

Navigating in the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia - a 2024 update

MARITIME REGULATION

In Peninsula Malaysia and the Federal Territory of Labuan in Borneo, all marine traffic, which includes leisure vessels are administered by Jabatan Laut (Marine Department) of Malaysia and governed under the Merchant Shipping Ordinance (MSO) 1952.

The semi-autonomous states Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysian Borneo is not a signatory of the MSO 1952, and not bound by this ordinance.

Therefore for the purposes of this article, we will only cover Peninsula Malaysia and Labuan only.

ARRIVING AT YOUR DESTINATION

1. Under MSO 1952, unless you are entering a marina or going to an official anchorage designated by the Marine Department, all visiting yachts need to apply to the Marine Department in advance prior to arrival by filling up form 491B (1). See attachment.
2. The form is an official application to anchor in areas not designated as official anchorages. The objective is to help the Marine Department monitor your whereabouts and safety. You can send the completed form by email to the respective regional Marine Departments for permission. If you are not an agent, the form should be signed by the captain of the vessel.
3. In reality, this form is only a formality. The Marine Department will normally sign off as 'no objections'. If your proposed anchorage is unsafe, the Marine Department can alert you.
4. Although officially meant for all marine traffic, as you can observe, this form is normally used for commercial vessels.
5. Due to the social nature and movements of leisure vessels, much leeway have been given to yachts.
6. Therefore, and credit to the Marine Department, this form is not being practised for yachts in most ports in Peninsula Malaysia and Labuan, probably since 1952.
7. Entering and exiting your designated port of call
 - a) You can check in yourself. Many use shipping agents. Although this is recommended, it is not necessary by law.
 - b) If you are coming from outside Malaysia, you are required to fill out a Malaysian Digital Arrival Card at most 3 days prior to your official arrival. There is plenty of time to fill in the online form when you arrive by sea and before you check in. The online application form can be found here: <https://imigresen-online.imi.gov.my/mdac/main>

- c) Formalities
- i. If you are arriving from:
- another country, or
 - from the semi-autonomous states of Sarawak and Sabah, or
 - coming into or from a duty-free zone such as Langkawi, Tioman and Labuan,
- You need to check in to:
1. Marine Department
 2. Immigration
 3. Customs
 4. Animal Quarantine, known as MAQIS (only if coming from another country).
- ii. For domestic voyages not involving the duty-free areas and within Peninsula Malaysia, you need to check in to:
1. Marine Department
 2. Immigration
 3. Privately owned pleasure vessels **not plying for hire and not carrying cargo** are exempted from reporting to Customs under the *Laws of Malaysia Act 235, Customs Act 1967 Section 39 (1) (d)*.
- d) Checking out - repeat the same process as point 4 (c) (i) and 4 (c) (ii) above.
- e) To make the process simple, enquire with your intended marina and follow their lead. Some will appoint an agent, while some will do it for you.
- f) In practice, in the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia, yachts are usually allowed to anchor between destinations as long as its not marked as prohibited or places that is considered dangerous by the Marine Department.

MARINE PARKS IN PENINSULA MALAYSIA AND LABUAN

1. To date, most of the islands in eastern Peninsula Malaysia have been gazetted as marine parks.
2. Within the marine parks in Peninsula Malaysia and Labuan, all maritime traffic, are also governed under the MSO 1952.
3. In addition to this, the said parks are also governed under the Fisheries Act 1985 (AP85) upon the establishment of the Malaysian Marine Parks in 1994.
4. These parks are administered from Putrajaya (federal) through the respective state offices in Terengganu, Pahang and Johor.
5. Marine Parks in Sarawak and Sabah is not included under the AP85.
6. Zoning for the marine parks in the east coast Peninsula covers 2 nautical miles from the island shore, with the exception of Pulau Kapas in Terengganu, where the it is only extended to 1 nautical mile.

7. Below is the list of islands in east coast Peninsula Malaysia gazetted as Marine Parks:

(Pulau means Island):

<u>State</u>	<u>Island</u>
Terengganu	Pulau Redang
	Pulau Perhentian Kecil
	Pulau Perhentian Besar
	Pulau Lang Tengah
	Pulau Susu Dara
	Pulau Lima
	Pulau Ekor Tebu
	Pulau Pinang
	Pulau Nyireh
	Pulau Tenggol
Pulau Kapas	
Pahang	Pulau Tioman
	Pulau Labas
	Pulau Sepoi
	Pulau Gut
	Pulau Tokong Bahara
	Pulau Chebeh
	Pulau Tulai
	Pulau Sembilang
	Pulau Seri Buat
Johor	Pulau Rawa
	Pulau Hujung
	Pulau Tengah
	Pulau Besar
	Pulau Tinggi
	Pulau Aur
	Pulau Pemanggil
	Pulau Harimau
	Pulau Goal
	Pulau Mensirip
	Pulau Sibul
	Pulau Sibul Hujung
Pulau Metinggi	

8. The charges to enter the marine park PER ENTRY are as follows:

- For yachts, RM 100
- Add:
- RM 30 per adult age 13-60
- RM 15 per adult age 60+
- RM 15 per child 6-12
- free entry for handicapped or child age 0-6
- discounts for those with a Malaysian ID

9. Once your entry is approved, the above tickets can be bought at any marine park office in Peninsula Malaysia. For example, if you are sailing from Langkawi or Pangkor, you can actually purchase these tickets at the marine park office in Melaka.

EAST COAST PENINSULA MALAYSIA

- 1) The east coast generally do not get a lot of yachting traffic, at least not yet.
- 2) There are 4 states in the east coast. From north to south, they are Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and Johor.
- 3) The practices on the ground may differ slightly from state to state. Lets start from the northernmost state and work our way south.

KELANTAN

Kelantan is the northeastern most state in Peninsula Malaysia. To our knowledge only 1 yacht has ever checked in here, which is Michael Foote from SY Romano. This is taken from his facebook page for your information.

Today after arriving yesterday in Kuala Besut the gateway to the beautiful perehentian islands which include Pulau Redang we went to check in to Malaysia today. First stop was Marine office here in Kuala Besut, which went well despite never having seen a yacht before. I asked if we could clear in with customs and immigration here but they said we had to go 50 miles north back to Kota Bharu which was an official port of entry. Ok makes sense so we hired Nazri and his 4x4 to take us there. 2 hours later we arrived in KB and went to customs to clear the boat in. There was a lot of chit chat going on with the customs officers and they took us to the big boss who told me as we had no cargo to declare we didn't need clearance. I pointed out that every time I'd entered Malaysian I had to complete a standard customs form C20 and showed her an old one. Ah she said we have never had a yacht in here before but I said you're listed as a port of entry for yachts. Ok let me see what I can do she came back with form C10 which was close, I filled it in and she and I signed it and after an hour and a half we moved on to immigration to get our passports stamped.

Same confusion lots of chit chat and passed from department to department until we found an officer who said you have to go to Port Tok Bali, 30 miles south to clear in. I said why can't you clear us in and she said because we're not a port and they are. Gobbsmacked I said but you're listed in government guidance as a port of entry to Malaysia so what's going on. She apologised and said it was beyond her control. So off we went to Port Bali where they were waiting for us and we cleared in without problem on a ninety day visa. It took one full day to clear in to Malaysia amid complete confusion.

The joys of cruising., but we're in ! 🍷

..thanks Mike for the comment

TERENGGANU

1. Whether you are coming in from the north or south, the main port of call is the capital city, Kuala Terengganu (popularly known as KT). Some of the rally yachts had anchored off Chukai town in the south, but all have done so en route to or from KT.
2. To enter the Terengganu Marine Park Islands, you must first report in at KT.
3. The procedure for checking in is similar to those done in the west coast with one major difference. The Marine Department requires you to fill up the Form 491B (1) and email them at ppjlmwt@marine.gov.my. Attach your travel plans, including anchorages in the marine parks and duration.

4. Understandably this is necessary for KT because there is a lot of boating traffic within and around the KT breakwater, especially from fishing boats, oil and gas crew vessels and some smaller tourist boat activities admiring the bascule bridge. So prior notice is a must here.

5. The breakwater anchorage, bridge and marina
 - a) Once the marine department have been notified of your arrival, you are able to anchor on the northern side of the breakwater to check in. Please be aware that the area is also used by the crew boats regularly. Anchor closer to the northeastern side of the basin and clear of the middle channel where traffic is constant.
 - b) The bascule bridge can be opened for a price. Requests have been filed to allow regular openings but that may take some time for the government to review. At this time, the retail rate is RM 1,500 per opening, but we have had reports for the bascule bridge to open for as low as RM 500. In other words, it's negotiable.
 - c) Pass the bridge, there is a marina called Duyong Marina. You can make bookings by whatsapp: Saiful Asri +60179266684

Formalities:

- a) It's not compulsory to use an agent, though highly recommended here, especially if you intend to visit the marine parks.
- b) To check in and out follow the procedures mentioned section 'Arriving at Your Destination' above.
- c) If you are intending to sail to the marine parks, the Marine Department will only sign off once you obtain approval from the Marine Park office (details below).
- d) Our recommended shipping agent, Aims-Global, can assist with your checking in and out as well as application to enter the marine parks by yacht. For enquiries contact Khairuddin (Mike) +60199155329 - whatsapp message only.
- e) Checking out can only be done from KT. This means once you have completed your journey in the marine parks, you will need go back to KT before continuing your journey.

TERENGGANU MARINE PARKS

1. Prior to your arrival in Kuala Terengganu, write in to the Marine Park office for permission to enter, with your passage plan. You can do this yourself or through an agent. Please include your contact number and email for them to get back to you.

Pengarah Taman Laut Negeri Terengganu
Jabatan Taman Laut Negeri Terengganu
No. 16, Blok B, Bistari Centre
Jalan Hiliran, Pulau Kambing
20300 Kuala Terengganu
(Phone number +6096312062)

2. From our experience, we had used the agent above. The rally passage plan included coordinates listed in our cruising guide book as places to visit. The application was approved on schedule.
3. Once approved, you can purchase your marine park tickets at their counter located at Taman Tamandun Islam in KT.
4. According to marine park laws, anchorage is prohibited. However, the marine park authorities had recognised the limitation on mooring bouys and jetties for yachts and allowed us to anchor on sand at the proposed coordinates in our letter. In the end 14 rally yachts enjoyed safe anchorages at these parks.
5. It is important to note that in Terengganu, the marine parks are divided into 4:
 - a) Redang Islands
 - b) Perhentian Islands
 - c) Pulau Kapas
 - d) Pulau Tenggol
6. The boundaries of these marine parks are clearly marked in Navionics.
7. This means that each entry is charged separately. For example if you visit the Redang Islands and then Kapas, you will need to pay 2 park entries.
8. A few notes:
 - a) Space is an issue in Pulau Tenggol which have 2 moorings at this time, and none of which are suitable for yachts. There is an anchorage on a sand patch but it will not be able to cater for more than 2 boats.
 - b) As for the other islands the anchorages are listed in our cruising guide book.
 - c) The only other counter available to buy the park tickets is in the marine park office on Pulau Redang. However, it is recommended that you buy your tickets at their counter in KT.

PAHANG - TIOMAN MARINE PARK

1. The jewel in the crown is Pulau Tioman and this is where everyone wants to visit.
2. If you are coming from the south and wish bypass the Johor marine parks, use the Sail Malaysia Cruising Guide Book to plan your journey. The recommended places to stop are:
 - a. Tanjung Leman, opposite Pulau Sibul and not in the Johor marine park zone. Approximately 30 miles from the southern tip of Tioman.
 - b. Jason Bay, approximately 50 mile passage to the southern tip of Tioman.
 - c. The Desaru Ferry Terminal, which have bunkering facilities for refuelling, is another option for faster boats further south.

The undercurrents are very strong in these locations. We advise against swimming here. Wait until Tioman.

3. When you check out from your originating port, notify the Marine Department that you plan to stop and anchor in these locations to rest before proceeding to Tioman. Alternatively, you can just send an email to the regional marine departments for notification.

Jabatan Laut Mersing: ppmsg@marine.gov.my
Jabatan Laut Pengelih: pptpgh@marine.gov.my

4. Formalities in Tioman

- a) Tioman Island welcomes tourism and is used to yacht arrivals for the past 15-20 years.
- b) The marina is almost always full. You can anchor on the northern side of the marina as mentioned in the cruising guidebook, on 5-15 metres in sand. Around 20 yachts anchored at this location when the rally was there in May, so there should be ample space.
- c) Start with the Marine Department at Tioman Marina. Immigration and Customs are all within walking distance.
- d) Once that is completed, go to the Marine Park office which is located on the northern side of the bay to pay your park fees.
- e) After that, you are free to explore Tioman and Pulau Tulai nearby.
- f) Just like the Terengganu islands, mooring buoys are inadequate. Therefore you are allowed to anchor on sand. Refer to the cruising guide book for details.
- g) When it's time to leave, report back to the Marine Department, Immigration and Customs.

It is important to point out that there is a heavy penalty for damaging corals in these marine parks, with fines that may exceed the value of your boat. These corals are not just monitored by the authorities but also by the local dive operators who look after them. So please pay special attention when you anchor. In that respect, arriving Tioman after sundown is not a good idea.

JOHOR MARINE PARKS

1. Apart from being under the administration of the Fisheries Department via Taman Laut Johor, all of the islands in eastern Johor are also under the purview of the Johor State Government under Taman Laut Sultan Iskandar (TMSI).
2. This is unique only for Johor, with 2 governing bodies, one from federal and another by the state.
3. Before you can enter the Johor Islands you have to check into Mersing port to do the formalities with the Marine Department, Immigration and Customs. The government agencies in eastern Johor almost always insist that you use a registered shipping agent.
4. If you are checking in without an agent:
 - a) Fill in Form 491B (1) prior to arrival.
 - b) Write in to Marine Park in Mersing (details attached) for permission to visit the Johor Islands by yacht, including permission to dive (if that is what you intend to do).

- c) Upon entering Mersing port limits, use the mooring/facilities available. Mersing port is notoriously shallow during low tide and there is plenty of boat traffic. If you need to anchor, call the Marine Department on Vhf 16 to confirm your position and permission to anchor.
 - d) Check in as mentioned 'Arriving at Your Destination' section above.
 - e) Marine Department will only stamp 'no objections' to your passage to the Johor Islands if you have a written permission by the Marine Park office in Mersing.
 - f) Upon completion, go to the Marine Park office. The marine park fee charges apply per entry based on your approved passage plan.
 - g) It is also important to note that anchoring is not allowed within 2 nautical miles from shore in the Johor Islands. You will need to find either a mooring or jetty.
2. Using an agent can help simplify the entry process, especially in Mersing. There are two shipping agents available for the Johor Islands:
- Bluewater - Rashid, whatsapp +60176036717
 - RHR - Hidayat, whatsapp +60197999360
3. These agents can get your approval beforehand. Ask them how they can assist you without having to enter Mersing to check in.
4. Since anchorages are not allowed in the Johor marine parks, this update supercedes the recommended anchorage numbers 89 to 99 in our cruising guide book.