

Aunty MacKassa's Area Map

The mapped area is a small extract spanning parts of four of the larger 250 × 200 mile Errynor maps, Maps 01, 02, 09 and 10, near where the four meet in the Equine or Frigid Ocean. It shows the region of and around the Hag Corals, and is centred on the entrance to deep-sea hag Aunty MacKassa's Coral Cave home. The circular zone - essentially a vertical cylinder from the sea-bed to the ocean's surface - some 50 miles (80 kilometres) in radius centred on this cavern, and marked as the "Limit of Aunty MacKassa's Influence", is the region the hag herself, her servants or the effects of her activities are more likely to be seen or encountered, albeit such an event by-chance should be extremely rare. After all, this zone is vast, given the sea-bed at Aunty's home is about 1,230 feet (375 metres) below the sea's surface. In a loose sense, the area is also what the hag considers "hers", and is where her influence is liable to be noticed by perceptive visitors, often as expressions of vague disquiet or unease in the populated places, such as paranoia of things which are suspected, yet seldom noticed directly, by other intelligent creatures living here.

The sea-floor slopes down from right to left (northeast to southwest) across the map, which is crossed southeast to northwest towards its northeastern edge by the 660 ft (200 m) sea-depth contour line, marked by the subtle colour change in the sea-bed texture. The slope angle is very gentle east of this contour, rather less so to its west. The northeast map edge is at approximately 600 ft (185 m) beneath the sea, the southwestern at around 2,380 ft (725 m) depth. Under the right conditions, sunlight can penetrate to about 660 ft (200 m) in seawater, so the right-hand segment of the map sometimes enjoys weak illumination from the surface, while the sea-bed below the contour line is in permanent darkness.

Much of the northwestern half of the map is occupied by the Kachayan ("Sea Devil") Ellenge Province, indicated by the red outlining, which, like Aunty MacKassa's area of influence, extends up through the water column to the sea's surface. Map toggles allow a general overview of the creatures and features found at some point in the water column below the ocean's surface (this map view is not at a fixed depth in that column, however), and atop the waves, as well as at the ocean floor. Labelled items on one or more of the three map views are detailed in alphabetical order below.

Creatures & Features

Aunty MacKassa's Home: Aunty MacKassa is a deep-sea hag, an especially powerful type of essentially immortal, humanoid, faerie creature. Her Coral Cave lair lies in the northern part of the cold-water Hag Corals. She makes life uncomfortable for many of the intelligent creatures in her orbit without them realising it. Centuries ago, when she was younger and less powerful, she lived in the Peak Corals, about 90 miles (145 km) west of her current home, just off the western (top left) corner of the map, in what seems now an unremarkable, flattish part of the sea-bed, an area devoid of coral mounds, towards the southern end of the Peak Corals. She was driven out from there by forces led by a great Kachayan leader, Zakra (for brief details on whom, see the separate Ellenge Town map's ruined Monument description), and the caves and corals of her former home were collapsed and levelled. She survived however, and continues to take her slow, painstaking

revenge on the Kachaya of Ellenge Province still. Aunty herself, the area closest to her lair, and that lair, are detailed in a series of separate maps.

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 50 ft high by 150 ft wide (15 × 50 m), though in places they can grow to be tens of miles (kilometres) long and a couple of miles/kilometres wide. Sometimes, the corals can form separate mounds scattered over areas around 40 square miles (100 square km) in extent, each mound about 330 ft (100 m) in diameter and 15 ft (5 m) tall, with a “tail” of sand extending for 1,000 ft or more (300 m +) down-current, 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 660 to 9,800 ft or so (200 to 3,000 m). Individual giant corals within these structures can be equally impressive. Rare branching ivory corals, resembling great white, leafless trees can reach 100 ft tall (30 m), 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. The main area of these on this map is the Hag Corals, with a tiny fraction of the Peak Corals in the top left corner of the map.

The Clawmarks or Fissure Lines: These are steep-sided, relatively narrow, elongated fractures in the seabed, that can be very deep (hundreds of yards = metres or more). They are tension features, notably where the relatively steeper descent towards the great Cliff at the edge of the continental shelf begins. They form convenient habitats for sea-dwellers not reliant on sunlight, including sometimes the sea’s intelligent humanoids. Most, like the pair shown here, trend roughly north-south. Only the two most southerly Fissure Lines are shown on this map, part of three sets of Lines extending for several hundred miles/kilometres to the north from here, which are known as The Clawmarks, as they could seem as if raked into the sea-floor by the claws of some colossal beast.

Creatures: The animals and intelligent creatures marked on the map, chiefly in its Water Column and Sea Surface views, 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 two giant octopodes, and of course Aunty MacKassa. 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. For clarity, “**Eels**” could be ordinary-sized types that congregate where marked from time to time in shoals large enough to be valuable to a small number of fishing vessels, or a lone ship in need of food supplies. They might instead be a threat though, should they turn out to be poisonous, in sufficient quantities and/or large enough to overturn a smaller craft, or be viciously carnivorous, for instance. Both “**Fish**” markers represent similar shoals of non-threatening, edible fish. The full list of creatures shown by markers are: Aunty MacKassa (1), Dolphins (2), Eels (1), Fish (2), Giant Jellyfish (3), Giant Octopus (2 - the locations of their sea-bed lairs are detailed below), Giant Sharks (1), Sea Serpent (1), Whales (1).

Ellenge: A Kachayan sea-floor town, capital of Ellenge Province, surrounded by ruined and abandoned properties that show it was once a larger city-sized settlement. Aunty MacKassa has been slowly revenging herself on it in recent generations. See the separate Ellenge map for more information.

Ellenge Province: Encompassing the great seamount of Zaraq and its leeward range of low, silty hills, as well as the southern Clawmark fissure lines, this Kachayan Province extends south to the Renesh Tablemount, west to the Witch Pots and east to the Gateway Vale canyon and its Bridge. Ellenge town is the main settlement, with a further substantial settlement at and in one of the Clawmarks, at Shark Bridge. Ellenge and a second Kachayan Province, Twin Peak, which lies to its west, 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, although expansion to the southeast has been long prevented by Merfolk settlements there, and more recently Aunty MacKassa.

Eshrar: A Merfolk town built into and on the cold-water coral mounds, silt hills and pockmark sea-bed craters of the southern Hag Corals. With the now-ruined city of Samas around 30 miles (50 km) to the north, this pair of settlements and the numerous smaller ones scattered between them have long formed a brake on any southeastwards expansion of the Kachayan Ellenge Province, before Aunty MacKassa arrived. Its current population is about 820, and there are five village-sized settlements within 10 miles (15 km - not shown on the map for clarity) to the north and northeast which help provide food and other items directly to the town, with populations between approximately 80 and 200 each. Other smaller Merfolk settlements, some now deserted and unidentifiable since the abandonment of Samas, are to be found elsewhere on the sea-floor plain between Eshrar and Samas, and in parts of the more southerly Hag Corals. There are some significant sea-bed gas-escape craters around Eshrar, and especially among the silty hills to its north.

Gateway Bridge: An immense, natural rock bridge that spans the mouth of Gateway Vale. Quite how it has survived is unknown; it simply remains an amazing natural wonder. Gateway Vale is roughly five miles wide (8 km) where the Bridge crosses it, and the Vale floor is some 720 ft (220 m) below the sea's surface where the centre of the Bridge line lies. Its span of rock is thus five miles long too, and around a quarter of a mile wide (about 1,320 ft, 400 m). Its thickness is about 50 ft (15 m). It arches up almost imperceptibly from the surface to either side of the Vale's gorge, with its centre over the mid-Vale only some 6 or 7 ft (2 m) higher than its ends. This does mean there are a few sedentary photosynthetic organisms growing on its upper surface, along with some of the usual deep-sea sedentary animals, as this lies at or slightly less than 660 ft, 200 m, below the sea's surface. Its rock is of the common undersea black basaltic type. It is considered part of the Ellenge Province by the Kachaya, along with the Vale.

Gateway Vale: A broad, natural valley protruding east into the 660 ft/200 m contour line, and long used as a marker-route to and from Ellenge Province by Kachaya travelling this way over the often featureless, open ocean-floor plains, especially because of the great stone bridge landmark towards the Vale's western end. The Vale is up to five miles (8 km) wide, and roughly 100 ft deep (30 m) compared to the surrounding terrain to its north and south where the Gateway Bridge arch crosses it. The Vale extends as a broad, linear

hollow west as far as the Standing Stone labelled “2” on the map, at a depth below the ocean’s surface by the Stone of *circa* 950 ft (290 m).

Hag Corals: A roughly north-south trending line of cold-water coral mounds and reefs, with associated sand and silt hills in places, and some areas where sea-bed gas-escape pockmark craters are apparent. The Corals run for about 60 miles (100 km) in this direction, with a width of up to 15 miles (25 km) in places, where some coral mounds at least may be still noticed. Towards the northern end, the area where coral mounds occur has two separated, broader regions, one near Aunty MacKassa’s Home, the other surrounding the ruins of Samas, both places where a greater proportion of silt and sand hills can be found too. In each case, these silty hills are most noticeable on the northern side of the coral mounds. A similarly broader area of corals, again with significant silt and sand hills towards their north, occurs in the southern Hag Corals, near Eshrar.

Numerical Features - 1: Atop the southern end of Ythil Tablemount are some slabs of ruined marble masonry. Their original form or constructors can no longer be identified. They are though distinctly different to the marble ruins of Ketorkan origin found on the Renesh Tablemount to Ythil’s north (Sea-Bed Structure K1 below). Some of this fallen rubble has formed a small cave, which the giant octopus marked in the water column near here uses as its lair.

2: A 13 ft tall (4 m) by 4 ft diameter (1.2 m), flat-topped, cylindrical standing stone of sea-floor basalt, carved with sea-creature animalistic designs, has been erected here, seemingly to mark the western end of the sea-bed hollow which becomes Gateway Vale as it passes further east. The sea-floor here is some 950 ft (290 m) below the waves. Who erected or carved the stone is unknown. The carvings are however of an ancient appearance.

3: This 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.

4: Another wrecked ship, probably only a single vessel this time, now embedded in, and partly overgrown by, cold-water corals at the southern end of the Hag Corals. The giant octopus marked in the water column close-by makes its lair here, when it is not out hunting.

Peak Corals: Only the southernmost tip of the Peak Corals extends slightly onto the western corner of the map, as this range of coral mounds extends more than 40 miles (65 km) to the northwest from here. In nature, they are similar to the Hag Corals.

Renesh Tablemount: Roughly midway along the north-south line between the Zaraq seamount and the Ythil Tablemount towards the map’s western edge, the upper parts of this Tablemount rise about 650 ft (200 m) above the nearby sea-floor. This is still around 1,300 ft (400 m) below the sea’s surface. Tablemounts, sometimes known as *guyots*, are a type of flat-topped seamount - volcanic undersea mountains, essentially - whose upper parts lie more than 650 ft (200 m) below the water’s surface. There are some Ketorkan ruins on its top (Sea-Bed Structure K1 below).

Samas: A large, outlying region of cold-water coral reefs and mounds on the northeastern end of the Hag Corals partly conceals the long-abandoned ruins of what was a sizeable Merfolk city, once home to perhaps 8,000 to 9,000 inhabitants. Most is overgrown by corals and other sedentary deep-sea life now, and nothing remains entirely intact, so identifying the nature and extent of the ruins is not easy. There are similarly abandoned remains of a number of village-sized settlements within twenty miles or so (35 km), some in the corals northeast and southeast of Samas, with more in the plains to its south and southeast. A few of these settlements may previously have been larger, town-sized places. There remain some still-inhabited villages scattered among these minor, commonly hard to detect, ruins, increasing in number further from Samas, particularly within 10-15 miles of Eshrar (15-25 km) in the southern Hag Corals. No obvious physical explanation is apparent for these abandoned sites, albeit as the knowledgeably perceptive might intimate, their relative proximity to Aunty MacKassa's dwelling lies ultimately at the root.

Sea-Bed Structures - Ketorkan: While there are no Sea Orc settlements in this area now, there are signs they were here once, possibly at some quite distant epoch. **K1:** On top of Renesh Tablemount are a number of silt-covered remains of ruined marble masonry showing evidence of Ketorkan work, including some typical, crude, pictorial carvings. It cannot be established what these remains may have been; perhaps the marble was once slabs decorating a lost structure here or elsewhere. **K2:** Almost 30 miles (50 km) east of the south end of the Hag Corals, on an otherwise unremarkable patch of sea-floor, and a short way inside the zone of Aunty MacKassa's influence, stands a 130 ft tall (40 m) by 5 ft square-section (1.5 m), metal pillar, with a series of low-relief cast faces of typical Ketorkan totemic deities up its entire length, on the side facing northwest. This "totem pole" has been set up with its flat sides pointing towards the northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest. The faces, perhaps only coincidentally, point directly towards where Aunty MacKassa's lair now is. The pillar is clearly many centuries old, apparently of cast iron, yet aside from its dull surface, it seems to have taken no harm from being so long in the ocean's depths, nor - unusually - has it been colonised by any sedentary animals. The sea-bed here is at a depth of some 950 ft or so (290 m), so the whole pillar is in permanent darkness. It shows no evidence of being magical.

Sea-Bed Structures - Merfolk: M1: One coral mound on the western side of the north-central Hag Corals has been turned into a mausoleum, with an elaborate, slab-closed, entrance archway formed on its southeast-facing side. The mound and internal layout give it the form of what on land might be considered a chambered long barrow. It has not been used in a very long time. Merfolk are one of the few undersea peoples to occasionally favour post-mortem rituals, such as burial of bodies, so while not wholly unexpected, this kind of complex burial structure is rare. **M2:** Roughly 10 miles (15 km) northeast of the M1 mausoleum, on top of a coral mound near the central axis of the Hag Corals, stands a more recently-erected, square-section stone pillar. Its four sides are carved with Merfolk renditions of the faces of undersea deities, set up in a stack, some of which are remarkably similar to those seen on the great metal totemic Ketorkan pillar at K2. Some at Eshrar and its associated villages can recall this being set-up a couple of generations ago as an apotropaic defence against the deep-sea hag of the northern Corals, even though the hag's actual location remains unknown. Its effectiveness is unclear.

Sea-Surface Items - Ghost Ship: This ghostly vessel is occasionally seen on the sea's surface around 10 miles (15 km) south of the island of Zaraq, particularly during storms. It has a magical link to one of the more recognisable shipwrecks in the Witch Pots area on the sea-bed far below, and is used at times to lure-in other ships to this trapped area by the Ellenge Province Kachaya. As the more likely zone for such sightings lies almost exactly on the limit of Aunty MacKassa's region of influence, it may be questioned as to who may be using, or luring, whom in this regard, given Aunty's long-standing antipathy towards the Ellenge Kachaya.

Seaweed Island: Free-floating forms of seaweed can be seen from time to time across the seas of Errynor. Here, the weed has managed to collect into a substantial mass, roughly a couple of miles (*circa* 3 km) in maximum extent. The Isle's size is seasonally variable, as is its shape, nature and precise location. As it is not fixed in place, it drifts, but usually only in an eddy, so is almost always somewhere within approximately 15-20 miles (25-30 km) of its mapped location. Parts can be thick and solid enough to support the weight of a normal adult standing human, and it would be possible to erect a small, lightweight structure - such as a driftwood shelter, say - in such a spot. As the Island constantly changes from day to day, any such security is illusory. Next day, the same spot might be an area of open water surrounded by weed instead, for instance. A substantial number of smaller sea-creatures have made homes here, and sea-birds are often attracted to the Island as a result. Thus if not for the lack of freshwater, this could be quite a useful place to know about. It drifts over and around the boundary of Aunty MacKassa's influence, and very occasionally she might be encountered here too.

Shark Bridge: A huge, ancient brick Bridge spans the southern end of the southeasternmost Clawmark fissure line. A group of Kachayan settlements has been constructed on the Bridge, and in the sides of the fissure cliffs far below it. See the separate Shark Bridge map for full details.

Witch Pots: 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 from where frequent eruptions of trapped natural gas on the sea-bed have happened in the past. There are remains of several wrecked ships still identifiable here too (see Numerical Features 3 above), 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 in connection with the magically wreck-linked ghost ship (see Sea-Surface Items - Ghost Ship above). The name is probably only coincidental, rather than making any oblique reference to Aunty MacKassa, despite being at the limit of her region of influence. Sailors often use the term "witch-ground" for areas of dangerous sea, for example, commonly - as here - where unexplained ship sinkings have happened repeatedly.

Ythil Tablemount: The larger and more southerly of the two physically-similar Tablemounts illustrated on the map, the Ythil Tablemount rises to a comparable height above the sea-bed to its northerly neighbour Renesh, around 650 ft (200 m). However, as it is in deeper water, it is further below the sea's surface, with its upper part at a depth of some 1,600 ft or so (490 m). Towards the southern end of its "table" is some ruined masonry in which a giant octopus has made its lair (see Numerical Features 1 above).

Zaraq Seamount & Surface Island: A seamount is an undersea surface hill or mountain that can have a remarkably steep-sided, relatively narrow, vertical extension, sometimes, as here, of a height sufficient to break the sea's surface as an island, no matter how deep the water in which it originates. Most such seamounts 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. Although the water column version of the map shows the Zaraq Seamount column as having a particular size, it must be understood that as the water column view is not for any specific depth below the surface, and that the column tapers continually from a larger base on the seafloor, this is representative only. At the water's surface, the main Zaraq Island is only a few miles/kilometres across. Zaraq's Seamount column is roughly 1,840 ft (560 m) tall, and is an important landmark in the Ellenge Province. Details on Zaraq Island can be found with its separate map elsewhere in the Atlas. Apart from parties of hunting, prospecting or foraging Kachaya on and around the Seamount and Island from time to time, Aunty MacKassa occasionally visits here too, especially the surface Island. It is no coincidence that there are no surviving humanoid settlements on Zaraq Island!