

### 3.10 Lochan Sàl to Loch Kirkaig

1. **Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology:** This section of coastline is situated in the north east corner of Enard Bay, where the heavily glaciated Assynt plateau adjoins the bay. The coastline is deeply indented by a series of fjords, bays and narrow inlets, characterised by high, rocky hillsides sloping down to narrow, sloping tidal rock platforms and offshore reefs and islands. The predominant bedrock throughout the section is highly resistant Lewisian gneiss seamed with dyke lines. There has only been limited development of coastal cliffs, which tend to take the form of low angle slabs. This type of coastal environment has been termed a 'skerry' coast (Price 1991, 96) (Plate 1), and is typical of a drowned landscape with a resistant bedrock. Occasional cobble and boulder beaches are located in isolated coves and bays, though no significant storm beach development was apparent. Fine to medium grade beach sediments are very rare throughout this section. An isolated raised beach is situated on the south shore of Loch an Eisg-Brachaidh adjacent to the mouth of Gleann an t-Srathan.
  
2. **Erosion Class:** This section of coastline has an essentially erosional character, comprising a complex series of exposed rocky headlands interspersed with small, well defined fjords (e.g. Poll Loisgann). The rate of regression is negligible and the active processes are probably dominated by sub-aerial weathering, as indicated by several recent rock falls along the north side of Rubha na Brèige, rather than mechanical wave activity. The incidence of wave notch development is very slight, and the underlying form of the glacial landscape is largely unaltered. Fluvial deposition is occurring in the intertidal zone at the mouth of Gleann an t-Srathan, however there is no evidence of the coast edge actively prograding at this point. The lack of storm bar development is possibly a result of the limited number of exposed inlets, most beach environments being located at the heads of sheltered inlets or bays. There is very little low lying land vulnerable to marine inundation in the event of a rise of sea level, with the exception of the lower reaches of Gleann an t-Srathan.
  
3. **Built Heritage and Archaeology:** The settlement pattern of this area was very sparse and generally confined to the mouths of the larger valleys or on terraces overlooking sheltered bays. Much of the coast edge in this section is very steep and inaccessible, and the majority of sites relate to the 19th and 20th centuries. Despite the difficult topography lazy bed cultivation and peat cuttings do occur in very isolated locations (e.g. NC 2072 9161). A particularly significant settlement was located at the head of Gleann an t-Srathan (NC 01 NE 5 & NC 2075 9172) on the south shore of Loch an Eisg-Brachaidh, which comprised 18th / 19th century buildings, boat nausts, slipways, weirs and a complex of cairns and crude, potentially early subcircular structures on an adjacent raised beach. A further building, footbridge, track and stone field boundary was located in a neighbouring valley at Polly More (NC 2075 9176). Other sites located in this sheltered bay area include an abandoned 20th century oyster farm (NC 2070 9186), a boat naust complex (NC 2070 9180) and an enclosed peninsula (NC 2073 9172) dating to the 19th / 20th centuries.

No positively identified prehistoric or medieval sites were situated in the coastal strip, though a complex of hut circles and other superimposed structures was noted on the crest of an isolated headland at Bealach Mór, located 400m from the coast edge at NC 2065 9190<sup>2</sup>. This indicates the possibility of other earlier sites occurring along the coast in this area, possibly superimposed by later settlement owing to the paucity of flat, cultivable land.

No sites are at immediate threat from coastal erosion or related processes, though most archaeology is situated immediately at the coast edge or on adjacent low lying land.

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<sup>2</sup> A description of this site has not been included in the site gazetteer included in this project (Volume 2), but is reported in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, 1996.

### 3.10.1 Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology

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#### 1. POLL LOISGANN

NC 206 916

3.1 km

*Mainly rock platform / boulder*

*Cliffs(20m) and storm beach*

*Peat / soil over visible rock*

A highly indented section of coastline consisting of steep rocky headlands and a fjord-like inlets (Poll Loigann), ringed by high grassy slopes and cliffs. The foreshore is primarily composed of narrow rock platforms with occasional cobble / boulder beaches in small coves.

#### 2. RUBH' A' BHROCHAIRE

NC 207 917

1.4 km

*Mainly rock platform / boulder*

*Low edge < 5m*

*Peat / soil over visible rock*

A small, steep sided island linked to the mainland at low tide, on the south side of Loch an Eisg-Brachaidh. The island is bordered by steep, rocky slopes with occasional low cliffs. The foreshore is primarily composed of narrow rock platforms with

occasional cobble and boulder beaches in small coves.

#### 3. LOCH AN EISG-BRACHAIDH (SOUTH)

NC 207 917

0.5 km

*Mainly cobble & boulder beach*

*Low edge < 5m*

*Raised beach & Peat / soil over visible rock*

A small, enclosed bay at the mouth of the Gleann an t-Srathain, containing small islands. The mouth of the valley contains a small raised beach, and foreshore consists of extensive cobble and boulder beach material.

#### 4. LOCH AN EISG-BRACHAIDH (NORTH)

NC 207 917

2.6 km

*Mainly rock platform / boulder*

*Low edge < 5m*

*Peat / soil over visible rock*

A highly indented bay containing a narrow tidal inlet (Port na Bò Ruaidhe) and ringed by short, steep rocky slopes. The foreshore consists of principally of narrow

rock platforms with small cobble and boulder beaches in frequent minor coves.

#### 5. CAIS-BHAIGH

NC 206 918

3.3 km

*Mainly rock platform / boulder*

*Low edge < 5m*

*Peat / soil over visible rock*

A highly indented section of skerry coastline bordered by steep rocky slopes. The foreshore principally consists of narrow rock platforms with small cobble and boulder beaches in minor coves.

#### 6. RUBHA NA BRÈIGE

NC 206 918

3.2 km

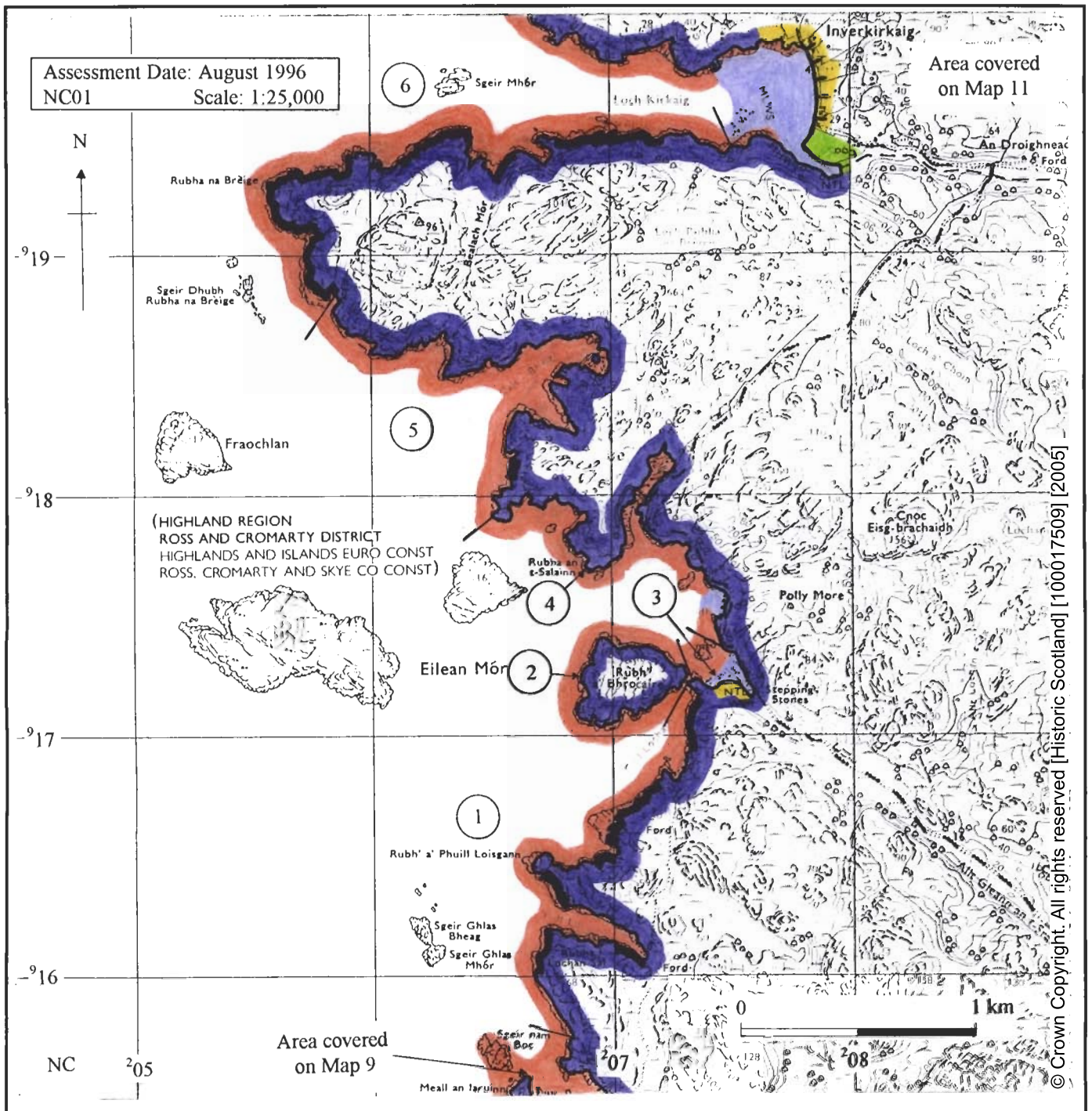
*Mainly rock platform / boulder*

*Cliffs (60m)*

*Peat / soil over visible rock*

A highly indented section of skerry coastline around a headland, bordered by steep wooded slopes and cliffs. The foreshore principally consists of narrow rock platforms with small cobble and boulder beaches in minor coves.

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Key:

<b>Hinterland Geology</b>	
Peat / soil over visible bedrock	
Raised beach and marine deposits	
Blown sand	
Alluvial deposits	
<b>Coast Edge</b>	
Low edge (<5m)	
Cliff (>5m)	
Man made barrier	
Storm beach	
Human disturbance	
<b>Coastal Geomorphology</b>	
Mainly rock platform/boulders	
Mainly shingle/cobbles/boulders	
Mainly sand	
Marsh	

### 3.10.2 Erosion Class

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#### 1. RUBHA LOCHAN SÀL

NC 206 915

1.0 km

*Eroding or stable*

A section of hillside situated at the head of a sheltered loch. The coast edge is characterised by steep grassy slopes, rock shelves, platforms and occasional cliffs. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

#### 2. POLL LOISGANN

NC 206 916

1.0 km

*Eroding or stable*

A narrow, fjord sheltered by a group of skerries. The coast edge is characterised by steep grassy slopes, rock shelves, platforms and cliffs. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

#### 3. RUBH' A' BHROCHAIRE

NC 206 916

3.2 km

*Eroding or stable*

An island linked to the mainland at low tide and adjacent sections of mainland coast. The coast edge is characterised by steep grassy slopes, rock shelves, platforms and cliffs. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

#### 4. LOCH AN EISG-BRACHAIDH

NC 207 917

2.5 km

*Stable*

A wide sheltered bay situated at the mouth of a series of streams and a small river. Sheltered by a group of offshore islands and a semi-tidal headland. There are no current indications of either active erosion or accretion.

#### 5. RUBHA AN T-SALAINN

NC 206 917

2.5 km

*Eroding or stable*

A deeply indented, section of coast sheltered behind a group of offshore islands. The coast edge is characterised by rock shelves, platforms and low cliffs. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

#### 6. CAIS-BHAIGH

NC 206 918

0.3 km

*Stable*

A sheltered cove situated at the head of a narrow inlet on an exposed section of coast. There are no current indications of either active erosion or accretion.

#### 7. RUBHA NA BRÈIGE

(SOUTH)

NC 205 918

2.5 km

*Eroding or stable*

The south side of an exposed headland, ringed with low cliffs, boulder filled coves and rock platforms. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

#### 8. RUBHA NA BRÈIGE

(NORTH)

NC 205 919

1.3 km

*Definitely eroding*

The north side of an exposed headland, ringed with cliffs and rock platforms. The occurrence of recent rock falls and extensive scree was noted, indicates the current influence of sub-aerial weathering processes. The rate of regression is probably slow.

#### 9. LOCH KIRKAIG (SOUTH)

NC 206 919

1.6 km

*Eroding or stable*

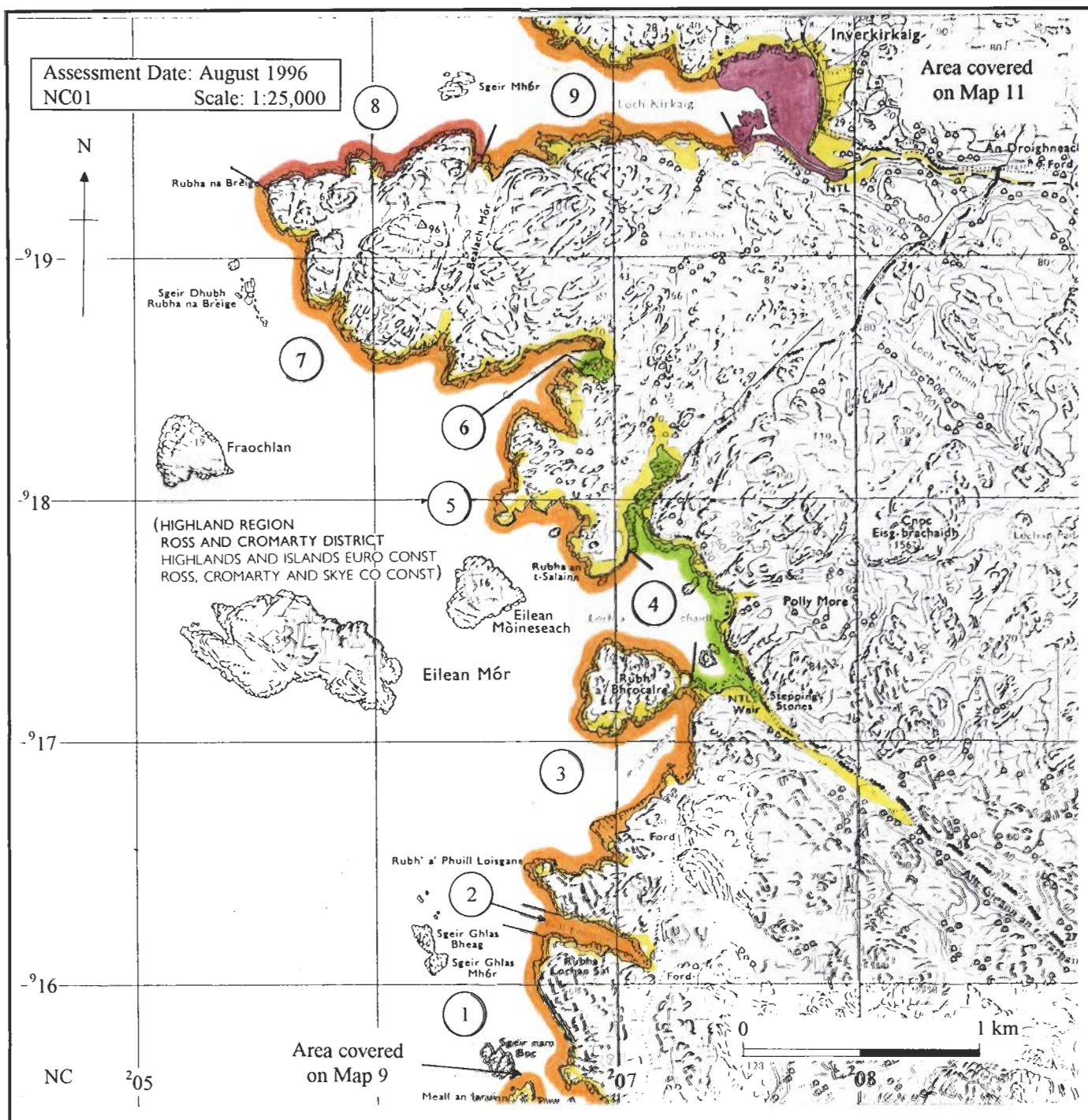
A broad headland on the south side of Loch Kirkaig, featuring short cliffs, rock platforms and occasional narrow inlets. Densely vegetated with birch woodland. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

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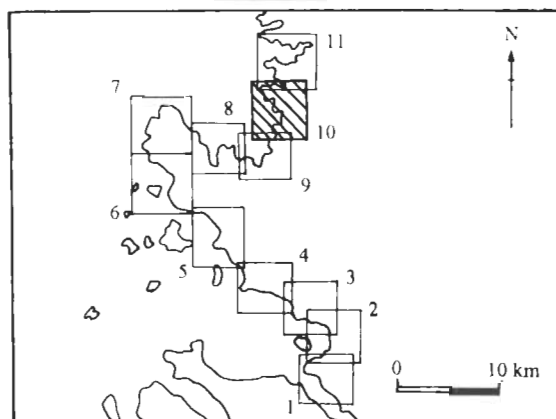
**MAP 10 LOCHAN SÀL TO LOCH KIRKAIG**

Erosion Class



Key:

Erosion Class	
Definitely accreting	
Accreting or stable	
Stable	
Eroding or stable	
Definitely eroding	
Both accreting and eroding	
Land below 10m	



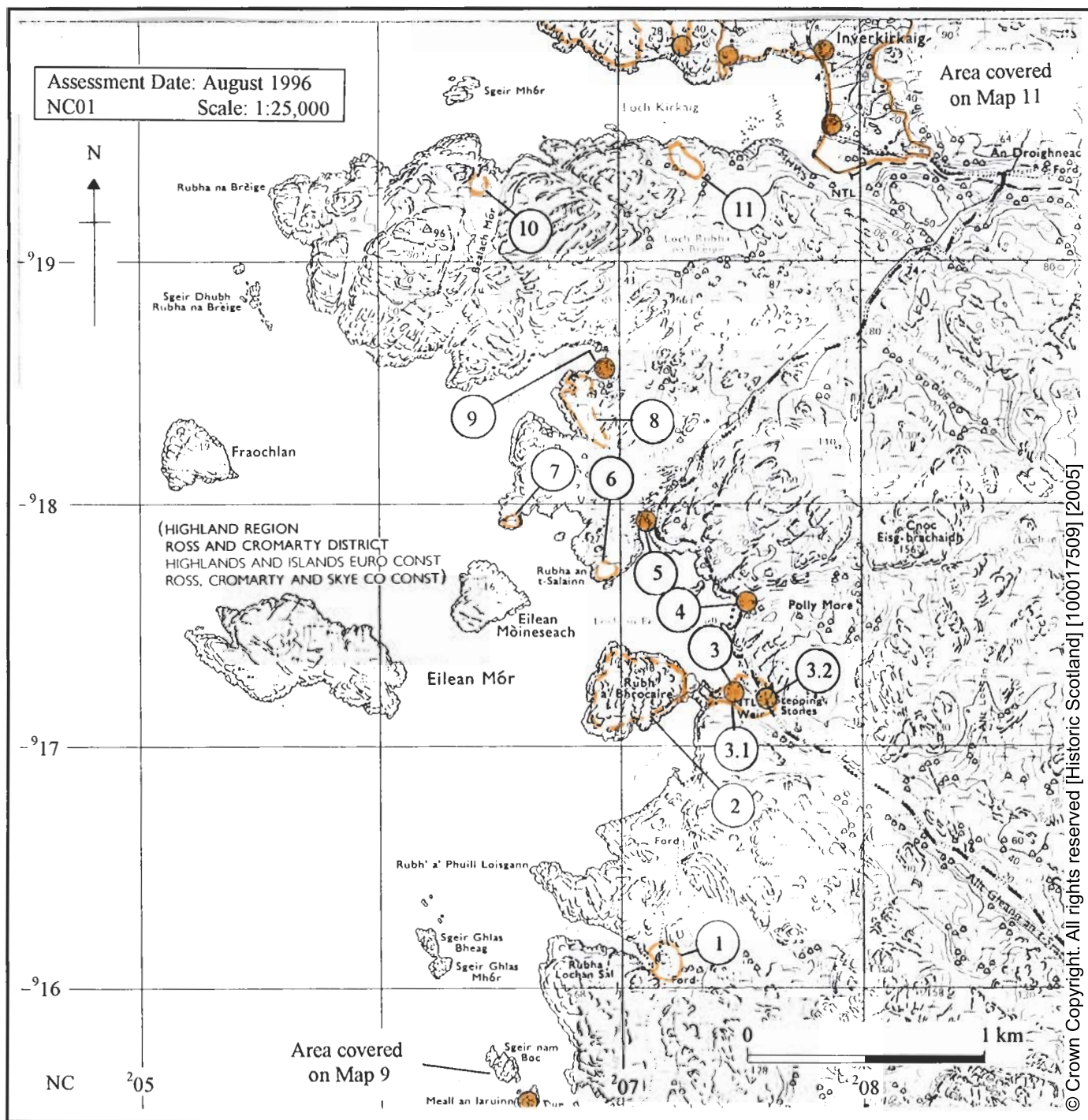
### 3.10.3 Built Heritage and Archaeology

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1. POLL LOISGANN Cultivation NC 2072 9161 16th-19th Century Fair Nil	NC 2075 9176 18th-19th Century Fair Nil	NC 2068 9184 16th-20th Century Fair Nil
2. RUBH' A' BROCHAIRE Enclosed peninsula, marker cairn NC 2073 9172 19th-20th Century Fair Nil	5. PORT NA BÒ RUAIDHE MORE Boat nausts (?), slipways, weir NC 2071 9179 19th-20th Century Fair Nil	9. CAIS-BHAIGH Oyster farm NC 2069 9186 20th Century Fair Nil
3. LOCH AN EISG-BRACHAIDH Buildings, structures, slipways, boat nausts (?), weirs NC 2075 9172 3.1 Circular structures & cairns NC 2075 9172 3.2 Buildings NC 01 NE 5 16th-19th Century Fair Nil	6. RUBHA AN T-SALAINN Peat cuttings NC 2069 9177 19th-20th Century Fair Nil	10. BEALACH MÓR Peat cuttings (?) NC 2064 9193 19th-20th Century Fair Nil
4. POLLY MORE Building, slipway (?), field systems, track, footbridge	7. CAIS-BHAIGH Peat cuttings NC 2065 9179 19th-20th Century Fair Nil	11. LOCH KIRKAIG Cultivation NC 2073 9195 16th - 19th Century Fair Nil
	8. CAIS-BHAIGH Cultivation, peat cuttings	

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Key:

Protected Ancient Monument	
Listed Historic Building	
Other known Ancient Monument	
Undesignated wreck	
Site complex	
Undetermined boundary	

