

Contents

Preface	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
Figure credits	xiii
1. Introduction	1
Early investigations	1
Early scientific research	2
Modern research interest	3
South West Indian Ocean circulation	4
Agulhas source currents	5
Agulhas Current	6
Agulhas Retroflexion	7
Agulhas Return Current	7
South Indian Ocean Current	7
Western boundary currents	8
Western boundary currents of the southern hemisphere	8
Global role of the Agulhas Current	9
Influence of the Agulhas Current on local climate and weather	11
Biological influence of the Agulhas Current	14
“Giant” waves	16
Perspective	16
2. Large-scale circulation of the South West Indian Ocean	17
The wind regime of the South West Indian Ocean	22
Flow patterns of the South West Indian Ocean	23
Water masses of the South West Indian Ocean	26
Movement of water masses	32
Transports in the South West Indian Ocean	41
Thermal structure of the South West Indian Ocean	44
Modelling large-scale flows of the South West Indian Ocean	46
Conclusions	51
3. Sources of the Agulhas Current	53
Surface flows	53
Flow from east of Madagascar	56
Flow through the Mozambique Channel	69
Recirculation in a South West Indian Ocean sub-gyre	84
Synopsis	89

4. The northern Agulhas Current	91
Kinematics of the northern Agulhas Current	91
Hydrography of the northern Agulhas Current	105
Circulation on the continental shelf	107
Inception of the Natal Pulse	113
Recapitulation	120
5. The southern Agulhas Current	121
Hydrography of the southern Agulhas Current	121
Meanders and shear-edge features	125
Shelf-edge upwelling	132
Hydrography of the Agulhas Bank	138
Atmospheric conditions	146
Summary	150
6. The Agulhas Current retroflection	151
The nature of the Agulhas retroflection	151
Agulhas rings	170
Inter-ocean exchange at the Agulhas retroflection	191
Agulhas Current eddies	198
The dynamics of the Agulhas retroflection	199
Overview	206
7. The Agulhas return flow	209
The Agulhas Return Current	209
The Subtropical Convergence south of Africa	218
Variability and eddy shedding	225
Dynamics of the Agulhas Return Current	228
South Indian Ocean Current	230
Summation	231
8. The greater Agulhas Current: some reflections	233
A global perspective	233
An inventory of things learnt	234
Knowledge gaps remaining	236
A look behind the curtain	237
References	241
Bibliography	269
Name index	295
Subject index	297