

# **Lea Island and Rich Inlet Adventure**

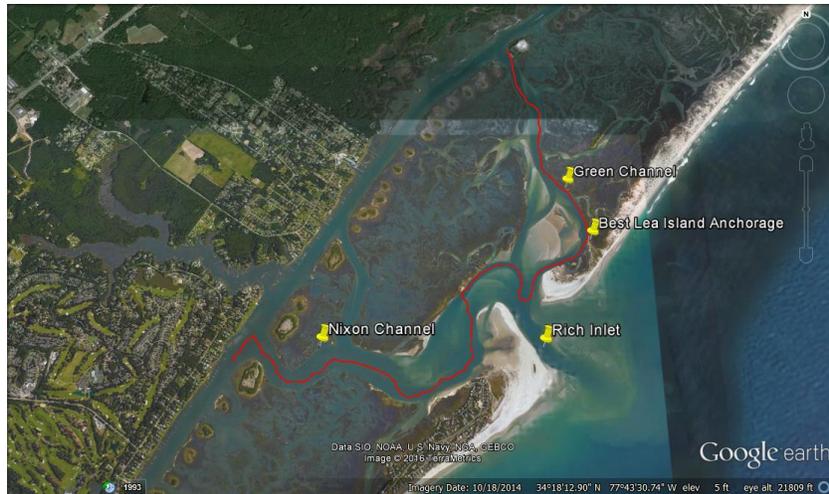
## **- New Navigation Information for future Boating Excursions**

**By Captain Tyler**



What a difference a year makes! Last summer the trip from Nixon Channel across Rich Inlet to Lea Island was relatively straight forward. This past week in preparation for this excursion I spent over 3 hours mapping out my route and the extent to which the inlet changed was amazing. Shoaling now prevents you from going straight across making the only navigable path requiring extreme caution with a lot of twists and turns along the way.

With that being said, this season we are recommending skipping Nixon Channel, when travelling to Lea Island, and going further north to Green Channel. While not straight forward, navigating Green Channel provides a direct path to the best anchorages on Lea Island and the ability to avoid the dangers (and stress!) of Rich Inlet.



**\*This is only a recap of our trip and NOT an aid to navigation\***

For our excursion we headed north out of the marina up to ICW marker #105. When entering Green Channel, you want to hug the north side by the old drain pipe. Your next move is to skip back to the south side to avoid a sand bar which is visible at low but hidden at high tide. After passing the sand bar, jump back to the middle of the channel but pay close attention because this is the trickiest part of the trip. The next landmark is the creek heading to “Snake Island” (it’s easy to spot as it is the only island with trees for many miles). Once spotting the creek, simply hug the north bank all the way to the anchorage.

We were able to safely navigate and anchor with the Nautic Star 243 at low tide. Once anchored, the group headed across the island on the short walk to the ocean. From there we spent an hour beach combing and the treasures poured in!



Everyone finished with handfuls of sand dollars. Other finds were fully intact conch shells, beautiful rocks and some nicely weathered drift wood. This is the best time of the year for beachcombing, being warm enough to be comfortable but early enough in the season to where the boat traffic to the island has been light.

After loading up we headed out across the inlet and back through Nixon Channel into the Intracoastal. As I said before, I spent **HOURS** exploring before finding safe passage so this is only an option to be taken after doing your homework and reading the tides carefully. With the wind at our backs we had a smooth cruise back to the docks after taking a pause to admire some dolphins feeding and ospreys nesting along the way.



Thanks to everyone who came out and took advantage of our first excursion of the year. Be sure to call and sign up for our **April 30 Open House 4-7pm**. We will be having a cookout at the marina while providing free boat rides and showing off a few new boats for the rental fleet! Bring an appetizer to share and BYOB if you wish. Meet others who are also passionate about boating.

RSVP for April 30 by calling 910-256-0638.

Meanwhile, for more information about our trip to Lea Island or to plan your own, call or stop by the marina and we will be happy to sit down with charts and show you in more detail the safe path. This was a great start to the season and we're looking forward to doing many more great excursions this summer!

- Captain Tyler