

No More Numbered NOAA Charts

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Coast Survey has produced paper charts for about 200 years. Before the electronics era, you had to purchase nautical charts from an authorized chart dealer such as Fred Woods in Marblehead and James Bliss in Boston. These charts were often out of date the day after they were printed. In the electronics age there are fewer chart dealers. The bottom line is that the traditional numbered charts are going away. A comprehensive list of all canceled NOAA charts is available at:

<http://www.charts.noaa.gov/MCD/Dole.shtml>.

NOAA transitioning to Electronic Navigation Charts in ENC data format. ENCs are vector data sets. They were originally designated for large commercial ships using electronic charts systems. ENC is the data format used by electronic chart plotters. This will improve the level of detail and consistency. ENCs are produced by many countries.

NOAA will still provide access to paper chart products based on ENC data either through third party sellers or through the NOAA Custom Chart system. The NOAA Weekly Chart Updates page, https://distribution.charts.noaa.gov/weekly_updates/, shows areas that have changed on each ENC since the last new addition was published.

The online Custom Chart application, <https://devgis.charttools.noaa.gov/pod/>, lets you create your own paper charts with NOAA ENC data. You can define the scale and size of the custom made charts, then download them in PDF format for printing.

The transition will be completed by January 2025.