

End of the Lane

Paddle-To Fishing Spots

Espiritu Santo/San Antonio Bay Seadrift, Texas

Presented by:

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Launch Location: End of Lane Road – Charlie's Bait Camp

From Seadrift, proceed 4.5 miles east toward Port O'Connor, turn right (south) onto Lane Road. Proceed 4.2 miles to dead-end at ICW. Turn right on Welder Flats Road, road ends at Charlie's parking lot. Parking/Launch fee is \$5.00 per vehicle per day.

Getting to the fishing grounds: Paddle across the ICW (ever watchful for traffic) and approximately ¼-mile east to Alcoa Cut (some call it Buffalo Pass but that is slang) take the Alcoa Cut ¼-mile south... The Lagoon and Dewberry Island are to your left (east) paddling out toward Espiritu Santo... Shoalwater Bay and Long Island lie on your right (west.)

The Lagoon A shallow body of water, nearly seven miles long, fairly constant in depth, shallow and occasionally firm-bottomed on the north side, somewhat deeper and very soft-bottomed on the south side. The Lagoon can hold trout and redfish year-round, best fishing is on higher tide levels. It is a good idea to establish a tide gauge at all fishing spots. Until you have these and have low and high water references, always inquire about the general height of the tide... tide swings within most days in this part of the bay are mere inches.

Backing and tailing reds are very common in the Lagoon especially along the north shore. Drifting in your paddle boat, either standing or seated, is a good way to find and fish for them. The bottom here is usually very grassy after about mid-May except on the sandy patches. Weedless gold spoons and weedless fly designs are necessary a good part of the time.

Lagoon's south shore is quite different. Water here is usually too deep for tailing and backing fish although explosions in the spartina grass are sure signs the reds are in there. My favorite lures are small topwaters worked right against the grass. Bone-silver Top Pups, baby trout and baby redfish Super Spook Jr. and baby Skitterwalks are best. I have caught many there with Spittin' Images too. There are several small coves along this shoreline... work 'em!

Dewberry Island Pothole Lakes These lakes are a well-kept secret! Powerboaters can't get in there except scooter kamikazes and airboaters; suffice to say you'll have it all to yourself unless Pam and I are in there with you.

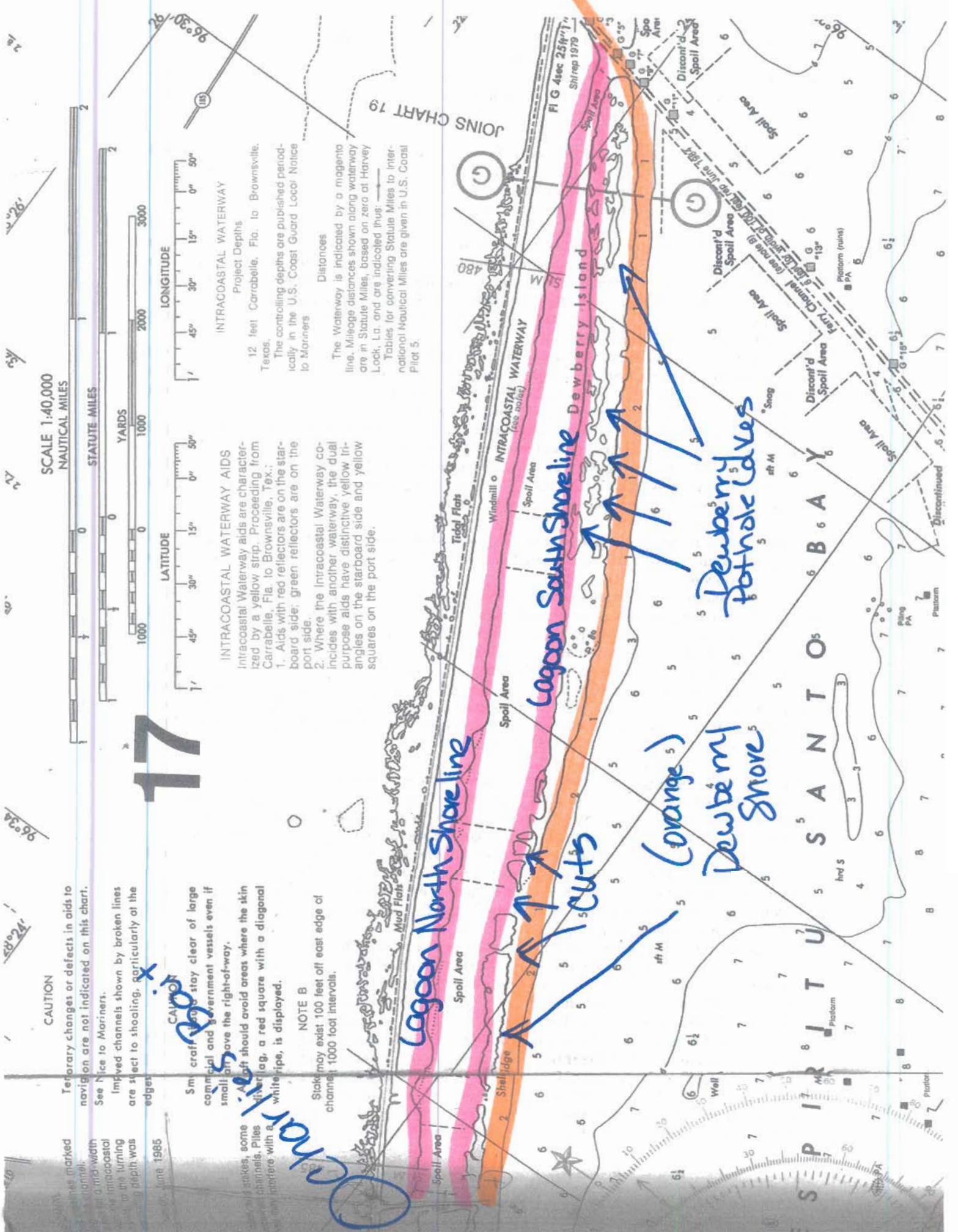
The way to find these lakes is to paddle east until you come to the mottes on Dewberry Island. The lakes lie to the east of the mottes, approximately 4.0 miles from Charlie's Bait Camp. Assuming a southeast wind, I like to paddle straight to the lakes while I am fresh in the morning and then drift and fish my way back kind of lazy-like.

Even though it does appear so on the chart, these lakes are all inter-connected via tiny slough ditches. This is a shrimp and mullet nursery and the reds pull up in here seasonally to gorge on the bounty. While it's always worth a look if you're in the area, the absolute best time is in October when the tides bulge and the last of the white shrimp begin their run to the Gulf of Mexico. I have seen these lakes absolutely stuffed full of redfish.

Dewberry Island Shoreline April through November, anytime the wind will give you a chance, this shore can be hot for trout and redfish. It is characterized by a series of bars and guts that get pounded into the bay floor by the predominant southerly winds. The first gut (nearest shore) averages about 1 to 1.5 feet deep. The bar that separates the first gut from the second gut is sometimes out of water on lowest tides and covered by several inches at normal levels. The second gut is about 1.5 to 2.0 feet deep, the third is about 2.5 to 3.0 and sometimes a fourth distinct gut can be found but not in all locations. Each bar/gut formation gets deeper as you move offshore. Most of the guts will have some amount of grass in the bottoms of them. The tops of the bars are bare and the bright sand makes them easy to spot.

Trout will likely be found in the second gut and deeper, the reds will roam the entire area. Look for reds very shallow early and late. These are also the haunts of true wall-hanger trout. Watch for bait disturbances and explosions, get to the area quickly but stealthily. I much prefer to wade here, fishing from the kayak will be too noisy and the wind will mess you up.

Once you establish which gut is holding fish, throw "down" the gut and work your lure back. Fanning your casts across the guts is a good fish finding technique, especially with small topwaters. Concentrate your efforts in the cuts through Dewberry Island, especially when the water is moving in or out. The ideal setup is to have the south wind on your back while you are facing a falling tide current. You'll be able to place your cast up-current from predators who are facing the current waiting for a quick handout. On incoming flows, go into the Lagoon and fish into the wind. Casting thus is tough so take a spinning reel, expect the fish to be lying on the wash-over fan or delta.



CAUTION
Temporary changes or defects in aids to navigation are not indicated on this chart.
See Notice to Mariners.
Impaired channels shown by broken lines are subject to shoaling, particularly at the edges.

SCALE 1:40,000
NAUTICAL MILES
STATUTE MILES
YARDS
1000 2000 3000

INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY
Project Depths
12 feet Carrabelle, Fla. to Brownsville, Texas.
The controlling depths are published periodically in the U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners

Distances
The Waterway is indicated by a magenta line. Mileage distances shown along waterway are in Statute Miles, based on zero at Harvey Lock, La. and are indicated thus: ———
Tables for converting Statute Miles to International Nautical Miles are given in U.S. Coast Pilot 5.

INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY AIDS
Intracoastal Waterway aids are characterized by a yellow strip. Proceeding from Carrabelle, Fla. to Brownsville, Tex.:
1. Aids with red reflectors are on the starboard side; green reflectors are on the port side.
2. Where the Intracoastal Waterway coincides with another waterway, the dual purpose aids have distinctive yellow triangles on the starboard side and yellow squares on the port side.

NOTE B
Stake may exist 100 feet off east edge of channel 1000 foot intervals.

CAUTION
Small craft must stay clear of large commercial and government vessels even if small craft have the right-of-way.
Aids should avoid areas where the skin of a vessel, a red square with a diagonal white stripe, is displayed.

Shoalage
Shoalage is marked by a yellow triangle with a black border. Aids should avoid areas where the skin of a vessel, a red square with a diagonal white stripe, is displayed.

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Long Island Shoreline This shoreline fishes almost the same as Dewberry with the major exception that the depths drop off quicker here than along Dewberry and some of the bottom structure is mud and scattered shell. Starting right at the corner of Alcoa Cut, anchor your kayak and fish the first gut and shoreline west toward First Cut. The gut averages two to three feet deep, depending the tide level, and is an excellent place to intercept trout, reds and big flounder. Given its close proximity to the Bait Camp and ramp, most powerboaters blow right on past.

On the offshore side, many reds and trout will lay right off the corner, seemingly undisturbed by boat traffic, and the fishing can be pretty spectacular right under the nose of all passersby. These fish remind me of deer that live right along the highway, they become conditioned to traffic and noise. Keep an eye out for boaters cutting the corner though. Wear a bright color and put a bicycle flag on your boat.

First Cut Now don't tell too many people about my little honey-hole. I have made my entire day here on guided trips catching near limits of trout and reds within sight of my house. This little cut is deep and runs well up into Shoalwater Bay. I love it on a falling tide. Work the whole thing... down the edges and up the middle. Wade in as deep as you can and then get to either side where it isn't too deep and keep going right up in there. I've caught more fish here than any other two-acre fishing spot in Calhoun County. I have seen trout to 30-inches come out here and bullreds too. I caught a flounder here once that weighed slightly over five pounds... Hell of a fishing hole!

Second Cut Not quite the producer that First Cut is but still a solid producer and worth the three mile paddle (approx) to reach it. Fish it same way as First Cut. The big sand flat inside Shoalwater is a dynamite spot for reds and flounder on an incoming tide.

Third Cut This cut and two little ones just to the east are excellent spots for the hearty paddler to set their sights on. I cannot tell you how many limit days my clients have found here, both on trout and reds. I like to bang big topwaters right down the middle of this wide cut, the louder the better because the middle is pretty deep and sometimes you're rattling up from four or five feet... bring on the She Dogs.

Shoalwater Bay – North Shore This is a redfish hotspot pretty much year 'round. Work all the coves and nooks. Look for 'em tailing and backing right up along the bank and in the flooded grass when the tide is high enough. Bring a stake-out tool... it's worth the time to sit and wait for cruising pods to come to you. Some of this shoreline can be waded without getting a severe hernia. You'll just have to do some trial and error. I stay in the boat along most of it.

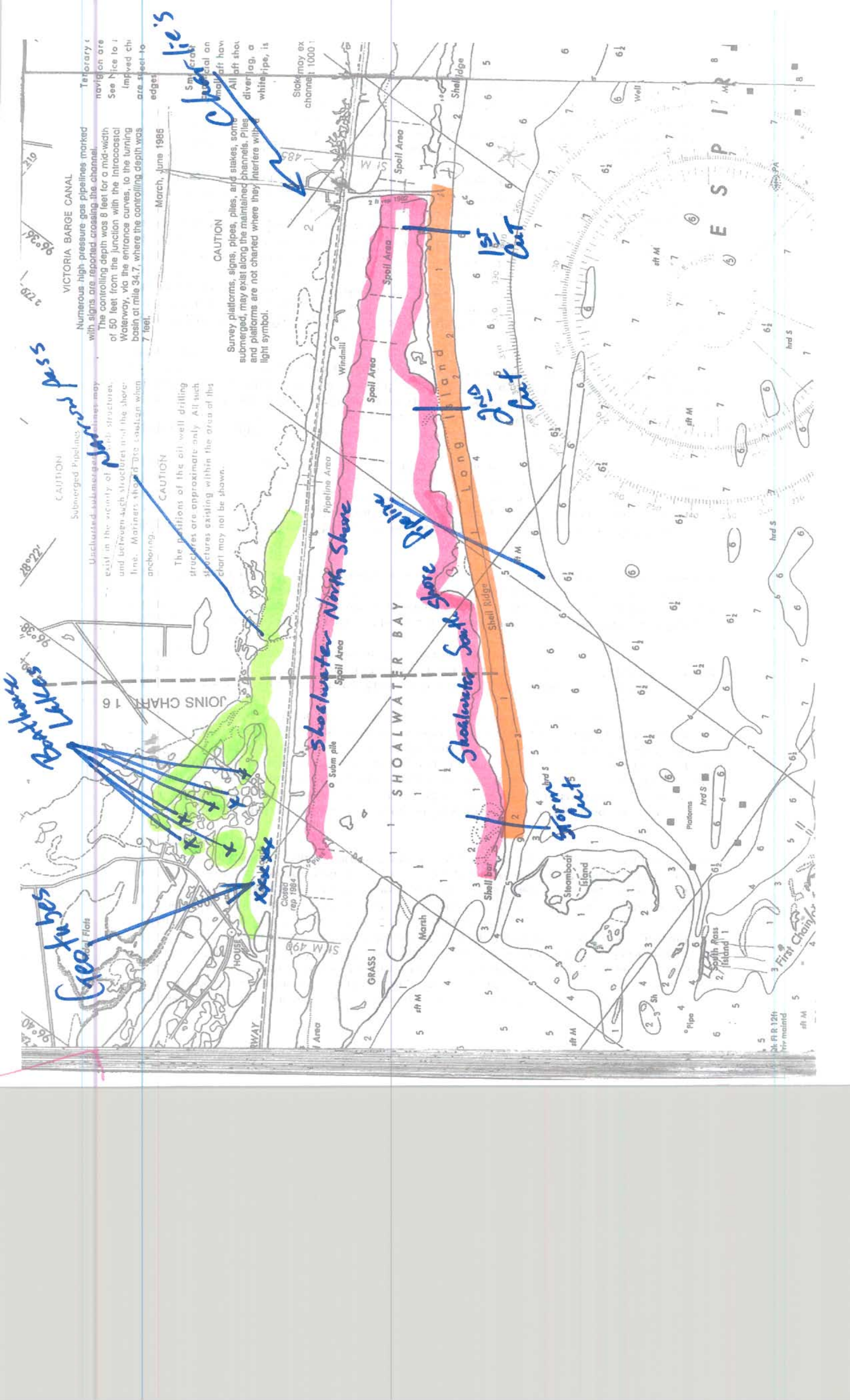
Shoalwater Bay – South Shore I don't really fish this shore much except to the west of Second Cut down to Storm Cut. There is an old pipeline that crosses Shoalwater and it is covered over with oysters. Naturally this bottom condition rising up from a near featureless mud plain will hold tons of bait and predators. I like it for trout and reds, September through early December can be awesome here. The shore between the pipeline and storm cut is also very good, especially on the highest of the fall bull tides.

Welder Ranch Shoreline/Welder's Flats This entire region can be absolutely killer. Spring and fall are always best, but the area can produce year 'round. There are reefs along the ICW from marker 8 intermittently all the way down to Marker 14. The reefs are good spots to try for trout on the ditch side. Reds love the flats side.

Work the shorelines, paying special attention to the little ditches and cuts that reach back into the neighboring marsh. We catch the reds in here rooting for shrimp and baby crabs. Getting out of the boat will almost always land you in knee-deep muck.

Tugboat traffic on the ICW creates lots of water movement here. The passes, sloughs and bayous "breathe" with each passing vessel. Concentrate your efforts on the narrow passes between larger lakes. Dredge the bottom of these for flounder. I once caught a seven pounder doing this.

Clyburn's Boat House Lakes This is the red house you can see from the ICW and from just about anywhere in Welder's Flats. The lakes lie all around it, east and west. These lakes are awesome redfish sanctuaries. When you find your way in (sometimes it's easier to drag the boat over land) work from lake to lake, you might be amazed what you can find in here. There will be zero other boat traffic, so the fish are usually skittish when you begin clunking the paddle against the boat.



Geo features
Northwest Lakes

Shoalwater North Shore
Shoalwater South Shore
Shoalwater Storm Cut
Shoalwater Island

Shoalwater North Shore
Shoalwater South Shore
Shoalwater Storm Cut
Shoalwater Island

Pipeline
Spoil Area

Shoalwater North Shore
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Pipeline
Spoil Area

VICTORIA BARGE CANAL
Numerous high pressure gas pipelines marked with signs are reported crossing the channel. The controlling depth was 8 feet for a mid-width of 50 feet from the junction with the Intracoastal Waterway, via the entrance curves, to the turning basin at mile 34.7, where the controlling depth was 7 feet.

CAUTION
Submerged Pipelines
Uncharted submerged structures may exist in the vicinity of pipelines and between such structures and the shore line. Mariners should use caution when anchoring.

CAUTION
The positions of the oil well drilling structures are approximate only. All such structures existing within the area of this chart may not be shown.

CAUTION
Survey platforms, signs, pipes, piles, and stakes, some submerged, may exist along the maintained channels. Piles and platforms are not charted where they interfere with white pipe, is light symbol.

Stake may exist channel 1000

March, June 1986

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Shoalwater South Shore
Shoalwater Storm Cut
Shoalwater Island

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