Off mile 84.8 on the ICW. 11.6 statute miles from Sarasota / Island Park, 11.8 statute miles to Manatee River / DeSoto Point.

From the gap between can buoy 39 and marker 40 on the Intracoastal Waterway, a wide swath of deep water stretches off to the west, leading to two popular, protected anchorages.

To enter this haven, depart the ICW about 75 yards south of marker 40. Do not get too close to 39. There is a patch of shoal water west of this aid, which is encroaching on the ICW.

The first anchorage, Longbeach, is on the tongue of charted 12-13 foot water stretching into a cove hard by the village of Longbeach. Minimum depths of 9 feet run to within 75 yards of the western banks and even closer to the northwestern shores. There is shoal water to the southeast, but there is plenty of swing room for boats up to 50 feet with excellent protection from all but easterly winds. A Bahamian moor is advised; this anchorage can become crowded.

The surrounding shores are lightly developed, but two of the buildings are seafood restaurants, each with its own dock. A dinghy ride into Bishop Bayou ends at the rear of a large shopping center with cleats on the sea wall. A few blocks
#1- Longbeach
Minimum Approach Depth: 9 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 9-13 ft.
Lat 27°26.3'N / Lon 82°40.8'W.
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation.

#2- Longboat Pass
Minimum Approach Depth: 9 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 9-14 ft.
Lat 27°26.4'N / Lon 82°40.9'W

inland runs the main road on Longboat Key; across the road and about a quarter mile further is access to Whitney Beach on the Gulf. This wide beach is largely in its natural state; development is well back behind the dunes. It is often deserted.

The second anchorage, Longboat Pass, is further northwest, just around the point from the restaurants and behind Jewfish Key, the thin, private island southwest of marker 41. This is an excellent anchorage if the wind is blowing from the northeast. Minimum depths are 9 feet and there is plenty of swing room. Watch for shoal water building westward from the north half of Jewfish Key.

There can be strong tidal currents in each anchorage, so make sure the anchor is well set. Be careful not to anchor in the sea grass found in and around both anchorages.

Though it is possible to leave this harbor by hugging close alongside Longboat Pass Bridge to go out the pass (as many small craft do) it is not recommended. Many boats have gone aground in the attempt. Go out south of Jewfish Key, the way you came in.

See "photomap" on Page 115 for additional information.
Sea Grass

Healthy sea grass beds are vital to the food chain which supports marine life. In the cover they provide, small animals can flourish and grow, increasing the numbers on which larger fish feed. It is believed that these beds of grass also help filter impurities out of the water.

From the mariner's point of view, anything that helps keep the tidal environment healthy and increases the stock of aquatic animals is important, but another very considerable point is that sea grass provides about the worst holding you can imagine. Danforth-style anchors slip along over the grass or enter very shallowly into the bottom and therefore come out when even slight stress occurs. The plow-type anchors fare better, but still damage the grass.

The best rule to follow is to steer clear of these areas unless an emergency forces you to try to set your hook there. Then, using a trip line on a plow-type anchor could be the best choice.
Minimum Approach Depth: 5 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 4-11 ft.

Lat 27°31.4'N / Lon 82°38.5'W
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

East of marker 12 on the Manatee River is a pocket of 6 foot water just inside DeSoto Point that offers good protection from western and southerly winds, but none from eastern or northerly breezes. In these conditions, it is safer to anchor across the river west of Emerson Point, in the lee of Snead Island.

To enter the anchorage, continue heading east about 100 yards past marker 12. Then turn sharply south, leaving land about 100 yards to the northwest side. Drop the hook shortly after coming into the protection of the point. The trick is to avoid the 2 foot shoals around the point, then stop before hitting the 4 foot shoals to the south.

Alternatively, proceed another 1/10 of a mile east past marker 12. Then begin easing east/southeast, then south and finally west to circumvent the shoal. Drop the hook after returning to the protection of the point.

The surrounding shores are almost entirely in their natural state. The DeSoto National Memorial, which commemorates the landing of Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto, is on the point, and is easily reached by dinghy.

The park offers a 20-minute movie which describes DeSoto’s landing in 1539. There also is a museum and nature walk. Every spring, DeSoto’s landing is reenacted here as part of a week-long festival.

See "photomap" on Page 116 for additional information.
MCKAY POINT

1.3 statute miles from DeSoto Point, 1.5 statute miles to Hooker Point.

HOOKER POINT

1.5 statute miles from McKay Point, 1.5 statute miles to Palmetto / Bradenton (red #20).
McKay Point
Minimum Approach Depth: 6 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 5-9 ft.

Just northeast of flashing red marker 14 lies one of two special anchorages on this part of the Gulf coast. It lies in 5-9 feet of water west of the docks of the Bradenton Yacht Club. Fore and aft moors are permitted. No anchor light is required.

The shores are privately owned. At the point stands a full service boat yard. East of the yacht club, a creek cuts through to Terra Ceia Bay, forming Snead Island, and offers a great opportunity for dinghy exploration.

There is good protection from northerly winds, and exceptional natural beauty. Birds and fish abound.

Hooker Point
Minimum Approach Depth: 6 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 6-8 ft.

Northeast of marker 15 on the Manatee River, a patch of 6 foot deep water extends east and south of Hooker Point.

A charted marsh runs out from the point, but offers little protection; waters thin rapidly toward shore behind the land mass of the point. Don't get too close to shore.

Set course for the first of several private homes fronting onto the western shores north of the point. As the main body of Hooker Point comes abeam, drop the anchor. Further north lie 4 foot depths.

The anchorage offers excellent protection from north and northwesterly breezes, but no protection from southerly blows.
1.5 statute miles from Hooker Pt.
to red #20 at Palmetto / Bradenton.
#1 Palmetto
Minimum Approach Depth: 5 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 5-7 ft.

#2 Bradenton
Minimum Approach Depth: 6 ft.
Depth In Anchorage: 6-8 ft.

Lat 27°30.4'N / Lon 82°34.7'W at red marker 20
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

There are two anchorages, one on each side of the Manatee River.

In northerly winds, leave the channel near red marker 20 and curve to the left and back toward the marina on the northern banks.

Opposite the entry to the marina is a park with fresh water and bathrooms. There is a substantial pool of good water and a paved ramp where a dinghy can be landed and secured. Grocery and hardware stores are within walking distance in Palmetto. Gasoline, diesel fuel and pump-out are available at the marina. Keep a lookout for the 3 foot patch of water shown on the chart.

In southerly breezes, anchor off the channel south of red marker 22 in a good sized area with 6-8 feet of water just off the Twin Dolphin Marina located at the west end of a two-mile-long river front park.

There is no easy access to facilities, but the Bradenton library is across the street, downtown Bradenton is another block inland and a few blocks east are the Southwest Florida Museum of Natural History and Bishop Planetarium.
Depending on whether you’re going north or south, this anchorage can be either the beginning or the end of your adventures along the southwest coast of Florida. Our hopes go with you for fair winds and blue skies. Your comments are welcome, also. You may write to:

BAIL
PO Box #15014
Sarasota, FL 34277-1014

or EMail us at:
bailinc@home.com.

We’d like to hear from you!
Minimum Approach Depth: 5 ft.  
Depth In Anchor:ge: 5-8 ft.

Lat 27°33.3’N / Lon 82°35.8’W
Use Chart 11414 for Navigation

The main entrance to Terra Ceia Bay makes off to the east from Tampa Bay just north of Snead Island at marker TC.

The entrance channel shows minimum depths of 5 feet, but careful navigation is required to avoid straying into depths as little as 3 feet.

Be especially careful of the segment between markers 3 and 5. A close look at the navigation chart will reveal a 3 foot shoal on the right of the course, which causes the course line to bend slightly to port and then return. Begin curving back when Terra Ceia Point comes abeam.

The balance of the channel is twisty but well-marked, with markers close enough to make navigation easy.

After passing green 13, curve around to port to avoid the shoal building out from the eastern point of Bird Key, then anchor between the island and Beville Point, where 5-8 foot depths can be held to within 200 yards of the northerly banks.

There is good holding, minimal tidal currents and plenty of swing room. This secluded anchorage offers protection from west to north-easterly winds.

It is not possible to go ashore in Terra Ceia Bay, since the surrounding land is all private, despite a sparsely populated appearance.

6.9 nautical miles from DeSoto Point / Emerson Point.