

TOP FISHING SECRETS

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How to Use a Nautical Chart

Really cool, fast, and productive tricks that not many saltwater anglers know

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Note the starting position of the first “Boat”, written in blue. As the boat is drifted or trolled, keep the bearing by watching the point the farther from it you get. Follow the point out away from the

shoreline to drift or troll to the next point where there are options. The boater can anchor off and fish the point of the invisible triangle, or troll too and fro from that position to cover the entire area. This kind of triangulation works absolutely everywhere and is a simple and effective way to find nautical areas that produce. Once a good fishing spot is found it's simply a matter of marking the nautical chart or throwing over a home-made buoy to find the exact same location later. The golden rule of fishing is “if a particular spot produces one time it will again and is worth hitting even if fish stop biting for the day”. This is exactly the same way experts find their favorite fishing spots to show on their DVD's or television shows. So, now you know too.

Finding a great spot where fish are biting is hard enough, but when you want to come back, relocation can be a bear even during the same day on the same pattern, that's where this really cool set of saltwater fishing tricks come in using water maps commonly known as Nautical Charts. “You'd be surprised to know how many boaters don't even know what one is.”

Take some time to triangulate (A.K.A. Cross-bearing) any productive position before moving on using nautical charts to find the same spot again, and again. Once a productive hold is found it's a lot easier to lose than to find another day, so learn these quick and easy steps to triangulate the position and then mark it on a map. As a matter of fact, in a pinch, write it down on a piece of paper if charts are not on board when the fishing suddenly becomes great. It's entirely possible to find a secret fishing spot right out in the middle of everything without another living sole who knows it. It's a really cool way to fish especially when the bite is on in your secret spot and nowhere else.

The first thing to do is locate two permanent structures along the shore; houses, bridges, transformers, and significant land markings are great. Use the boat as the “third” marker.

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Align the boat up with the two markings to form an invisible ninety degree angle. This is how triangulation works. Combining three points makes for great bearings but more than that, makes it easy to find a starting point for drifting, trolling, and still-casting. All triangulations should be done in areas where fishing is productive.

It's actually possible to line up with nautical charts to find submerged structures as well. Look at the chart and plot the relative location and motor out to it. Look for any kind of marking the same way you would for land, but sometimes that means triangulating off permanent and semi-permanent buoys. Take along some empty plastic milk jugs and tie them off with rope and an anchor. Paint them to make personal markings that only you can identify. Go out and fish for the day utilizing the nautical chart. When you get that first strike, toss out one of the homemade buoys. Keep on fishing, when the bite goes off toss over another buoy and stop fishing. Motor or row back to the first buoy and start over. This is a quick way to cover water effectively without putting fish off the bite.

When the fishing is really good mark several locations this way and leave them in the water for several days: Caution. Mark these buoys very brightly so that other boats can see them or risk getting the plowed into by boaters who won't be able to spot them in time. Not only that, but when it's time to come back and fish the hold from the day before it will be impossible to get the "exact" same pattern to fish, and the bite could be greatly diminished due to inadequate presentation of offerings.

These are some really cool, fast, and productive tricks that not many saltwater anglers know, which saves an enormous amount of time and effort streamlining fishing time from "looking" time.

*It is **IMPORTANT** to remember, this is an "example chart & plot image" of a nautical chart and by no means designed for specific navigation. It is a very good, but general representation of a typical set of charts. This example is designed to illustrate how to triangulate and to cross-bear a position to find the best holding spots of fish and to cover water more effectively without spending too much time "looking" rather than fishing. Proper elements of nautical charts will have a Legend showing specific locations, depths, potential submerged hazards, and shipping lanes. Consult your local nautical chart for the best possible depth and current information and remember to use this spectacular set of tricks for finding productive reaches of marine water in your area.*