Tracking the NAT Track Changes

OPSGROUP Team
8 February, 2022

Big news from the NAT. From March 1, FL330 and below will no longer be part of the NAT Organised Track Structure (OTS).

What does this mean?

It means operators will have the flexibility to **file random routes at FL330 and below** when flying between Europe and North America.

Particularly for operators unable to file routes across OTS tracks with active flight levels, this means much greater flexibility in choosing their own trajectory.

Why is this helpful?

NATS quoted a study which suggested every extra minute over the ocean equates to about £51, or $70. It might not be the most radical change, but it is a step towards further improving the efficiency for operators, and ultimately to **reducing fuel burn and CO2 emissions** with it.

Why now?

It comes down to the **introduction of ADS-B**. This allows controllers to receive updates every 7-8 seconds instead of every 840 seconds (14 minutes).

What about the rest of the tracks?

This change forms part of **NATS 2030 NAT vision**, and more improvements can be expected. Unfortunately, it isn't a direct result of their NAT tracks NIL experiment and abolishment of all the OTS isn't on the cards anytime soon.

However, studies from the 'OTS Nil' trial are being reviewed and there are plans to simulate further OTS Nil on busier traffic days to see if viable, useful, doable…
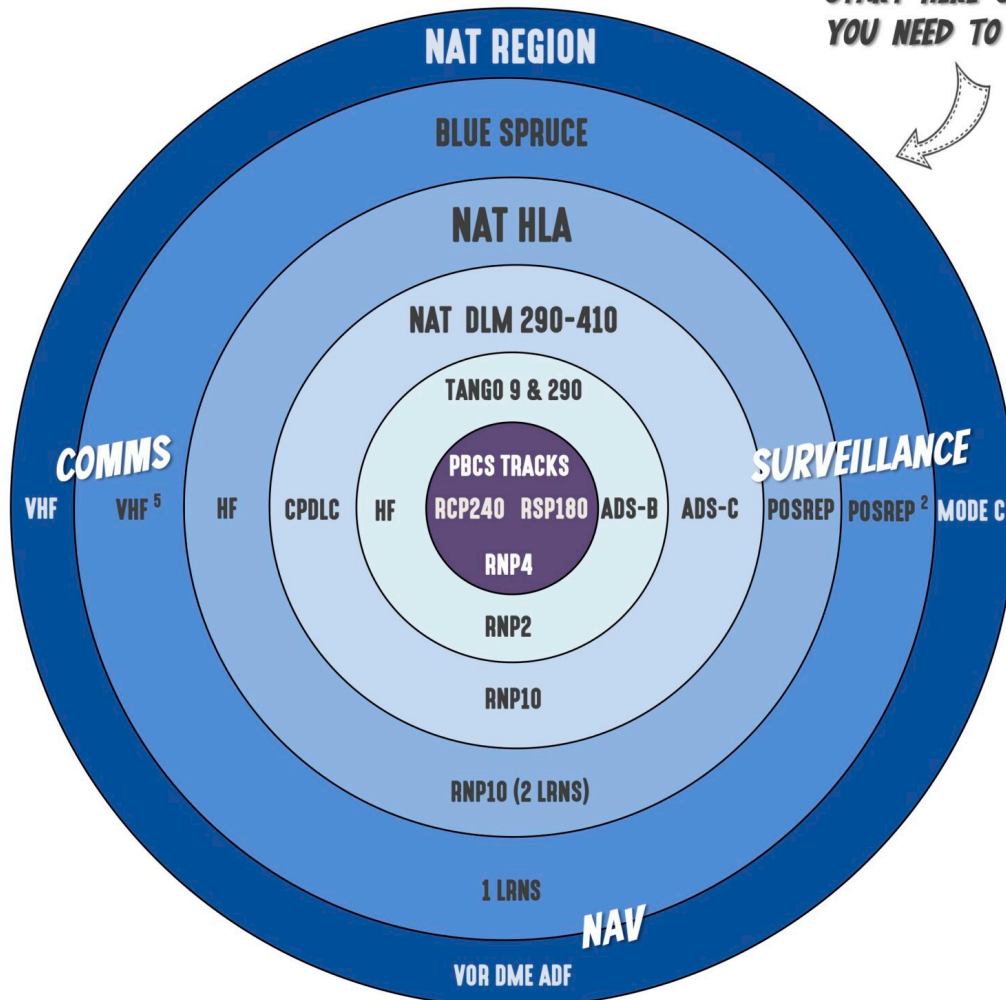
What do you need?

If you want to fly at FL330 or below (down to FL285) then remember **you are still in the NAT HLA**, just not on the OTS, so the same HF, long range nav and comms requirements apply, as do datalink mandates.

CIRCLE OF ENTRY
NORTH ATLANTIC AIRSPACE

OPSGROUP
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START HERE & SEE WHAT YOU NEED TO GET IN

NAT REGION

BLUE SPRUCE

NAT HLA

NAT DLM 290-410

TANGO 9 & 290

COMMS

SURVEILLANCE

PBCS TRACKS
RCP240   RSP180
RNP4

VHF | VHF [5] | HF | CPDLC | HF | ADS-B | ADS-C | POSREP | POSREP [2] | MODE C

RNP2

RNP10

RNP10 (2 LRNS)

1 LRNS

NAV

VOR DME ADF

A FEW NOTES :

1 : The **NAT HLA** (formerly MNPS) is FL285-420 and everyone needs HLA approval in this area.

2 : **Blue Spruce** routes: 1 LRNS ok, VHF ok on most, but since 2021 more restrictive: datalink needed FL290-410 on southerly routes, ADS-B over Greenland (if no ADS-C), and HLA approval FL285-420.

3 : **Datalink** (CPDLC and ADS-C) is needed from FL290-410 in the entire HLA, except for: North of 80N, NYC Oceanic, Tango 9 & 290, and 'surveillance airspace' over Iceland/Greenland (latter needs ADS-B).

4 : **PBCS Tracks** (half degree apart), when published, are FL350-390 requiring Datalink with RCP240 and RSP180, and RNP4. Normal NAT Tracks (one degree apart) just need HF, Datalink, and RNP10.

5 : **Shanwick OCA** needs HF, no exceptions (even Blue Spruce). **T9 & T290** need HF, RNP2, and ADS-B, but not datalink. You can normally **climb and descend** through most airspace even if you don't have the gear to cruise in it. You need **TCAS 7.1** everywhere in the NAT, and **RVSM** from FL290-410. **SLOP** right on all tracks, including random. Outside VHF areas **2 LRCS** are required – HF must be one, Satcom or CPDLC for the other.

This is our NAT Airspace Circle of Entry 2021 – easily check what you need for Nav, Comms and ATC Surveillance depending on which bit of the NAT you will be flying through.

Anything else?

Unfortunately no, that's the news for now. Any questions on this feel free to direct them to us at team@ops.group

If you want to read the "official" NATS notice then you can do so here. We don't yet have a reference for the official NAT Docs.