

Advice to small vessels - interactions in vicinity of Cruise ships.

Welcome

The Harbourmaster's office would like to extend a welcome to all contestants and participants to the annual Bay of Islands Sailing Week. To help ensure a safe and successful event, there are a few important points to remember when sharing the bay with visiting ships navigating or anchored within the Bay.

Overview

Ships calling to the Bay of Islands arrive typically between 0600 and 0800 and usually depart between 1500 and 1800. Pilot transfers are conducted approximately 3.0nm NE of Fraser Rock from the vessel "Waikare". Depending on the weather, the ship may be required to turn to create a lee to facilitate a safe Pilot Transfer.

The ship will then line up on the white sector of the Waitangi sector leading light and proceed in on a SW'ly heading. Shortly before passing the Buoy on Brampton Reef, the ship will alter onto a S'ly heading, and proceed to its final anchoring position.

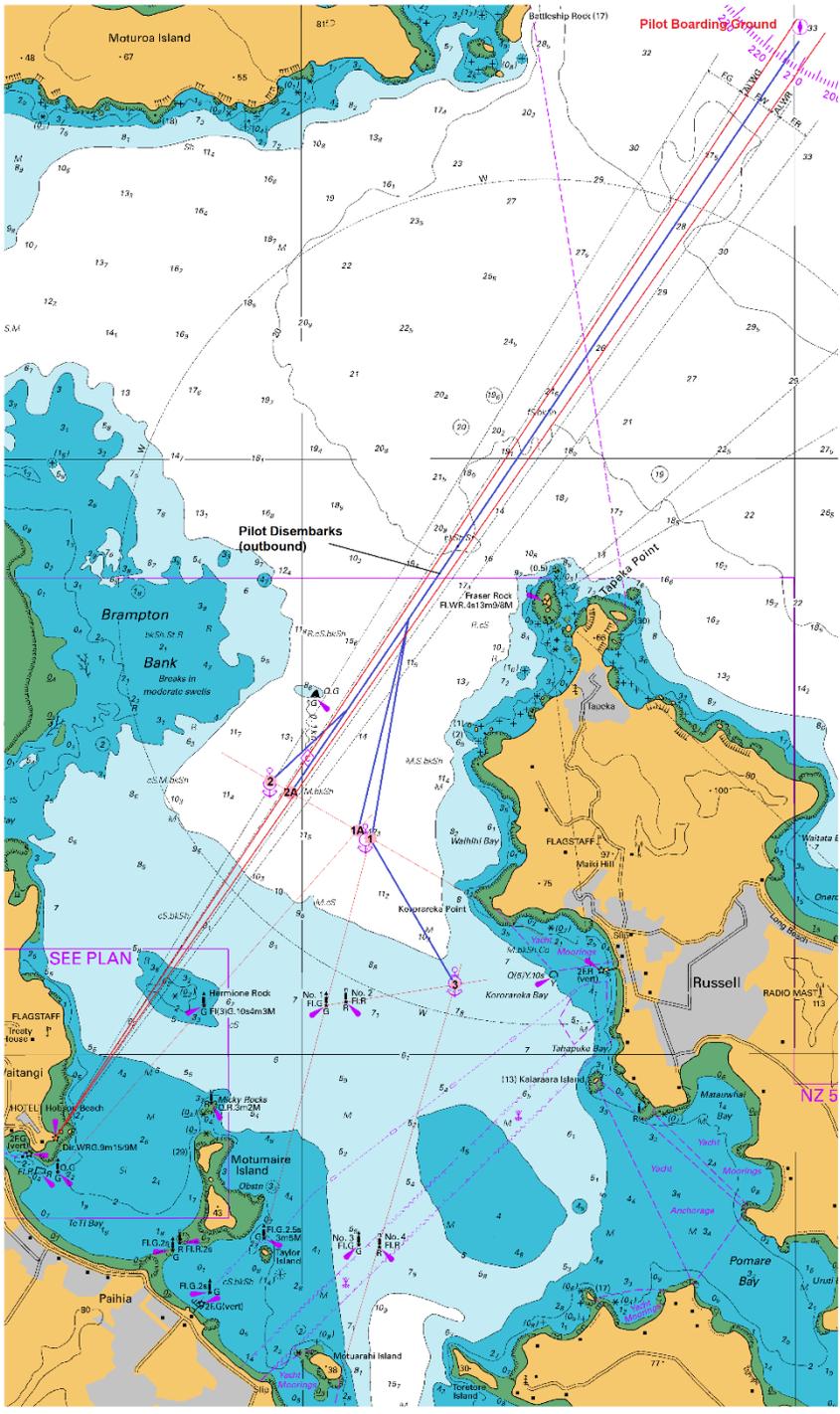
During its stay, the ship may utilise bow and stern thrusters at any time to optimise conditions at the tendering pontoons for safe passenger transfers, or to assist with the recovery of tenders towards the end of the port call.

On departure, the Pilot boards the ship half an hour before it is due to sail. Once the vessel commences weighing anchor, bow and stern thrusters as well as the main engines will be utilised to assist with the recovery of the anchor.

Once the anchor is aweigh, the cruise vessel will sometimes wait in position until all tenders are recovered, and will then manoeuvre until it is on a northerly heading and proceed up to the white sector of the Waitangi sector light. It then alters onto a NE heading and proceeds outbound.

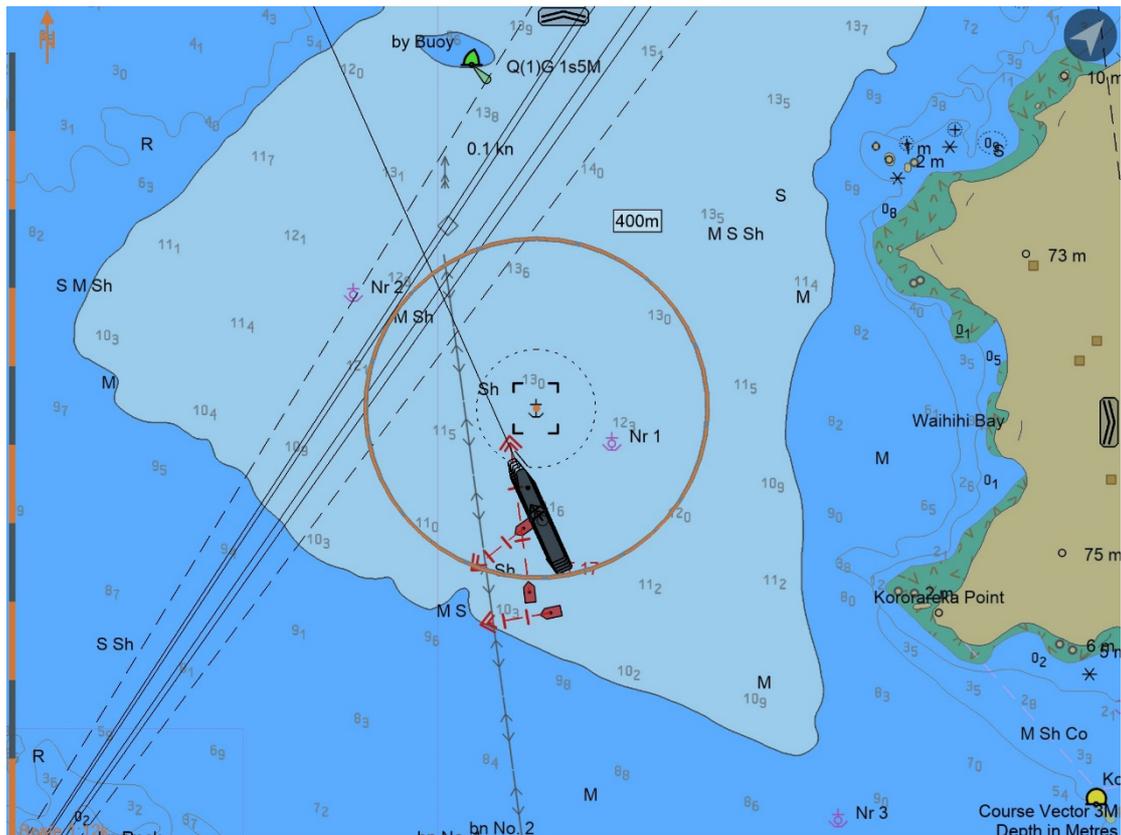
The Pilot typically disembarks near Fraser Rock. If required, the ship may alter to create a lee to facilitate safe disembarking of the Pilot.

Overview of passage, anchorages, critical points and features.



Key points to note.

Ships at anchor in the bay typically occupy a swinging circle with a radius centred on the dropped anchored position of about 0.2 nautical miles, (400m) but may be as large as 0.3 nautical miles (500m). The ship – while at anchor- may manoeuvre anywhere within this circle at any time.



The Vessel “Sea Princess” (261m cruise vessel) at anchor, #1A Anchorage with 400m swing radius.

Extensive blind spots exist around the ship where presence of other craft may not be readily known, particularly directly behind the vessel and up to 60m forward of the bow.

The effects of thrusters and main propulsion units can extend significant distances away from the ship, they can operate at any time and in any direction.

Ships underway, entering, leaving or manoeuvring within the Bay of Islands have limited safe water to manoeuvre in. Masters of all vessels of less than 500GT (that’s all small boats) must not allow their vessel to impede the navigation of any vessel over 500 GT.

With very large ships speed and acceleration can be deceptive. These ships are very powerful, and can increase in speed from stopped to 12 knots in a surprisingly short distance. It is critical for safety that small vessels do not try to cross in front of a vessel if its anchor is up, even if they think they might just make it!

Skipper responsibilities.

Skippers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of every person on board, and for the safe operation of their vessel.

The skipper must not cause or permit any act to be done in a manner which causes unnecessary danger or risk to any other vessel or person in the water irrespective weather or not any damage or injury occurs.

All vessels under 500GT or 24m in length (including sailing vessels) are required to:

- Avoid crossing ahead (crossing the bow) of any ship over 500 GT. If crossing the bow is unavoidable, a minimum distance of 500m must be maintained.
- Keep clear by a minimum of 100m each side and 100m to the stern of a ship over 500GT

It is requested that vessels under 500GT, keep at least 1 ship length clear when a ship over 500GT is at anchor, or picking up anchor.

Entering within the prescribed distances is considered an impedance to the navigation of the ship, and exposes small craft to possible interaction with the ship's hull, its propulsion or thruster units and possible collision. It can also present potential security threats to the ship.

Your understanding and cooperation is much appreciated, the harbourmaster's office wishes you a safe and enjoyable event.

