

Bulletin 480 - 07/06 - Groundings in the Rio Parana - Argentina

The Association has been informed by its local correspondent in Argentina that over the present year a total of eight ships have grounded in a section of the Rio Parana. The groundings occurred within the proximities of km 314/316 (Abajo las Hermanas Passage) and 292/285 (Los Ratones Passage).

The River Parana rises in Brazil and runs into the River Plate. Local pilots have confirmed that the groundings occurred in a 100 metre wide section of the channel where ships have to make an alteration of course of 40 degrees.

The Club is advised that the channel is in fact dredged beyond the 100 metre width requirement and there is sufficient water if ships follow the proper track of the channel. Although investigations into the groundings are not concluded, none of the incidents appear to have occurred due to a failure of the channel but due to error of navigation. Hidrovia guarantees depths declared within the navigable channel, beyond which similar depths may be encountered but not guaranteed. Maximum speed restrictions as detailed in the coastguard's regulation 4/2000 should be adhered to.



Prevailing information concerning depth, widths or any other variable which could alter the normal navigation is given on a daily basis by the Secretariat of Waterway & Ports (Vias Navegables). The maximum daily draft is reported every day at 0900 local time by the Coastguard. The maximum daily draft takes into account the mandatory under keel clearance of two feet (0.60 metres).

Whilst the Coastguard reports on a daily basis the maximum allowable draft for the day from up-river ports and terminals, it does not from Buenos Aires port or for the River Plate channels but sets out that ships must maintain an under keel clearance of two feet along the River Plate channels.

Although the maximum allowable draft is reported by the Coastguard, varying conditions of tide, winds, and depths in the channel and alongside some piers mean that this issue should be treated with great care; consulting pilots and authorities through agents as necessary.

Ships are strongly advised to have Argentine Charts of the area onboard. Over the last two weeks two ships have gone aground for not anchoring in proper places. Neither of the two ships was carrying Argentinean charts, which could have alerted them to depths in the area. In this respect, a notice has been issued by the Naval Hydrographical Service with the intention of mandatory use of Argentine charts to be used when sailing through the River Parana and River Plate waterways.

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