A **SEA MARK**, also seamark and navigation mark, is a form of aid to navigation and pilotage aid which identifies the approximate position of a maritime channel, hazard and administrative area to allow boats, ships and seaplanes to navigate safely.

There are three types of sea mark:
- **BEACONS** - fixed to the seabed or on shore
- **BUOYS** - consisting of a floating object that is usually anchored to a specific location on the bottom of the sea or to a submerged object
- A type of **CAIRN BUILT** on a submerged rock/object, especially in calmer waters.

Sea marks are used to indicate channels, dangerous rocks or shoals, mooring positions, areas of speed limits, traffic separation schemes, submerged shipwrecks, and for a variety of other navigational purposes.

Some are only intended to be visible in daylight (*daymarks*), others have some combination of lights, reflectors, bells, horns, whistles and radar reflectors to make them usable at night and in conditions of reduced visibility.

Marks are shown on nautical charts, using symbols that indicate their colour, shape and light characteristic, and are usually identified by name or number.

The International Association of Lighthouse Authorities defines one system of marks specifying the shapes, colours and characteristic lights of buoys depending on their purpose, the IALA Maritime Buoyage System.

For historical reasons, there are two regions of lateral marks in use:
- **IALA Region B** in the Americas, the Philippines, South Korea and Japan
- **IALA Region A** everywhere else.

**SABAH WATER ARE CLASSIFIED AS REGION A**
LATERAL MARKS

To indicate edge of a channel.

Situation in Malaysia including Sabah water's :-

When travelling upstream or away from sea :
  • Keep port (red) marks on your port-hand side (left)
  • Keep starboard (green) marks on your starboard hand side (right)

When travelling downstream or towards the sea :
  • Keep port (red) marks on your starboard hand side (right)
  • Keep starboard (green) marks on your port-hand side (left).

PORT HAND MARK
RED Colour
CYLINDRICAL CAN like shape
Display RED flashing light at night with rhythm 2+1

STARBOARD HAND MARK
GREEN Colour
CONICAL CON like shape
Display GREEN flashing light at night with rhythm 2+1
To indicate the position of a hazard and the direction of safe water by using a compass. Its indicate the direction of safety as a cardinal (compass) direction (north, east, south or west) relative to the mark.

A cardinal mark may be used to accomplish the following:
- Indicate that the deepest water is an area on the named side of the mark
- Indicate the safe side on which to pass a danger
- Draw attention to a feature in a channel, such as a bend, junction, branch, or end of a shoal
- Draw attention to a new danger such as a grounded ship. In such cases two equal marks are often placed together to indicate that it's a newly marked danger and is not yet printed in official charts.

**NORTH CARDINAL MARK**
Has two cones pointing up. Pass on the northern side of this mark. When lit, a north marker exhibits a continuous (very) quick flashing white light.

**WEST CARDINAL MARK**
Has two cones pointing to point. Pass on the western side of this mark. When lit, a west mark exhibits a white light flashing in groups of nine (9) quick or very quick flashes.

**EAST CARDINAL MARK**
Has two cones pointing away from each other. Pass on the eastern side of this mark. When lit an east mark exhibits a white light flashing in groups of three (3) quick or very quick flashes.

**SOUTH CARDINAL MARK**
Has two cones both pointing down. Pass on the southern side of this mark. When lit, a south mark exhibits a white light flashing in groups of six (6) quick or very quick flashes followed by a long flash.
SAFE WATER MARKS

To indicate the end of a channel

It usually implies that open, deep and safe water lies ahead, though it is sometimes also used to indicate the start and end of a buoyed section of a continuous narrow channel, or a line of these marks can be used to mark a safe route through shallow areas.

It is recognisable by its red and white vertical stripes and commonly bears a top-sign in shape of a red ball.
ISOLATED DANGER MARKS

To indicate a hazard to shipping such as a partially submerged rock.

It is recognisable by its black and red bands and top-mark of two black balls.

Its distinctive sequence of flashing white light consists of 2 quick flashes with intervals of 5 seconds.
SPECIAL MARKS

It is recognisable by its yellow colour and X, (often referred to as a St. Andrews Cross) top-mark.

It has a distinctive sequence of various flashes that does not match any other navigational mark flashes in its vicinity.

Special marks can indicate:

- Administrative areas
- Water skiing areas
- Anchorage areas
- Mooring areas
- Waiting areas
- Marine farms
- Oil wells
- Dead ends
- Pipelines
- Spoil ground (an area where dredged material is deposited)
- Historic wrecks
- Protected areas
- Outfall pipes (such as Stormwater, and Cooling water)
- Sewerage pipes
- Intake pipes
- Cables
- Power cables