

# Gippsland Lakes – Ocean Entrance and Bar

**WARNING:**

Masters and Skippers are advised that the Lakes Entrance Bar can be extremely dangerous to navigate and lives have been lost when boats have broached, swamped or capsized in the breaking surf. A Bar crossing should only be attempted by persons with local knowledge and night crossings should only be attempted by experienced skippers with extensive knowledge of the Bar.

Further information can be obtained from Gippsland Ports Website:

Recent hydrographic surveys:-

<https://www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au/publications/bathymetric-surveys>

Near real time Waves, Currents, Tides and Weather:-

<https://www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au/boating/waves-tides-and-weather/lakes-entrance-waves-tides-and-weather>

Webcams:-

<https://www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au/boating/webcams>

Gippsland Ports Bar and Entrance Channel recorded message line (03) 5155 6999

Australian Charts AUS182, AUS357

Notices to Mariners

Australian National Tide Tables (ANTT)

Victorian Tide Tables

Admiralty Sailing Directions Australia Pilot Vol. II

NP14. Admiralty List of Lights and Fog Signals Volume K NP83

Attention is drawn to Marine Safety Regulations 2012 (SR No 45 of 2012) - REG 179, specifying the conditions that apply to commercial trading vessels wishing to carry passengers across the Lakes Entrance Bar.

## Description

A horseshoe shaped bar extends across the Entrance and under normal conditions the Bar is 400 metres across on the line of the fairway with its inner edge 100 metres from the heads of the piers. The sea almost always breaks over the shallow ridge of the Bar, east of the fairway. The swell usually rolls in across the fairway without breaking, but in heavy weather the Bar may become dangerous and unfit for navigation.

## “Marks in Line”

Gippsland Ports has established "marks in line" for the purpose of assisting safe navigation. The rear mark is a blue LED lit triangle, apex pointing down, situated at the position 37° 53.316'S 147°58.394'E, locally known as the 'Flagstaff'. The lit triangle is visible by day and night.

The front mark is a blue LED lit vertical bar, which may be positioned at various locations ranging from 50 to 190 metres in front (to seaward) of the rear mark. When a line joining both marks is extended seawards it will coincide with the deepest fairway line to enter and exit the Port. The front mark will be moved from time to time whenever the fairway, as a consequence of the naturally occurring sand movement, position or alignment has changed.

The beacons on which the front mark may be located have triangles, apex up for the main lines 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 to the west of the 'green light line', and 8,9,10,11,12 to the east of 'green light line'. "Green light line", which is a well-recognised 'local mark', is where the green light on the eastern entrance mole is in line with the rear mark on the Flagstaff. To give greater definition of lines, 'half marks' have been established for lines 7, Green light, 8,9,10 and 11. These marks are delineated by vertical rectangles.

Regardless of the establishment of these "marks in line" caution must be exercised whenever navigating in the vicinity of The Entrance because in severe weather conditions between dredging programs, there can be a rapid and significant reduction in depth and/or change in the alignment of the fairway over the Bar.

Mariners should note that whenever the rear mark is extinguished, it indicates that Gippsland Ports are uncertain about the location and alignment of the fairway and extreme caution should be exercised in attempting to enter or leave Lakes Entrance.

### **WARNING:**

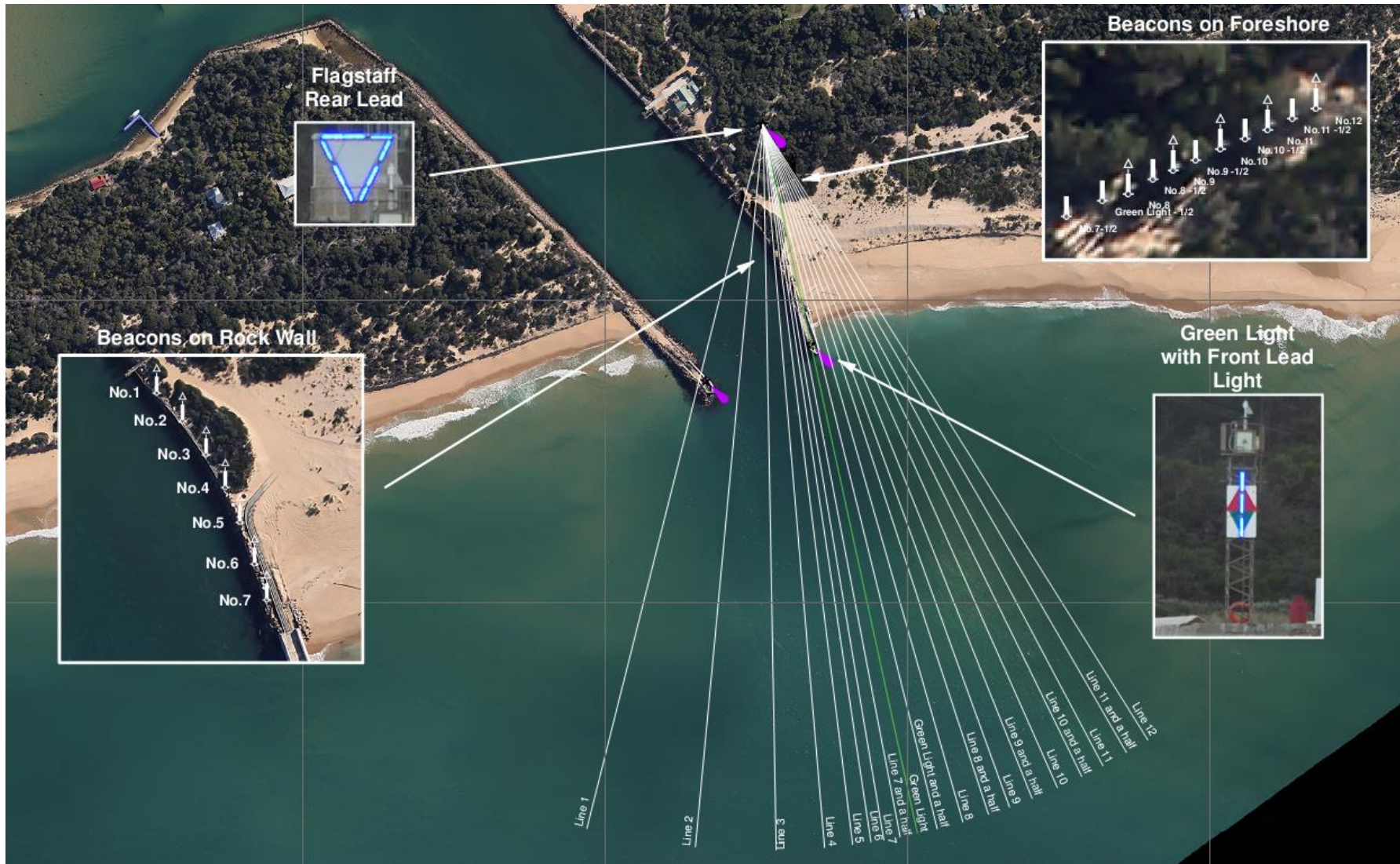
Mariners are advised that the depth and width of the fairway cannot be guaranteed and is constantly changing. No warranty whatsoever can be given for the depth and/or width of the dredged fairway.

Figure. 1 – View from offshore with marks in line. Forward lead is on the Green Light in this photograph.





Figure.2 Plan view of "Marks in line"



## **Approaching Lakes Entrance Bar from Seaward**

From the west the coast between Shoal Inlet and Lakes Entrance is low and featureless. Mt Taylor, north of Bairnsdale, is a prominent land mark. From the east, Red Bluff (37° 52' S, 148° 04' E), 49m high, stands 4.4 nautical miles ENE of Lakes Entrance.

Behind the township of Lakes Entrance is Mt Barkly (70m) with a 9m metal tower on top exhibiting a light with flash sequence Oc.4s. A steep bluff about 40m high extends east and west from Mt Barkly peak. It is advisable to approach the Port from a position one mile directly seaward of the Entrance.

## **Lakes Entrance Bar Closure**

In the event that an incident occurs on the Lakes Entrance Bar which constitutes a navigation hazard, the following signals will be shown and alterations made to light beacons as follows:

### **Eastern Pier Head (37° 53.414'S 147° 58.422'E)**

The fixed green light and the flashing green light will be extinguished and be replaced by a single fixed yellow light with visibility of 7 nautical miles.

An isolated danger mark of two black balls will be suspended from a yardarm on the light structure.

The blue marks defining the fairway will remain illuminated as long as the fairway is believed to exist.

### **Eastern Pier Root (37° 53.223'S 147° 58.240'E)**

The flashing green light at the inner end of the Eastern Pier (marking the south side of Cunninghame Arm) will be extinguished and be replaced by a single flashing yellow light (Fl.Y.3s) with visibility of 7 nautical miles.

An isolated danger mark of two black balls will be suspended from a yardarm on the light structure.

During the period when the above signals are shown, a 24 hour radio watch will be maintained by Gippsland Ports on VHF Channel 16 and Channel 88 (27MHz) and 2482 HF.

### **WARNING:**

All Mariners are advised not to attempt navigation of the Entrance, Channel or Bar area when the above signals are displayed.