

UMPQUA RIVER

GARDINER

COLUMBIAN TONES



REEDSPORT

UMPQUA



Cleaning crab at Salmon Harbor

About the harbor

The Umpqua rises in the Cascades and crosses a low Coast Range divide, then tumbles into its estuary through one of the coast's prettiest river canyons. The smaller Smith River converges with the Umpqua at Reedsport. A century ago the Umpqua carried steamers, schooners, barges, log rafts, and tugboats from the sea all the way up to Scottsburg and back. Today most river traffic is recreational, with fishing boats dominating the scene.



Boy in a hurry at Salmon Harbor Dock

Hazardous areas

A. Middle ground and north spit. The north spit, to the right for outbound vessels, starts from the first rock spar jetty and the long pier on the east side of the channel. Small breakers are present when a swell is running; conditions become rougher toward the north jetty. A very dangerous area because large breakers come into this area from the middle ground. The north spit meets the middle ground at the outer end of the training jetty. The middle ground extends from the north jetty about 1000 yards seaward. This area is dangerous because a little swell can create large breakers that may capsize a vessel. Do not linger near the mouth of the river during ebb tide because an engine failure could put you out to sea before you could anchor or row to safety.

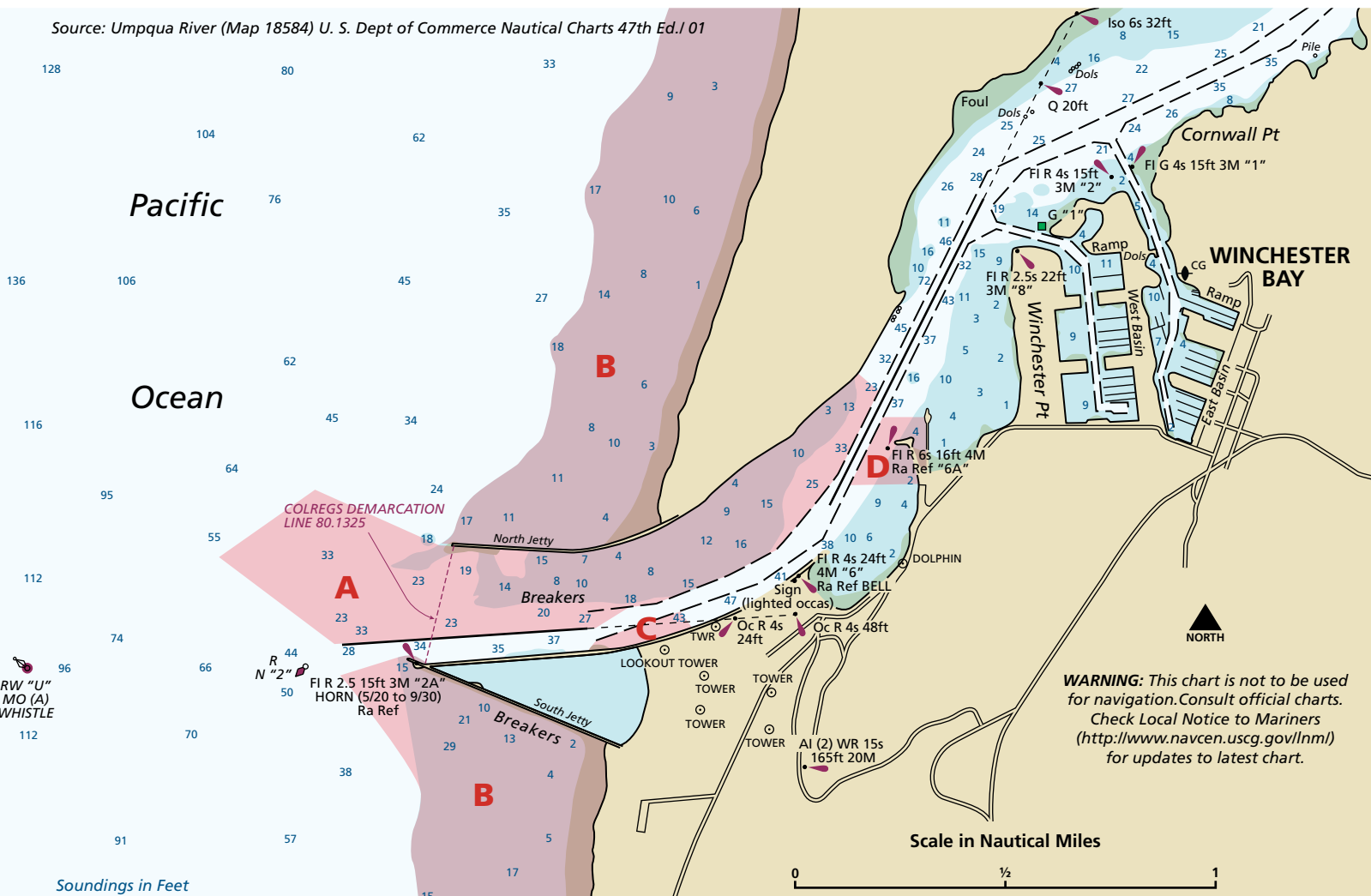
B. North and south jetty. The areas north of the north jetty and south of the south jetty can be very dangerous. Avoid the area when breakers are present.

C. Training jetty. On the ebb tide, the current will pull boats into the jetty.

D. Buoy 6A, old Coast Guard docks. Current on ebb or flood will often set boats into this area.

Rough-weather advisories and information

- Coast Guard station, Umpqua River: (541) 271-2138; for weather information: (541) 271-8417; for emergencies only: (541) 271-2137.
- Coast Guard radio: VHF channel 1610; hourly bar updates on VHF channel 16 or 22.
- Steer a course that keeps the two range markers in line as you navigate the channel. The range markers are red rectangles with a vertical black stripe.
- The storm warning display is on the lookout tower. A rough-bar advisory sign is located at each boat launching ramp and at Aid "6".



What to do in and around the Umpqua estuary

Winchester Bay's Salmon Harbor is the Umpqua's hub for commercial, charter, and recreational fishing. It has ample facilities and attractions for recreational boaters. Umpqua Lighthouse State Park is a short uphill trek from the boat basin. Besides chinook salmon, the lower river has sturgeon, bottom fish, and striped and smallmouth bass. Anglers ply the jetties at Half Moon Bay and Osprey Point to catch chinook from the ocean. Crabbing is good off the Salmon Harbor docks Salmon Harbor docks, especially the Crab Dock. The beaches of the estuary produce some big gaper, razor, and softshell clams.

Cruising up the bay, visitors can stroll through the historic district of Gardiner, one of the oldest communities in Oregon. A couple of miles upstream is Bolon Island, where the ill-fated Jedediah Smith party camped in 1828 before most of them were killed in an Indian attack.

Across the channel, few steps from Reedsport Landing, is the Umpqua Discovery Center, with exhibits and dioramas about the history of the native peoples and of later settlement times. Reedsport's Old Town, with shops, galleries, restaurants, and gift shops, is a short walk from the boat landing.



Fishing in Salmon Harbor



Tying up at Salmon Harbor dock



Umpqua Discovery Center in Reedsport's Old Town

Umpqua River attractions

- 1** Umpqua Lighthouse State Park
- 2** Crab Dock
- 3** Salmon Harbor
- 4** W. I. Jewett Historical House
- 5** Bolon Island Tideways State Wayside
- 6** Jedediah Smith Trail Historical Marker
- 7** Umpqua River Bridge
- 8** Umpqua Discovery Center
- ?** Visitor information



A friendly greeter

Boating facilities

- A** Salmon Harbor West Basin

- B** Salmon Harbor East Basin

- C** Reedsport Rainbow Plaza