

# **NWS Melbourne Marine Web Letter**

## **July 2007**

### **Safer Boating Needed**

I attended the Ft. Pierce Coast Guard Open House on May 19th. They have an excellent facility along the inlet and performed a simulated helicopter rescue of a boater in the water. This Open House occurred on the first day of Safe Boating Week. Sadly, boating related deaths across Florida are above normal with more than 40 the first half of the year. I composed the following message that was broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio during Safe Boating Week.

Statistics show that over 70 percent of recreational boating deaths are due to drowning. Of that total, 85 percent of the victims were not wearing life jackets.

Florida has over a million registered boats and leads the nation in boating fatalities with an average of about 65 per year.

The primary causes of accidents are carelessness, recklessness and navigational rules violations. The number one factor in fatal accidents is alcohol.

Something as simple as wearing life jackets would save the lives of nearly 40 Floridians each year. Following basic safety rules, being careful and not boating under the influence would also save many lives.

Data shows that about 80 percent of boat operators involved in fatal accidents have never taken a boating safety course. Check with your local Coast Guard Auxiliary or Power Squadron about safe boating courses. Discounts on marine insurance often apply to those who complete safety courses. Also, check with local marinas for free Vessel Safety Check events as mechanical malfunctions also cause many accidents.

A boating hazard that is often overlooked is hypothermia. Water temperatures in the 50s and 60s occur for much of the central Florida cool season. Since 2000, an average of at least 2 people die each year due to hypothermia, including strong swimmers who are forced overboard.

The best protection is to always wear a life jacket, especially when boating alone or far from shore. It only takes a small trauma such as a bump to the head or for the body to develop a hypothermic condition in order to inhibit ones swimming ability. Also, remember to let family or friends know your boating plans before disembarking.

Remember, You're in Command. Boat Responsibly.

### **Two buoys develop problems the same day**

Buoy 41114 broke loose from its mooring on June 12. Thanks to a vessel assist boat out of Fort Pierce Inlet, the buoy was quickly retrieved. Scripps shipped a new mooring and the buoy was re-deployed on July 2. Good work!

Buoy 41012 met a worse fate however as an intense thunderstorm with frequent lightning moved across it on the same day. The National Data Buoy Center hopes to have it returned to service in August.

### **It's lightning storm season**

The summer season usually results in diminished winds and seas (except during infrequent large scale events caused by tropical systems or strong high pressure centers to our north). Often the Bermuda high pressure ridge parks itself across central Florida, resulting in doldrum type conditions (especially in August). Many boaters take great delight in the often rather flat sea conditions that develop for long periods of time.

However, the pattern that often produces the flattest seas over the nearshore coastal waters, westerly flow, also brings a dangerous threat from storms moving off the peninsula during the afternoon and evening.

Forecasters often try to provide information on when these days will occur. Remember, the weatherwise boater will look at the [Hazardous Weather Outlook](#) and [Area Forecast Discussion](#) to glean details that are not available in the Coastal Waters Forecast.

## Plans

National Weather Service Headquarters approved our proposal for a realignment of the Coastal Waters Forecast zones. The new breakpoints will be:

AMZ550 -- Flagler Beach to Volusia-Brevard County Line 0-20nm  
AMZ570 -- Flagler Beach to Volusia-Brevard County Line 20-60nm

AMZ552 ◆ Volusia-Brevard County Line to Sebastian Inlet 0-20nm  
AMZ572 ◆ Volusia-Brevard County Line to Sebastian Inlet 20-60nm

AMZ555 ◆ Sebastian Inlet to Jupiter Inlet 0-20nm  
AMZ575 ◆ Sebastian Inlet to Jupiter Inlet 20-60nm

The date for implementation of this realignment is December 4, 2007.

This change will result in smaller zone groups and hopefully better forecasts and watches/warnings. 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 Daytona Beach transmitter will broadcast AMZ550 and AMZ570. The Melbourne transmitter will broadcast AMZ552 and AMZ572. Fort Pierce will broadcast AMZ555 and AMZ575.

You can view the new zone configuration [here](#).

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.

I am happy to report that two projects have commenced!

Funding for a multi-year and multi-organization project has been approved. Highly experienced wave modelers and marine forecasters will work together, so a very robust product is anticipated. A proof-of-concept project for a rapid response near shore wave model has also begun. More details will be forthcoming in future web letters about the improved products and services that are anticipated from these projects.

The next Marine Web Letter can be expected during October or November (depending how the Hurricane Season goes!). Feel free to contact me by email, [Randy.Lascody@noaa.gov](mailto:Randy.Lascody@noaa.gov).

**Randy Lascody**