



Responses to survey of long distance communication equipment used by Ocean Cruising Club members while on the high seas

OCC surveyed members who are crossing oceans either this year or in the near future to determine what communications equipment they carry when out of range of VHF and cellphones. The survey also included some questions on communications practices.

This document summarises the 355 responses received. A supplementary Excel file including all the details (except respondents names and email addresses) is available at

[Survey response details 3April25.xlsx](#)

This file can be viewed or downloaded, but not edited.

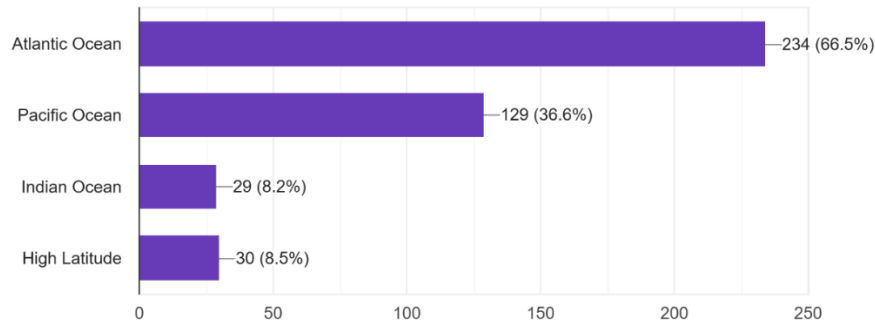
Results are summarised below. Some graphs are generated automatically by "Google Forms", others by myself. In a few cases, responses were narrative rather than numeric, so I tried to summarize them.

Comments to Neil@McCubbin.ca would be welcomed.

Neil McCubbin

1. Please select the geographical region(s) in which you currently sail

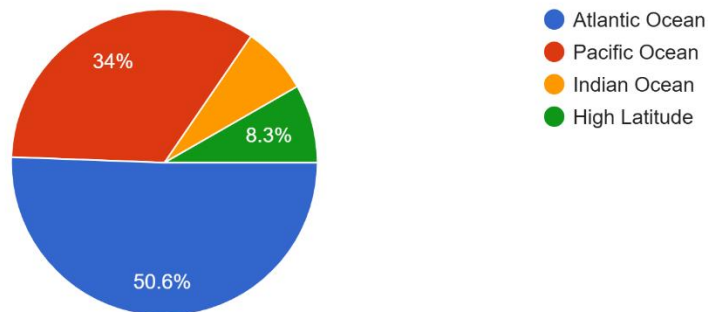
352 responses



Several respondents indicated that they sail in more than one ocean, but the data is not captured here. Do not understand*

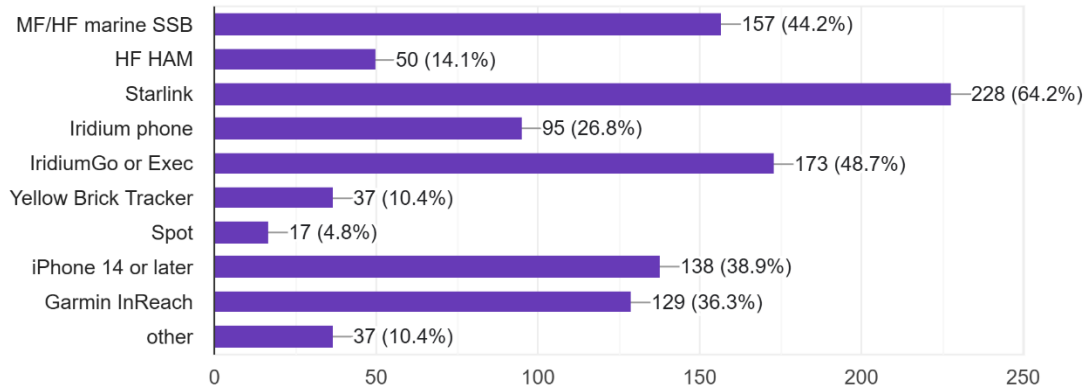
2. Please indicate the geographical regions you expect to sail in the next 12 – 24 months

350 responses



3. What long range communications equipment do you currently carry? (please indicate all that apply)

355 responses



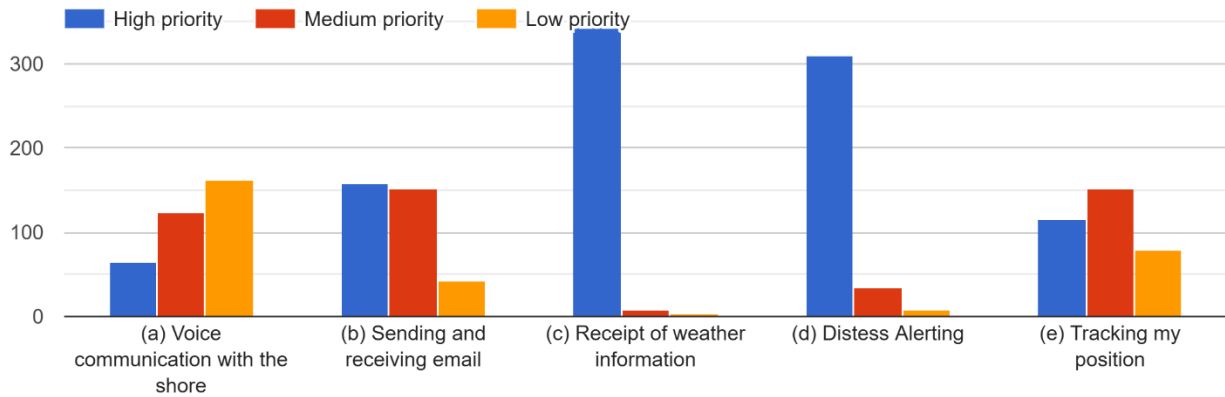
Although nearly 60% of responders have HAM and/or marine SSB radio (I am considering them jointly as SSB), quite a number of users indicated that they no longer use them, and that when they try, “nobody is listening”.

Of the 140 respondents who indicated which equipment they would omit if re-equipping, 108 noted that they would not install a SSB radio, and 25 that they would not install one of the Iridium devices.

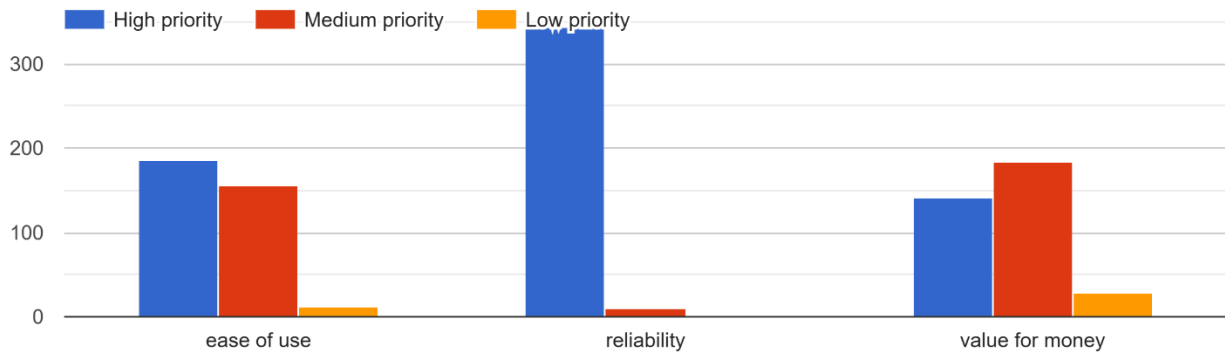
I was surprised to see only 64% of respondents using Starlink, because two “quickie” surveys of Pacific cruisers had showed well over 90%. I analysed the OCC responses by ocean and found:

Ocean	Boats		Sailors	
	Starlink Users	in Ocean	Starlink Users	
Atlantic	89	173	51%	51%
High Lat	14	28	50%	8%
Indian	17	22	77%	6%
Pacific	95	118	81%	35%
Total	215	341	63%	100%

4. Communications Priorities: When outside VHF / mobile telephone range, please rate your communications priorities:

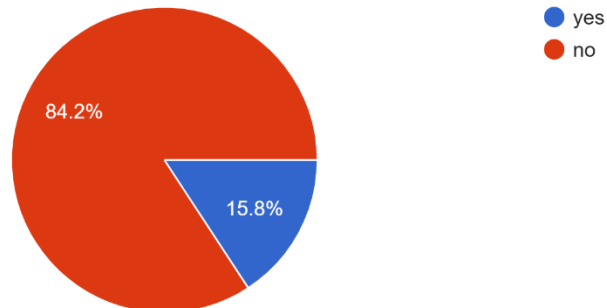


5. For your primary means of long range communication, please rate the following:



6. If you are currently participating or if you intend to participate in any organised ocean events (e.g. rallies) in the next 12 months, does this influence your communication priorities?

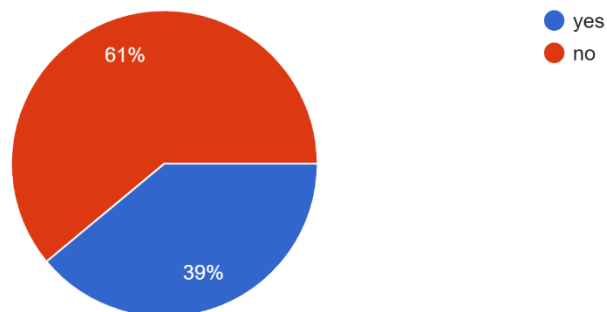
298 responses



A wide variety of reasons stated referred essentially to rules for various rallies, which are changing rapidly. I did not see them as useful so have not reported here.

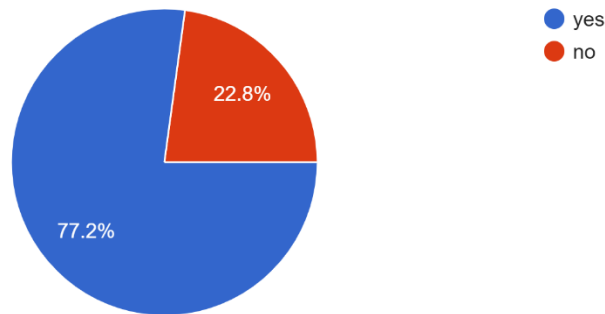
7. Do you use the services of a weather routeing service?

349 responses



8. If you answered NO to question 6 do you use weather routing software?

289 responses



These four questions:

9. What is your primary means of long-distance distress alerting?

10. Do you have a secondary means of long-distance distress alerting?

If yes to the above question please specify:

11. Do you carry an EPIRB?

12. If so, is it float free or available for immediate deployment?

Elicited rather surprising and confusing responses. Over half the respondents listed more than one device as their "primary" means of alerting authorities of distress, so it is impossible to determine which is considered the most important.

97.4% indicated that they have an EPIRB, of which 88% are automatic float-free type, yet only about a quarter see these as primary means of alerting a distress.

Refer to the Supplementary Report mentioned on page 1 for further details.

13. In the event of abandonment of the vessel, what communication equipment would be taken aboard the life raft? (Please list all)

Responses are narrative and difficult to summarise. Most people said they would take all portable communication equipment, including EPIRB, PLB, Garmin inReach, Iridium GO, satphone etc. A couple said they would take Starlink, but did not specify the power source they would use.

14. Do you expect to purchase new long-range communications equipment / devices in the next 12 months If YES to the above, please state what type of equipment you intend to purchase and why :

84 (about 20%) responded that they would buy communication equipment on the next year. 66 responses defined the equipment they would purchase:

28 Starlink

6 InReach

6 Satphone

- 3 Backup Starlink
- 1 HF (for World Arc compliance)

The other responses covered a wide variety, often indicating uncertainty.

15. If you were equipping your boat from scratch, what long range communication equipment would you install today within the constraints of your own willingness to spend?

Responses were narrative. I summarised as well as I could, as follows:

Equipment	Buyers	
EPIRB	40	12%
Garmin	25	8%
Iridium	86	27%
Satphone	5	2%
SSB	56	17%
Starlink	209	65%

About 20% of respondents replied simply "Same as I have". The equipment these respondents would buy is not captured in the above table

Only 12% of respondents indicated that they would buy an EPIRB. This is extremely inconsistent with the fact that virtually all currently carry an EPIRB, as evidenced by responses to question 11. One must assume that it is now considered as routine, like a bilge pump or an engine.

16. Further to question 15, is there any classic equipment that you would omit if re-equipping your vessel? (Include reasons if you wish):

Of the 197 responses, specific equipment to omit was as follows:-

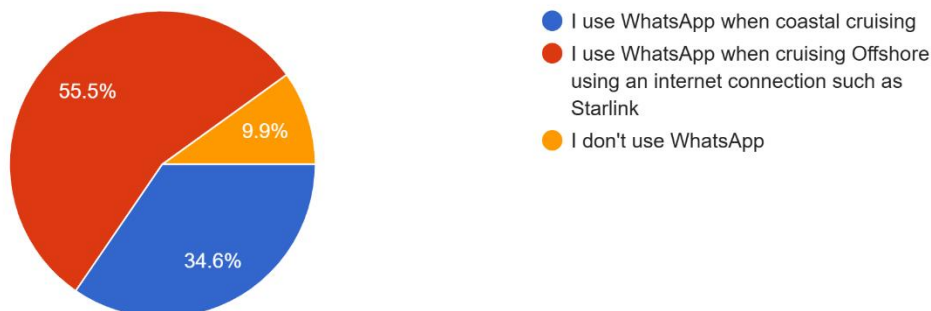
- 107 SSB (including ham and marine)
- 21 Iridium GO and Exec
- 4 Satphone
- 3 WeatherFAX

Other responses indicated that they had no equipment that they would omit.

17. Extent of WhatsApp use:

17. WhatsApp

353 responses



Question 18 No title this just hangs out there but I did not want to edit the picture.

18. When offshore, how often to you connect to email, WhatsApp or some other communication device

352 responses



Question 19. Any other comments?

This question elicited 163 responses, too diverse for a simple summary. They can be reviewed in the Supplementary Report mentioned on page 1.