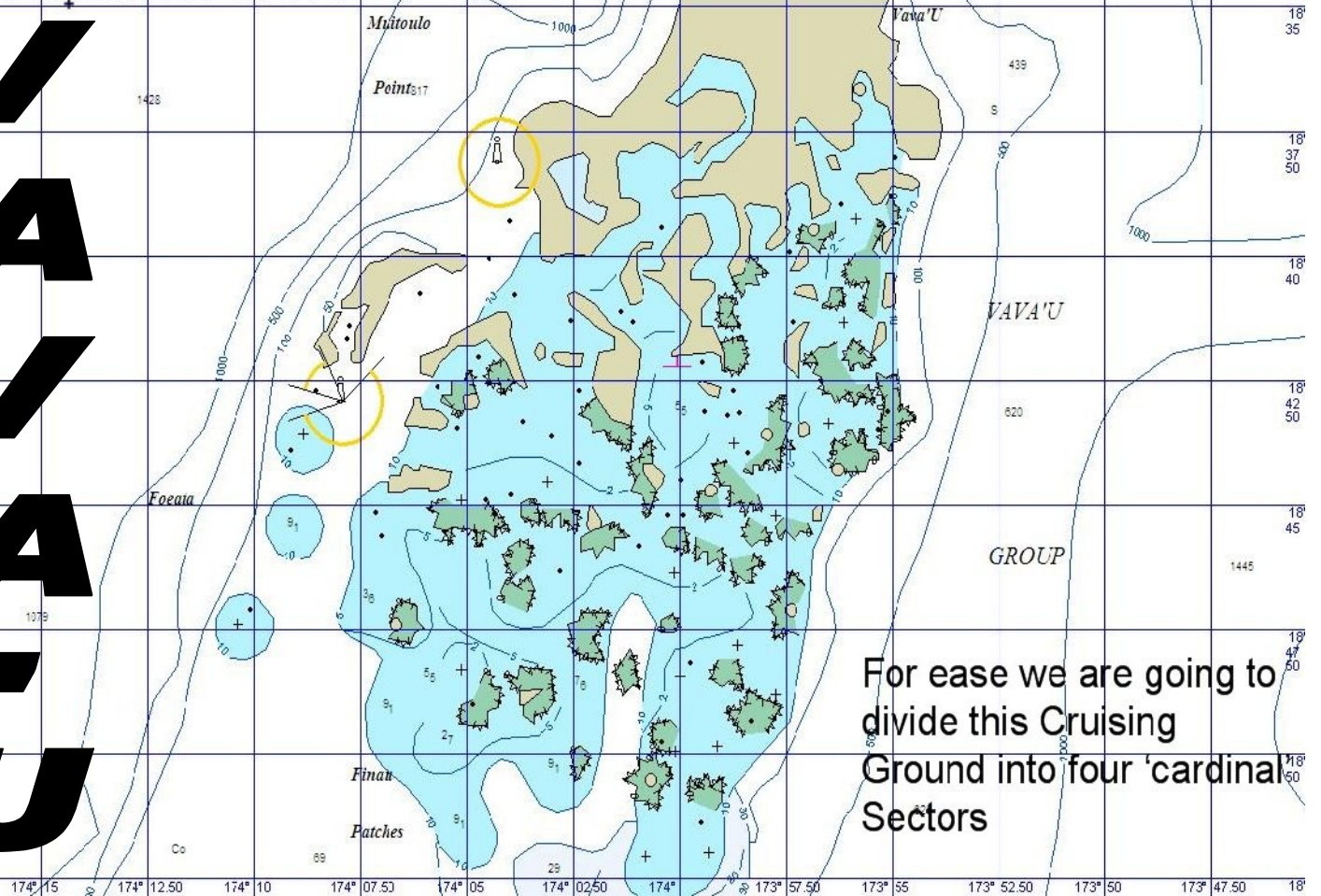




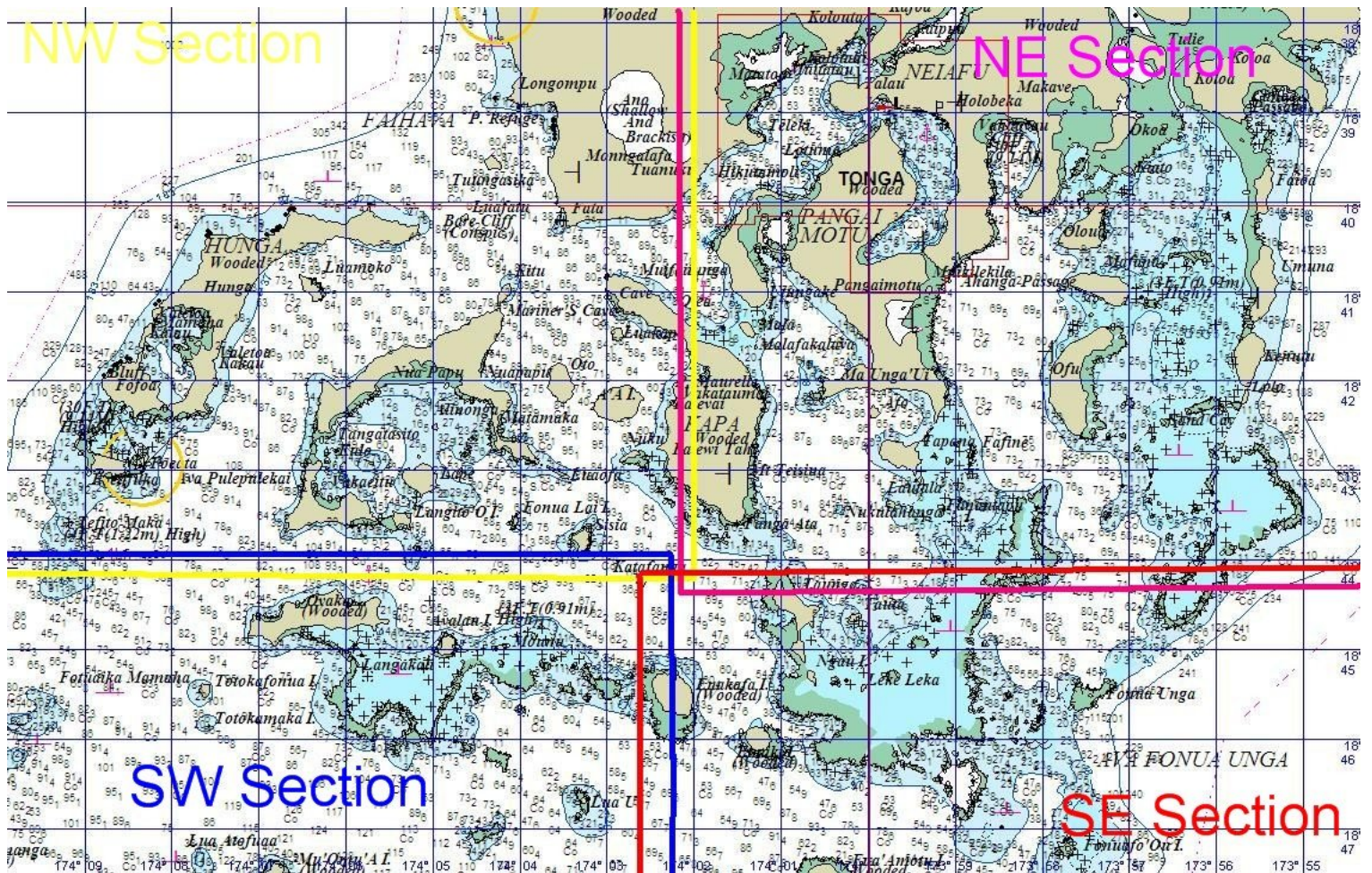
**MR JOHN'S  
Kingdom  
of  
TONGA**

# Welcome to Vava'u

# V A V A ' U



For ease we are going to divide this Cruising Ground into four 'cardinal' Sectors



NW Section

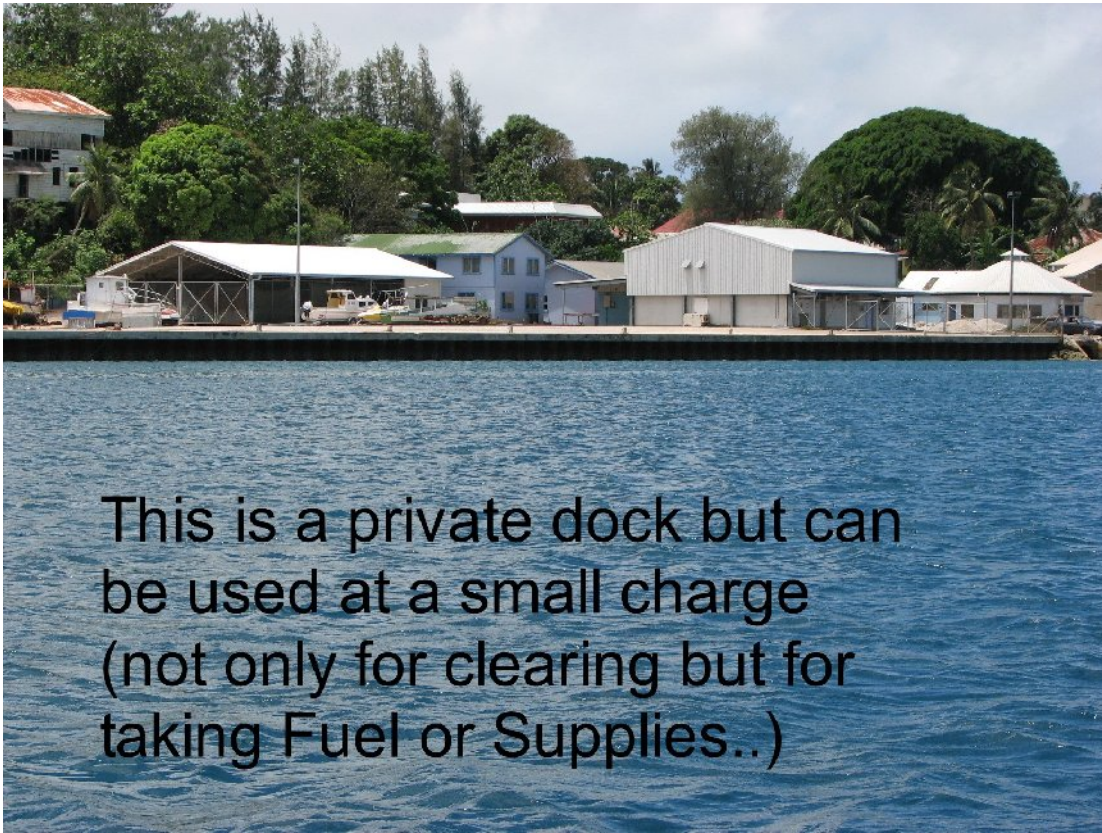
NE Section

SW Section

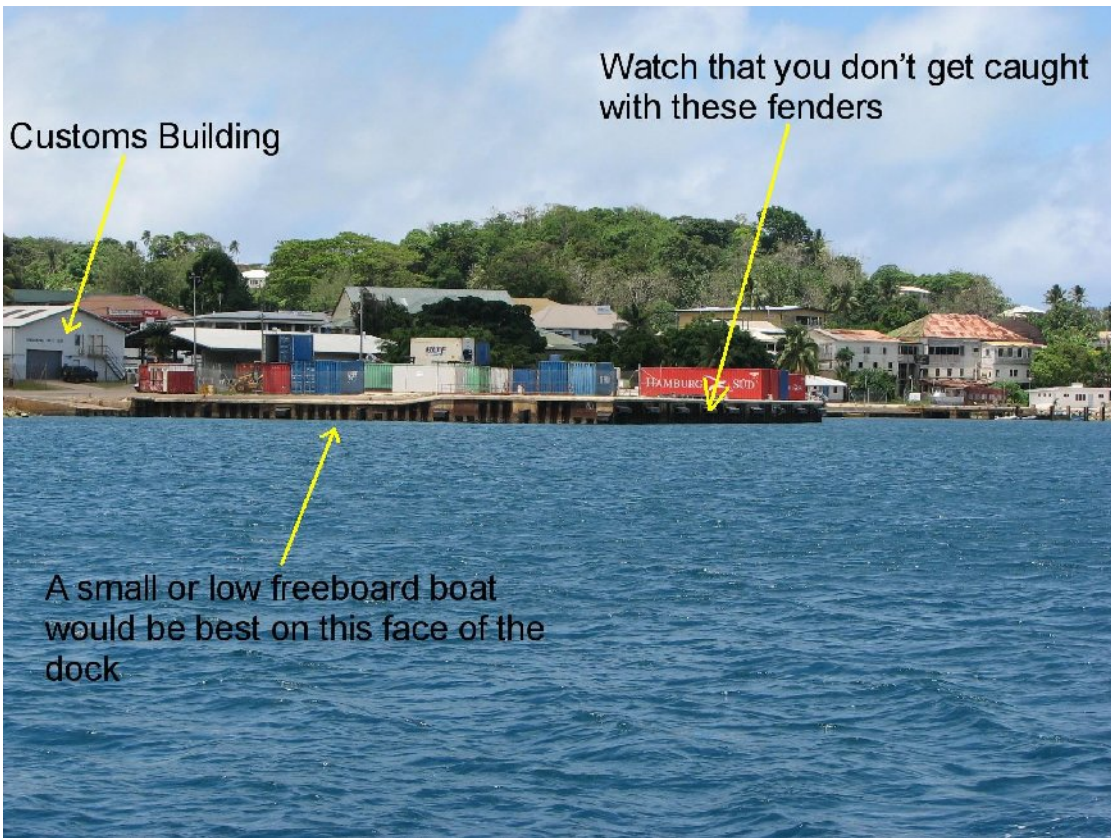
SE Section

# Arrival details.....





This is a private dock but can be used at a small charge (not only for clearing but for taking Fuel or Supplies..)



Customs Building

Watch that you don't get caught with these fenders

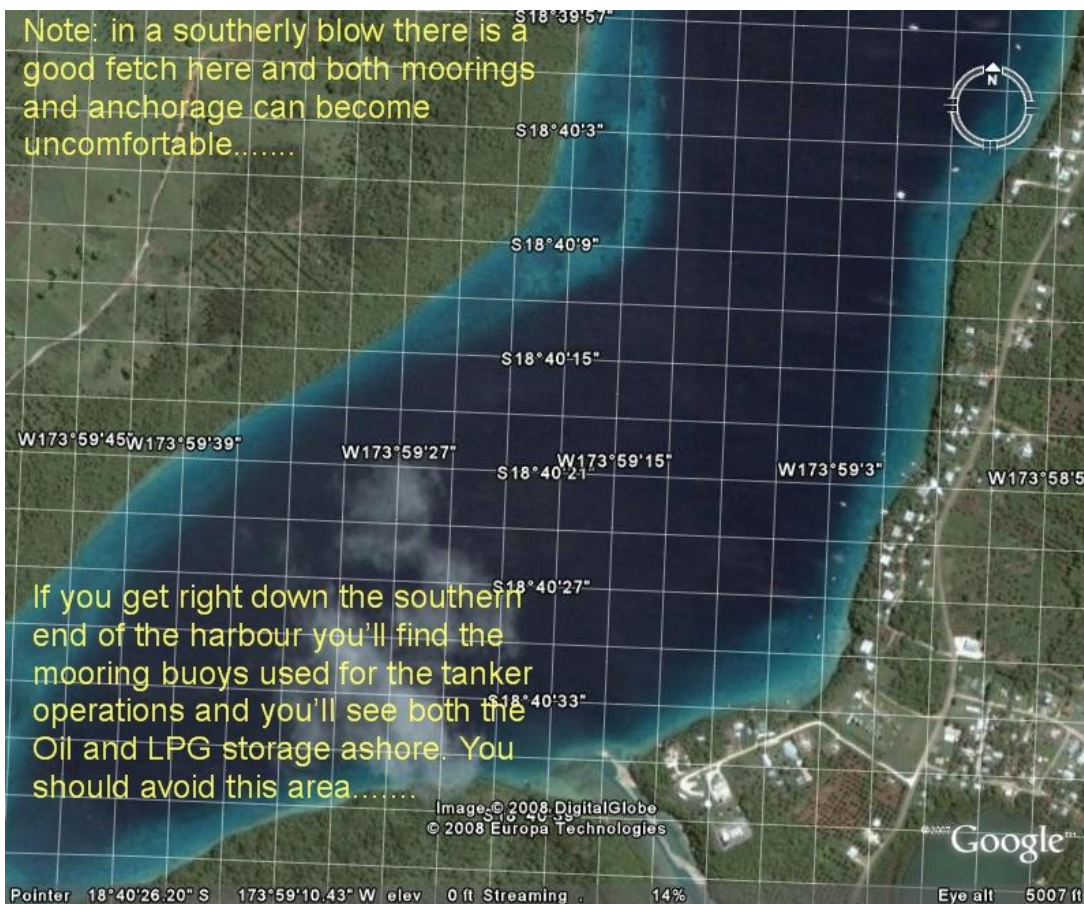
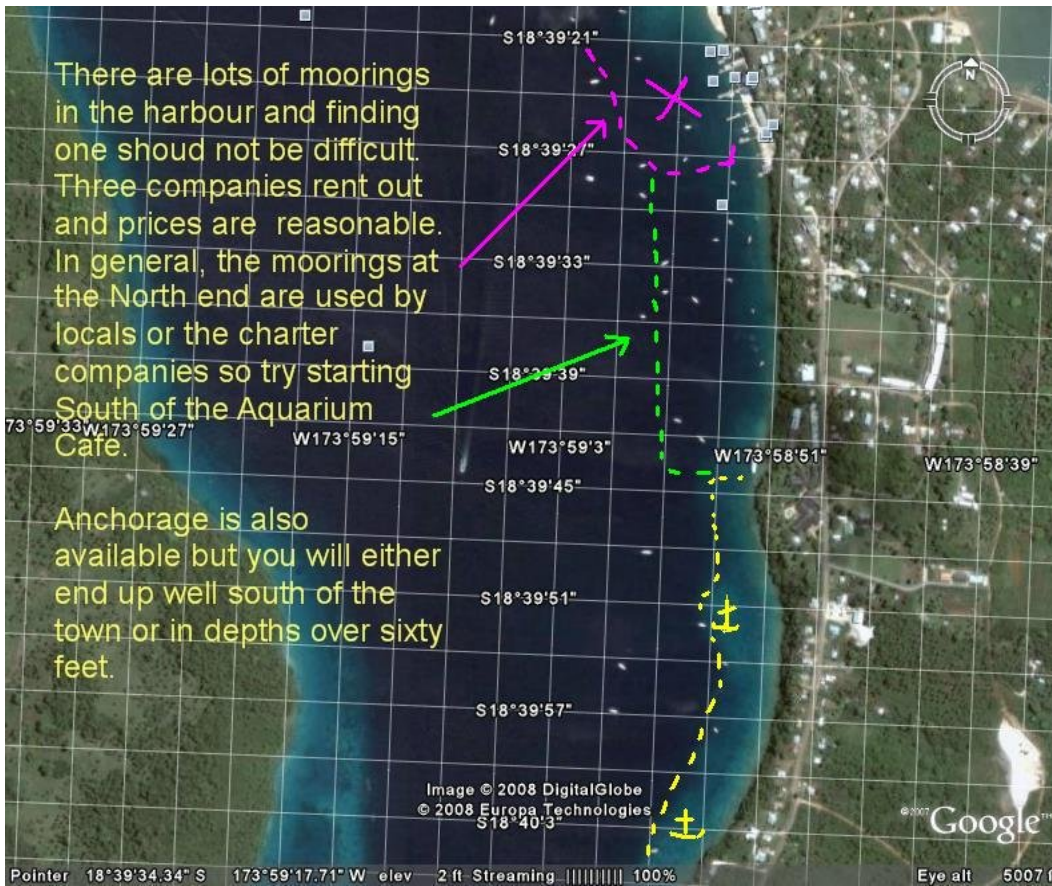
A small or low freeboard boat would be best on this face of the dock



Fenders are lower here and a small boat can make do with just this one.....

The main face of the wharf may cause damage if your freeboard is below the fenders





## **A Few words about Neiafu**

You should be a little cautious using the moorings, generally they are well looked after but you can never be sure when you are sitting on someone else's gear! Best take your normal precautions, go astern on it like you would do your own anchor, use your anchor drag alarm and if the weather is becoming adverse, keep a good eye out or move to a more sheltered spot.

There is enough food to survive in town however it is best not to have high expectations.

The local restaurants put on good value for money food but they also have logistical and price considerations .....so if you want prime Angus and French wine; you are in the wrong place.

There is a surprising amount of talent available to 'fix things'; at least enough to get you to someplace where more permanent repairs can be carried out.

The patrons of ALL establishments work hard (and in concert with each other) to get you fixed up with what ever you want.

Town water is available at two docks and it's cheap enough..... problem is you can't drink it (although they SAY the locals do). If you are short on drinking water most of the restaurants will come forward and let you fill jerry cans....(No one wants to see you leave because you can't get good drinking water!).

There is an active VHF net in the mornings and if there is anything you want or want to know, this is a sure place to ask....



# Out and about in the NW Sector



## VAIMALO

Just fifteen minutes from Neiafu Harbour.

Away from the hustle and bustle.....

VAIMALO is just out side of Neiafu Hr and when its blowing in there, its usually calm in this anchorage..... not in a strong Sly or SWly though! Be careful at HW as the bay looks deeper than it is, there is a pool at the back end seperated off by a reef that dries at LW. We anchored at the edge of the spit where depths are about 11 feet in broken coral and patches of sand. There are coral heads in the deeper water and you may have fun getting the hook back.....

W174°00'33"W 174°00'27" W174°00'15" W174°00'3" W173°59'51" W173°59'39"

S18°38'3" S18°38'5" S18°38'15" S18°38'21" S18°38'27" S18°38'33"

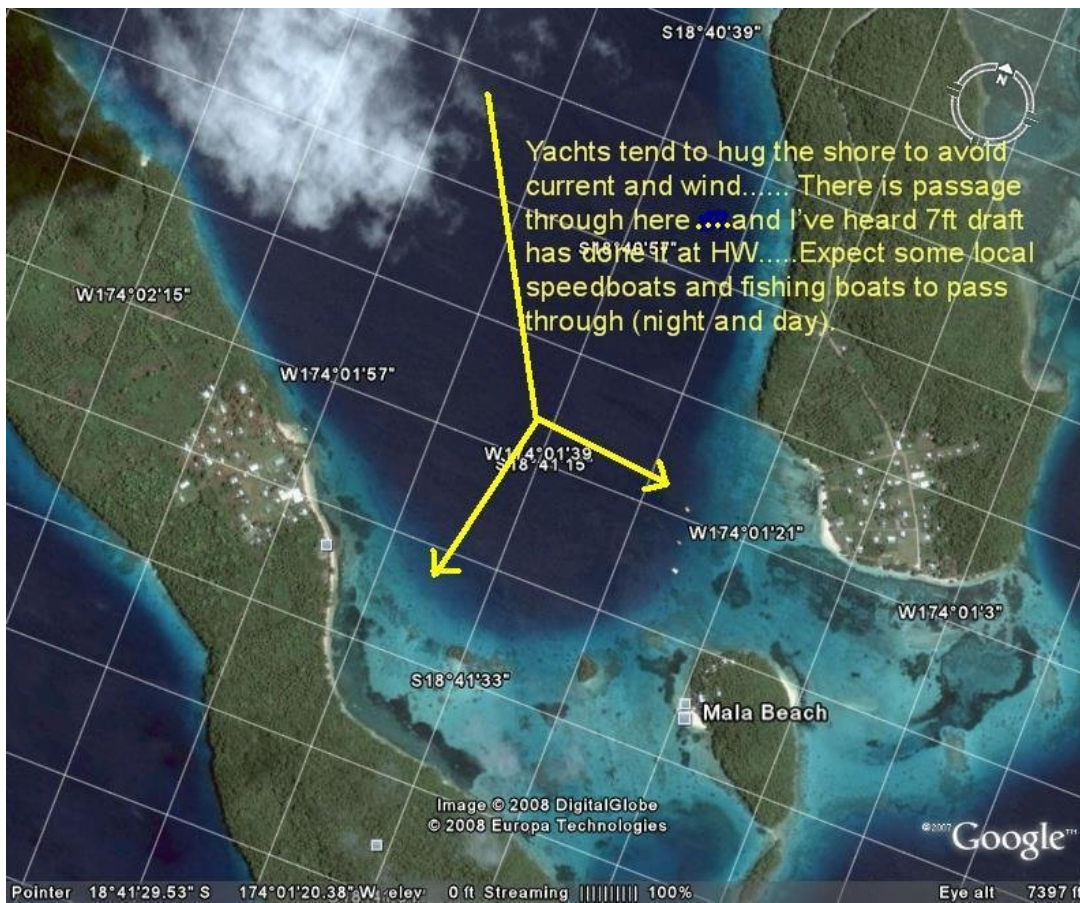
Anchor Posn: 16°38.306'S 173°59.980'W  
 Quiet and peaceful...lots of early morning bird calls...

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO  
 Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe  
 © 2010 Google  
 © 2010 Europa Technologies  
 Streaming 100%

Google

Eye alt 1.62 km







Also quite close to Neiafu are two very nice anchorages.

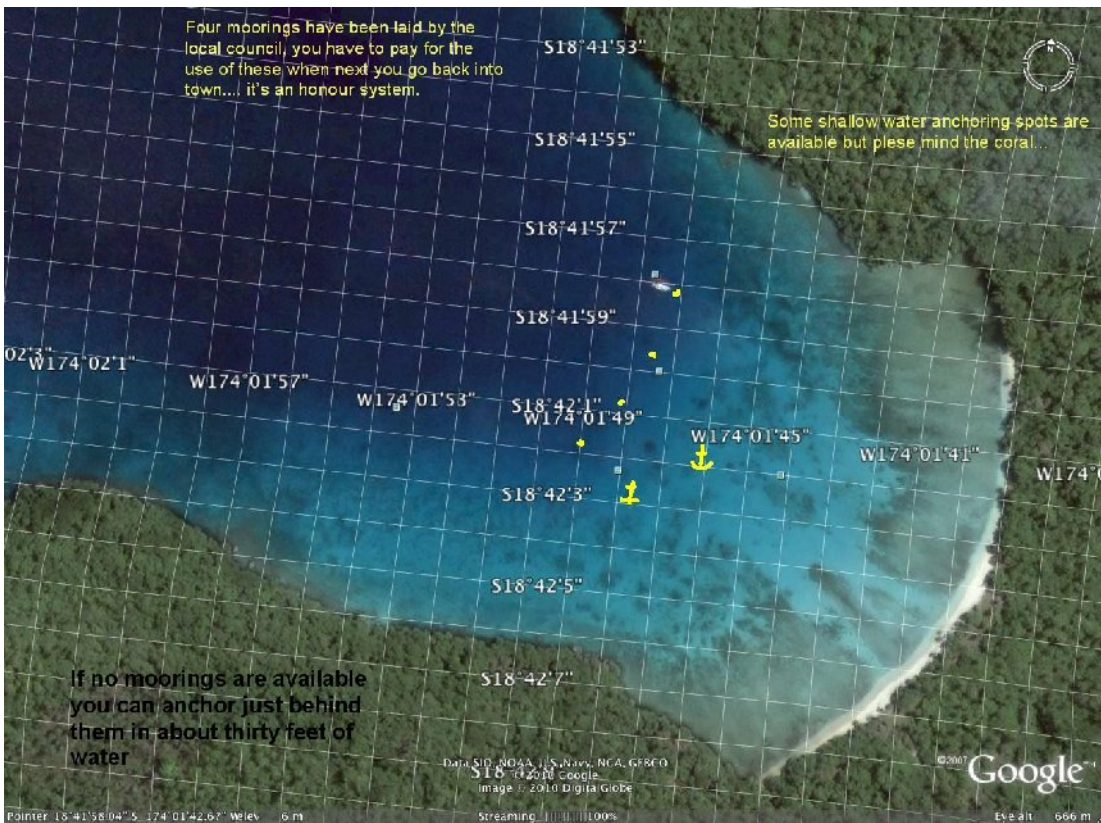
On route, having passed Mala Island to Port, you will round the next promontory “Muifaitunga”, on the end of which you will find Swallows Cave; an interesting dinghy excursion from Port Maurelle.

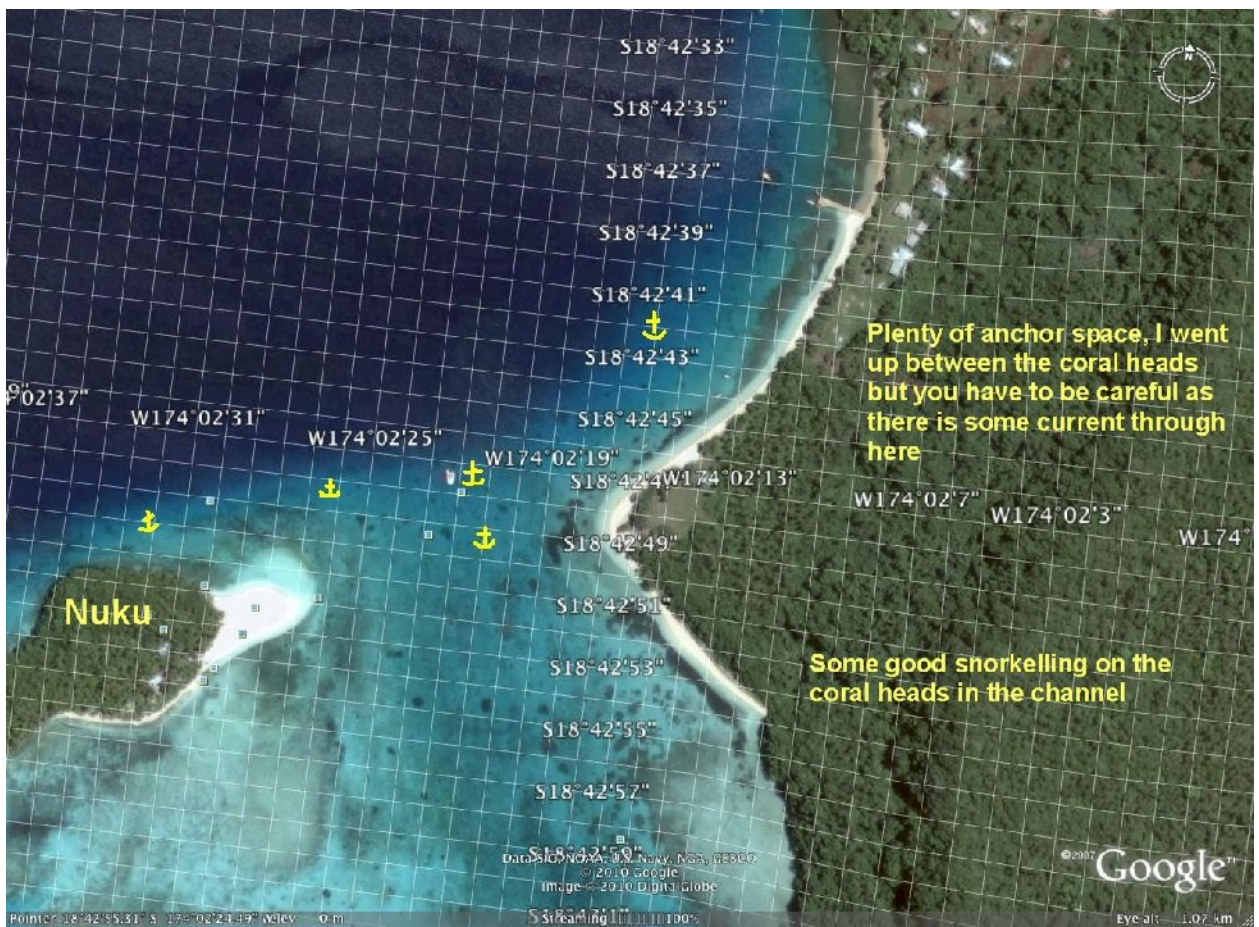
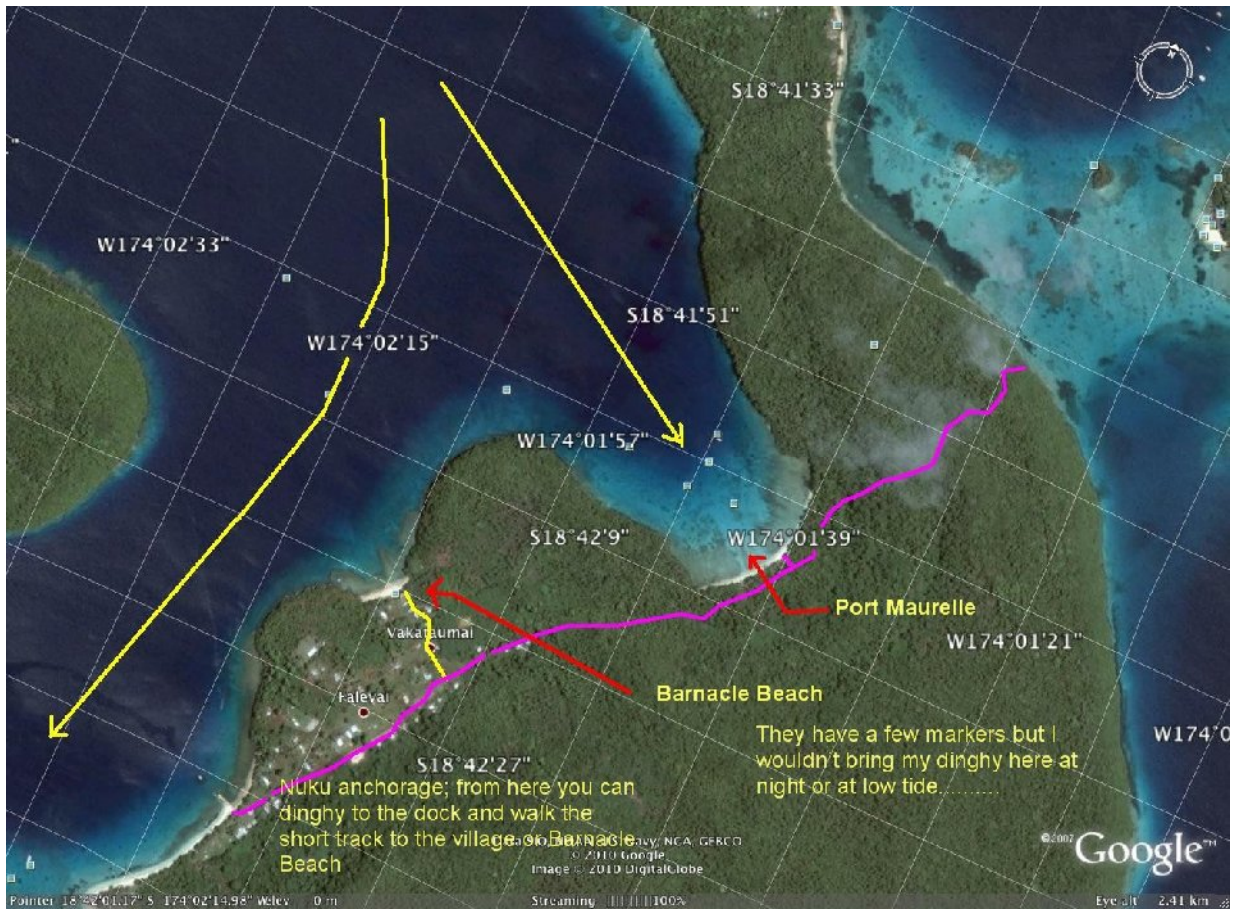
Port Maurelle is one of the most sheltered anchorages in the group and has a nice beach (no houses) and some coral with plenty of colourful, small fish.

There is a path leading south to **Barnacle Beach** where they hold Tongan Feasts most weekends

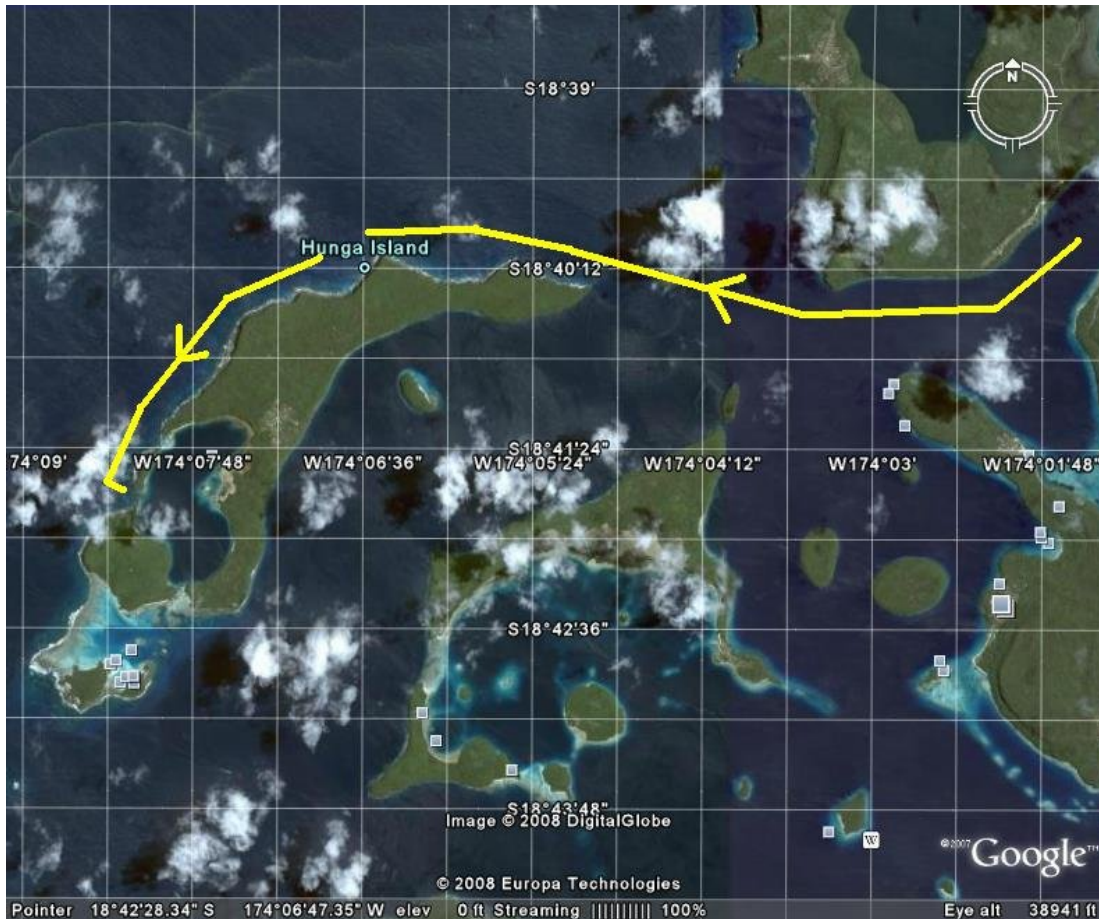
Nuku is a great spot for swimming and the anchorage gets more Trade Wind breeze

## PORT MAURELLE



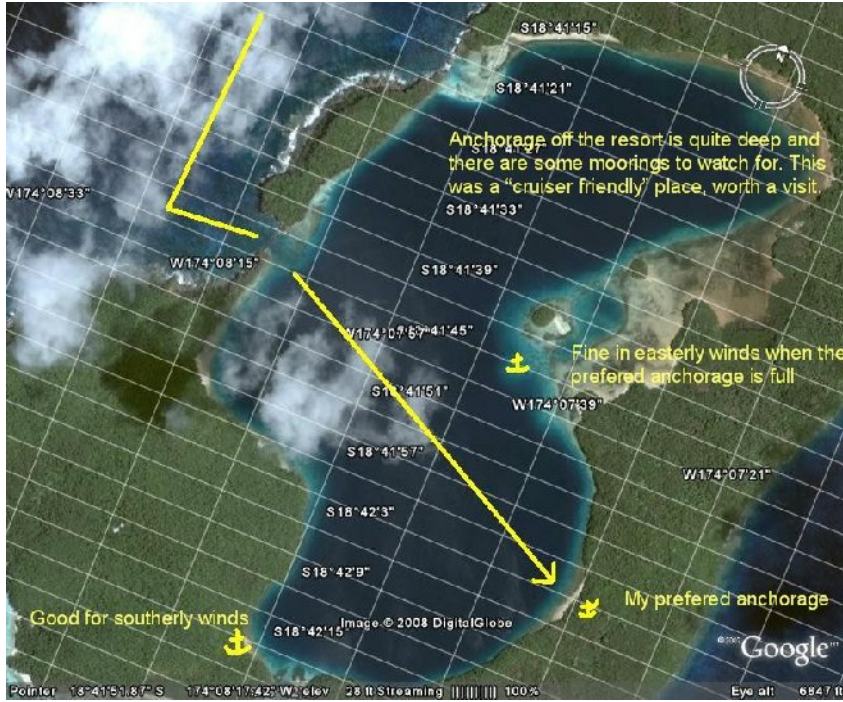


# A visit to Hunga



When it comes to Hunga, there are only two places that yachts go; the main one is the Central Lagoon, which is the main body of “almost” enclosed water you see above. The second one is to Blue Lagoon in the south. The later has some lovely colouring and a neat spot for a photo, other than that, I find it has little to recommend it as the Blue Lagoon resort is well known for it’s inhospitable attitude towards visiting yachts (even if you do want to spend money!) and the anchorage can become very roly at high tide when the swell gets over the reef.

The trip around to the entrance of Hunga Lagoon is very straight forward and you may even catch a fish if you hug the coast....I have no problem doing this in low visibility but first time around you may like a little sun behind you, thus its best to have an afternoon arrival. The tidal flow in or out of the lagoon is minimal but enough that there is often a long ‘tell tail’ on the surface, ruffled when against the wind, smooth when with the wind, showing where the main body of water is moving fastest; this also indicates the deep water so you can just follow it in.....

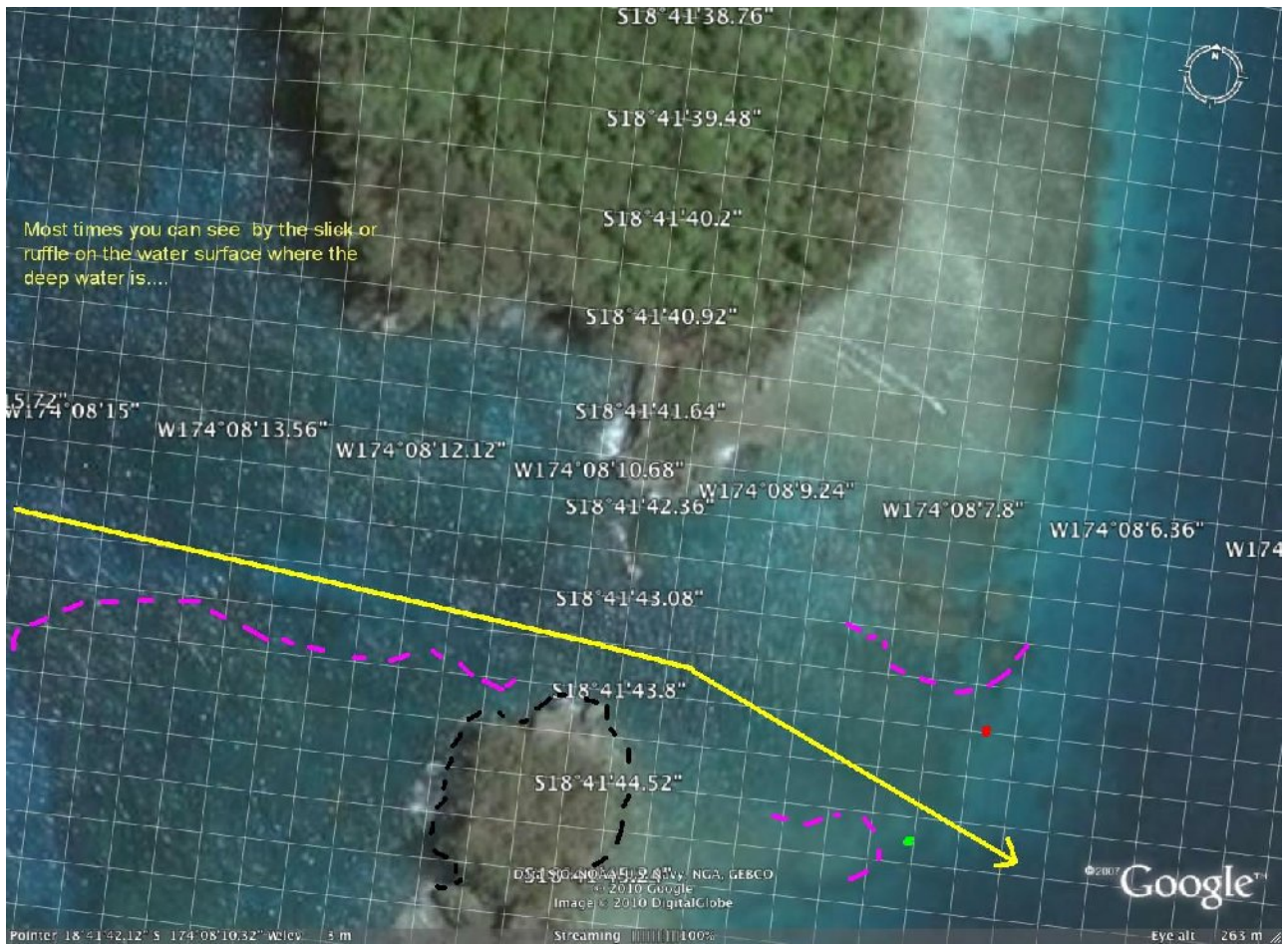


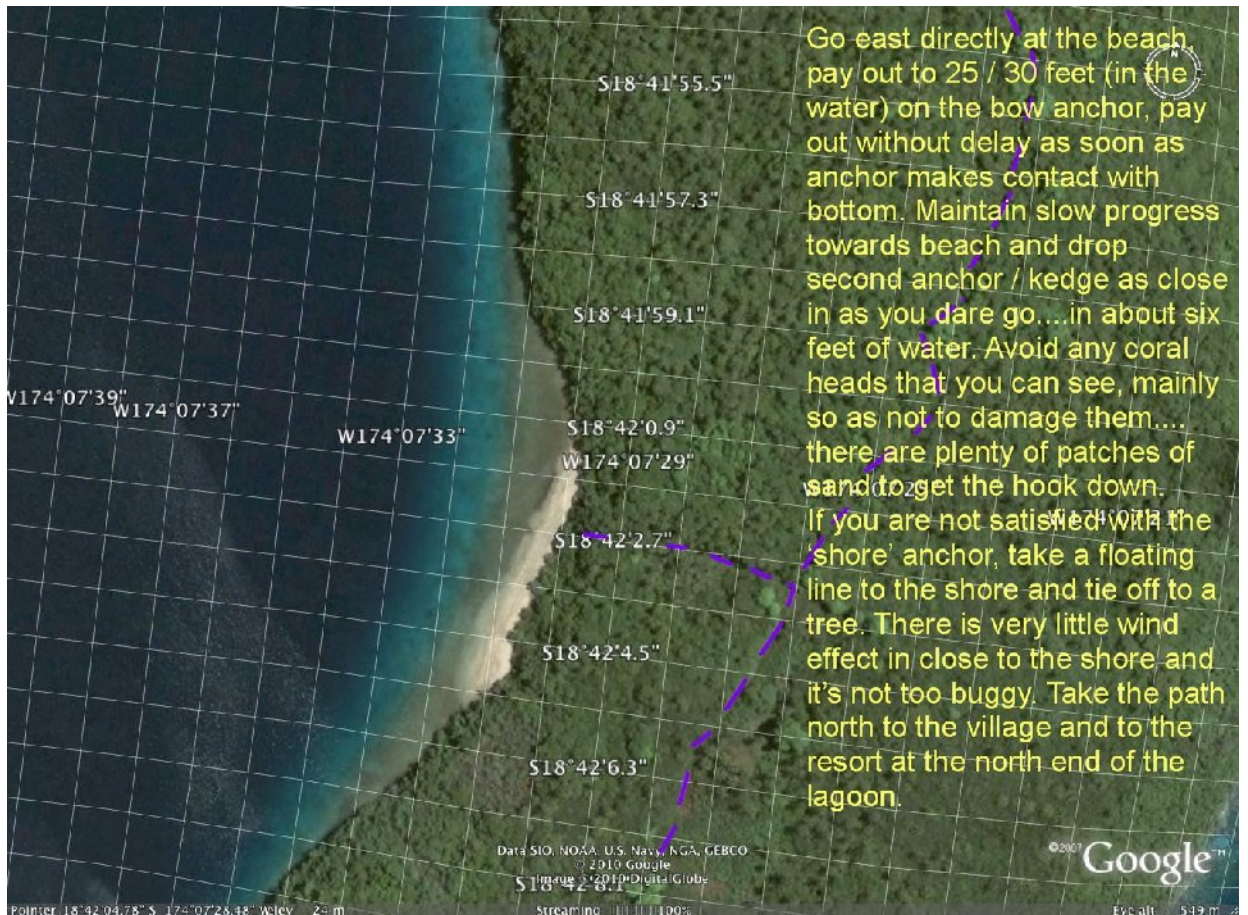
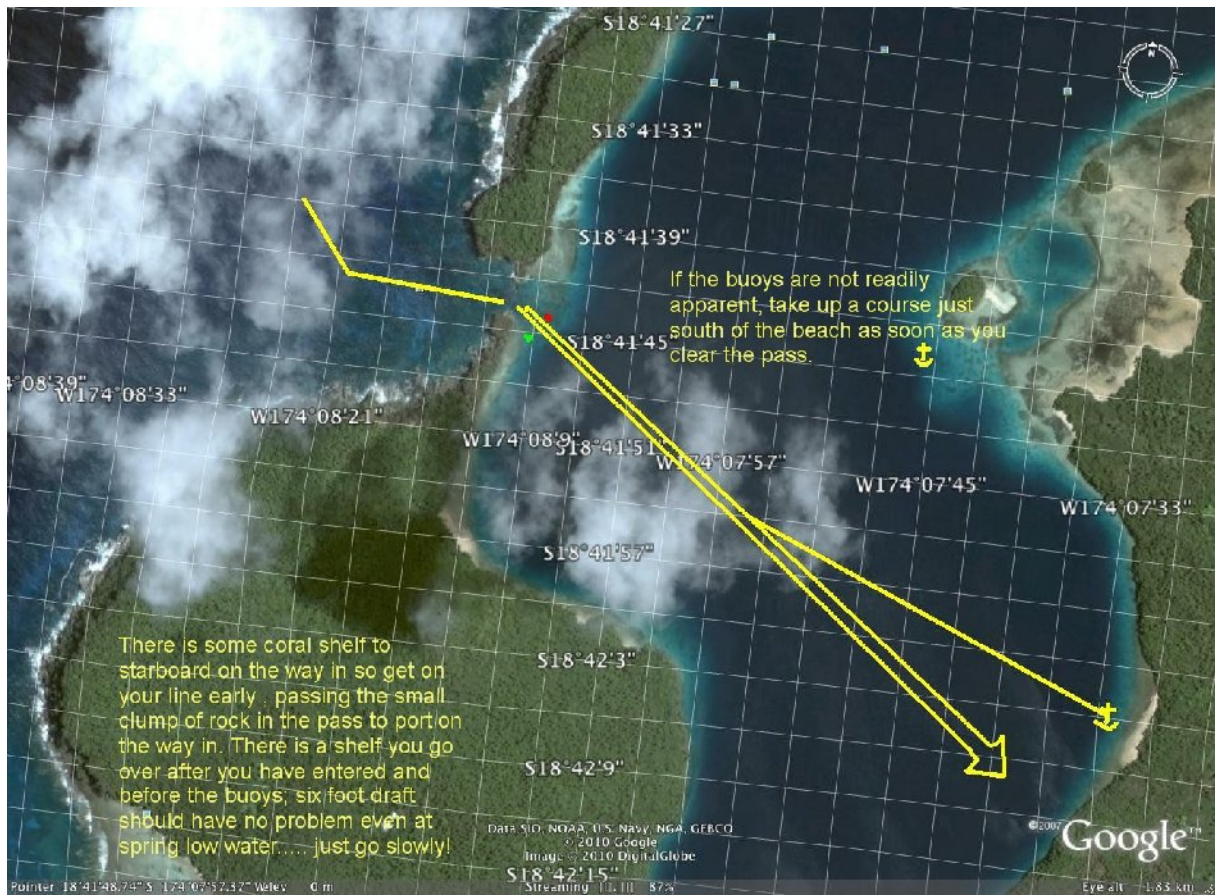
Outer: 18 41.716S  
174 08.264W

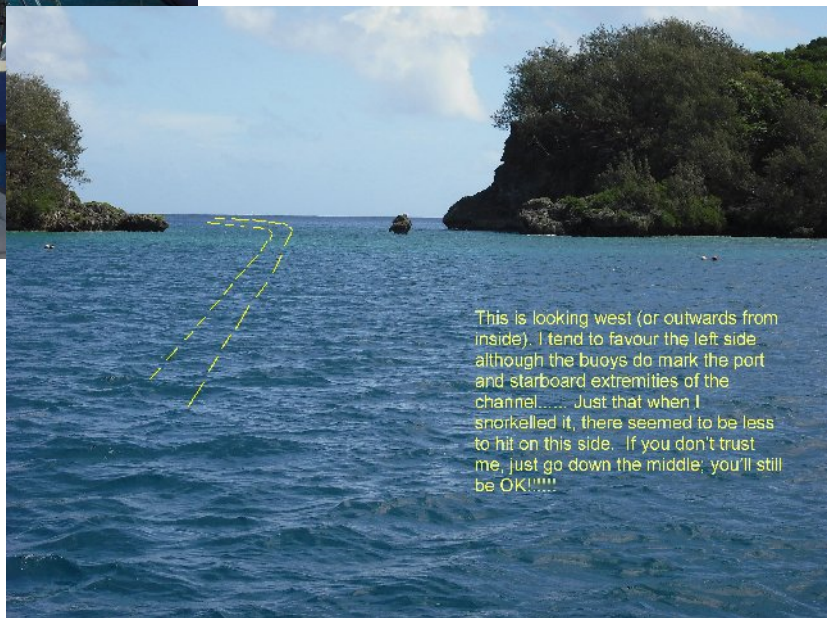
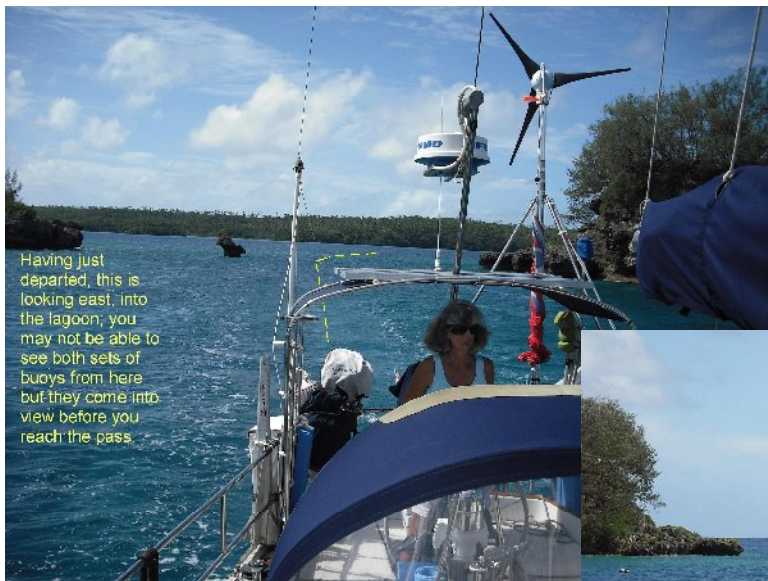
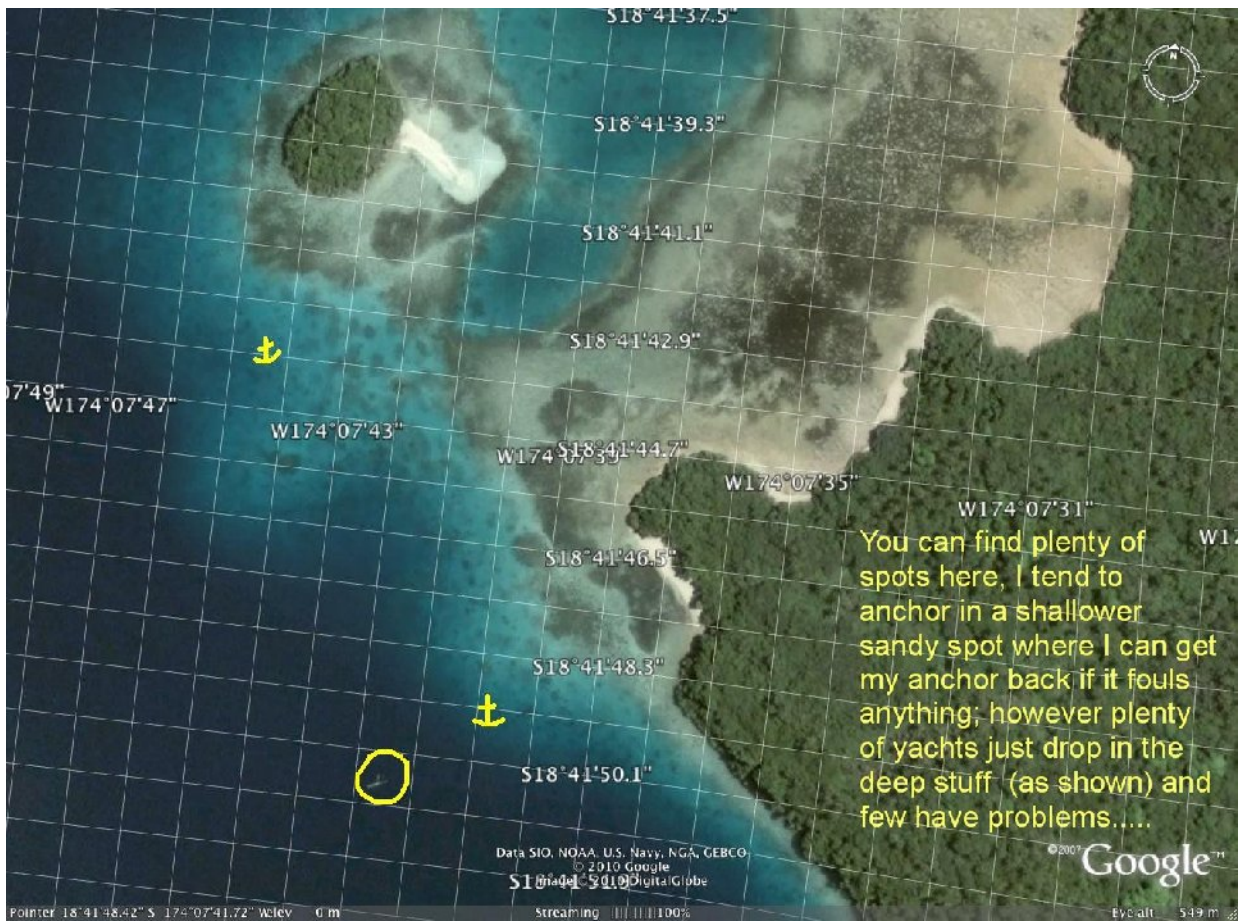
Pass: 18 41.728S  
174 08.170W

Buoys: 18 41.760S  
174 08.111W

Anchor: 18 42.050S  
174 07.540W

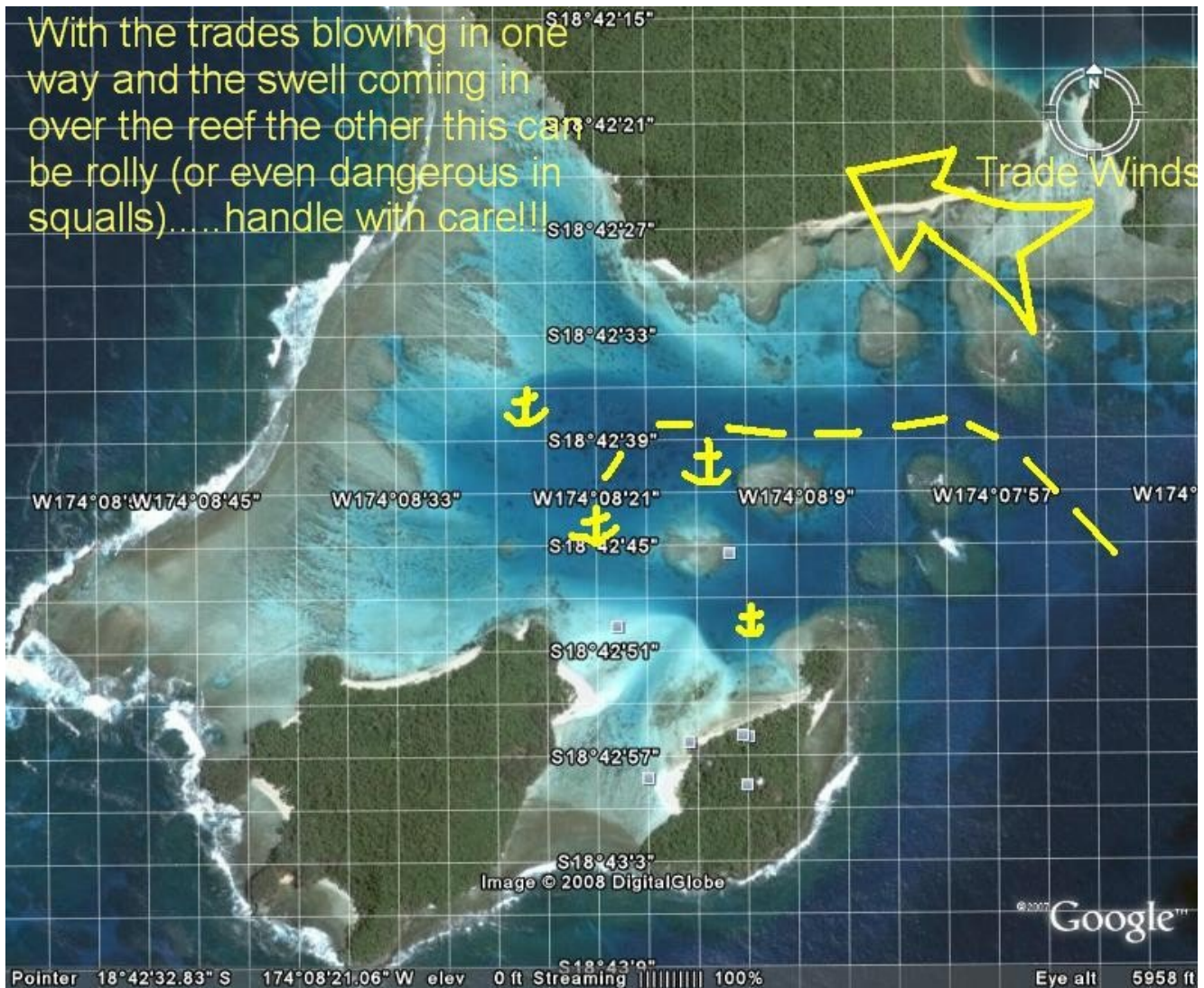






# The Blue Lagoon

With the trades blowing in one way and the swell coming in over the reef the other, this can be roly (or even dangerous in squalls).....handle with care!!



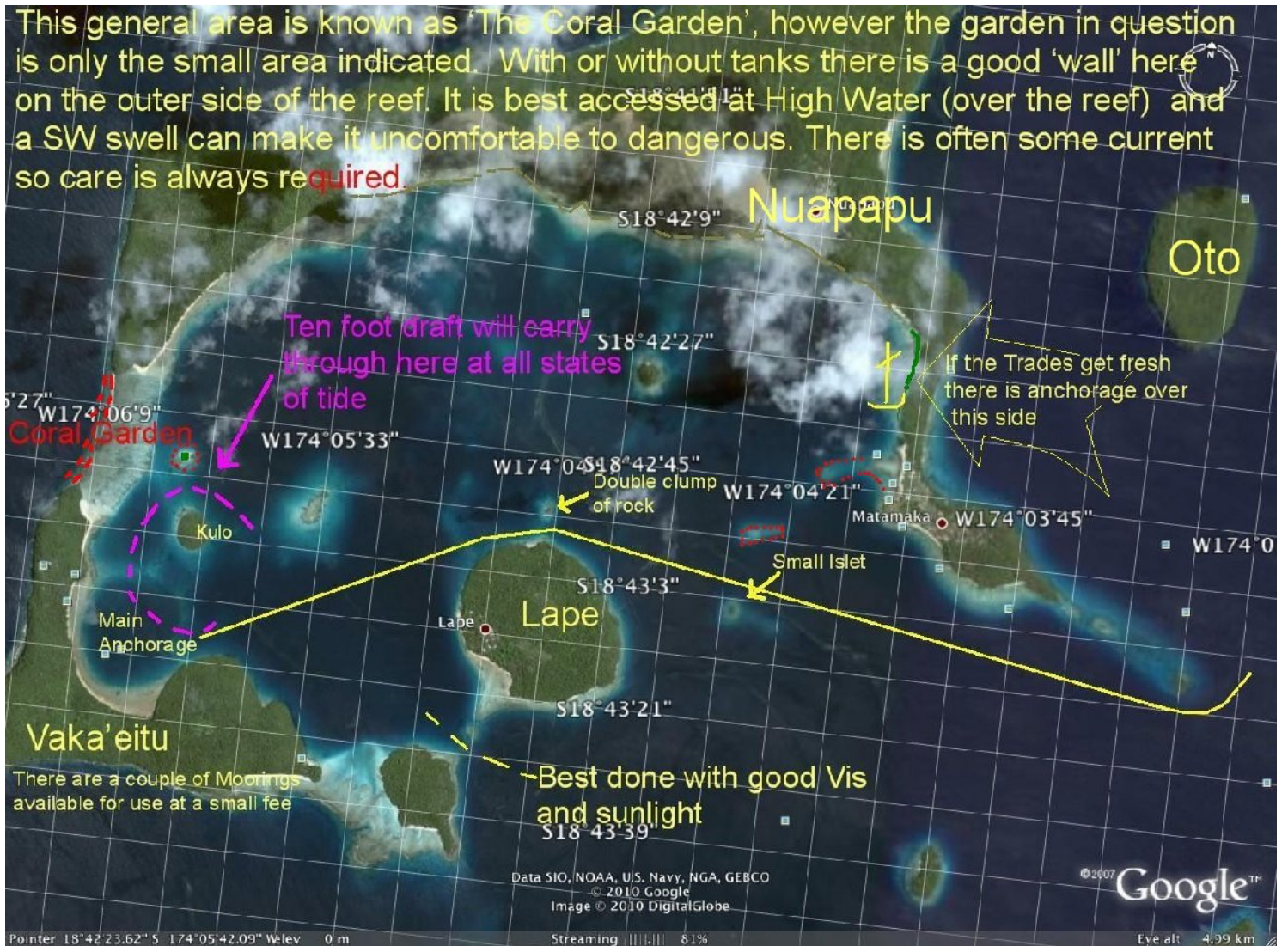


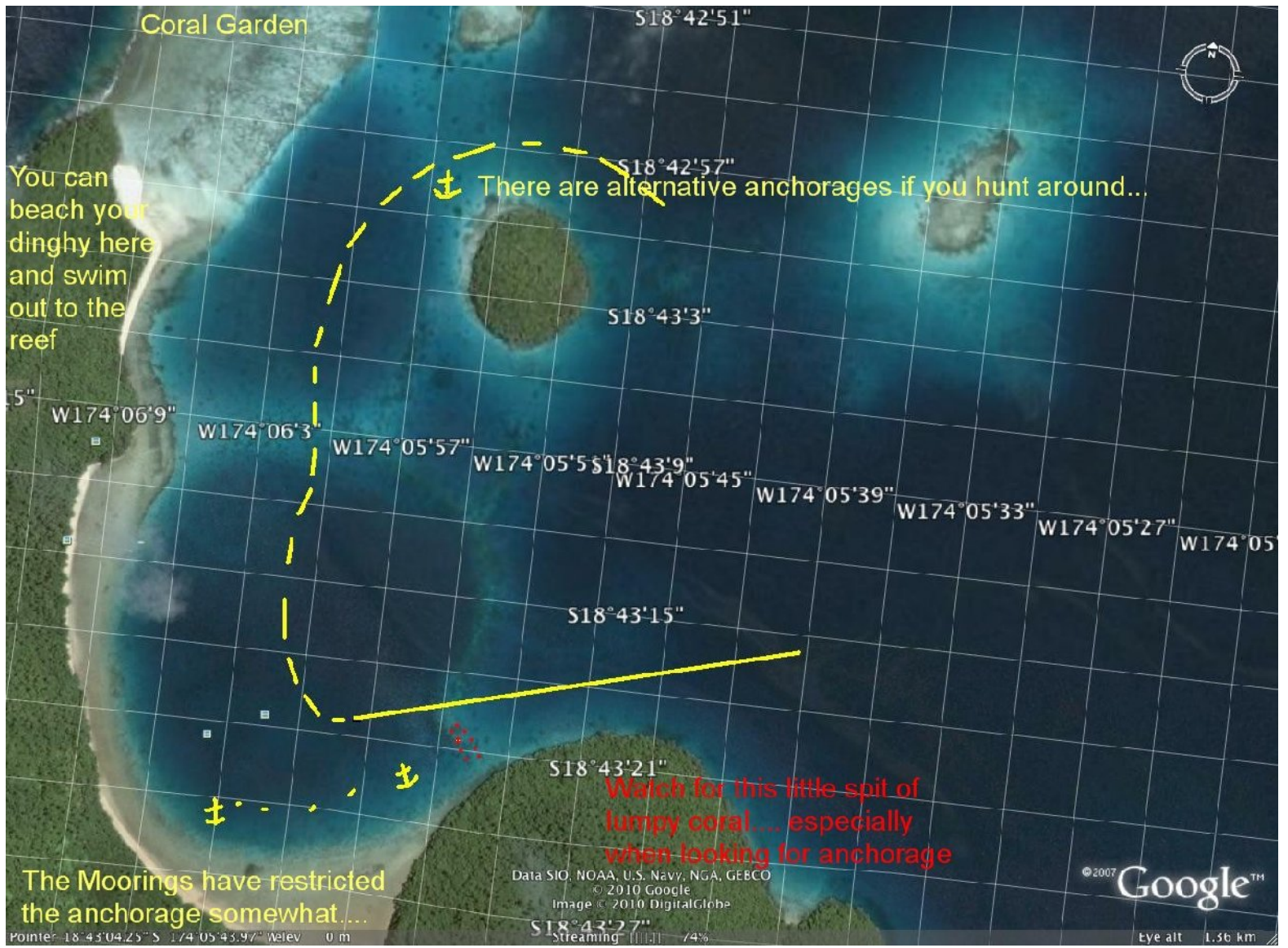
# The SW Sector



# The Coral Garden

This general area is known as 'The Coral Garden', however the garden in question is only the small area indicated. With or without tanks there is a good 'wall' here on the outer side of the reef. It is best accessed at High Water (over the reef) and a SW swell can make it uncomfortable to dangerous. There is often some current so care is always required.





You can beach your dinghy here and swim out to the reef

There are alternative anchorages if you hunt around...

The Moorings have restricted the anchorage somewhat...

Watch for this little spit of lumpy coral... especially when looking for anchorage

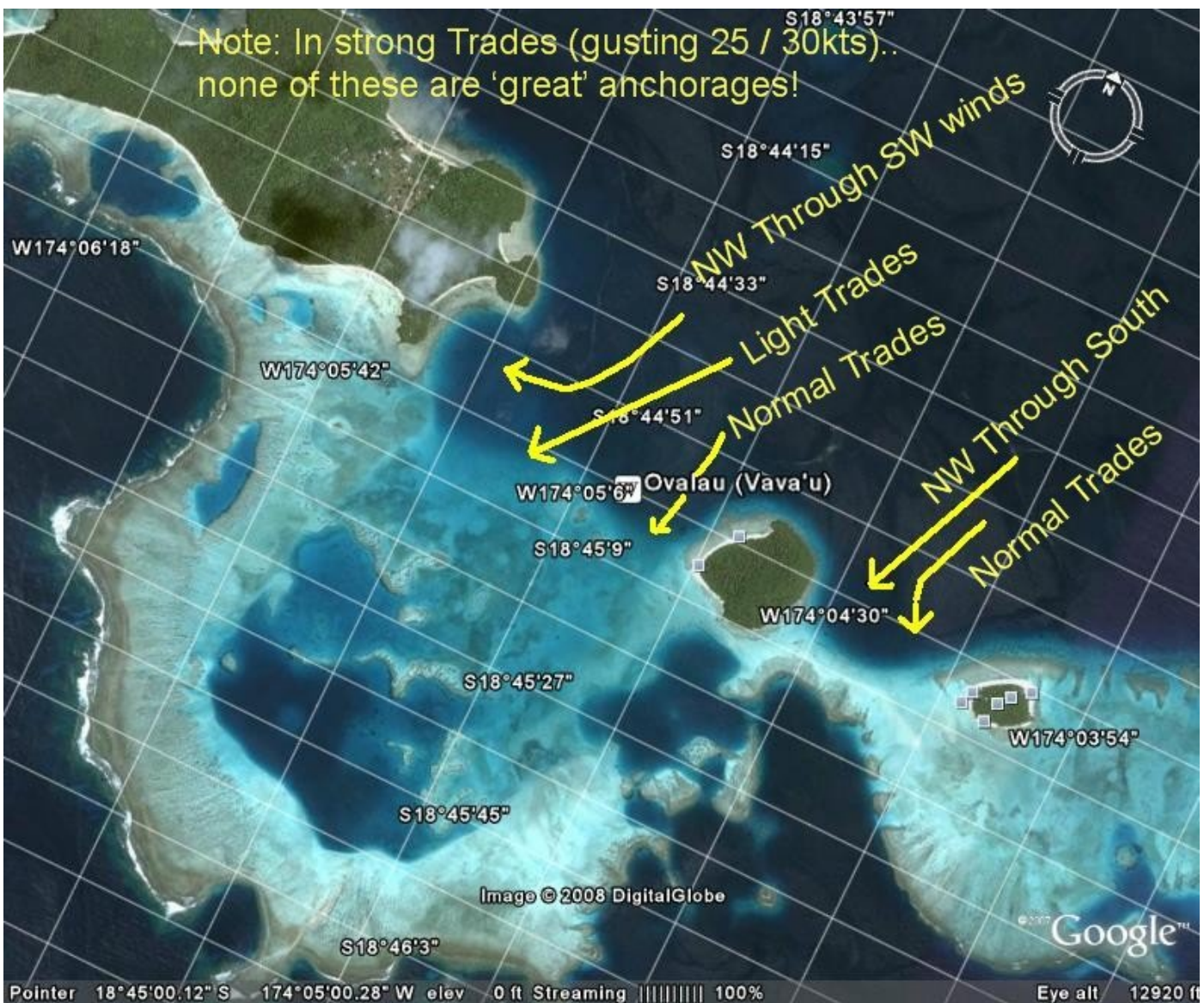
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO © 2010 Google Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe

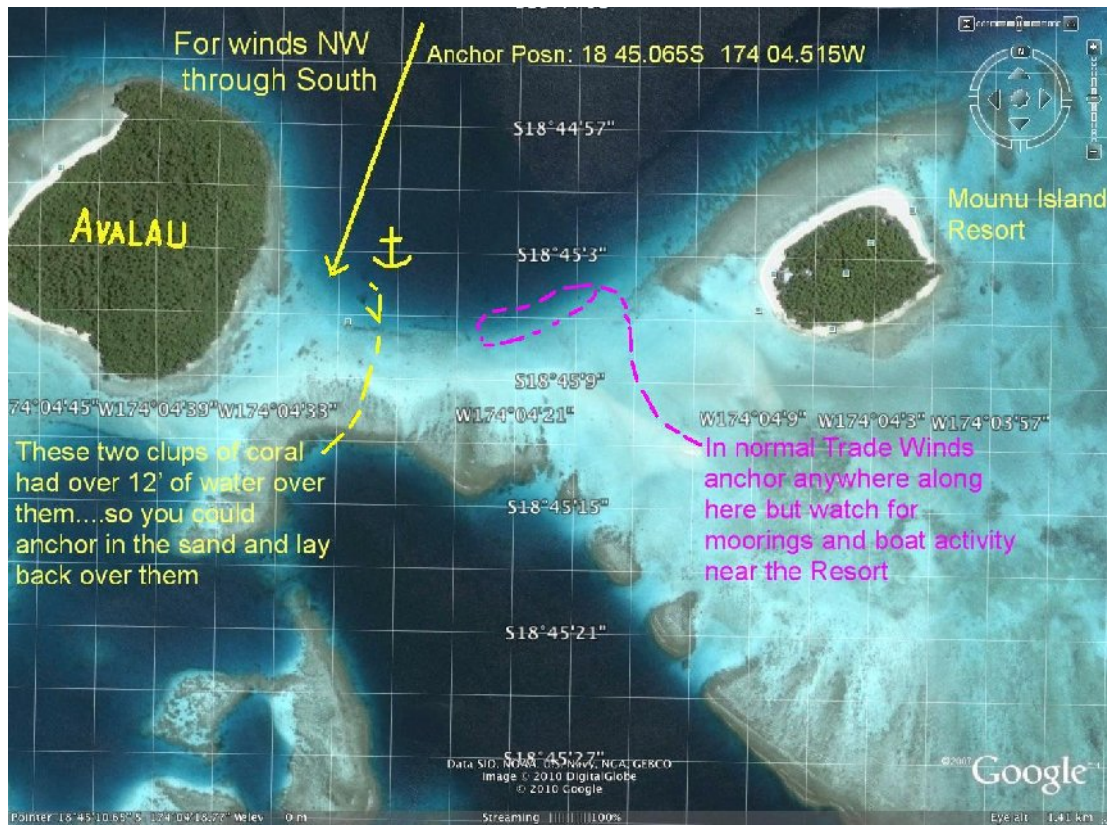
© 2007 Google™

Streaming 74% Eye alt 1.56 km

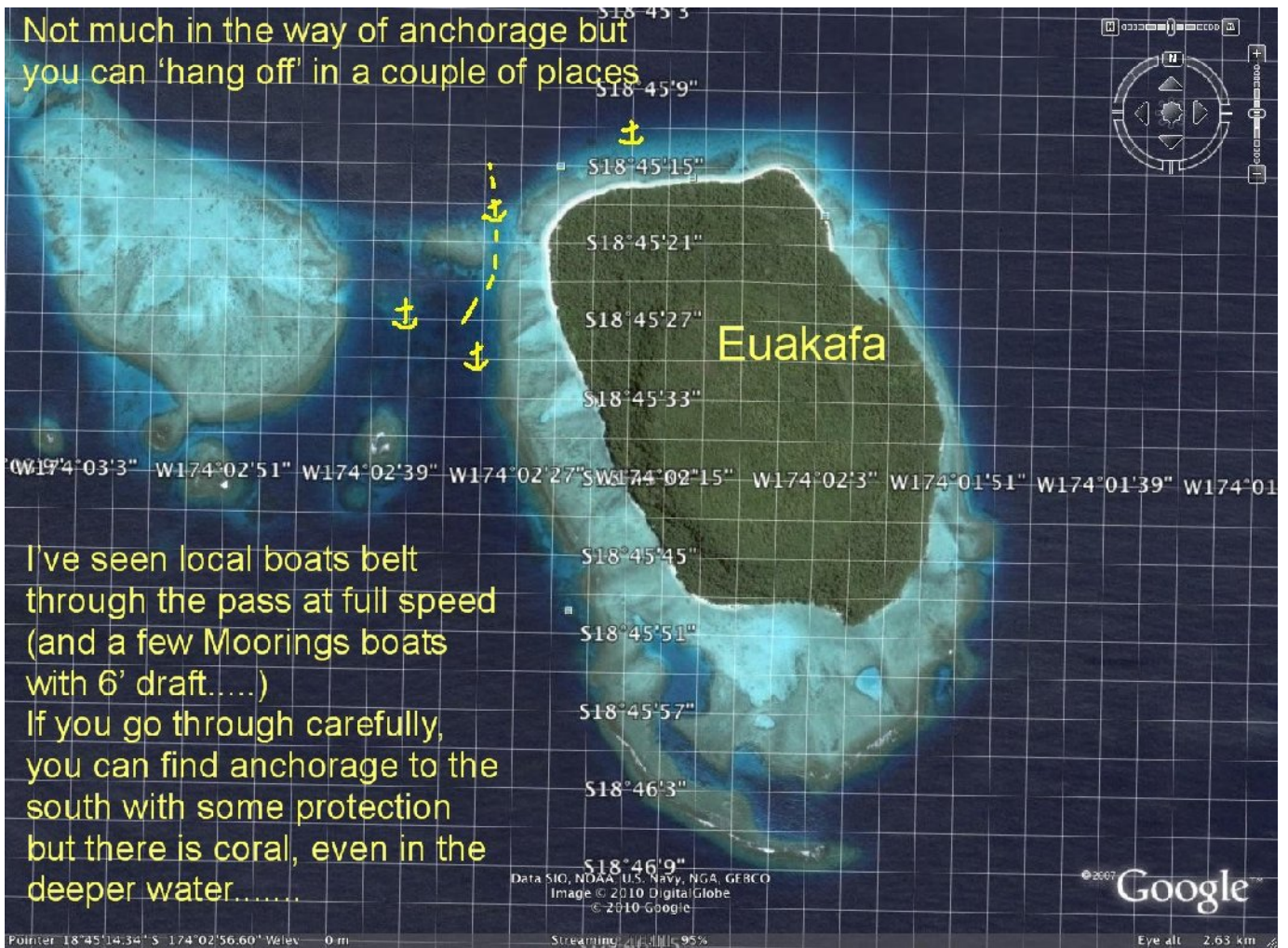
# The Avalau Group

Maybe known as the "Ovalau (Vava'u) Group....."





Not much in the way of anchorage but you can 'hang off' in a couple of places



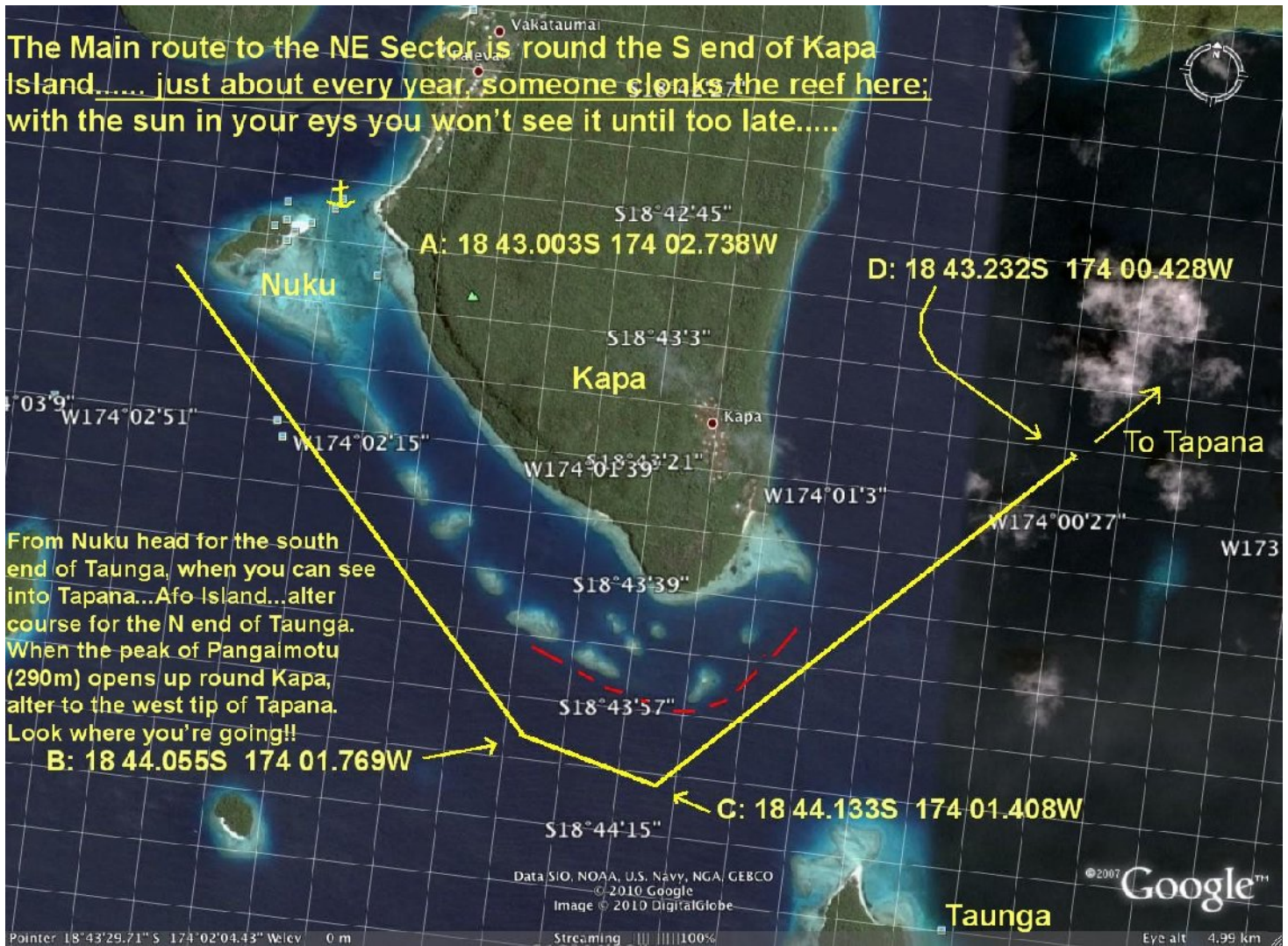
I've seen local boats belt through the pass at full speed (and a few Moorings boats with 6' draft....)  
If you go through carefully, you can find anchorage to the south with some protection but there is coral, even in the deeper water.....

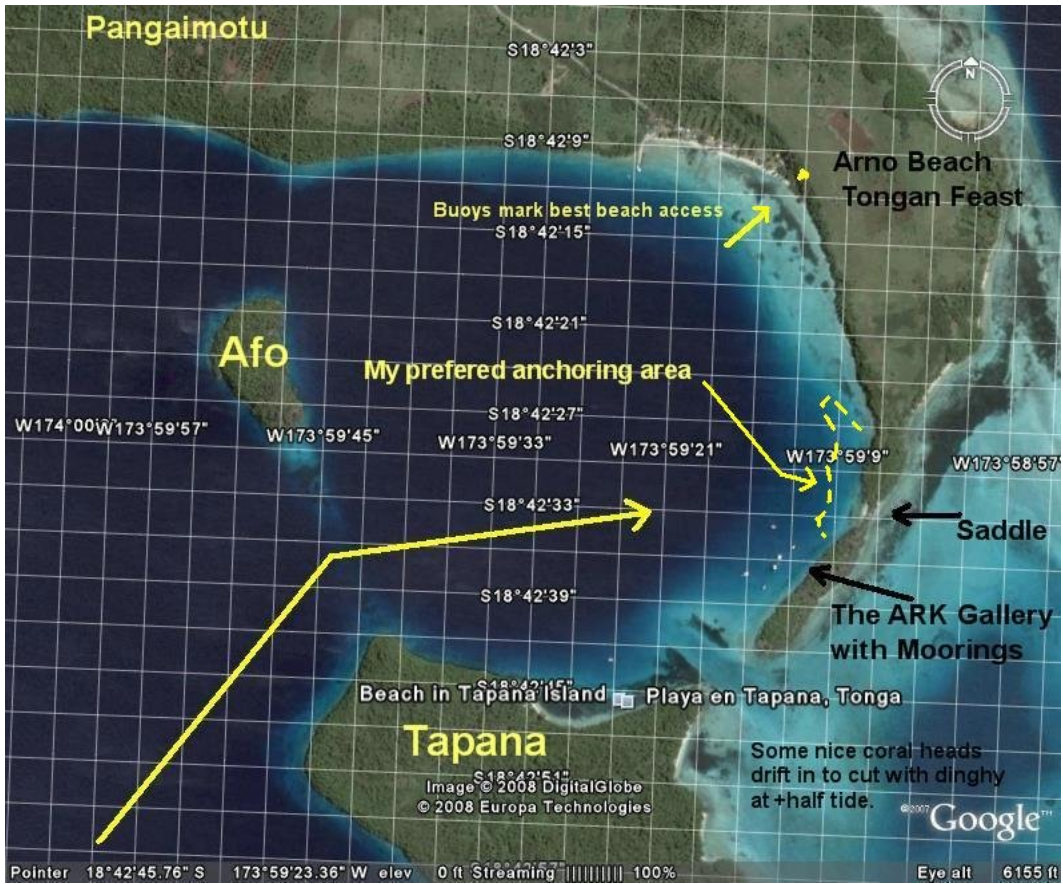
In NEly Trades this would make a good day stop. The southern point is a photo shoot, there is some nice coral and the water is usually clear.



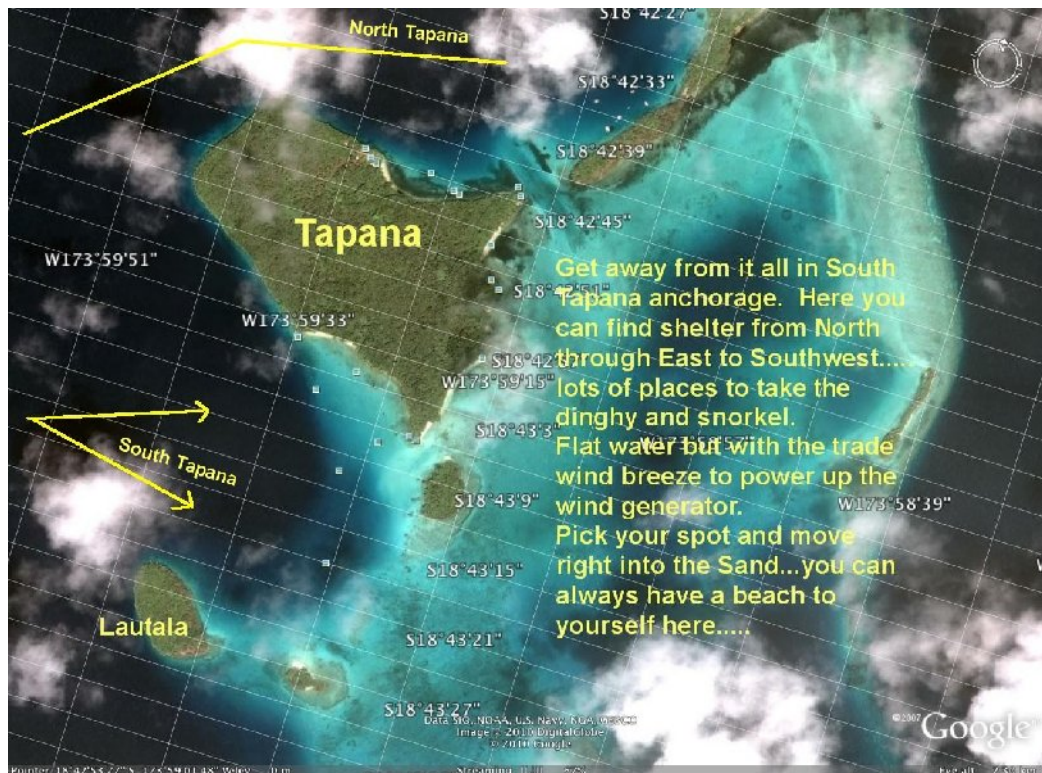
# The NE Sector

The Main route to the NE Sector is round the S end of Kapa Island..... just about every year, someone clocks the reef here; with the sun in your eyes you won't see it until too late.....





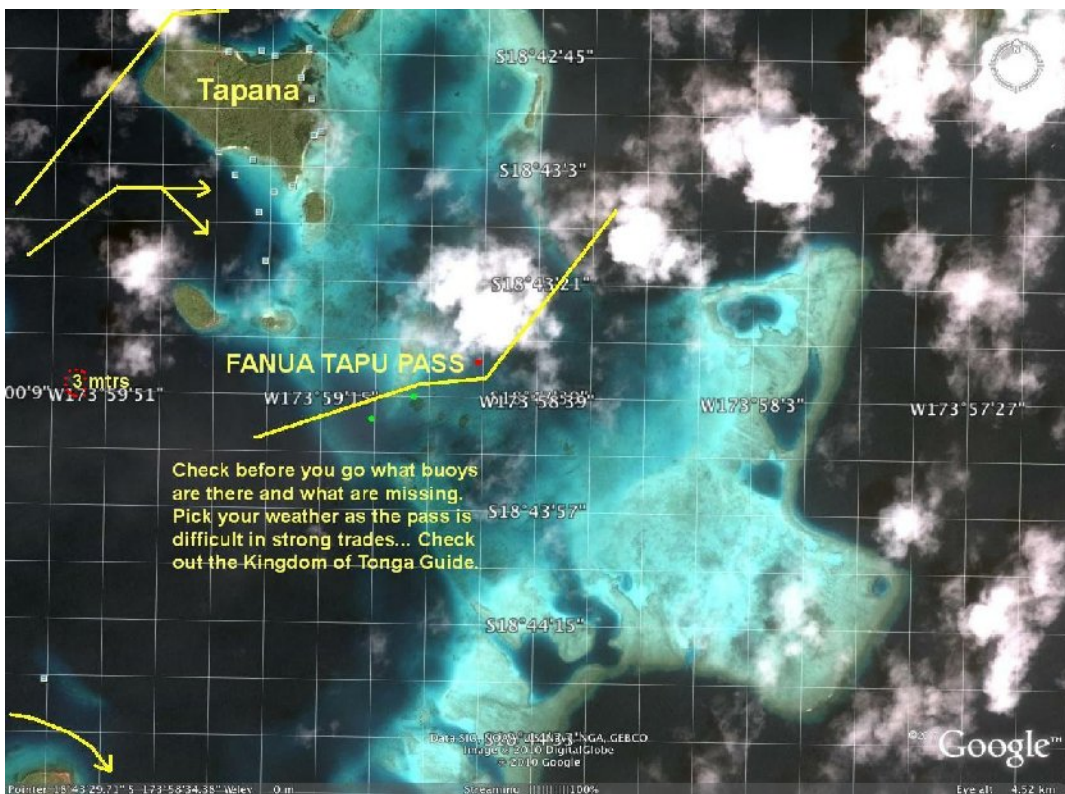
## TAPANA ISLAND

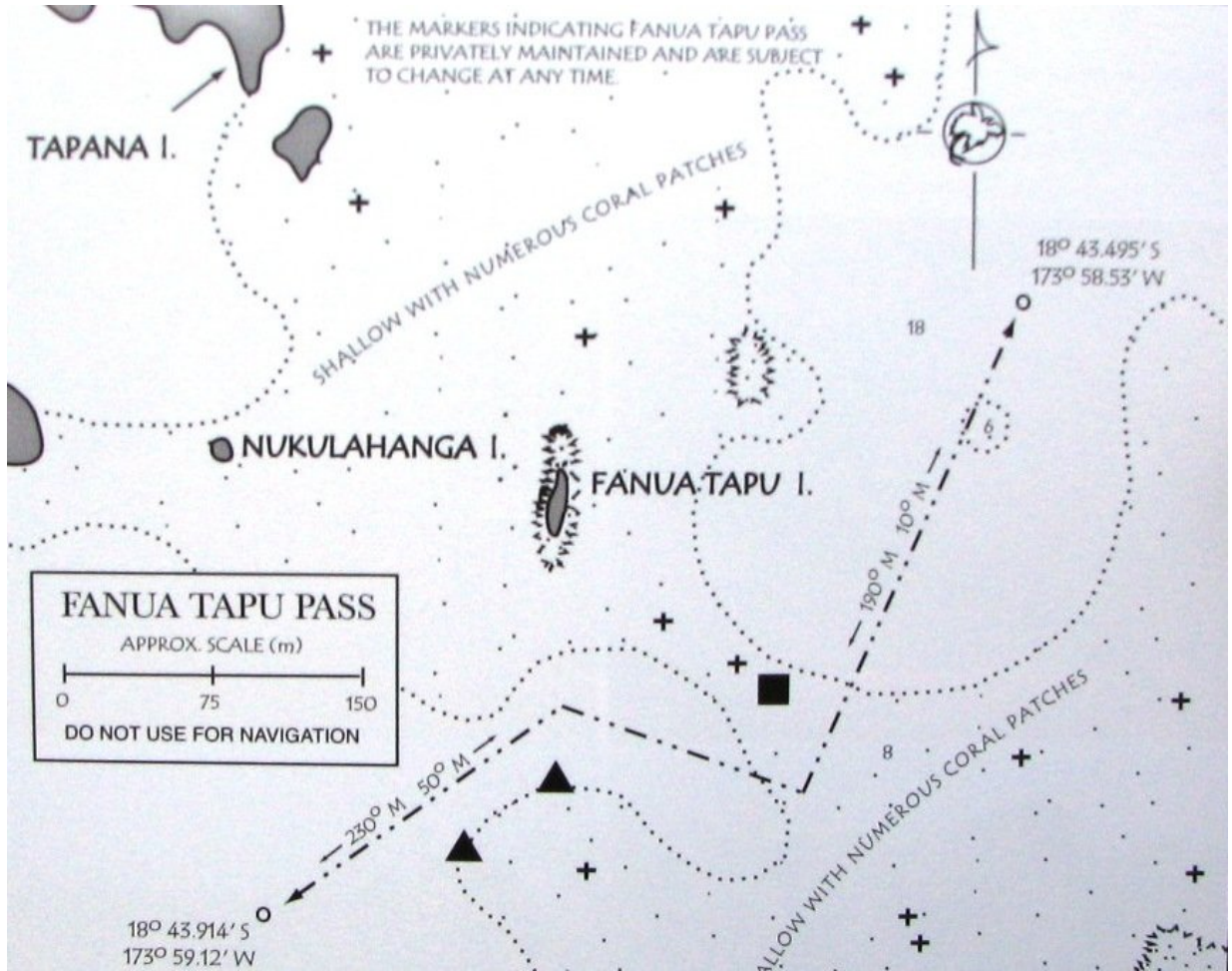




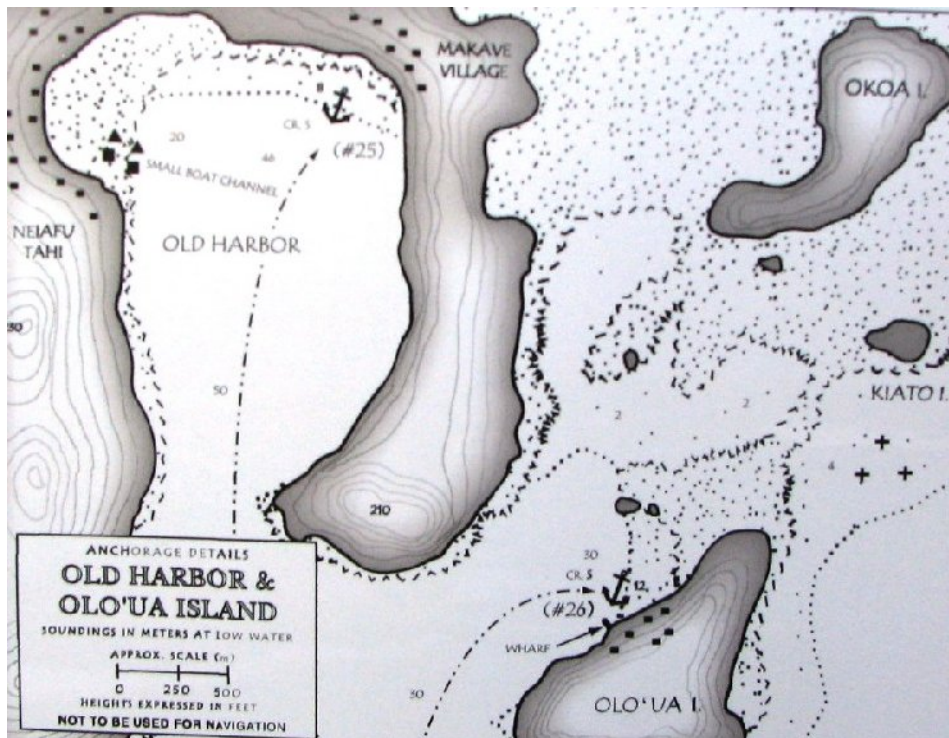


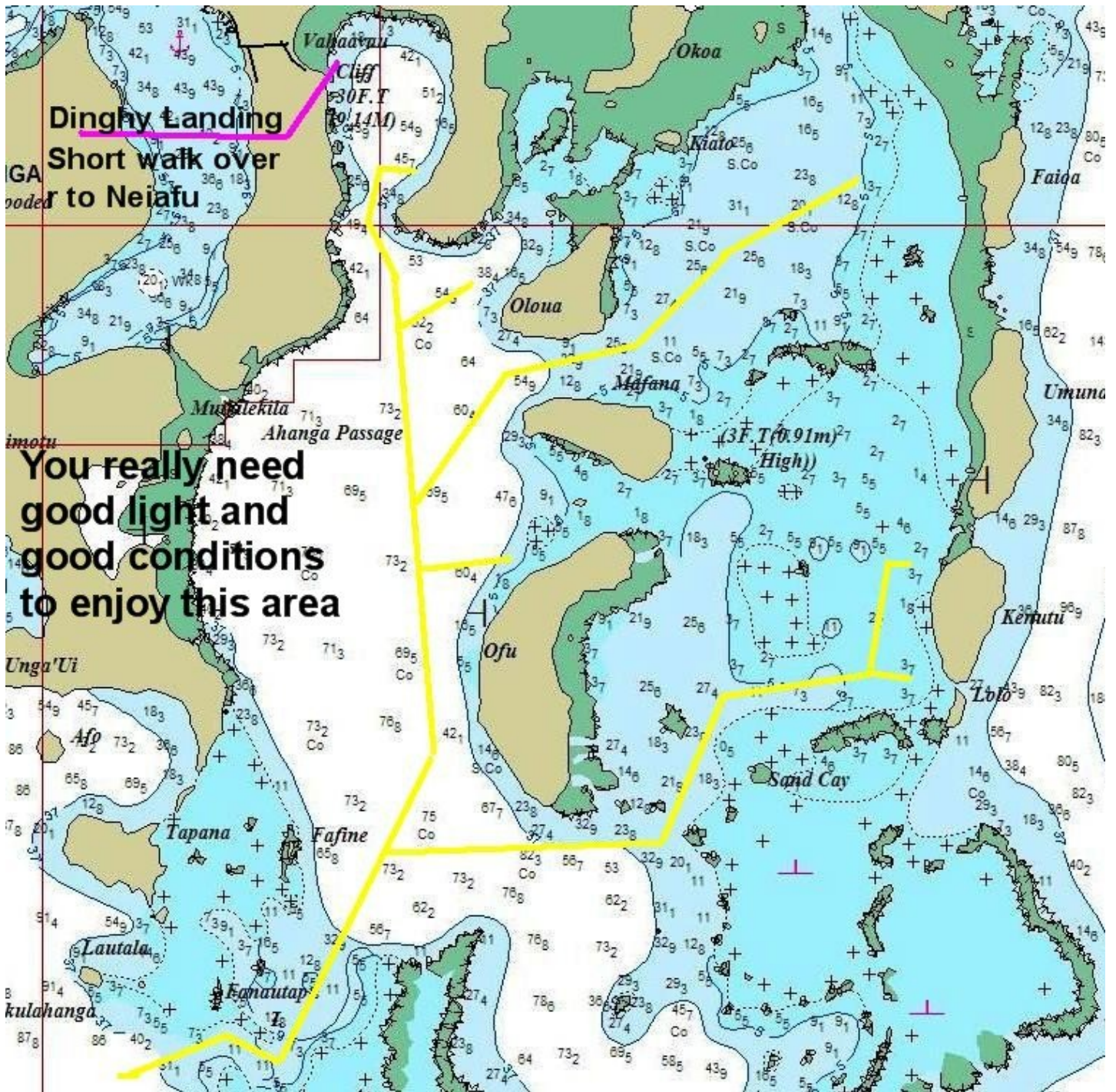
# Going further East





Above and below are from the 'Sailingbirds Guide'..... you should buy this book as soon as you arrive if you don't have it already.....



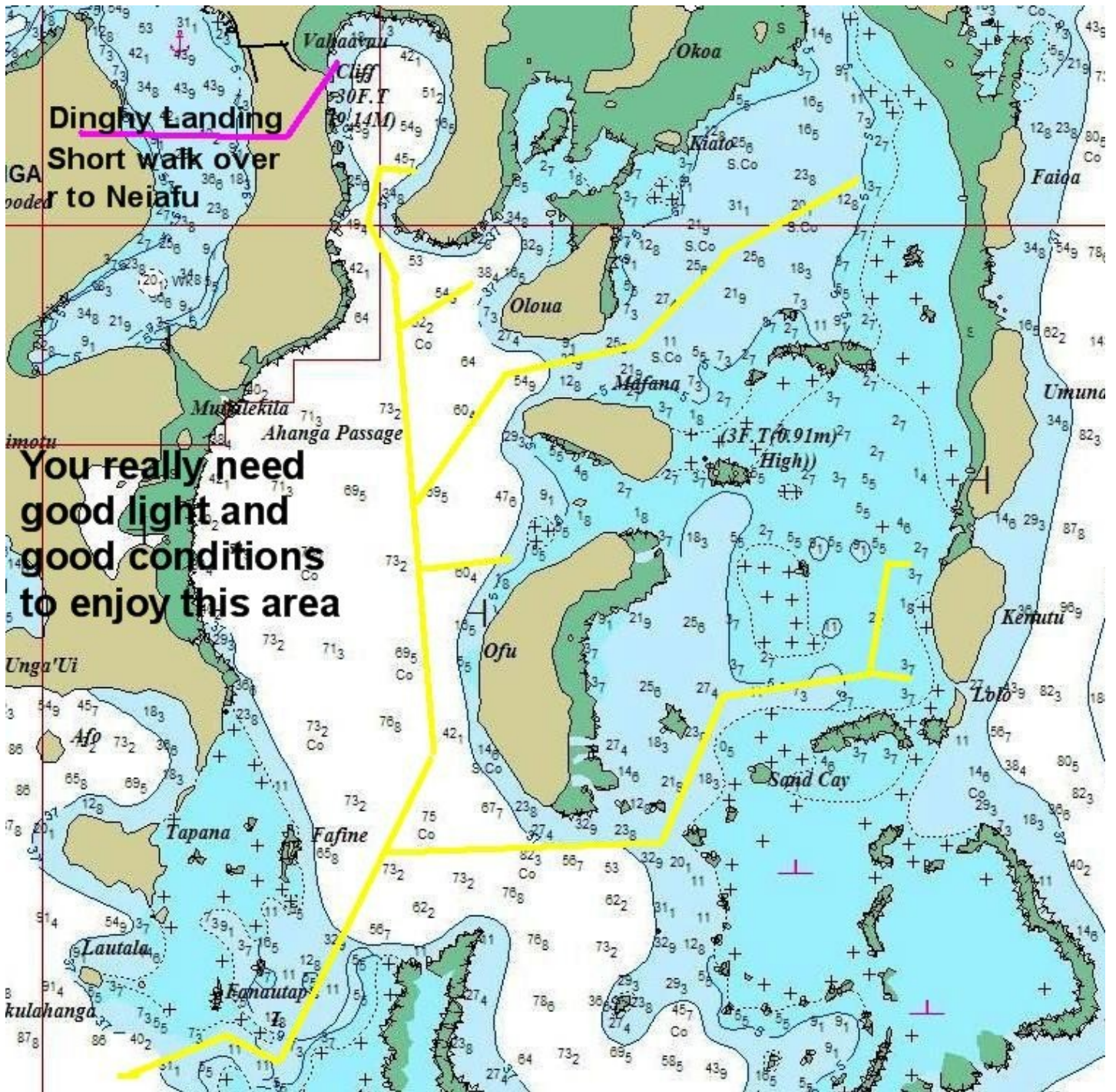


**Dinghy Landing**

**Short walk over to Neiafu**

**Cliff 30 F.T (9.1M)**

**You really need good light and good conditions to enjoy this area**

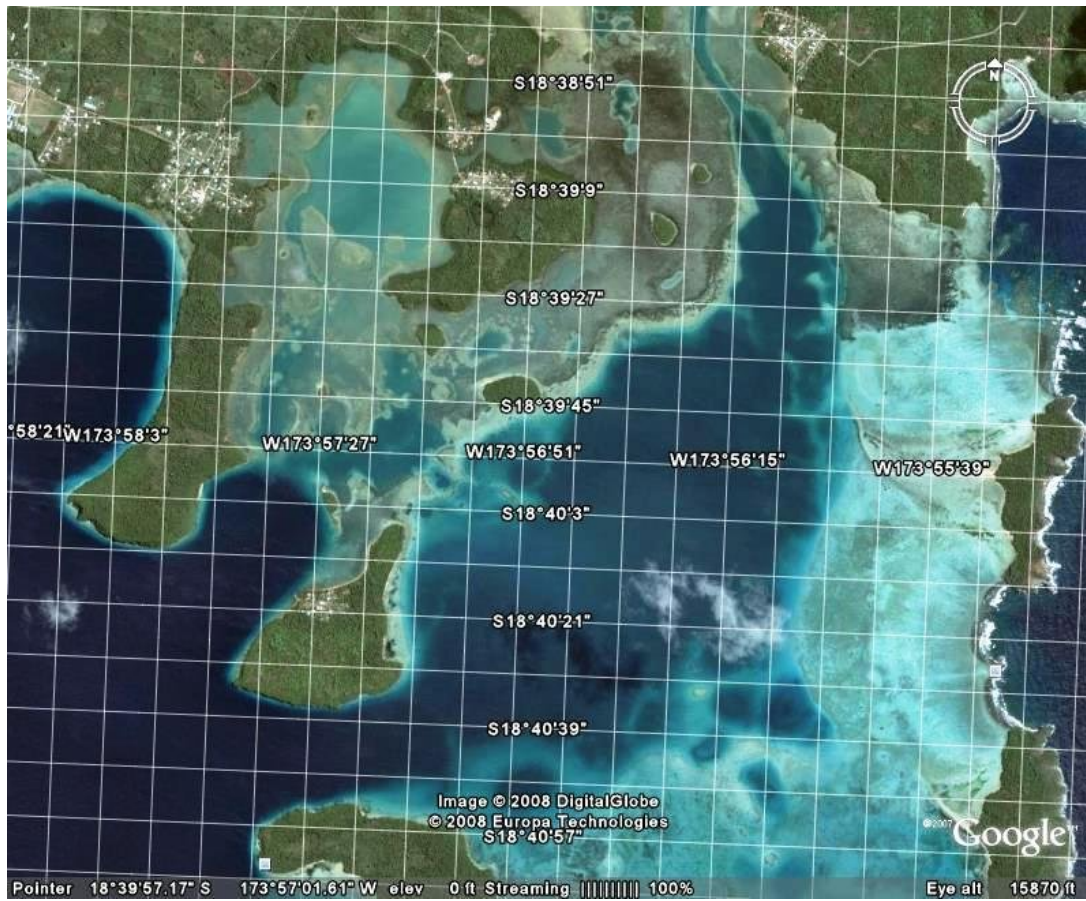
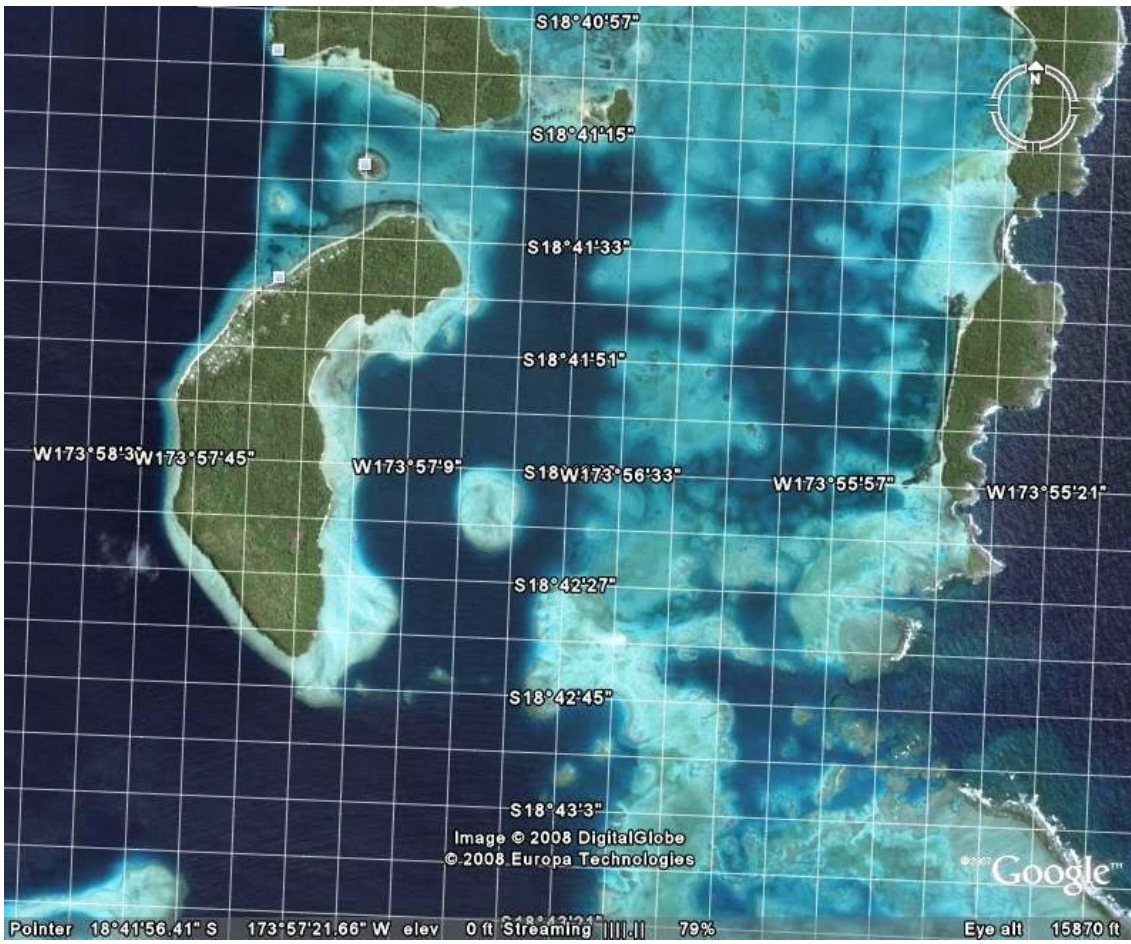


**Dinghy Landing**

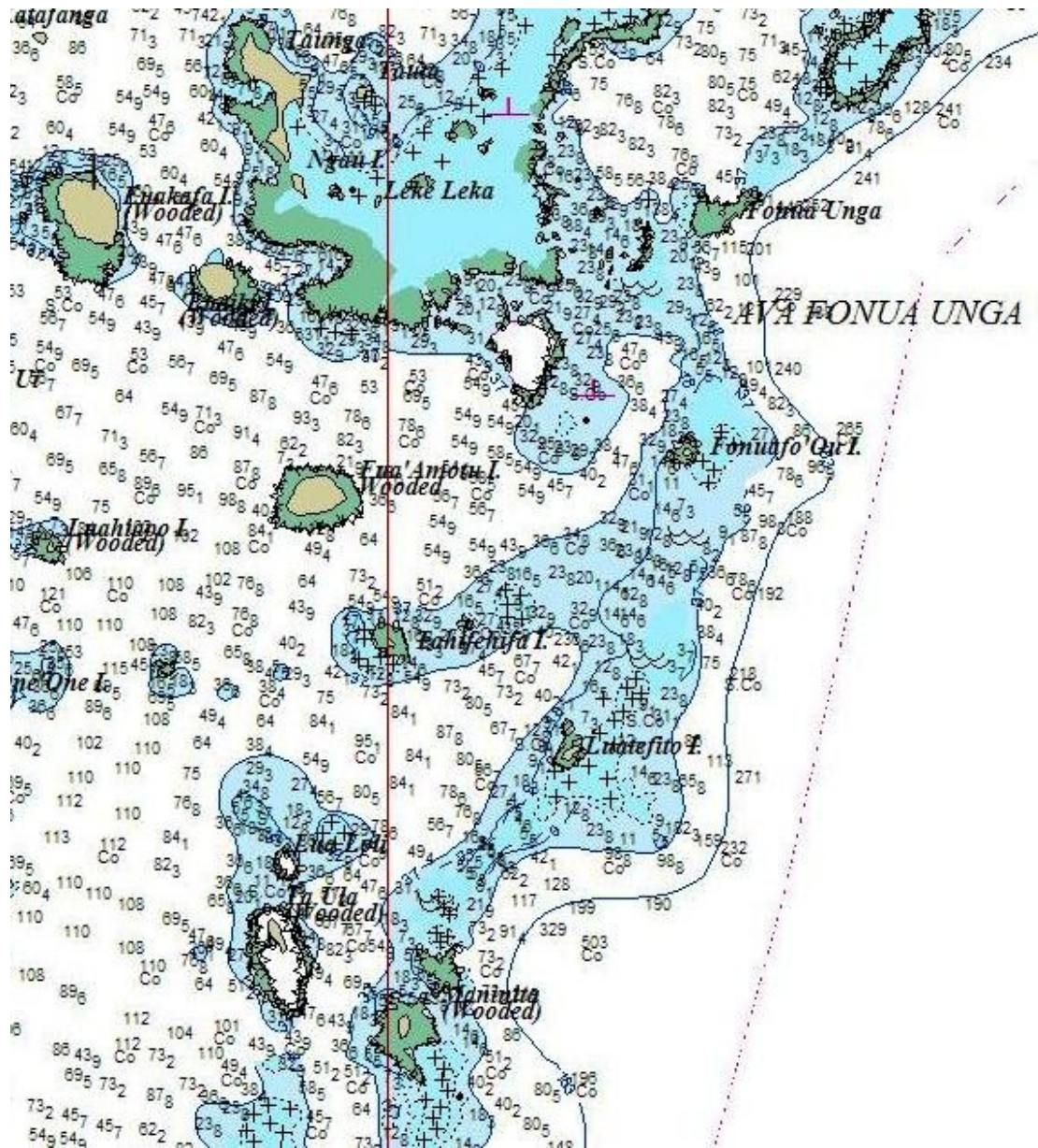
**Short walk over to Neiafu**

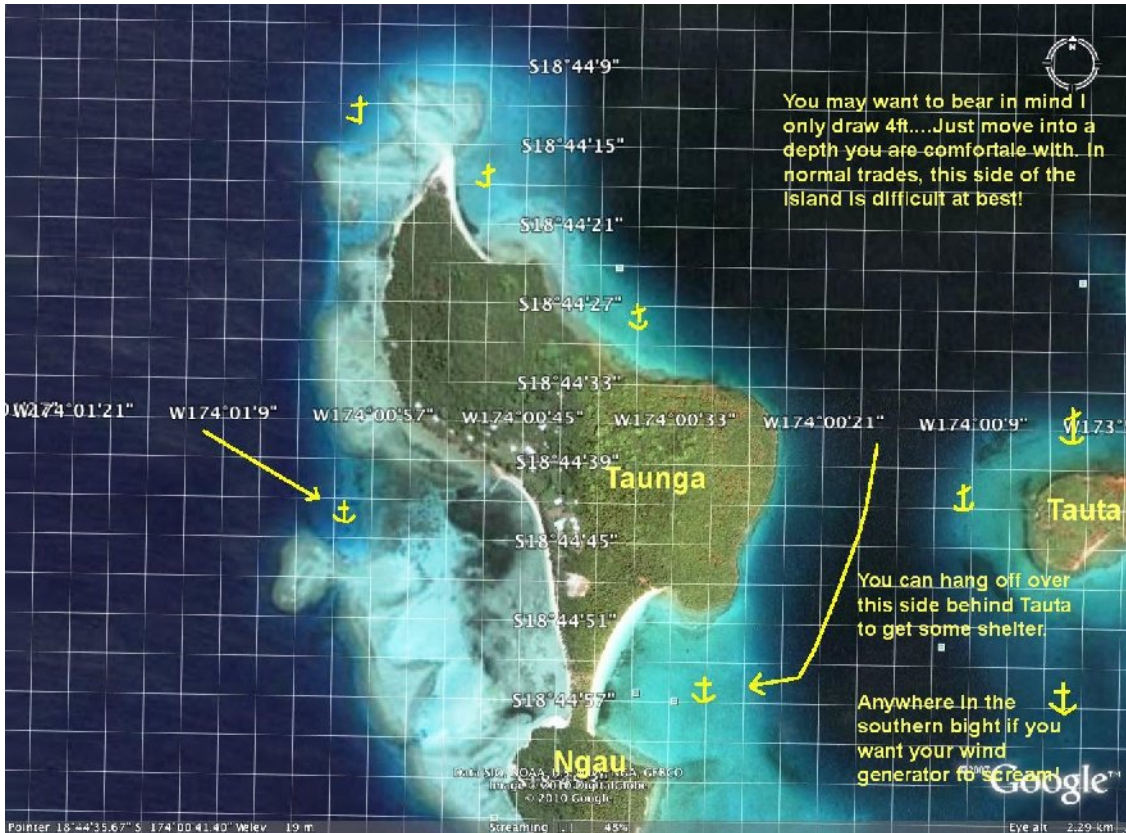
**Cliff 30 F.T (9.1M)**

**You really need good light and good conditions to enjoy this area**

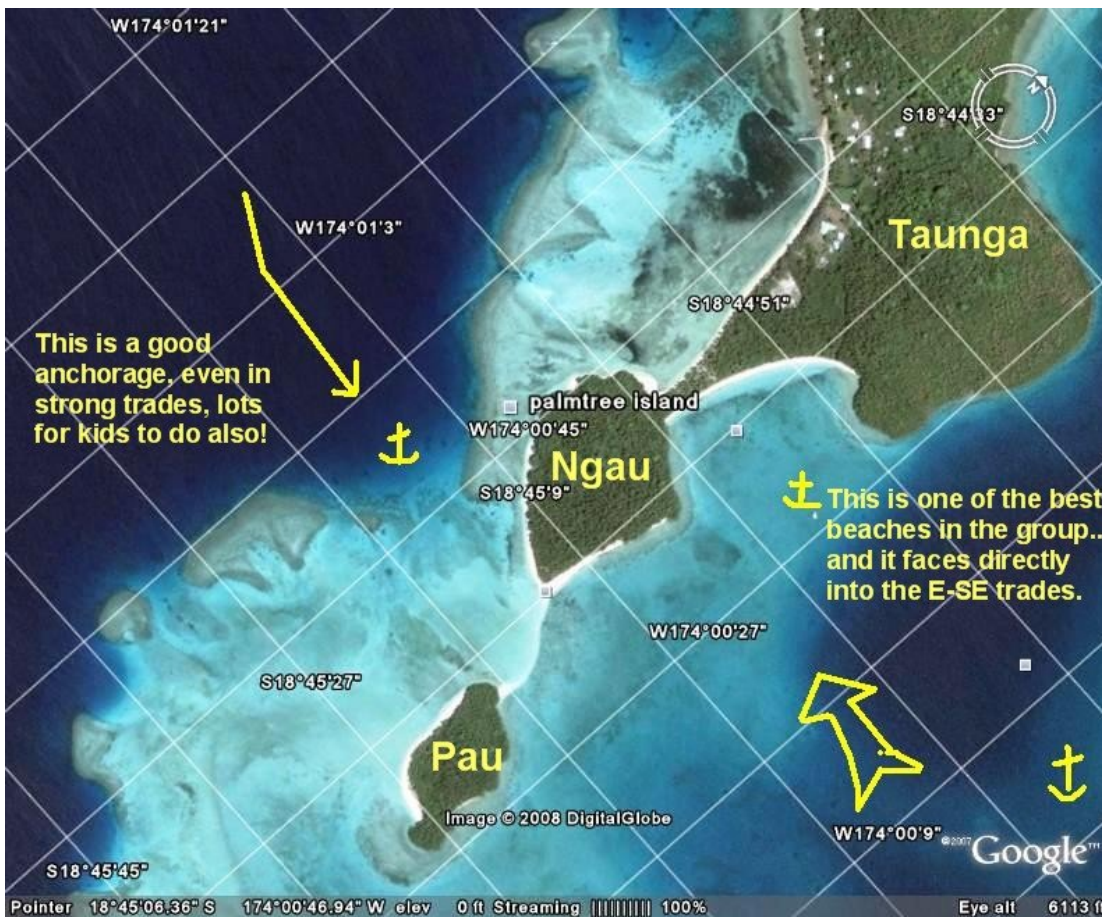


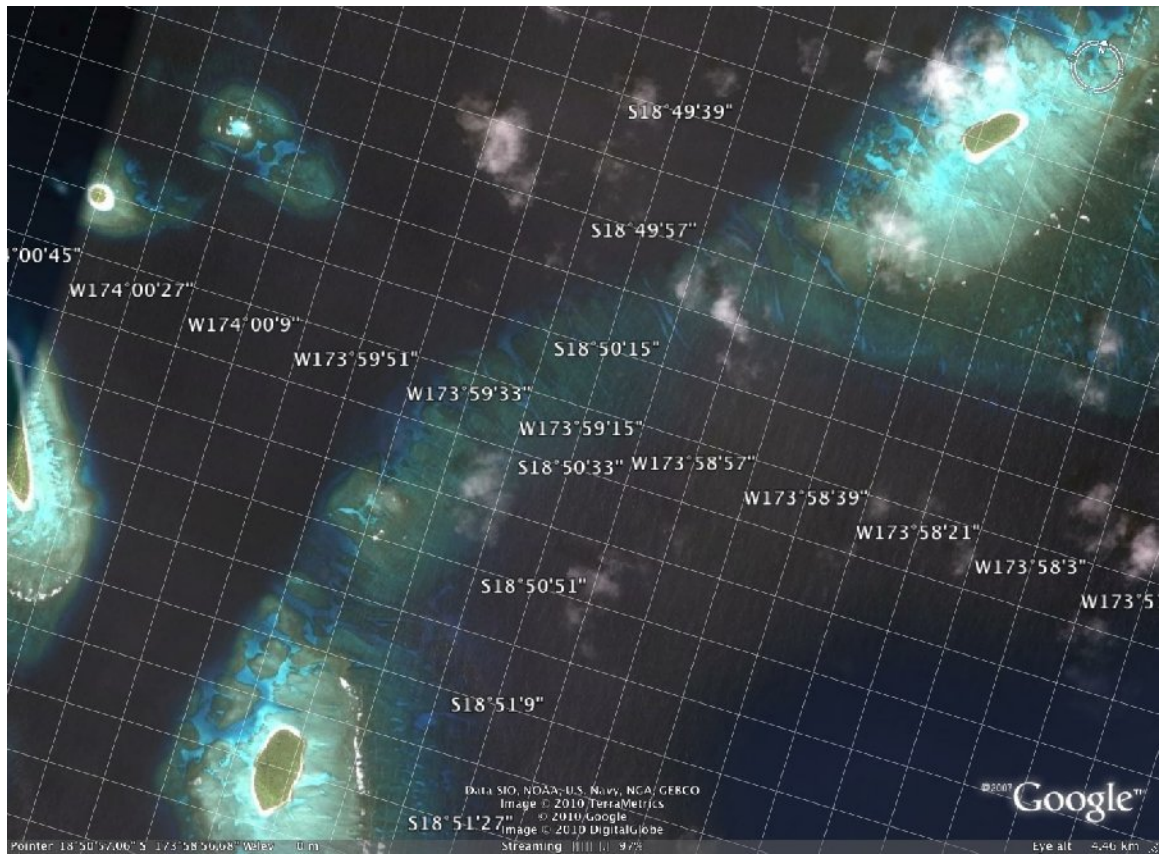
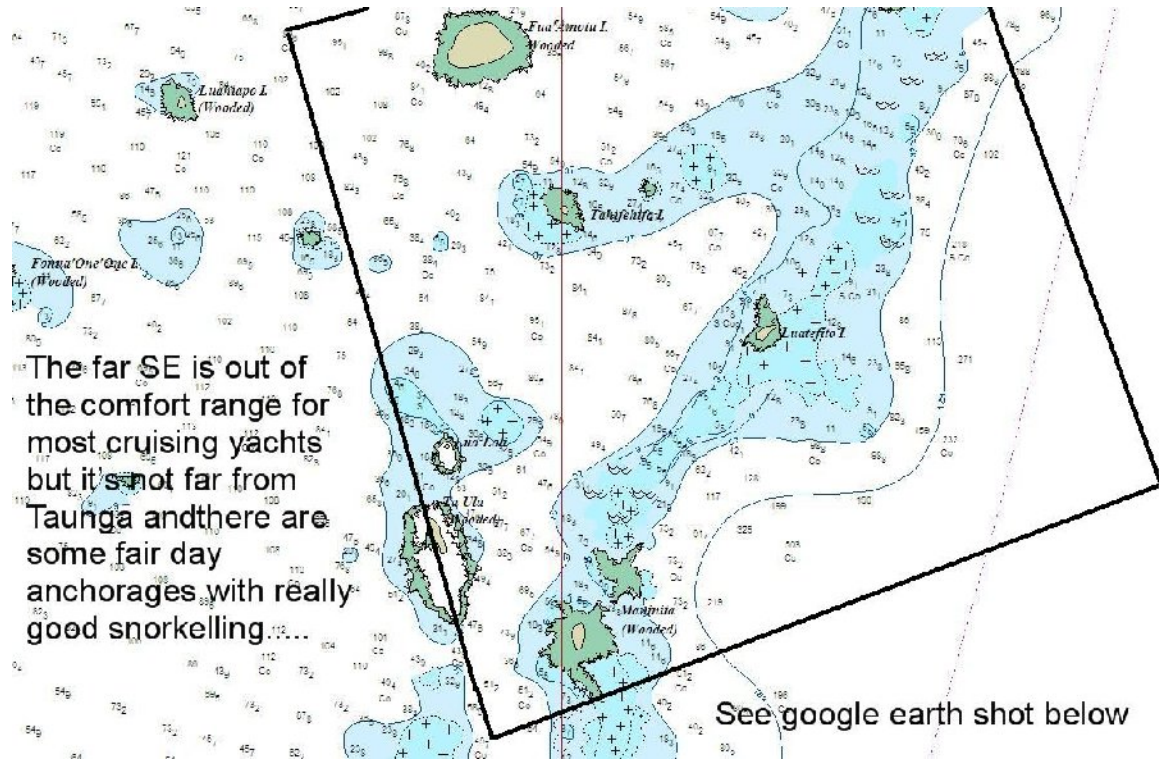
# SE Sector





**T**  
**a**  
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**a**

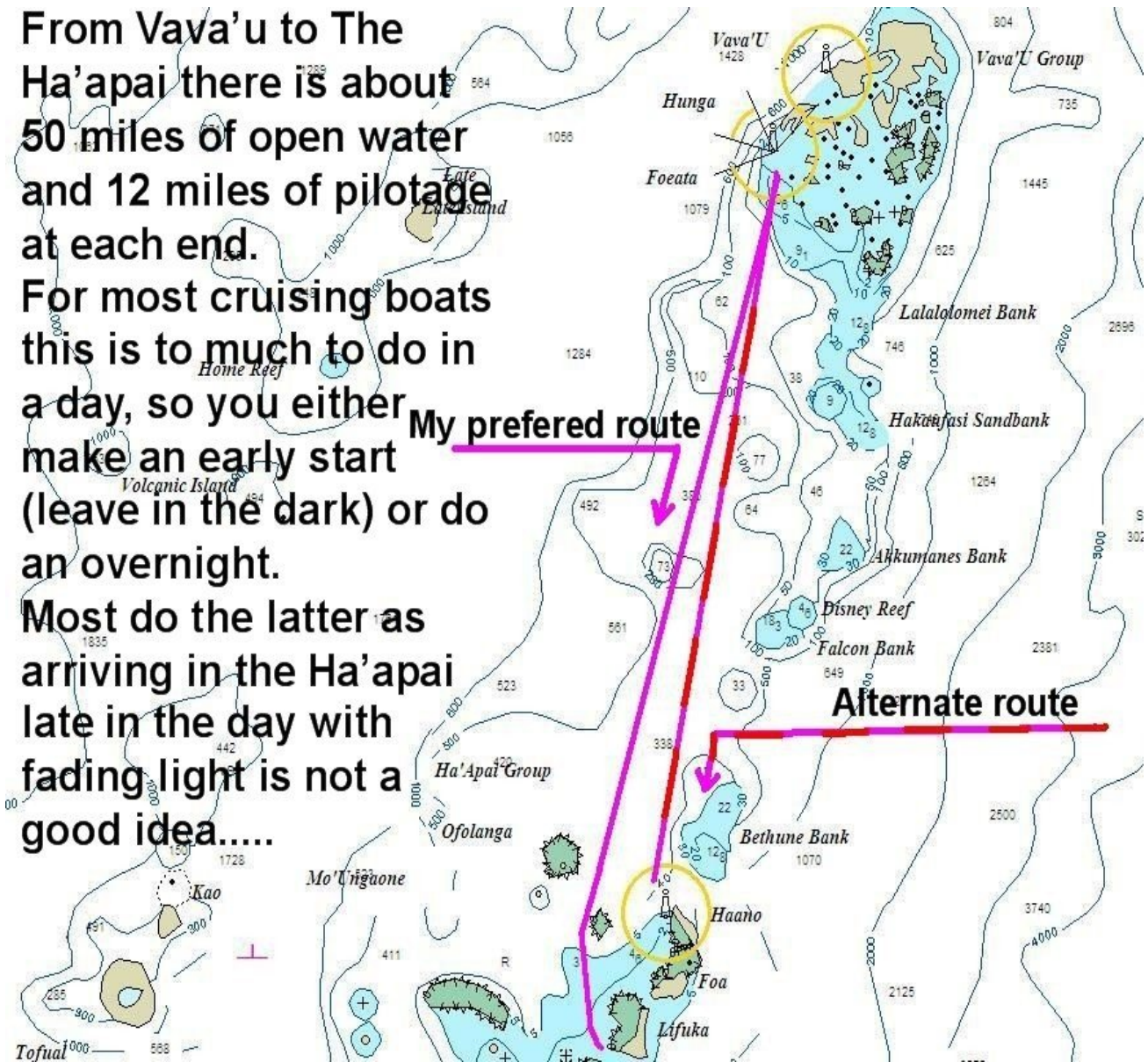




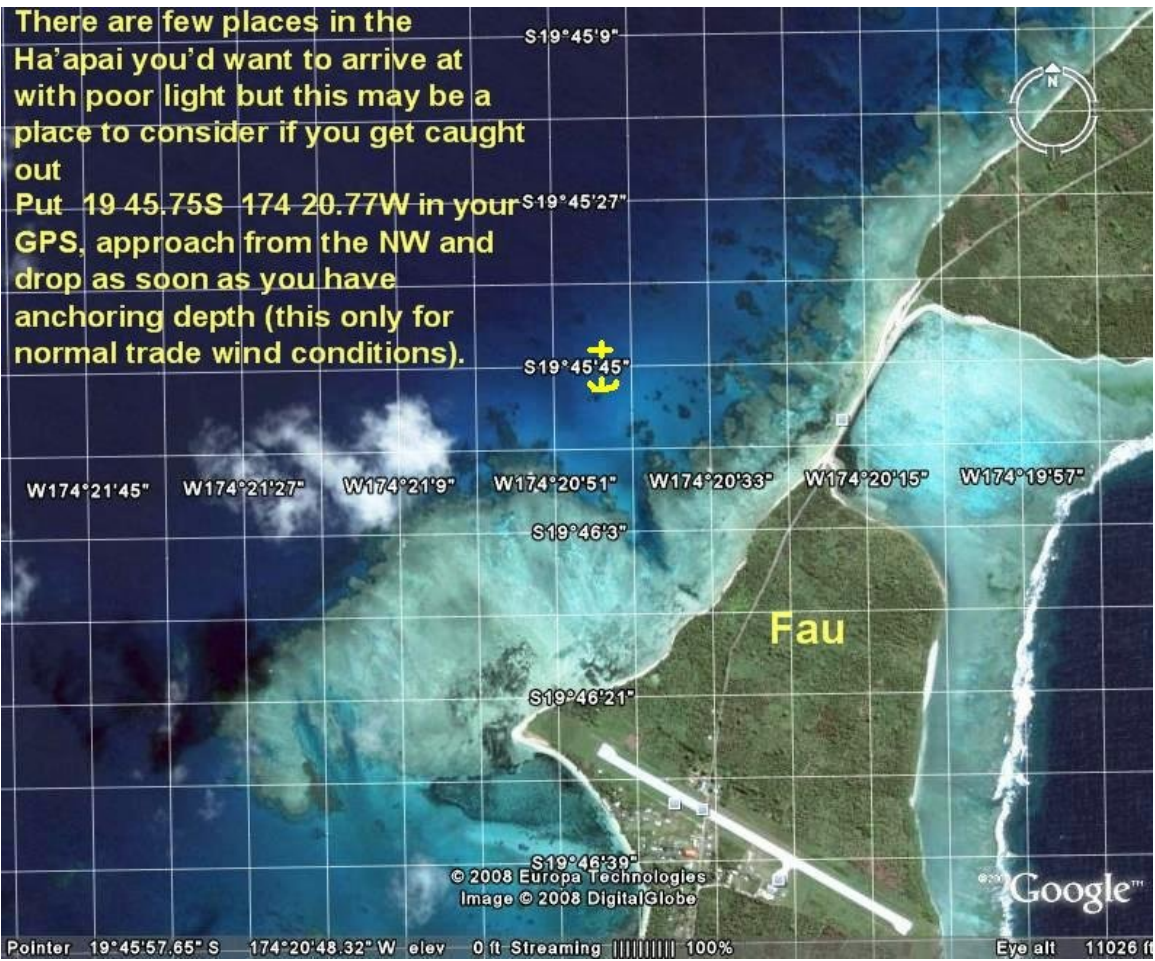
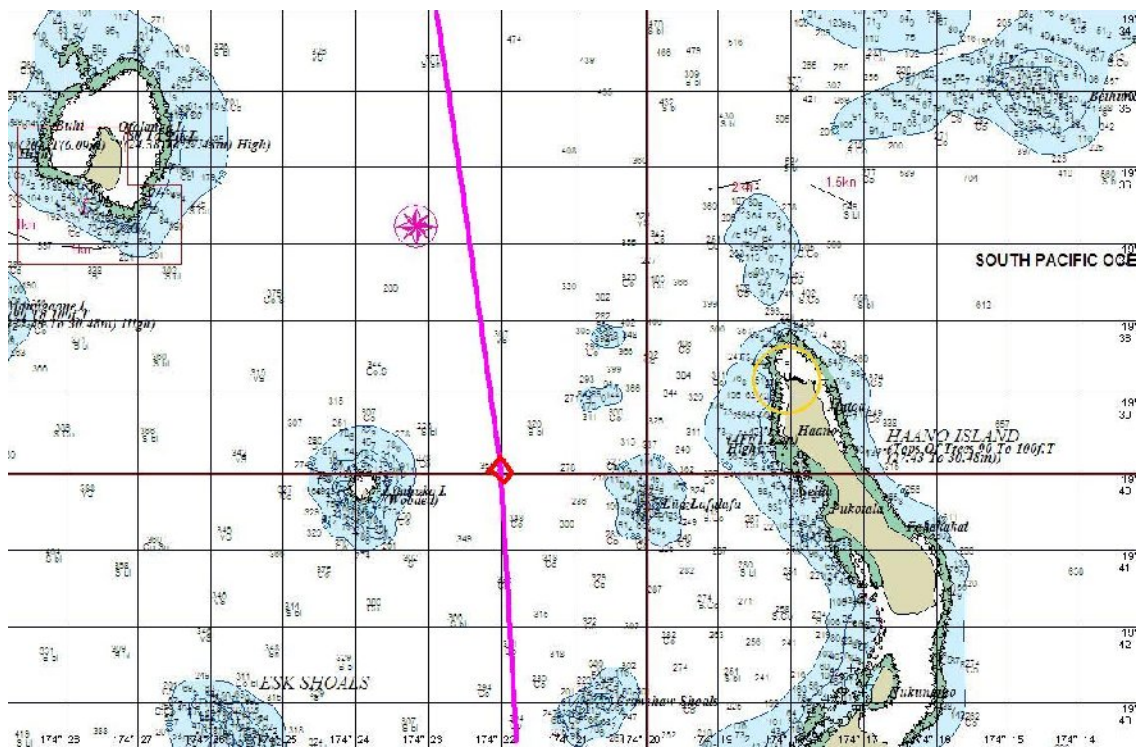
# A visit to the Ha'apai

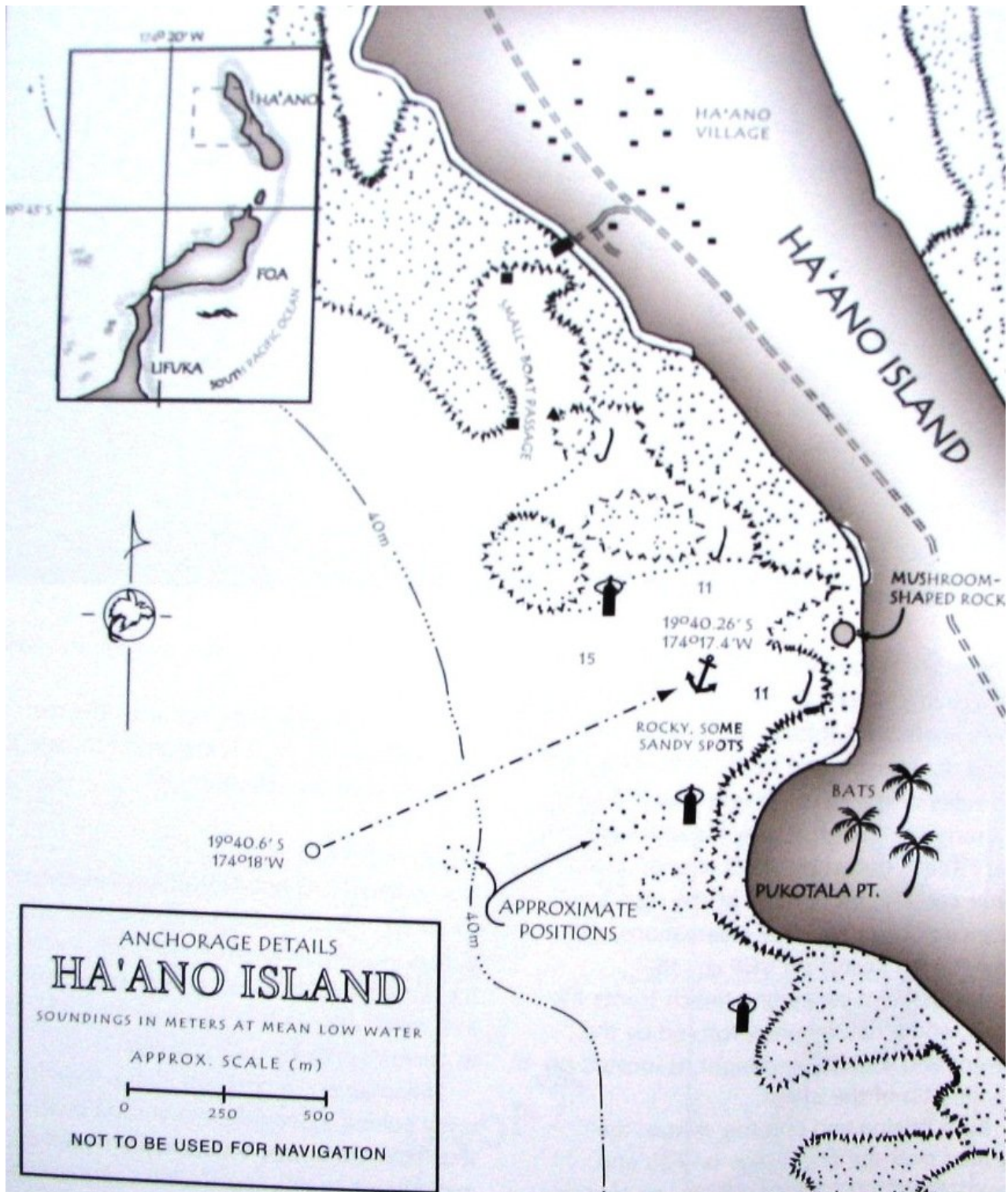
From Vava'u to The Ha'apai there is about 50 miles of open water and 12 miles of pilotage at each end. For most cruising boats this is too much to do in a day, so you either make an early start (leave in the dark) or do an overnight.

Most do the latter as arriving in the Ha'apai late in the day with fading light is not a good idea.....

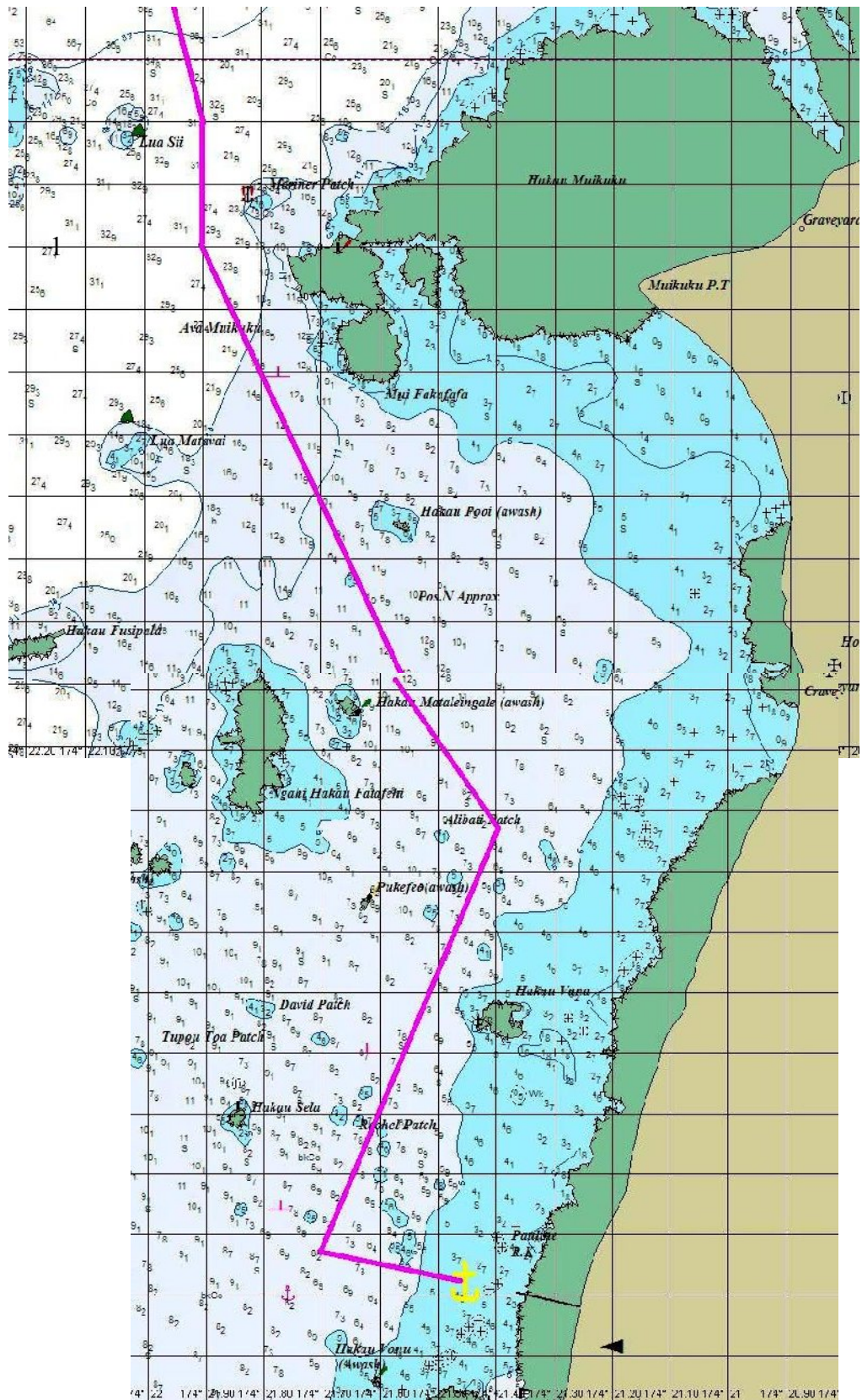








The 'Sailingbirds Guide' offers the above anchorage.....It may be good for an early departure when going north but arrival in poor light may be tricky....  
 I couldn't get a 'google' on it and the last time I went passed, there was a boat rolling heavily in the cove.....so I kept on going!!!

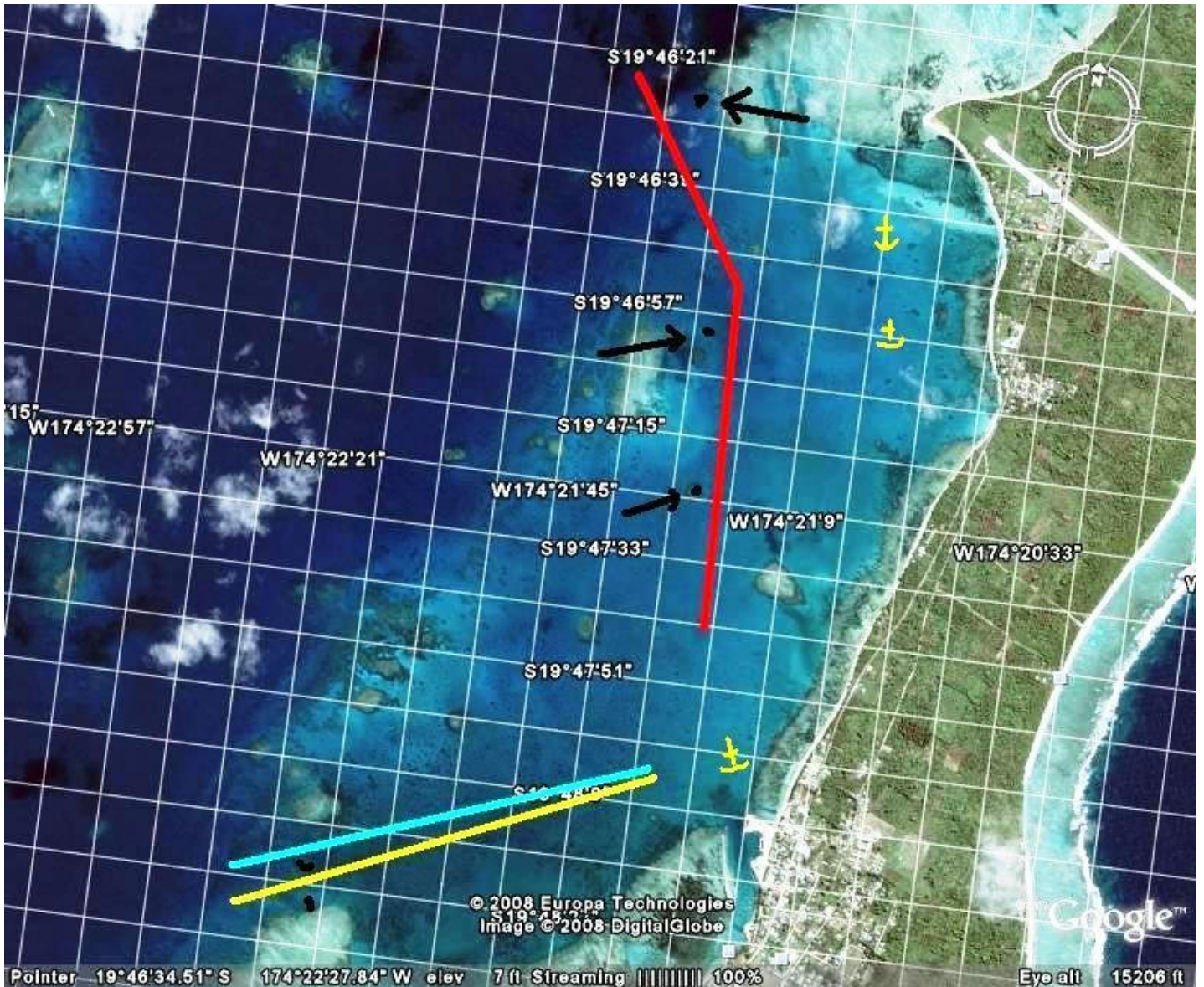


Anchoring off Pangai , Lefuka

Posn 1) 19 48.002S 174 21.239W ...muddy sand...18feet of water

Posn 2) 19 47.973S 174 21.285W... muddy sand...16feet of water

Both of these are a short distance north of the harbour entrance but clear of traffic.



## PANGAI HARBOUR

Not the greatest of places but you have to go here to 'clear in' and out of the Ha'apai. The process is painless if you are calling in anyway..... but if you are on route, passing through, it can be a pain. Best take clearance direct between Vava'u and Nuku'alofa, then if you do stop on route, well... you can always make your way here to make it official.



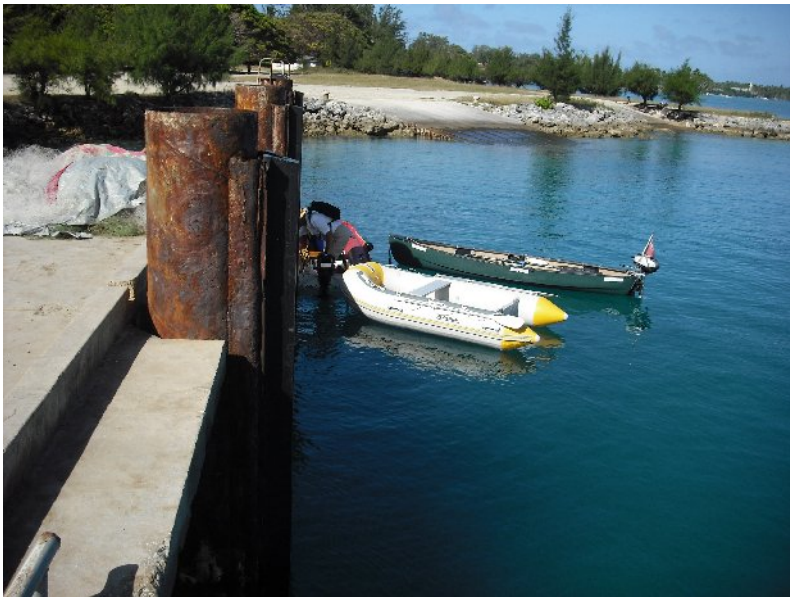
There is room in the harbour for a couple of boats to anchor and this is one of the few places with some all-round protection in a frontal passage. Ourselves and a few other boats did take one here in roughly the yellow positions marked.... You should be prepared to use at least two anchors (line ashore is also an option). Do not anchor in the north of the basin as commercial traffic arrives and departs at all hours.....

There is not much available here however the Diesel was cheaper than in Vava'u and easier to get!!!! LPG is also available near the dock and limited supplies. Most of the limited Fresh Provisions were of very poor quality. AND if you do buy anything best check for roaches before you bring it aboard (that includes lettuce, cabbage and the like!!!).



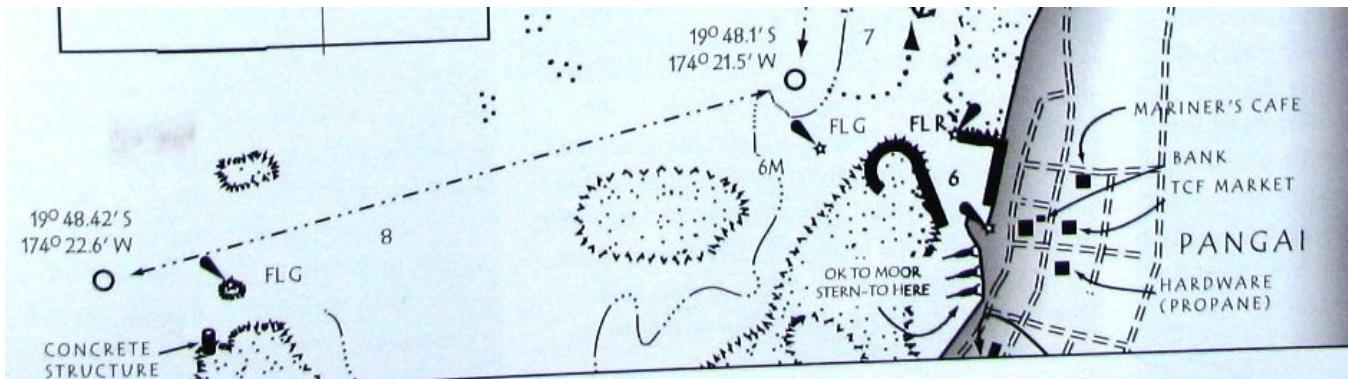
The end of the dock is fine most weekdays however, when school is out this is the local swim site so you can expect a wet, if not drowned, dinghy.

There are two ramps (one facing you on the bottom photo) , we put our wheels down and pulled out there without problem except that at Low Water the ramp has a drop-off at the end..... and it's slippery!!!

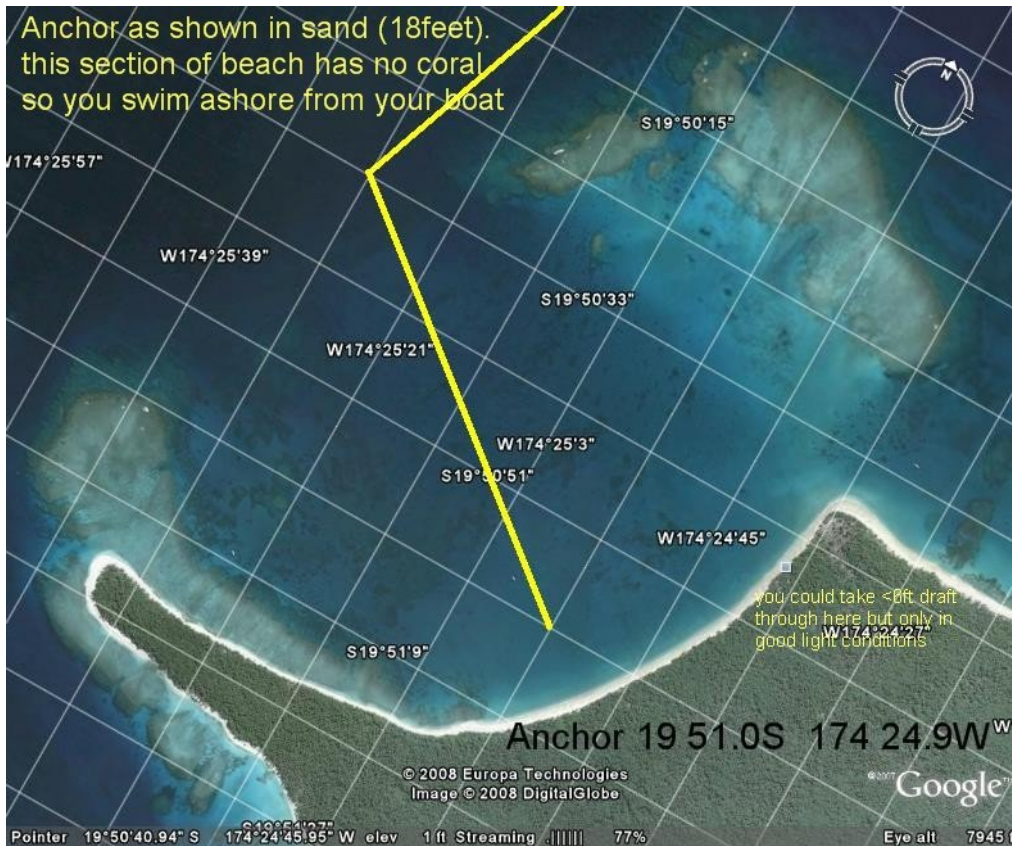
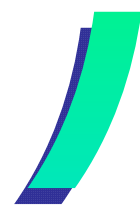
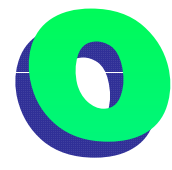
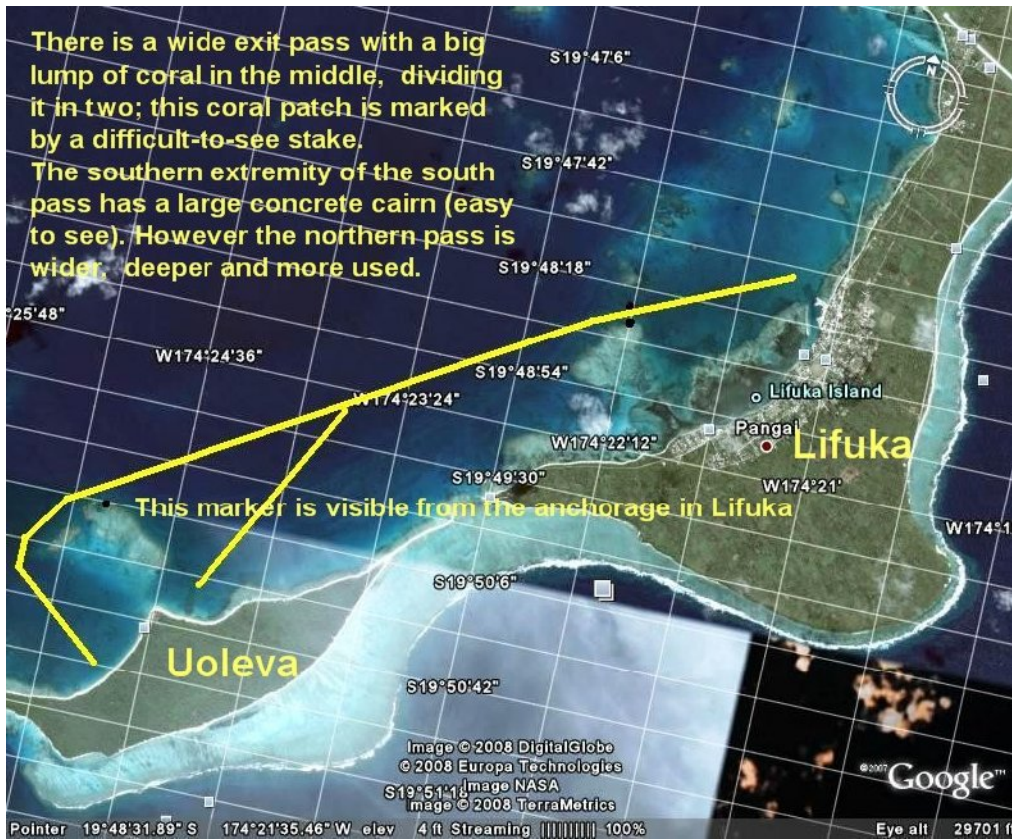


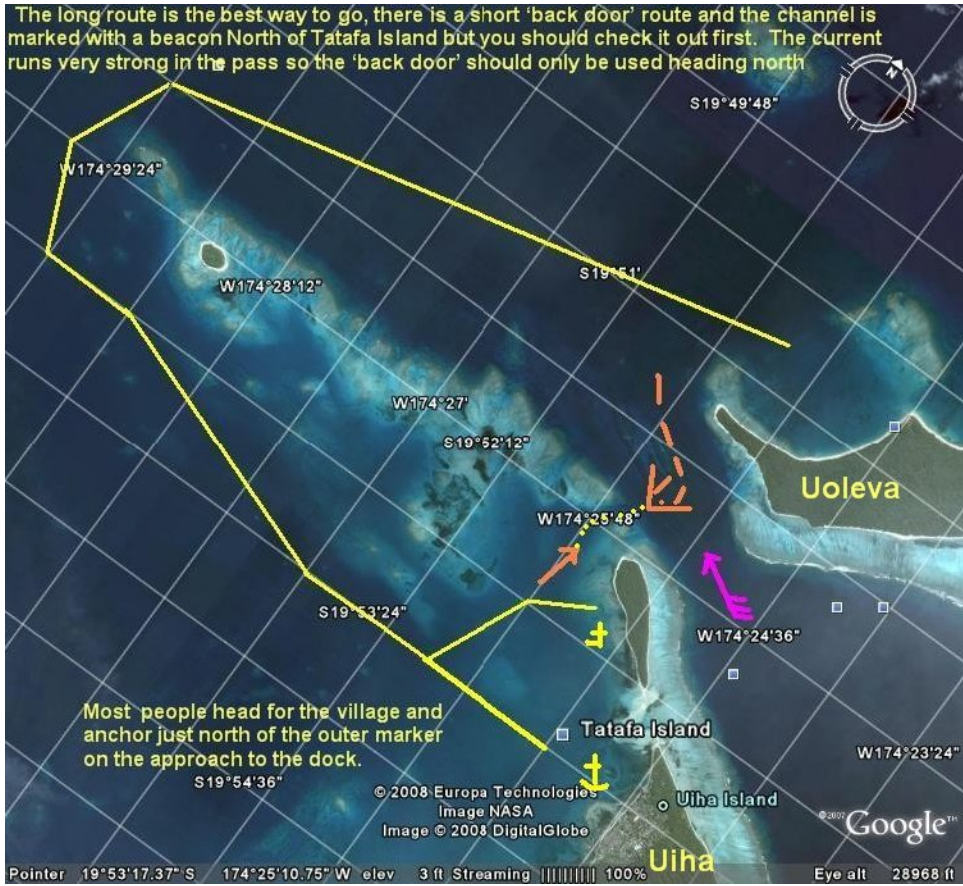
As there is so little of interest ashore here, there should be no problem leaving the dinghy for short periods.

# South of Lefuka



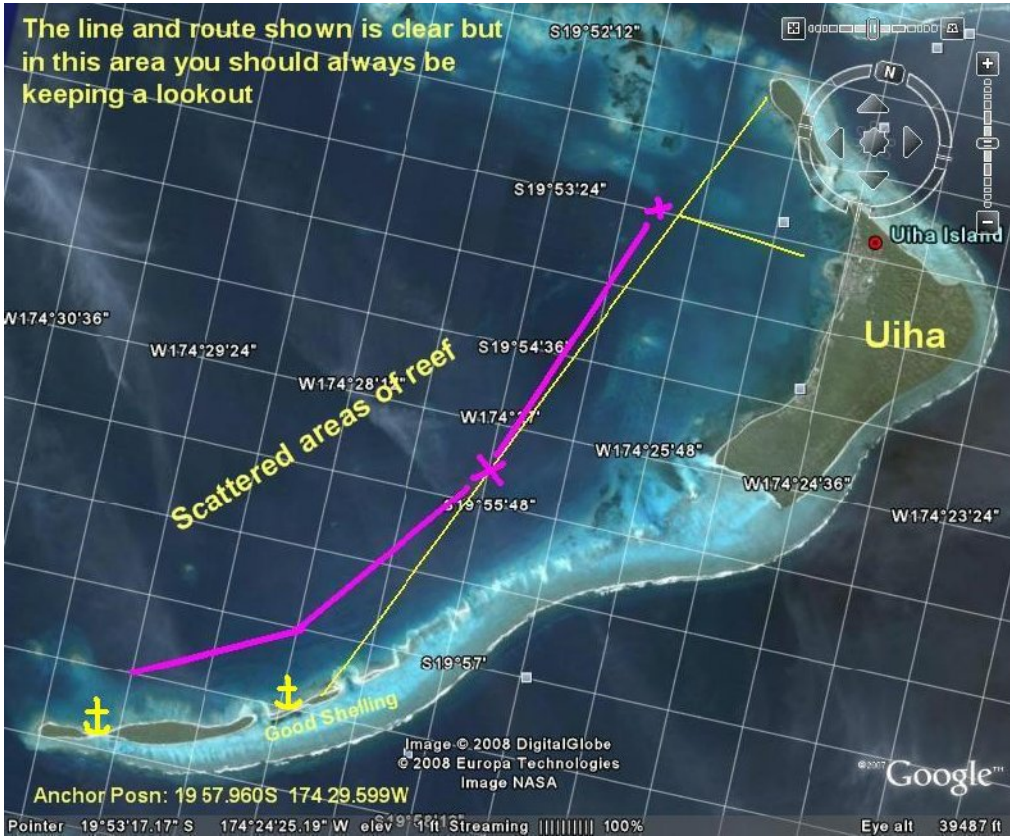
c/o Sailingbird Guide..... (The FL.G has been replaced by a stake June 2010)





U

i

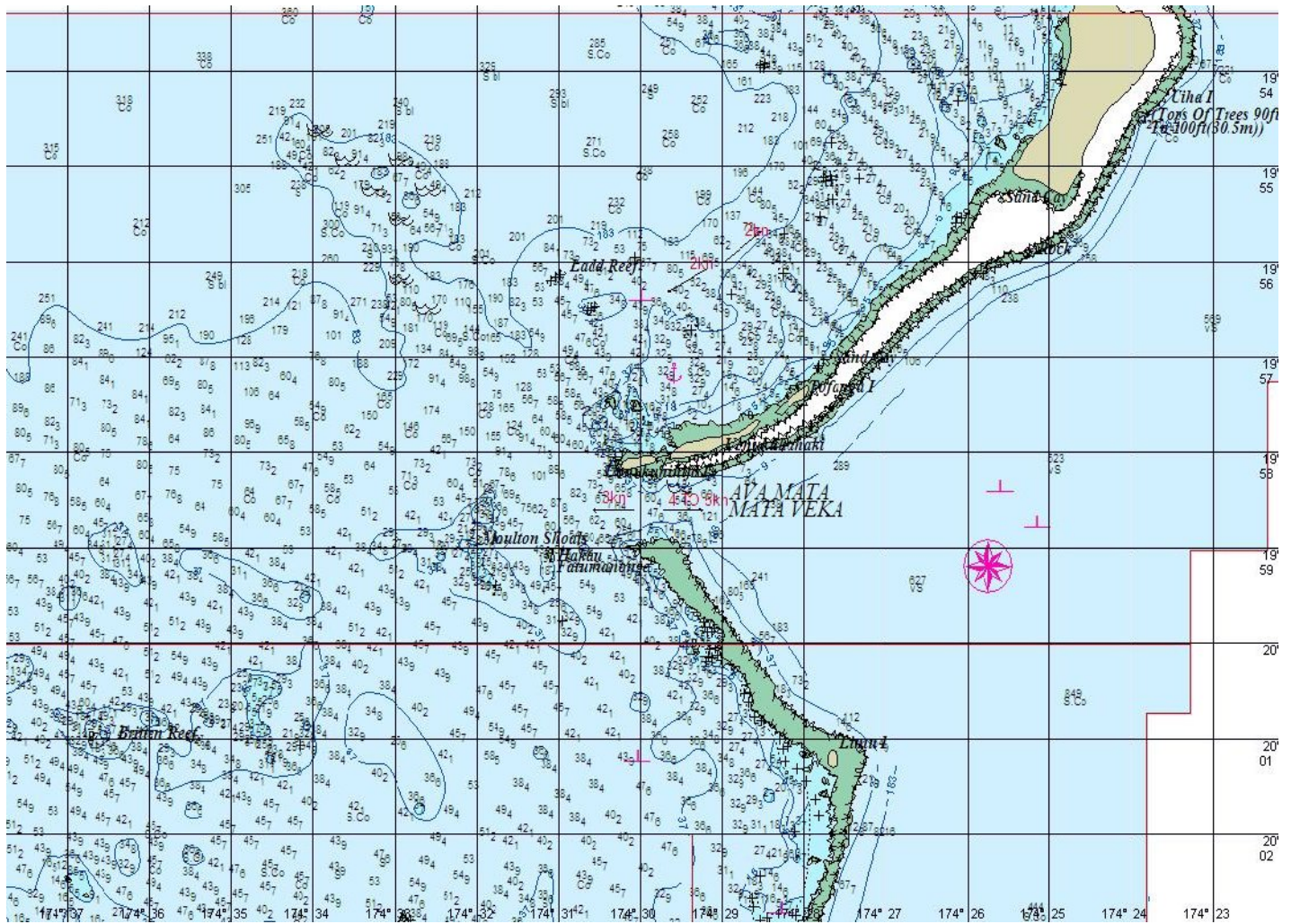


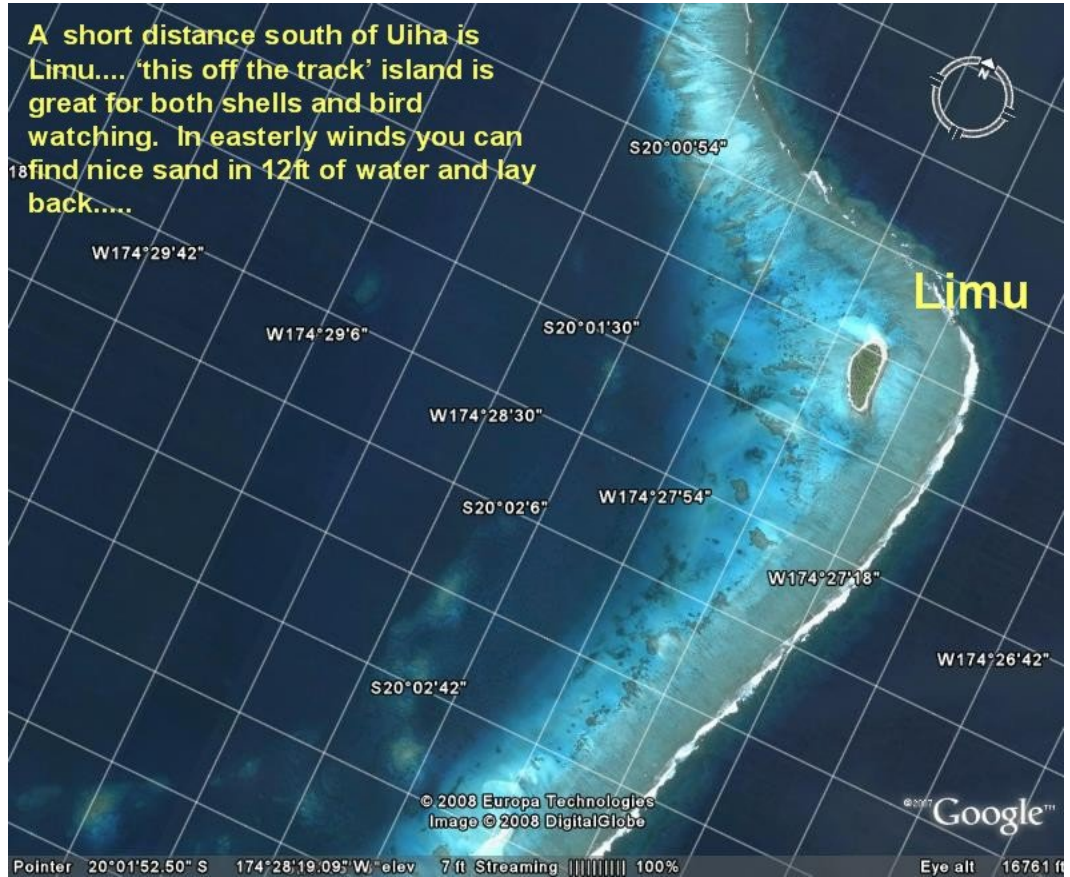
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a



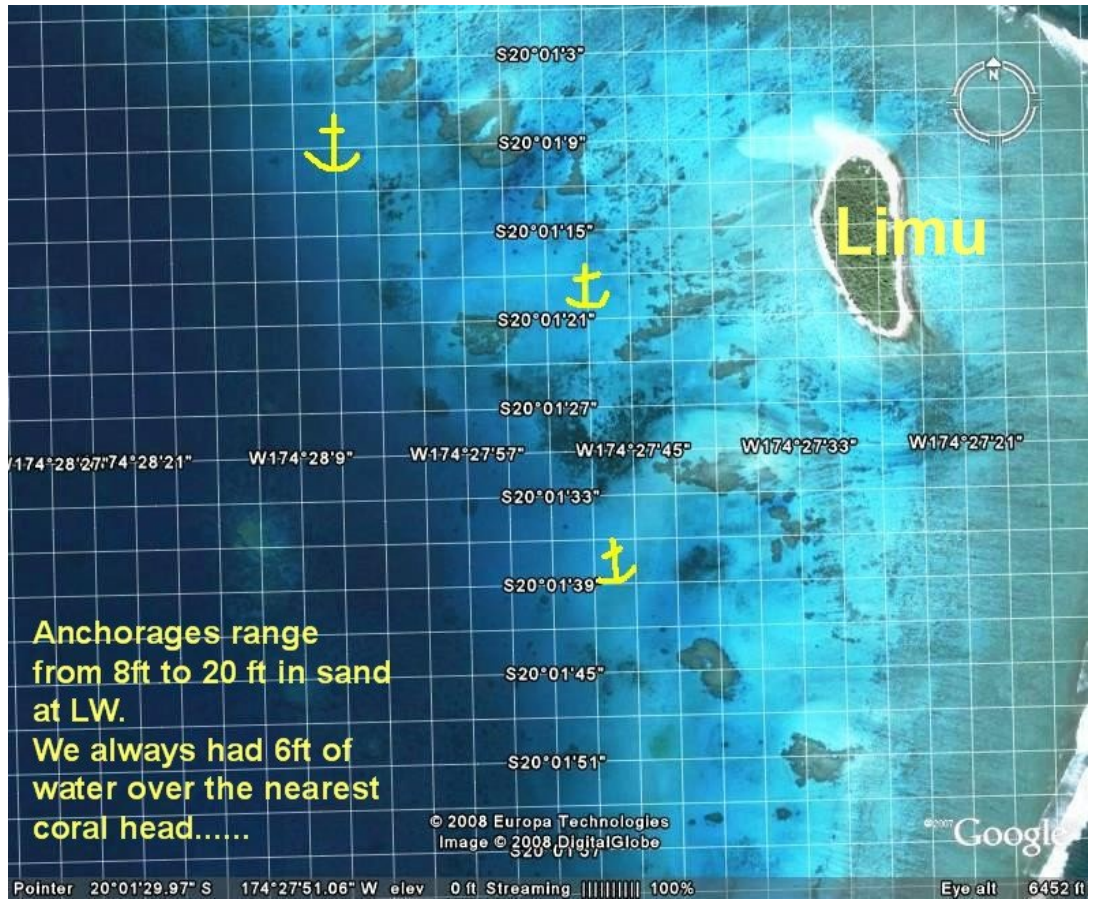
Going South from UANUKUHAHAKI, which is the anchorage indicated on the chart above in the southern Uiha group, you pass 'Ava Mata MaTa Veka' and to the west of Joulton Shoals. You may then take up a course directly for Limu Island. There are a couple of coral heads close to the approach line so the best time to do this passage is in the early afternoon.





L

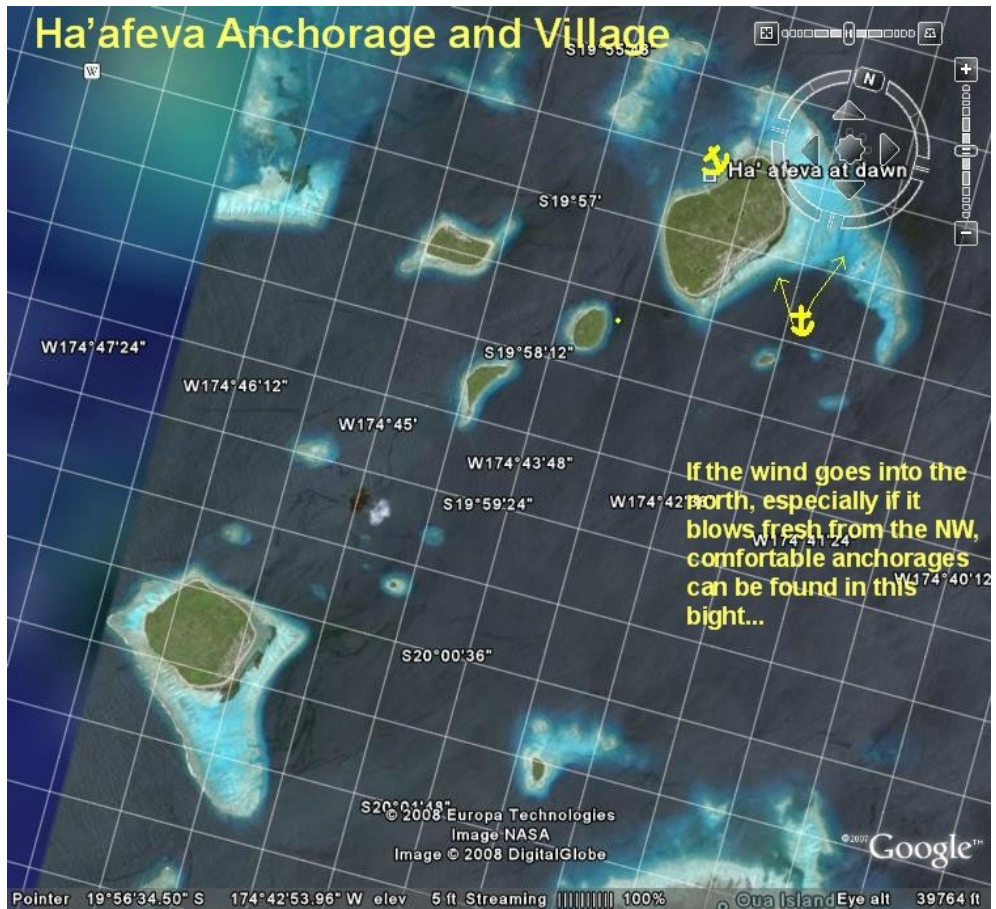
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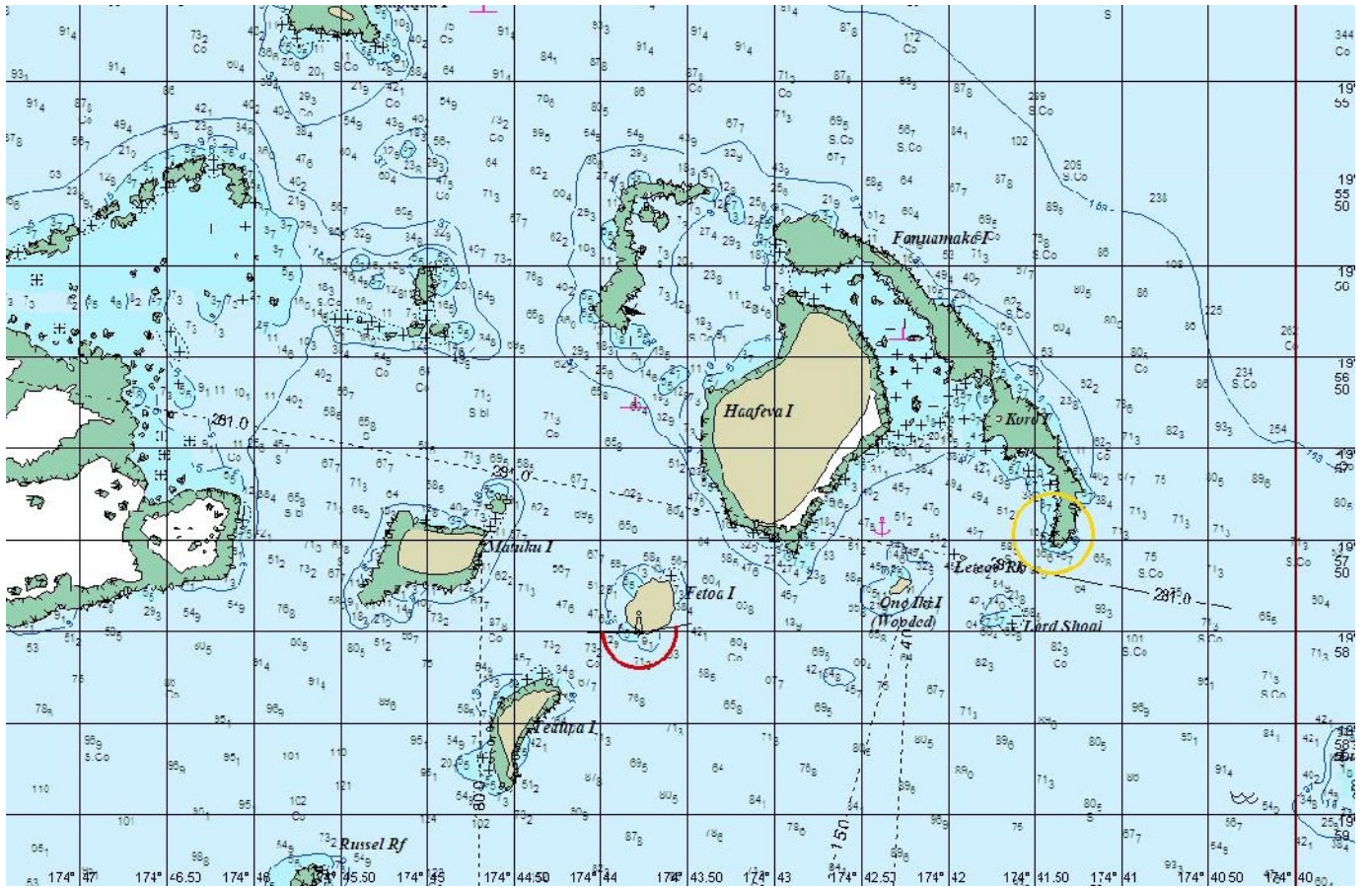


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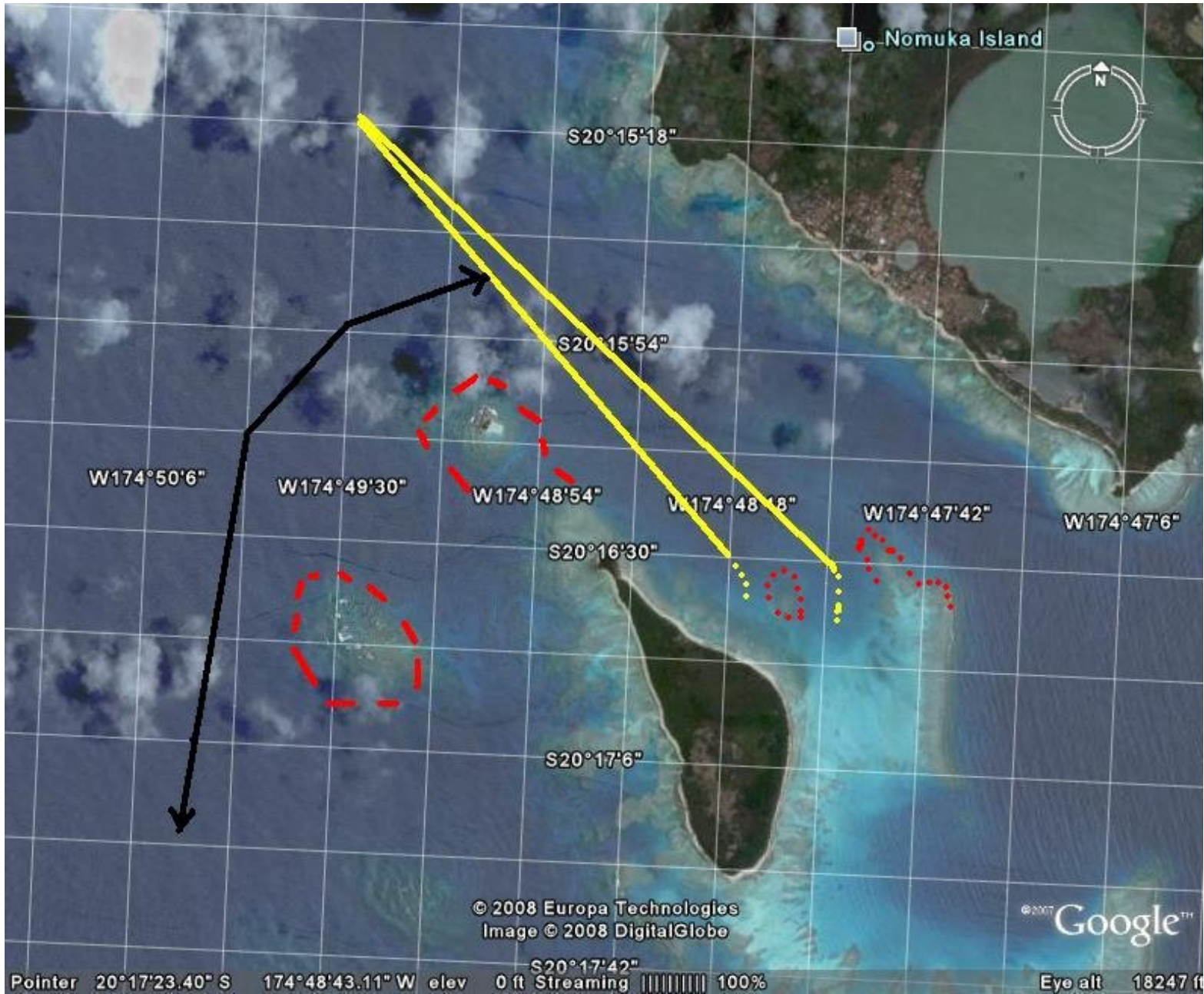
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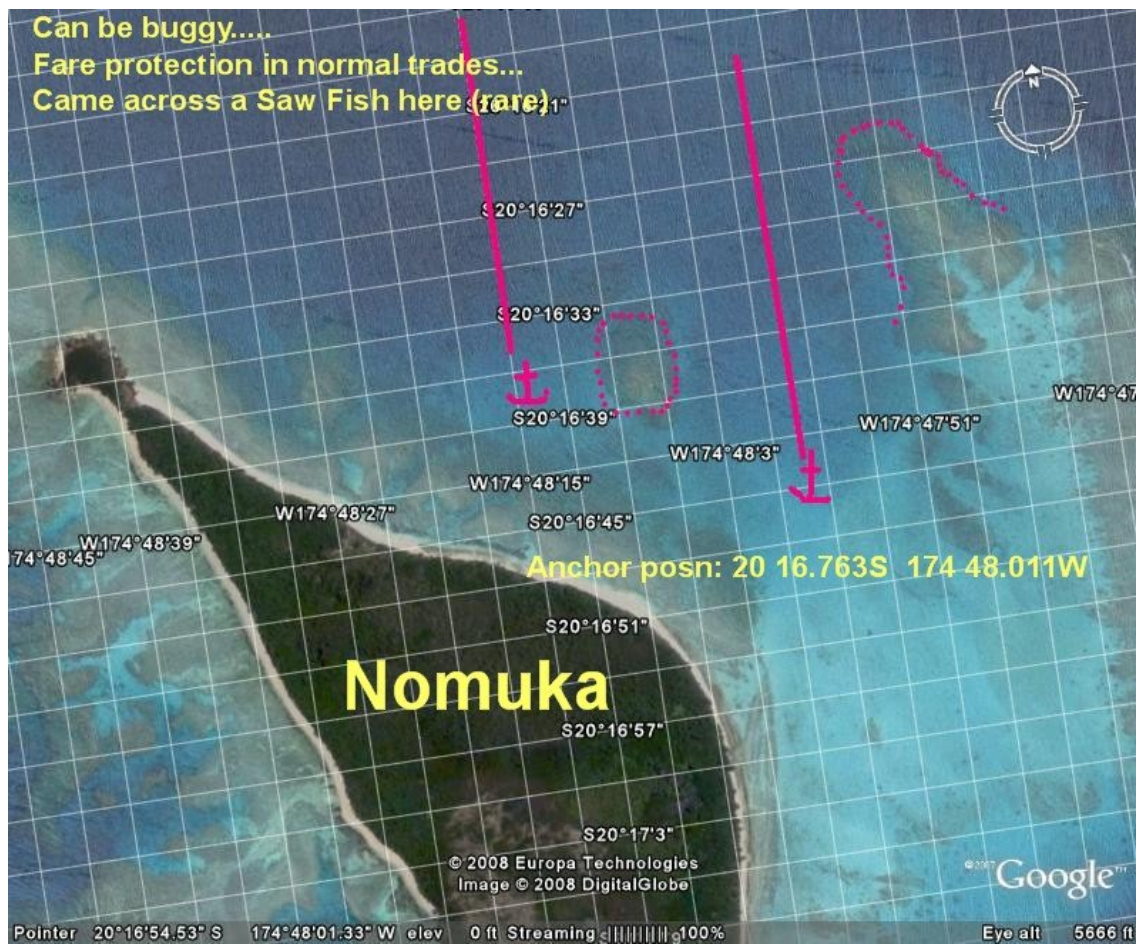
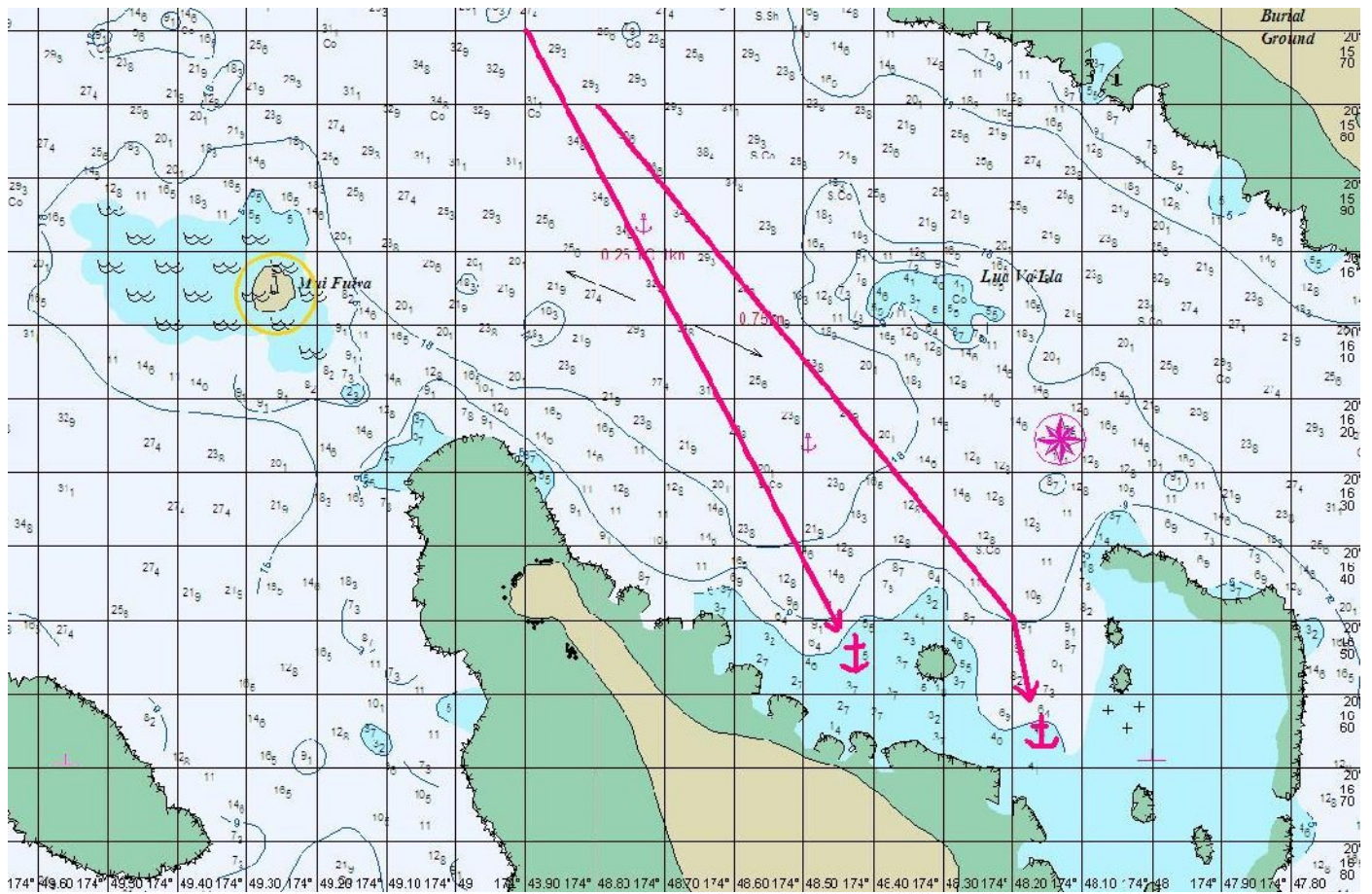
# Ha'afeva



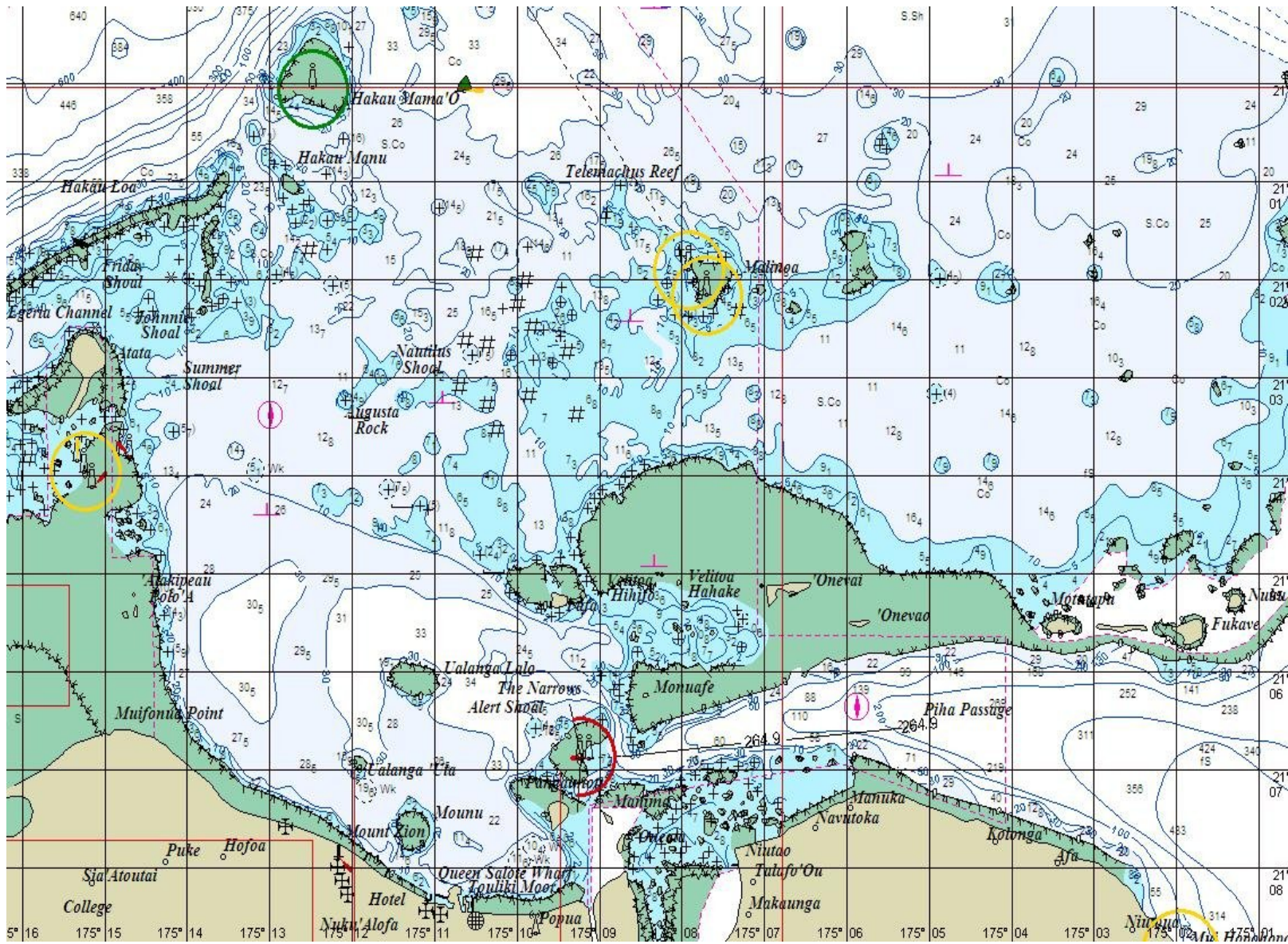


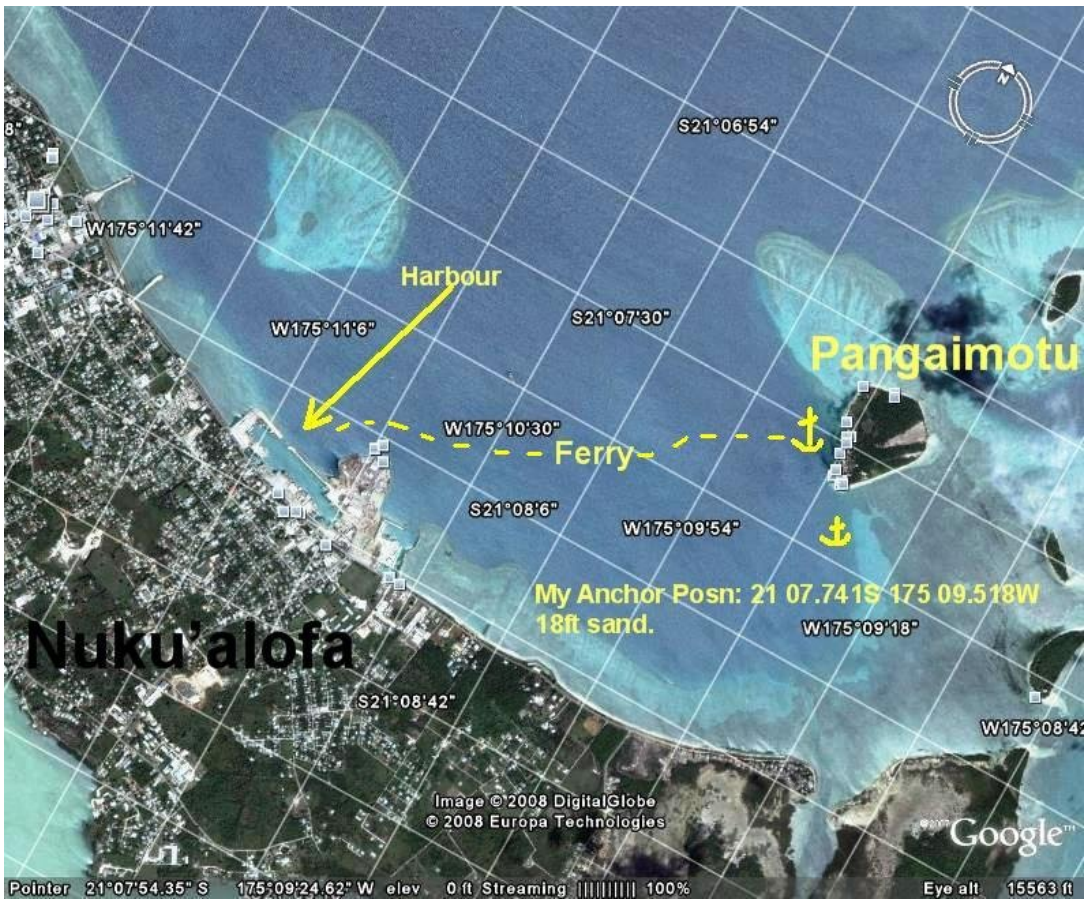
# Nomuka





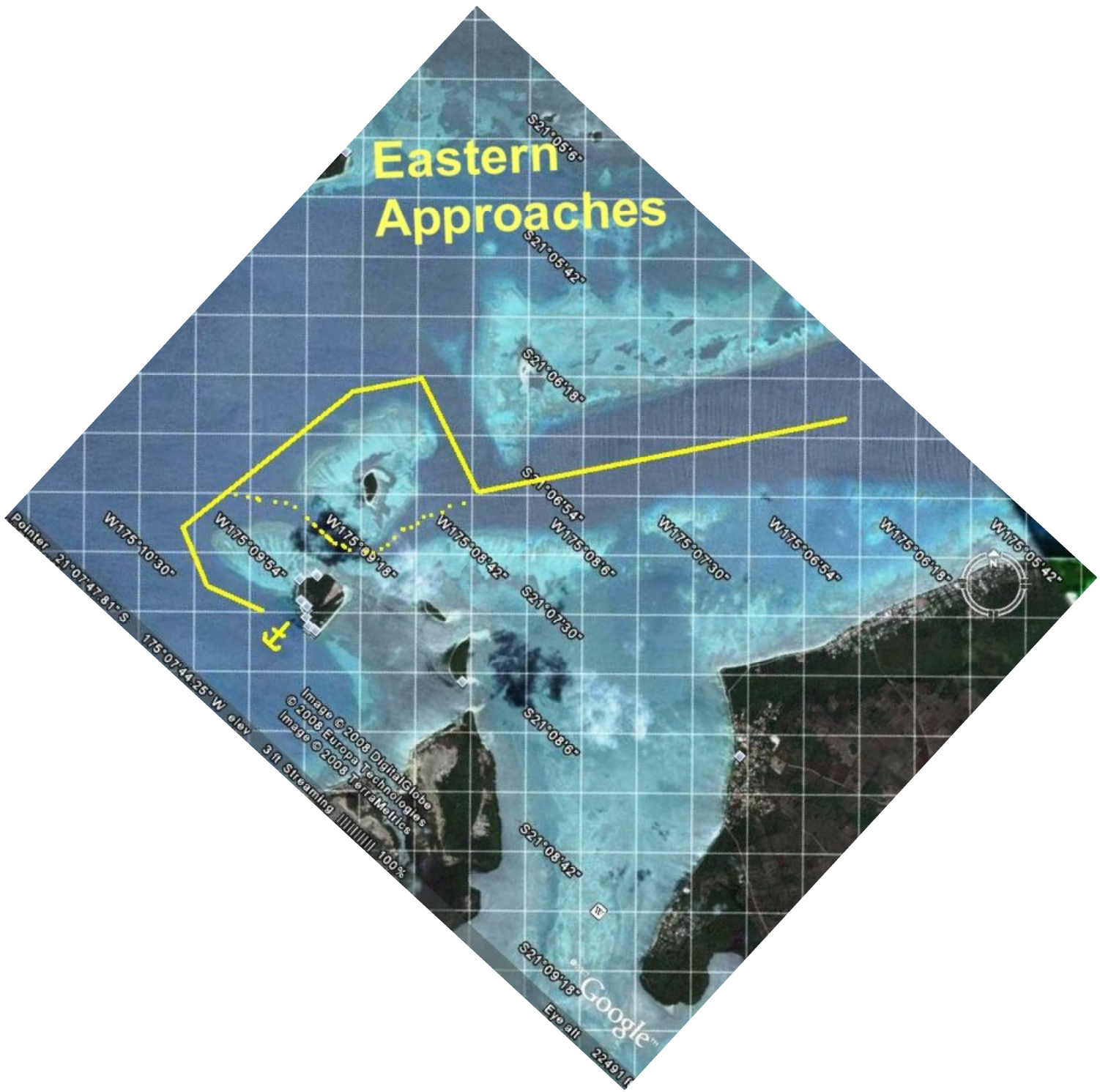
# Tongatapu







# Eastern Approaches



# Western Approach



S21°00'36"

S21°01'48"

S21°03'

S21°04'12"

S21°05'24"

S21°06'36"

S21°07'48"

S21°09'

21°05'19.80" S 175°21'06.85" W elev 48 ft Streaming 100%

S22°12'

W175°21'

W175°19'48"

W175°18'36"

W175°17'24"

W175°16'12"

W175°15'

W175°13'48"

W175°12'36"

W175°11'24"

W



Fouj

Nukunuku

Google

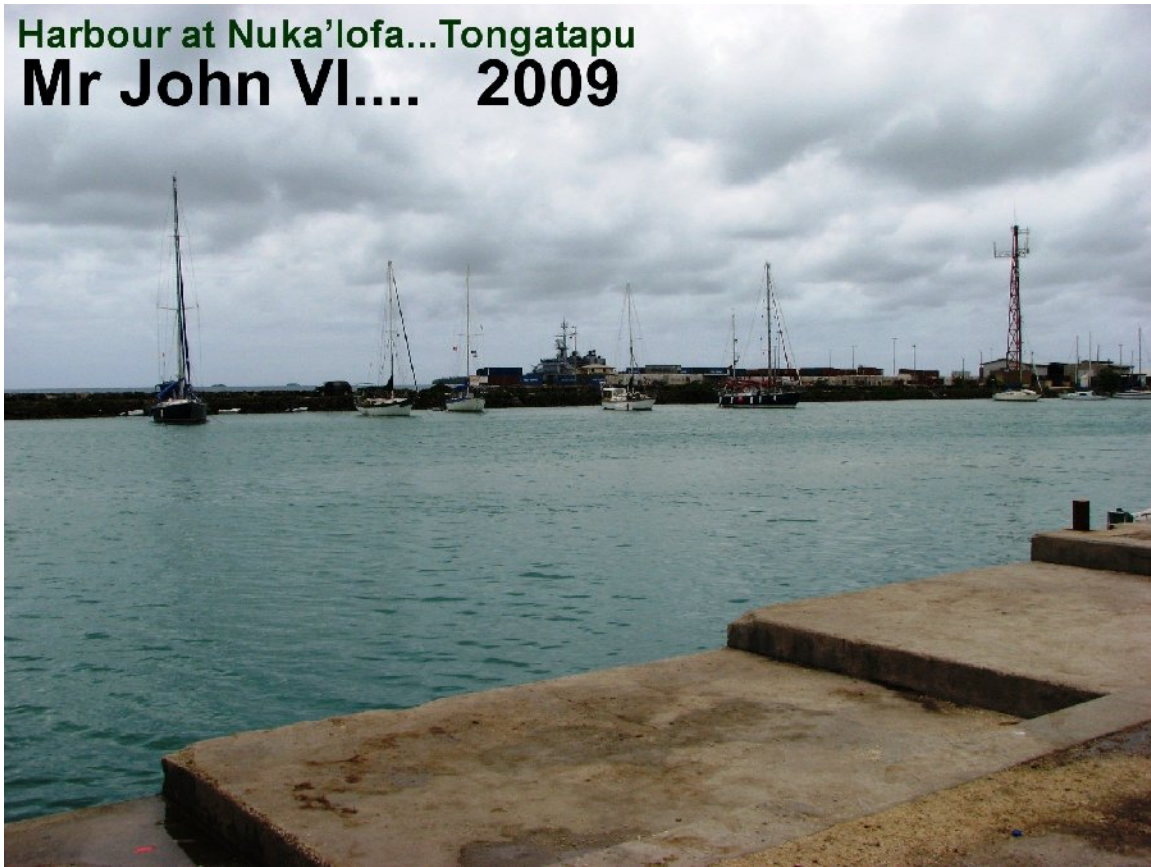
Eye all 50209 ft

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Image NASA

Mr John IV  
1988 in Nukualofa



Harbour at Nuka'lofa...Tongatapu  
Mr John VI.... 2009



**And after all that time, the Rats are still here.....!!!!!!!**

**TONGATAPU** is not a bad place to hang out waiting for the jump to New Zealand, there is some local cruising around the island and ashore you can always hire a car to see the interior. There is a good market up town and all basic supplies can be purchased.

If you go alongside for fuel, watch out for Rats on the quay..... they will board you within moments of getting alongside no matter what time of day!

Whilst there are some nice places to visit south of Vava'u, none of it could be called a 'Cruising Ground' in the same way as Vava'u..... you always have to be alert and looking over your shoulder, there are few places offering any sort of all round protection; in many you may be fine with the trade wind but the southern ocean swell will creep in and set you rolling. With due care however, good times can be had.

I was never that impressed with the snorkelling, they have had a lot of cyclone damage of late. **Swimming with the whales** however is the most unbelievable experience and this is one of the few places in the world where you can do it.

THIS IS NOT A PILOT BOOK..... just a little guide to give you some ideas what is available and how much time you want to a lot to the group. I hope it gives you some insight and that you have a great time here as we have always done.

There are some good, up to date, Pilot Books available and you should get one on arrival. Watch out when using charted data.... both paper and electronic charts are out in many areas.... I have always found "Google Earth" positions to be spot on.

Good luck and good sailing....

John & Paula Wolstenholme  
British Yacht "Mr John VI"  
Sept 2010

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"Mr John IV" in Hunga Lagoon 1989

