

Kachemak Bay and Homer

Concise written study | 1 of 2

Learn the bold facts; explain them in your own words. Chart drawing and light-list transcription remain separate study tasks.

1 Geography and landmarks

Kachemak Bay opens into eastern Cook Inlet between **Anchor Point, north**, and **Seldovia Point, south**. Homer Spit is low gravel and shingle, **4.5 miles long and 100-500 yards wide**. **Coal Point** is its outer end, marked by Homer Spit Light 3. Coal Bay lies northeast of the Spit. Bluff Point rises to **750 ft**. Homer airport lights operate when needed by aircraft; the Deep Water Dock loading tower and eight harbor light towers are prominent. The research reserve lies east of the **Anchor Point-Point Pogibshi** line.

2 Approaches

From the south, pass **2-5 NM west of Flat Island**, then **1.5-3 NM off Point Pogibshi**. For Homer berths or anchorage, the Coast Pilot gives an approach about **1 NM south of Homer Spit Light 3**. From the north, keep **3 NM off Bluff Point and 5 NM off Anchor Point**. Allow for current and weather. Give **Archimandritof Shoals west of Homer Spit** a wide berth; use the largest-scale chart and do not steer toward town or harbor lights as an approach guide.

3 Traffic and broadcasts

Large ships and tug/barge traffic operate year-round. Ferries, fishing vessels and tour boats also use the bay; small-craft traffic increases in summer. Large ships and tugs with barges make **Securite broadcasts abeam Flat Island and Anchor Point**, and when leaving an anchorage, berth or pilot station. Give **name, speed, course, destination and position** on **VHF 16**, within 60 seconds; monitor **13** bridge-to-bridge and **10** for tugs.

4 Tides and currents

Homer has a large tidal range: roughly **16 ft mean and 18 ft great diurnal**. Allow for changing depth and swinging room. Flood sets **NE at 1-2 knots**; ebb sets **SW-W**. Currents up to **4 knots** are reported. Set at the bay mouth is uncertain. Eddies occur east of Homer Spit on both flood and ebb.

5 Weather and ice

NE winds prevail from late fall to early spring; **SW winds** prevail otherwise. Winds are strongest in late summer/early fall; winter storms can quickly raise **6-8 ft seas**. Anchor Point is especially exposed. Summer fog may persist over open water after harbors clear; SW winds hold fog against the eastern shore. **January-March**, strong NE winds drive ice from the bay head onto Homer facilities. Slush and pan ice may extend **500 yards offshore**; severe cold can clog the harbor entrance and form **4-6 inches of ice**.

Tidal ranges are rounded. If exact constants are requested, use the assigned examination chart or tide table. NOAA Coal Point Homer: mean 15.94 ft; great diurnal 18.43 ft.

Homer pilotage and port knowledge

Concise written study | 2 of 2

6 Pilotage and port services

Pilotage is compulsory except for exempt vessels. **SWAPA: 36 hours' notice; dispatch 90 minutes before the pilot station; pilot boat 30 minutes out on VHF 10 or 16.** The pilotage section places the station **1 NM south of Homer Spit**. Confirm the boarding track and arrangements with the pilot boat. Arrange tugs in advance. Port Director/harbormaster: **VHF 16 and 10**. Customs and immigration are arranged through Anchorage.

7 Anchorages

Medium/large vessels: **at least 1 NM NE of Homer Spit Light 3, 10-23 fathoms, soft bottom.**

Large-vessel reference anchorage: **Sixty Foot Rock in line with Coal Point, 1 NM NNE of Coal Point, 22 fathoms.** Smaller vessels: **2-10 fathoms**, mud, northeast of the Spit. Keep clear of shoal water, the Coal Bay wreck and charted cable areas.

8 Anchor watch and heavy weather

Maintain a **24-hour bridge watch by an English-speaking deck officer**. Report dragging promptly to **Sector Anchorage or MSD Homer**. For the Coast Pilot gale trigger, **forecast/actual winds exceeding 34 knots**, have propulsion immediately available, check position and under-keel clearance **at least every 15 minutes**, and ready the second anchor. For its storm trigger, **exceeding 48 knots**, also discuss more scope, suitable standby tugs, a pilot and possible departure to sea with the Coast Guard, SWAPA and agent.

9 Docks

Pioneer: 469-ft outer face; **40 ft reported alongside**, 32-ft deck. Eddy sets **east on flood and ebb, stronger on ebb**. **Deep Water:** 324-ft face plus 450 ft of mooring facilities; **40 ft reported alongside**, 28-ft deck. **Flood sets on; ebb sets off, more strongly.** Portside-to is recommended on the outer face except for certain large-vessel loading operations. **Fish Dock:** 383-ft face; **20 ft reported alongside**, 31-ft deck.

10 Hazards and chart cautions

Coal Bay is shoal and contains a wreck covered 3 ft at 59°37'32"N, 151°25'11"W. Archimandritof Shoals extend west from the Spit; depths in part were reported in 1996 as **2 fathoms less than charted**, not 2 fathoms deep. Expect irregular depths and detached boulders inside the north-shore **10-fathom curve**, dense fishing traffic/fixed gear, and charted cable areas. Use the chart's specific caution notes alongside this narrative.

Pilot pickup: Coast Pilot paragraph 1349 gives 0.5 NM south of Light 3; paragraph 1399 describes a common 0.75 NM track and a station 1 NM south of the Spit. The text does not resolve the difference; confirm the boarding arrangement.

Source: supplied Coast Pilot 9, 13 Sep 2026, Ch 4, pp 205-212; Securite broadcasts p 199, paragraph 1207. The Coast Pilot takes precedence over older candidate notes. See the separate comparison for source references and regional topics.