

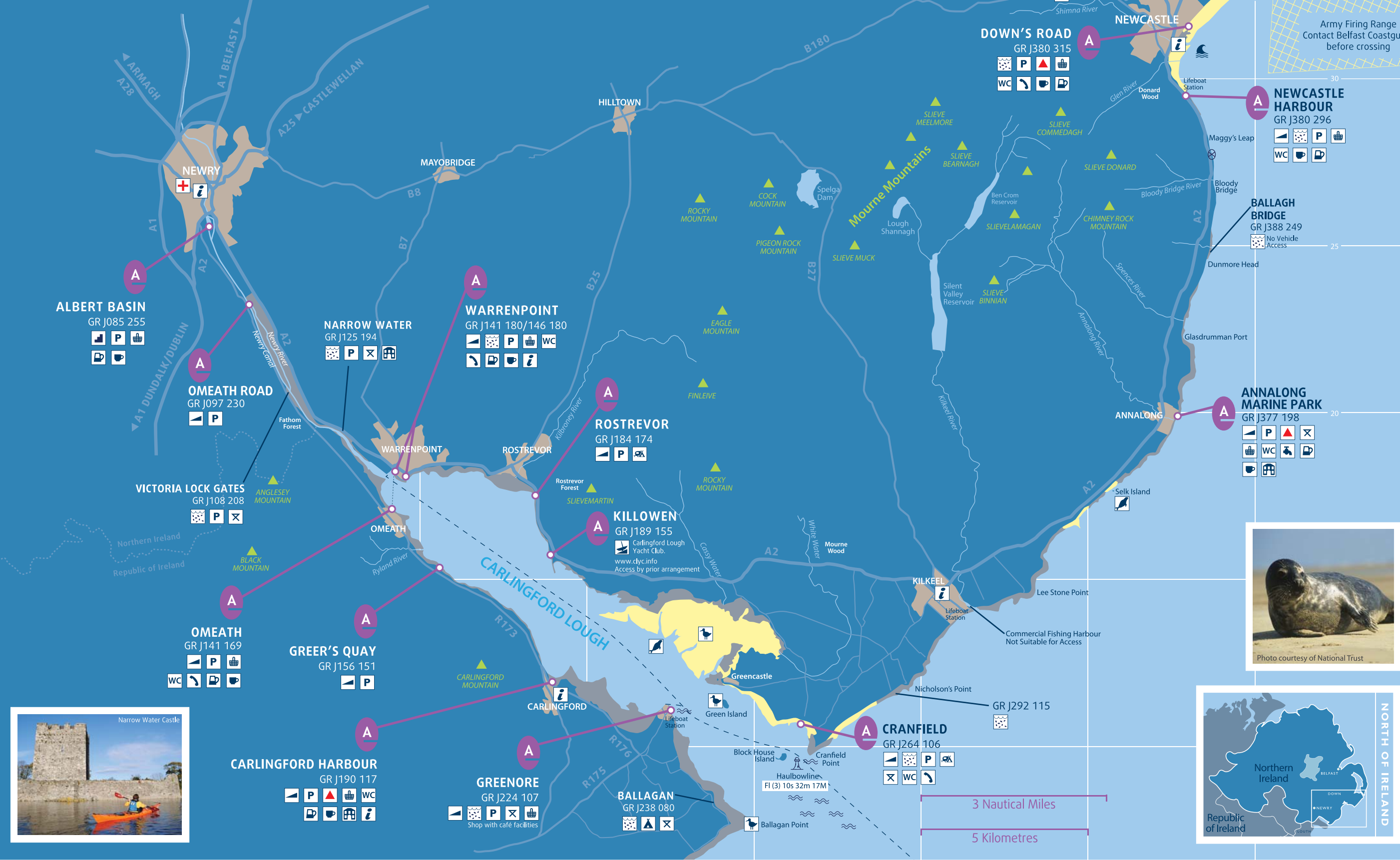
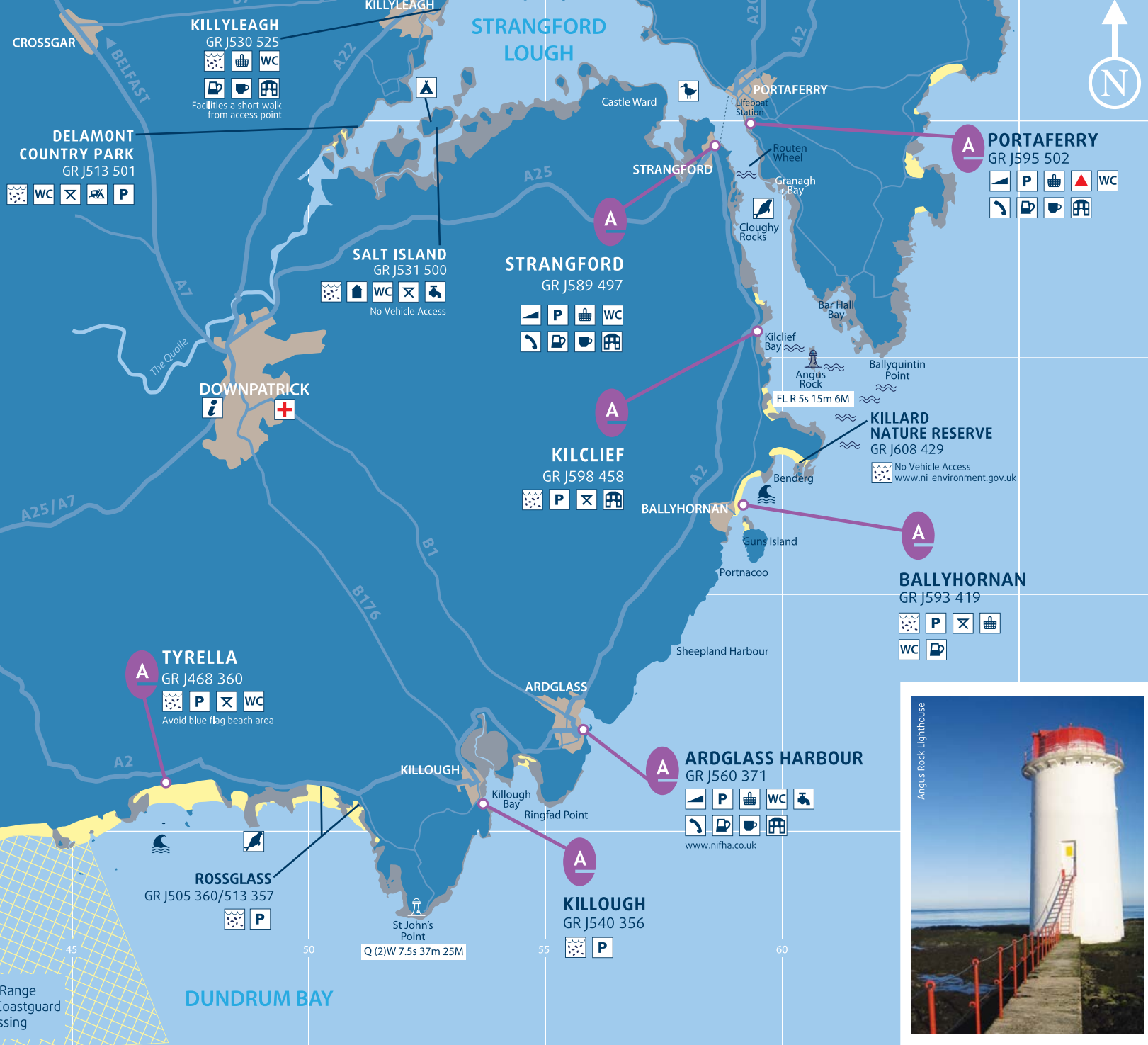
Key to Symbols

- Slipway Access
- Shore Access
- Step Access
- Sailing Club Access
- Parking
- Caravan & Camp Site
- Rough Camping
- Bothy
- Hostel/Youth Hostel
- Suitable Picnic Site
- Shop
- Toilets
- Fresh water
- Telephone
- Shower
- Public house
- Café/restaurant
- Historical Building
- Tourist Information
- Hospital
- Nesting/Wintering Birds
- Seals
- Overfalls - Tidal Rapids and waves, dangerous to the inexperienced canoeist
- Surf beach - dependent on conditions
- Caves
- Towns or Residential areas
- Beaches
- Areas exposed at low tide
- Access points
- Ferry Routes
- Shipping Channel

Wind Strength and Corresponding Sea Conditions

Beaufort Scale Force	Wind Speed Knots	Wind Speed MPH	Description	Sea State
0	0	0	Calm	Sea like a mirror.
1	1-3	1-3	Light Air	Ripples but without foam crests.
2	4-6	4-7	Light Breeze	Small wavelets, crests do not break.
3	7-10	8-12	Gentle Wind	Large wavelets, occasional white horses, crests begin to break. Noticeable work paddling into headwind.
4	11-16	13-18	Moderate Wind	Small waves, frequent white horses, becoming bouncy. Inexperienced should consider heading to shore unless it's an onshore wind.
5	17-21	19-24	Fresh Wind	Moderate waves, many white horses, some foam and spray. Hard work paddling into wind or across wind.
6	22-27	25-31	Strong Wind	Big seas with large waves. White foam crests and spray. Rescues difficult to execute, warnings issued to small craft.
7	28-33	32-38	Near Gale	Big seas with large waves, white foam blown in streaks along the direction of wind. Kayak handling difficult even for experienced paddlers. Communication very difficult.
8	34-40	39-46	Gale	High waves, crests begin to break into spindrift. Very dangerous conditions; communication almost impossible, rescues impractical, each man for himself.

- Limit for inexperienced paddlers
- Limit for experienced paddlers
- Limit for advanced paddlers



Earning a Welcome

- Please be friendly and polite to local residents and other water users.
- Drive with care and consideration and park sensibly.
- Change clothing discreetly, preferably out of public view.
- Gain permission before going on to private property.
- Minimise your impact on the natural environment and use recognised access points. There are also many unofficial access points along the coastline, which may be used with the owner's consent.
- Be sensitive to wildlife and other users regarding the level of noise you create.
- Observe wildlife from a distance and be aware of sensitive locations such as nesting birds, wintering flock concentrations and seal haul-outs.
- CAAN supports the principles of Leave No Trace and encourages others to do the same when taking part in outdoor recreation. For more information please visit www.leaveonotraceireland.org.
- Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the water conditions and the impact on your surroundings.
- Wild camping should be carried out discreetly, in small parties, and for overnight stays only.

Accommodation

A range of self catering, B&B and hotels are available along the trail. For a full list of accommodation providers please visit www.canoeni.com or www.discovernorthernireland.com or www.failteireland.com

Canoe Hire and Canoe Tours

For up-to-date canoe hire and guiding please visit www.canoeni.com

Camping

For details of official campsites and rough camping opportunities please visit www.canoeni.com

Further Information

Tourist Information Centres:
Downpatrick +44(0)28 4461 2233 www.downdc.gov.uk
Newcastle +44(0)28 4372 2222 www.downdc.gov.uk
Kilkeel +44(0)28 4176 2525 www.newryandmounre.gov.uk
Newry +44(0)28 3031 3172 www.newryandmounre.gov.uk
Carlingford +353 (0) 4293 73033 www.carlingford.ie

Trail updates: Any changes to the canoe trail that may occur will be updated on www.canoeni.com. Please email any feedback to info@canoeni.com

Other Resources

Canoe Trails www.canoeni.com
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland www.cani.org.uk
Loughs Agency www.loughs-agency.org
Louth County Council www.louthcoco.ie

Wildlife Sightings

Canoeists are encouraged to report sightings of cetaceans (whales, porpoises and dolphins) and basking sharks at www.iwdg.ie

Provision for people with disabilities

All sites with slips cater for disability access with varying degrees depending on the water level. It is recommended to check before starting a journey

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication. CAAN and its partner organisations cannot, however, accept responsibility for errors or omissions but, where such are brought to our attention, future publications will be amended accordingly. Canoeing may by its nature be hazardous and involve risk; training is essential for safe participation. It is recommended to take out personal accident insurance. Users must undertake and act on their own risk assessments prior to use of any access site or waterway and review and update during use. The guide must be used in conjunction with an Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map and an accurate navigation chart. Neither the publishers, funders, contributors, landowners, site managers, riparian owners nor agents of the aforementioned can be held responsible for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person or persons as a result of information, guidance or advice given in or omitted from this guide.

Acknowledgements

Design www.thinkstudio.co.uk

This project has been developed by

CAAN
COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS & ACTIVITIES NETWORK

Loughs Agency

Other project partners include: The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland, National Trust, East Coast Adventure, Newry & Mourne District Council, Louth County Council, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre.

CAAN is core funded by the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Northern Ireland Tourist Board & Sport Northern Ireland.

Safety

Canoeing is an adventure sport and as such should be treated with respect. If you are new to the sport, it is advisable to contact a Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) approved provider or club where expert coaching and local knowledge can be provided. Details can be found at www.cani.org.uk

When taking part in canoeing consider the following safety advice:

- 1. Attending a recognised training course to develop skills and to acquire safety and environmental knowledge is very important for safely paddling on the coast.
- 2. It is recommended that canoeists consult the relevant Maps, Charts and Pilot and obtain up to date information on weather and tides before planning a trip on the sea.
- 3. CANI recommends that paddlers leave details of their journey with the Coastguard and with a responsible adult based on the shore.
- 4. Carry adequate basic safety equipment - spare clothes, extrafood, warm drink, form of shelter, First Aid kit, means of communication (VHF Radio, mobile phone), flares, torch and whistle.
- 5. Wear appropriate buoyancy in the form of a personal lifejacket or buoyancy aid. Canoe buoyancy should be sufficient to keep the canoe afloat if you capsizes.
- 6. It is not recommended to canoe alone - three boats is the minimum required for most rescues.
- 7. Be aware of other water users such as sailing boats, ferries and commercial shipping. Canoeists should make allowance for the limitations and needs of larger craft that are less maneuverable and may be restricted to deep water channels.
- 8. Parts of Carlingford and Strangford Loughs experience extremely powerful tidal currents and should only be tackled by appropriately experienced canoeists.
- 9. At busy harbours, canoeists should inform the Harbour Master of their approach.

Winds and Weather

The Shipping Forecast, Inshore Waters Forecast and Coastal Forecast can all be obtained from the BBC website news.bbc.co.uk/weather BBC radio 4 broadcast a shipping forecast four times daily – 0048hrs, 0520hrs, 1201hrs, 1754hrs. Sea area ‘Irish Sea’

Non-emergency contacts

Police non-emergency (Northern Ireland) 0845 600 8000
Belfast Coastguard non-emergency +44 (0)28 9146 3933

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency - **Dial 999 or 112** (from all phones, UK and ROI) to contact Coastguard, police and ambulance. Use **VHF Radio Channel 16** to contact Coastguard

Harbour contact details

Strangford Harbour - +44(0)28 4488 1637
Ardglass Harbour - +44(0)28 4484 1291/+ 44(0)7990 648274
Kilkeel Harbour - +44(0)28 4176 2287/ +44(0)77 0257 3879
Port of Greenore +353(0)42 937 3170
Warrenpoint Harbour +44(0)28 4175 2878
The Harbour Office can be contacted on VHF Channel 12 for each location above.

Maps, charts and pilot

Maps required

OSNI Discoverer Map Series 1:50,000 Sheet 21 Strangford Lough
OSNI Discoverer Map Series 1:50,000 Sheet 29 The Mournes
OSI Discovery Series 1:50,000 Sheet 36 Armagh, Down, Louth, Meath, Monaghan

Other useful maps

OSNI Strangford Lough Activity Map 1:25,000
OSNI The Mournes Activity Map 1:25,000

Admiralty Charts required

No: 2159 Strangford Narrows
No: 44 Nose of Howth to Ballyquinton Point
No: 2800 Carlingford Lough

Other useful Charts - No: 2156 Strangford Lough

Publications required - UKHO Irish Coast Pilot NP40



South East Coast Canoe Trail

Stretching more than 50 nautical miles along the south east coast of Northern Ireland and into County Louth, this coastal trail boasts remarkably varied scenery: mountains and sea loughs, rocky coves and long sandy beaches. The South East Coast Trail offers sea kayaking for all abilities.



Newry River



The south east coast of Northern Ireland is, in general, a straightforward area for the sea kayaker to enjoy. Along the coastline there are two main areas of more demanding water, namely Strangford Narrows and the mouth of Carlingford Lough, where the waters of these impressive sea loughs meet the Irish Sea. As such, the trail has a great deal to offer sea canoeists of all abilities; a mixture of sheltered paddling within the loughs and along gentle stretches of coastline, contrasted with tide races and overfalls at the lough entrances to challenge even the most experienced paddler. The area is abundant in marine wildlife and most of the coastline enjoys special designation status. Canoeists can expect to encounter a wide variety of birdlife, seals and even porpoises and other marine mammals. The trail starts at Strangford village with regular access points along its length to Narrow Water on Carlingford Lough. From here, the historic ship canal leads to Newry city. The trail can be paddled in sections and in either direction.

Happy Paddling!



Strangford to Killough

Strangford Lough is a Marine Nature Reserve and is internationally renowned for its abundance and diversity of habitats and species. The gentler waters of the northern reaches

of the Lough, part of the Strangford Lough Canoe Trail, are in sharp contrast to the fast running tidal 'Narrows'; the 5 nautical miles long entrance channel leading from the Irish Sea into the main basin of the Lough. Here, 350 million tonnes of water rush through the channel every 6 hours as the tide floods and ebbs, raising and lowering the water levels by more than 3 metres. This powerful flow of water, reaching 7.5 knots in places, creates boils, overfalls, stoppers, and standing waves at various points along the channel as it flows over rock features on the seabed beneath. **The Narrows provides an excellent challenge for the experienced canoeist, however paddling here is a serious undertaking and should be approached with caution.** The most challenging sections of water are the legendary Routen Wheel and the Bar Mouth, although it is possible to avoid the most turbulent stretches by hugging the shoreline.

Pale-bellied Brent Geese
Image courtesy of NIEA

The picturesque village of **Strangford** marks the starting point of the canoe trail. A regular ferry service operates across the Narrows between here and Portaferry and canoeists should take care to stay well clear of ferry operations. Immediately south of the village, in mid-channel, is the red and black striped tower of the recently installed experimental marine current turbine, designed to harness the energy of the tidal currents. This should be given a wide berth by all boat users.

At Cloghy Rocks, Granagh Bay and Bar Hall Bay, both grey and common seals haul out at low water. The area is a rich feeding ground attracting great flocks of gulls, terns and gannets at flood tides, especially in summer. Bar Hall Bay also provides a feeding ground for many waders and wildfowl, including large numbers of Brent geese in winter. This is one of the best bird-watching areas along the trail, with sightings of porpoise an additional attraction.

Angus Rock is a long reef running north-south at the Lough’s entrance. A squat lighthouse stands on the highest point and is an important navigation aid marking the Bar, where a line of breaking water develops on both the flood and ebb tide. Even at high water, a small area of land is exposed and canoeists have been known to rest here. The surrounding sea can become very violent in strong southerly and easterly winds, especially on ebb tide.

Opposite Angus Rock, on the western shore is **Kilclief Castle**, a fifteenth century Anglo-Norman ‘tower house’. The adjacent sandy inlet makes an excellent resting place.

Rounding **Killard Point** is the secluded beach of Benderg. The peninsula is a nature reserve, its natural grassland noted for butterflies, wildflowers, and especially its orchids in early summer. The site is well worth a visit. A low headland separates Benderg from **Ballyhornan beach**, busy with visitors in the summer. Offshore is Gun's Island (private), with its colonies of breeding gulls, kittiwakes, cormorants and guillemots on the seaward side. Between here and the mainland the tide runs at up to 2 knots, while the channel dries out completely at extreme low water. In previous centuries, this coastline was frequented by smugglers bringing contraband spirits and tobacco from the Isle of Man.

From Ballyhornan to Ardglass is a coastline of low cliffs, with only a few inlets, for example at Portnacoo and Sheeplands. At the latter the remains of an old windmill is visible from the sea. Here too is St Patrick’s Well, allegedly blessed by Ireland's Patron Saint, who landed near Salt Island within the Lough to begin his missionary work in the early fifth century.

Ardglass is a busy fishing port and also boasts a marina. Access is possible at all states of tide. Canoeists can launch from a small slip in the south west corner of the South Harbour.

The rocky coastline continues south past Ardglass to Ringfad Point, then opens to the shallow **Killough Bay**. Just south of the town, landing is possible on the shingle beach at Long Plate. From offshore, the whitewashed buildings of the former Coastguard station are an obvious landmark.



St John's point Lighthouse
Photograph:Vivienne Beck

Killough to Newcastle

From **Killough**, the low rocky shore continues to St Johns Point, where the tall yellow and black striped lighthouse marks the entrance to Dundrum Bay. From here to Newcastle, a distance of 8 nautical miles as the crow flies, the scenery is dominated by the beach and sand dune system of the Murlough Nature Reserve. In the distance, the distinctive profile of the Mourne Mountains comes into view.

Prior planning is essential when paddling this stretch of coastline as there is an army firing range extending almost 3 nautical miles out to sea off Ballykinler and the entrance to Dundrum Inner Bay. **Canoeists should contact Belfast Coastguard for details of when firing is scheduled** and plan to paddle outside of these times. If the firing range is in use, red flags (daytime) or red lights (night) are visible over the base, just north of the entrance to the Inner Bay. Out to sea, there are three yellow marker buoys marked DZ marking the outer perimeter of the range.

Dundrum Bay is relatively shallow, and is framed by sandy beaches, interrupted by only a few reefs and rocky foreshore. Landing is possible on the beaches almost anywhere along the shore, however canoe access requires a long beach trek at low water. The only break in the line of beaches is opposite the village of Dundrum, where a marked passage leads to the Inner Bay. Access here is tidal with landing possible at **Black Rock** and just north of the **Downshire Bridge** where there is a small turning circle for cars. The bridge is a good spot for developing moving water skills as the tide flows between its stanchions at rates up to 6 knots. The best conditions are 2 hours before and after high water. HW at the bridge is +0030 HW Belfast.

At the entrance to the Inner Bay, tidal flows can reach 3 knots on both the flood and ebb tide. Deep water surfing waves also form here on the ebb tide with swell from the south or east. Large numbers of common seals haul out on the Ballykinler shore.

Overlooking Dundrum village is the medieval Dundrum Castle, while to the south, the Mourne Mountains rise steeply from the coastal plain, with **Newcastle** town at their foot. Approaching from Murlough, the Slieve Donard Hotel marks the beginning of the sea front promenade. From here the beach begins to narrow, ending in the harbour at the foot of Slieve Donard - the highest mountain in the range. This is a drying harbour, built for the export of granite from the mountain quarries, and home to the RNLI offshore lifeboat. Above this, and visible from the sea is the ‘Bogey Line’, where a funicular railway transporting quarried granite once tracked down the mountain. At low tide, access can be gained at a stony beach adjacent to the south wall of the harbour.

With the exception of Dundrum Inner Bay entrance, tides along this section of coastline are weak.



Murlough Beach
Image courtesy of National Trust

Newcastle to Cranfield

Offshore from Dundrum Bay is the meeting point of the tides that sweep around Ireland from north to south, and a heavy swell can build up in the Bay in strong onshore winds. This makes for good surf, with best access from Newcastle harbour or the beach nearby.



Newcastle
Image courtesy of NITB

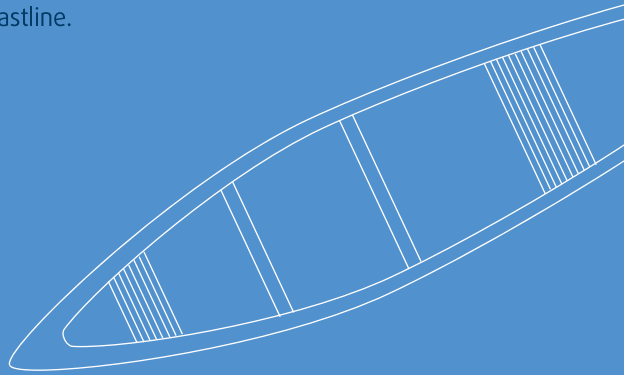
The Mourne Mountains dominate the scenery from **Newcastle** to Cranfield Point. The mountains rise steeply inland whilst the shoreline is made up of rocky beaches and small cliffs. The latter provide enjoyable rock dodging, particularly at high water, when many of the caves and channels become accessible by kayak. Maggie’s Leap, a narrow chasm stretching inland, is famed in

local folklore as the place where a local woman made a dramatic leap to get away from her pursuing lover. Just to the south, two larger caves are well worth exploring. One of these involves a 50 metre squeeze, where hands are needed in the place of paddles!

At Dunmore the mountains begin to recede inland and the shoreline flows smoothly south, etched in soft boulder clay deposited by ice sheets some 16,000 years ago. There are few offshore reefs and few sandy beaches, but the coast is breached by two rivers, at **Annalong** and Kilkeel. The former was once a bustling fishing port but today is used mainly by small craft engaged in creeling (lobster pot laying). The historic harbour at Annalong and the adjacent operational cornmill are worth a closer look. Further south, a small island called Selk Rock is home to a small colony of common seals.

The fishing port of **Kilkeel** has a large harbour which accommodates the largest fishing fleet in this sector of the Irish Sea. For this reason the harbour is not suitable for canoe access and paddlers should stay clear of fishing vessels operating in the vicinity.

Tidal streams are generally weak along this section of coastline.



Rostrevor Coastline

Carlingford Lough

A few miles further along the coast, after rounding Cranfield Point, the sandy beach of **Cranfield** comes into view. This beach is popular in summer time and the waters of Cranfield Bay are zoned for water sports.

Nearby, the Norman castle of Greencastle, the most impressive along this coast, guards the crossing to County Louth. Offshore is Green Island, an important bird nesting site.

Tidal waters rush though the mouth of Carlingford Lough at up to 5 knots with races, overfalls and rough water extending out beyond Cranfield and **Ballagan Points** on both the flood and ebb tides. **This is a challenging stretch of water suitable for experienced canoeists only.** In contrast, tidal streams within the Lough are weak and the paddling is relatively sheltered and pleasant.

Carlingford Lough is the most dramatic sea lough on the east coast of Ireland. Its broad waters are framed by the wooded slopes of Slieve Martin and the Cooley Mountains which rise steeply, creating a fjord-like setting. Beneath the Lough’s waters lies the boundary between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This area is an important shellfish fishery with dredging for mussels and cage cultivated oysters. Shore angling is also popular and canoeists should take extra care when approaching wading anglers. The historic railway village and one time ferry port of **Greenore** operates today as a freight port. Take care negotiating the shipping channel and the strong currents near the shore access south of Greenore Point. Both sides of the Lough are shallow with extensive mudflats; these are home to a wide variety of wading birds. Mill Bay and the shoreline between Greenore and Carlingford are considered prime spots for bird watching.

The narrow winding streets of **Carlingford village** reflect its Norman and medieval origins. There are several ruined castles, a Dominican priory, and remnants of the ancient town walls. King John’s Castle towers above the harbour, which dries to a mud berth at low tide.

Further along the Lough, there are landing places at **Killowen** and near the old quay at **Rostrevor** in Mourne, at **Greer’s Quay** and **Omeath** in Louth, and at the beach and public slip in **Warrenpoint**. The latter is a busy commercial port. Canoeists should stay clear of the shipping channel - clearly marked along the Lough’s length - and beware of the wash generated by passing vessels. The shipping channel should only be crossed at right angles and only after notifying Warrenpoint Harbour Authority.

Within the Lough, mini-tornadoes or ‘kettles’ form during strong south-south-westerley winds when squalls funnel down from Carlingford Mountain .

Beyond Warrenpoint, the Lough narrows to the historic crossing point at **Narrow Water**, guarded by a distinctive tower house and bawn and overlooked by steep mountains. Canoeists can access at the old stone quay on the Newry side of the castle.



Narrow Water

Newry Canal

Further inland, the ship canal runs into the city of Newry. The gates at **Victoria Lock** mark the canal entrance where access for canoeists is only practical at high water by making an awkward portage around the lock. Keep well clear if the lock is in use - huge volumes of water are rapidly exchanged between canal and lock by way of a subsurface sump. Built in the mid nineteenth century, the canal transported ships carrying coal and other cargo.

Midway along its length there is slip access to the canal off a small layby on the **Omeath Road**. From here, it is just a short paddle to the **Albert Basin** where there are canoe steps and roadside parking at the southern end of the quay.

Tidal Information

All tidal information within the guide is given in relation to High Water (HW) Belfast, except in the case of Carlingford Lough, where it is given in relation to High Water Dublin.

Tide tables are available free of charge from the following locations: Belfast tide tables - Port of Belfast, www.belfast-harbour.co.uk Dublin tide tables - Irish Sailing Association, www.sailing.ie news.bbc.co.uk/weather also provides tidal information with a free 6 day tide prediction service for all UK standard and secondary ports.

Tidal Streams

Outside of Strangford and Carlingford Loughs, tidal streams along this section of coastline are weak, following the coast in both directions, but may reach a rate of 1 knot (Springs) off salient points. In general terms these are as follows:
-0545 HW Belfast NE/E stream runs
+0030 HW Belfast W/SW stream runs

Within the entrances to Strangford and Carlingford Loughs, tidal streams are strong and complex - canoeists must consult the Admiralty Chart and Pilot for detailed tidal information. However, in general terms the timings and rates are as follows:

Strangford Narrows

Tidal streams begin nearly simultaneously throughout the length of the Narrows as follows
-0330 HW Belfast In-going 5-7.5 Knots (Springs)
+0230 HW Belfast Out-going 5-7.5 Knots (Springs)

Carlingford Entrance

-0530 HW Dublin In-going 2.5-5 Knots (Springs)
-0010 HW Dublin Out-going 2.5-5 Knots (Springs)
The streams decrease gradually further up Carlingford Lough to a maximum rate of 1 knot near its head. At the Newry River close to Narrow Water Castle, ingoing and outgoing streams can reach rates of 2.5 knots (springs)

Tidal Constants

Local HW times in relation to HW Belfast:
Strangford Quay +1hr 52 mins
Strangford Bar +0hr 16 mins
Ardglass +0Hr 23 mins
Newcastle, Dundrum Bay +0Hr 30 mins
Carlingford Bar +0Hr 24 mins
Warrenpoint +0hr 30 mins