

# Errynor Map 01 - The Cliff

This 250 × 200 mile map is centred on the great Cliff of the continental shelf edge off the northwestern tip of Alarius. It shows the surrounding seafloor, some of the denizens that inhabit it and the overlying water column, some of which creatures may be found up to the sea's surface too. The unsubmerged land comprises just two small islands, where a pair of seamount columns, Zariq and Zaraq, breach the water's surface. The sea here is part of the Frigid Ocean, or as most dwellers in western Errynor know it, the Equine Ocean.

The seafloor surface slopes down from right (northeast) to left (southwest) across the whole area as viewed, with a water column depth on the northeastern edge of between roughly 300 metres (about 1,000 feet) in the lower right (eastern) corner to approximately 500 m (*circa* 1,600 ft) in the upper right (northern) corner. The Cliff top lies some 1,000 m (3,300 ft) below the ocean's surface, while the Cliff line itself sees the seabed drop away near-vertically in places for a further *circa* 2,000 m (6,600 ft). The Deeps, the surface level at the foot of the Cliff, continues descending further from the Cliff line towards the map's left (southwestern) edge, in a similarly gradual fashion to that seen above the Cliff.

The entire seafloor here is in perpetual darkness, as sunlight penetrates only to roughly 200 m (660 ft) below the water's surface. Consequently, there are no photosynthetic organisms on the seabed. The water here is also very calm, unaffected by whatever storms may be happening in the near-surface waters and the air above.

There is though plenty of life to be encountered here, of both animal and greater intelligence, of which only the more prominent or easily-found kinds are marked on the three main mapped layouts - seabed, water column and sea surface. Many other creatures could be found, at GM's option, along with numerous smaller or hidden lairs and settlements. While for convenience, the seabed settlements are ranked by size, from smaller to larger as "Castle", "Village", "Town" and "City", these titles are simply recognisable labels, as their resemblance to dry land constructions of the same name is often slight. Space is not constrained by river lines, vegetation or, except in a few places, substantial variations in terrain, and many settlements can include partly subterranean areas, or even be almost entirely subterranean. Where scent cues are more common, and sound can travel much further than in air, individual building structures tend to be less clustered than in settlements on dry land, so can seem sparse to an air-dweller at times - assuming they can visualise them at all, as lights (chiefly bioluminescent) are uncommonly used on the outside, or even the outer rooms, of a sea-dweller's settlement, in case they draw the wrong kind of attention.

Such seabed structures may be built of many different materials, for example items reused from shipwrecks, carved into convenient rock outcrops, coral mounds, or the seafloor, or constructed from stone blocks. Most buildings intended to be long-standing or permanent use concrete mortaring to link individual pieces - such as blocks of stone - although some are made up entirely of such concrete, formed from ground-up bedrock mixed with the lime-rich silts that lie on the seafloor, crushed shells and dead coral. All the main intelligent undersea races make at least some use of this concrete. However, the Kachaya (a name meaning "The Quiet-Water Folk", though others usually know them

better as “Sea Devils”) with their domed buildings, and the Thalassa (or “Fish-folk”) with their narrow, soaring, spire-cones, specialise in using such concrete-only constructions. The solidified concrete outer surface is often designed to attract micro-organisms to colonise it, who feed off the settlement’s waste. With careful tending, this organic covering gives each building a particular colouring. Abandoned concrete ruins tend to become grey as these micro-organisms die-off, the concrete’s natural colouring otherwise.

By activating the Solar/Geomagnetics toggle, an overlay showing the geographical latitudes for every one-degree interval can be seen, together with the central line for Nibirum’s polar auroral zone. The entire mapped area lies within this zone, so the aurora can be seen from the sea’s surface on any clearer night when it is active. The magical influence the aurora may create can be detected right down to the deepest ocean floor shown here, however. The other toggles reveal the water column and sea surface features respectively.

## **The Seafloor Map**

Most seabed features shown are briefly described later in the following notes, in order of their listing on the Undersea Surface Features Key. The nature of the Cliff and the Deeps has been commented upon already. Two other natural features need mentioning here first, the Canyon and the Rocking Stone, along with the three red-outlined and labelled Kachayan province areas and their inhabitants.

### **The Canyon**

This is an eastern embayment in the Cliff, around 35 kilometres (20 miles) wide at its midpoint, and nearly 90 km (55 miles) long, compared to the general line of the Cliff. The drop of the Cliff line at its closed (east) end is about 1,300 m (4,250 ft), while the fall at its western, open, end is *circa* 2,000 m (6,600 ft), so the Canyon’s floor slopes down from east to west very gently at an angle less than  $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ .

### **The Rocking Stone**

Towards the northwestern map corner, at the northeastern end of a range of mostly low, silty hills and hollows, is a more substantial area of rocky hills. Perched on top of the highest peak of that area is a huge boulder around 40 m across (130 ft), which rests on only one small region of the peak, but in such a way that the boulder cannot roll away, only gently rock to and fro, making a tapping sound at each limit of its swing. Ordinarily, the Rocking Stone is still and silent, but even a light touch, a large creature, or several smaller (human-sized) ones, swimming past close-by, is enough to set it in motion. On dry land, such boulders occur naturally where the boulder has proven more resistant to erosion than the underlying rocks, or where a boulder has been deposited by a retreating glacial ice-sheet, for example. Quite how such a stone has ended up here, roughly 3,300 metres (10,800 ft) below sea-level, and some 950 km (600 miles) from the nearest continental landmass, is unknown. It appears to be of similarly dark, basaltic rock to that of the seabed.

## **Kachayan Provinces**

Politically, red-labelled features and named province areas belonging to the Kachaya dominate the seafloor map. In reality, the Kachaya are second in decreasing order of population numbers to the Merfolk among the intelligent undersea-dwellers overall, so their seeming dominance here is relative. The three Province sections shown are parts of a larger, if loosely-bonded, Kachayan realm that comprises eight scattered Provinces, five of which lie wholly beyond the confines of this map. Relative to Ellenge Province, these lie to the northeast, southeast and south. The whole realm owes allegiance to a ruler in the capital city of Karruch some 250 km (150 miles) south of Ellenge town. The bulk of these other Provinces are shown on Errynor Maps 2, 9 & 10.

**The Kachaya** are of a generally humanoid form and Human-like size, thus have a body with four limbs and head, all of which are scaled, with hands and feet also similar to those of Humans, but rather larger, with sharp claws instead of nails, and webbing between their fingers and toes. Roughly 1 in 200 is born with four usable arms instead of two; typically, they grow to be taller than the average. Males and females are physically similar, though females are more commonly magically proficient. All have small control fins on their arms, legs and back. Their heads are ruggedly square by Human norms, their faces flattened, with large, dark, forward-facing, fish-like eyes, a mouth full of robust, sharply pointed teeth, and spines around the edges of their faces which can look like horns, partly hence their common name of "Sea Devils". They are all able to breathe freely above or below the water, though they can breathe air for only quite short periods. They prefer to live in deep, quiet waters, which is where they are more liable to be encountered, and hence their own name for themselves of "The Quiet-Water Folk". Their communication is largely telepathic when undersea, within eye-to-eye range (they have a normal vision range even in the darkness of the Deeps, albeit seeing only in black-and-white unless some light is present), or vocal speech in air, though they can use either at any time. They have a bioluminescent patch above each eye that they can show or hide at will too, which can be used to communicate over greater distances in the dark. They are also able to use a sonic attack when in water from time to time, over typical hand-to-hand combat distances.

A few favour a wandering, nomadic lifestyle, similar to land nomads. They use shamanic magic and follow marine animal or elemental spirit totem creatures. They live by hunting, with some following particular migratory fish shoals or marine mammal herds. They will also attack lone surface craft and raid seabed settlements, should the opportunity arise.

Most Kachaya though prefer a more fixed existence. Their seafloor settlements are normally of domed buildings with round access-points, the whole sometimes concealed within natural features such as fissures, reefs or caverns. These settled Sea Devils carry out some fish and coral farming, but like the nomads, they frequently supplement this by raiding other undersea settlements and surface vessels.

They do pair-bond and maintain loose family structures, giving birth to live young that mature to adult forms in 8-10 months, young that are able to feed and look after themselves independently from birth. While social standing can be determined by heredity, aptitude and forcefulness are more important, because although adults can live to be 50 or so, most die younger, often by violence or accidents.

Although all political borders in Errynor are somewhat fluid, those of the undersea folk are especially so. Each of the undersea humanoid groups believes - or will at least publicly express the belief - that the entire ocean is "theirs". The reality is that groups of Sea Devils tend to be attacked if they stray far from their home ranges, on the assumption

that they must be intent on raiding. Consequently, the Kachaya, when not actually out raiding, remain largely within the provinces as noted on the map. Other folks straying into these areas are considered fair game by the Kachaya, who will maintain they are simply protecting themselves against aggressors. While the Sea Devil provinces can be thought of as vertical columns in the water up to the surface, Kachaya numbers and practical considerations mean they are essentially domes, highest above the larger settlements within the province. Thus the chances of an attack decline higher in the water column, and laterally further from such settlements. Surface ships “violating” the province areas - or passing nearby - stand a much increased chance of being attacked than elsewhere however, given the two-dimensional nature of the sea-surface effectively traps them should they pass “over” the invisible border. Kachaya leaders tend to be physically and/or magically strong individuals, and although they have an aristocracy of sorts, their leaders do not necessarily come from it. Each province has its own leader. However, nearby provinces sometimes become grouped together when an especially capable leader emerges. Such leaders at any level usually survive only as long as their strength and success lasts. (The Kachaya are loosely similar to the Sahuagin of D&D.)

**Kelchayn Province:** Extending off the northwestern map corner, the mapped area includes the Province’s capital city of Kelchayn, the Sea Orc cavern village of Aak, and the previously-described Rocking Stone.

**Sea Orcs** or *Ketorka*, meaning roughly “Sea-Folk” in their own language, are rarely encountered in Errynor’s waters. They are water-breathing, tall, streamlined, hairless humanoids, with large, webbed, clawed hands and feet, large, dark eyes, and long, sharp teeth. They have quite robust control fins on their back, arms and legs that flatten into their skin when a burst of swimming speed is necessary. They are probably the fastest swimmers in short bursts of any of Errynor’s undersea folk. They live chiefly by hunting fish, but are not above taking other prey - surface swimmers, for example - at need, or should opportunity arise. They can attack using a sonic stun burst at times, at a target up to 50 m/150 ft away. Although they can use vocal communication near one another, their preferred method is by eye-to-eye contact range telepathy. Like the Kachaya, they can see normally, if only in monochrome, in the endless darkness of the Deeps, as well as in colour when there is sufficient light. Their communities though are widely-scattered over the seas, with no cohesive larger-scale or realm-like structure. Each tribal group, like that of Aak, does usually have one or more undersea caves they regard as “theirs” within their normal hunting range, so they are relatively sedentary in that respect. They can make objects quite skilfully, primarily tools and weapons for hunting, which often show a remarkable degree of inventiveness. (These are variants of D&D’s marine hobgoblins, the Koalinth.)

**Twin Peak Province:** The great seamount rock columns of Zariq and Zaraq dominate the geography of the southeastern part of the map, as well as the mindsets of the creatures that dwell nearby, for all these columns are more than 130 km (80 miles) apart. There are no known substantial Kachayan settlements in the mapped part of this Province presently, so the major features here are the Zariq seamount, and the sand and silt hills that lie in its lee, as what generally weak sea currents there are here, predominantly flow south to north. The Province’s western edge runs partly along the top of the Cliff, as Merfolk from Shaldun Castle, halfway down the Cliff nearby have long prevented Kachayan expansion from here towards the Deeps.

**Ellenge Province:** The eastern seamount of Zaraq and its lesser leeward range of silty hills is just one feature of this Province. Ellenge town is the main settlement, although disused and ruined structures indicate it was once larger than it is currently. The bridge across the southeastern Clawmark fissure line, labelled “**10**”, is a remarkable, very old, brick-built one, with concrete mortaring. A far more recent set of three Kachayan watchtowers has been built along it, with a stronghold constructed in caverns below the bridge, cut into the sides of the huge chasm the bridge crosses. It is known as Shark Bridge. The **Witch Pots** is an area of broken ground, with hills, hollows and pothole craters scattered about, clear signs for those sufficiently knowledgeable to tell it is a region of witch-ground, from where frequent eruptions of trapped natural gas on the seabed have happened in the past. There are remains of several wrecked ships (marked as “**9**”) still identifiable here too, as such gas escapes in large enough quantities render the water the gas passes through incapable of supporting floating objects in or on the water - so a surface ship will suddenly sink like a stone, for instance. Investigation will show evidence that this area has been used - and likely still is used - as a Kachayan trap, especially as the ghost ship which may be seen on the sea’s surface far above here at times, particularly during storms, is directly linked magically to one of the wrecks.

Ellenge and Twin Peak Provinces were once parts of the single, larger, Kachayan Province of Twin Peaks, now fallen on harder times. It extended into the Peak Corals area to the northwest at its greatest, as the ruined castle may suggest. Expansion to the southeast has been long prevented by Merfolk settlements there, and more recently a powerful deep-sea hag, Aunty MacKassa, who has her home in a concealed cave among the coral mounds, sand and silt hills labelled “**11**”.

### **Other Seabed Features**

**Inhabited Caves:** Five are shown on the map. From northwest to southeast these are: the **Ketorka Cavern Village of Aak** set among a range of mostly low sand and silt hills; a coral-concealed cave with gas-escape seabed potholes nearby in the northern Claw Corals, home to a giant octopus (labelled “**1**”); another giant octopus’ lair in a rocky cave amid some rocky and silty hills somewhat southeast of the Canyon (“**5**”); one more giant octopus’ home, a coral cavern in the midst of the Peak Corals, with some sand and silt hills, and past gas-escape pothole features, nearby (“**8**”); and the coral-mound, sand- and silt-hills-concealed home of the deep-sea hag Aunty MacKassa (“**11**”).

**Cold Water Corals:** Also, if misleadingly, known as deep-water corals, as they often occur in deep, dark, cool, high latitude seas. They form reefs on the seabed, averaging 15 m high by 50 m wide (50 by 150 ft), though in places they can grow to be tens of kilometres (miles) long and a couple of kilometres/miles wide. Sometimes, these corals can form separate mounds scattered over areas around 100 square km in extent (40 square miles), each mound about 100 m in diameter (330 ft) and 5 m tall (15 ft), with a “tail” of sand extending for several hundred metres down-current (1,000 ft or more), looking somewhat like a sand volcano. About 60% of all such reefs and mound-clusters occur beside or within seafloor pockmark craters caused by natural gas-escapes. They are found in water depths from around 200 to 3,000 m or so (660 to 9,800 ft). Individual giant corals within these structures can be equally impressive. Rare branching ivory corals, resembling great white, leafless trees can be several tens of metres tall (up to 100 ft or so), for instance, and in tangled thickets can be more formidable as obstacles than any land-based vegetation

that may seem superficially similar. They may be home to many creatures, including humanoids. There are two main areas of these, the Claw Corals to the north of the Canyon, and the Peak Corals southeast of it. The northern tip of a third range of corals at the “11” label runs off the southern map edge into Errynor Map 9. It is sometimes called the Hag Corals after the deep-sea hag Aunty MacKassa who lives in a cavern at the 11 marker.

**Constructed Bridges:** Two of these are shown, both built of identical fired-clay bricks with concrete mortaring, each crossing a separate Clawmark fissure line chasm in the seabed on a great arched structure of tremendous size, as each is approaching a kilometre long (over half a mile). One bridge lies north of the Canyon’s closed end, the other, Shark Bridge, is labelled “**10**” in Ellenge Province, towards the map’s eastern corner. The nature of the bricks is such that they must have been made on land, and both bridges are clearly ancient, yet remain in remarkably good states of repair. As to who built them, when and why, that is a mystery.

**Fissure Lines:** These are steep-sided, relatively narrow, elongated fractures in the seabed, that can be very deep (hundreds of metres = yards or more). They are tension features, notably where begins the relatively steeper descent towards the Cliff at the edge of the continental shelf. They form convenient habitats for sea-dwellers not reliant on sunlight, including sometimes the sea’s intelligent humanoids. Most shown here trend roughly north-south, with the triple lines towards and extending off the north and northeastern map edges known as the Clawmarks, as they could seem as if raked into the surface by the claws of some colossal beast.

**Hot Water Vents:** Hot springs warmed by geothermal energy where sedentary animals tend to congregate to take advantage of the nutrients brought up along with the warm water. Here, the vents form impressively tall, chimney-like structures from deposited minerals coming out of solution as the water cools after escaping from the subterranean region. Two areas of these are illustrated, one by the northern part of the Cliff, labelled “**3**” (which conceals a cave where a kraken has its lair), the other southwest of the middle of the map, south of a ruined Kachayan village in the Deeps.

**Kachayan Settlements:** Two inhabited ones are shown, the city of Kelchayn in the western corner, and the town of Ellenge in the eastern. There is also the fissure line stronghold near and on the bridge labelled “10”, plus a ruined village in the Deeps and a ruined castle southwest of the Peak Corals. More on the Kachaya and their settlements can be found in the “Kachayan Provinces” section above.

**Merfolk Settlements:** Again, two inhabited ones are illustrated, the rock-built **town of Selass** in the western Deeps and the **castle of Shaldun**, an ancient stronghold built halfway up the Cliff below what is now the western edge of the Kachayan Twin Peak Province. The heavily-protected and largely concealed fortress of Shaldun has been long a thorn in the side of the Kachaya, preventing their expansion beyond the top of the Cliff from the Twin Peaks area. Two ruined Merfolk villages lie in the region north of the Canyon, one set among the Claw Corals.

**Merfolk** are more or less the equivalent of Sea-Humans, in that they are by far the most populous of Errynor’s intelligent humanoid sea-denzens, and their upper bodies, limbs and heads are often very human-like, including to skin, eye and hair colouring.

Their lower bodies and legs show considerable variation however, including some that have a single, large, fish-like tail instead of legs, while others have scaled legs that end in large, propulsive fins, not feet. Some are able to change forms between such options, while some can alter their lower halves into a form more suitable for whatever their current needs and environment are, including to fully humanoid legs and feet capable of walking on land. They cannot stay long on land, even so. Many Merfolk can cope with a broad range of sea environments, from shallow to great depth, providing they have sufficient time to acclimate to the substantial pressure changes involved with changing water depth. Most are able to see normally even without natural light in the ocean depths, although under those circumstances, only in monochrome. A significant proportion, especially those that preferentially occupy the shallower, nearer-surface waters, are able to breathe in air or water with comparable facility. Merfolk pay little heed to the physical differences between their variant forms, which can have its own dangers for land-dwelling air-breathers who fall into the sea, as Merfolk will sometimes mistake them for their own folk, and not realise they may be drowning. Their own name for themselves reflects this, as it is simply “The Folk”, and even within a family group, it is common to find a mix of legged and tailed types. They communicate using vocal speech and eye-contact-range telepathy, though they can use telepathy only when underwater.

The only distinction Merfolk sometimes draw is with that proportion of Merfolk that follow a nomadic existence, whom they can know as “The Sea-Folk”, compared to the more sedentary settlement-constructors, “The Place-Folk”. Such sea nomads commonly follow a similar lifestyle to land nomads, using shamanic magic and following marine creature or elemental spirit totems. They live by hunting, with some following particular migratory fish shoals or marine mammal herds. They will also attack lone surface craft at times, depending on the proportion of those among them who can breathe in air and water. Their mix of physical forms is largely the same as other Merfolk.

Merfolk that build settlements do so again in a wide variety of styles and places, partly dependent on their preferred lifestyle. Those that practice agriculture - on this map, those who grow and harvest cold water coral, and farm fish, often in large, netted enclosures - tend to build more and larger structures overall, generally from whatever materials are available close-by. These may be carved into rock or coral reefs, or constructed from pieces of rock which may be quarried for the purpose, or re-used from older structures (including ruined settlements), along with shells and pieces of living coral, shipwrecks and driftwood. Natural caverns may be used as well, or seafloor hollows roofed over, while some Merfolk use concrete, as described on pages 1-2, for their buildings. Even the nomadic folk will build temporary structures from time to time (and more permanent sacred seabed sites), though when the nearer-surface conditions start to roughen in winter storms, like the shoals and herds they follow, they usually just head into deeper, calmer waters instead. (Similar to the Merfolk of D&D, while the nomadic types are based on D&D’s Tritons.)

**Ruins:** Other than those of the Kachaya and Merfolk already noted, there is also a ruined Thalassan castle about midway between the mouth of the Canyon and Kelchayn province in the Deeps.

**Thalassans** are slender humanoids with four limbs, including webbed hands and large, webbed feet, control fins on their arms, legs and back, and narrow, forward-facing, fish-like heads, with large, dark eyes. They are entirely marine aquatic beings, and cannot breathe in air without magic. They are rare in Errynor’s seas, but do form settlements from time to time, often ones that are well-concealed, and usually carved skilfully into

native rock or dead coral within a still-living reef. Their architecture favours narrow openings that suit their slender frames, along with tapering, conical towers, which can make their buildings look quite castle-like to land-dwellers (or like miniature seamounts for sea-dwellers). They build almost exclusively using undersea concrete. They are at home in almost any depth of water, given enough time to acclimatise to the pressure changes involved, and can see readily at all light-levels, including the darkness of the Deeps - though only in black-and-white without light sources. Although most prefer a relatively settled lifestyle, even when they do not build structures to live in, a small number favour a free-swimming nomadic existence instead, some of whom will tackle lone surface vessels on occasion. Fish-folk live otherwise primarily as hunter-gatherers, but will trade with other creatures, and produce particularly fine, artfully-carved work in stone, coral, shell and similar substances. They communicate using a mixture of visual gestures, skin-colour changes (including bioluminescent patches), some noises, and limited-range telepathy (*circa* 500 m = 1,500 ft). (Thalassans are similar to D&D's Locathah.)

**Sand/Silt/Debris Hills & Hollows:** The seabed everywhere has at least minor variations in level, softened by millennia of sand, silt and other debris (such as tiny free-floating or swimming animal shells and skeletons) raining down constantly out of the water column. In only a relatively few places have geological forces or living organisms made their mark more obviously. Across this map, these more major landscapers have helped create conditions where usually low hills of sediment can build up nearby, typically on the lee-side of what gentle sea currents there may be. In this region at depth, such currents as there are commonly flow slowly south to north.

**Seamounts:** Seamounts are undersea surface hills and mountains that can have remarkably steep-sided, relatively narrow, vertical extensions, sometimes of a height sufficient to break the sea's surface as an island, no matter how deep the water in which they originate. Most are undersea volcanoes, and while typically they start on the seabed as a normal shield volcano (one with a broad base and quite gently-sloping sides), as the mount grows, it erupts more lava than might be expected of a similar land volcano. Surrounded by cold water, the lava solidifies more rapidly than it would in air, so stays fairly close to the eruptive vent. Hence after a time, such volcanoes tend to grow vertically, but not horizontally. While a seamount remains active, such a narrow, high, steep conical form is fairly stable, probably because the magma pipe feeding the lava to the top vent keeps the interior warm and malleable, so the whole retains a degree of flexibility. As the structure ages, and less magma is extruded, the seamount becomes prey to partial or total collapses. The collapse of such a vast amount of rock can generate massive tsunamis at the ocean's surface. Two of these mounts occur in the mapped area, reaching from the seafloor to its surface as small islands. Both the seamounts and their islands are called respectively Zariq (the westernmost) and Zaraq by the sea-dwellers, who regard them with reverence, and treat them as being twins, often using them thus mythologically. Further details on both these mapped seamounts are given below under the "Water Column" notes.

**Skeletal Remains:** Just one of these features is present on the map, item 7, part of the exoskeleton of a colossal sea-crustacean. Its limbs and most of its other identifying parts are missing. Some may have become detached and carried away, or still lie buried beneath the silt nearby. There are indications the larger carapace pieces have been used

at times quite recently as a camp. Although the connection cannot be made from the evidence to-hand, it is the nomadic Merfolk tribe sometimes encountered in the water column not far off who occasionally use the site thus.

**Statues & Effigies:** Again there is only a solitary example of these on the map, item **6**. This is a cylindrical granite column 40 m (130 ft) tall that rises from the seabed. It is around 6 m (20 ft) in diameter, and appears to be a single piece of stone, fixed in place some way below the silty ocean floor. It is covered with narrative, bas-relief-carved scenes showing different forms of Merfolk engaged in an array of activities, including building settlements, hunting for food, farming and other everyday practices, plus some scenes of combat, sometimes against huge sea creatures, sometimes the Kachaya. The Merfolk figures are each carved at no more than one-quarter life size. There are no inscriptions to explain the column or its scenes, and while the work has been carved in a finely realistic way, it is not clear who may have carved or placed it here. The seafloor bedrock is dark and basaltic, not pale and granitic, so the stone at least must have come from elsewhere, probably on land, and possibly from a mountainous region.

**Wrecks & Wreckage:** The map shows four of these. One, labelled “**Shipwreck**”, is towards the mid-right (northeastern) edge of the map, and is magically associated with a ghost vessel that may be sighted on the sea’s surface from time to time. The others are labelled 2, 4 and 9 respectively.

**Wreck 2** lies near the mid-upper (northern) map limit, west of the Cliff. It is the remains of an impressively large, covered, wheeled, battering-ram of human construction. Although broken into two main pieces, and partly silted-over, it is still an obvious seafloor feature. It is also home to a great sea serpent.

**Wreck 4** rests on the seabed not far from the open end of the Canyon. It is a sunken ship, linked magically to a ghost ship sometimes visible on the sea surface. The more substantial part of the wreck is the lair of a kraken.

**Wreck 9** is a scattered group of shipwrecks lying amid the hills, hollows and gas-escape craters of the Witch Pots, near the foot of the Zaraq seamount. The number of wrecks is hard to tell, as some have lain here a very long time, and are well-hidden by layers of silt. One of those which is still more recognisable is connected by magic to a ghost craft visible especially on stormy nights on the sea’s surface, used at times as a lure to trap further craft by the Kachaya. The “Ellenge Province” section earlier has further notes on the Witch Pots area.

## **The Water Column Map**

This does not represent a specific height above the seafloor. Instead it simply shows the range of significant free-swimming creatures that may be encountered somewhere between the seabed and the water surface. Consequently, although the two great seamount columns of Zariq and Zaraq have been shown as each having a particular size, it must be understood that they both taper continually from rather larger bases than shown on this map at the seafloor, to breach the water’s surface as islands only a few kilometres/miles across. Also, because the seabed slopes down between the pair, they are not of equal dimensions. Zaraq is somewhat narrower than Zariq, and a lot shorter. Zaraq is roughly 560 m tall (1,840 ft), while Zariq has an approximate height of 930 m (3,050 ft).

The animals and intelligent creatures marked on the map are just those more dominant or larger types most likely to be spotted or encountered, not a comprehensive listing of everything that may be found. Even these items are, as ever, purely at GM's discretion. Some are solitary individuals, such as the sea serpent, the giant squid, the water elemental, the deep-sea hag Aunty MacKassa, the two krakens and the three giant octopi. Others represent groups of a size appropriate to the GM's needs - large enough to be a threat, or in numbers sufficient to be potentially useful or valuable, say. Most of the creatures are described, with relevant game-statistics, among the publications for the D&D RPG system, if required, where not simply based on Earthly examples.

To clarify a few items, "**Fish**" means edible fish of ordinary size in shoals large enough to be valuable to a small number of fishing vessels, or a lone ship in need of food supplies. "**Eels**" could be similar to these food fish, though they might instead be a threat, should they turn out to be poisonous, large enough in numbers and size to overturn a smaller craft, or viciously carnivorous, for instance. "**Killer Fish**" fall into this latter category, as while they may seem to be a school of edible fish, it is they who will do the eating if given a chance.

The four groups of **nomadic Merfolk** scattered loosely along the line of the seabed Clawmarks area, south as far as that by the Peak Corals, maintain tales that seem to refer to the two ruined Merfolk villages and the Brick Bridge in and east of the Claw Corals, suggesting they may be ancestral survivors of those who once lived there. Some of their stories also involve hippocampi, and it may be the **Hippocampi** shown to the southeast of the Peak Corals are distant children of those former Merfolk steeds. Their occurrence as quite such an isolated herd is otherwise most curious.

## **The Sea Surface Map**

This map shows the only dry land in the whole area, the tiny islands of Zariq and Zaraq, along with the animals, intelligent creatures, floating wreckage and ghost ships that may be discovered sometimes when crossing the region. The surface-projected borders for the three Kachayan Provinces are also indicated, with red colouring and labels, though they need viewing in light of the comments made earlier in these notes under the "Kachayan Provinces" section.

For the creatures marked here, the details concerning them given under the "Water Column Map" description above apply equally. There are in addition four solitary **Ghost Ships**, of which three (all in the eastern half of the map) are connected magically with wrecks on the seabed - those marked there as items 4, 9 and "Shipwreck". One area where, for some reason, **Flotsam** tends to congregate is also shown. This lies only about 10 km (6 miles) north of being directly above the seafloor's ruined Kachayan village in the Deeps, if probably only a minor coincidence...



As a check, the following list gives the number of marked features of each type as shown on the Water Column and Sea Surface maps. Those occurring only on the Sea Surface map are given in curly parentheses, “{ }”:

Dolphins (6), Eels (3), Fish (2), {Flotsam (1)}, {Ghost Ships (4)}, Giant Jellyfish (3), Giant Nautilus (1), Giant Octopus (3), Giant Sharks (3), Giant Squid (1), Hippocampi (1), Jellyfish (2), Killer Fish (2), Killer Whales (6), Krakens (2), Nomadic Merfolk (7), Sea Hag (1), Sea Serpent (1), Sea Snakes (3), Water Elemental (1), Whales (5).

### **Quick Reference List to Numbered Seabed Features**

- 1:** A cave among the Claw Corals which is home to a giant octopus. Although much obscured by subsequent coral-mound growth, there are signs of seabed gas-escape potholes nearby.
- 2:** The remains of an impressively large, covered, wheeled battering-ram of human construction lie on the seafloor, home to a great sea serpent.
- 3:** A hot-water vent area, with a cave where a kraken has its lair.
- 4:** Another kraken lair, this time on the Canyon’s floor in a shipwreck. The wreck is magically associated with a ghost ship sometimes seen on the sea surface above.
- 5:** The cavern lair of a giant octopus, set among some unusually prominent seafloor geomorphology.
- 6:** A cylindrical granite column 6 m (20 ft) in diameter and 40 m (130 ft) tall. It is carved with bas-reliefs of Merfolk in an array of scenes, including combat against various huge sea creatures and the Kachaya. No inscriptions explain it, while the seafloor bedrock is basaltic, not granitic.
- 7:** Parts of a colossal sea-crustacean’s exoskeleton lie on the seabed. It has been used sometimes as a camp by the nearby nomadic Merfolk.
- 8:** The most substantial part of the Peak Corals helps conceal the cavern home of a giant octopus. Some of the nearby low hills are the result of past seafloor gas-escape cratering.
- 9:** Several shipwrecks lie among the mounds, hollows and gas-escape potholes of the Witch Pots area. One of the wrecks has a magical link to a ghost ship sighted at times during storms on the sea’s surface above.
- 10:** A huge, ancient brick bridge, called Shark Bridge, crosses one of the Clawmark fissure lines, set on a huge arch. The Kachaya have built a stronghold in tunnels below the bridge on either side of the fissure, and set three great watchtowers on the Bridge itself.
- 11:** Coral mounds, sand and silt hills conceal the cavern lair of the deep-sea hag Aunty MacKassa.

