

MEMBER ALERT



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RECENT GROUNDINGS IN ARGENTINA

The attention of Members is drawn to the following information recently received from the Club's correspondent in Argentina.

During the last two weeks of May 2015, four vessels went aground in the River Parana in the area comprised between km 286 and km 290. Although meetings have been held with the maritime authorities (Coast Guard and Department of Waterways), with the private company in charge of the maintenance of the waterways (Hidrovia) and the Association of the River Parana Pilots, no clear comments have been received from any of these parties.

As will be noted from the attached photographs of the Argentine Chart H-103 vessels have to go through very sharp bends in the leg known as "Paso Abajo Los Ratones" where the river current always goes downstream at about 2.5 knots although this could vary depending on the level of the river. Therefore a combination of factors when negotiating these restricted waters could cause loss of control of a vessel with a consequent risk of grounding.

Although the authorities are reluctant to issue any official comments, they indicate that vessels navigating through the Paso Abajo Los Ratones in particular must remain within the dredged channel, identified on the attached chart extracts by dashed lines. Although the pilot has the conduct of navigation, the Master retains responsibility for monitoring the actions of the pilot and the ultimate safety of the ship rests with the Master.

Therefore it is recommended that a proper plan of navigation is discussed between the Master and the Pilot before commencing pilotage so that the Master is well aware beforehand of the crucial points on the river the vessel has to go through and the Pilot is well briefed on the characteristics and weaknesses of the vessel when navigating in this area.

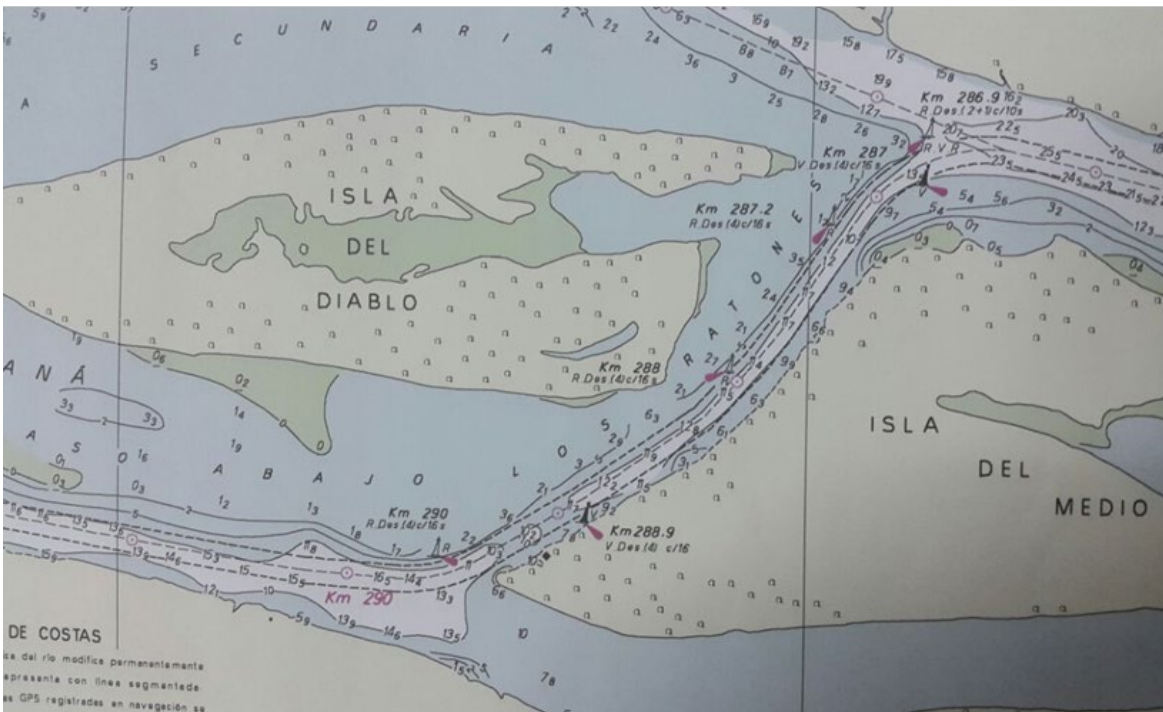
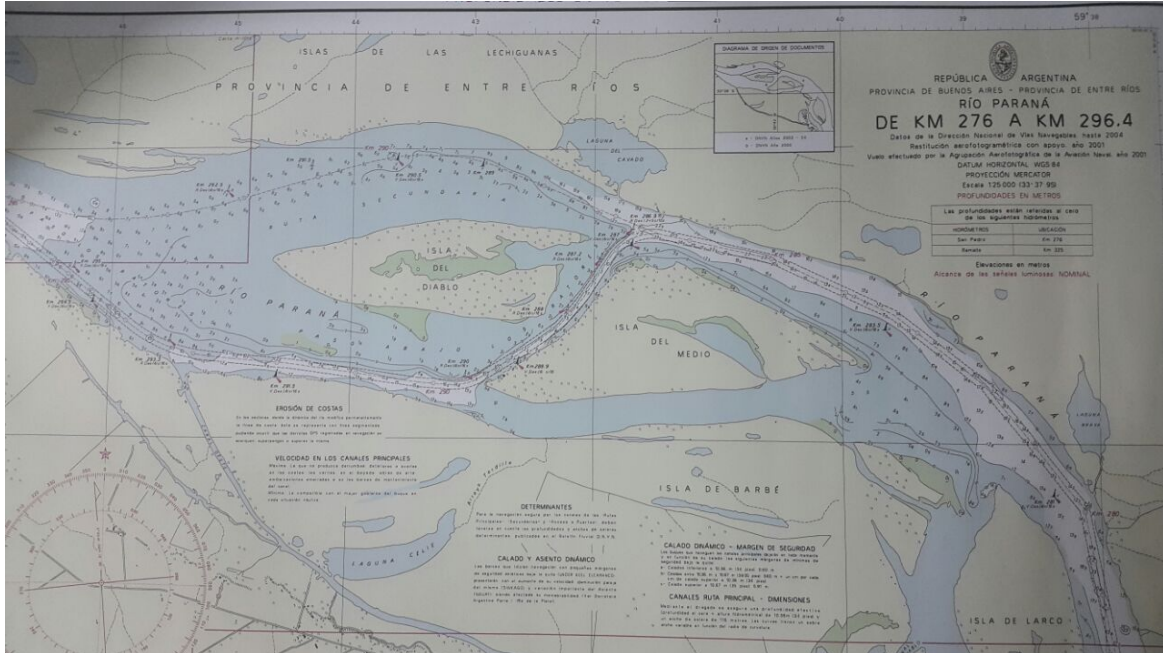
The Master should also monitor the electronic charts used by most pilots, on which the ship's position within the dredged channel is generally shown. On the other hand the vessel has always to comply with the 2 foot under keel clearance for safe passage taking into account the permissible sailing draft which is informed by Coast Guard on daily basis in accordance with information provided by the Department of Waterways and ports.

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As always, your Managers will be pleased to respond to enquiries arising from the above. And they express their gratitude to the Club's correspondent in Argentina in Buenos Aires, Pandi Liquidadores S.R.L., for their passing on the above information.