

Cooperative Charting: Aids to Navigation (ATON) Surveys

One of the fun activities in Cooperative Charting is getting out on the water (we are a boating club after all) and going out to inspect aids to navigation on the waterways. This is part of the Coop Nautical Program which includes bridges. When you do an ATON survey, you will receive 15 credits for each verification (ATON is in correct position and no issues) and 25 credits if you find a discrepancy (ATON off station or needs attention).

So, let's look at the process!

To do a verification for individual credit, you will need to get reasonably close to the aid whether it is a day beacon or a floating aid. Do remember though that most day beacons are not in deep water so be careful. If you determine that there is nothing wrong, take a time/date/GPS photo of the aid (ideally use an APP like Solocator) and then move on to the next one. If you find there are issues, such as missing boards or numbers, or missing aid in general (according to the chart of the area), you then need to also report the discrepancy to the Coast Guard. You can do this via VHF, by phone, by email or on the USCG website. Make sure that you ask for and get a receipt from them showing that you were in contact. This will be attached to the report that you submit to the Cooperative Charting Committee. You also need to take a time/date/GPS photo of the defective aid or, if it is missing, of the area where it is supposed to be. Do check the Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) lists to see if what you have found has already been reported.

Once you have collected your information, go to the Co-op website under the Executive Department in the National USPS website where you will find the necessary form to report your verifications or discrepancies plus a link to the NOAA site to report any discrepancies to them.

Make sure that you access the Light List to identify the number for each aid that you are reporting on. There is an APP that you can use on Apple products called AV Assistant that is of great help in finding the information as well.

Once submitted, your report will be reviewed by a Co-op Charting Committee member and credits awarded. You should get an email acknowledging that your report has been reviewed.

The Cooperative Charting Committee is also in the process of developing a program for reporting navigation issues like shoaling or other chart discrepancies to NOAA. But **ONLY** discrepancies! Not general items or ATON's! More on that later.

Have fun and get out on the water as often as you can. If you have questions, please reach out to one of the committee members. We are always glad to help.