

# AQUA MAP ROUTES FOR NAVIGATION

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In my last article I talked about the Aqua Maps app for navigation. That was an introduction. This time I am sharing information about routes for safe navigation using Aqua Maps. A route is, in marine navigating, a safe way from one place to another on the water. To create a route, you use waypoints and by connecting waypoints forms a route. A waypoint is a point of reference that can be used for location and navigation.

When creating a route, knowing how deep your boat is in the water is a must, this dept is called draft. Our boat has a draft of 4 feet 6 inches, I seek water deeper then 6 feet to be safe. I also use navigation buoys, markers, and identified hazards that are available on the chart to help in creating routes. This helps to identify any areas to watch out for while creating the route. I like to limit my routes to 50-70 Nautical miles because that is how long it is comfortable navigating on the water each day.

I start a route by dropping a waypoint where I am going to begin my route. Ensuring I have the depth needed and place additional waypoint(s) where a turn is needed. My goal is to have as few turns on the route as needed while continuing to be safe. I also place waypoints next to buoy's and markers, this helps when following your progress. Note: do not place waypoints on the buoy in the chart, but to the side of the buoy that you plan to pass on (port or starboard), you don't want to hit the buoy. Continue to place waypoints along the way where a turn is needed and alongside the buoys, markers and identified hazards until the destination is reached.

Then review the route in detail to ensure it is a safe route and not putting the boat in unsafe situations. This step is critical, additional waypoints/turns may be needed to be safe. If needed, loading USACE Surveys (color coding depths in shoaling areas) information onto the chart helps to ensure the route created is keeping the boat in deep enough water is critical. The channels in shoaling areas get tricky and many turns might be needed. With Aqua Maps you can look at surveys that span multiple years. In doing so, you can see what direction a

shoaling area has been moving over time. With that information you can ensure the route is to the correct side of the channel in case shoaling has continued to move in that direction. You can do the same with Buoy's, if the coast guard moves a buoy in Aqua Maps you can see that it has been moved over time.

There are some applications that can create routes for you and I strongly encourage you to review any route created with the steps mentioned ensuring you know you have a safe route for your boat.

When following the route while underway using the waypoints that are near buoys and markers helps track progress. Also having waypoints near buoy's and markers when using Aqua Maps Route Explorer provides an understanding of the estimated time of arrival ETA to them. My experience with Aqua Maps is that the ETA is very accurate and it always being adjusted based on your speed. Route explorer will also call out bridges, hazards, marinas, and anchorages along the way. This is important if you are in bad weather and need to ditch to wait for a better weather window.

The next article for Aqua Maps will be about some of the more advanced features available that help with planning and research and being connected.

This article is given the courtesy of your local America's Boating Club of the Pamlico. Keep us in mind for your boating education and skill building. Our in-person course on Marine Electrical Systems will be presented early January. To learn more, email our Education Officer at [psps@gmail.com](mailto:psps@gmail.com). We also invite you to reference our website at <https://pamlicosailandpowersquadron.org> to learn more about your local America's Boating Club of the Pamlico.