2025 Wash Cockle Fishery: management proposals

Proposed high-density juvenile closures

The cockle Fisheries Management Plan sets out that areas of high-density juveniles (i.e. year-0 cockles at densities of more than 1000 per m^2) are closed to the fishery. This is intended to ensure that the juvenile stocks remain above conservation thresholds and to prevent impacts on future fisheries by protecting pre-spawning individuals and areas likely to support fisheries in future years.

There are 16 areas identified as containing high-density juvenile cockles. These are set out in **Charts 1 to 5 below**. Two of these closures coincide in part with the seal haul-out closure. The proposed closures would protect an estimated 4,042 tonnes of Year-0 cockles, representing 46% of the overall biomass of that cohort. In doing so, the fishery would lose access to approximately 8.3% of the biomass of cockles ≥14mm width and 7.5% of the total biomass of cockles older than Year-0. These closures, therefore, offer a good protective value to the stocks, while causing limited restriction on access to larger cockles.

For the most part, where a sample area contained high-density juveniles, the associated 12.44ha grid is proposed as closed. It is likely that the closures will contain areas which do not have high-density juveniles and that the high-density juveniles extend beyond some boxes.

Two closures encompass boarder areas with the intention of protecting less dense patches of juvenile cockles but which are anticipated as being likely to contribute to future fisheries.

1. **Roger closure**

   The Roger supports a large extent of Year-0 cockles covering multiple stations (Chart A below). Protection of the wider area is intended to ensure that the high-density cockles are available to next year's fishery, including those likely to be outside of the 'high-density boxes'.

   The cockle survey also indicates that the impacts of closing the wider area are limited as the density of cockles which are year-1 and above is low throughout, with the exception of two areas (boxes labelled 'C' and '7' on Chart A below) which would be closed in any case as they are either supporting high-density juveniles or occurring within a shellfish lay.

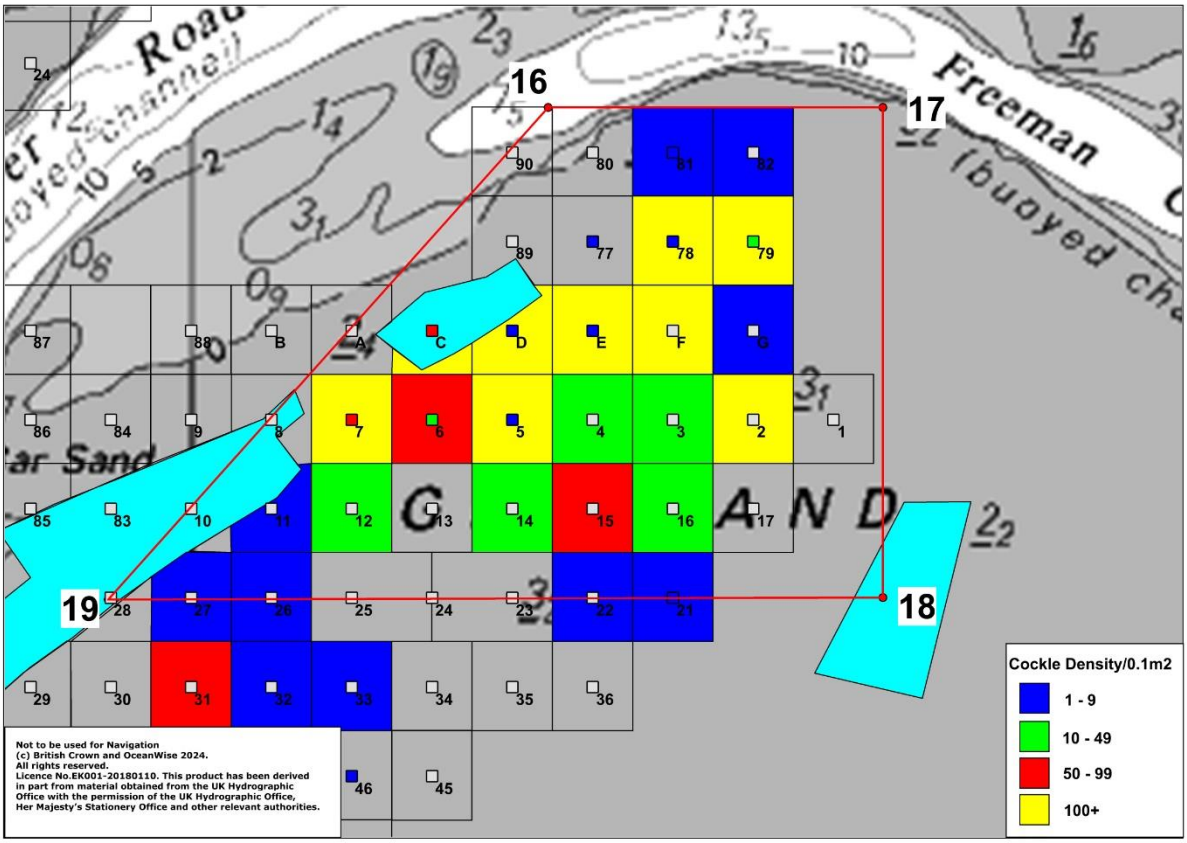


Chart A – showing the density of cockles in relation to the proposed Roger Closure.

2. Gat Closure

The Gat closure is only marginally larger than the 12.44ha boxes which require closure. Because of their diagonal orientation, is it likely that the year-0 cockles are spread continuously between them. As such, it is proposed that the closure encompasses both to ensure that high density cockles outside of the boxes are protected. The area is not thought to contain high densities of cockles beyond year-0. This closure, and the cockle densities are set out in Chart B.

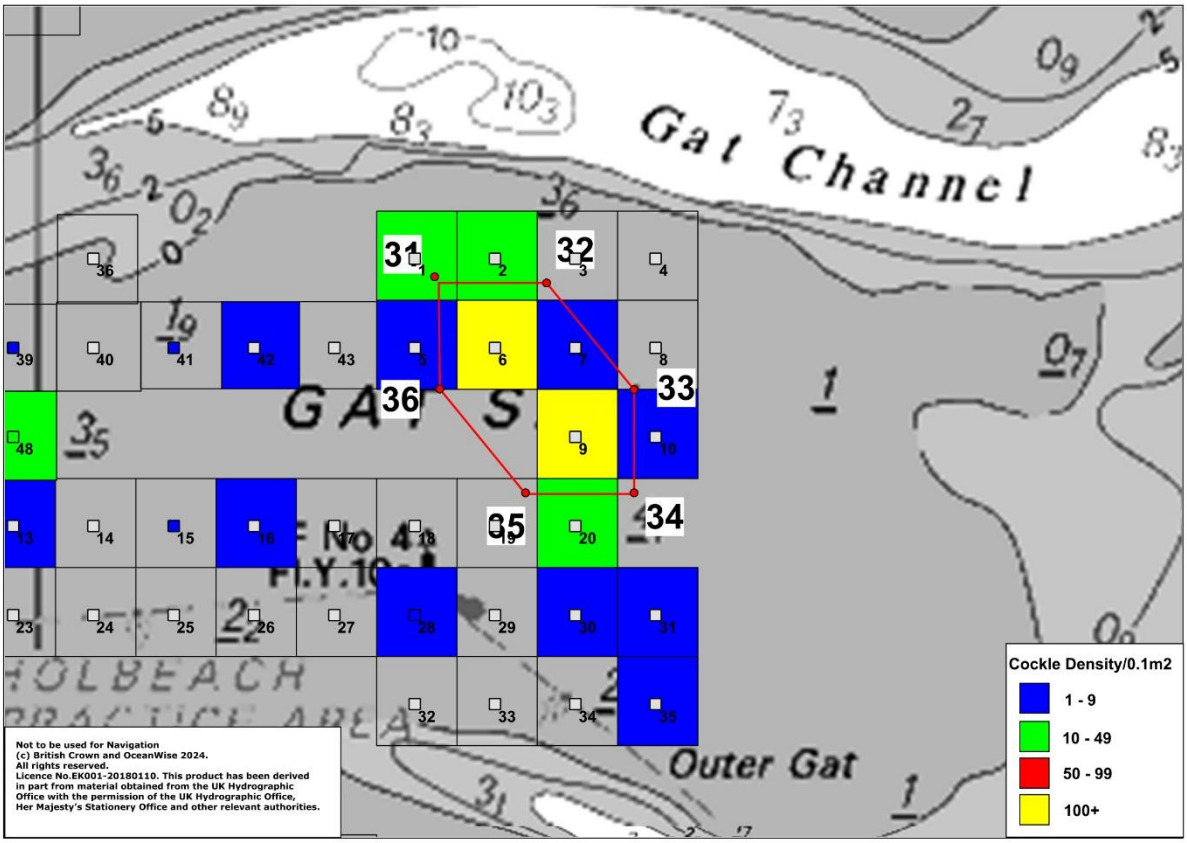
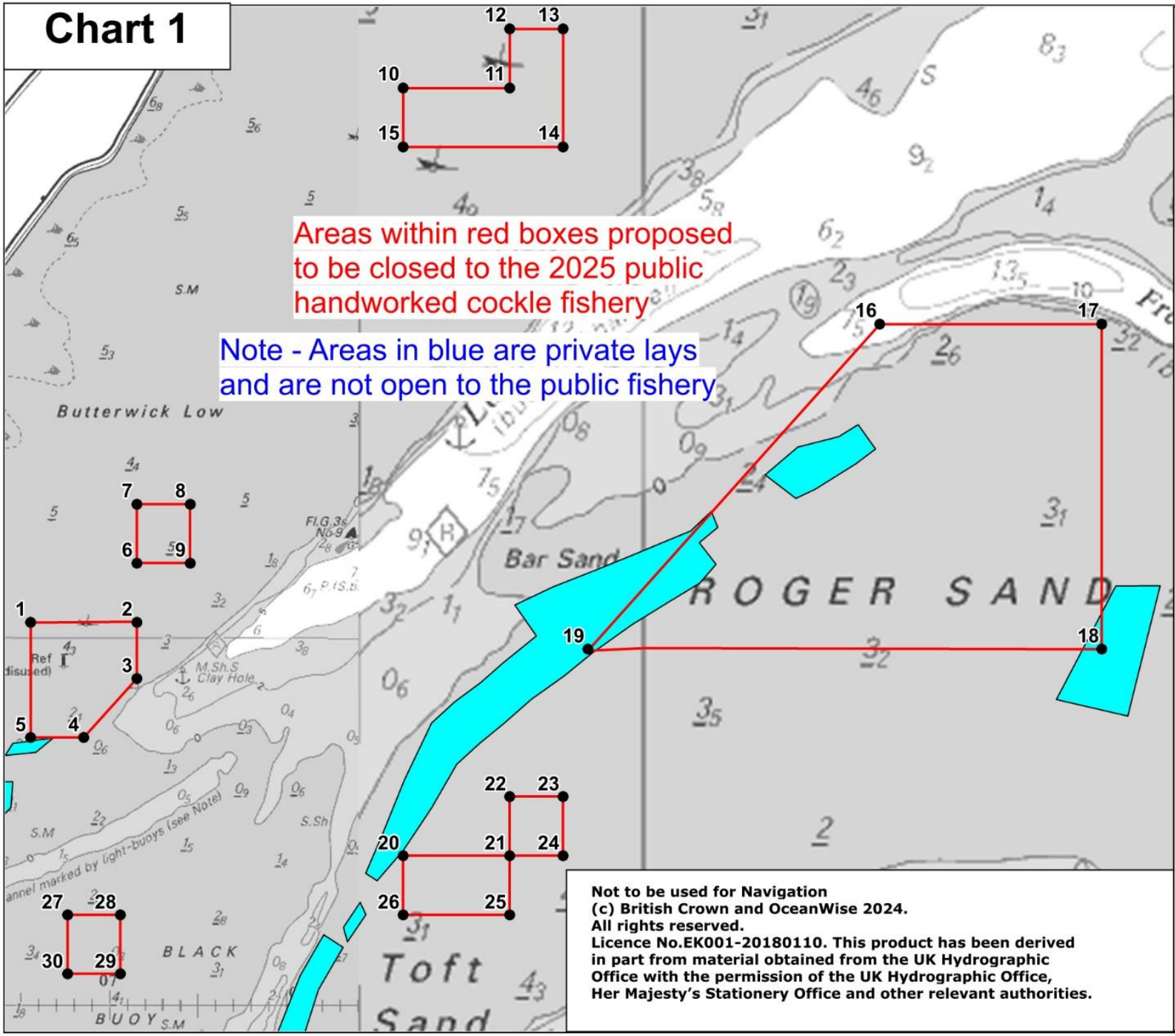


Chart B – proposed Gat closure

Chart 1



Coordinates

1. 52 57’.290N 00 06’.550E
2. 52 57’.290N 00 07’.150E
3. 52 57’.100N 00 07’.150E
4. 52 56’.900N 00 06’.850E
5. 52 56’.900N 00 06’.550E

6. 52 57’.490N 00 07’.150E
7. 52 57’.690N 00 07’.150E
8. 52 57’.690N 00 07’.450E
9. 52 57’.490N 00 07’.450E

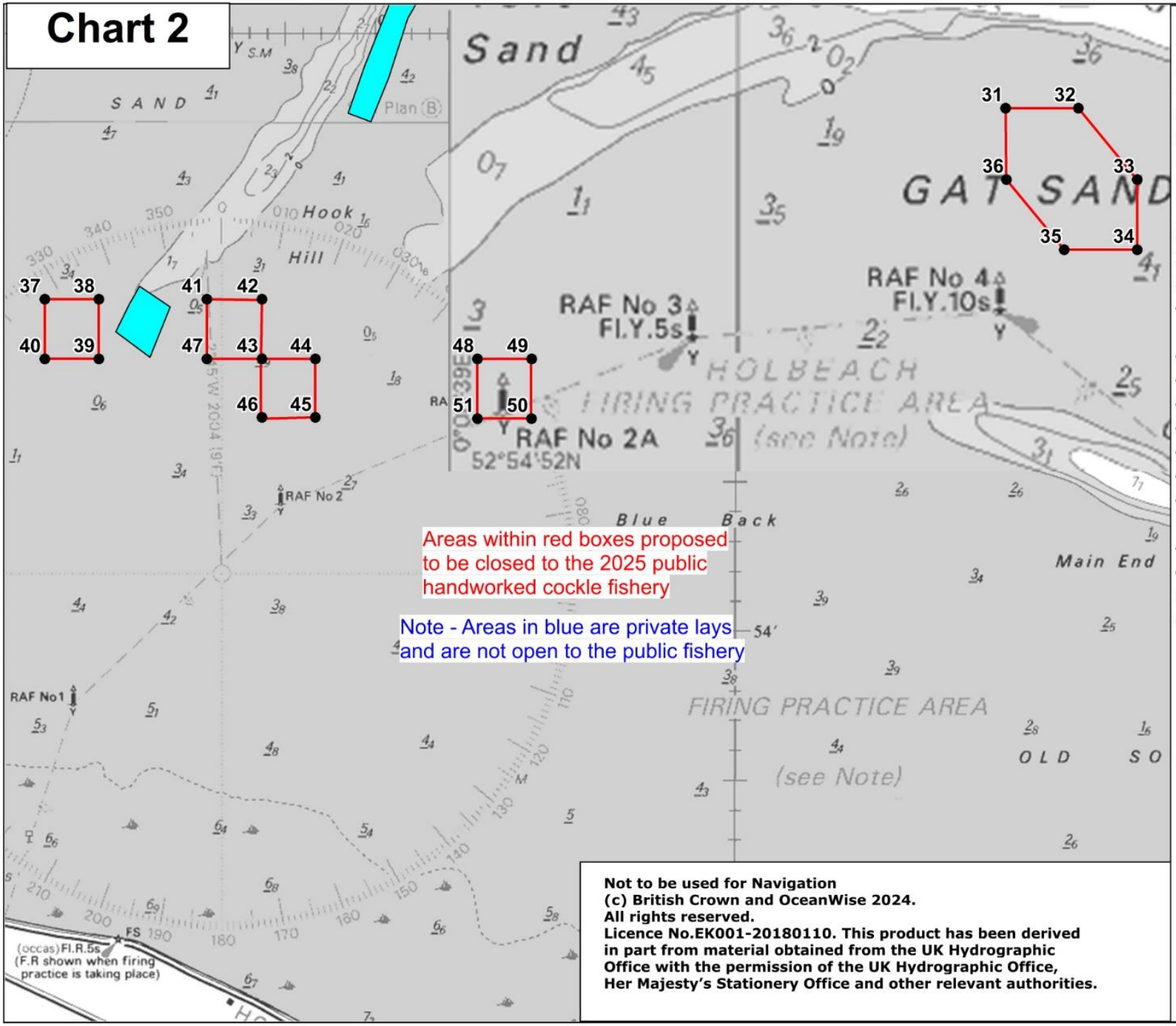
10. 52 59’.100N 00 08’.650E
11. 52 59’.100N 00 09’.250E
12. 52 59’.300N 00 09’.250E
13. 52 59’.300N 00 09’.550E
14. 52 58’.900N 00 09’.550E
15. 52 58’.900N 00 08’.650E

16. 52 58’.300N 00 11’.334E
17. 52 58’.300N 00 12’.585E
18. 52 57’.200N 00 12’.585E
19. 52 57’.200N 00 09’.690E

20. 52 56’.500N 00 08’.650E
21. 52 56’.500N 00 09’.250E
22. 52 56’.700N 00 09’.250E
23. 52 56’.700N 00 09’.550E
24. 52 56’.500N 00 09’.550E
25. 52 56’.300N 00 09’.250E
26. 52 56’.300N 00 08’.650E

27. 52 56’.300N 00 06’.759E
28. 52 56’.300N 00 07’.057E
29. 52 56’.100N 00 07’.057E
30. 52 56’.100N 00 06’.759E

Chart 2



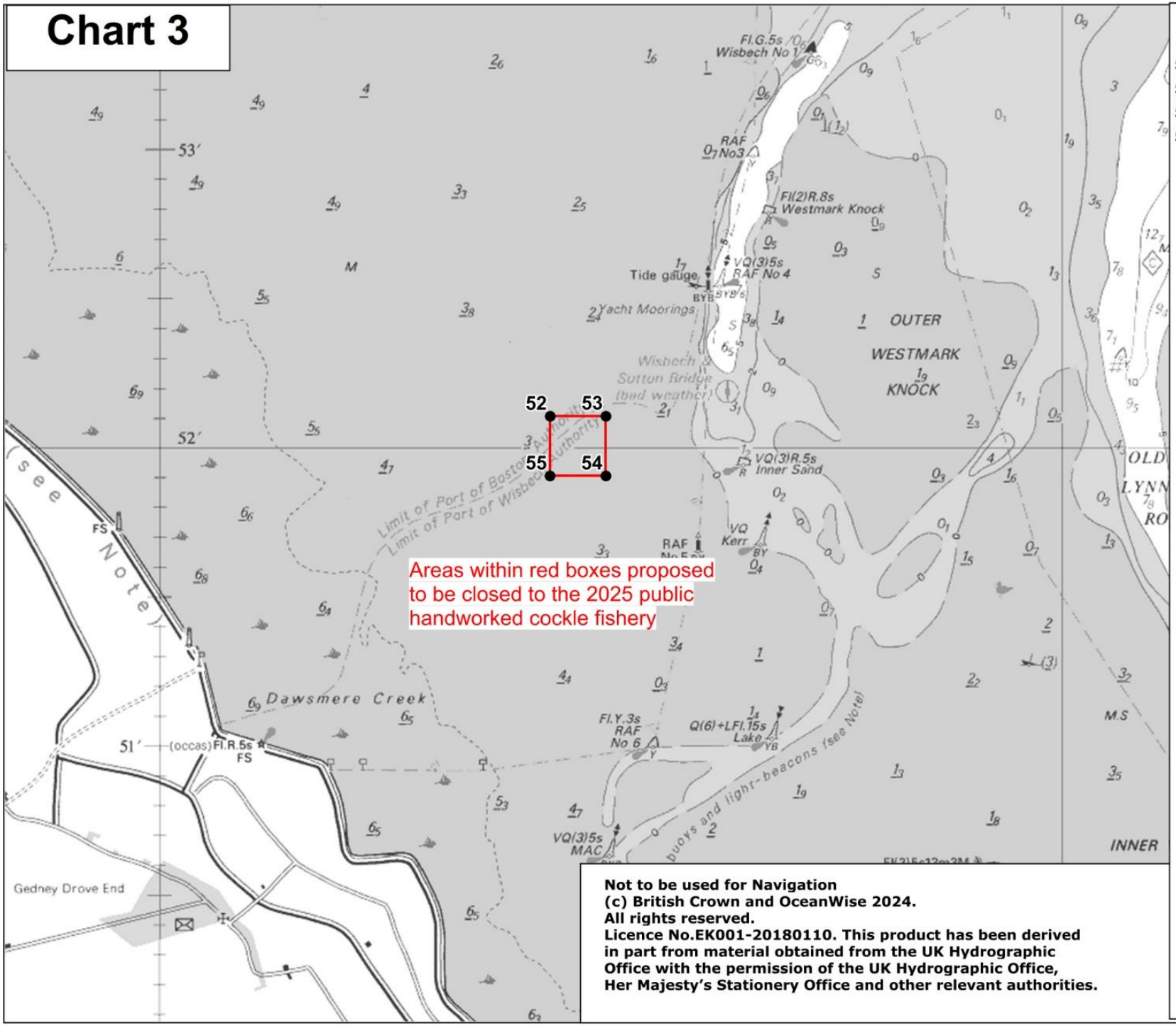
Areas within red boxes proposed to be closed to the 2025 public handworked cockle fishery

Note - Areas in blue are private lays and are not open to the public fishery

Coordinates

31	52 55'.744N	00 11'.490E
32	52 55'.744N	00 11'.893E
33	52 55'.505N	00 12'.220E
34	52 55'.270N	00 12'.220E
35	52 55'.270N	00 11'.815E
36	52 55'.505N	00 11'.495E
37	52 55'.105N	00 06'.159E
38	52 55'.105N	00 06'.459E
39	52 54'.905N	00 06'.459E
40	52 54'.905N	00 06'.159E
41	52 55'.105N	00 07'.059E
42	52 55'.105N	00 07'.364E
43	52 54'.905N	00 07'.364E
44	52 54'.905N	00 07'.660E
45	52 54'.709N	00 07'.660E
46	52 54'.709N	00 07'.364E
47	52 54'.905N	00 07'.059E
48	52 54'.905N	00 08'.560E
49	52 54'.905N	00 08'.860E
50	52 54'.705N	00 08'.860E
51	52 54'.705N	00 08'.560E

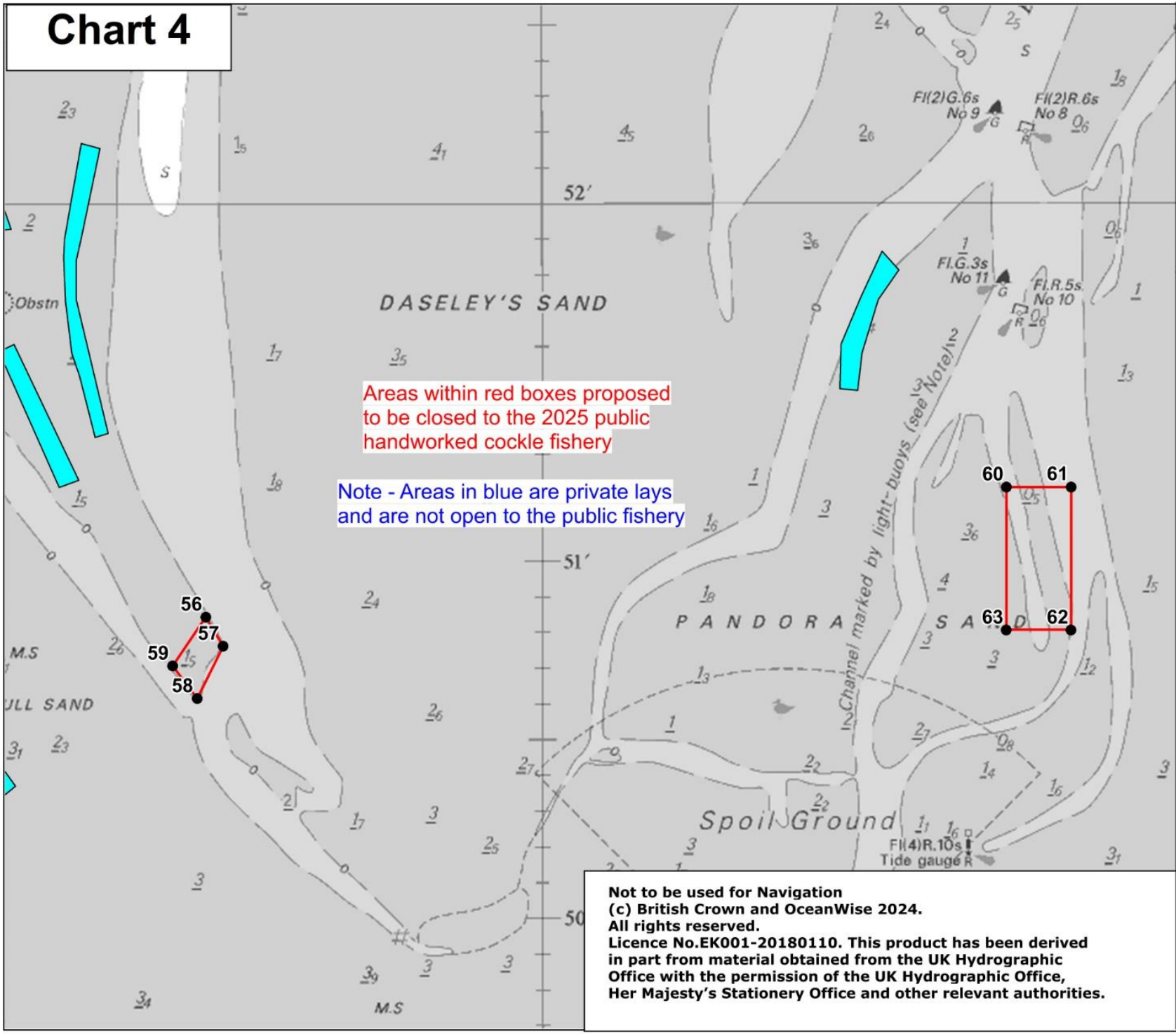
Chart 3



Coordinates

52	52 52’.100N	00 12’.150E
53	52 52’.100N	00 12’.460E
54	52 51’.900N	00 12’.460E
55	52 51’.900N	00 12’.150E

Chart 4



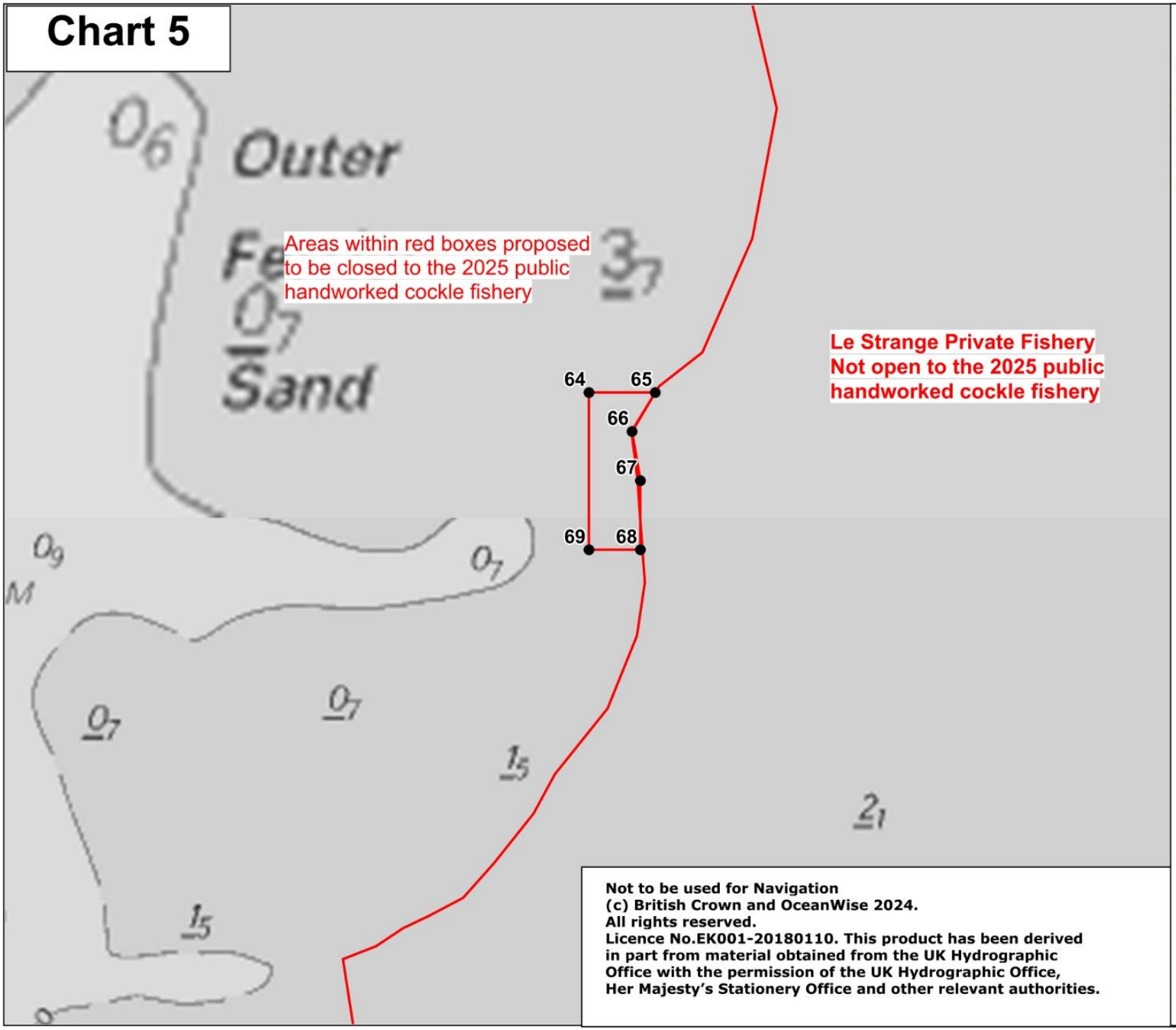
Areas within red boxes proposed to be closed to the 2025 public handworked cockle fishery

Note - Areas in blue are private lays and are not open to the public fishery

Coordinates

56	52 50'.837N	00 18'.440E
57	52 50'.755N	00 18'.520E
58	52 50'.609N	00 18'.400E
59	52 50'.700N	00 18'.287E
60	52 51'.200N	00 22'.150E
61	52 51'.200N	00 22'.450E
62	52 50'.800N	00 22'.450E
63	52 50'.800N	00 22'.150E

Chart 5



Coordinates

64	52 54'.700N	00 26'.450E
65	52 54'.700N	00 26'.604E
66	52 54'.646N	00 26'.550E
67	52 54'.577N	00 26'.570E
68	52 54'.480N	00 26'.570E
69	52 54'.480N	00 26'.450E