

3.7 Reiff to Rubha Dubh

1. **Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology:** This section of coastline is consists of a series of high, steep cliffs around the western and northern sides of a broad, peat covered peninsula (Rubha Còigeach). The peninsula is formed by a wide, peat filled valley flanked by ranges of low hills to the south west and north east, which effectively define the position of the coastline. On the north eastern side in particular, long, undercut hillslopes (< 80m) characterise the coast edge. The predominant bedrock throughout this section is Torridonian sandstone. On the exposed western coast the rock is horizontally bedded with a massive blocky structure, resulting in steep, cliffs broken only by occasional bays. In contrast on the northern side of the peninsula the bedding planes are exposed on edge, resulting in frequent geos, caves, narrow peninsulas and sea stacks. Wide wave cut platforms are prevalent throughout this exposed section.

In the south, the Loch of Reiff has been impounded as a result of the linking of an island with the mainland by tombolos composed of huge boulders (Plate 2). Raised beach deposits are distributed along the west coast, though with the exception of the sheltered Loch of Reiff area, they are generally very small, often consisting of only small pebble banks. The foreshore consists predominantly of rock platforms strewn with massive boulders, however sandy stretches of beach do occur in sheltered bays.

2. **Erosion Class:** The Peninsula of Rubha Còigeach is the most exposed stretch of coastline in the study area, and also showed the clearest indications of coastal erosion in the form of steep cliffs, caves, sea stacks, geos and wide boulder strewn rock platforms. Owing to the nature of the bedding structure the western side of the peninsula is predominantly affected by mechanical wave erosion, while the northern and eastern sides are affected by a combination of both mechanical wave erosion and sub-aerial weathering. Two large bays on the west coast (Camas Eilean Ghlais & Faochag Bay) are relatively sheltered and considered stable. Owing to the resistance of the bedrock, it is probable that the coastline is only receding at a very slow rate.

The presence of storm beach composed of huge boulders indicates that in the past the coastline has been exposed to extremely high energy wave activity. At the southern end of the Loch of Reiff the tombolo has been artificially breached by a channel, and the loch is still tidal, which causes some erosion to raised beach deposits around the edge. Otherwise it appears the loch is slowly silting up. The land surrounding the loch is low lying and susceptible to marine inundation, otherwise the coastal strip is likely to be unaffected as a result of changes in climatic conditions or sea level.

3. **Built Heritage and Archaeology:** Settlement in this section is clustered around sheltered inlets and raised beach deposits, and appears more coastal in nature than elsewhere in the study area. In particular the 18th-19th century crofting township of Reiff (NB 1966 9145) is one of the few settlements in the study area to be located entirely within the coastal strip. Consequently, there is a very dense concentration of 19th century buildings at the head of Reiff Bay and on the east side of the Loch of Reiff, with various boat nausts, kelp storage pits and enclosures situated around the loch and in the adjoining settlement of Camas Eilean Ghlais (NB 1968 9155). Several putative kelp kilns have been constructed from storm beach boulders on the tombolo linking Roinn a' Mhill with the mainland, and there is a well preserved lazy bed landscape and an unusual series of low stone field boundaries or enclosures (NB 1964 9147) on the west side of the loch.

Elsewhere in this section sites are less densely distributed. Mills, shelters and other constructions composed of piled boulders are distributed along the west side of the peninsula between Reiff and the outlying settlement of Faochag (NB 1979 9175), however only a single section of peat cutting (NB 1985 9177) was observed along the higher, northern coastline.

No site was observed to be actively eroding, however several sites are in exposed positions and could be subject to inundation and / or erosion if climatic conditions change or in the event of a rise of sea level.

3.7.1 Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology

1. REIFF BAY (SOUTH)

NB 196 914

0.3 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Low edge < 5m

Peat / soil over visible rock

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

2. REIFF BAY (NORTH)

NB 196 914

0.4 km

Mainly sand with shingle & cobble beach

Storm beach

Raised beach with bedrock outcrops

A substantial storm bar blocks the entrance to Loch of Reiff and abuts raised beach deposits situated on a rocky, glaciated shelf. The foreshore is composed of sand, shingle and cobbles.

3. LOCH OF REIFF

NB 196 914

1.6 km

Mainly cobble & boulder beach

Low edge < 5m

Raised beach with bedrock outcrops

This tidal loch is impounded by storm bars to the north and south (sub-sections 2 & 5), but has been artificially opened to the sea by means of a channel for boats. To the east and west raised beach deposits are situated at the base of moderately steep rocky slopes. The foreshore within the loch is primarily composed of boulder beaches. The adjacent hinterland regularly floods and has some characteristics of salt marsh.

4. ROINN A' MHILL

NB 196 914

1.3 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs(20m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

A steep sided, rocky headland to the west side of the Loch of Reiff. The coast edge is composed of steep cliffs highly indented by deep, boulder filled geos, rock platforms and boulder storm beaches situated high above the HWM.

5. CAMAS EILEAN GHLAIS

(SOUTH)

NB 196 915

0.2 km

Mainly boulder beach

Storm beach

Raised beach

A massive boulder storm beach linking the Roinn a' Mhill to the mainland. The boulders abut raised beach deposits.

6. CAMAS EILEAN GHLAIS

(NORTH)

NB 196 915

0.7 km

Mainly sand and boulder beach

Low edge < 5m

Raised beach with bedrock outcrops

A wide bay sheltered behind a steep rocky islet. The coast edge is composed of small, steep sided headlands and isolated raised beach deposits. The foreshore is composed of boulder and sand beaches.

7. AN STIÙIR

NB 196 916

2.2 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (20m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

A highly indented, exposed stretch of coast composed of steep cliffs, geos and wide boulder strewn rock platforms. High storm beaches occur at locations along the coast, and a single isolated section of raised beach is situated at the mouth of a shallow valley (Allt

nan Clàr-Lochan). A large glacial deposit composed of massive boulders located at the coast edge has been partially eroded by wave activity to form a feature resembling a massive storm beach.

8. FAOCHAG BAY

NB 197 917

1.8 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Low edge < 5m

Peat / soil over visible rock

A relatively sheltered, indented west facing bay, enclosed behind protruding headlands and rock platforms. A small sheltered inlet on the north side of the bay contains a storm beach, with indications of tidal flooding behind. Sand deposits are exposed at low tide in the northern part of the bay. A single isolated section of raised beach is situated on the southern shore of the bay.

9. RUBHA CÒIGEACH

NB 198 917

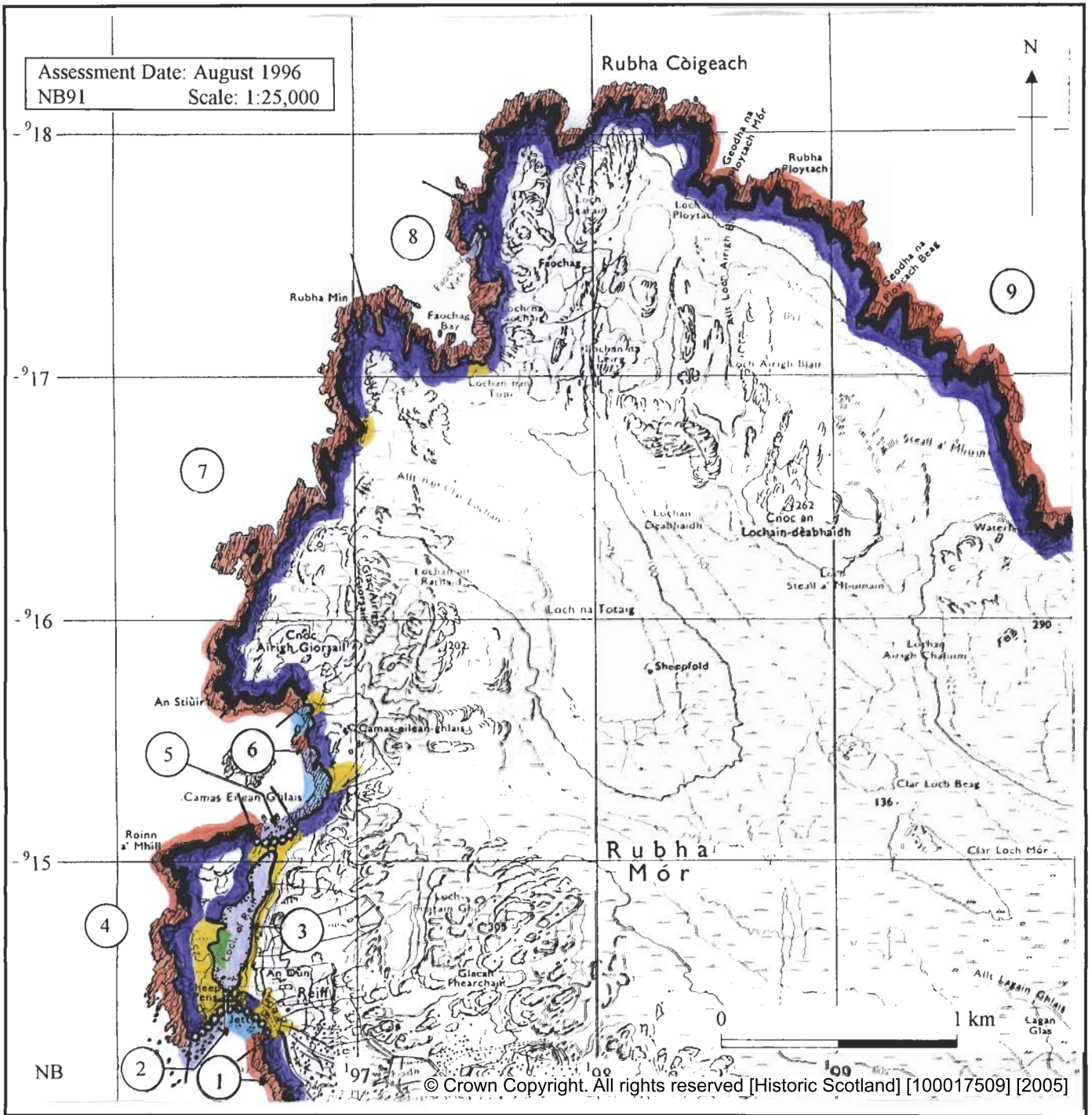
4.1 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (60m)

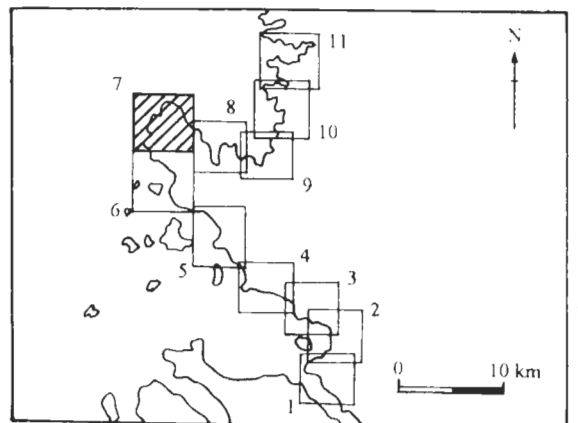
Peat / soil over visible rock

A highly indented, exposed stretch of coast composed of steep rocky slopes, high cliffs, geos, stacks, caves and wide boulder strewn rock platforms. The character of gradually changes to the east as the coast runs along the base of a range of low hills, and the bedding structure is exposed on end. Longer, shallower slopes with an base of undercut cliffs predominate.



Key:

Hinterland Geology	
Peat / soil over visible bedrock	[Blue swatch]
Raised beach and marine deposits	[Yellow swatch]
Blown sand	[Orange swatch]
Alluvial deposits	[Green swatch]
Coast Edge	
Low edge (<5m)	[White swatch]
Cliff (>5m)	[Black swatch]
Man made barrier	[Vertical lines swatch]
Storm beach	[Wavy lines swatch]
Human disturbance	[Zigzag lines swatch]
Coastal Geomorphology	
Mainly rock platform/boulders	[Red swatch]
Mainly shingle/cobbles/boulders	[Purple swatch]
Mainly sand	[Light blue swatch]
Marsh	[Green swatch]



3.7.2 Erosion Class

1. REIFF BAY (SOUTH)

NB 196 914

0.3 km

Eroding or stable

A wide peat / soil covered shelf on the south side of Reiff Bay. The coast edge is composed of steep cliffs highly indented by deep, boulder filled geos, caves and rock platforms. Recent evidence of erosion includes fresh rock falls and scar exposures at the edge of glacial till and peat deposits above steep slopes. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

2. REIFF BAY (NORTH)

NB 196 914

0.4 km

Stable

A sheltered bay at the entrance to Loch of Reiff. The coast edge is composed of an extensive storm bar and raised beach deposits behind a sand, cobble and boulder foreshore. There are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

3. LOCH OF REIFF

NB 196 914

1.6 km

Both accreting and eroding

An almost totally enclosed tidal loch situated behind a storm bar and connected to the sea by an artificial channel. The coast edge is composed of peat covered shelves and low angle rocky slopes above a boulder foreshore. The marine environment within the loch is stagnant, and the artificial channel has clearly silted up, however erosion to the coast edge is evident at HWM. Much of

the adjacent land is low lying and vulnerable to inundation.

4. ROINN A' MHILL

NB 196 914

1.3 km

Eroding or stable

A steep sided, rocky headland defining the west side of Loch of Reiff. The coast edge is composed of steep cliffs highly indented by deep, boulder filled geos and rock platforms and high storm beaches composed of boulders. This section is extremely exposed, but the rate of regression is probably very slow.

5. CAMAS EILEAN GHLAIS

NB 196 915

1.0 km

Stable

A wide bay sheltered behind a steep rocky islet. The coast edge is composed of small, steep headlands, raised beach deposits and a storm beach composed of massive boulders. The foreshore is composed of boulder and sand beaches. There are no indications of either active erosion or accretion.

6. AN STIÙIR

NB 196 916

2.3 km

Eroding or stable

A highly indented, exposed stretch of coast composed of steep cliffs, geos, wide boulder strewn rock platforms and high storm beaches comprised of boulders. The rate of regression is probably very slow. The erosion of the base of a glacial deposit of massive boulders

graphically demonstrates the erosive force of the sea along this coast.

7. FAOCHAG BAY

NB 197 917

0.9 km

Stable

A relatively sheltered west facing bay, enclosed behind protruding headlands and rock platforms. There are no indications of either active erosion or accretion, but the aspect of the bay is very exposed and may be susceptible to erosion under extreme conditions.

8. RUBHA CÒIGEACH

NB 198 917

1.6 km

Eroding or stable

A highly indented, exposed stretch of coast composed of steep cliffs, geos, wide boulder strewn rock platforms and high storm beaches comprised of boulders. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

8. RUBHA PLOYTACH

NB 198 917

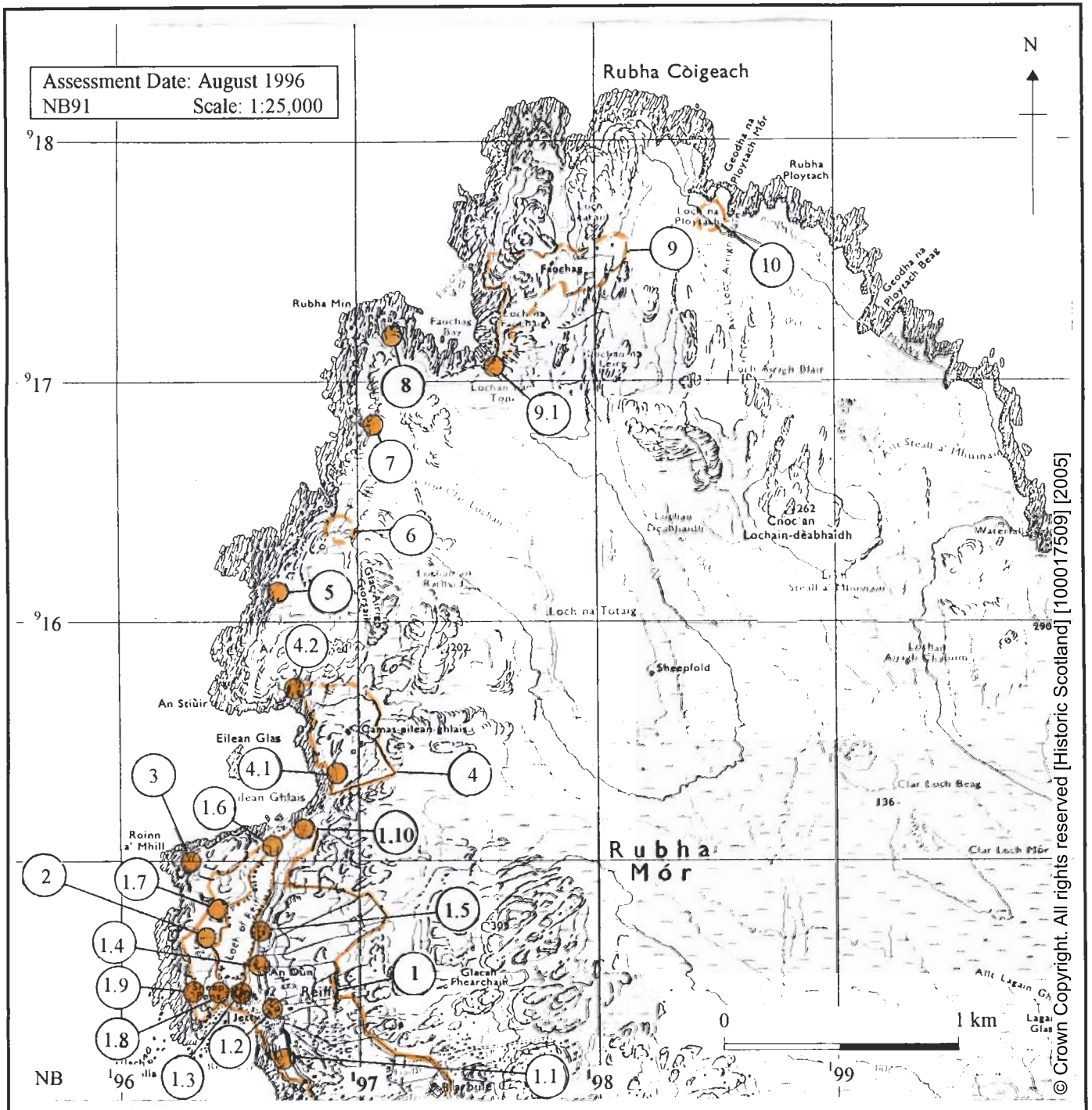
3.0 km

Definitely eroding

A highly indented, exposed stretch of coast composed of high rocky slopes, steep cliffs, geos, caves and wide boulder strewn rock platforms. There is extensive evidence of fresh erosion and rockfall along this section, though the rate of regression is negligible for the purposes of cultural resource management. The peat deposits above the cliffs are also badly deflating in parts.

3.7.3 Built Heritage and Archaeology

1. REIFF Township, field systems, cultivation, boat nausts, slipways, kelp kilns and storage pit (?), NB 1966 9145 1.1 Buildings, kiln (?) NB 1967 9142 1.2 Buildings, boat naust NB 1966 9144 1.3 Buildings, boat naust NB 1965 9145 1.4 Buildings, boat nausts NB 1966 9146 1.5 Buildings (occupied) NB 1966 9147 1.6 Boat naust, slipway, hut NB 1967 9151 1.7 Boat naust, hut NB 1964 9148 1.8 Kelp storage pit (?) NB 1964 9144 1.9 Kelp kilns (?) NB 1963 9144 1.10 Pen NB 1967 9151 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	Nil	Nil
2. LOCH OF REIFF Enclosures NB 1964 9147 Pre-early modern Fair	3. ROINN A' MHILL Structure NB 1963 9150 18th-20th Century Fair Nil	7. ALLT NAN CLÀR-LOCHAN Mill NB 1971 9168 18th-19th Century Fair Nil
	4. CAMAS EILEAN GHLAIS Township, field systems, cultivation NB 1968 9155 4.1 kelp storage pit (?), boat naust, pens NB 1969 9154 4.2 Structure (pen ?) NB 1967 9157 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	8. RUBHA MIN Shelters NB 1971 9172 16th-19th Century Fair Nil
	5. CAOLAS NA SGEIRE Shelters, kelp kilns (?) NB 1967 9162 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	9. FAOCHAG Township, cultivation, field systems, peat cuttings NB 1979 9175 9.1 Structure (mill ?) NB 1976 9171 16th-19th Century Fair / poor Nil
	6. GLAC AIRIGH GORSALL Peat cuttings NB 1969 9164 19th-20th Century Fair	10. GEODHA NA PLOYTACH MÒR Peat cuttings NB 1985 9177 19th-20th Century Fair Nil



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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>	

