

Charts and Notices to Mariners - Capt. Geoff

A while ago, I wrote an article called "Introduction to Charts". One point I made was that charts have to be kept updated, with relevant Notices to Shipping and all Notices to Mariners. I want to expand on this aspect. I'm going to cover Notices to Mariners (NotMar), but the same principle applies to Notices to Shipping (NotShip), although NotShip corrections are normally done in pencil, as they are often temporary.

If you look up Notices to Mariners, (use the link on our website), select your language of choice, then scroll down to Online Service, and click on the link to Chart corrections, you can then select the chart you are interested in correcting, and the date range (starting from when the chart was last corrected – again, see the original article, to know when that was). You will then see a list of all Notices to Mariners since that time for that chart. You can save these as a PDF.

Below, I have reproduced the information From February 2017 back to January 2016:

3539 - Discovery Passage - New Edition - 30-MAR-2007 - NAD 1983

11-MAR-2016		LNM/D. 15-JAN-2016
Delete	radar reflector (See Chart No. 1, S4) This notice affects Electronic Navigational Chart: CA470017, CA570018	50°07'40.6"N 125°20'32.4"W (P2016021) LL(515.5) DFO(6203216-01)
15-JAN-2016		LNM/D. 06-NOV-2015
Add	sector light F RWG red from 144° to 149°, white from 149° to 152°, green from 152° to 154° (See Chart No. 1, P40.1) (Patch to follow at a later date) This notice affects Electronic Navigational Chart: CA470017, CA570195	50°00'01.1"N 125°11'50.0"W (P2015099) LL(511.1) DFO(6203183-01)

First, you need to check if you are working with the most current edition of the chart – in this case, the header information shows it is dated 30-MAR-2007. If you have an earlier edition of the chart, there have likely been changes to it that you won't find on this list. Often a new edition of the chart is only released when there have been enough changes that further updates to the old chart are not practical. Therefore you should use the latest edition of the chart, unless you know for sure that the older version has been completely corrected up to the starting date you choose. (As an example, for chart 3539, an earlier version of the chart may not show the cruise ship dock.)

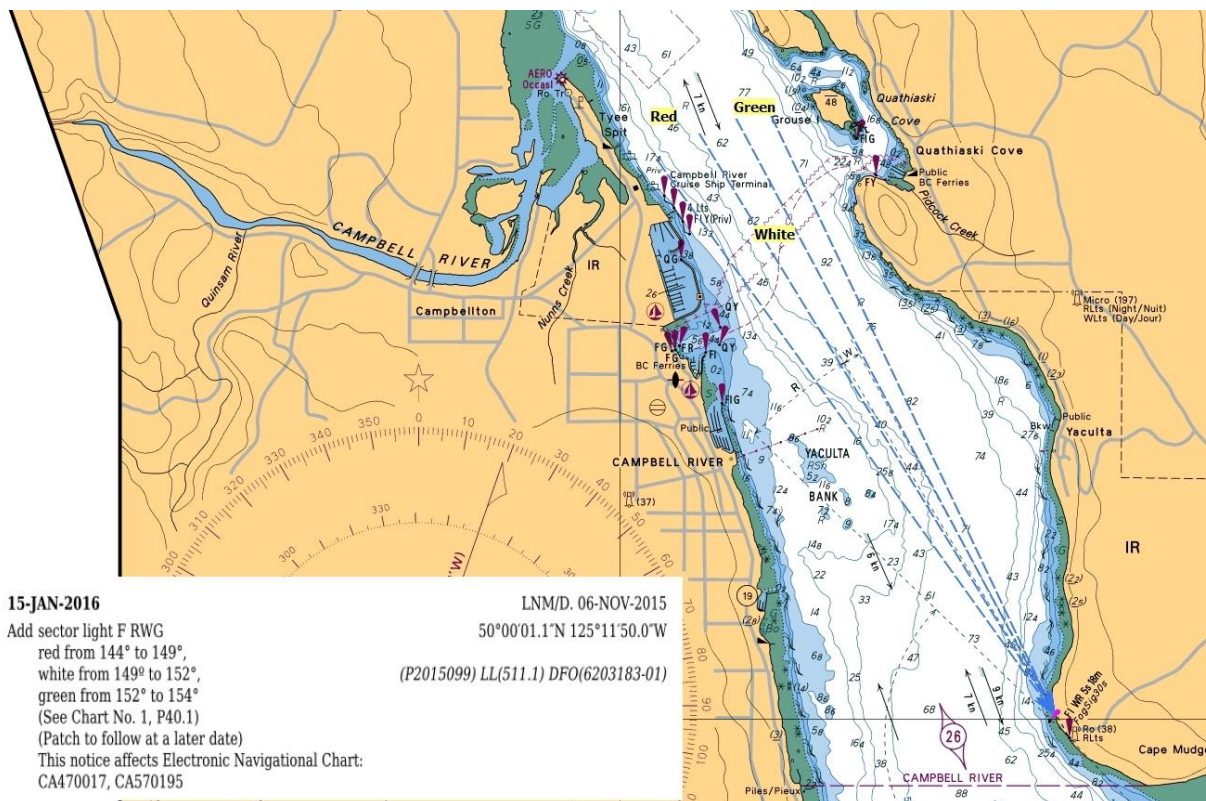
There is a link on our website from Canadian Hydrographic Services (CHS), which is now part of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), that outlines the general procedure for corrections, but I will step through the first

couple with you. Note that you would usually start with the oldest correction from the list, so the notice dates are entered chronologically. Instead, I'm going to start with the latest and work backwards, as I want to start with a simple correction.

The format of the corrections can be somewhat cryptic until you are used to them. The first (latest) NotMar on our list deals with deleting a radar reflector. When you plot the position given for the first NotMar, you will see that this is the southern beacon on Maud Island (FI R). The normal method for deleting an object (which isn't actually covered in CHS's procedure), is to draw a line through the object, (similar to using ~~strikeout text~~) making sure you don't obscure any other relevant information. The traditional colour for doing chart corrections is a light magenta (as seen in the CHS's instruction page pen). You then add the notice date on the bottom of the chart.

The second latest correction is the addition of a sector light. When you plot the position, you will see it is just north of Cape Mudge. When you plot the sectors, you will see that the white arc is almost the same as the most northern (white) arc of the original Cape Mudge sector. There is a narrow red sector towards Yaculta Bank, and a green sector has been added on the Quadra side.

I have roughly reproduced what this should look like on your chart. I used an electronic chart program to create the image, so I can't make proper arc labels (see existing Cape Mudge sector for correct annotation). I have also given the arc labels a yellow background to make them easier to see. The light icon isn't exactly in the right place as the program spreads the icon across the location of the electronic mark, and I have not put the F RWG label on, as it needs to be fitted in on an angle so as not to obscure Cape Mudge's characteristics.



As noted in the original article, if you bought your copy of 3539 fairly recently, one or both of these corrections may have been applied by CHS, so check the last correction date on the chart.

If you bought the chart several years ago, and haven't done any corrections since, there have been a fair number of other changes. Selecting a start date Sept 2010 for this chart, you will see there have been 17 more corrections since then, for a total of 19. The next oldest correction is the addition of a wreck at a depth of 6.1 metres (the notice includes instructions on what symbol to use to make the correction – Chart 1, item K26). The previous NotMar is another, deeper wreck. Before that comes several, almost paired NotMars. They indicate several rocks where the depth has been re-assessed in a slightly different location and shallower (16-Jan-2015, sounding of 12.5 metres removed, then 6 metres sounding is added in a slightly different position). The same concept applies to the next few entries. There are also entries for the new breakwater and beacons in Heriot Bay.

Along with paper charts, there are a number of providers of electronic charts besides CHS. Looking at whether these corrections have been applied to the charts you are using can be of value in determining their accuracy.

In the US, their version of CHS, called NOAA, provides raster electronic charts (and printable pdfs) for free. In a press release, the reason is quoted as "Up to date charts help boaters avoid groundings and other dangers to navigation, so our aim is to get charts into the hands of as many boaters as we can," said Rear Admiral Gerd Glang, director of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey. "Within about 90 days of the product's beta release, nearly 2.3 million charts were downloaded. To us, that represents more than two million opportunities to avoid an accident at sea."

(http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20140221_nauticalcharts.html). Selling raster charts is a good revenue stream for Fisheries and Oceans, but the charts are created and updated anyways as part of CHS's mandate. Making rasters available for free download would cut into their revenue stream (they would still be selling vector charts, as the US does, as well as paper charts, which the US is phasing out), but having up-to-date charts easily available for free could avoid a number of accidents. Rather than applying Notices to Mariners, you just download a new version of the chart. Might be a concept to pass along to the National Power Squadron office, your local yacht club, DFO or your MP directly.

If terms such as Fl R, Chart 1, sector light, soundings and the like are not familiar, you may wish to consider taking Power Squadron's Boating 2 and 3 courses, which teaches basic chartwork, and other navigational and seamanship skills. Details are available at <http://www.riplerocksquadron.com/>