



# LIMITS OF OCEANS AND SEAS

The limits described in this publication have been drawn up solely for hydrographic purposes. It must not be construed as having any legal or political connotation whatsoever.

**Special Publication 23**

Draft 4th edition 1986

Published by the  
INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC  
BUREAU



INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION



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## PREFACE

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The publication of the Fourth Edition of Special Publication No. 23 "Limits of Oceans and Seas" was decided by the XIth International Hydrographic Conference (April 1977) which adopted the following Decision No. 17 :

*"The Conference resolved that in view of the increasing use being made by cartographers, national institutions and commercial agencies of SP 23, the International Hydrographic Bureau shall undertake a revision of this publication in order to update its content.*

*To accomplish this task the IHB should solicit representation on an ad hoc Working Group to carry out a review of this publication and to provide guidelines for its updating and revision."*

The following Member States nominated representatives on the Working Group : Argentina, Chile, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Japan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

In response to the action initiated by the Bureau, as convenor of the Working Group, the United Kingdom submitted guidelines for the work of the Group which were circulated to the Members for consideration and were adopted after minor amendments. The Working Group started the work of the revision of SP 23 in November 1979 and worked closely with the other IHO Member States in their respective zone, by correspondence.

After having received all proposals from the members of the Working Group, the Bureau compiled a Draft Fourth Edition 1986 of the SP 23 which was submitted to the IHO Member States for comments and approval before its final publication as the Fourth Edition.

The names and limits used in the text and shown on the chartlets of the Fourth Edition have been drawn up solely for the convenience of national Hydrographic Offices when compiling their charts and preparing the nautical publications produced by them. The limits do not necessarily result from complete and exact geographical studies, but bathymetric data of various oceanographic expeditions, where available, has been taken into consideration so that the names and limits may be also acceptable to oceanographers and other users. In any case, it must be clearly stated that limits used in the SP 23 have no legal or political significance whatsoever.

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## NOTE

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**A.** The oceans and seas of the World have been divided in the following nine main zones, numbered 1 to 9 :

1. North Atlantic Ocean and its sub-divisions.
2. Baltic Sea and its sub-divisions.
3. Mediterranean Region and its sub-divisions.
4. South Atlantic Ocean and its sub-division.
5. Indian Ocean and its sub-divisions.
6. South China and Eastern Archipelagic Seas and its sub-divisions.
7. North Pacific Ocean and its sub-divisions.
8. South Pacific Ocean and its sub-divisions.
9. Arctic Ocean and its sub-divisions.

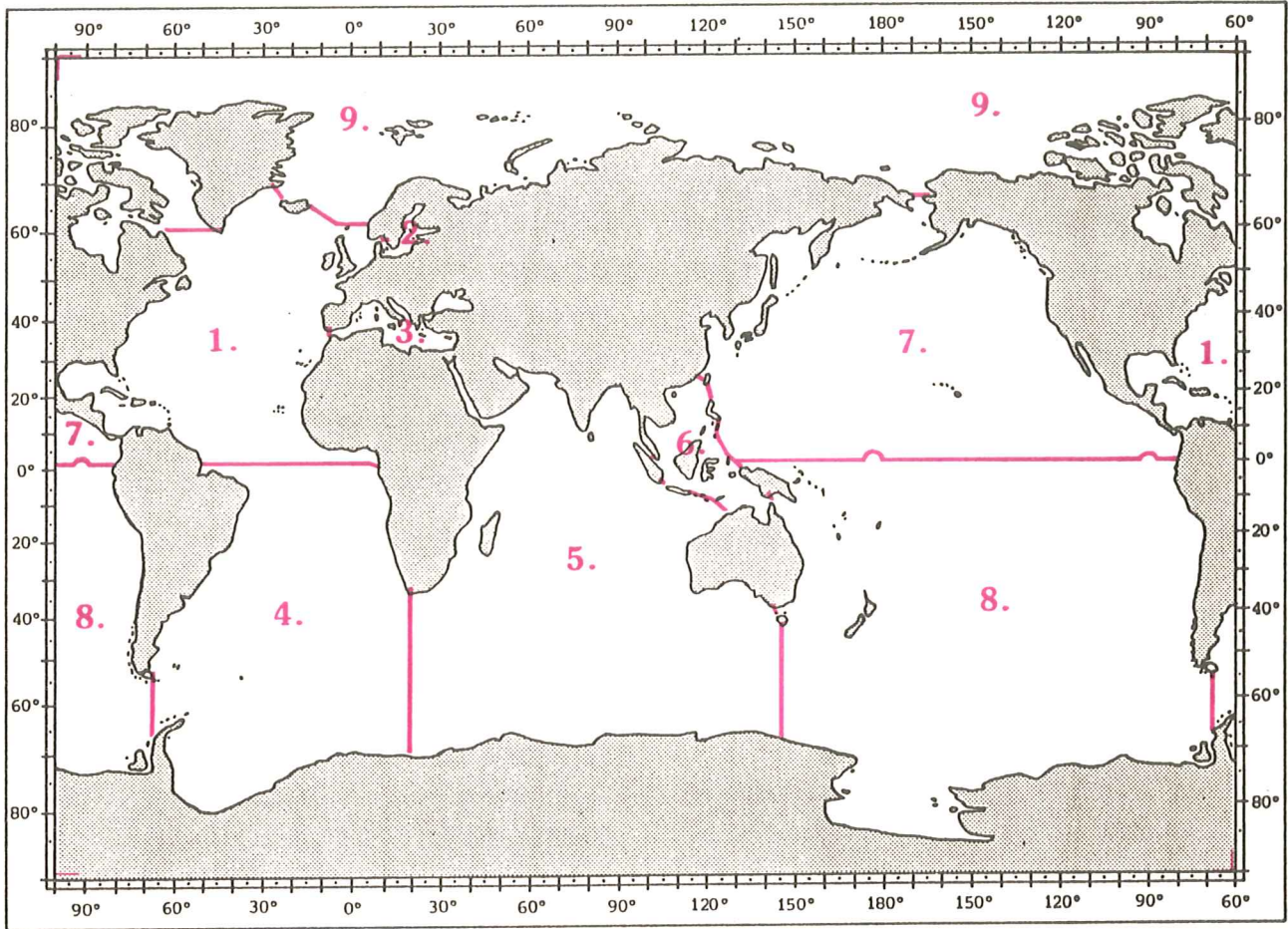
Each main zone and its sub-divisions constitute a chapter of the publication. Each sub-division is designated by the number of the main zone followed by another number designating the sub-division. A graphic depiction of the nine main zones appears with the Alphabetical Index, at the beginning of the publication.

**B.** The following layout has been adopted :

- The texts describing the limits of each main zone and of each sub-division are printed on the right hand pages with a reference chartlet printed opposite.
  - The chartlets are for illustrative purposes only and have no navigational or political significance.
  - At the beginning of each chapter, a chartlet-index shows the location (by means of the corresponding numbers) of all the sub-divisions included in the main zone described in the chapter.
  - The geographical positions given in the descriptions of limits are taken from national larger-scale charts published by the IHO Member States located in the area concerned and in the possession of the Bureau. When such national charts were not available or do not exist, the United Kingdom larger-scale charts, available at the Bureau, have been used.
  - Generic terms (cape, point, island, etc.) are in English only.
  - Only the geographical names cited in the descriptive texts are shown on the chartlets.
  - An "Alphabetical Index" of oceans, seas, straits and gulfs described in this publication has been added after the "Index of Main Zones", at the beginning of the publication.
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