

NWS Melbourne Marine Web Letter

March 2007

In early March, I spent two days at the Boat Show in Orlando. I didn't get a lot of complaints from boaters about our forecasts, so that must mean we are doing a great job!

No Tie-Ups, Please!

On a serious note, I have received reports that boaters are frequently tied up to buoy 41009. I have been told by the National Data Buoy Center that this can affect the wave data and hence could have a negative impact on forecasts. The Buoy Center also reports that a lot of fishing line is removed from buoy masts whenever they are serviced. This fishing line can lead to intermittent communications outages and of course literally "tie up" the anemometer (wind speed measuring device).

If you tie up to the buoy or break your line off on it, you might be "shooting yourself in the foot" along with all mariners who rely on the data. The Coast Guard will not allow boats to tie up to a buoy or navigational aide and will interdict when tie ups are observed.

Climatological Notes

The "Meteorological Winter" months of December, January and February had less rainfall than normal, despite the occurrence of El Nino. There were several severe weather cases in which fast moving storms raced across the coast. Hopefully, boaters kept well informed during these events, especially by reading the [Hazardous Weather Outlook \(HWO\)](#).

The months of March, April and May make up "Meteorological Spring" and are usually a continuation of the rather dry winter months. Cold fronts become weaker and less effective at producing showers and storms. We often start referring to them as "cool" fronts. April is driest month of the year at most locations in east central Florida.

On average, March and April are the windiest months of the year along coastal sections. This may not be true over the marine environment, but periods of breezy conditions occur behind the cool fronts. Usually the post frontal winds veer quickly to the northeast/east as the centers of high pressure remain well to our north. Often the start of our "shower and thunderstorm" season occurs in late May. Though storms are usually slower moving, they can still push off the mainland and affect boaters.

Are You Weatherwise?

When I hear complaints about the Coastal Waters Forecast, I sometimes ask the user if they read the [Area Forecast Discussion \(AFD\)](#) and the HWO. Often the answer is "no."

Ben Franklin said that "some people are weatherwise, but most are otherwise." If you are a boater and read the Coastal Waters Forecast and check out the buoy reports, but don't also read the AFD or the HWO, then you might be missing valuable information that can make you more "weatherwise." There is often information in these products that cannot be effectively communicated in the Coastal Waters Forecast. In the AFD, you can often "get in the head" of the forecaster and see what he/she is thinking. Many times you can determine the degree of confidence the forecaster has.

Plans

- I recently submitted a proposal to National Weather Service Headquarters for a realignment of the Coastal Waters Forecast zones. The new breakpoints would be:

AMZ540 -- Flagler Beach to Volusia-Brevard County Line 0-20nm

AMZ560 -- Flagler Beach to Volusia-Brevard County Line 20-60nm

AMZ542 – Volusia-Brevard County Line to Sebastian Inlet 0-20nm
AMZ562 – Volusia-Brevard County Line to Sebastian Inlet 20-60nm

AMZ544 – Sebastian Inlet to Jupiter Inlet 0-20nm
AMZ564 – Sebastian Inlet to Jupiter Inlet 20-60nm

This change would result in smaller zone groups and hopefully better forecasts. The zone realignment will also allow for a reduction in the number of zones played on NOAA Weather Radio, as the breakpoints were chosen to correspond with the broadcast range of the transmitters at Daytona Beach, Melbourne and Ft. Pierce.

The tentative date for implementation of this realignment is December 3, 2007.

If you would like to offer comments on this proposal, please [email me](#).

- I have mentioned in previous Web Letters that NWS Melbourne continues to investigate how best to implement a near shore wave model. The reason for wanting to accomplish this task is that research has shown that there is an improvement in wave forecasts where these near shore models have been used. The group looking into the possibilities has had one proposal accepted, but the implementation date is uncertain due to budgetary matters. There is also interest in undertaking another proof-of-concept project with another group.

The next Marine web letter can be expected during June. Feel free to contact me by email, Randy.Lascody@noaa.gov.

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