



WATERWAY

The grounding occurred in Southeast Alaska off of Point Couverden, which is at the southernmost end of an isthmus extending into the junction of the eastern end of Icy Strait (which runs northwest to southeast) and Lynn Canal (which runs roughly north-south). Specifically, the ship grounded on the southeastern shoals of Rocky Island (58 10.6 N and 135 03.1 W).

Coast Pilot describes Icy Strait as follows:

“Cross Sound and Icy Strait are the northernmost sea connections for the inland passages of southeastern Alaska, separating the mainland between Cape Spencer and Point Couverden, and from Yakobi Island and Chichagof Island between Cape Bingham and Point Augusta. The waterway is about 61 miles long from Cape Spencer at the W

entrance to Point Augusta, at its junction with Chatham Strait. It averages 4 to 8 miles wide, but in places this is reduced by islands.”

Coast Pilot describes Lynn Canal as follows:

“Lynn Canal extends from the junction of Chatham Strait and Icy Strait, at Hanus Reef, in a NNW direction for about 58 miles to Seduction Point, where it divides into two arms, called Chilkat Inlet and Chilkoot Inlet; the latter inlet extends 25 miles farther N from Seduction Point. At Rocky Island, the canal is 5 miles wide; from Point Howard to Ralston Island about 3 miles wide; thence it averages 6 miles wide to Seduction Point. The canal is nearly free of dangers, and the water is generally very deep. The shores as a rule are very high and wooded, with many bare mountain peaks and small glaciers in nearly every ravine. It is reported that in the winter N winds in the canal often attain a maximum speed of about 70 knots.”

Coast Pilot describes Rocky Island as follows:

“Rocky Island, grass covered and marked by a light, is 3.2 miles NW of Hanus Reef. The water is deep to within 250 yards of the island. As the currents are erratic in the channel between Rocky Island and Point Couverden, the slight saving in distance this channel offers does not warrant its use; however, if used, vessels should favor Rocky Island, as shoal water extends from Point Couverden.”

Coast Pilot notes that, “currents in Lynn Canal have a velocity of 0.3 to 1 knot in the S part, diminishing in velocity toward the head.” Coast Pilot also notes that “strong tide rips occur at the entrance to Swanson Harbor with a slight S breeze.”

NOAA tide data for Juneau (the closest data station) indicate that at the time of the accident (approximately 0130 local time) the tide had just begun to ebb.

Juneau AK:



