

Shipping Routes to Points Outside the Gulf

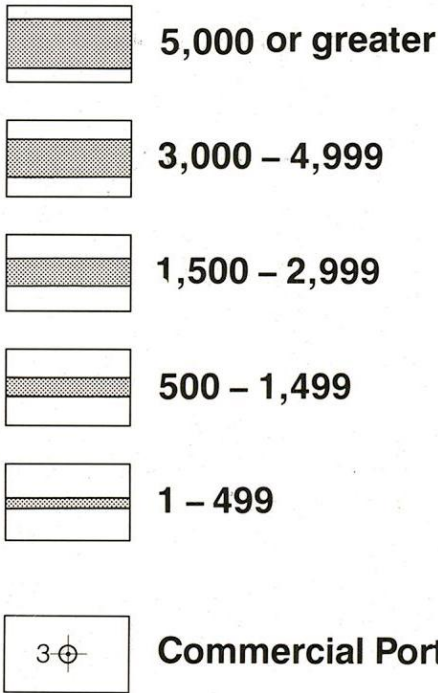
Description

This is the first of two maps (4.27 and 4.28) depicting shipping routes throughout the region. Shipping routes on these maps are defined as the preferred paths traveled by dry cargo ships, tank ships, and barges. Routes were defined using a variety of sources, including cargo shipping and oil company records and studies conducted by the US Maritime Administration, Coast Guard, and Army Corps of Engineers (Ehler, Basta, and LaPointe, 1983). Shipping is a major activity in the region and a critical link in the regional economy. However, oil discharges from vessel operations are a major source of oil inputs to Gulf waters (Map 5.23).

Tank ships and cargo ships are the major classes of vessels that travel outside the Gulf of Mexico. About 69% of the tank ships and 64% of the cargo ships leaving American ports in the region travel to points outside the Gulf. About 20% of tank ships and 30% of cargo ships departing from Mexican ports have destinations outside the region. Approximately 61% of the vessels entering and leaving the region move through the Florida Straits; the remainder travel through the Yucatan Channel (Keith, pers. comm.).

Goods exported from American Gulf ports include wheat, corn and soybeans, iron and steel products, industrial and agricultural chemicals, and coal. Large amounts of petroleum products, industrial chemicals, and crude oil are also shipped through the Gulf of Mexico to ports along the East Coast of the USA. Major imports coming into American ports include crude oil, iron, and steel that are transported to the Houston-Galveston area and ports along the Mississippi and Ohio river systems (US DOD, Army Corps of Engineers, 1982). A primary export from Mexican ports in 1979 was crude oil (approximately ten million tons). Mexican imports included approximately 1.6 million tons of cargo such as processed food products and equipment.

Trips per Year in 1979



US and Mexican ports as numbered on map:
1. Tampa, FL; 2. Pensacola, FL; 3. Mobile, AL; 4. Pascagoula, MS; 5. New Orleans, LA; 6. Lake Charles, LA; 7. Port Arthur, TX; 8. Beaumont, TX; 9. Galveston, TX; 10. Texas City, TX; 11. Houston, TX; 12. Freeport, TX; 13. Corpus Christi, TX; 14. Brownsville, TX; 15. Tampico, Tam.; 16. Tuxpan, Ver.; 17. Veracruz, Ver.; 18. Coatzacoalcas, Ver.; 19. Dos Bocas, Tab.

References

Engineering Computer Optecnomics, Inc., 1980; US DOC, NOAA, National Ocean Service, various dates; US DOD, DMA, Hydrographic/Topographic Center, various dates; US DOI, Mineral Management Service, 1982c.

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