

## Red Island Harbour

47° 24.0' N x 054° 09.2' W

Charts # 4617, 4622

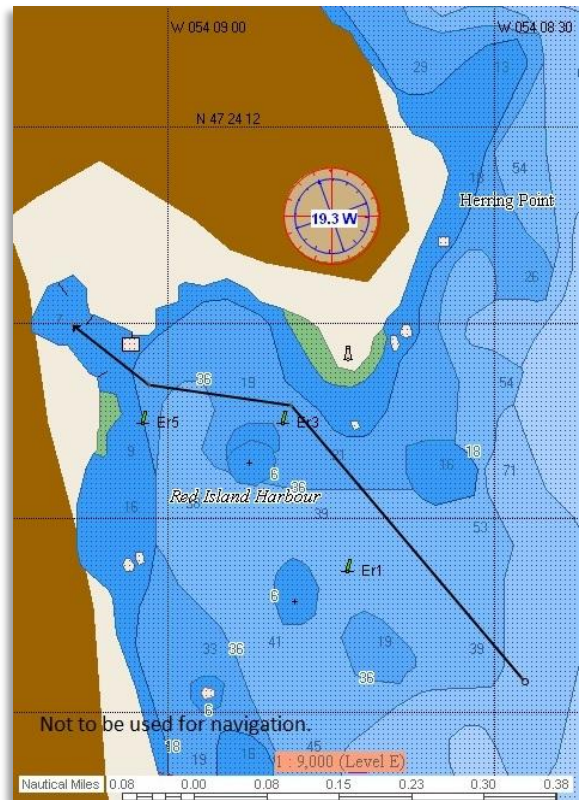
Located at the entrance to Placentia Bay's Central and Eastern Channels, Red Island Harbour is a convenient stopover when transiting between the inner 'islands' area and the outer portions of the Bay. It has a relatively large seasonal community, a substantial wharf, and a system of maintained trails connecting former Red Island communities and present-day recreational areas.

**Approach:** Red Island Harbour is found in the northeastern area of Red Island. The recommended harbour approach keeps a vessel south of the light-station on Herring Point and north of a shoal in the center of the outer harbour. The approach is well marked by three spar-type port hand light buoys.

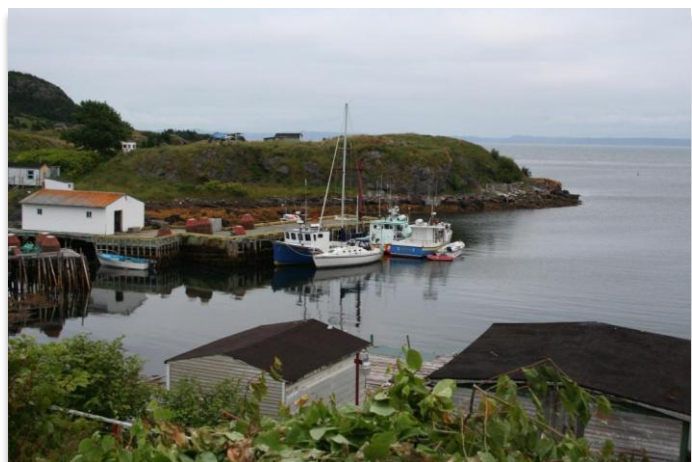
**Caution:** Pilot vessels frequent Red Island Harbour to await the arrival of large commercial traffic transiting the Eastern Channel. Mariners are advised to ascertain vessel movements (pilot and otherwise) when approaching the Harbour. Placentia Bay Vessel Traffic Management monitors VHF Channel 12 in the Red Island vicinity.

**Docking/Anchoring:** The 80-foot wharf (recently privatized) on the harbour's north side has 8 foot depths alongside. The wharf was in active use during our 2011 visit and appeared to be in good repair. The harbour's small size and relatively high traffic affords minimal room for anchoring, so the wharf is a visitor's best option. Expect some congestion at the wharf; having to raft-on should be anticipated.

**History:** Red Island is named for the prominent hills of red sandstone that rise to nearly 900 feet in the southern part of the Island. Red Island Harbour was first settled by two Irish fishermen around 1811. The Island's entire population peaked at almost 500 by the 1920s. Although it was primarily a fishing community throughout its history, Red Island Harbour also had an economic base that included subsistence farming and several small-scale industrial activities (often called home industries) such as cod liver oil factories and lobster canning plants. Difficult times for the fishery in the 1930s combined with good job prospects constructing the US Naval Base in nearby Argentia in the 1940s halved the population in just a few decades. The 1960s resettlement program completed the Island's depopulation, although one resident remained there year-round until just a few years ago. The substantial size of the seasonal population and various community re-establishment initiatives such as the



Source: BoatCruiser™ from [Navsim](#) with C-Map from [Jeppesen](#).



Staragan at the public wharf on Red Island Harbour's north side.  
Photo by Ed Wyse.

short-lived school reactivation in the early 1980s indicate the strong attachment of former residents and their descendants to the Island and their reluctance to see it fade into history as yet another of Newfoundland's abandoned outposts.

**Ashore:** Twenty-plus cabins make up the seasonal community. Pathways, many with streetlights, course their way among the cabins. Good cell phone signals may be obtained throughout the community. The Red Island Harbour cemetery, a few minutes away from the wharf, joins its counterpart in Broad Cove (King's Island) as one of the temporary interment locations for the bodies of sailors discovered at Red Island from the tragic grounding at St. Lawrence of the US naval vessels Truxton and Pollux in 1942. Stories of their discovery ashore, recovery at sea, temporary interment, and mistaken disinterment remain topics of conversation to the present day.

An extensive system of trails radiates away from the harbour area: to Cochrane Cove, located on the coast south of the community; to Sand Pond, a favourite swimming spot in the Island's interior; to Southwest Cove (known locally as Back Cove) on the Island's west side; to Wild Cove, on the Island's north end; and to Margaret's Cove (shown on hydrographical charts as Margery Cove) to the northeast. Tens of kilometres of trails are actively maintained by seasonal residents, with some trails featuring rest benches and intersection signage.

Further information on Red Island Harbour may be accessed through its location webcard at <http://iprox.mi.mun.ca/PlacentiaBay.htm>.

**Jim Wyse aboard Staragan in 2011**