





Seal watching off Arisaig | Doug Cooper

Arisaig

No. 10 | Grade A | 11km | 3 Hours | OS Sheet 40 | Tidal Port Ullapool

- Start**  Gortnachullish (642 877) or
Road head by South Channel, Loch nan Ceall (627 852)
- Finish**  Arisaig (657 865)
- HW/LW** HW/LW at Arisaig is around 40 minutes before Ullapool.
- Tidal times** For Loch nan Ceall:
The ingoing stream starts about 5 hrs and 45 mins after HW Ullapool.
The outgoing stream starts at about 50 mins before HW Ullapool.
- Tidal rates** In the N and S Channels the average spring rate can reach 1-2 knots.
- Coastguard** Stornoway, tel: 01851 702013, VHF Weather 0910 UT

INTRODUCTION This area is the nearest you will get to paddling in the Caribbean when in Scotland. On a sunny day it has golden sands and crystal clear waters. With the backdrop of the isles of Rum, Eigg, Muck and Skye it is a truly magical place.

DESCRIPTION Just before reaching the campsite at the end of the road at Gortnachullish there is a little sheltered sandy bay, which marks the start of our trip. Parking on the grass verge is limited so please be considerate. At low tide launching here can require a few hundred metres of carrying over the sand, but it is easy walking.

Paddle out around Eilean Ighe; the passage separating this island and the mainland is rarely navigable. The outside of Eilean Ighe provides the most exposed water of our trip; if this is not to your liking then starting at the road head by the South Channel in Loch nan Ceall (627 852) provides more shelter. Cross the North Channel heading for the main inlet amongst the mass of skerries just to the east of Luinga Bheag. As you make your way from here to Luinga Mhor you will be passing through a wildlife haven. Luinga Mhor provides a good stopping place, with a choice of small areas of beach on its eastern side to land.

Make your way to Sgeir Ghainmheach, the innermost large skerry. A gentle paddle back into the pretty village of Arisaig will take you past yet more seals and wildlife if you keep to the northern side of the loch. In

Arisaig there are plenty of places to land, and parking is not a problem. At low water the marina is best. An alternative return route as far as Sgeir Ghainmheach will be a similar distance as finishing in Arisaig.

TIDE & WEATHER Loch nan Ceall and the skerries provide a lot of shelter in most weather conditions. It can be rough on the outside of the skerries and island, so care should be taken if less experienced. The tidal streams are only really noticeable in the narrows of the North and South Channels, and are therefore always avoidable by eddy hopping amongst the skerries. To make best use of any tidal movement, start four hours before HW Ullapool. For launching the tide will be about halfway in and for landing it will be around high water. It will also mean that you will have the last three hours of the ingoing stream to help you towards Arisaig when paddling through the North and South Channels.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Arisaig is well serviced with shops and a hotel. Boats and a ferry use both North and South Channels, so care should be taken when paddling in these areas. The marina is kayak friendly, but please ask for permission and park considerately.



Excerpt abridged and adapted from *Scottish Sea Kayaking* by Doug Cooper & George Reid ISBN 0954706129, published by Pesda Press, Caernarfon. For details of this and other books, as well as downloads of further mini-guides and route cards in this series, visit: WWW.PESDAPRESS.COM

Trip Name & Number	
Page Number	VHF Weather
Date	Weather Forecast
Coastguard Contact	

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tidal Port		Mean Sp Range			Local Port		
		Mean Np Range					
Tidal Port Tide Times (UT)	Height in Metres	Tidal Range in Metres	HW/LW	+1 Hr for BST?	Local Port HW/LW Time Difference	Local Port HW/LW	Sp or Np Tides

TIDAL STREAM TIMES

Location	Direction of Tidal Stream	Tidal Stream Time Diff.	Tidal Port HW (BST?)	Tidal Stream Start Time	Tidal Rate	Est. Max Speed
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ROUTE PLAN

Location	Notes	ETA	ETD
Start			
1st			
2nd			
3rd			
4th			
5th			
Finish			