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General

Argentina, located on the E side of the S part of South America, is bounded on the N by Bolivia; on the NE by Paraguay; on the E by Brazil, Uruguay, and the Atlantic Ocean; and on the W by Chile. The country has a coast of about 2,180 miles, including the shore of the Rio de la Plata.

The Andes Mountains form the greater part of the W border region. The N half of the country is composed of the rich plains

of the Pampas. In the far N, these plains are heavily wooded and are known as the Gran Chaco. The Pampas in the central region is treeless and fertile. The S region is occupied by a series of steplike plateaus. This region, known as the Patagonia, is bleak, arid, and rises to heights of over 1,500m.

The shore of the Rio de la Plata is low and featureless, while the sea coast consists of long stretches of low cliffs with occasional areas of low sand.

The climate is very warm over the plains where the rainfall occurs at all seasons, but diminishes towards the W. In the N and W parts, the climate is more arid, with high summer temperatures. In the extreme S, conditions are dry and much cooler.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region B) is in effect. See chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Cautions

Kelp, or sargasso weed, grows on most of the dangers having a rocky or stony bottom, especially off the coast and S of Golfo Nuevo. Growing kelp should invariably be considered a sign of danger and vessels should never pass through it if it can be avoided. A clear patch of water in the middle of a thick growth of weeds often indicates the position of the least depth over the danger. Many dangers are not marked by kelp; heavy seas sometimes tear the weed from a rock, or a moderate tidal current draws it underwater and out of sight.

Dead kelp, which has broken away from the bottom, floats in curled masses, with leaves showing above the surface; it sometimes drifts in long lines.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the nuevo peso, consisting of 100 centavos.

Government



Flag of Argentina

Argentina, a former Spanish colony, was ruled by the military since 1976, when Isobel Peron and her government were deposed. In 1983, the country returned to civilian rule. In 1994, Argentina adopted a new constitution that provides for an directly-elected President, who is the chief of state and head of government, and a National Congress. The National

Congress consists of a 72-member appointed Senate and a 257-member directly-elected Chamber of Deputies. There are 23 provinces, each governed by an elected governor.

The legal system is based on Spanish and French civil codes. The capital is Buenos Aires.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	January 1
Maundy Thursday	Varies
Good Friday	Varies
Labor Day	May 1
1810 Revolution Anniversary	May 25
Flag Day	June 20
Independence Day	July 9
Death of General San Martin Anniversary	August 17
Columbus Day	October 12
Immaculate Conception	December 8
Christmas Day	December 25

Industries

The main industries are agriculture and livestock raising. Other industries include meat packing, food canning and processing, flour mills, tanning, leather goods, textiles, oilseeds, oil and natural gas production, chemicals, wool, pharmaceuticals, automobile assembly, forestry, tourism, and fishing.

Minerals include iron ore, lead, zinc, tin, copper, mica, manganese, gold, silver, coal, tungsten, beryllium, uranium, barites, and limestone.

Crops include wheat, maize, tobacco, oats, barley, rye, sunflower seeds, potatoes, sugarcane, soya, rice, yerba mate (tea), cotton, and various fruits.

Languages

The official language is Spanish; however, English, Italian, German, and French are also spoken.

Pilotage

Pilotage is compulsory for all foreign vessels in all Argentine channels, rivers, passes, ports, and berthing locations.

Regulations

General

Vessels operating in the proximity of an open port or close to quays or loading places where other vessels or barges are operating must reduce speed to a maximum of 6 knots.

Vessels anchored or moving within port limits must not use their whistles, sirens, or bells except as called for in the regulations to avoid collision or to signal a fire.

Pollution

Tank residues, bilges, or ballast water from oil compartments must never be pumped or released into ports or rivers. On the Atlantic coast, including Bahia Blanca, tanks and bilges can only be cleaned at a distance of not less than 50 miles off the shore and on a falling tide.

Search and Rescue

Coast Guard duties in Argentina are carried out by the Prefectura Naval Argentina, which is part of the Argentine Navy. The Prefectura Naval Argentina provides the Safety of Navigation Communication Service (SECOSENA) through the following Prefectura Naval Radio (PNR) coast stations:

Station	Designation(s)
Ushuaia PNR	L3J, L3O, and L3P
Rio Grande PNR	L4F
Rio Gallegos PNR	L3C and L3I
San Julian PNR	L4M
Puerto Deseado PNR	L4N
Comodoro Rivadavia PNR	L2V, L2Y, L2Z, L3A, and L3B
Bahia Blanca PNR	L2H and L2N
Quequen PNR	L5B
La Plata PNR	L5F
Mar del Plata PNR	L2O, L2R, L2T, and L2U
Recalada Rio de la Plata PNR	L3V
Buenos Aires PNR	L2A, L2D, L2E, L2F, and L2G
Zarate PNR	L5T
Rosario PNR	L6I
Concepcion del Uruguay PNR	L8T

A reporting system designed to provide information in the event of Search and Rescue (SAR) incidents has been established. Participation in this reporting system is mandatory for all vessels, with certain exceptions.

Reporting messages should be sent, as follows:

1. When entering Argentine waters, vessels should report the following information:

- Vessel name.
- Flag.
- Call sign.
- Length.
- Beam.
- Draft.
- Speed.
- Port of departure.
- Destination.
- Position.
- Course.

- Type of cargo.
 - Whether there is a doctor on board.
2. When leaving Argentine waters, vessels should send the following information:
- Vessel name.
 - Flag.
 - Call sign.
 - Speed.
 - Port of departure.
 - Destination.
 - Position.
 - Course.
3. When entering an Argentine port, vessels should send the following information:
- Vessel name.
 - Call sign.
 - ETA.
 - Berthing location.
4. When departing an Argentine port, vessels should send the following information:
- Vessel name.
 - Flag.
 - Call sign.
 - Length.
 - Beam.
 - Draft.
 - Speed.
 - Port of departure.
 - Destination.
 - Type of cargo.
 - Whether there is a doctor on board.
5. When navigating within Argentine waters, vessels should report their name and call sign, as follows:
- Between the parallels of 42°00'S and 54°30'S—to Comodoro Rivadavia PNR at 2000 UTC and 1400 UTC and whenever course and speed changes occur.
 - Between the parallels of 35°50'S and 42°00'S—to Mar del Plata PNR at 0000 UTC and 1200 UTC and whenever course and speed changes occur.
 - South of the parallel of 54°30'S—to Ushuaia PNR at 2000 UTC and 1400 UTC and whenever course and speed changes occur.

All messages should be sent to the nearest PNR coast station on VHF channel 16, if possible. If contact with the nearest PNR coast station cannot be established, any other PNR coast station may be used, or, failing this, any Argentine public correspondence coast station.

Messages should be in Spanish; however, if it is not possible to understand Spanish, vessels should use the International Code of Signals, or the Q-code, remembering the Standard Maritime Navigational Vocabulary.

Submarine Operating Areas

Argentine submarines may be encountered by day or at night while operating in the waters off the coast. Under certain circumstances, warnings that submarines are exercising in specified areas may be broadcast by local coastal radio stations.

Argentine warships fly the International Code Group "NE2" to denote that submarines, which may be submerged or sur-

faced, are in the vicinity. Vessels are cautioned to give a wide berth to any vessel flying this signal.

It must not be inferred from the above that submarines exercise only when in the company of escorting vessels.

A submarine submerged at a depth too great to show the periscope may indicate its position by means of an underwater lantern, which will illuminate the sea surface from below.

The following signals are used by submerged submarines while in submarine exercise area:

1. White smoke candles (with flames) indicate the position in response to a request from a ship or aircraft, or as required.
2. Yellow and green pyro flares indicate the position from which a practice torpedo has been fired. All vessels are requested to keep clear as the submarine may want to surface after the firing.
3. Yellow smoke candles.
4. Red pyrotechnic flares, which may be accompanied by smoke candles, repeated as often as possible indicate that vessels should keep clear as the submarine is carrying out emergency surfacing procedure. Vessels must not stop their propellers, but should clear the area immediately and standby to render assistance.
5. Two yellow pyrotechnic flares or two white or yellow smoke candles released 3 minutes apart indicate that vessels should keep clear as the submarine is preparing to surface. Vessels must not stop their propellers and should clear the immediate vicinity.

Navigation Lights

Submarines may be encountered on the surface at night off the coast. The steaming and side lights of Argentine submarines appear to be placed well forward and very low above the water in proportion to the length and tonnage of these vessels. In particular, the emergency steaming light is lower than the side lights. The overtaking light (stern) is also placed low down and may be obscured by spray and wash. Argentine submarines are fitted with an amber quick-flashing light situated 1 to 2m above the steaming light as an aid to identification. It will also be used when snorting. While at anchor or moored to a buoy at night, Argentine submarines display normal anchor lights.

The overall arrangements of submarine lights is unusual and may well give the impression of markedly smaller and shorter vessels. Their vulnerability to collision when proceeding on the surface dictates particular caution when approaching such vessels.

Sunken Submarine

A submarine which is bottomed and unable to surface will try to indicate its position by the following methods:

1. Releasing an indicator buoy (which carries a vertical whip aerial) as soon as the accident occurs.
2. Firing candles giving off yellow or white smoke, at regular intervals, on the approach of surface vessels. (Yellow candles will be used as much as possible by day.)
3. Pumping out fuel or lubricating oil.

It may be impossible for a submarine to fire smoke candles. Correspondingly, a partially-flooded submarine may only have a certain number of smoke candles available and searching ships should not therefore expect many to appear.

Since oil slicks or debris may be the only indication of the presence or whereabouts of the sunken submarine, it is vitally important that surface ships refrain from discharging anything which appears to have come from a submarine while they are in the probability area. Searching ships and aircraft can waste valuable time investigating these false contacts.

Some Argentine submarine pyrotechnics can be fitted with message carriers. These may be recovered as soon as they have finished burning.

Argentine submarines are fitted with a free-floating indicator buoy which can be released from inside in case of emergencies or if for any reason the submarine is unable to surface.

In any submarine accident, time is the most vital factor affecting the chances for rescue of the survivors, and, as the sighting of an indicator buoy may be the first intimation that an accident has in fact occurred, it is vital that no time should be lost in taking action. The sighting of any indicator buoy should at once be reported by the quickest available means. If known, the name of the submarine should be included in the report. However, if vessels are unable to establish communication without leaving the vicinity of the submarine, it should be borne in mind that the primary consideration should be for vessels to remain standing by to rescue survivors and not leave the scene of the accident.

At any time after a submarine accident, survivors may start attempting to escape. Current policy dictates that survivors will wait before escaping until rescue vessels are known to be standing by or conditions inside the submarine deteriorate to such an extent that an escape must be attempted. It should be noted that, in certain circumstances, the latter situation may not arise through lack of air supply until several days after the accident. However, if the submarine is badly damaged, survivors may have to make an escape attempt immediately. On arrival at the surface, crewmembers may be exhausted or ill, and, if circumstances permit, the presence of a boat already lowered is very desirable. Some crewmembers may require a recompression chamber. Therefore, it is the aim of the authorities to get such a chamber to the scene as soon as possible.

In order that those trapped in the submarine shall be made aware that help is at hand, naval vessels drop small charges into the sea which can be heard from inside the submarine. There is no objection to the use of small charges for this purpose, but it is vital that they are not dropped too close since crewmembers in the process of making ascents are particularly vulnerable to underwater explosions, and may easily receive fatal injuries. A distance of about 0.3 mile is considered to be safe.

If no small charges are available, the running of an echo sounder or the banging of the outer skin of the ship's hull with a hammer from a position below the waterline are likely to be heard in the submarine, and such banging and/or sounding should therefore be carried out at frequent intervals.

Indicator Buoy

Argentine submarines are equipped with free-floating indicator buoys. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the position, together with the estimated current and the strength and direction of the wind at that position; and the time of first sighting of the buoy be accurately and speedily reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Argentine submarine free-floating indicator buoy is made of aluminum. The body is cylindrical, 60cm long, ap-

proximately 20cm in diameter, and slightly domed on top. The base of the body flares out to a diameter of 23cm. It is bolted onto the buoy by means of eight-16cm bolts. Along the body there are three extensions which strengthen the structure and also act as guides to the strap with which the buoy is secured to the submarine. The whole of the body is painted bright orange. Between the base and the lower extension, a number is molded into the buoy with numerals 1cm in size. Another number with numerals 0.5cm in size appears close below the first.

Above the body is an aerial consisting of a yellow painted protection piece consisting of a metal cylinder, 14cm long and 9cm in diameter; a rubber protection piece, about 18cm long, which protects the flexible connection between the buoy and an insulator, 9cm long, on top of it; and a VHF aerial, 25cm long, which has a small white plastic knob on the end of it.

The buoys are fitted with an automatic transmitting radio unit operating an A2 transmission on 243MHz and 121.5MHz. The signal transmitted consists of a series of short dashes. Vessels receiving this signal should report the fact, giving their position and, if possible, an indication of signal strength.

Submarine indicator buoys should not be confused with white or yellow smoke candles or sonobuoys.

White smoke candles are usually fired from submarines to indicate their positions. They burn for up to 15 minutes emitting white smoke, flame, and a green dye into the water. These candles can be seen by day or at night and may easily be confused with aircraft marine markers. Yellow smoke candles are also fired from submarines to indicate their positions. They burn for about 5 minutes emitting yellow smoke. These candles can be seen more easily than white smoke candles in rough weather, but they cannot be seen at night. Sonobuoys are dropped from aircraft to detect submarines and may be encountered anywhere at sea.

The above objects may frequently be seen in areas where warships and aircraft exercise, whether or not submarines are present. In case of doubt, the object should be approached to confirm, visually, whether or not it is a submarine indicator buoy before reporting it.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is PAPA (+3). Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy is situated at Avenida Clombia 4300, C1425GMN Buenos Aires.

The mailing addresses are, as follows:

1. International mail—
Avenida Clombia 4300
C1425GMN Buenos Aires
2. APO mail—
Unit 4334,
APO AA 34034

U. S. Embassy Argentina Home Page

<http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/ar1/www0100.html>