

3.6 Polbain to Reiff Bay

1. **Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology:** This section comprises an undulating coastal shelf on the western edge of a range of low hills dominated by the steep slopes of Meall Dearg (163m), overlooking two wide bays (Badentarbat Bay & Loch an Alltain Duibh) and a narrow channel (Caolas Eilean Ristol). The most characteristic feature of the coastline is the harbour of Old Dorney Bay (Plate 3), which is entirely sheltered by an adjacent island, Isle Ristol, 300m to the west. The predominant bedrock throughout this section is Torridonian sandstone, which outcrops in the form of cliffs, rock platforms and glaciated slabs on steeper slopes throughout the section. The coastal shelf is largely comprised of peat deposits and infrequent raised beach deposits, covered with a thin layer of soil. The foreshore is predominantly composed of rock platforms strewn with boulders. Occasional shingle and cobble deposits form beaches in sheltered bays. Old Dorney Bay at low tide contains extensive shingle, cobble and mud deposits. The coast edge was characterised by sloping rocky shelves and low cliffs, increasing with height (< 20m) in the north of the section.

2. **Erosion Class:** This coastal section is generally erosional in nature, though much of the coast edge is sheltered from long shore wave activity by offshore islands (The Summer Isles). Exposure to the open sea increases in the vicinity of Geodha na Glaic Bàine, and the presence of substantial cobble and boulder storm bars in some of the exposed bays clearly indicates that the coastline does experience high energy wave activity from the west. There were few indications of active erosion and the overall rate of coastal regression is probably very low, however, soft deposits of peat and glacial till were receding from the top of cliffs composed of more resistant sandstone bedrock. Minor accretion was exhibited in Old Dorney Bay, where shingle and mud banks had formed in the intertidal zone. A tombolo almost connects Isle Ristol to the mainland at low tide. Comparatively limited parts of the hinterland are low lying, though some exposed locations would be vulnerable to erosion and / or marine inundation in the event of a change in climatic conditions or rise in sea level.

3. **Built Heritage and Archaeology:** As in the Achiltibuie area (Section 3.5), settlement along this stretch is closely associated with the coastal shelf, with particular concentrations in the vicinity of the 18th-19th century crofting townships of Alltan Dubh, Polbain, Dornie and Old Dornie. It is highly probable that prehistoric and medieval settlement is also concentrated in this area, however it is often hard to distinguish these elements from the later settlement pattern. The current townships are scattered along a road located 300m+ from the shoreline, however several buildings and structures, including crofts, mills and boat nausts are situated on or close to the coast edge. Old Dorney Bay (NB 1980 9108) in particular contains extensive lazy bed cultivation, and the highest concentration of slipways, boat nausts and hulks in the study area. Other maritime related site types present include a kelp kiln (NB 1995 9097) and kelp storage pits (NB 1970 9138). An apparently early, pre-improvement settlement comprising at least 4 sub-rectangular buildings and a midden was located in the lee of a storm bar at Old Dorney Bay (NB 1982 9113, see Volume 2), and a similarly highly reduced structure (NB 1982 9113) was situated on a temporary island in the bay. Prehistoric occupation in the area was indicated by a putative hut circle (NB 1975 9131) (Plate 4) and burial cairns (NB 1984 9102 & NB 91 SE 2), which were located on exposed parts of the coastal shelf peripheral to the later settlement.

No site was observed to be actively eroding, however several sites are located in exposed positions and could be subject to erosion or inundation if climatic circumstances change. One structure (NB 1975 9131) was only exposed as a result of disturbance caused by peat cutting.

3.6.1 Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology

1. RUBHAN NA BUAILE

NB 199 909

0.9 km

Mainly shingle & cobble beach intersected with rock platforms

Low edge < 5m with occasional storm beaches

Peat / soil over visible rock interspersed with raised beach deposits

A wide shelf above low rocky banks, interspersed with small bays containing storm beaches. The foreshore is composed principally of coarse beach deposits with occasional rock platform outcrops.

2. FEAR BHREUG

NB 198 909

1.0 km

Mainly rock platform interspersed with shingle & cobble beaches

Low edge < 5m

Peat / soil over visible rock interspersed with raised beach deposits

A wide shelf above low rocky banks, interspersed with small bays. The foreshore is composed principally of rock platform with occasional sections of coarse beach material deposits.

3. MOL MÓR

NB 198 910

1.75 km

Mainly rock platform intersected with cobble & boulder beaches

Mainly cliffs (< 10m) with occasional storm beaches

Peat / soil over visible rock intersected with raised beach

Steep rocky slopes and low cliffs above rock platforms interspersed with raised beach deposits, storm bars and cobble / boulder forshore.

4. OLD DORNEY BAY

NB 198 911

2.15 km

Mainly shingle & cobble beach with occasional rock platforms and mud banks

Low edge < 5m with occasional storm beaches

Peat / soil over visible rock intersected with raised beach

A complex section comprising a sheltered bay at the base of steep rocky slopes and peat covered shelves. Raised beach deposits occur around the north east and south west sides of the bay. A tombolo comprised of boulders links a former island with the north shore, while another small island in the centre of the bay is accessible at low tide. Extensive foreshore deposits in the bay consist of mud, shingle, cobbles, boulders and occasional sand.

5. CAMAS AN FHÉIDH

NB 198 912

1.2 km

Mainly rock platform interspersed with cobble & boulder beaches

Low edge < 5m with occasional storm beaches

Peat / soil over visible rock intersected with raised beach

A section composed of steep rocky slopes and a wide peat / soil covered shelf above low cliffs and rock platforms. A raised beach is situated at the mouth of a narrow valley behind a storm bar and sand and cobble foreshore.

6. ALLTAN DUBH

NB 198 912

1.8 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Low edge < 5m with occasional cliffs (10m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

A wide shelf covered with peat and glacial till deposits is located above low cliffs, sloping rocky shelves and platforms. Occasional boulder beaches are located in small inlets.

7. GEODHA NA GLAIC BÀINE

NB 196 913

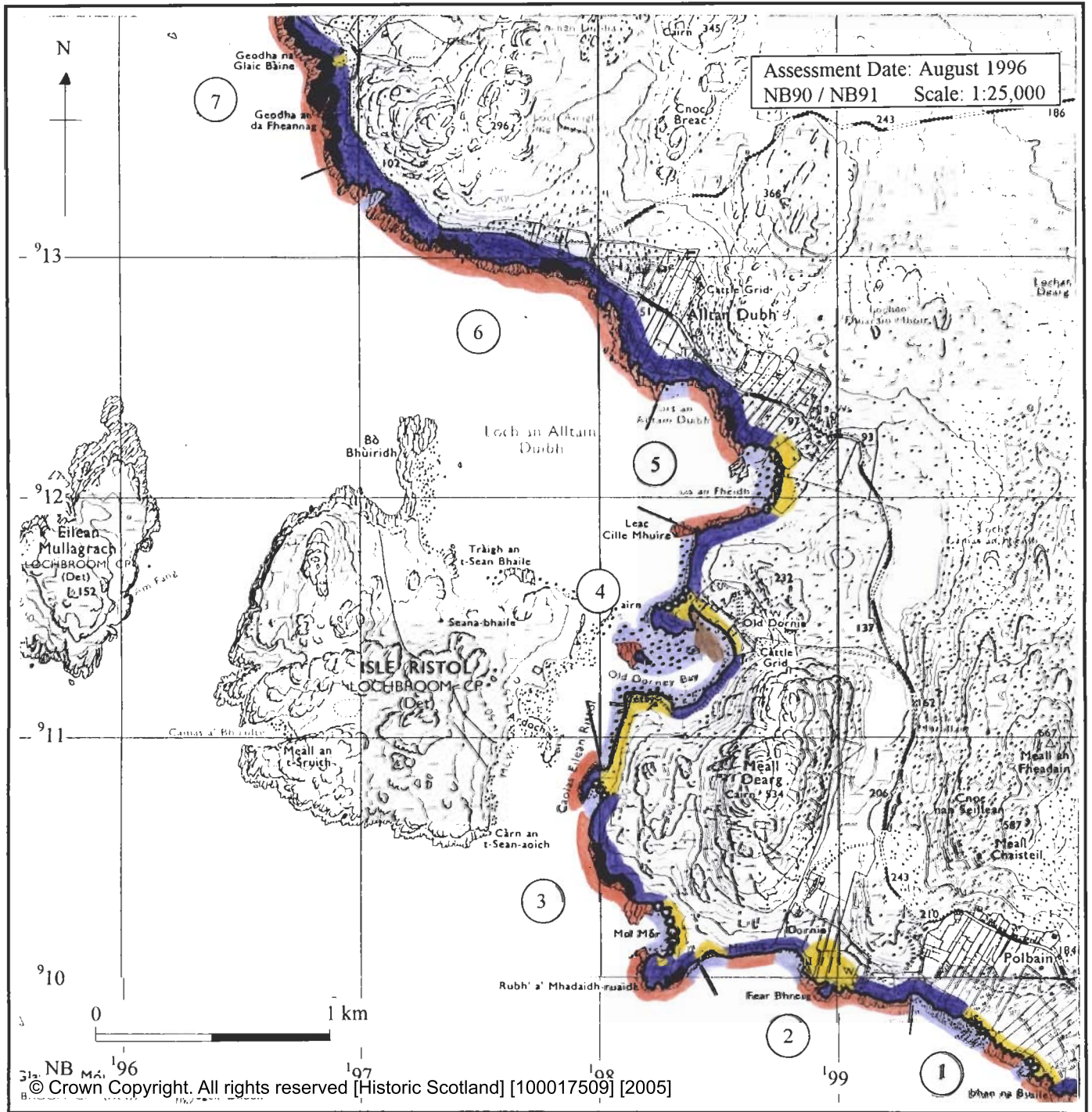
0.8 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs(20m)

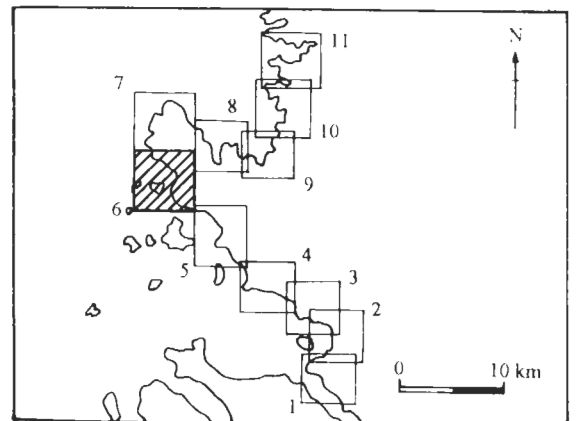
Peat / soil over visible rock

A wide shelf covered with peat and glacial till deposits is located above high cliffs, steep rocky slopes and rock platforms. Occasional boulder beaches are located in small inlets.



Key:

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



3.6.2 Erosion Class

1. RUBHAN NA BUAILE

NB 199 909

0.5 km

Eroding or stable

A series of short, grassy banks and cliffs above rock platforms are probably eroding slowly.

2. CAMAS COILLE

NB 199 909

0.4 km

Stable

An exposed bay between rocky headlands, backed by grassy banks. Currently there are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

3. FEAR BHREUG

NB 199 909

0.6 km

Eroding or stable

A series of short, grassy banks and cliffs above rock platforms are probably eroding slowly.

4. DORNIE BAY

NB 198 910

0.15 km

Stable

A small bay between rocky headlands, backed by grassy banks. Currently there are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

5. RUBH' A' MHADAIDH-

RUAIDH

NB 198 910

0.85 km

Eroding or stable

A series of short, grassy banks and cliffs situated above rock platforms, around the south side of a small promontory.

6. MOL MÓR

NB 198 910

0.3 km

Stable

A small bay on the north side of a small promontory enclosed by protruding rock platforms. Currently there are no indications of either active erosion or accretion, though the bay is in an exposed situation.

7. MEALL DEARG

NB 198 910

1.0 km

Eroding or stable

Grassy banks and cliffs situated above rock platforms at the south end of a sheltered channel between the mainland and Isle Ristol, at the base of a steep rocky hill. The coast edge is probably eroding very slightly.

8. CAOLAS EILEAN RISTOL

NB 198 910

0.35 km

Stable

The east side of a sheltered channel between Isle Ristol and the mainland is characterised by a peat covered shelf at the base of a steep rocky shelf, behind a cobble and boulder beach. Currently there are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

9. OLD DORNEY BAY

NB 198 911

1.3 km

Accreting or stable

An enclosed bay in a sheltered position opposite Isle Ristol, which contains slack water. A wide foreshore consisting of extensive mud, boulders, cobbles and shingle indicates that active accretion is occurring, in particular in the lee of a tombolo in the north west corner of the bay. Isle Ristol is almost accessible from the bay at low tide. A deep channel around the south east side of the bay is stable.

10. LEAC CILLE MHUIRE

(SOUTH)

NB 198 911

0.5 km

Stable

The north east side of a sheltered channel between Isle Ristol and the mainland is characterised by a heather covered slope behind a boulder foreshore. Currently there are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

11. LEAC CILLE MHUIRE

(NORTH)

NB 198 911

0.3 km

Eroding or stable

The south side of a bay, consisting of steep rocky slopes above a narrow rock platform foreshore. Recent signs of rock fall were evident, indicating an erosional environment.

12. CAMAS AN FHÉIDH

NB 198 912

0.5 km

Stable

A small bay at the mouth of a minor stream valley enclosed by protruding rock platforms. Currently there are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

13. ALLTAN DUBH

NB 197 912

2.5 km

Eroding or stable

A wide peat / soil covered shelf on the north side of the channel between the mainland and Isle Ristol. The coast edge is indented and comprises of low cliffs, sloping rocky shelves and platforms. Recent evidence of minor erosion include scar exposures on the edge of glacial till and peat deposits above steep slopes and cliffs.

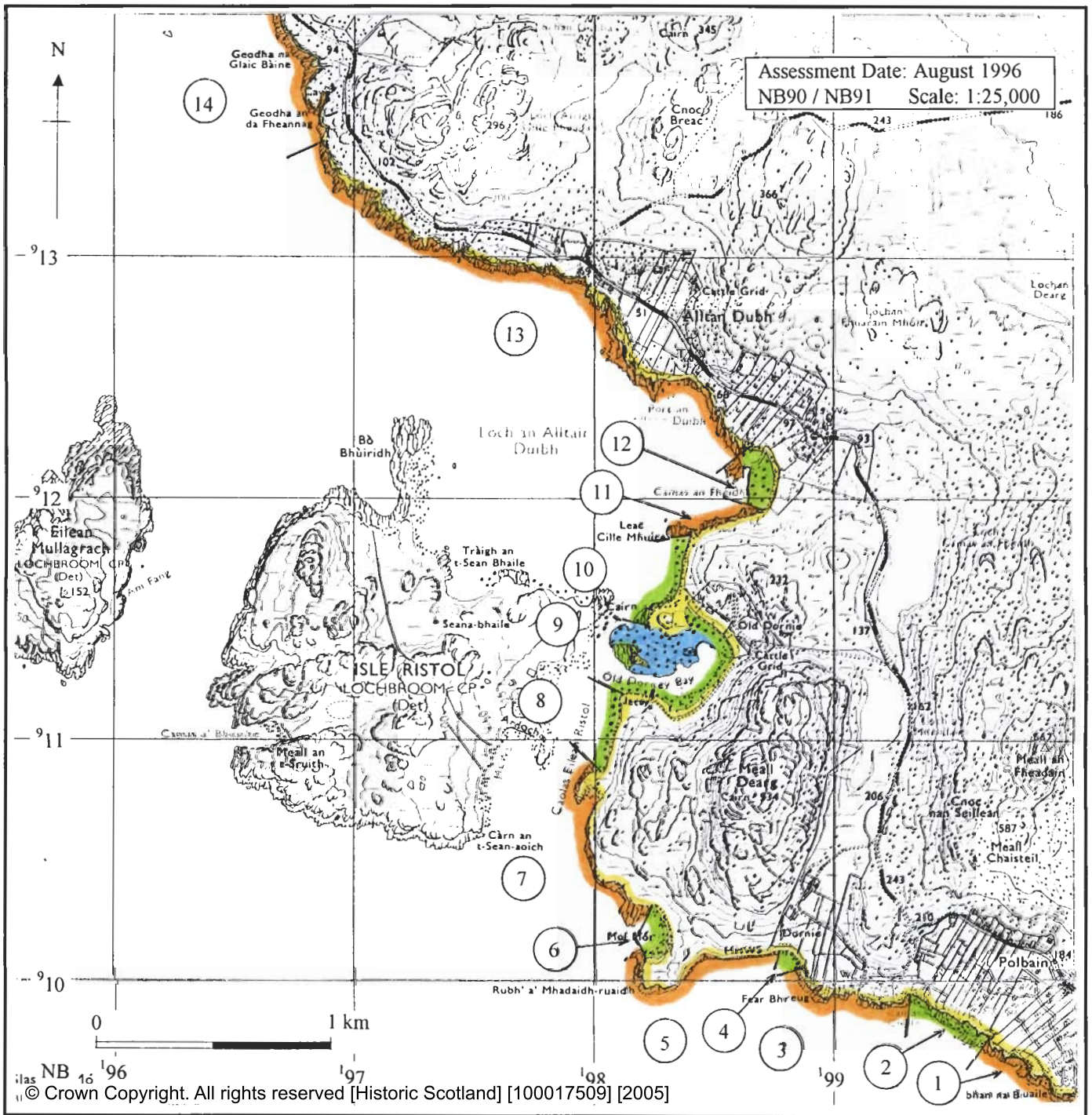
14. GEODHA NA GLAIC BÀINE

NB 196 913

0.7 km

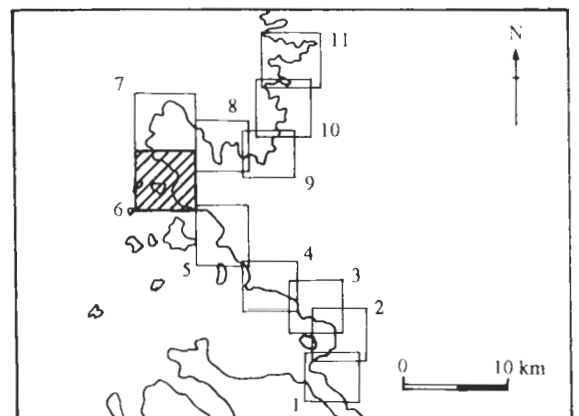
Eroding or stable

A wide peat / soil covered shelf on the north side of the passage between the mainland and Isle Ristol. The coast edge is composed of steep cliffs highly indented by deep, boulder filled geos, caves and rock platforms. Recent evidence of minor erosion include rock falls, slump scars on the edge of glacial till deposits and deflation hollows in peat on the shelf above the steep slopes and cliffs.



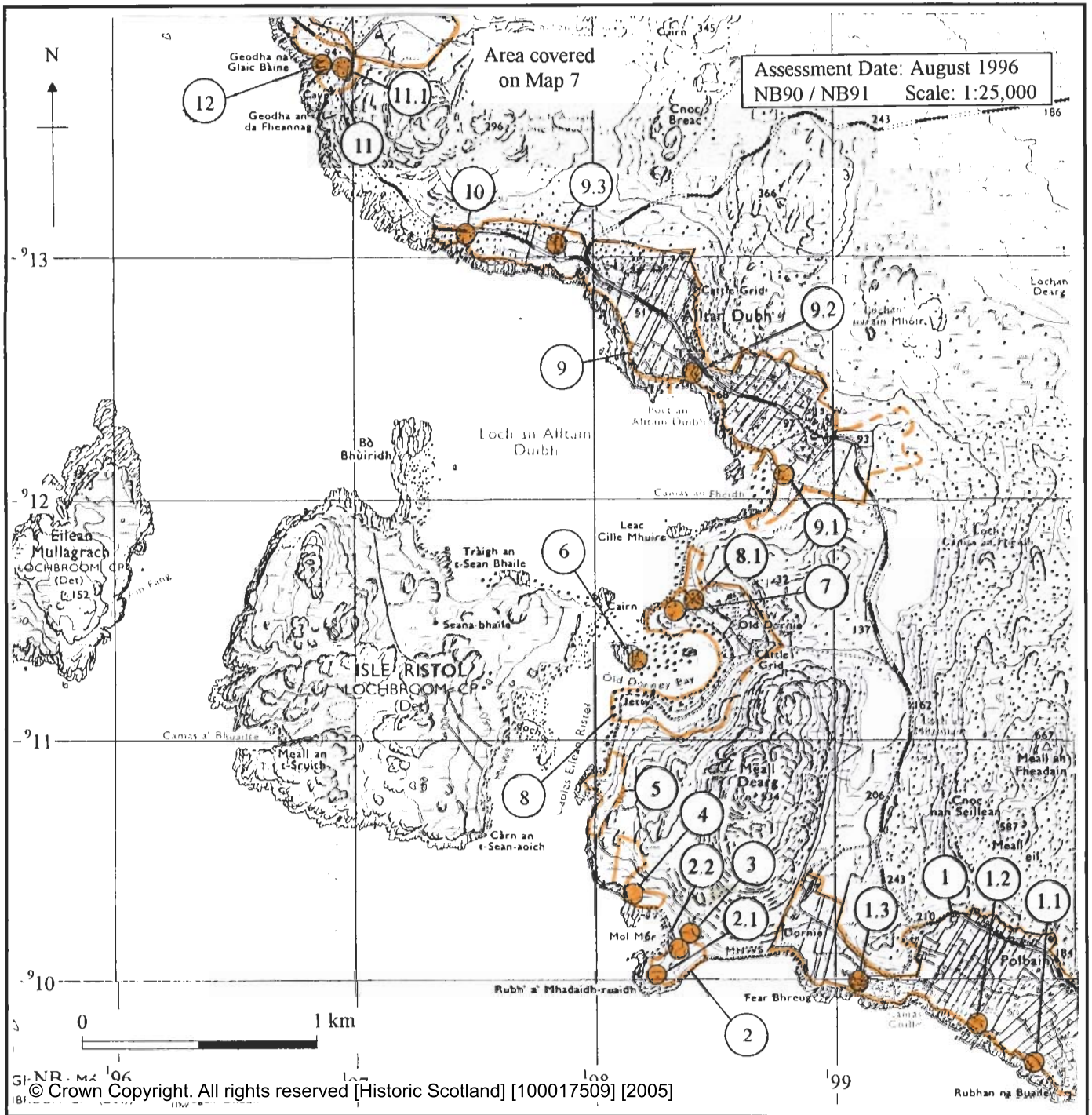
Key:

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



3.6.3 Built Heritage and Archaeology

1. POLBAIN- DORNIE Township, field systems, cultivation NB 1995 9099 1.1 Structures NB 1997 9096 1.2 Rectilinear kelp kiln NB 1995 9097 1.3 Building complex (occupied) NB 1991 9010 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	5. CAOLAS EILEAN RISTOL Field systems, cultivation, peat cuttings NB 1980 9108 16th-19th Century Fair Nil	NB 1984 9125 9.3 Building complex (occupied) NB 1978 9131 16th-20th Century Fair Nil
2. RUBH A' MHADAIDH- RUAIDH Buildings, field systems, cultivation, slipways NB 1984 9101 2.1 Building NB 1982 9100 2.2 Building & pen (not located) NB 1983 9101 16th-19th Century Fair Nil	6. OLD DORNEY BAY Structure, slipway NB 1982 9113 Pre-modern Fair Nil	10. ALLTAN DUBH Hut circle (?) NB 1975 9131 Pre-modern Fair/poor Nil
3. MOL MÓR Burial cairn (?) NB 1984 9102 Pre-modern Not located Nil	7. OLD DORNEY BAY Building complex, midden NB 1984 9115 Pre-modern Fair Nil	11. GEODHA NA GLAIC BÀINE Structures, cultivation, field systems, trackway NB 1970 9138 11.1 Mill (?), kelp storage pits NB 1970 9138 16th-19th Century Fair Nil
4. MOL MÓR Building, compost pit (?), cultivation, peat cuttings NB 1982 9104 16th-19th Century Fair (building not located) Nil	8. OLD DORNIE Township, cultivation, field systems, boat nausts, slipways, hulks NB 1985 9113 8.1 Building complex NB 1984 9116 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	12. GEODHA NA GLAIC BÀINE Burial cairn, modern burial NB 91 SE 2 Pre-modern / 20th Century Fair Nil
	9. ALLTAN DUBH Township, cultivation, field systems, peat cuttings, slipways, hulks, trackway NB 1985 9125 9.1 Mill (?) NB 1988 9121 9.2 Structure	



Key:

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

