

CORRECTIONS GUIDE IMRAY



Mediterranean Cruising Handbook

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International nautical mile

(N mile = 1852.0m)

Page 86, sect. 9.12

Decca coverage has been turned off. Delete this section.

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GPS

Selective availability for GPS has now been turned off by the US military and a consistent accuracy of 20 metres is achieved for 95% of the time.

Modern GPS receivers are all multi-channel and can receive from three to twelve signals at any one time and decode them to determine a position. The speed at which a GPS receiver can do a cold start and produce a position is now around 30 seconds. The ease with which we retrieve data has been simplified by software that enables us to scroll through pages and pick out how we want to view the data. From the stream of position data we get speed over the ground, course heading in true and magnetic, distance off course from a waypoint, and a graphic display of our course.

GPS is the cheapest form of position finding around with a handheld set costing less than a good hand-bearing compass. Now that US has turned off selective availability most modern multi-channel receivers are accurate to around 20 metres in practice, an accuracy greater than the yachtsman needs to establish a position. SDGPS gives an accuracy of $\pm 3m$ where the system operates. At present it does not operate for the Mediterranean area.

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Digital Selective Calling VHF, MF and HF will utilise DSC for ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, shore-to-ship and will also generate a pre-formatted distress signal giving a location position if connected to GPS or any other position-finding receiver.

All GMDSS equipment had to be fitted to ships by February 1st 1999. Ships are no longer required to keep a listening watch on 2182 MHz and will not have to keep a listening watch on VHF Ch 16 after February 1st 2005. It is uncertain yet whether shore stations will likewise stop listening on VHF Ch 16. Channel 70 is now banned for voice transmission and is the DSC distress frequency.

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Amend fax transmission speed to 9600k for normal GSM phones and 14400 for WAP phones.

GSM phones will send and collect e-mail.

Using a GSM phone and dedicated connection cord and appropriate modem you can connect at 9600 baud wherever you can get a signal. This is the system I most commonly use as it allows you to connect in the comfort of your boat. 9600 baud is not a very fast speed these days but it is sufficient for e-mail. Transmission charges vary not only with your local provider, but also with your provider in the UK or wherever your phone is registered. It is worthwhile doing a comparison of costs on providers to see who is giving the best deal.

The new second generation phones (G2) only offer 14400 baud which hardly makes it worthwhile investing in a new (very expensive) phone and invariably a new cable and perhaps a PC card modem for it. But in 2002 the third generation phones (G3) using the Unified Mobile Telephone Service (UMTS) will come into being and that should offer a whacking 2Mbps, faster than anything you can get on a landline at present. In the interim the so-called 2.5G transmission technologies are underway which offer up to 57.6kbps to 115kbps utilising the present GSM networks and one of these technologies may be the way to go. Invariably the different providers are using different transmission technologies and so compatibility with an overseas provider will be a problem. For information on 2.5G (utilising HSCSD, GPRS, or EDGE) contact your service provider or change to another if no service is available.

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Some weatherfax stations have been shut down for the Mediterranean area and it is likely that more will go as the information is transferred to internet sources.

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E-mail There are a number of ways of sending and receiving e-mail while cruising. The following is a brief round-up of ways and means of doing so.

1. Using a GSM phone and dedicated connection cord and appropriate modem you can connect at 9600 baud wherever you can get a signal. This is the system I most commonly use as it allows you to connect in the comfort of your boat. 9600 baud is not a very fast speed these days but it is sufficient for email. Given that much of the Mediterranean is mountainous and hence transmitters must be sited quite high, coverage at sea can be obtained at up to 25–30NM off the coast and in some cases I have had coverage at 40NM off the coast. Transmission charges vary but can be as little as 20 pence (32 US cents) per minute depending on your service provider.
2. Using a satellite system such as INMARSAT or Iridium you can send and receive e-mail just about anywhere in the world. INMARSAT and Iridium transmissions are painfully slow at just 2400 baud although there are moves afoot to increase transmission rates to around 9600 baud. The costs of the systems are expensive and transmission charges are expensive, typically \$4–8 per minute.
3. Cyber-Cafés. Many quite small places have a cyber-café these days and if you have an internet e-mail provider such as *Hotmail* or *yahoo!* then it takes little time to download and send mail using a floppy disk. If you do not have a laptop to compile mail on and download it from the desktop in the café then most cyber-café will let you print out the mail for a small fee. Costs are low and of course connection rates are high at typically 56K baud. I use this method of connecting when I cannot get a connection via GSM or when I feel like a coffee with my mail.
4. Acoustic couplers. This sort of connection whereby you use an acoustic coupler fitted onto the mouthpiece of a public phone used to be popular but connection rates are slow and errors can creep in. Despite claims to the contrary, it is unusual to get connection rates much over 2400 baud.
5. HF Radio. There are a number of companies who will transmit data via HF radio including Pinoak, GlobeE-mail and the Ham Radio Network. Data rates are slow, typically less than 2400 baud, and costs for the service are relatively expensive for the commercial concerns (the Ham network is a co-operative group but you must be a licensed ham operator to use it). In addition you must make a substantial investment in a HF modem and the appropriate software. For the Mediterranean the system is probably too expensive in investment and running costs but does have the advantage of operating in many parts of the world.
6. Magellan GSC 100. This is a combined GPS and e-mail device. The e-mail is sent and received via the ORBCOMM satellite network. Because of the cost of the service it is really only suitable for short messages and besides the small keypad interface would make it tedious to send long messages anyway. Like the HF radio services it does offer near global coverage.
7. Plugging in to a conventional telephone socket. If you can find somewhere to plug into a conventional telephone socket ashore with (usually) a meter on the time used, then this is a quick and easy way to send and receive e-mail using your own laptop. There are certain things to be borne in mind. If you connect to an ISP in the country you are in then the cost is that of a local or at most a national call. Large companies like CompuServe and AOL will most likely have a server in the country you are in, but unless your home ISP has a reciprocal agreement in other countries (and some do), you will have to dial up to the country your home ISP is in and this obviously will be an overseas call. I use CompuServe and mostly find I can connect to a server in the country I am in when I use this method. Many marinas, service companies and a whole host of other places will let you plug in to a metered telephone line. Remember you will need adapters for the perverse collection of telephone jacks that exist in Europe although sometimes you will be able to connect simply through a normal US jack plug commonly found on many fax machines.

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Weather on the Internet

There are a number of services on the Internet which provide up-to-date surface forecasts, text forecasts and satellite pictures. Access to the internet from a boat can be obtained in a number of ways. For a fuller account of the options see the e-mail options in section 10.7a above.

1. Using a GSM phone and dedicated connection cord and appropriate modem. Connection speed is 9600 baud at present which is slow but sufficient to access the internet.
2. Using a satellite system such as IMMARSAT. At present speeds are too slow to adequately access the internet and unless 9600 baud rates are introduced the system is inadequate.
3. Cyber-Cafes. If you know the sites you are looking for then half an hour will be more than sufficient to get weather data. Most cyber-cafes will let you print out surface charts for a small fee.
4. Plugging into a conventional socket. This is a quick and easy way to access the internet using your own laptop and a modem, preferably a PC card modem.

Internet sites

Mediterranean sailing

<http://www.medsail.nildram.co.uk>

Rod Heikell's site for sailing in the Mediterranean with a weather page and links to those sites he considers most useful in terms of content and download time. Includes 36 hour surface charts from NEMOC, satellite loops, wind and sea forecasts from a number of sources. Benefits from actually being used on board in the Mediterranean.

Nemoc (Naval European Meteorology and Oceanography Center)

<http://www.nemoc.navy.mil/about1.htm>

This is the US navy site based in Rota which has the best unclassified forecasts and maps for the Mediterranean. Many other private sites use the forecasts and maps from NEMOC (often without a source signature) so this is a good place to go first. Here you can get excellent text forecasts, surface analysis maps showing lows, highs and wind strength for next 36 hours, surface maps showing wave height and surface currents for next 36 hours, Meteosat photos updated hourly, satellite loop mpegs, wind and sea warnings, and much more. Excellent site which is quick to load.

Met Office site

<http://www.meto.govt.uk/>

Provides a B&W surface analysis map for pressure, highs and lows from Bracknell. Satellite photos of Europe can be accessed at: http://www.meto.govt.uk/satpics/latest_VIS.html Updated daily. Difficult site to navigate because of all the pay features included. Basically you pre-pay for units to navigate some pages for data.

Weather Links

<http://www.bcryachts.com/links/weather.htm>

Good surface analysis maps especially of the Atlantic approaches to the Mediterranean. Bracknell surface analysis map of Europe. NEMOC surface analysis maps and other data. Good site quick to load.

Mediterranean Sea Weather Page

<http://www.sto-p.com/atol/>

Bracknell surface analysis map, surface analysis maps from NEMOC and wind charts from the University of Athens. Good site.

Reading University Weather Site

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/~brugge/europe.html>

Excellent source of web sites and links to European weather sites.

WeatherNet4

<http://wxnet4.nbc.com/chap1/worldfcst.html>

Satellite image for Europe.

The Weather at a Glance

<http://pcl.ifk-mp.uni-kiel.de/~narjes/english/wx.html>

University of Kiel European weather site. Excellent links to other European sites.

Bablake Weather Stations Bookmarks

<http://bws.users.netlink.co.uk/wthr.html>

Excellent links for Europe.

Dooley SeaWeather Analysis

<http://pw2.netcom.com/~dseawx/links.html>

Surface analysis chart for northern hemisphere.

Line Weather Images

<http://www.weatherimages.org/>

Mostly US weather but has some excellent satellite images for Europe.

Nottingham University site

<http://www.ccc.nottingham.ac.uk/pub/sat-images/meteosat.html>

Meteosat pictures downloaded every 20 minutes. Fast graphics required for the colour images

Weather Online

<http://www.nbn.com/people/lovejoy4/weather.html>

Current satellite and radar imagery and text forecasts

IPD

<http://psbsgil.nesdis.noaa.gov.8080/IPD/IPD.html>

Data from NOAA satellite

Weather

<http://www.serve.com/ds/wetter.html>

Satellite images and forecasts

OWL

<http://www.comet.net/weather/>

Organised weather links. Includes forecasts and other weather sites

CompuServe and Yahoo!

The weather data available from CompuServe and Yahoo! includes satellite maps and aviation forecasts

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Caribbean to the Azores

Traditionally yachts crossing from the Caribbean to Europe leave the Caribbean in late April or early May for Bermuda and then head for the Azores sometime around late May to early June. Many yachts now leave the Caribbean and sail direct for the Azores.

Traditionally this route has less wind and you will have to be more patient than on the Bermuda-Azores route. Many yachts take on additional fuel although yachts which sail well in light conditions can make good passage times. From St Maarten or Antigua to Horta is around 2100 miles and yachts normally take around 21 days for the passage. You can either head north for a bit before curving east to the Azores or sail a rhumb line. There seems to be little evidence that more calms will be encountered on the rhumb line route as opposed to heading north first.

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Cruising permit On the 14th January 2000 Law 2743/1999 was introduced requiring cruising yachts under any flag (EU or non-EU) to pay taxes amounting to 2000Dx per metre per month. This tax is valid for 30 days and can be renewed after 30 days at the same rate of 2000Dx per metre per month. If a vessel departs from Greek waters before the 30 days expires and then re-enters Greek waters then a tax of 15000Dx per metre must be paid.

The introduction of the tax has occasioned a good deal of excitement and the exact purpose and import of the law is yet to be worked out. The large number of rumours circulating about the tax and also the lack of clarity from the authorities has not made it any easier to determine what is going on here. The following points may be useful, but it remains to be seen just what will happen in the future in practical terms.

1. The tax applies to yachts not permanently based in Greece. If a yacht is permanently based in Greece, that is it has an annual contract with a marina, or a recognised boatyard, then the tax is applicable once only and the yacht can remain in Greece for 3 years without paying further tax.
2. The tax appears to contravene EU regulations for free travel within EU countries and it is possible the law will be repealed or changed to conform with EU regulations.
3. The fact that yachts permanently in Greece can make a one-off payment points to a change of culture in Greece whereby yachts must take annual contracts with marinas or boatyards as is common in other EU countries. There may also be the matter of tax regulation going on whereby the Greek tax authorities can better control the assets owned by Greek nationals.
4. It is also thought that the tax may be an attempt to regulate yacht charter in Greece when the requirement to have Greek flagged charter yachts is waived under EU regulations for free trade within the EU. This has been promised for 2002.
5. For the time being I suggest a wait and see policy as it may be that the tax is dropped, officially or unofficially, as has happened in the past similar ill-conceived laws. And write to your local MEP.

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In 2000 a new piece of legislation was introduced which means that a yacht with an annual contract with a marina or a boatyard will effectively get a residents permit for the length of time the contract runs for.

The circular from the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, Directorate General of Security, addressed to provincial governors, directs them to grant visas or residence permits to yachtsmen and their accompanying family members for periods concurrent with their valid marina contracts. This means that if a yachtsman takes out a 2-year marina contract a 2-year visa or residence permit will be given. This applies to EU and US citizens and permits granting stays:

1st. time applicants - 2 years

2nd extension - 3 years

3rd extension - 5 years.

Although a recent piece of legislation and one that you might expect to take some time to filter down to minor officials, the circular has been acted on and at some of the major marinas and a few boatyard resident's permits have already been issued. If you are taking out an annual contract I recommend you contact the marina manager and enquire about whether applications have been processed successfully for the permit.

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There have been reports that it is now easier to get a visa for Libya and that yachts can now visit without too many hassles. However check with the local cruiser net and the foreign office before heading for Libya.