

Cradle Bay Anchorage

Cradle Bay is one of the forgotten anchorages of Great Salt Lake. It used to be more popular in years past when the lake was higher. But when the lake dropped dramatically after 2001 it was all but forgotten. Probably the reason it was forgotten was all the boats grounding on the reef to the south of Cradle Bay. Sailors had abandoned all the anchorages along Stansbury in the myth that you couldn't get close to the island without risking a hard grounding on a reef.

Cradle Bay is named for an old boat cradle that was in the bay. I have not been able to find the cradle so I don't know if it is still there.

Contrary to what many may think Cradle Bay can be a very fine anchorage even in shallow water years offering fairly good protection from north and south seas. But some caution must be used in higher water years as there is a ridge that rises up abruptly from the bottom of the lake on the south end of the bay. This is also a very busy place from October through January as the brine shrimp fleet uses the bay as a base of operation. Caution should also be used when approaching the bay to avoid Atlantis Reef and Baskin Island.

Cradle Bay is the southernmost bay on the eastern shore of Stansbury Island and is just north of Atlantis Reef. It is located 11 nautical miles northwest of the Great Salt Lake Marina. Atlantis Reef is a five mile long by three mile wide reef that stretches north from Eardley Spit and has removed the bottom paint and some lead from many a boat that ventured on to it.



Navigation to Cradle Bay

Navigation to Cradle Bay is pretty straight forward as long as you plot a course to clear Atlantis. The recommended course is to take a heading from the Great Salt Lake Marina of 295° for 2.5 nautical miles. This will put you on a course that will pass near two of the yacht club's racing buoys; D and then 1. Then set a course of 291° and sail for 4.9 nautical miles until you reach waypoint *CRDL 1* (coordinates listed in the table below). This will put you north of Atlantis in deep water. From here you will take a heading of 262° magnetic to waypoints *CRDL 2* and *CRDL 3*. At waypoint *CRDL 3* you will take a more southwesterly course to waypoints *CRDL 4* and *CRDL 5*. This is necessary to

avoid a shallow underwater ridge on the northern end of the bay. If you follow the waypoint coordinates listed below you will remain in deep water for the whole approach into Cradle Bay.

Once you reach waypoint *CRDL 5* you will want to take a heading of 297° for about 7/10ths of a nautical mile to reach the preferred anchorage. With a lake level of 4198' you should be in about 8' of water with a good sandy bottom. Do not head west of the recommended anchorage as you will encounter a bioherm field with tufa mounds rising one to two feet off the bottom. It is possible to head north of the anchorage and anchor in shallower water near the north ridge of the bay.

In shallow water years it is possible to put your boat right at waypoint *CRDL LNDNG*. Your boat will still be in five feet of water yet you can walk right of the bow of your boat and on to the beach. But this should only be tried when you can see beach at the waypoint. Otherwise there is a risk of hitting the underwater ridge that rises abruptly from the bottom of the lake.

GPS Coordinates for Approaching Cradle Bay

NAME	NORTH	WEST
CRDL 1	40° 48.468'	112° 20.922'
CRDL 2	40° 48.549'	112° 22.463'
CRDL 3	40° 48.617'	112° 23.674'
CRDL 4	40° 48.378'	112° 24.479'
CRDL 5	40° 48.125	112° 24.979'
CRDL ANCHOR	40° 48.289'	112° 26.072'
CRDL LNDNG	40° 47.867'	112° 25.399'

Ashore

Stansbury Island is still some distance from the anchorage. It is about a 1.5 nautical mile walk before you actually reach the island. And this is if you paddle due west to the shore. If you paddle to the beach due north of the anchorage it is just over a mile walk to the mile as there is a ridge that stretches east on the northern end of the bay. The beach along here is on State Lands and the Island here is on BLM land so there are no trespassing issues. This is not so on the southern beach. Here there is a stretch of land that is owned by one of the mineral extraction companies. Their pumping canal draws water from the southwest corner of the bay and runs to their pumping house. Do not trespass in this area.

Bring good hiking shoes or foot protection. Expect to encounter sticker bushes, cactus and possibly rattlesnakes.

Please do not build any fires on the beach or on land. The whole island burned several years back and is just now healing.