

DEPOE BAY



A protected cove

About the harbor

Millions of years of the relentless pounding of ocean on rock have made Depoe Bay the world's smallest year-round navigable harbor. Unlike most other harbors in Oregon, the land-locked bay is not a river estuary. Its egress to the ocean is a 50- by 300-foot slit through steep basalt cliffs. Getting a boat through this notch is known locally as "shooting the hole." Even though there is no river current to complicate the tidal flux, boaters should be extremely cautious entering and exiting the harbor.



Depoe Bay bridge from the harbor side

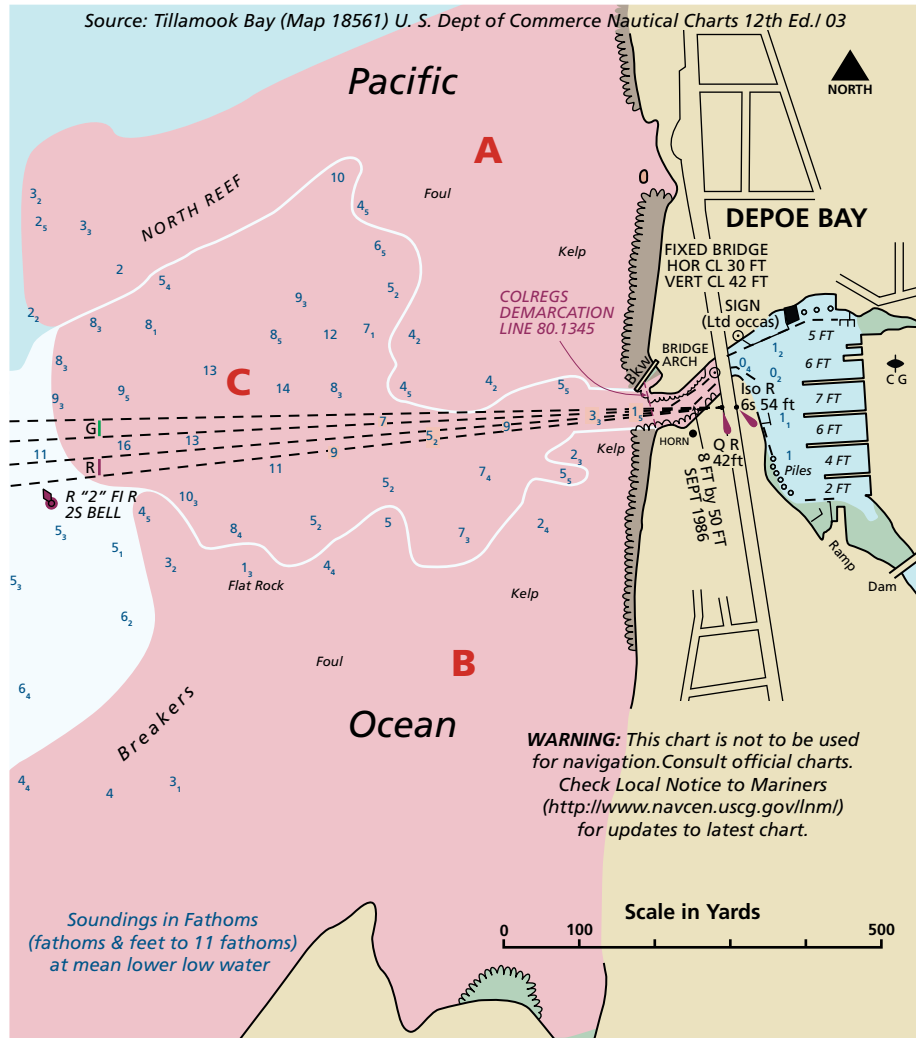
Hazardous areas

A. North reef. Once a boat has cleared the entrance, waters to the north are hazardous up to the red bell buoy. Seas break from the northwest and southwest at the same time. Avoid this area.

B. South reef (Flat Rock). Breakers are almost always present. If you are coming in from the south, do not use this area as a shortcut to the channel. Avoid the area at all times.

C. Red bell buoy to harbor mouth. The channel is narrow, short, and difficult. Study it before navigating it. Seek advice from more experienced mariners if possible. Do not try to cross at night or in rough weather. Because the north and south reefs are so close to the channel, the area sometimes becomes very hazardous. In bad weather, breakers from the north reef will cross the channel and run into the entrance. In such a case, stand off and wait until conditions improve, unless the Coast Guard can escort you in. Do not fish between the entrance and the red bell buoy.

Vessels longer than 50 feet should not enter without checking with the harbormaster and the Coast Guard. All vessels must sound one 4- to 6-second blast when leaving or entering Depoe Bay. Right of way goes to inbound vessels. Check the local Notice to Mariners (www.nga.mil/portal/site/maritime) for location of #2 marker, which may be off station in the winter.



Rough-weather advisories and information

- Two flashing yellow lights north of the entrance warn of a rough bar.
- Check with the Coast Guard on VHF channel 16 for crossing restrictions.
- The Coast Guard foghorn is activated when visibility drops below 1 nautical mile.
- Coast Guard station at Depoe Bay: (541) 765-2124.



Morning reflections



Working on the boat at Depoe Bay

Things to do in and around Depoe Bay

About 100 boats are moored year-round in this postage-stamp harbor, making it hard to see the water some-times. As in all Oregon's coastal towns, fishing tops the list of favorite activities. Commercial and recreational catches of chinook and coho from offshore waters are typically as high as anywhere in the state, and bottom fishing for rockfish, greenling, halibut, and other species is popular. Albacore is another favorite quarry of deep-sea anglers. Gray whales pass close to shore on their annual migrations in October and February. Several charter companies offer fishing and whale-watching tours.

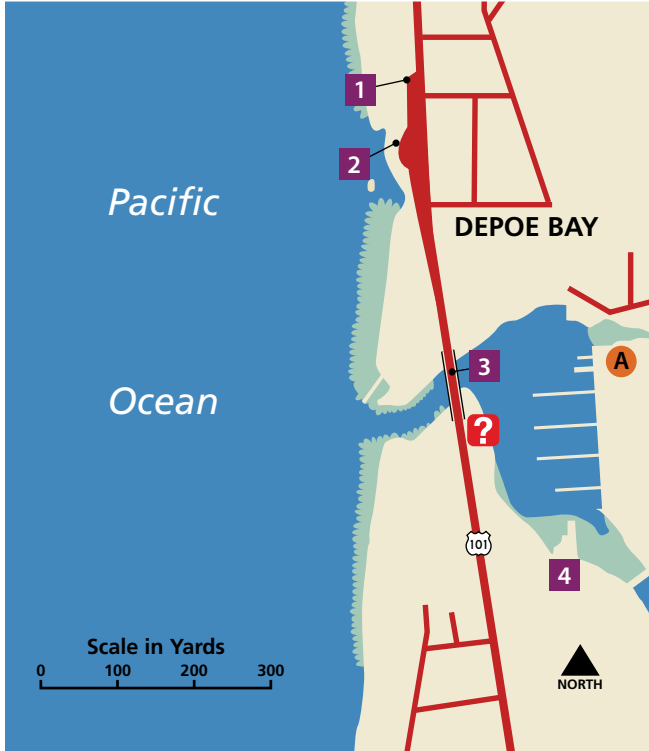
Like the harbor, the town of Depoe Bay is compact, and it is stuffed with things for visitors to do and see. Salt-water taffy, cooked crab, microbrewed beer, handmade jewelry, and many other items are available within short walk uphill from the boat basin.

Shops and eateries line the east side of Highway 101. Across the highway is a stone seawall and sidewalk where visitors can watch whales through binoculars and, sometimes, get soaked by geysers of seawater that smack into the cliffs on strong incoming tides.

About a mile and a half north along Highway 101 is Boiler Bay State Scenic Viewpoint. It is named for a boiler from a wrecked ship that washed up in the cove in 1910. Tidepools are exposed at low tide, and the park is a good place to watch whales and seabirds.



Looking out to sea from the north jetty



Depoe Bay attractions

- 1** Depoe Bay Whale Watching Center
- 2** Seawall
- 3** Depoe Bay Bridge
- 4** City Park
- ?** Visitor information

Boating facilities

- A** Port of Depoe Bay
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Gull's-eye view of the diminutive Depoe Bay boat basin