

# ROGUE RIVER BAR HAZARDS

## CROSSING THE BAR

The bar is the area where the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean meet with the shallower waters near the mouth of the river.

Most accidents and deaths that occur on coastal bars are from capsizing.

Coastal bars may be closed to recreational boats when conditions on the bar are hazardous. Failure to comply with the closure may result in voyage termination, and civil and/or criminal penalties. The regulations are enforced by Coast Guard boarding teams.

Improper loading and/or overloading are major causes of capsizing. Improper/overloaded boats have less stability and less freeboard, which can allow seas to break into the vessel, causing the boat to become even less stable.

Boats are more likely to capsize when crossing the bar from the ocean because the seas are on the stern and the boater may have less control over the vessel.

Boaters must make sure the bar is safe prior to crossing. Check with other boaters or the Coast Guard to find out conditions of the bar.

If you are caught on a rough bar running in...

- ◆ Make sure everybody aboard is wearing a personal flotation device.
- ◆ Keep the boat square before the seas.
- ◆ Keep the boat on the back of the swell. Ride the swell and stay clear of the following wave.

Avoid sudden weight shifts from passengers or gear moving around in the boat. If possible, have passengers lie down as near the center-line of the boat as possible.

Do not allow the waves to catch your boat on the side (beam). This condition is called broaching, and can easily result in capsizing.

## TIDES

Tides are the vertical rise and fall of the water and tidal current is the horizontal flow of the water. There are roughly four tides each day in the Pacific Northwest. Tidal movement toward the shore or upstream is the flood current. Movement away from the shore or downstream is the ebb current. The period between the two is known as slack water. Tidal currents may gain tremendous velocity, particularly when the ebb current is augmented by river runoff.

- ◆ It is extremely dangerous to get caught on the bar during strong ebb current. Even on days that are relatively calm, fast moving ebb can create bar conditions that are too rough for small craft.
- ◆ Always know the stage of the tide!
- ◆ Avoid getting caught on the bar during an ebb tide.

It is normally best to cross the bar during slack water or on a flood tide, when the seas are normally calmest.

## BAR AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

Listen to the local broadcast on 1610 AM

## REGULATED NAVIGATION AREA

The Coast Guard has established a Regulated Navigation Area. If the yellow lights on this sign are flashing, indicating a restriction has been placed on recreational and uninspected passenger vessels crossing the bar. In accordance with 33 CFR 165.1325, the U.S. Coast Guard has the author-

ity to restrict all recreational and uninspected passenger vessels from crossing the bar when hazardous conditions exist. Failing to comply with posted bar restrictions may result in a maximum civil penalty of \$25,000.00.

## WARNING SIGN LOCATION

A white diamond shape sign with orange border indicating "Rough Bar" and amber flashing lights is located at the Coast Guard station on the north jetty. The sign is visible up river and to the south, toward the Port of Gold Beach. When the amber lights are flashing, hazardous conditions are present and a bar restriction is in place. Mariners should tune in to 1610 AM listen to the restriction information. For further guidance when the lights are flashing, contact the Coast Guard. Always exercise caution when crossing the Rogue River bar.



## BAR CONDITIONS AND OBSERVATION REPORTS

Observed weather and bar conditions are updated every four hours or more frequently if there is a significant change in the conditions. Marine Information Broadcasts on Channel 16 VHF-FM are conducted by the Coast Guard when hazardous bar conditions and restrictions are put into place or are lifted. Mariners are strongly encouraged to monitor channel 16 VHF/FM for all notices and weather updates. The AM radio broadcast is audible within a 4-mile radius from the Coast Guard in Gold Beach. It provides a continual broadcast on radio station 1610 AM containing bar conditions, bar restrictions, and local weather.

## COAST GUARD OPERATION

**Memorial Day - Labor Day:** The Coast Guard Station operates seasonally from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. During this time, contact the Rogue River Coast Guard on Ch-16 VHF FM or call (541) 247-7219 for updated weather information, current bar conditions and restrictions. The station is closed during the off season, and the amber warning lights are not in operation. Absence of the lights does not indicate good bar conditions. Use extreme caution and call the Chetco Coast Guard Station, (541) 469-3885, for current bar conditions, updated weather information, and restrictions.

**Please note:** In addition to carrying all required safety equipment when crossing this bar, you should carry an anchor with attached line. In the event of an engine failure, an anchor can keep your boat from drifting with the strong river current into the marked danger areas.

You can also access current bar conditions and restriction on your smart phone or hand held device by going to, [www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/marine/BarObs.php](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/marine/BarObs.php).



## EMERGENCIES

VHF-FM Radio: Channel 16

If in distress (threatened by grave and imminent danger):

1. Make sure radio is on
2. Select Channel 16
3. Press/Hold the transmit button
4. Speak slowly, and clearly say: MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY
5. Give the following information:
  - ◆ Vessel Name and/or Description
  - ◆ Nature of Emergency
  - ◆ Position and/or Location
  - ◆ Number of People Aboard
6. Release the Transmit Button
7. Wait for 10 seconds - If no response, repeat "Mayday" call. If not in immediate danger, switch to CH 22 and follow the same steps as above, except do not use the word "MAYDAY."

**Make Sure Everyone is Wearing a Life Jacket!**

**Phone 911.** Tell the operator that you have a marine emergency. Be ready to provide the same information required in item number 5 of the mayday call.

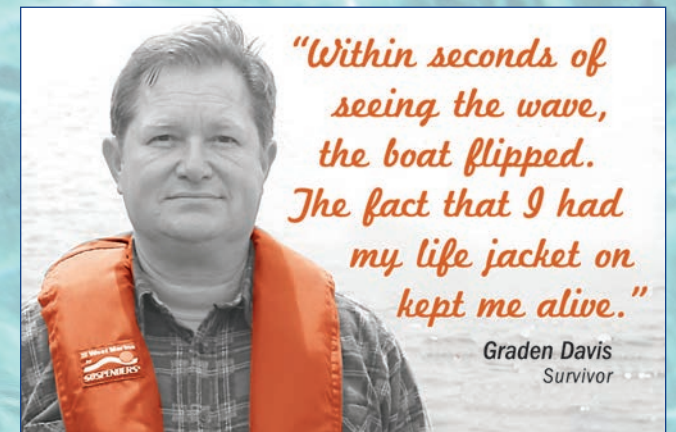


## Coast Guard Stations:

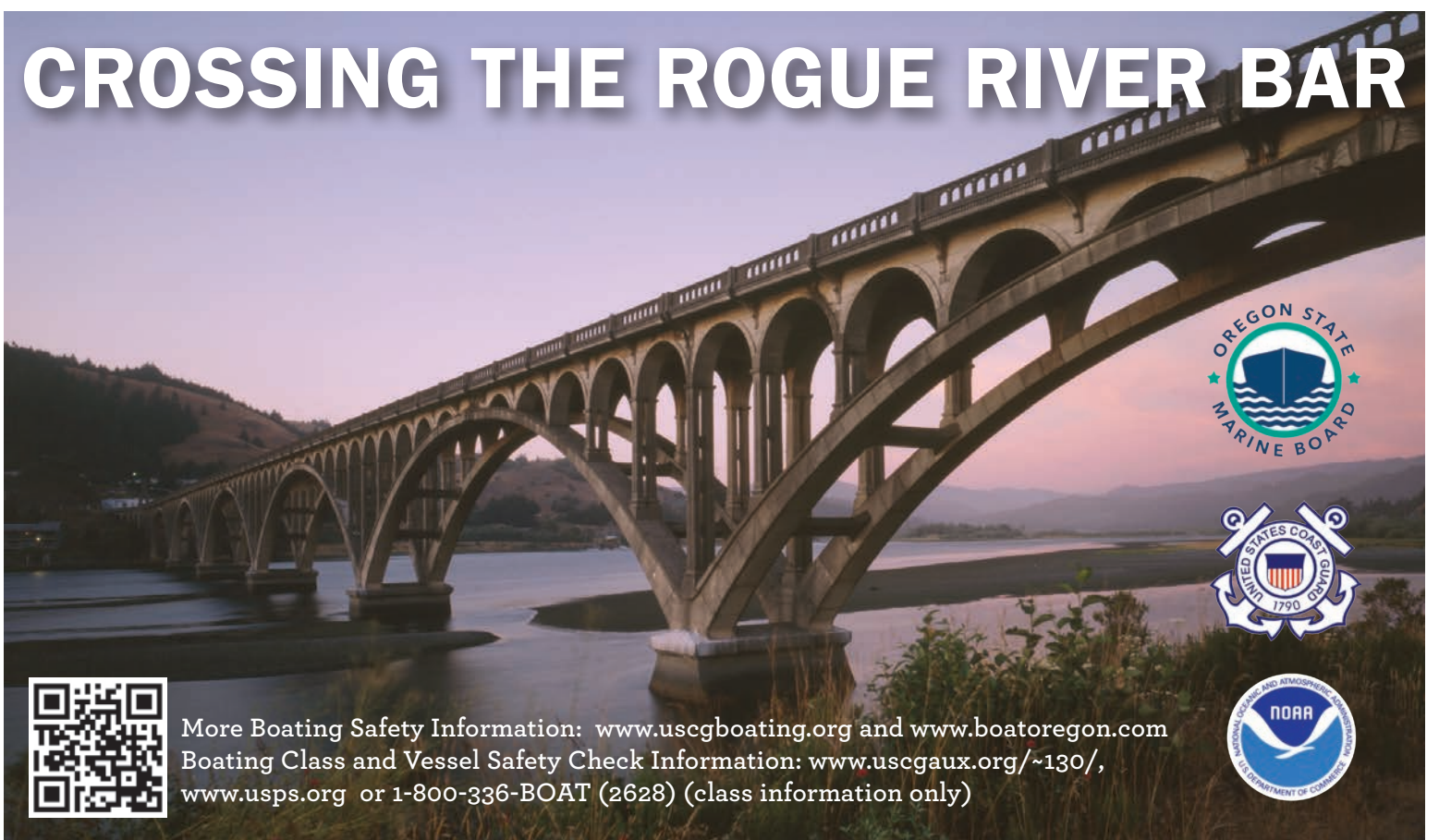
Rogue River	Chetco
Gold Beach	Brookings, OR
(541) 247-7219	(541) 469-3885

## BOATING SAFETY TIPS

- ◆ Check Weather, Tide, and Bar Conditions - The latest Information Can Be Heard on 1610 AM
- ◆ File a Float Plan With Friends/Relatives
- ◆ Don't Overload Your Boat
- ◆ Wear Your Life Jacket
- ◆ Carry Flares and a VHF-FM Radio
- ◆ Stay Well Clear of Commercial Vessels
- ◆ Have Anchor With Adequate Line
- ◆ Boat Sober

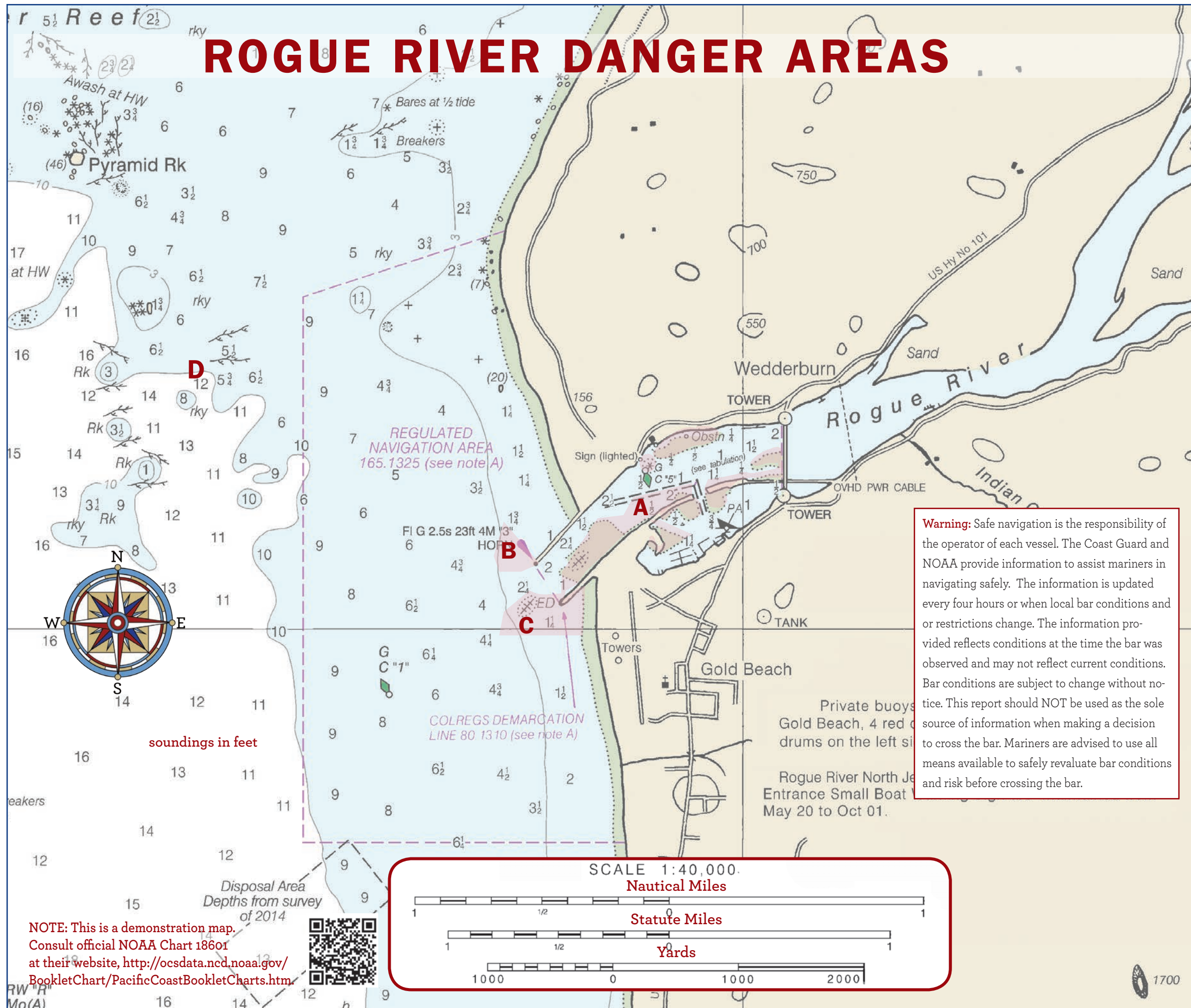


# CROSSING THE ROGUE RIVER BAR



More Boating Safety Information: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org) and [www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com)  
 Boating Class and Vessel Safety Check Information: [www.uscgaux.org/~130/](http://www.uscgaux.org/~130/),  
[www.usps.org](http://www.usps.org) or 1-800-336-BOAT (2628) (class information only)

# ROGUE RIVER DANGER AREAS



**A. Shoal water, south side.** Along the south side of the Rogue River channel are shoal waters and gravel bars. This shoal water breaks to a height of six feet when a swell is running. Many boaters fishing inside the river or trolling between the jetties find themselves set into this dangerous area by northwest winds. If a vessel breaks down in the channel and is not anchored, the northwest wind and ebb tide will set it into this dangerous area within a matter of minutes.

**B. Outer end, north jetty.** Breakers are almost always present here because of shoal water. When the sea is running from the west or southwest, it is particularly dangerous.

**C. Outer end, south jetty.** Breakers are almost always present here because of shoal water. When the sea is running from the west or southwest, it is particularly dangerous.

**D. Channel.** The Rogue River channel lies along the north jetty. Under existing conditions, there is a channel 20 feet deep and 100 feet wide, extending from the "Danger: Rock" buoy seaward to the danger area in the vicinity of the north jetty. The channel from the tip of the north jetty seaward is always changing. Boaters are urged to use and stay within this channel. Do not rely on charted depths; mariners should contact the local Coast Guard Station for current information.

## FISHING INSIDE THE CHANNEL

During recent years, small boats, which do not usually go out into the ocean, fish just inside the bar and troll in an area between the north and south jetties. Frequently, there are a great number of boats in this area, and they tend to crowd each other. Because trolling is the most popular fishing method, lines can get caught accidentally in a boat propeller. Should this happen the disabled boat should anchor immediately or call for aid. A northwest wind or ebb tide could set a boat into a dangerous area in a matter of minutes.



## COAST GUARD PRESENCE

The Coast Guard mans a seasonal station from approximately Memorial Day to Labor Day. This unit is located on the north jetty. During times when this station is not active, people should call the Coast Guard Station Chetco River for assistance.

A "Rough Bar" sign is located on the Gold Beach Coast Guard Station property. When the sign's amber lights are flashing, recreational boating traffic is restricted from crossing the bar. Boaters should contact the Coast Guard for additional information on bar restrictions.

