

3.2 Ardmair to Camas Beag

1. **Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology:** This section encompasses the estuarine mouth of a major glaciated river valley (Strath Kanaird), situated between ranges of steep, rugged hills. The predominant bedrock throughout this section is Torridonian sandstone, though most of the coast edge within the valley consists of drift deposits. The topography of the valley mouth is complex and contains a number of isolated rocky knolls and extensive raised beach deposits (Steers 1973, 70), which vary considerably in height. This clearly indicates a sequence of post-glacial sea level fluctuations covering a range of at least 10-20m, consisting of an initial rise caused by glacial melt, followed by a series of drops in relative sea level caused by subsequent isostatic uplift. Deep peat has since developed over the highest raised beach deposits and this is now being excavated on a commercial basis (e.g. Blar Mór).

Steep cliffs and rock platforms have developed around the base of glacial knolls, which now comprise a series of small headlands. In relatively sheltered bays the foreshore is primarily composed of shingle supplied by fluvial deposition and the erosion of raised beach deposits, notably forming a pronounced spit at Ardmair. In exposed locations storm beaches have developed including a tombolo at Meallan Bhuidhe.

2. **Erosion Class:** This stretch of coastline has been substantially sheltered from long shore wave activity by Isle Martin. The condition of the coast edge is generally stable in nature, though some erosion is occurring, notably at points within the Kanaird estuary and on exposed headlands. The character of the coast is heavily influenced by the outflow of the River Kanaird, which deposits a large quantity of medium grade fluvial material within the mouth of the estuary. There is little indication of active accretion except at Ardmair Point, where the confluence between the riverine and marine currents has created a spit. The extent of deposition within the estuary is limited to the formation of intertidal shingle and mud banks which show little indication of developing into permanent islands. The coast edge around the estuary is subject to minor wave erosion in places. The rate of regression is likely to be slow, however the high incidence of soft drift deposits will make this section highly vulnerable in the event of a worsening in climatic conditions.

To the north of the estuary there are a series of low rocky headlands which show signs of slow erosion in the form of cliff, rock platform and occasional boulder beach development. Between these points there are shallow bays containing shingle foreshores which show no obvious indications of erosion or accretion. However, the incidence of storm beach development along this section does indicate the potentially exposed aspect of the coastline. The steep sided, cusped formation of some of these bays suggest that the edge of the raised beach deposits behind are slowly receding through sub-aerial weathering. Much of the land in Strath Kanaird and at Ardmair Point is low lying and may be subject to marine inundation in the event of a rise in sea level. A causeway has recently been constructed to prevent inundation of a very low lying area at the head of the tidal reach of the river (NC 2120 9007). Evidence of human disturbance to the coast edge includes the construction of harbour facilities, revetment walls and a shoreline road embankments.

3. **Built Heritage and Archaeology:** The archaeology of this section is varied, and contains sites reflecting the longest period of occupation in the study area. Prehistoric sites are represented by a putative Mesolithic rock shelter (NH 19 NW 1) and a substantial dun (NC 10 SW 1) (Cover, Volume 1). An impressive fish trap (NC 2111 9009) (Plate 12) adjacent to the dun is certainly pre-modern in origin, while extensive evidence of 18th - 20th century settlement around the Kanaird estuary (e.g. Ardmair (NH 2110 8983) and South Keanachulish (NH 2120 8995)) including various buildings (many still occupied), lazy bed cultivation plots, peat cuttings, boat nausts, a ford and a hulk indicate the importance of the Kanaird valley throughout the later post-medieval period. There is little evidence of coastal erosion at specific sites, though some pre- and post improvement site elements have been disturbed by late 20th century developments, such as the construction of a salmon farm (NH 2115 8987), caravan / chalet park (NH 2109 8985) and extensive peat cutting near Camas Mòr (NC 2114 9005).

3.2.1 Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology

1. AIRD NA H-EIGHE

NH 210 898

1.4 km

Mainly shingle beach

Disturbed storm beach and man-made barriers

Raised beach

A spit composed of raised beach material and recently deposited shingle defines the south eastern side of Loch Kanaird. A storm beach situated along the west side of the promontory has been modified through the construction of a superimposed road embankment. A series of retaining and harbour walls have been constructed around the north side of the promontory.

2. POLL A' CHREADHA

NH 211 898

0.7 km

Mainly shingle beach, with boulders in the north

Low edge < 5m and occasional cliffs (20m)

Mainly peat / soil over visible rock

A shingle foreshore abuts raised beach deposits and a steep hillside to the north east of Aird na h-Eighe.

3. RIVER KANAIRD ESTUARY

NH 211 899

4.1 km

Mainly shingle beach, with some mud deposition

Low edge < 5m with a section of man-made barrier

Peat / soil over visible rock interspersed with raised beaches

A complex area encompassing the tidal reach of the River Kanaird. At low tide extensive shingle banks with occasional mud banks are exposed. Occasional rock platforms occur around the base of small headlands at the mouth of the estuary. The majority of the coast edge comprises low grassy banks, though a man-made causeway has been constructed along the west side of the upper reach. A small tidal tributary behind the causeway has been blocked, and modified into a drain. The hinterland comprises low rocky knolls interspersed with raised beach and alluvial terraces.

4. RUBHA MEALLAIN

BHUIDHE

NH 211 899

0.7 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (20m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

An exposed rocky headland formed by a glaciated knoll situated on the west side of the Kanaird estuary. A shingle tombolo is situated at the west end of the section, linking a small rocky island to the mainland.

5. CAMAS AN LOCHAIN

NH 211 899

0.4 km

Mainly shingle beache

Storm beach

Raised beach

An enclosed bay with a shingle foreshore backing onto a storm

beach in front of raised beach deposits and steep rocky slopes. The storm beach has impounded a small freshwater lochan.

6. MEALLAN BUIDHE

NC 211 900

0.5 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (20m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

A small rocky headland formed by a glaciated knoll situated between raised beaches.

7. CAMAS MÓR

NC 211 900

0.55 km

Mainly shingle beach

High edge (10m)

Raised beach

A wide bay backed by high grassy slopes defining the edge of raised beach deposits covered by deep peat deposits. The shingle beach is situated between small rocky headlands.

8. CAMAS BEAG

NC 211 900

0.4 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder with an isolated shingle beach

Cliffs (10m) with a low edge < 5m

at the back of an enclosed bay

Raised beach and peat / soil over visible rock

A narrow rocky headland formed by a glaciated knoll enclosing an indented bay with a shingle and boulder beach.

3.2.2 Erosion Class

1. CUL A' BHOGHA

NH 210 897

0.7 km

Stable

A present shingle foreshore and storm beach to the south of promontory spit of Aird na h-Eighe. There are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

2. AIRD NA H-EIGHE

NH 210 898

0.45 km

Accreting or stable

The deposition of shingle derived from fluvial deposits in the River Kanaird estuary and long shore drift from Cul a' Bhogha has caused a small spit to develop at Ardmail Point. The effects of the construction of a stone pier on the north side of the point are uncertain at this stage. The basic form of the spit has apparently not changed since 1756 (May's map SRO/RHP 85395).

3. POLL A' CHREADHA

NH 211 898

0.9 km

Stable

A shingle foreshore abuts raised beach deposits on the east side of the promontory spit of Aird na h-Eighe. There are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

4. CREAG DHUBH

NH 211 898

0.2 km

Eroding or stable

Rock fall at the base of a steep hill has created a boulder beach in front of cliffs at the mouth of the River Kanaird estuary.

5. RIVER KANAIRD ESTUARY

NH 211 899

4.1 km

Both accreting and eroding

A complex area dominated by active alluvial deposition in the River Kanaird estuary, and subsequent reworking of these deposits by fluvial and tidal processes. A causeway has been constructed in the upper reach of the estuary to protect low lying land from erosion or inundation.

6. RUBHA MEALLAIN

BHUIDHE

NH 211 899

0.7 km

Eroding or stable

A steep, rocky hillside at the mouth of the River Kanaird. A slow erosional environment indicated by the development of low cliffs.

7. CAMAS AN LOCHAIN

NH 211 899

0.4 km

Stable

A shingle foreshore abuts a storm beach in front of raised beach deposits between glacial knolls. There are no indications of active erosion or accretion.

8. MEALLAN BUIDHE

NC 211 900

0.5 km

Eroding or stable

Rock platforms around base of steep rocky headland. A slow erosional environment indicated by the development of low cliffs.

9. CAMAS MÓR

NC 211 900

0.55 km

Stable

A shingle beach abuts raised beach deposits in a wide bay between headlands. An unusually steep backslope to the bay indicates the possibility of slow erosion to the raised beach.

10. CAMAS BEAG

NC 211 900

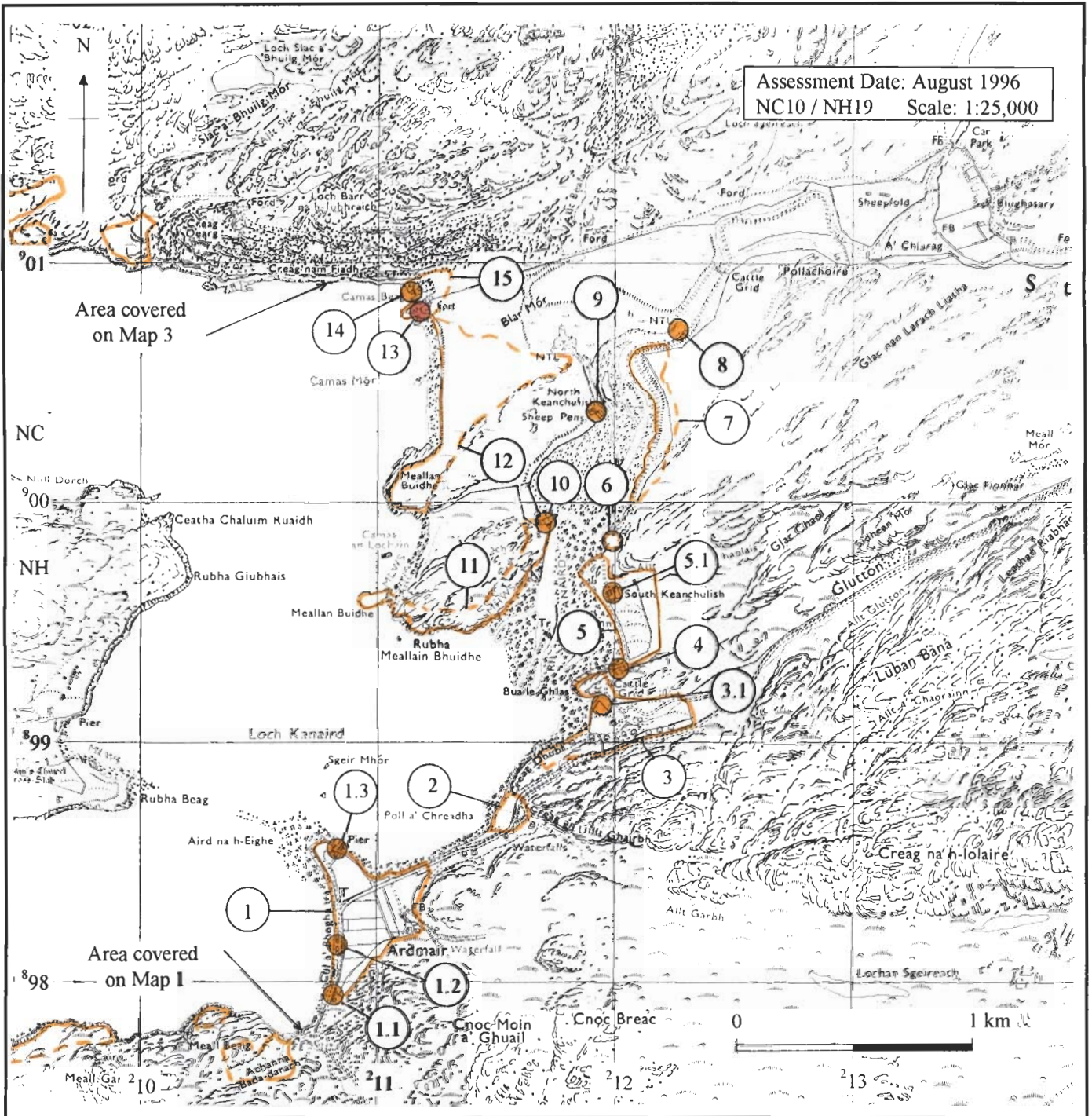
0.4 km

Eroding or stable

A low rocky headland which shelters a small enclosed bay to the north.

3.2.3 Built Heritage and Archaeology

1. ARDMAIR Township, field systems NH 2110 8983 1.1 Building complex NH 2108 8979 1.2 Building complex (occupied) NH 2108 8982 1.3 Building (occupied); boat naust; harbour NH 2108 8985 18th - 20th Century Fair Nil	5.1 Building complex (occupied) NH 2120 8996 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	Nil
2. POLL A' CHREADHA Cultivation, slipway NH 2115 8987 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	6. RIVER KANAIRD Hulk NH 2120 8998 20th Century Fair Nil	11. RUBHA MEALLAIN BHUIDHE Cultivation, peat cuttings NH 2115 8995 16th-19th Century Fair Nil
3. BUAILE GHLAS Township, field systems NH 19 NW 9 3.1 Building complex NH 2119 8992 16th-19th Century Fair Nil	7. RIVER KANAIRD Cultivation, peat cuttings NC 2112 9003 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	12. CAMAS MÓR Field systems, peat cuttings NC 2113 9005 19th-20th Century Fair Nil
4. BUAILE GHLAS Rock shelter NH 19 NW 1 Pre-modern Fair Monitor	8. RIVER KANAIRD Ford NC 2123 9007 19th Century Fair Nil	13. DUN CANNA Dun, building complex NC 10 SW 1 Protected Ancient Monument Late Prehistoric-Early modern Fair Nil
5. SOUTH KEANCHULISH Settlement, field systems, slipways NH 2120 8995	9. NORTH KEANCHULISH Building complex (occupied), field systems NC 2119 9004 19th-20th Century Good Nil	14. CAMAS BEAG Fish trap NC 2111 9009 Pre-modern Fair Nil
	10. RIVER KANAIRD Boat naust, slipway NH 2117 8999 19th-20th Century Fair	15. CAMAS BEAG Cultivation NC 2113 9009 16th-19th Century Fair Nil



Key:

<i>Protected Ancient Monument</i>	
<i>Listed Historic Building</i>	
<i>Other known Ancient Monument</i>	
<i>Undesignated wreck</i>	
<i>Site complex</i>	
<i>Undetermined boundary</i>	

