



## Baileys Harbor NSLR

North–South Light Range (NSLR) is a true Great Lakes training passage built around fundamental practices that make crew members better fast: purposeful crossings, real navigation decisions, and ports that reward good planning. The Baileys Harbor passage is designed to feel like “real cruising” while keeping the days achievable and the learning goals clear. Ideal for crew members who want more than protected water destinations and are ready to operate at skipper-level discipline.

We depart Traverse City (TVC) with a full passage brief including weather window selection, routing, alternates, fuel-and-distance planning, watch roles, and clear standards for navigation and communications. The first major leg crosses Lake Michigan to Manistique, an excellent step-up crossing that delivers a more remote, big water feel and forces crew members to think beyond the next waypoint. Underway, the focus is on fundamentals that matter. Maintaining an accurate plot, validating electronics with visual and chart cues, building the habit of “staying ahead of the boat,” and making conservative decisions early when conditions shift. Manistique is a great training stop because it rewards precise timing and disciplined arrival planning of a river current and small harbor, exactly the kind of real-world approach separates casual boaters from capable skippers.

From Manistique, we set up for the highlight: Baileys Harbor and its classic and historic Light Range approach. Navigation turns into piloting. Crew members learn to build a clean approach from offshore, identify and use aids to navigation correctly, and understand why ranges are so effective for verifying alignment, correcting set and drift, and managing a stable, repeatable entrance. We treat the arrival as a full “arrival evolution”, approach briefed, to track and stray from the range to get a real perspective on proper alignment and what deviation off range looks like. Once secured in Baileys Harbor, we use the stopover for debrief, chart review, and next-day planning—tightening the details that become habits. If you were wondering, we’ll use the Light Range for the departure out of Baileys Harbor.

From Baileys, we run east to Frankfort or Leland, adding another rewarding crossing that blends open-water execution with well-defined landfalls. Crew members rotate through acting skipper, navigator, and deck lead, owning the plan and then executing it—watch standing discipline, fatigue management, traffic awareness, and clean helm communication. Frankfort makes a strong contrast to the prior ports: more familiar, more “home waters,” and a great place to reinforce docking leadership, line handling, and arrival/departure consistency after a larger-water leg.

The passage finishes with the return to TVC, tying the whole trip together: weather assessment, routing, watch rotation, and confident arrival management. NSLR is an excellent CPC option for crew members who want a well-rounded Great Lakes experience—big-water legs, a signature light-range approach, and multiple opportunities to practice weather-window decisions, efficient port-to-port navigation, and skipper-level leadership in real conditions.