MARINE SAFETY AGENCY

MARINE GUIDANCE NOTE

MGN 12(F)

Fishing vessels operating in submarine exercise areas

Notice to Owners, Skippers and Crew of Fishing Vessels

INTRODUCTION

1. This Marine Guidance Note describes measures implemented by the Royal Navy to minimise the risk to fishing vessels operating in areas of submarine activity. It also explains how to obtain information about submarine activity and what action fishing vessel skippers need to take when operating in areas of submarine activity, particularly in the event of motive power being lost.

SUBMARINE EXERCISE AREAS

2. All exercise areas around the United Kingdom that are permanently established and used for training by submarines are listed in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS) Volume 3, Part 1 (Figure 1) (ALRS 3-NP 283 (Figure 1). Diagrams indicating these general areas can be seen at the Annex to this notice.

SUBFACTS BROADCASTS

3. Use of these exercise areas by submarines is promulgated to other marine users by SUBFACTS broadcasts. ALRS Volume 3 (Figure 1) gives details of the broadcast frequencies and their times. Notification of activity is outlined on the NAVTEX system and draws marine users' attention to the VHF broadcast schedules. Additionally, any mariner can request information on submarine activity from the nearest Coastguard Rescue Centre or by contacting the following local "hotlines":

Plymouth (for the South coast) (01752) 557550
Faslane (for Scottish areas) (01374) 613097

THE CODE OF PRACTICE

4. The Royal Navy's "Code of Practice for conduct of submarine operations in the vicinity of fishing vessels" (revised in November 1995) governs the arrangements and procedures that have been put into place for the conduct of dived submarine operations in waters frequented by fishing vessels, and the related arrangements for improving fishing vessel safety. The Code has been approved by the Department of Transport's Fishing Industry Safety Group Sub-Group on Submarine and Fishing Vessel Matters. It is designed for use by submarine Commanding Officers who are required to comply with its provisions, and places the onus for fishing vessel avoidance by dived submarines squarely on their Commanding Officers.

5. The arrangements apply to RN submarines in all waters frequented by UK fishing vessels and to dived Allied submarines operating in UK territorial and internal waters (defined as the territorial sea adjacent to the UK, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands), and in UK exercise areas. Royal Navy Commanding Officers are expected to be very familiar with the provisions of the Code, which is accorded a high priority in training. Before foreign submarines dive in UK territorial waters, or in UK exercise areas, their Commanding Officers too are briefed comprehensively on the conduct expected of them when operating in the vicinity of fishing vessels.

SONAR CAPABILITY OF SUBMARINES

6. The modern submarine sonar is designed to provide all round coverage of 360°, and to detect noise over a wide frequency range, allowing analysis of engine signatures, gearing, propeller speeds and other machinery which generates noise. This includes hydraulic winches hauling and veering under strain.

7. Submarines are fitted with both active and passive sonar, the main difference being the passive sonar does not listen for the return echo of an emitted sound signal but instead "listens" for sound signals generated from other sources ego other vessels.

8. Under certain circumstances there can be some limitations on the effectiveness of passive sonar. However, these limitations are highly unlikely to affect the capability of the submarine to detect a fishing vessel engaged in normal fishing activities.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FISHING VESSEL SAFETY SHIP (FVSS) IN EXERCISES

9. A FVSS will be appointed (either surface or air unit) in all exercises involving RNI Allied Warships and RN submarines in all waters frequented by UK fishing vessels and RN I Allied Warships operating under UK OPCON (UK OPerational CONtrol) in UK territorial and internal waters and in UK exercise areas.

10. The aim of establishing the FVSS is to

(a) provide assistance to the participating submarine to compile its plot of fishing vessel activity in order to minimise the risk of hazardous incidents.

(b) make fishing vessels aware of submarine exercise activity in their vicinity and to provide a source of information and advice to minimise the risk of hazardous incidents.

11. All exercise participants are required to support the FVSS by providing information of fishing activity in their vicinity, warning any FV detected approaching the area that anti-submarine exercises are being conducted in the vicinity, and warning the submarine of any FV within 6000 yards (3 nautical miles) of the warship.

12. The submarine must not rely upon these services alone but is required to, comply with the Code of Practice, maintain a comprehensive plot of all fishing activity supplemented by the FVSS BROADCAST (communications between the FVSS and the submarine on the designated exercise broadcast frequency), and consider the use of Radar to support information from other sensors whenever the Commanding Officer considers it necessary, regardless of the exercise instructions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN OPERATING WITHIN A SUBMARINE EXERCISE AREA

13. Before carrying out, and during, fishing operations in a known submarine exercise area skippers are **strongly urged** to make use of the SUBFACTS broadcasts and the other services described at paragraph 3. Unless the skipper consents to a request by naval personnel to do otherwise, or unless there is any doubt that sufficient radiated noise is being generated, normal fishing operations need not be affected by a submarine exercise and skippers need only ensure that proper navigational and radio watch on VHF Channel 16 is maintained.

14. In the event of a total power failure there would be no radiated noise from the fishing vessel for a submarine to detect. If this were to occur in a known submarine exercise area, which had been declared active in SUBFACTS, the skipper should;

(a) contact the hotline number and the Coastguard immediately advising them of his situation, and

(b) in the best interests of safe navigation, consider marking and releasing the fishing gear for later recovery.

15. If the fishing vessel has stopped in the water but power to work the nets and any other machinery is available, then provided the nets or other machinery are being operated, the radiated noise should be sufficient to alert the submarine. Skippers should also ensure that all electronic equipment which generate impulses in the water (eg sonar/echo sounder) is operating. If motive power can not be restored in a short time scale, or there are any doubts about the vessel's capacity to generate sufficient radiated noise, the skipper should contact the hotline number and the Coastguard to advise them of his situation.

16. Submarines at periscope depth make a careful visual assessment of the surface situation. A number of incidents have occurred because surface craft have been showing incorrect navigation lights, or no lights at all. It is therefore essential that at all times vessels display correct lights and signals in accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

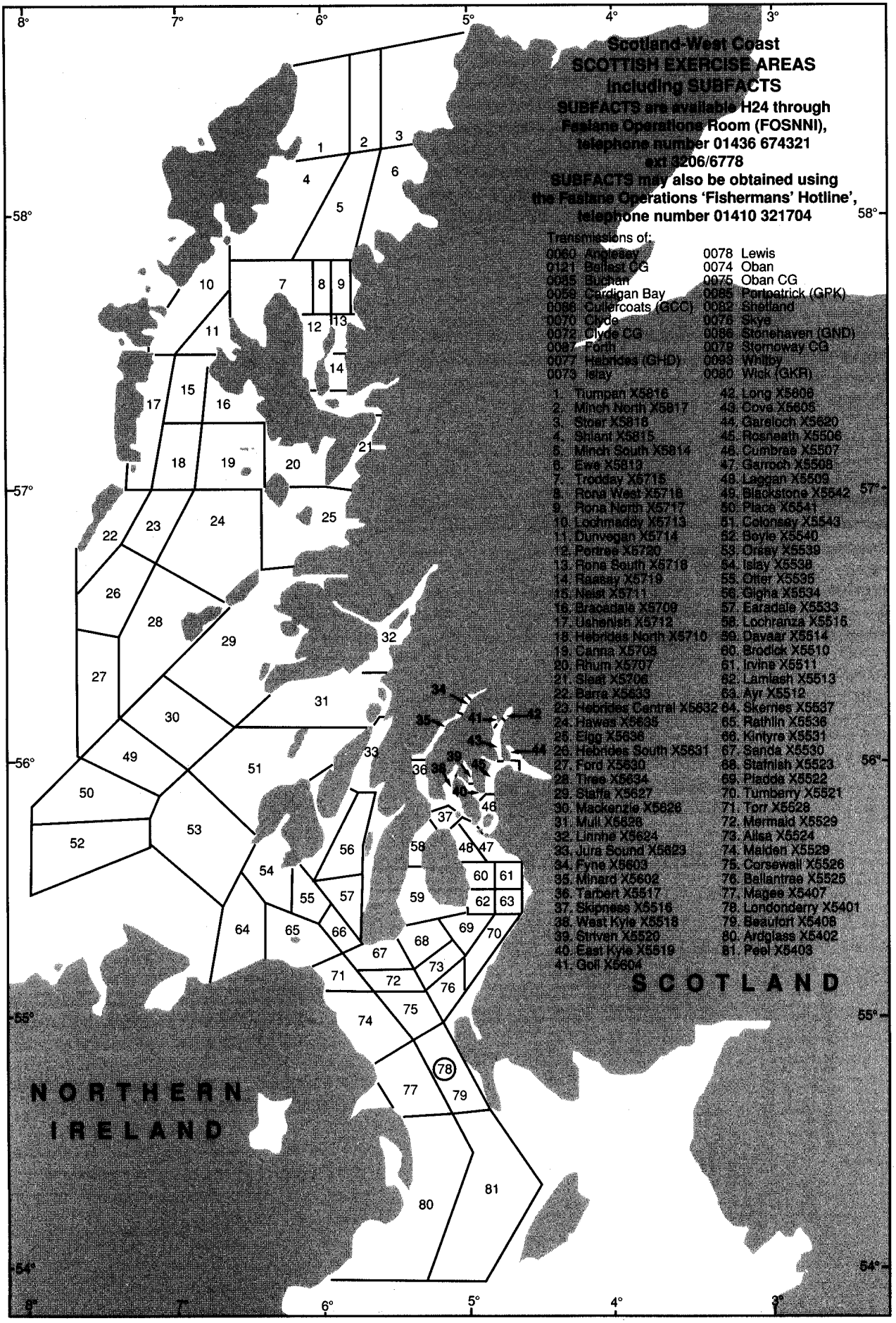
Marine Safety Agency
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton SO15 1EG

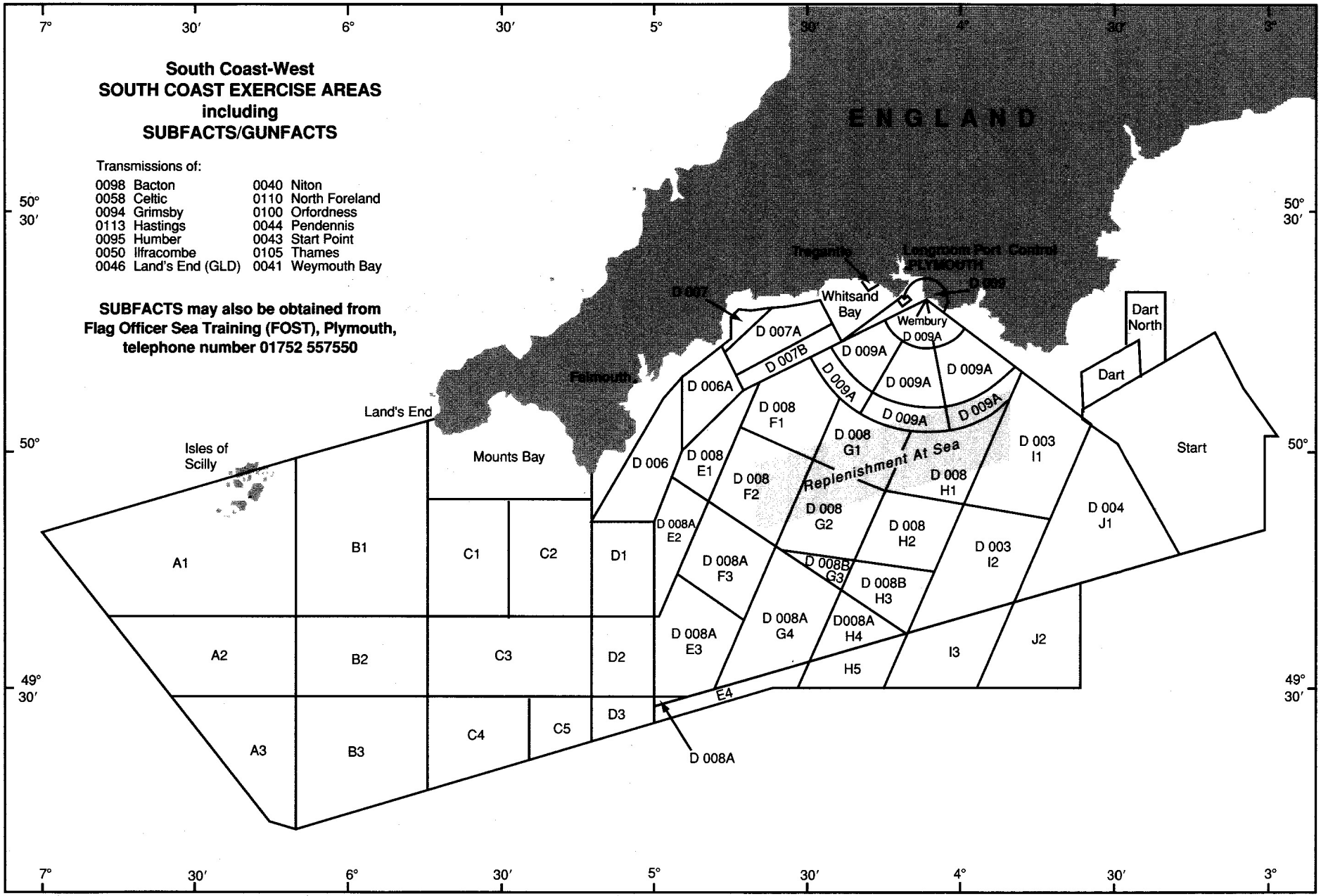
Tel: 01703 329 130
Fax: 01703 329 161

Following the merger of the Departments of Environment and Transport, the Marine Safety Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR).

June 1997

Safe Ships Clean Seas


Scotland-West Coast
SCOTTISH EXERCISE AREAS
Including SUBFACTS
SUBFACTS are available H24 through
Faslane Operations Room (FOSNNI),
telephone number 01436 674321
ext 3206/6778
SUBFACTS may also be obtained using
the Faslane Operations 'Fishermans' Hotline',
telephone number 01410 321704
Transmissions of:
0060 Anglesey
0121 Belfast CG
0085 Buchan
0059 Cardigan Bay
0086 Cullercoats (GCC)
0070 Clyde
0072 Clyde CG
0087 Forth
0077 Hebrides (GHD)
0073 Islay
0078 Lewis
0074 Oban
0075 Oban CG
0085 Portpatrick (GPK)
0082 Shetland
0076 Skye
0086 Stonehaven (GND)
0079 Stornoway CG
0093 Whitby
0080 Wick (GKR)
1. Trumpan X5616
2. Minch North X5617
3. Stoer X5618
4. Shiant X5615
5. Minch South X5614
6. Ewe X5612
7. Trodday X5715
8. Rona West X5716
9. Rona North X5717
10. Lochmaddy X5713
11. Dunvegan X5714
12. Portree X5720
13. Rona South X5719
14. Raasay X5719
15. Neist X5711
16. Bracadale X5709
17. Usheniish X5712
18. Hebrides North X5710
19. Canna X5708
20. Rhum X5707
21. Skiat X5706
22. Barra X5633
23. Hebrides Central X5632
24. Hawes X5635
25. Eigg X5636
26. Hebrides South X5631
27. Ford X5630
28. Tiree X5634
29. Staffa X5627
30. Mackenzie X5628
31. Mull X5626
32. Linnhe X5624
33. Jura Sound X5623
34. Fyne X5603
35. Minard X5602
36. Tarbert X5517
37. Skipness X5516
38. West Kyle X5518
39. Striven X5520
40. East Kyle X5519
41. Goil X5604
42. Long X5608
43. Cove X5605
44. Gareloch X5620
45. Rosneath X5506
46. Cumbrae X5507
47. Garroch X5508
48. Leggan X5509
49. Blackstone X5542
50. Place X5541
51. Colonsay X5543
52. Boyle X5540
53. Orsay X5539
54. Islay X5538
55. Otter X5535
56. Gigha X5534
57. Earadale X5533
58. Lochranza X5515
59. Davaar X5514
60. Brodick X5510
61. Irvine X5511
62. Lamlash X5513
63. Ayr X5512
64. Skerries X5537
65. Rathlin X5536
66. Kintyre X5531
67. Sanda X5530
68. Stamish X5523
69. Pladda X5522
70. Turnberry X5521
71. Torr X5528
72. Mermaid X5529
73. Alisa X5524
74. Malden X5528
75. Corsewall X5526
76. Ballantrae X5525
77. Magee X5407
78. Londonderry X5401
79. Beaufort X5408
80. Ardglass X5402
81. Peel X5403
SCOTLAND
NORTHERN IRELAND
8°
7°
6°
5°
4°
3°
58°
57°
56°
55°
54°


South Coast-West
SOUTH COAST EXERCISE AREAS
including
SUBFACTS/GUNFACTS
Transmissions of:
0098 Bacton
0058 Celtic
0094 Grimsby
0113 Hastings
0095 Humber
0050 Ilfracombe
0046 Land's End (GLD)
0040 Niton
0110 North Foreland
0100 Orfordness
0044 Pendennis
0043 Start Point
0105 Thames
0041 Weymouth Bay
SUBFACTS may also be obtained from
Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST), Plymouth,
telephone number 01752 557550
ENGLAND
7° 30′ 6° 30′ 5° 30′ 4° 30′ 3°
50° 30′
50°
49° 30′
Tregantle
Longroom Port Control
PLYMOUTH
D 009
D 007
Whitsand Bay
Wembury
D 009A
D 007A
D 007B
Falmouth
Land's End
Isles of Scilly
Mounts Bay
D 006A
D 006
D 008 F1
D 008 E1
D 008 F2
D 008 G1
D 008 H1
D 008 G2
D 008 H2
D 008A E2
D 008A F3
D 008B G3
D 008B H3
D 008A G4
D008A H4
D 008A E3
H5
I3
J2
D 003 I1
D 003 I2
D 004 J1
Dart North
Dart
Start
Replenishment At Sea
A1
A2
A3
B1
B2
B3
C1
C2
C3
C4
C5
D1
D2
D3
E4
D 008A