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S. ...c.147
19 June 1991

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Ref. T2/2.07

DEEP-WATER ROUTE WEST OF THE HEBRIDES

1 At the request of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 59/33, paragraph 10.15) at its fifty-ninth session (13 to 24 May 1991) the attention of Member Governments is invited to the problem created by laden tankers sailing through the restricted waters of the Minches and not following the deep-water route "West of the Hebrides" as indicated in the attached Note by the Government of the United Kingdom.

2 Member Governments are invited to ensure that mariners operating in the region of north-west Scotland are aware of the deep-water route and to encourage ships flying their flag to use the route in accordance with resolution A.618(15).

W/1494x/EWP

ANNEX

ROUTEING OF SHIPS

Review of tanker traffic in the deep-water route
West of the Hebrides and through the MinchesNote by the Government of the United Kingdom

1 The deep-water route West of the Hebrides, as submitted to the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation under NAV 33/3/4, was adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee in April 1987 and confirmed by the fifteenth Assembly on 28 October 1987. This route is now marked clearly on charts of the area, with an accompanying note recommending that, weather permitting, laden tankers of over 10,000 gross registered tonnage use this route in preference to sailing through the restricted waters of the Minches.

2 Between 10 September and 6 October 1989, a survey was carried out to establish current traffic patterns in the deep-water route and through the Minches. This was intended to assist in ascertaining the effectiveness of the deep-water route. During the period of the survey, a number of laden tankers of over 10,000 grt were seen to be using the Minches although weather conditions were not generally favourable.

3 The Government of the United Kingdom is deeply concerned that many laden tankers do not appear to be following the recommended route. Member Governments are, therefore, requested to ensure that mariners operating in the region of north-west Scotland are aware of the deep-water route and to encourage use of this route, in accordance with the recommendation.

4 The attached notice to mariners issued to ships leaving Sullom Voe is also drawn to the attention of Member States with a request that it is issued to ships entitled to fly their flag.



NOTICE TO MARINERS

NAVIGATION OFF THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND - USE OF DEEP WATER ROUTE WEST OF THE HEBRIDES

To all Shipowners, Masters and Persons in Charge of laden tankers of over 10,000 grt.

The Department of Transport is concerned that vessels have not been complying with the recommendations of the International Maritime Organization to use the above Deep Water Route, i.e. that laden tankers over 10,000 grt should use this route in preference to the passage through The Minches. The Deep Water Route is clearly marked on relevant charts of the area. Details of this Route and the accompanying recommendation are shown in the extract of the IMO Routeing Guide overleaf.

Masters are strongly urged to take full account of the recommendation when planning their passage through the area. They should avoid, wherever possible, passing through the narrow and environmentally sensitive waters of The Minches.

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DEEP-WATER ROUTE WEST OF THE HEBRIDES

(Reference chart: British Admiralty No. 2721, May 1985 edition)

Note:

This chart is based on Ordnance Survey of Great Britain (1936) Datum.

Description of the deep-water route

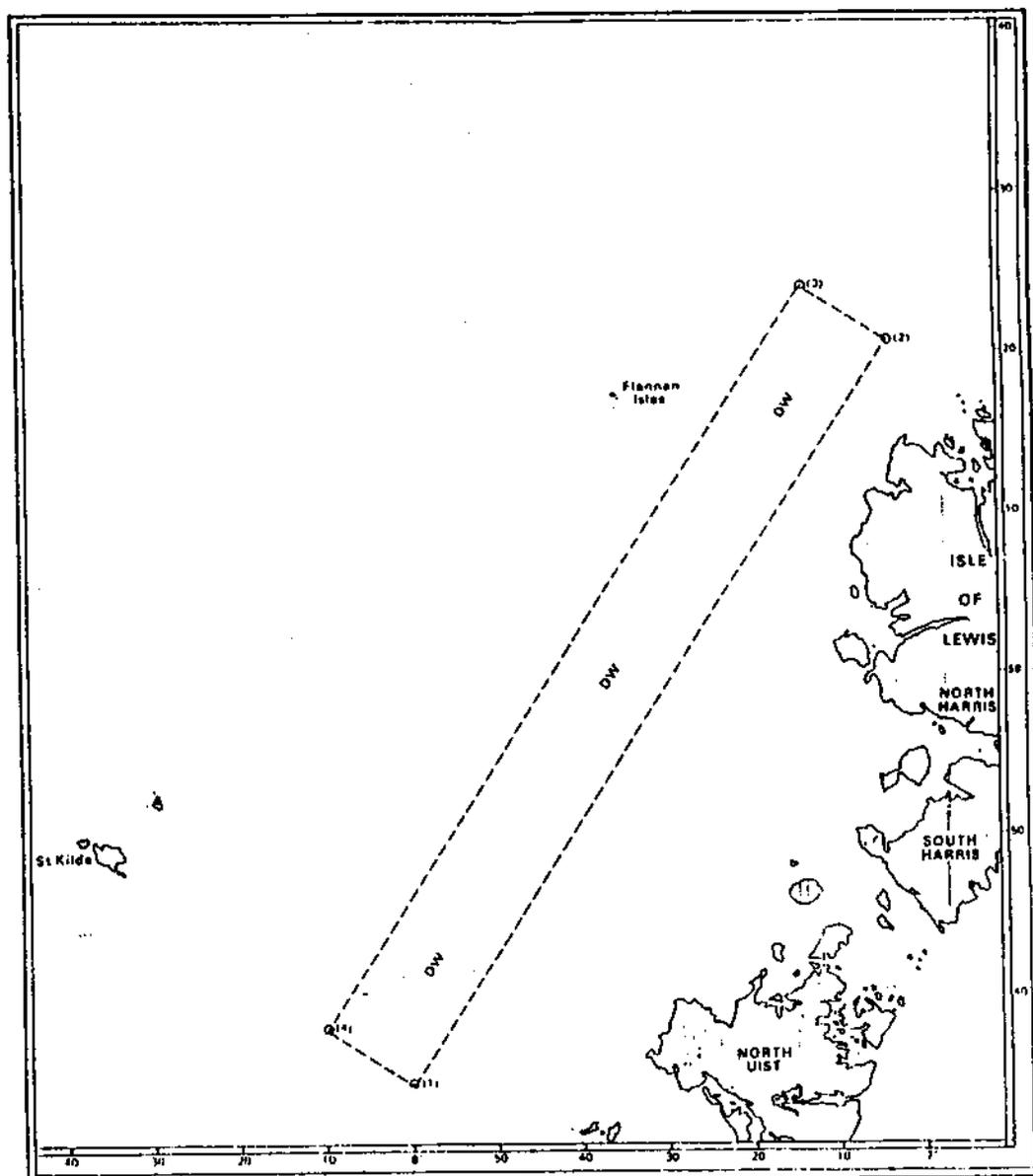
The deep-water route lies between the Outer Hebrides Isles on its south-east side and the Flannan Islands and St. Kilda to the north-west. The limits comprise lines joining the following geographical positions:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| (1) 57°34'.50 N., | 8°00'.00 W. |
| (2) 58°20'.70 N., | 7°03'.50 W. |
| (3) 58°24'.10 N., | 7°13'.50 W. |
| (4) 57°38'.05 N., | 8°09'.95 W. |

Notes:

(i) The depths in the route, as confirmed by recent detailed hydrographic surveys, are nowhere less than 34 metres.

(ii) Laden tankers of over 10,000 grt are recommended, weather conditions permitting, to use this route in preference to sailing through the restricted waters of the Minches.



DEEP-WATER ROUTE WEST OF THE HEBRIDES
ROUTE EN EAU PROFONDE A L'OUWEST DES HEBRIDES