

3.9 Garvie Bay to Lochan Sàl

1. **Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology:** This section is situated at the south east corner of Enard Bay, and comprises two distinctly different stretches of coastline. This is a result of a major change in geological formation, where the Torridonian sandstone of the Coigach area runs out onto the underlying Lewisian gneiss of Assynt. In the south west lies the edge of an undulating Torridonian sandstone plateau, characterised by the development of steep cliffs with rock platforms and occasional boulder-filled geos (cf. Section 3.8). In contrast, to the north of Camas a' Bhothain the coast is dominated by Lewisian gneiss, which is characterised by high, rocky hillsides sloping down to narrow tidal rock platforms. There is only limited development of coastal cliffs, which tend to take the form of low angle slabs, reflecting earlier glacial processes rather than mechanical wave erosion. This type of coastal environment has been termed a 'skerry' coast (Price 1991, 96), and is typical of a drowned landscape with an underlying resistant bedrock. Shingle foreshores and raised beach deposits occur in sheltered bays and inlets, while storm beaches have blocked the mouths of the larger valleys.

2. **Erosion Class:** This character of this section is essentially erosional, comprising a series of rocky headlands interspersed with enclosed bays, and in the northern part, small fjords. The rate of regression is extremely slow, and in the case of the Lewisian gneiss from Camas a' Bhothain to Lochan Sàl, dominated by sub-aerial weathering. The incidence of wave notch development is negligible, and underlying form of the glaciated landscape is largely unmodified. Fluvial deposition is occurring in the intertidal zone at the head of Polly Bay; however, there is no evidence of the coast edge actively prograding, and it is probable the deposited beach material is being subsequently eroded by longshore wave activity in this exposed situation. The incidence of storm bar development around the back of Enard Bay indicating exposure to high energy waves from the north west, however, on the basis of archaeological evidence, this activity predates the 19th century. An extensive area of low lying land is located in the wide valleys of Strath Polly and Gleann Lochan Sàl and on a shelf overlooking Lag na Saile, otherwise very little of this section is vulnerable to marine inundation in the event of a rise in sea level.

3. **Built Heritage and Archaeology:** The settlement pattern of the area is dominated by the larger valleys (Strath Polly and Gleann Lochan Sàl), since much of the coast edge is very steep and inaccessible. On the edge of the sandstone plateau in the south west, sites are also located on terraces overlooking sheltered bays. The majority of the recorded sites are 18th / 19th century buildings and associated boat nausts, field systems, peat cuttings and lazy bed cultivation, with a particular clustering in Strath Polly (NC 01 SE 1 & NC 01 SE 8). There are documented references to a 19th century shipwreck approximately located in Polly Bay (Baird 1996, 264) which would warrant some maritime investigation. The only prehistoric and possible medieval sites in the area include the vitrified fort located on the isolated promontory of Meall an Iaruin (NC 01 NE 1) and a highly reduced subcircular structure at Camas a' Bhothain (NC 2054 9130). This does not preclude the possibility of other, as yet undetected sites existing beneath later settlement patterns

None of the recorded sites are affected by coastal erosion, though much of the settlement and cultivation in Strath Polly is very low lying and potentially susceptible to inundation. A storm beach blocking the mouth of the valley is higher than the surrounding valley floor and defines the course of a disused 19th century trackway (1st ed. O.S. map 1875), flanked by possible milestones (no markings). May (1756) marks a salmon creave at the mouth of the River Polly on his map of the Barony of Coigach (SRO / RHP 85395). Several 18th / 19th century buildings and structures (e.g NC 2070 9153) are situated on overgrown storm bars, effectively providing a *terminus ante quem* for this period of high energy wave activity.

3.9.1 Hinterland Geology and Coastal Geomorphology

1. GARVIE POINT

NC 204 913

1.2 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (< 10m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

A low headland comprised of steep rocky slopes and low cliffs below a flat peat covered shelf. The predominant bedrock is Torridonian sandstone. The foreshore is principally rock platform with occasional boulder and cobble beaches located in small coves.

2. LAG NA SAILLE

NC 205 913

1.1 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder with isolated cobble beaches

Cliffs (< 10m) and storm beach

Peat / soil over visible rock with isolated raised beach deposits

An enclosed, indented bay situated between steep, rocky headlands (Rubha Lag na Saille and Creig Liath), with a primarily rock platform and boulder foreshore. The predominant bedrock is Torridonian sandstone. Two minor valleys at the rear of the bay are blocked by storm bars. Each contains an extensive cobble foreshore abutting raised beach deposits.

3. RUBHA NA MÒINE

NC 205 913

2.0 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (< 100m)

Peat / soil over visible rock

An indented headland formed by the base of a steep rocky hill between two pronounced bays (Lag na Saille and Polly Bay). The predominant bedrock is Lewisian gneiss. The coast edge consists of high grassy slopes and rock slabs with a rock platform foreshore.

4. POLLY BAY

NC 206 914

0.8 km

Mainly shingle & cobble beach

Low edge < 5m and storm beach

Peat / soil over visible rock enclosing raised beach deposits

A substantial cobble storm bar has partially blocked the mouth to a wide valley containing raised beach deposits (Strath Polly) forming a steep sided bay between rocky headlands (Creig Liath and Creag na Speireig). The foreshore is primarily composed of shingle and cobbles with some sand exposures.

5. RUBHA PHOLLAIDH

NC 206 914

1.8 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Cliffs (< 100m, with some lower sections)

Peat / soil over visible rock

An indented headland formed by the base of a steep rocky hill between two pronounced inlets (Lag na Saille and Polly Bay). The predominant bedrock is Lewisian gneiss. The coast edge consists of high grassy slopes and rock slabs with a rock platform foreshore.

6. LOCHAN SÀL

NC 206 915

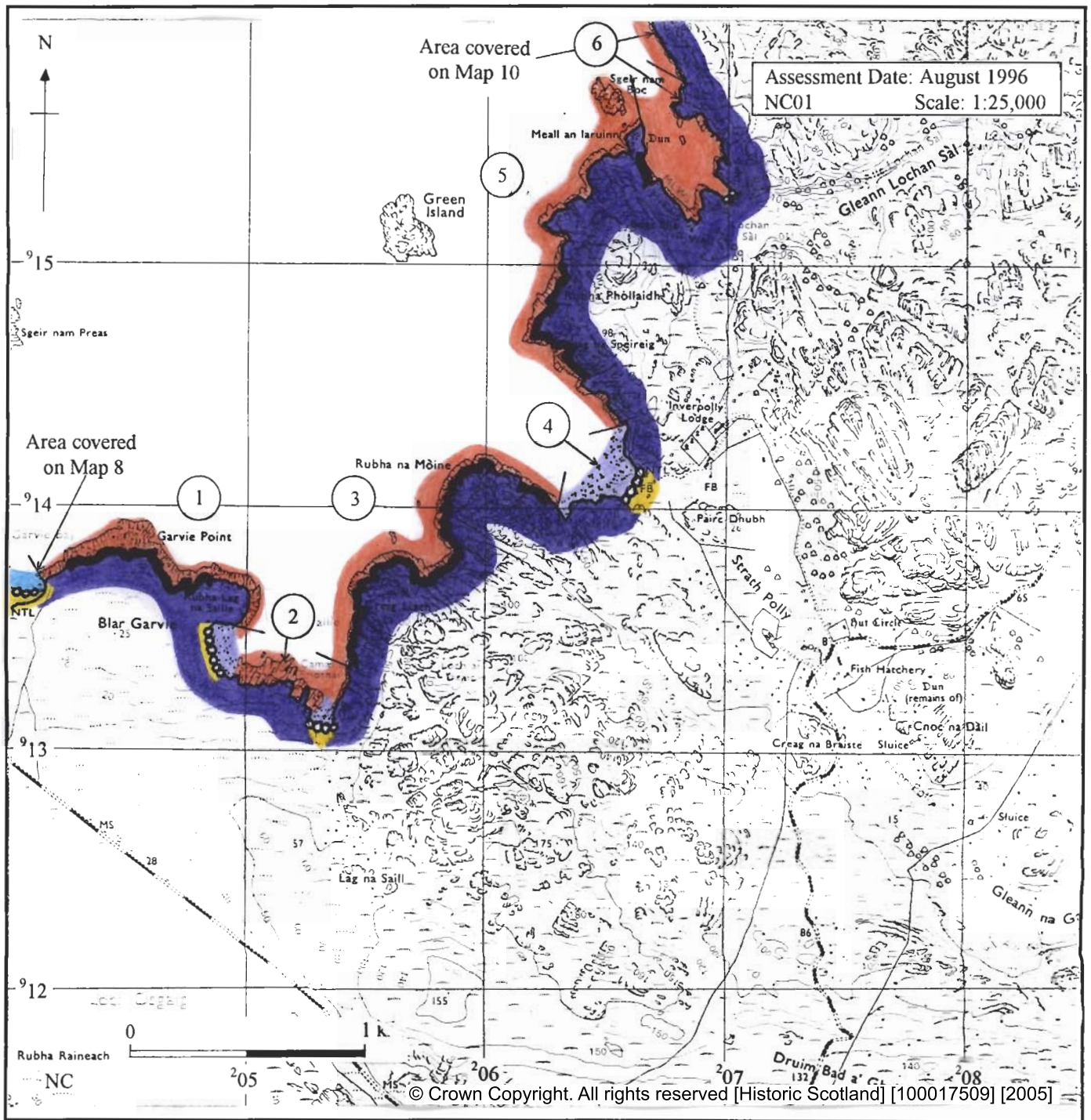
1.3 km

Mainly rock platform / boulder

Low edge < 5m and storm beach

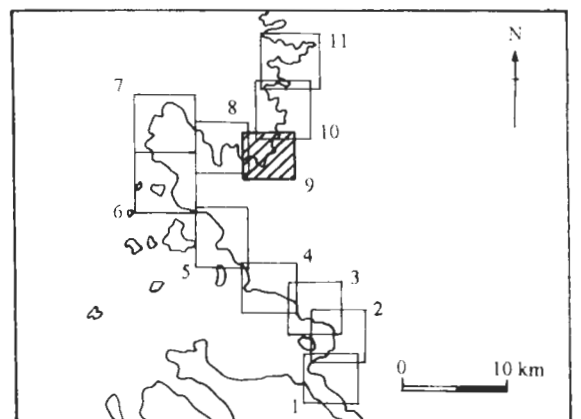
Peat / soil over visible rock

A fjord-like inlet at the mouth of a wide valley (Gleann Lochan Sàl) ringed by high grassy slopes and low cliffs. The head of the bay is enclosed by low knolls and a storm bar which have impounded a small freshwater loch (Lochan Sàl). The foreshore is primarily composed of narrow rock platforms with occasional cobble & boulder beaches in small coves.



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	



3.9.2 Erosion Class

1. GARVIE POINT

NC 204 913

1.2 km

Eroding or stable

This stretch of coast has an exposed northerly aspect. There is clear evidence of an erosional trend, as demonstrated by the presence of steep cliffs, rock platforms, caves and the accumulation of boulders in occasional inlets. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

2. BLAR GARVIE

NC 204 913

0.4 km

Stable

A sheltered beach with an easterly aspect at the head of a minor bay (Lag na Saille). A sand and cobble beach foreshore has accumulated against an overgrown storm bar, but there are no current indications of either active erosion or accretion.

3. LAG NA SAILLE

NC 205 913

0.5 km

Eroding or stable

This stretch of coast has a northerly aspect, but is sheltered at the head of deep bay. There is clear evidence of an erosional trend, as demonstrated by the presence of steep cliffs, rock platforms, caves and the accumulation of boulders in occasional inlets. The rate of regression is probably very slow.

4. CAMAS A' BHOTHAIN

NC 205 913

0.2 km

Stable

A sheltered beach with a northerly aspect at the head of a minor bay (Lag na Saille). A cobble foreshore has accumulated against an overgrown storm bar, but there are no current indications of either active erosion or accretion.

5. RUBHA NA MÒINE

NC 205 913

2.0 km

Eroding or stable

This stretch of coast has an exposed north-westerly aspect, but is sheltered at the head of deep bay. There is clear indication of an erosional trend, in the form of steep rocky slopes, talus, rock platforms, occasional cliffs, rock fall and boulder accumulation in small inlets. The resistance of the bedrock however ensures that this is a very slow process. The steep form of the topography is largely a result of glacial processes.

6. POLLY BAY

NC 206 914

0.8 km

Both accreting and eroding

An exposed beach with a westerly aspect at the head of Polly Bay. An extensive sand, shingle and cobble foreshore has accumulated against an overgrown storm bar. The marine deposits have been supplemented by fluvial deposition

from the River Polly, which enters the bay at the north end of the beach via a system of distributaries. In spite of this intensive deposition, there is no indication of active accretion, and it is likely the beach deposits are being continually reworked by tidal processes.

7. RUBHA PHOLLAIDH

NC 206 914

2.3 km

Eroding or stable

This stretch of coast has an exposed north-westerly aspect, but is sheltered at the head of deep bay. There is clear indication of an erosional trend, in the form of steep rocky slopes, talus, rock platforms, occasional cliffs, rock fall and boulder accumulation in small inlets. The resistance of the bedrock however ensures that this is a very slow process. The steep form of the topography is largely a result of glacial processes.

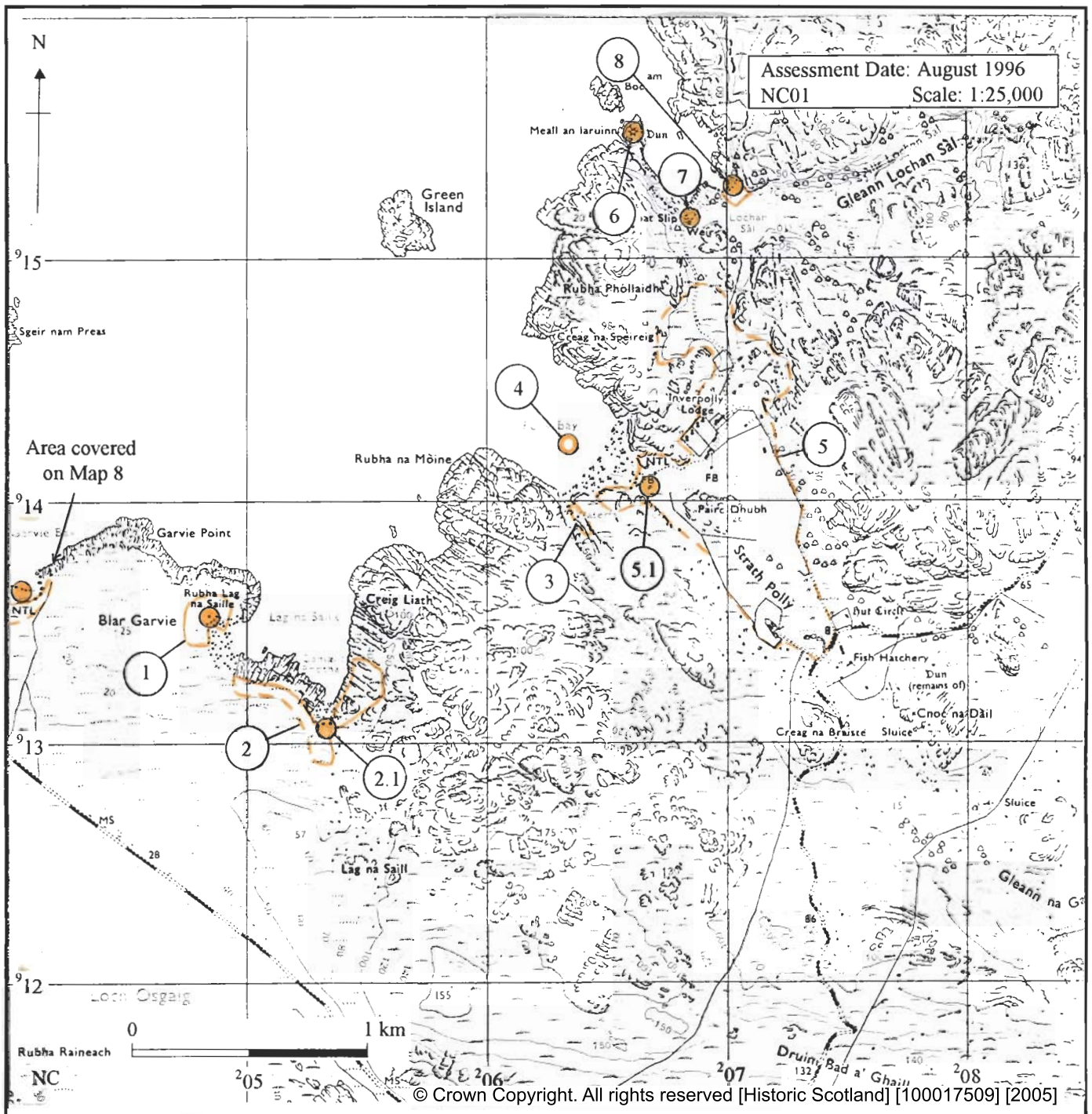
8. LOCHAN SÀL

NC 206 915

0.65 km

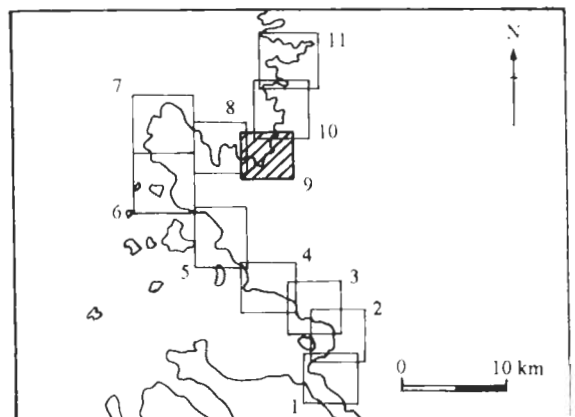
Stable

The head of a small fjord with a sheltered north-westerly aspect. An overgrown storm bar and glaciated knoll have impounded a small loch and adjacent raised beach deposits, indicating exposure to high energy wave activity in the past. There are however no current indications of either active accretion or erosion.



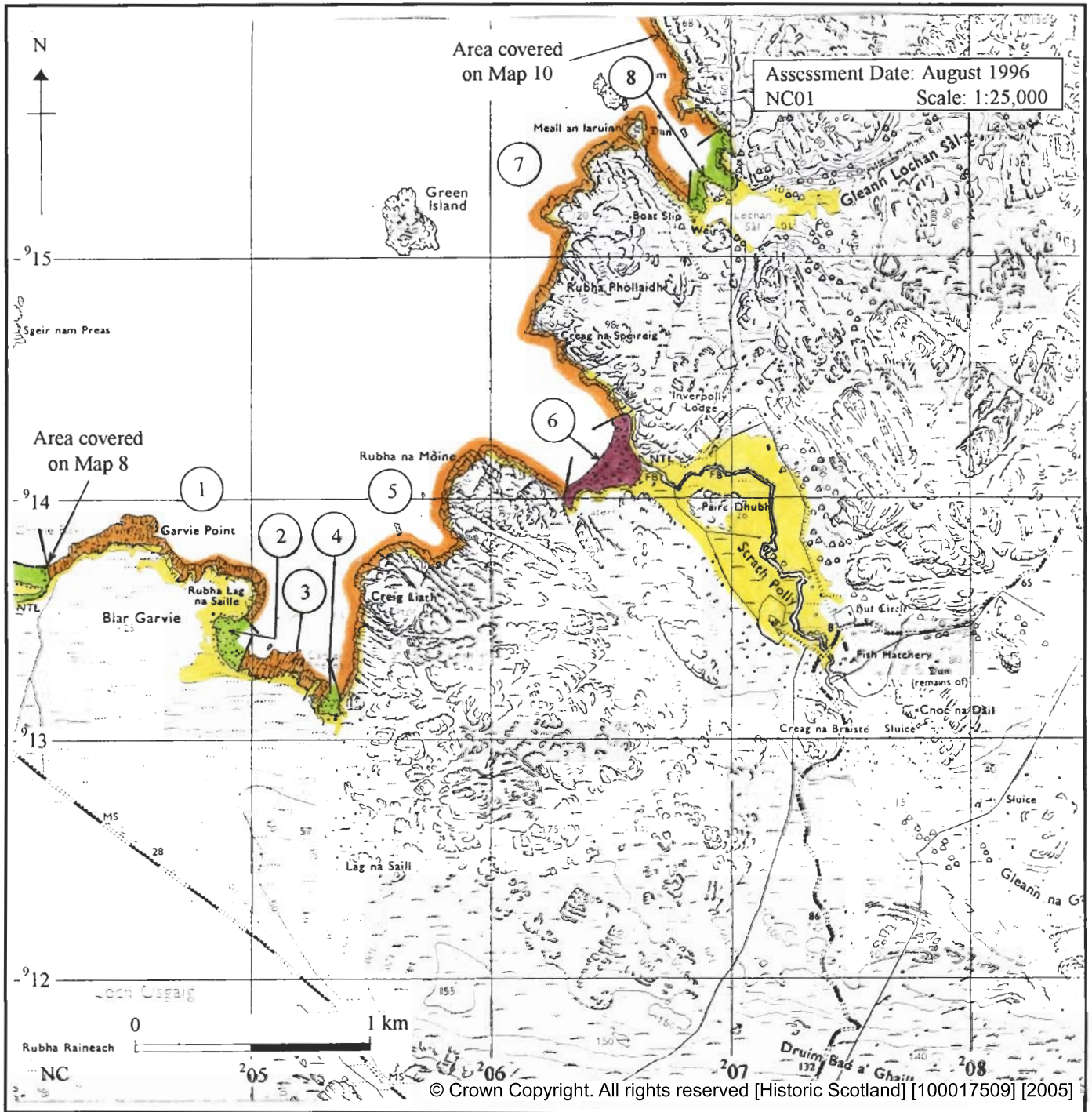
Key:

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



3.9.3 Built Heritage and Archaeology

1. RUBHA LAG NA SAILLE Building, cultivation, peat cuttings, slipway NC 2048 9135 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	19th-20th Century Fair Nil	6. MEALL AN IARUINN Vitrified fort NC 01 NE 1 Late prehistoric Fair Nil
2. CAMAS A' BHOTHAIN Buildings, cultivation, peat cuttings NC 01 SE 7 2.1 Buildings & subcircular structure NC 2054 9131 Early modern-20th Century Fair Nil	4. "GOTFREDE" Shipwreck Decca lat. 5804.00 N, Decca long. 0517.00 W 1882 Not inspected Survey	7. LOCHAN SÀL Building (occupied), weir, slipway NC 2068 9151 19th - 20th Century Fair Nil
3. POLLY BAY Peat cuttings NC 2064 9139	5. INVERPOLLY Township, field systems, cultivation, trackway, weirs, footbridge, milestones (?) NC 01 SE 1 5.1 Building NC 01 SE 8 16th-20th Century Fair Nil	8. LOCHAN SÀL Building, cultivation, boat nausts, slipway (?) NC 2070 9153 16th-19th Century Fair Nil



Key:

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

