

LOCAL WEATHER.—For extended remarks on the marine climate along foreign coasts, see the appropriate Sailing Directions and Planning Guides prepared and published by the National Imagery and Mapping Agency ; for the coasts of the United States and its possessions, see the appropriate Coast Pilot prepared and published by the National Ocean Service. The trimester publication "Mariners Weather Log" prepared and published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, carries informative articles on marine climate conditions and tropical cyclone information.

MARCH

PRESSURE.—The South Pacific subtropical high continues to extend from South America to across the southern half of Australia in March. Its mean central pressure is located near 34°S, 95°W, averaging just over 1023 millibars. The equatorial trough remains fairly weak, and the intertropical convergence zone is most definable north of the equator. South of 50°S the relatively strong zonal pressure gradient continues.

TEMPERATURE.—Highest mean air temperatures occur over the northwest South Pacific between 10°S and the equator where mean range from 28°C to 29°C; 98% of the observations fall between 24°C and 32°C. At 60°S, mean temperatures occur in the neighborhood of 3°C to 4°C; only 2% of the observations fall outside the 0°C to 8°C range.

WINDS.—Prevailing winds are westerly south of 40°S and east to southeast north of 40°S except north of Australia where winds are northerly. Scalar wind speeds continue to average force 3 to 4 north of 40°S and force 4 to 5 south of 40°S.

GALES.—North of 40°S, winds of force 8 or greater are infrequently observed over the western half and rarely observed over the eastern half of the South Pacific. Frequencies increase to 10% or more south of 45°S and to near 20% or more across most areas south of 50°S and east of 180° longitude. Maximum occurrences reach 30% through the center of Drake Passage.

TROPICAL CYCLONES.—During March an average 3.7 tropical storms reach 34 knots or greater. Of these storms an average 1.1 is expected to attain hurricane strength (≥ 64 knots). As in previous months all tropical storm activity is confined to the northwest quadrant.

VISIBILITIES.—Poor visibilities (less than 2 miles) are mainly observed south of 40°S. Frequencies reach 10% between 40°S and 50°S, and increase to 30% between 50°S and 60°S west of 120°W.

WAVE HEIGHTS.—The wave pattern changes little from month to month, reflecting the stable wind regime across the South Pacific. Wave heights of at least 12 feet are observed less than 10% of the time between the equator and 20°S. Frequencies reach 10% between 20°S and 30°S except along the coastal areas of Australia, New Zealand, and Chile. At 60°S, frequencies reach over 30% south of Cape Horn, over 40% at 90°W and over 50% at 130°E.

CHART #1

TROPICAL CYCLONES

The mean tracks of tropical storms and hurricanes are shown in red. These tracks represent averages, and movements of individual systems may vary widely.

SURFACE PRESSURE

This chart shows the average barometric pressure reduced to sea level. Isobars are solid blue lines for every 2.5 millibars difference in pressure.

CHART #2

AIR TEMPERATURE

The mean air temperature (°C) in red lines is shown for every 2 degrees. All weather narratives refer to air temperature.

VISIBILITY

Blue lines show percentages of observations reporting visibilities less than 2 miles.

CHART #3

GALES

The red numerals in the center of each 5-degree square on this inset chart show the average percentage of ship reports in which winds of at least force 8 have been recorded for the month. In cases where the observation count is low the gale frequency may be nonrepresentative and therefore different from the values used in the text. Where "0" is given, gales may have been recorded, but too infrequently to give a percentage value.

SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURE

The mean sea surface temperature (°C), in blue lines, is shown for every degrees.

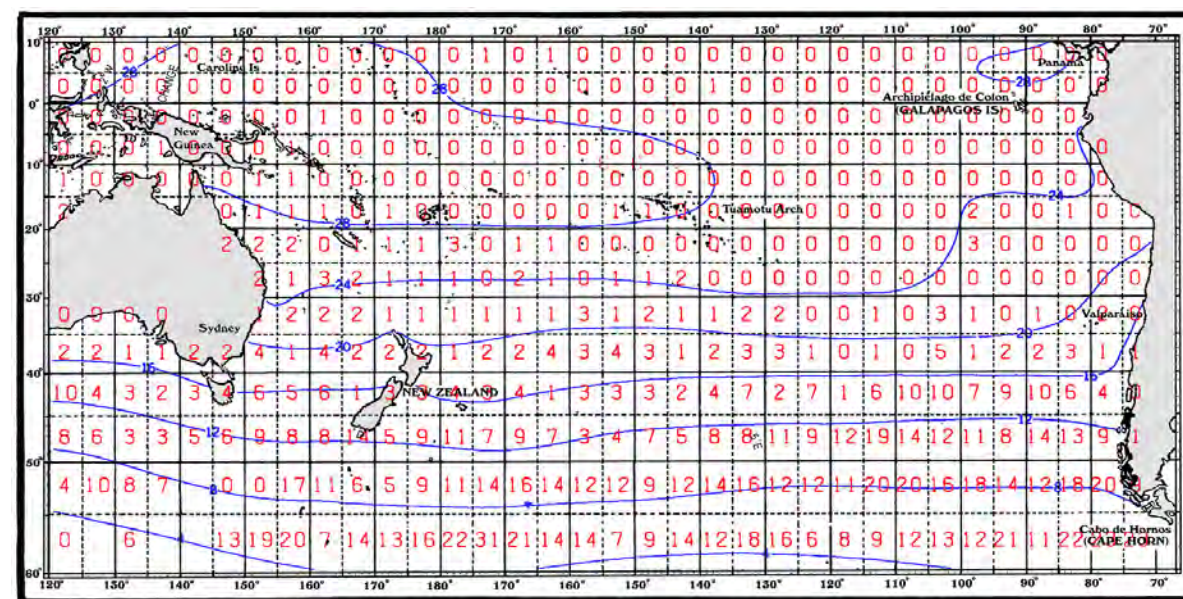
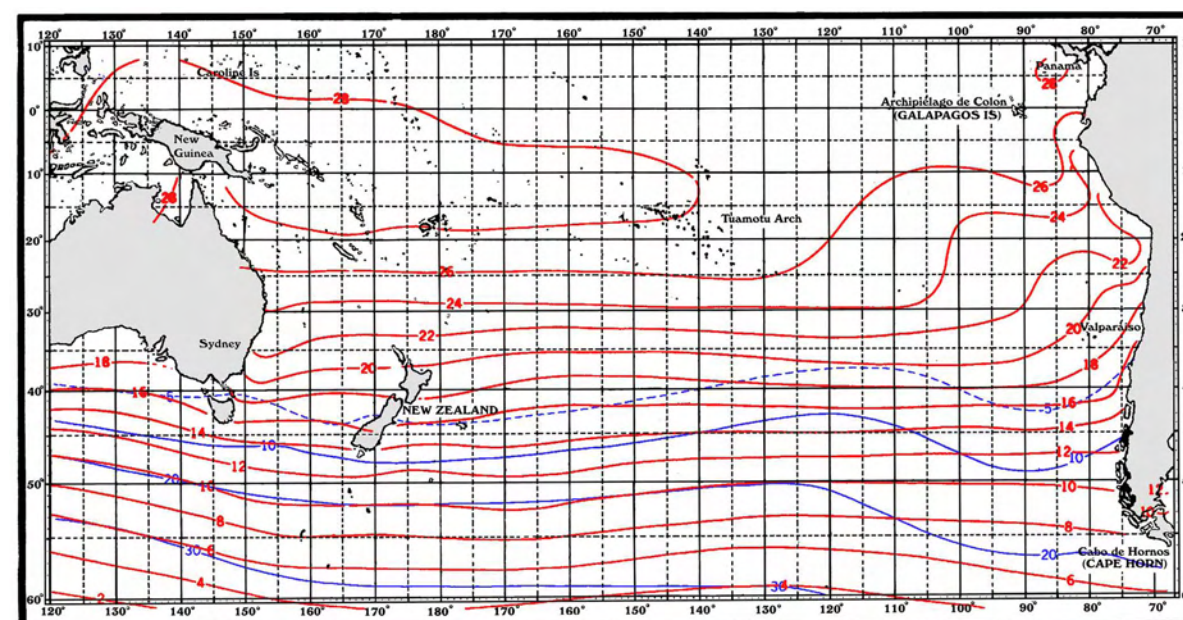
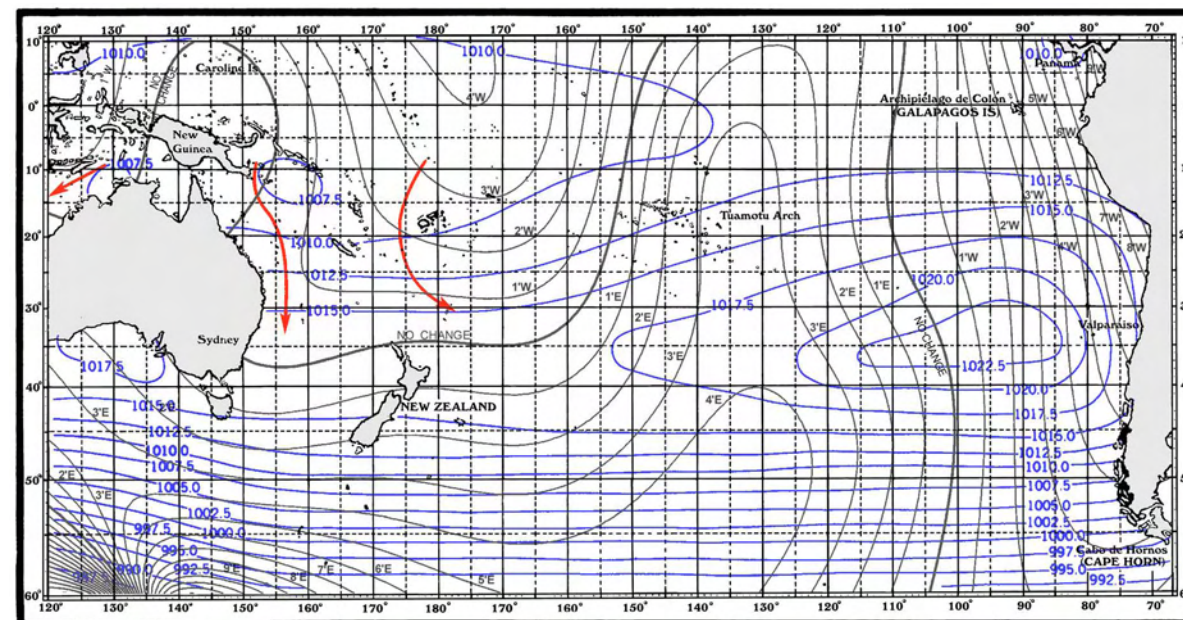
EXPLANATION OF WIND ROSES

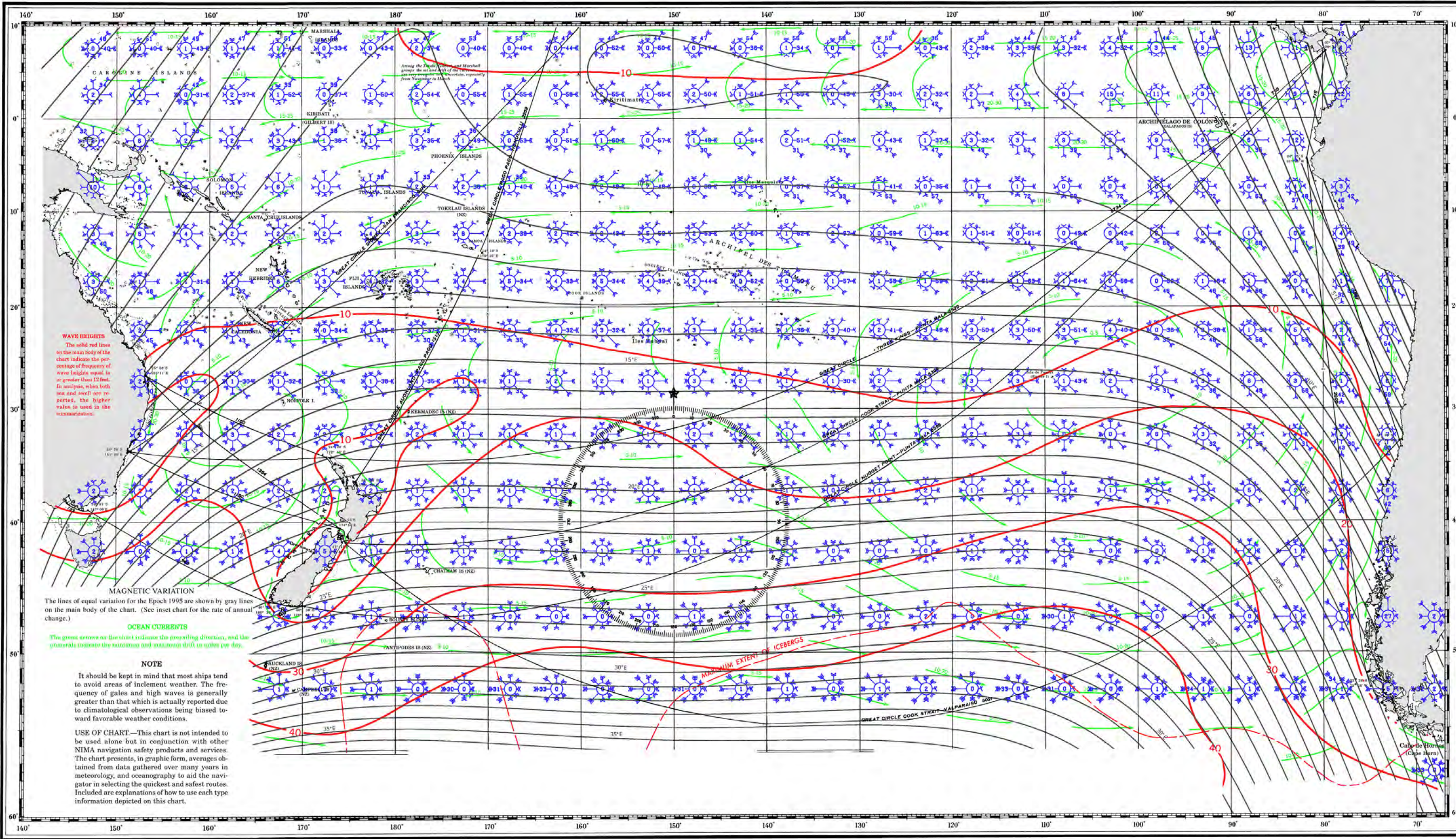
PREVAILING WINDS AND CALMS.—The wind rose in blue color is located in the center of each 5° square where there was sufficient data. The rose shows the distribution of the winds that have prevailed in the area over a considerable period. The wind percentages are summarized for the eight points and calm. The arrows fly with the wind indicating the direction from which the wind blew. The length of the shaft, measured from the outside of the circle using the scale below, gives the percent of the total number of observations in which the wind has blown from that direction. The number of feathers shows the average force of the wind on the Beaufort scale. The figure in the center of the circle gives the percentage of calms. When the arrow is too long to fit conveniently in the 5° square, anything over 29 percent, the shaft is broken and the percentage is indicated by numerals.

FOR EXAMPLE.—The sample wind rose should read thus: In the reported observations the wind has averaged as follows: From N. 3 percent, force 3; N.E. 16 percent, force 4; E. 61 percent, force 4; S.E. 17 percent, force 5; S. 1 percent, force 4; S.W. less than 1 percent, force 3; W. 1 percent force 2; N.W. 1 percent, force 4; calms 0 percent.



SCALE OF WIND PERCENTAGES





WAVE HEIGHTS
 The solid red lines on the main body of the chart indicate the percentage of frequency of wave heights equal to or greater than 12 feet. In analysis, when both sea and swell are reported, the higher value is used in the summarization.

MAGNETIC VARIATION

The lines of equal variation for the Epoch 1995 are shown by gray lines on the main body of the chart. (See inset chart for the rate of annual change.)

OCEAN CURRENTS

The green arrows on the chart indicate the prevailing direction, and the numerals indicate the minimum and maximum drift in miles per day.

NOTE

It should be kept in mind that most ships tend to avoid areas of inclement weather. The frequency of gales and high waves is generally greater than that which is actually reported due to climatological observations being biased toward favorable weather conditions.

USE OF CHART—This chart is not intended to be used alone but in conjunction with other NIMA navigation safety products and services. The chart presents, in graphic form, averages obtained from data gathered over many years in meteorology, and oceanography to aid the navigator in selecting the quickest and safest routes. Included are explanations of how to use each type information depicted on this chart.

Among the Tuvalu, Phoenix and Marshall groups the set and drift of the currents are unregular in direction, especially from November to March.

MAXIMUM EXTENT OF ICEBERGS