



PORTS AND YACHTING DIRECTORATE

## LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS N° 186 OF 2025

Our Ref: **TM/PYD/0001/25**

07 October 2025



**Transport Malta**

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Malta

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### **Situational awareness – Navigation at Sea**

The Ports and Yachting Directorate, Transport Malta, reminds Mariners of the importance of situational awareness at sea to ensure that safety at sea is always safeguarded. Situational awareness must take into account other vessels and other users as well as any other floating object and underwater reefs, submarine cables and pipelines or any other obstruction, ensuring compliance with the applicable regulations within the internal and territorial waters of Malta.

All mariners are required to plan their voyage or passage plan in full, from departure to destination. They must ensure that the passage plan considers the various restrictions that may exist which are charted on the Official Nautical Charts of Malta, and promulgated through Local Notice to Mariners, Coastal Notice to Mariners and Port Notices (to some extent).

This includes, but is not limited to, being well versed with all Notice to Mariners issued by the Authority from time to time. Active Notices may be found on Transport Malta's website on the following link:

<https://www.transport.gov.mt/maritime/local-waters/official-notices/recent-official-notices-6386>

All mariners are reminded that the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), Chapter V, Regulation 27, requires that all ships carry on board up to date nautical charts and publications for the intended voyage. Though this Regulation is applicable to SOLAS vessels, local recreational vessels and commercial vessels operating within Maltese territorial waters are also obliged to ensure situational awareness for their intended voyage to ascertain that safety at sea is maintained at all times.



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Safety of navigation is crucial and cannot be ascertained without the appropriate and updated nautical charts and publications, which are essential for the vessel to plan its route. Therefore, vessels must be equipped with the necessary equipment that enables the Master to maintain awareness of the exact position and overall situational awareness.

The attention of all mariners is also directed to the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREGS), which are mandatory and should be complied by all navigating within the internal and territorial waters of Malta. Mariners are reminded about the importance to keep a proper lookout, by sight and hearing as well as by all available means, and this requirement is not limited just to other traffic in the area but also to vessels or persons that might be in distress and require assistance.

All Mariners are reminded that it is essential to consider the navigation equipment on board when planning their voyage. When paper charts are not available or practical for a particular vessel, digital charts can serve as an alternative, providing the same essential information as traditional nautical charts. This includes devices like chart plotters that contain relevant nautical chart data. Mariners must ensure that the latest edition of the chart or electronic chart is used, and that the equipment is up to date to reflect any changes to the information being provided.

Additionally, smartphone applications offering comparable information are widely accessible and may sometimes be the only option available to mariners.

The aforementioned tools are designed to assist mariners with the necessary guidance to maintain situational awareness and minimise risks as much as possible. In conjunction with the COLREGS and a thorough understanding of all active Notices to Mariners and nautical charts, these resources are considered minimum requirements for all mariners.

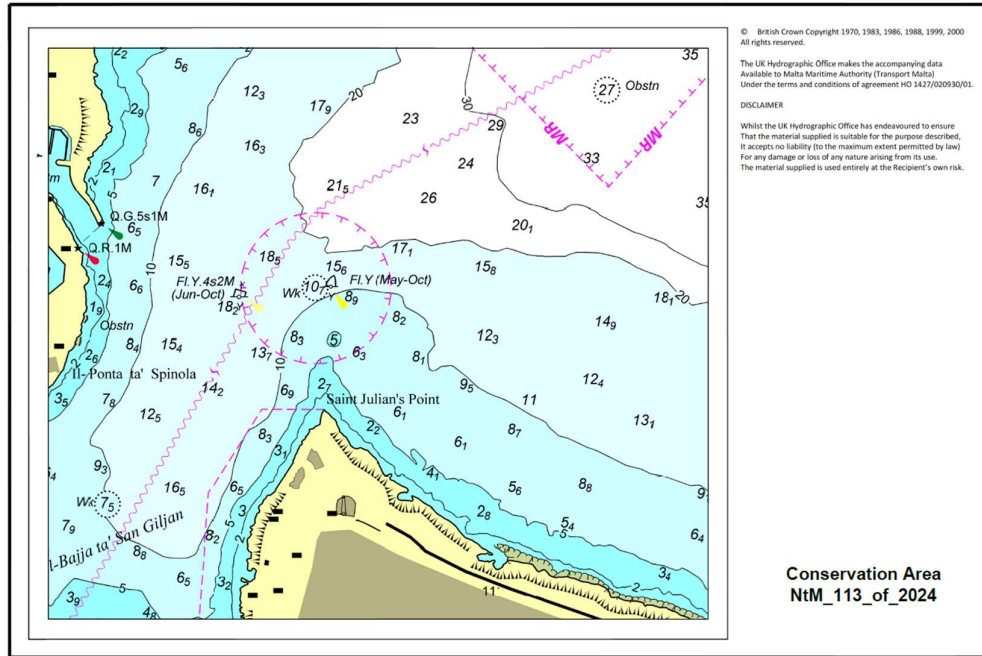
It is of essential importance that mariners must be able to read and be conversant with nautical charts and maritime data. Proper interpretation of nautical charts or their equivalents is fundamental, and compliance with the information depicted is mandatory.

Below are examples of the types of information available from both nautical charts, digital charts, and smartphone applications, demonstrating the wealth of knowledge accessible to mariners in the interest of ensuring safety at sea.

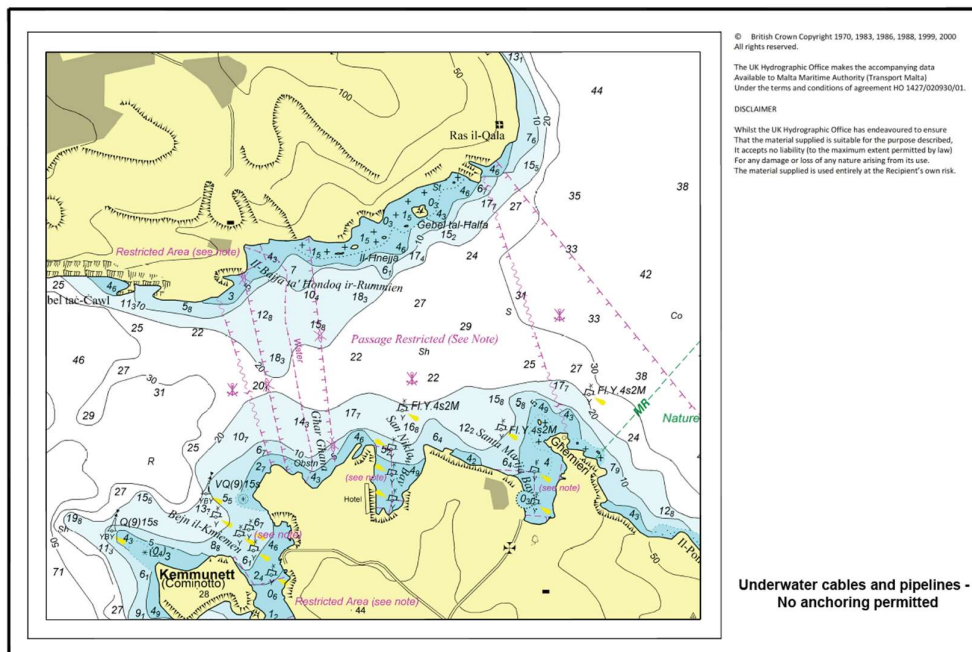


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### Conservation Area – NTM 113/2024



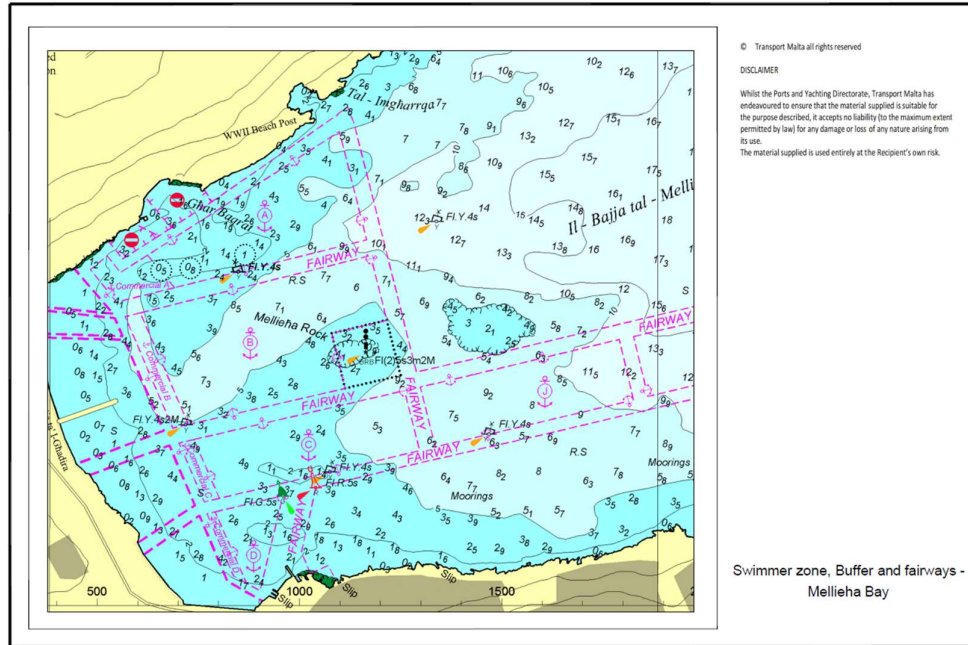
### Underwater cables and pipelines – No anchoring permitted



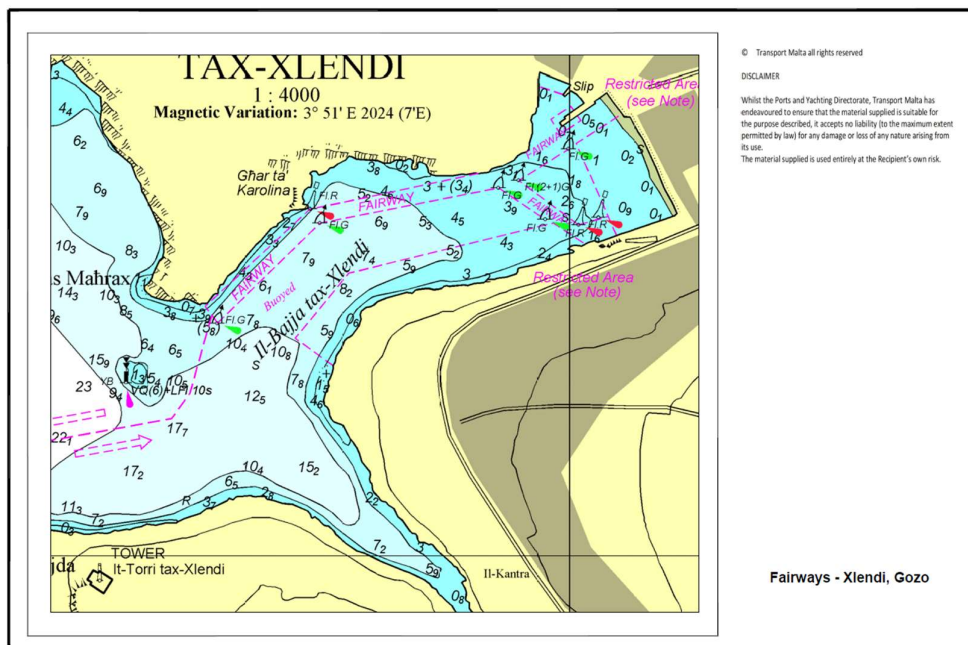


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### Swimmer zone, Buffer and fairways - Mellieha Bay



### Fairways – Xlendi, Gozo





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Mariners are directed to diligently plan their voyages, utilise all available navigational aids, as well as keeping up to date with all the relevant notices to mariners, and always remain vigilant to ensure safety at sea at all times.

Failure to maintain situational awareness, particularly if mariners are not equipped with the necessary navigation tools, indicates a disregard for the principles of good seamanship. Such is deemed as a noncompliance and may result in legal and enforcement action.