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SECTOR 7 — CHART INFORMATION

SECTOR 7

CAPE WRATH TO PENTLAND FIRTH

Plan.—This sector describes the N coast of Scotland from Cape Wrath to Pentland Firth. Solan Bank, Sule Skerry, Stack Skerry, and Skerry Bank are also described. The descriptive sequence is from W to E.

General Remarks

7.1 The N coast of Scotland extends from Cape Wrath in a general E direction for 52 miles to Dunnet Head, the SW entrance point of Pentland Firth. High land and numerous peaks back the rugged shoreline which is broken by several inlets, coves, and small bays. In general, the coast is steep-to with dangers lying close inshore in many places.

Tides—Currents.—In the vicinity of Cape Wrath and close inshore, the tidal current always sets W, but at a position about 2 miles NE of the cape, it sets both E and W. The E current usually begins 6 hours before HW and the W current at HW at Stromness. At a position about 7 miles NNW of the cape, the tidal currents set ENE and WSW. The ENE current usually begins 4 hours before HW and the WSW current begins 2 hours 45 minutes after HW at Stromness. In this area, the currents generally attain rates of 1.5 knots at springs.

In the vicinity of Cape Wrath, heavy and dangerous seas often result when the tidal currents are opposed by strong winds.

The tides rise about 4.6m at springs and 3.5m at neaps at the Kyle of Durness. The tidal currents run strongly through the shallow channel in the inner part of this inlet, especially near LW when the sands are uncovering, but they are hardly perceptible close outside the bar.

Generally, the tidal currents in Loch Eriboll are weak and only attain rates of up to 0.5 knot in the channel leading W of Chorrie Island.

In the entrance to Kyle of Tongue, the E current begins 4 hours 45 minutes before HW and the W current begins 1 hour 15 minutes after HW at Stromness. A heavy sea is raised when the latter part of the W current meets the current setting out of the inlet.

At a position about 7 miles N of Torrisdale Bay, the E current begins 3 hours 45 minutes before HW and the W current begins 2 hours 30 minutes after HW at Stromness. These currents attain rates at springs of 1.4 knots.

Off Strathy Point, the E current begins 4 hours 15 minutes before HW and the W current begins 1 hour 45 minutes after HW at Stromness. These currents attain rates at springs of up to 2.5 knots and always set N along the E side of the Strathy peninsula.

Off Brims Ness, the E current begins 4 hours 15 minutes before HW and the W current begins 1 hour 45 minutes after HW at Stromness. These currents attain rates at springs of about 3 knots. During strong winds, a dangerous sea is raised when strong tidal currents set over the Whales Back.

Both the E and W tidal currents enter and circle Thurso Bay and attain rates at springs not exceeding 1.2 knots. In Scrabster Road and Dunnet Bay, the tidal currents are hardly perceptible.

Off Holborn Head, the E current begins 4 hours 15 minutes before HW at Stromness. It sets toward Scrabster Road for the first 2 hours and then part of it gradually turns W and N to form a countercurrent between Little Head and Holborn Head. The tidal current on the W side of Thurso Bay sets N for the duration of the W current.

At a position about 0.5 mile N of Dunnet Head, the W current begins 45 minutes after HW at Stromness and the E current begins 5 hours 30 minutes before HW at Stromness. The current runs N along the E side of Dunnet Bay during both the E and W main tidal currents, the set being due in the latter case to the countercurrent that is formed.

Caution.—Marine farms are situated within many of the inlets and lochs along this stretch of coast.

Off-lying Dangers

7.2 Nun Rock (58°52'N., 4°58'W.), with a depth of 5.4m, lies 15 miles N of Cape Wrath. When the tidal currents are running strongly, this weed-covered pinnacle rock is marked by breakers and tide rips.

Nun Bank extends up to 8 miles N and 1 mile S from Nun Rock. It has depths of 21 to 54m and a bottom of sand, rocks, and broken shell.

Solan Bank (59°04'N., 4°53'W.) has depths of 36 to 55m and a bottom of sand, stones, and shells.

Sule Skerry (59°05'N., 4°24'W.), a flat and grass-covered island, is 12m high and fringed by shallow reefs. A rocky patch, with a depth of 14.6m, lies about 1 mile NE of the island and breaks during W gales. A main light is shown from a prominent tower, 27m high, standing on this island. A racon is situated at the light. A rocky patch, with a depth of 21m, lies 2 miles N of the light.

Stack Skerry (59°01'N., 4°30'W.), a steep-to and rocky islet, is 36m high. It has the appearance of a double rock when viewed from the W and the appearance of a vessel under sail when viewed from the S.



SULE SKERRY BEARING N



STACK SKERRY

Cape Wrath to Dunnet Head

7.3 Cape Wrath ($58^{\circ}37'N.$, $5^{\circ}00'W.$), the NW extremity of the mainland of Scotland, is a bold and rocky headland. It is 110m high and very radar conspicuous. A main light is shown from a prominent tower, 20m high, standing on the cape. However, it is reported that this tower is frequently obscured by fog. A wind generator is situated close to the light.

Duslic Rock, which dries 3.4m, lies 0.8 mile NNE of Cape Wrath and is steep-to. Vessels with local knowledge sometimes pass S of this rock in order to take advantage of the prevailing W current in the passage and to avoid the adverse currents setting N of it.

Caution.—Firing exercises, involving the use of live ammunition by ships and aircraft, take place occasionally within an area lying off Cape Wrath. This area extends up to 5

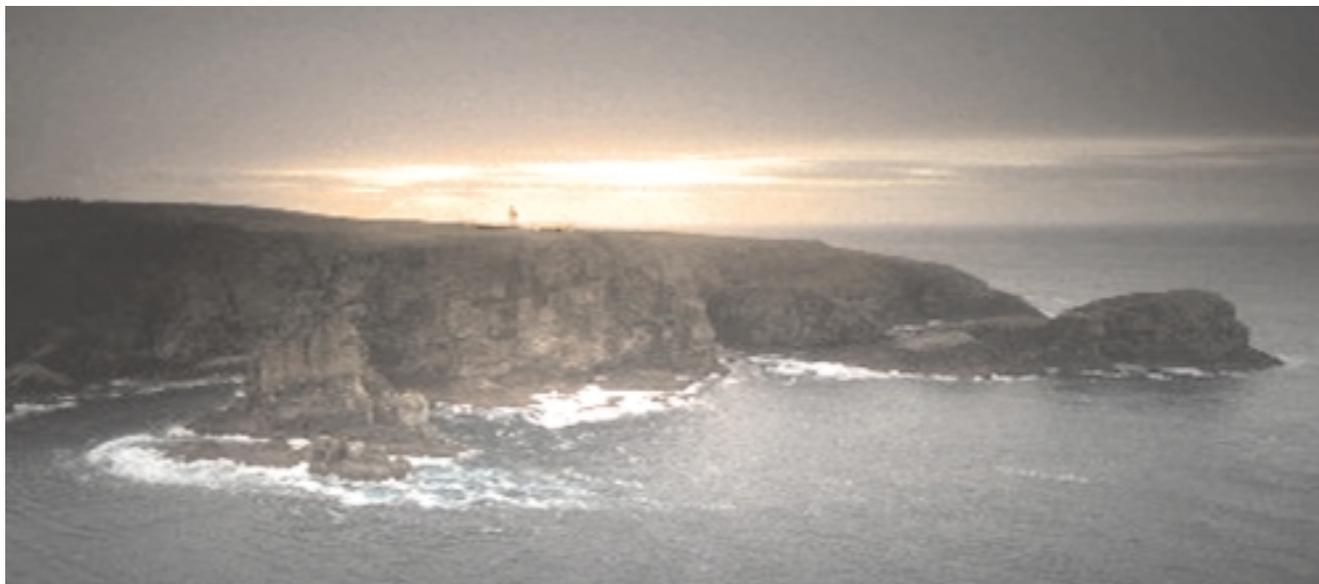
miles seaward between the cape and Faraid Head, 7.2 miles ESE. A target buoy is moored 1.7 miles WNW of the latter headland.

When the firing area is in use, red flags, or pairs of red flags disposed vertically, are exhibited at the four extremities of the land limits. During such periods, vessels may only pass through the area in the ordinary course of navigation, but for their own safety are advised to keep well clear. In addition, pleasure craft should not cruise in this area. Anchorage and fishing are prohibited within the area when the exercises are being carried out.

By day, the red flags on the S extremities of the area will be exhibited at half-mast to notify vessels that they are within the area. At night, such notification will be conveyed by the continuous signaling, by searchlight, in the direction of the vessel of the group IB (you should keep clear of the firing range) from the International Code of Signals. When so notified, vessels should leave the area immediately, except in cases of emergency.

7.4 An Garbheilean ($58^{\circ}37'N.$, $4^{\circ}52'W.$), an islet, lies close offshore, 3.8 miles E of Cape Wrath. It is grass-covered and 30m high. A reef, with a least depth of 2.7m, extends up to 0.4 mile NW from this islet.

Kyle of Durness ($58^{\circ}36'N.$, $4^{\circ}49'W.$), an irregular inlet, is entered between Stoir Point, located 6.7 miles ESE of Cape Wrath, and Farout Point, 1 mile E. Immediately within the entrance, this inlet widens slightly to form Balnakeil Bay. A village, with a prominent church, is situated on the SE shore of this bay. The inner part of the inlet, which extends for 5 miles in a S direction, is almost completely filled with drying banks and fronted by a sand bar. Heavy swells from the NW frequently set into this inlet and it does not provide a safe anchorage.



CAPE WRATH

Photo courtesy of Scottish Radiance

Faraid Head (58°36'N., 4°46'W.) is a bold and steep-to headland, 96m high. It is the N extremity of the peninsula which forms the E side of the entrance to Kyle of Durness. A prominent building is situated 0.3 mile S of this headland.

Clach Mhor na Faraid, a pinnacle rock, is 51m high. It is the tallest of a group of detached rocks and is located 0.2 mile offshore, 0.5 mile SE of Faraid Head.

7.5 Sango Bay (58°34'N., 4°44'W.), a small cove, indents the irregular coast midway between Faraid Head and Loch Eriboll. The village of Sangomore is situated at the head of the cove and a radio mast stands on Old Castle Point, the W entrance point.

Hoan Island (58°34'N., 4°41'W.), grass-covered, is the largest of several islands lying on the W side of the approach to Loch Eriboll. An Dubh Sgeir, a rocky islet, is 10m high and lies about 0.3 mile NE of Hoan Island. It is the outermost danger lying off this section of the coast. Several rocks, which break, obstruct the passage leading between this islet and Hoan Island. An Cruachan, a small round-topped rock, is 2m high and lies 0.4 mile NW of Hoan Island. Several other small islets, fringed by rocks, lie close inshore to the SW of Hoan Island.

Anchorage is available in depths up to 16m, sand, to the S of Hoan Island, but the area is open to winds from the E and NE.

Ant-Aigeach (58°33'N., 4°39'W.), located at the W side of the entrance to Loch Eriboll, is formed by a small peninsula which is joined to the coast by a narrow neck of land. It rises to a well-defined summit, but is difficult to distinguish from the higher hills to the SW.

Eilean Cluimhrig, a small table-topped islet, lies 0.3 mile NE of Ant-Aigeach and has mostly cliffy sides. It is bare, rocky, 13m high, and fringed by rocks. A narrow chasm, located near its center, almost divides this islet into two parts. Several rocks, awash, lie up to about 0.3 mile W of the islet.

Loch Eriboll (58°33'N., 4°38'W.), a steep-sided inlet, has general depths of 36 to 55m and extends inland in a SW direction for about 9 miles. It is entered between Eilean Cluimhrig and Whiten Head, 2.3 miles NE.

Rispond Bay, a small partially drying inlet, lies 0.2 mile S of An-Aigeach. It has a village situated at the head and is used by small craft. A'chleit and Eilean Dubh, two small islets, lie close offshore, 1.8 miles S of Ant-Aigeach. They are both connected to the W side of the loch by drying reefs. Portnancon, a small cove with a village situated at the head, lies close S of Eilean Dubh.

The E side of the loch is more irregular than the W side and drying rocks lie up to 300m offshore in several places. The River Hope flows into the E side of the loch, 3.5 miles S of Whiten Head. Sgeir a Bhuic, a drying reef, lies 0.4 mile NW of the mouth of this river and is surmounted by a small islet, 8m high.

White Head, a prominent cliffy point, is located 1.1 miles WSW of the mouth of the river and is marked by a light. A prominent white patch is located on the rocks below the light.

7.6 Chorrie Island (Eilean Choraith) (58°29'N., 4°42'W.), lying 2.7 miles SW of White Head, is the largest island within the loch. It is grassy, 21m high, and fronted by reefs. Vessels can pass to the E or W of this island. The E channel is the widest and safest. Its fairway is 0.3 mile wide

and has depths of 18 to 51m. The fairway of the W channel is only 300m wide and has a least depth of 8.5m.

Ard Neackie, a small peninsula, is located 1.4 miles ENE of Chorrie Island. It is connected to the E side of the loch by a causeway and appears as an island from the N.

Loch Eriboll offers little protection from winds from the NE or the SW. Gales from these directions often sweep up and down the loch during the winter, but the full force of the heavy seas does not penetrate into the inner part, S of Ard Neackie, because of the conformation of the land. Vessels can anchor as convenient, SW of Ard Neackie, over a bottom of mostly mud.

Camas an Duin, one of the largest bays indenting the sides of the loch, is entered close S of Ard Neackie. Good anchorage is available in a depth of 14m in the S part of this bay. However, the N part of the bay is exposed to SW winds and the weed-covered bottom provides a poor holding ground. Good anchorage is also available in depths of 13 to 27m, mud, in the middle of the loch between the S end of Chorrie Island and the head. However, the anchorage near the head is exposed to the full force of the SW gales which blow down through the mountain ravines with considerable strength. The tidal currents within this loch are generally weak and attain rates of only 0.5 knot.

7.7 Whiten Head (58°35'N., 4°35'W.), the E entrance point of Loch Eriboll, is formed by a cliff located between two headlands. The E headland is dark, red-veined, and 155m high. The W headland is 136m high, white, and very conspicuous when the sun strikes it. The Sisters, consisting of a pair of white pinnacle rocks, is located midway between the headlands. These rocks are 47 and 53m high and lie about 200m offshore. Bodach Dearg, another pinnacle rock, is 23m high and lies 100m W of the E headland.

From Whiten Head, the coast trends E for 1.3 miles to Cleit an t-Seabhaig (Babach Head), a prominent red promontory, 160m high. A rock, 4m high, lies close offshore, about 200m N of this promontory.

The coast then extends 3 miles SE to Achaninver Bay, a small sandy-bottomed bight. Cliffs rise up to 240m high in some places along this stretch of shore.

Cnoc Glass (58°33'N., 4°26'W.), 68m high, is the E entrance point of Achaninver Bay and also the W entrance point of the Kyle of Tongue.

7.8 Ben Hutig (Ben Hutich) (58°33'N., 4°31'W.), with a prominent summit, is 406m high and rises 2 miles inland, about midway between Loch Eriboll and the Kyle of Tongue.

Kyle of Tongue (58°32'N., 4°23'W.), open to winds from the N, is the E most of the long and narrow inlets indenting the N coast of Scotland. It extends inland in a SSW direction for about 7 miles, but the inner 5 miles consists of a sand-filled area and is fronted by a bar. A causeway, carrying a road, extends across the inlet, 3 miles from the head. A narrow and shallow channel, which passes under the causeway, leads through the sands to the head.

From the W, the entrance of this inlet is not easily identified and the off-lying islands are difficult to distinguish from each other.

Cnoc an Fhreicheadain (58°30'N., 4°23'W.), a prominent hill, stands on the E side of the inlet. It is 306m high and is a

useful landmark when approaching the entrance. A radio mast stands 0.5 mile S of this hill.

Eilean Nan Ron (58°33'N., 4°20'W.), 75m high, lies 0.5 mile N of Torrale Head, the E entrance point. This bold and rocky island is fringed by rocks and two small islets lie close NW of it.

The Kyle of Tongue can be entered, in depths of 14 to 25m, between Cnoc Glass and Eilean Nan Ron. Caol Raineach (Kyle of Rannock), the passage leading SE of Eilean Nan Ron, has a least depth of 9.1m in the fairway. Local knowledge is advised.

Eilean a Chaoil (58°33'N., 4°26'W.), an islet, lies close offshore, 0.5 mile SE of Cnoc Glass. From Cnoc Glass, the W side of the inlet trends SSE for 2 miles to Ard Sgianaid. Several other islets lie close off this section of the shore.

7.9 The Rabbit Islands (58°32'N., 4°24'W.), consisting of two grass-covered islands, lie 0.5 mile NE of Ard Sgianaid. They are connected to each other and to the side of the loch by a shoal spit which nearly dries. Sgeir an Oir, a rocky islet, is 40m high and lies close N of the NE most island. Dubh Sgeir More (The Skerries), formed by a group of rocks, lies 0.7 mile offshore, midway between Eilean a Chaoil and Sgeir an Oir. No channels lead into the inlet to the W or S of the Rabbit Islands. Temporary anchorage can be taken in a depth of 7m, sand, SE of the Rabbit Islands.

Skullomie Harbor, a shallow cove, lies on the E side of the lock, 2 miles SSW of Torrale Head, and is used by fishing vessels.

From Torrale Head, the coast extends 10.5 miles ENE to Strathy Point and is indented by several bights.

Neave Island (58°33'N., 4°18'W.) lies close offshore, 1.3 miles E of Torrale Head. It is rugged and 68m high. The stratified formation on the N side gives this island a peculiar striped and prominent appearance.

Strathy Point (58°36'N., 4°01'W.), 35m high, is located at the N end of a peninsula which projects 2 miles N from the coast. Garbh Eilean, a rocky and steep-to islet, lies close W of this point. A main light is shown from a tower with a dwelling, 14m high, standing on the point.



Photo courtesy of Scottish Radiance
STRATHY POINT LIGHT

The W side of the peninsula is fringed by small islets and rocks, and the E side is lined with cliffs.

Between Strathy Point and Holborn Head, 15 miles E, several small bays indent the coast.

Rubha Na Cloiche (58°34'N., 3°57'W.), located 2.8 miles SE of Strathy point, is a bold and granite point, 79m high. Rubha Bhra (Skerry Point), a rocky headland, is located 0.8 mile E of this point and The Stag of Port, a large drying rock, lies close off it.

Port Skerra (Port Skerry), a very small cove, is entered close E of Rubha Bhra and is used by local boats.

Rubha Antuir (58°34'N., 3°54'W.), 94m high, is a rounded and bold headland fringed with drying rocks.

7.10 Sandside Head (58°34'N., 3°48'W.) is formed by an overhanging cliff, 75m high. The Stags, consisting of two drying rocks, front this point. Sandside Bay, a bight, is entered E of the point and a small drying harbor, formed by piers, lies on its W side.

In the vicinity of Sandside Bay, the nature of the countryside starts to change. In contrast to the sharp-topped granite peaks to the W, the hills rising to the E of the bay are lower and rolling.

The extensive buildings of Dounreay nuclear power station stand near the coast, 1 mile ENE of the E entrance point of Sandside Bay. These buildings include a very conspicuous sphere, 58m in diameter, and a chimney, 57m high. An airfield and a heliport are situated behind the buildings.

A lighted buoy is moored about 0.5 mile NW of the sphere and marks the seaward end of an outfall pipeline.

Brim's Ness (58°37'N., 3°40'W.) is a salient point. Its E side is formed by a cliff, 35m high, and its W side slopes gradually to a low point. Whales Back, a steep-to rocky ledge, extends up to 0.4 mile N from the point. The inner half of this ledge dries and the outer half has depths of less than 8m. A conspicuous radio tower, 183m high, stands 1 mile SW of the point.

The coast extending E from Brim's Ness gradually becomes steeper and black, slate cliffs rise to heights of about 90m in places.

Holborn Head (58°37'N., 3°32'W.), the W entrance point of Thurso Bay, is steep-to and 31m high. The Clett (The Cleit), a detached rock, lies close offshore, 0.2 mile W of this point.

7.11 Thurso Bay (58°37'N., 3°30'W.), the largest bay on the N coast of Scotland, lies between Holborn Head and Rough Head, 4 miles ENE. Scrabster Road lies at the W end of this bay and Dunnet Bay indents the E end.

Thurso Bay has general depths in the entrance of 36 to 55m with a bottom formed of mostly sand, black specks, and shells. Closer inshore, the bottom consists of rock and sand.

The Sands, a bank, lies in the approach to the bay, 1.8 miles NW of Rough Head, and has a least depth of 29.8m. The Grounds, an extensive rocky area, lies 1 mile ENE of Holborn Head and has a least depth of 14m. During NW gales, the sea breaks heavily over this area.

A main light (Holborn) is shown from a prominent tower, 17m high, standing on Little Head, a point located 0.5 mile S of Holborn Head.

Caution.—Deep sea pilots occasionally board vessels within Thurso Bay. Such actions are carried out by vessels



Photo courtesy of Scottish Radiance
HOLBORN HEAD LIGHT

passing N of Scotland that wish to embark pilots before reaching the complex Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS) established in the North Sea.

Salmon nets and lobster pots are situated along the shore of the bay in several places.

7.12 Scrabster Road (58°36'N., 3°33'W.) is the name given to the bight lying at the W end of Thurso Bay. The town of Thurso stands on both banks of the River Thurso which flows into the S part of this bight. A small harbor, used by only boats, fronts the town. The prominent ruins of a castle are situated on the E side of the river and a church, with a conspicuous spire, stands in the town.

Scrabster Harbor (58°37'N., 3°33'W.) ([World Port Index No. 32780](#)), a small port, lies in the NW part of Scrabster Road. It is a fishing center and a terminal for ferries. The town stands close W of the harbor.

Tides—Currents.—Tides rise about 3.7m at springs and 2.8m at neaps.

Depths—Limitations.—There are three principal basins, lined by quays. Fish Basin is used by fishing vessels and has a

dredged depth of 4m. Inner Basin has an entrance 15m wide. It is shallow and used by fishing vessels, small craft, and yachts. Outer Basin has an entrance 28m wide. It has depths of 3 to 3.2m and is used by small commercial vessels of up to 90m in length.

Terminal Pier projects SSE from the shore at the E side of the harbor. It has a depth of 5.4m alongside and provides berths for ro-ro ferry vessels. Vessels of up to 120m in length and 6m draft have been accommodated alongside at HW.

Pilotage.—Pilotage is not compulsory, but is advised. Pilots can be contacted by VHF and board about 0.5 mile SE of Little Head.

Anchorage.—Vessels should anchor in a depth of 9m, blue clay, about 0.2 mile S of Little Head.

7.13 Dunnet Bay (58°37'N., 3°24'W.) lies on the E side of Thurso Bay and is entered between Rough Head and Clardon Head, 2.3 miles SW. The S shore of the bay is fringed by a drying reef and several detached rocks. The N shore is fairly steep-to and lined by cliffs which have fallen in places. A sandy beach lies at the head of the bay and is backed by large sand dunes. The villages of Dunnet and Castletown are situated, respectively, at the NE and SW ends of the beach. A conspicuous silo stands 1.7 miles ESE of Dunnet village.

A large radar aerial array and a prominent sphere stand 0.2 mile SW of Clardon Head. A prominent radar tower surmounts a hill which rises about 2.5 miles SSE of the sphere.

Caution.—During W gales, a heavy swell sets into Dunnet Bay and makes it untenable.

Fishing stakes project from the shores of the bay in several places.

A submarine cable, which may best be seen on the chart, extends seaward from a point on the SW side of the bay.

Dunnet Head (58°40'N., 3°22'W.), the N extremity of Britain and the SW entrance point of Pentland Firth, is located 2 miles NNE of Rough Head. The coast between consists of steep cliffs. This headland is fronted by a sheer cliff, 125m high. A main light is shown from a prominent tower, 20m high, standing on the headland.