

TIDES

By Richard Sorokin

Every mariner must be aware of the tides in his waters. The rising and lowering of the water's depth effects all boating. The currents associated with tides can have a damaging effect.

Tides are caused by the gravities of the Earth, Moon, Sun and the spinning of the Earth. When we speak of tides we are referring to the height of the water. Tidal currents refer to the movement of the water. The changes in the water flow and depth varies though out the world. Near the equator tides seem to be very small. In our are waters, 3 to 6 feet seems the norm. In the Bay of Fundy 54 foot tides happen often. You walk to the edge of a dock and look down at that tiny boat sitting in the mud, 54 feet down. In some river systems where there is very high tide the incoming tide meets the out going river current. At first the river drives the tide back. As the tide increases it not only stops the river current but builds up a high wave called a bore that marches up the river. You don't want to be out in a boat when the bore passes.

You must know your area's water. When the tides occur and how high they will be. Bucking a tide can use up a great deal of fuel. Harbors may not be accessible due to tides. How you tie your vessel up at a dock will depend on the tides you experience in your area, unless you have floating docks.

Tidal charts are easy to come by and should be part of the supplies on board. G.P.S systems also will give tidal information.

It's important that a mariner is aware where the bottom is at all times and how the fluid water that he is traveling in is moving.

Because we missed the tide one time when we were out sailing; we had to wait 12 hours for the tide to change so we could pass under a bridge. Use the charts.