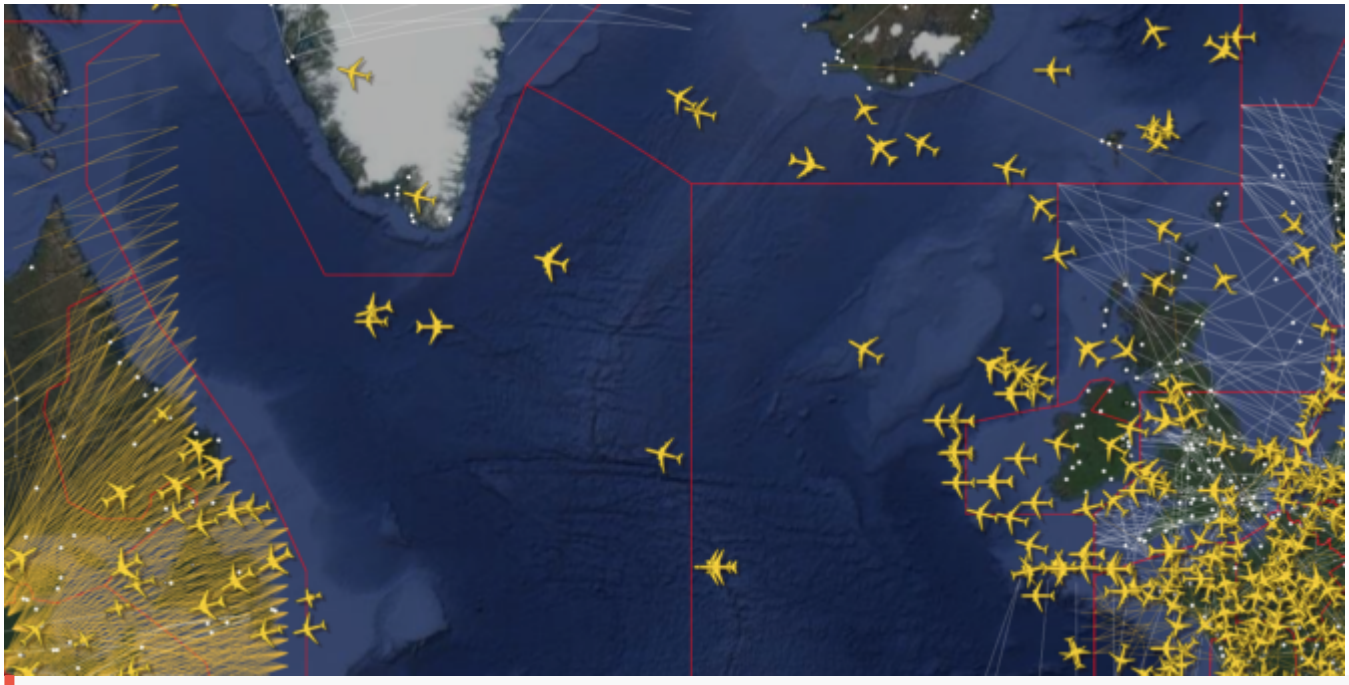
Timeline of North Atlantic Changes

OPSGROUP Team
19 March, 2026



This page has a timeline of big NAT changes, for the six Oceanic Area Control Centres (OACC's): EGGX/Shanwick, CZQX/Gander, BIRD/Iceland, ENOB/Bodø, LPPO/Santa Maria, and KZWY/New York Oceanic.

2026

- **OCR still not fully implemented.** Most NAT FIRs now operate "No Oceanic Clearance Required", but Shanwick still requires a clearance and is not expected to implement OCR until after summer 2026. More info.
- **No RCL for Reykjavik.** Reykjavik no longer requires an RCL. If you send one, they'll tell you it's not needed. Flights exiting Reykjavik into Gander or Shanwick are coordinated automatically – no extra RCL required. More info.
- **ETO replaces ETA.** RCL timing now uses ETO (Estimated Time Over the OEP) instead of ETA – more precise and aligned with how ATC separates traffic. More info.
- **FLAS removed.** There is no longer a published Flight Level Allocation Scheme. You can plan any level, but expect less predictability and more tactical level changes. More info.
- **GNSS interference now a normal NAT risk.** Jamming and spoofing are treated as routine. Even if position recovers, timing and surveillance may not – tell ATC early (usually in the RCL). More info.

2025

- **Shanwick OCR delayed.** Transition to Oceanic Clearance Removal pushed to after summer

2026 following issues seen during Gander's rollout. More info.

- **ADS-B required in Reykjavik FIR.** ADS-B is now mandatory across the entire BIRD FIR for IFR flights. More info.
- **Greenland alternates changing.** BGGH/Nuuk is now open to regular jet traffic. BGBW/Narsarsuaq is expected to close in 2026. More info.
- **Gander back to voice for pre-oceanic changes.** CPDLC removed for pre-entry route changes – expect VHF voice instead. More info.
- **Blue Spruce concept removed.** The formal Blue Spruce Routes were removed from NAT Doc 007, although VHF routings still exist in practice. More info.
- **GNSS interference procedures introduced.** NAT Ops Bulletin 01/2025 sets out what to do if affected by spoofing or jamming – advise ATC early to avoid reroutes or level restrictions. More info.

2024

- **OCR rollout began.** Transition to "No Oceanic Clearance Required" started across the NAT – but not all FIRs implemented it fully. More info.
- **Shanwick OCR postponed.** Shanwick delayed implementation and remains the main FIR still issuing oceanic clearances. More info.
- **Comms failure simplified.** Updated procedures made RCF handling more straightforward. More info.
- **Squawk 2000 standardised.** Squawk 2000 ten minutes after the OEP across the NAT. Exceptions: Reykjavik CTA and Bermuda radar – retain assigned code while under surveillance. More info.

2023

- **WATRS renamed WAT.** FAA updated terminology for North Atlantic airspace. More info.
- **Datalink exempt area reduced.** The northern exemption no longer extends as far south – previously down to SAVRY, now only to EMBOK. This means more of the Greenland sector controlled by Gander requires datalink. More info.

2022

- **Tracks start at FL340.** NAT Tracks are no longer published at FL330 and below, giving more flexibility for random routing at lower levels. More info.
- **HF datalink no longer counts as Satcom.** You must use Inmarsat or Iridium for NAT DLM compliance – HF ACARS alone is not sufficient. More info.

2021

- **Max uplink delay standardised.** Expect "SET MAX UPLINK DELAY VALUE TO 300 SECONDS" on each CPDLC logon to a new OACC. More info.

2020

- **Datalink mandate introduced.** CPDLC and ADS-C are required between FL290-410 across most of the NAT, with exemptions including north of 80N, surveillance airspace, and New York Oceanic East. More info.

2019

- **Micro-SLOP introduced.** Aircraft can now offset up to 2.0NM right of track in 0.1NM increments. More info.
- **ASEPS separation reduced.** Lateral separation reduced to 19NM for fully PBCS-compliant aircraft with ADS-B, RNP4, RCP240, and RSP180. Read the ICAO Bulletin.
- **Free speed (OWAFS).** "Resume Normal Speed" allows variable Mach within limits – advise ATC if it changes by 0.02 or more. Read the ICAO Bulletin and check out our article.
- **PBCS tracks expanded.** More daily PBCS tracks were introduced. Initially these were FL350-390, though current procedures now allow tactical expansion higher or lower. More info.
- **Contingency procedures updated.** New contingency and weather deviation procedures introduced. For contingencies, you now turn at least 30 degrees and offset by 5 NM. For weather deviations, you now do your 300ft up/down offset when 5 NM away from track. More info.

2018

- **PBCS introduced.** From March 2018, PBCS became a requirement for the daily mandated PBCS NAT Tracks. For the NAT, this means having both RCP240 and RSP180, along with RNP4. More info.
- **RLAT expanded.** From Jan 2018, Shanwick and Gander expanded half-degree spacing on more tracks before RLAT was replaced by PBCS terminology. More info.

2017

- **SLOP mandatory.** Offsetting right of track became standard NAT practice. Why it matters.
- **TCAS 7.1 required.** From Jan 2017, TCAS 7.1 became mandatory throughout the entire NAT region.
- **No fixed cruising levels required.** ICAO hemispheric cruising levels no longer need to be followed in NAT airspace.
- **Gross Nav Error tightened.** This is now defined as greater than 10NM, instead of 25NM elsewhere.
- **Initial datalink mandate.** Since Dec 2017, datalink became mandatory at FL350-390, with exemptions including Tango Routes, airspace north of 80N, surveillance airspace, Blue Spruce routes, and New York Oceanic.

2016

- **Confirm Assigned Route message introduced.** Introduced in Aug 2016, this CPDLC message requires crews to confirm the planned NAT route and helps catch routing errors early.
- **NAT HLA introduced.** MNPS was renamed NAT HLA in Feb 2016. Aircraft must be RNP4 or RNP10, and previous MNPS approvals remained valid through 2020.

2015

- **RLAT introduced.** Starting in Dec 2015, spacing on core NAT Tracks was reduced to half-track spacing (30NM). More info.
- **SLOP becomes mandatory.** Routine right offsets of 1NM or 2NM were introduced to reduce collision risk.