

MalinWaters^o



Cruising Route:

Campbeltown and the Firth of Clyde to north Antrim and Lough Swilly

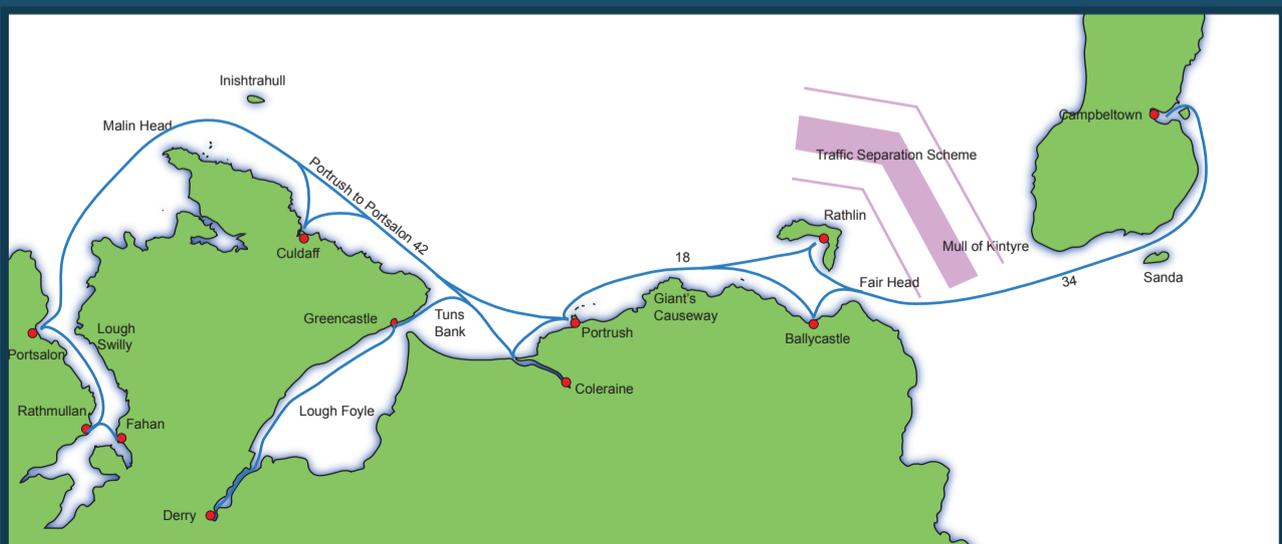
The crossing from Campbeltown to Rathlin or Ballycastle is 34 miles, or from the anchorage at Sanda only 22 miles. It's essential to make this crossing on the north- and west-going tide, since the tide runs at 4 to 5 knots at the Mull of Kintyre and up to 6 knots in Rathlin Sound. Due attention needs to be paid to the forecast, since strong winds against the tide can raise heavy seas, especially near the Mull. But a well-found boat should have no problem with winds up to force 5 against the tide in Rathlin Sound. There is a Traffic Separation Scheme between Rathlin and the Mull, in which the usual rules apply. Traffic is not exceptionally heavy but you may expect to see a few ships.

From Ballycastle, make the 18-mile hop to Portrush, or a few miles further to the river Bann and Coleraine. The cliff scenery of Rathlin and from Fair Head to Portrush is spectacular, particularly around the Giant's Causeway, and the north coast is a world hot spot for basking sharks.

Navigational hazards along the coast include the dangerous rock Carrickmanannon, west of Ballycastle. Further west, the shallow Tuns Bank lies off Magilligan Point at the entrance to Lough Foyle, but it is well marked. The Lough itself is shallow but has a deep dredged channel up to Derry. Greencastle harbour, at the entrance, is accessible in all weathers.

There are visitors' moorings at Culdaff, but most yachts make the 42-mile trip from Portrush or Coleraine to Lough Swilly in a single voyage. Careful attention to tide and weather are needed when planning the trip round Malin Head. Garvan Sound, closest to the mainland, is the shortest route, but Inishtrahull Sound or the passage outside the island are simpler. Inishtrahull itself offers an interesting stopover for the more adventurous sailor.

The first port of call in Lough Swilly is Portsalon, where there are visitors' moorings. The Lough is the main sailing centre on the north coast, with a marina at Fahan and pontoon accommodation at Rathmullan.



Campbeltown to Lough Swilly chart