

NOAA Seeks Public Comment on Draft of National Charting Plan



NOAA invites public comment on the recently released National Charting Plan. Comments are due by midnight on 1 June 2017. The National Charting Plan is a strategy to improve NOAA nautical chart coverage, products and distribution. It describes the evolving state of marine navigation and nautical chart production and outlines actions that will provide the customer with a suite of products that are more useful, up-to-date and safer to navigate with. It is not a plan for the maintenance of individual charts, but a strategy to improve all charts.

Since the introduction of electronic navigational charts (ENCs) thirty years ago, the size of commercial vessels has increased four-fold and navigation systems have become more sophisticated. Additionally, there are now over 15 million recreational boat users in the

U.S. and many have joined professional mariners in using electronic chart displays and NOAA digital chart products when navigating. User groups of all types are increasingly expecting more precise, higher resolution charts, and greater timeliness and ease-of-access to chart updates. This plan presents strategies to meet the growing demand.

The [National Charting Plan](#) outlines several improvements to chart content, such as:

- Reducing unwarranted alarms in the electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) used by large commercial vessels and Improving the differentiation between dangerous and non-dangerous wrecks.
- Resolving uncertainties about 'reported', 'existence doubtful' and 'position approximate' dangers.
- Creating an orderly layout for ENC charts that will replace the current set of 1,182 irregularly shaped ENC cells compiled at 131 different scales with a regular gridded framework of cells compiled at a few dozen standard scale.
- Strengthening partnerships with the U.S. Coast Guard by developing methods to ingest changes to the database of USCG maintained aids to navigation directly into Coast Survey's chart production system. This will save time and avoid any chance of data being entered incorrectly by hand.

How to provide feedback is outlined in the Draft National Charting Plan, linked above.