

IHB File No. S3/7020

**CIRCULAR LETTER 55/2001
7 November 2001**

**FOURTH EDITION OF S-23 "LIMITS OF OCEANS AND SEAS"
(Draft)**

- References:
- 1) Decision No.17 of the XIth I.H. Conference, 1977
 - 2) Circular Letter 27/1998, dated 8 June 1998
 - 3) Circular Letter 26/1999, dated 1 June 1999
 - 4) Circular Letter 45/1999, dated 17 September 1999

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a CD-Rom containing a draft of the Fourth Edition of IHO Publication S-23 "Limits of Oceans and Seas" (English version). There has been considerable interest in the availability of an updated version of this publication. As long ago as the XIth I.H. Conference in 1977, the Organization requested the Bureau, by Decision No.17 of that Conference, to undertake a revision of S-23. As you are aware, the draft presented to Member States in 1986 was not approved. Various attempts have been made to prepare another edition since that date, and since the last Conference we have engaged the services of Mr. Adam J. Kerr, former IHB Director (1987-1997), to progress the work. Some of you will have been in direct contact with him in the course of his work and the help that you have given is much appreciated. Some limited distribution was given to specific chapters to obtain regional comments and these have now been considered and included in the text.

The purpose of this publication is to provide guidance to Government-authorized Hydrographic Offices, when compiling their charts and preparing their nautical publications, in order to ensure the greatest possible uniformity in the use of geographical names of oceans and seas.

Some general administrative changes have been made compared to the 1986 draft, following comments received from some Member States. These include the use of generic place names in the national language, in accordance with Administrative Resolution A4.2 and providing the geographical coordinates to reference points to the nearest minute instead of the nearest second. An exception to the first of these measures will be found in the new Chapter 10 "Southern Ocean" where, because of the uncertain nature of sovereignty, English has been used for the generic part of names.

A significant addition to this draft is Chapter 10 "Southern Ocean". It was agreed, following an exchange of Circular Letters [see above references 2) to 4)], that such an area, including its name and its limits, be identified. Although it was mentioned in the response to the Member States' comments that the matter of the northern limit may be reviewed during the final approval of this publication, it is noted that no different or new arguments have been raised since the original correspondence and, consequently, the parallel of 60° South has been used in this draft.

In preparing this draft, an attempt has been made to follow the practices used by the Member States in the naming of oceans and seas, but in certain places there are differences of opinion on these. The Directing Committee appeals to the Member States to bear firmly in mind the purpose of this publication in raising any comments. It is further suggested that Member States take into account the regional nature of nomenclature and, as far as possible, restrict their comments to names within their own proximity.

Notes have been used in the text of this draft only where it was considered that it would be helpful to the general reader.

The annex to this letter gives the reasoning behind some of the choices for names and limits that had to be made. It is hoped that all comments that have been made either to the Bureau, or directly to Mr. Kerr, have been taken into account and, if they do not appear as changes to the text, that the reasons why are explained in these appendices.

As the Directing Committee wishes to see this work completed and the publication approved and available before the Conference, comments should be sent as soon as possible so that they may be carefully considered before a final draft is made available for your approval. Accordingly, would you please ensure that your reply to this letter reaches the I.H. Bureau **by 15 January 2002.**

This draft 4th Edition of S-23 is provided on CD-Rom only, thus reducing the printing workload at the IHB. A limited number of printed copies has been prepared, however, which can be provided on request.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Giuseppe Angrisano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rear Admiral Giuseppe ANGRISANO
President

Encl: - Annex (English only)
- 1 CD-Rom

COMMENTS ON DRAFT S-23, 4TH EDITION

PREFACE – INTRODUCTION

In the preface, last but one paragraph, first sentence, the part in brackets, which was for internal use at the IHB, must be disregarded.

The Alphabetical Index referred to in Section B of the Introduction is missing from this draft. It will be included in the S-23 immediately before final publication.

CHAPTER 1 – NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

1. North Atlantic Ocean

Its northern limit, between Iceland and Greenland, has been adjusted to the southern limit of the Arctic Ocean (See 9.6)

CHAPTER 3 – MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Concerning the names appearing on the graphics, it is a general rule that all names used in the text appear in the graphics and no others.

3.1.1 Mediterranean Sea, Western Basin

It appears that there is widespread use of the term Cap Bon and consequently an alternative Arabic name has not been considered.

3.1.2 Mediterranean Sea, Eastern Basin

3.1.2.1 Adriatic Sea

It may be noted that all country names along the eastern coast of the Adriatic have now been included.

3.1.2.2 Strait of Sicilia

The name Capo Passero, appearing in this text and elsewhere (3.1.2.3), has been proposed by Russia as Punta di Porto Palo, but an inspection of the charts reveals that Capo Passero is more appropriate (Italy to comment).

3.2 Sea of Marmara

Although alternative names for the straits joining the Black Sea and Aegean Sea have been proposed, retention of the name Sea of Marmara as referenced in the Treaty of Montreux and also used in the 3rd Edition of 1953 appears more appropriate.

Russia has proposed that the name Rokettas, used to define the western end of the northern limit should be replaced by Rumali Burni. However an examination of the charts does not support this view and Rokettas (41°14'N – 29°07'E) has been retained.

CHAPTER 4 – SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

4. South Atlantic Ocean

The limit between the South Atlantic Ocean and the Magellan Straits has been amended according to the conclusions in the 1985 Argentina-Chile Peace Treaty, i.e. from Cabo Espiritu Santo (52°39'S - 68°37'W) to Punta Dungeness (52°24'S - 68°26'W).

Location of the northwest corner of Drake Passage has been changed from Cabo de Hornos further west to Isla Waterman (55°25'S – 70°00'W), as proposed by the UK and agreed by Russia and Chile.

CHAPTER 5 – INDIAN OCEAN

5. Indian Ocean

Australia has indicated its national position for the area adjacent to its southern coast and this is provided as a note.

CHAPTER 6 – SOUTH CHINA AND EASTERN ARCHIPELAGIC SEAS

6. South China and Eastern Archipelagic Seas

Proposals by Australia that the Timor and Arafura Seas be in Chapter 5, Indian Ocean, and not in Chapter 6 have been considered. While noting that, contrary to the Australian comments, this situation did not exist in any of the previous edition of S-23, there has been tentative agreement on its proposal by the coastal states and the publication recognizes the Indian Ocean extending eastward to the western limit of the Torres Straits.

Australia has also proposed that the Malacca Straits be in Chapter 6 rather than Chapter 5 (See Note on 6.5).

Russia has proposed that the area covered by Chapter 6 be included in the Pacific Ocean. Here it is necessary to explain that the partitioning of this publication into separate chapters, originally carried out by the Working Group preparing the 1986 Draft, aimed not to place every body of water in one of the five recognized oceans of the world, but to partition into convenient administrative areas, of which the South China and Eastern Archipelagic Seas was one. If Russia insists that this area is defined as being part of the Pacific Ocean, the title, and possibly the entire structure of the publication, will require modification. Coastal States are asked to comment on this matter.

This Chapter is exceedingly complex in terms of the different generic names used nationally by the many Member States involved. In some cases these have been romanized and some interpretation has been required. An attempt has been made to be consistent but Member States are invited to correct if the interpretation appears incorrect.

6.5 Malacca Strait

It has already been noted that Australia has proposed that this area be in Chapter 6 instead of Chapter 5. It may be noted that there has been a change in the northern limit from that proposed in the Draft 1986 edition. This also followed Australia's proposal.

6.21 Celebes Sea

It appears that the area in Chapter 6 may be partitioned in greater detail than other areas of the world. The USA commented specifically on this matter in the 1986 Draft where Mindanao Sea and Sulawesi Sea had been separately defined. It is therefore proposed to only identify the Celebes Sea covering this combined area.

CHAPTER 7 – NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

7. North Pacific Ocean

The only change on the limits will be a minor change of the north limit requested by Russia. Previously this was the Arctic Ocean. Further discussion may be found in Chapter 9.

This Chapter is very complex in the use of national generic names, many of which have had to be romanised. Member States are invited to offer corrections if needed.

7.2 T'ai-Wan Strait

There has been some contention on whether this should be placed as part of the South China Sea and hence appear in Chapter 6. However it has been decided that it remains in Chapter 7.

7.5 Seto Naikai

In the first paragraph, the second sentence should read : "it is connected through the Kanmon Kaikyo with Area 7.6 in the West, and throughetc."

7.6 (Name to be agreed)

A discussion remains to be made by the surrounding coastal states on the naming of this area. This decision will be made before final publication.

7.6.1 Tatarskiy Proliv

At the request of Russia this has been included as a sub area to 7.6.

CHAPTER 8 – SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

8. South Pacific Ocean

Australia has indicated its national position for the area adjacent to its southern coast and this is provided as a note.

8.3 Coral Sea

Change to the south east corner has been made according to Australia's proposal.

8.4 Tasman Sea

The southern and eastern limits have been changed according to New Zealand's proposal, supported by Australia.

CHAPTER 9 – ARCTIC OCEAN

9. Arctic Ocean

The only change proposed in the limits of this area from the 1986 draft is a minor change proposed by Russia, that the southern limit of the Chukchi Sea (9.16) be from 66°11'N – 166°14'W to 66°22'N – 170°35'W instead of the Arctic Circle.

A proposal by Russia that the Davis Strait be in Section 1 and not Section 9 was not supported by the adjacent states. However, a Note under the relevant section has been included.

9.1 East Siberian Sea

9.2 Laptev Sea

The northern limits of these two areas, appearing in the 1986 draft, were disputed by the USA noting that they extended northward beyond those of the last approved definition of 1953. Russia remains determined on the limits as stated in the 1986 edition. In view of its position as the coastal state, and the lack of further comment by the USA, the Russian proposal has been presented but Notes stating the USA's views have been included.

9.6 to 9.9 Greenland Sea, Norwegian Sea, Iceland Sea, Denmark/Greenland Straits

Various proposals for identification of the Denmark Straits and change to limits have been considered. These have included the possibility of using the alternative name Denmark/Greenland Straits and consideration of both a Greenland Sea and North Greenland Sea. However, Iceland, as the coastal state most directly involved in the general area, has proposed retention of the names and limits of the 1986 draft. This is now presented, with the exception that Area 9.6 be termed Greenland Sea rather than North Greenland Sea and that the location of the northwestern corner of the Iceland Sea be at Kap Brewster. The Denmark/Greenland Straits have been omitted on the proposal of Iceland that each country may decide upon the term they use for the narrows between Iceland and Greenland.

9.10 Davis Strait

(See Note under 9. Arctic Ocean)

9.15 Northwestern Passages

It has been suggested to Canada that some more specific partition of this area would be more consistent with practices used elsewhere in S-23. However Canada has stated its preference for leaving the divisions as in the 1986 draft.

9.16 Chukchi Sea

Russia has proposed that the northwestern limit of this area be at 76°N - 180°W, in accordance with the draft 1986 edition. This has been disputed by the USA stating that the last approved edition of 1953 was the northernmost point of Wrangel Island (Ostrov Vrangalya) should be used. Unlike areas 9.1 and 9.2, the Chukchi Sea is situated adjacent to the coasts of both Russia (Siberia) and the USA (Alaska), and both countries proposals should therefore be considered. It is proposed to use the 1953 choice with a Note stating the practice of Russia. As noted in 9. Arctic Ocean, a minor difference of opinion exists in the southern limit and in this case, the Russian preference has been presented in the text.

CHAPTER 10 – SOUTHERN OCEAN

10. Southern Ocean

CL 45/1999, dated 17 September 1999, conveyed to Member States, the results of a questionnaire seeking their opinion on the name and limits of this area. Although several comments have been received subsequently they offer no new arguments than originally raised and consequently the description resulting from CL 45 /1999 is proposed.

Australia has indicated its national position for the area adjacent to its southern coast and this is provided as a Note.

10.1 Weddell Sea

A majority of those commenting preferred that the northwest limit be Shishkova/Clarence Island and this, rather than Joinville Island, has been proposed.

There has been agreement on using the alternative names of Shishkova and Clarence Island but a lack of agreement on their order. An arbitrary choice of Shishkova preceding Clarence has been proposed. The use of the English generic name "Island" has been adopted, following the general principle used for Chapter 10.

There is disagreement on the choice of location for the northeast corner, Russia proposing that shown in the text as 59°27'S – 27°22'W and the UK proposing 59°30'S – 12°12'W. Both countries state scientific reasons for their choice. The former, which is based on a specific terrestrial point, Thule Island, is proposed.

10.2 Kong Håkon VII Sea

Norway has proposed the name Kong Kåkon VII Hav for the large area north of Dronning Maud Land. This is disputed by Russia as being a very large area with no general claims to the use of the name. It is therefore proposed that the Norwegian national interest be recognized by a Note in the text.

A small change from 66°S to 65°S has been proposed by the UK and agreed by Russia, for consistency for the northern limit of Lazarev Sea, Riiser-Larsen Sea and Cosmonauts Sea. This has been embedded in the text.

India's suggestion to include Indian Bay (69°58'S – 11°51'E to 69°57'S – 11°53'E) has not been retained as it is believed that such tiny features are not appropriate for S-23.

10.5 Sodruzhetsva (Cooperation) Sea

It has been agreed that separate areas proposed for Sodruzhetsva Mare and Cooperation Sea be combined in one area as defined in the text. The question of the naming convention shows a majority preference to the form shown.

Australia's concern for the precise position of Cape Darnley has now been by-passed by the combination of the two areas.

10.6 Davis Sea

There is a considerable difference between the proposals of Russia and Australia on the westward limit of this area. The UK supports the Australian position, noting that it is based on sound historical background. However, it may be noted that acceptance of the area defined by Australia will result in a gap in the continuity of naming seas along that part of the Antarctic coastline. In view of the majority view, the Australian description is proposed. Positions of Cape Maksimova and Cape Vize, respectively on the West and Shackleton Ice Shelves have been used to define the limits.

10.6.1 Tryoshnikova Gulf

This sub-area has been proposed by Russia, although due to its small size it was suggested not to include it. Some minor inconsistencies exist in the co-ordinates of the western limits compared with those for the Davis Sea. Proposals not to include this and several other smaller features should be considered. It is included here for consideration.

10.7 Mawson Sea

Originally proposed by Russia, this has now been supported by Australia. Due to reported changes in the West and Shackleton Ice Shelves, the coordinates of Cape Vize, affecting the western limits, are those shown as 64°56'S – 95°35'E. This change also affects coordinates used in 10.6 and 10.6.1.

10.8 Dumont d'Urville Sea

While there is now agreement on the proper part of the name, France has advised its preference for the generic part to be in French. This would be inconsistent with the policy adopted for Chapter 10, due to the uncertain nature of Antarctic sovereignty, that all generic names be in English. Concerning the limits, although appreciating that this area originates from French interests, the limits proposed by Russia and Australia are relatively similar and related to selected coastal features. Accordingly, preference has been given to these rather than the basic meridians of 130°E and 143°E proposed by France.

10.10 Ross Sea

The description originally proposed by Russia provided a northern limit directly from Cape Adare to Cape Colbeck. Subsequently, the UK noted that this excluded a considerable portion of what is normally considered to be the Ross Sea and proposed a north east corner at the intersection of the parallel of Cape Adare and the meridian of Cape Colbeck. Unfortunately, drafts promulgated have been ambiguous, showing the original Russia proposal in the text but the UK subsequent proposal on the graphic. As the UK proposal appears to reflect chart usage, this has now been proposed to the text.

10.10.1 McMurdo Sound

Together with some other smaller areas, there is some contention on whether this area should be included in the publication. Due to its historical importance it is proposed that it should be retained.

10.12 Bellingshausen Sea

There is agreement on both the name and limits except that, on the advice of member States, it may be noted that the name Bellingshausen (from Admiral Thaddeus Bellingshausen) has been corrected from earlier drafts. A proposal for Peter I Øy has been rejected to conform with the policy of using English generic names.

10.13 Drake Passage

In the original proposal by Russia to define the limits, Bransfield Strait was included. Subsequent comments by the UK proposed it be excluded. In addition, a change to the location of the northwest corner from Cabo de Hornos further west to Isla Waterman (55°25'S – 70°00'W), proposed by the UK and agreed by Russia and Chile, has been included in the present description.

10.14 Bransfield Strait

Apart from some contention whether this be included in Drake Passage, discussed above, there have been proposals that it not be included in the publication. It is included here for consideration.
