

PART II

Forecast	Frequency	Times (local time) unless otherwise stated
BBC	198kHz(1515m)	00:48, 05:55, 13:55, 17:50 (GMT & BST) Forecast for Finisterre & St. Vicent as part of general shipping forecast
Tarifa Traffic	VHF Ch 10	Even hr UTC + 15 Vessel traffic service announced on Ch 16 first Navigational warnings and advisories, then weather report from Tarifa followed by forecasts for sea areas: Straits, Cadiz & Alboran in English then Spanish.
Cadiz Radio	Ch 16/74	03:15 hrs then every 4hrs GMT
Tarifa (EAC)		
Weather	1704kHz	11:03, 17:33
Navigational Warnings	1704kHz	Upon receipt. At end of next silence period. 00:33 then every 4 hrs
	Ch 27	Upon receipt. At end of next silence period. 08:33, 15:33 In English then Spanish
Algeciras Port Control	Ch 16/81	Announced on Ch 16 Then broadcast on odd hr UTC + 15 min
Malaga Radio	Ch 16/10/27	Working frequency in English then Spanish
Almeria Port Control	Ch 16/10/27	
Cabo de gata Radio	Ch 16/10/27/81	9:40
Radio Gibraltar	1458kHz 92.3 FM	Mon-Fri 06:10, 09:30, 10:30, 12:30, 13:00, 15:30, 17:15 Sat 09:30, 10:30, 12:30, 13:00 Sun 10:30, 12:30 Forecast in english for sea area up to 5NM from Gibraltar Wind direction and strength. Sea state and visibility. (Now not very good information but frequent)

Forecast	Frequency	Times (local time) unless otherwise stated
BFBS 1 Storm Warnings Weather Met Officer from RAF Gibraltar talks briefly about the weather at:	93.5 & 97.8 FM <i>Sailing Forecast: Tel: 8988</i> <i>Daily Weather Forecasts: Tel:8989</i> <i>3 Day Weather Forecast : Tel: 8990</i> <i>This service is available in Gibraltar</i> <i>or via mobiles roaming in the</i> <i>Gibtelecom network</i>	Upon Reciept Mon - Fri 07:45, 08:45, 10:05, 16:05 Sat & Sun 07:45, 08:45, 09:45, 12:03, 17:03 Mon - Fri 10:05, and 16:05 Sat & Sun 12:03 and 17:03 (free service but limited information)

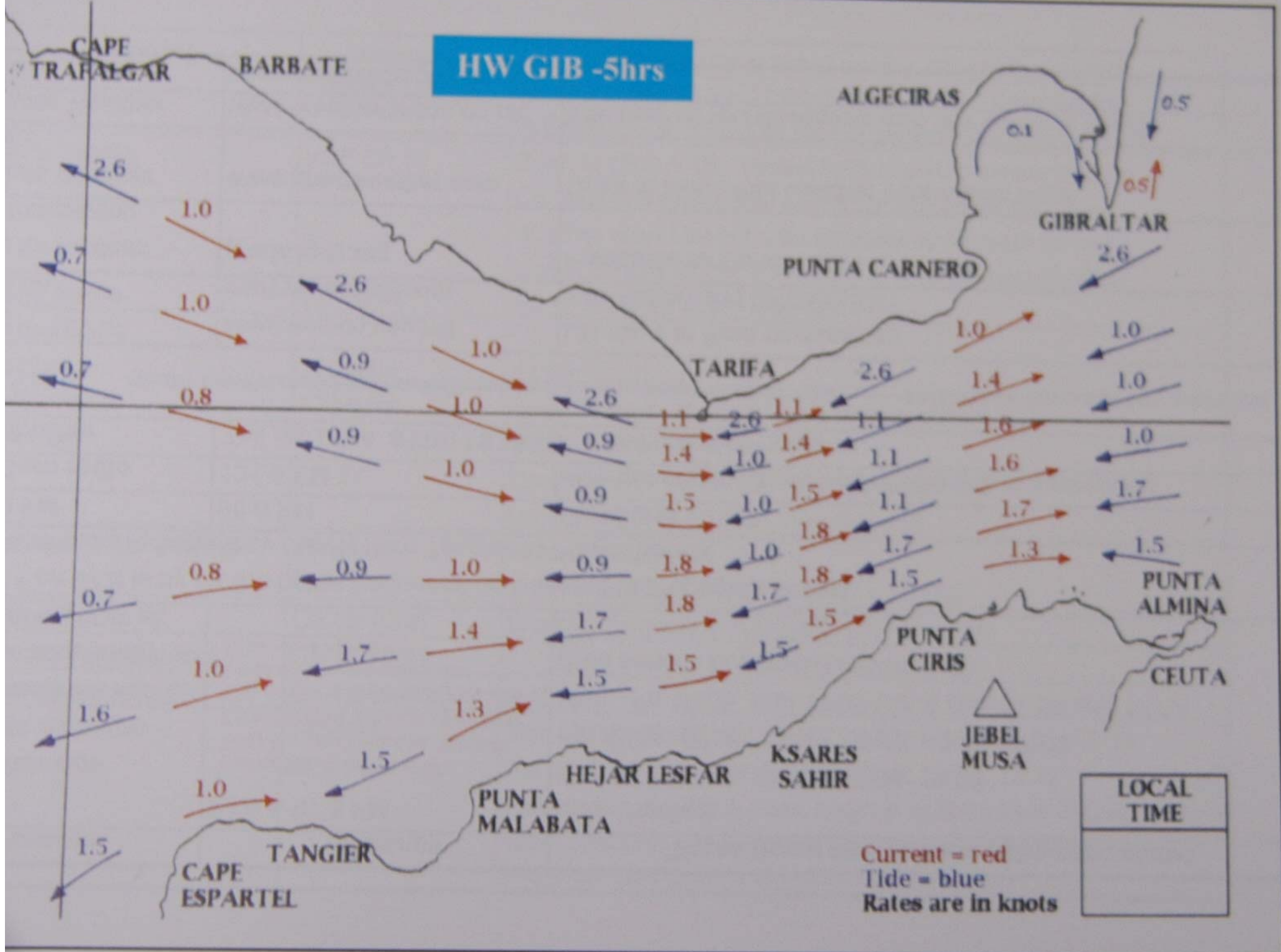
* BFBS 1 on 97.8 is by far the better frequency as it seems to propogate further.
I have received this frequency clearly from Tangier to Puerto Banus.

Central FM	98.8 FM	09:30 and 12:30
Onde Cero radio	101.6 FM	very general in nature and of little use to yachtsmen
RAF Gibraltar	Toll no: 0044 8700767818 - see previous notes	

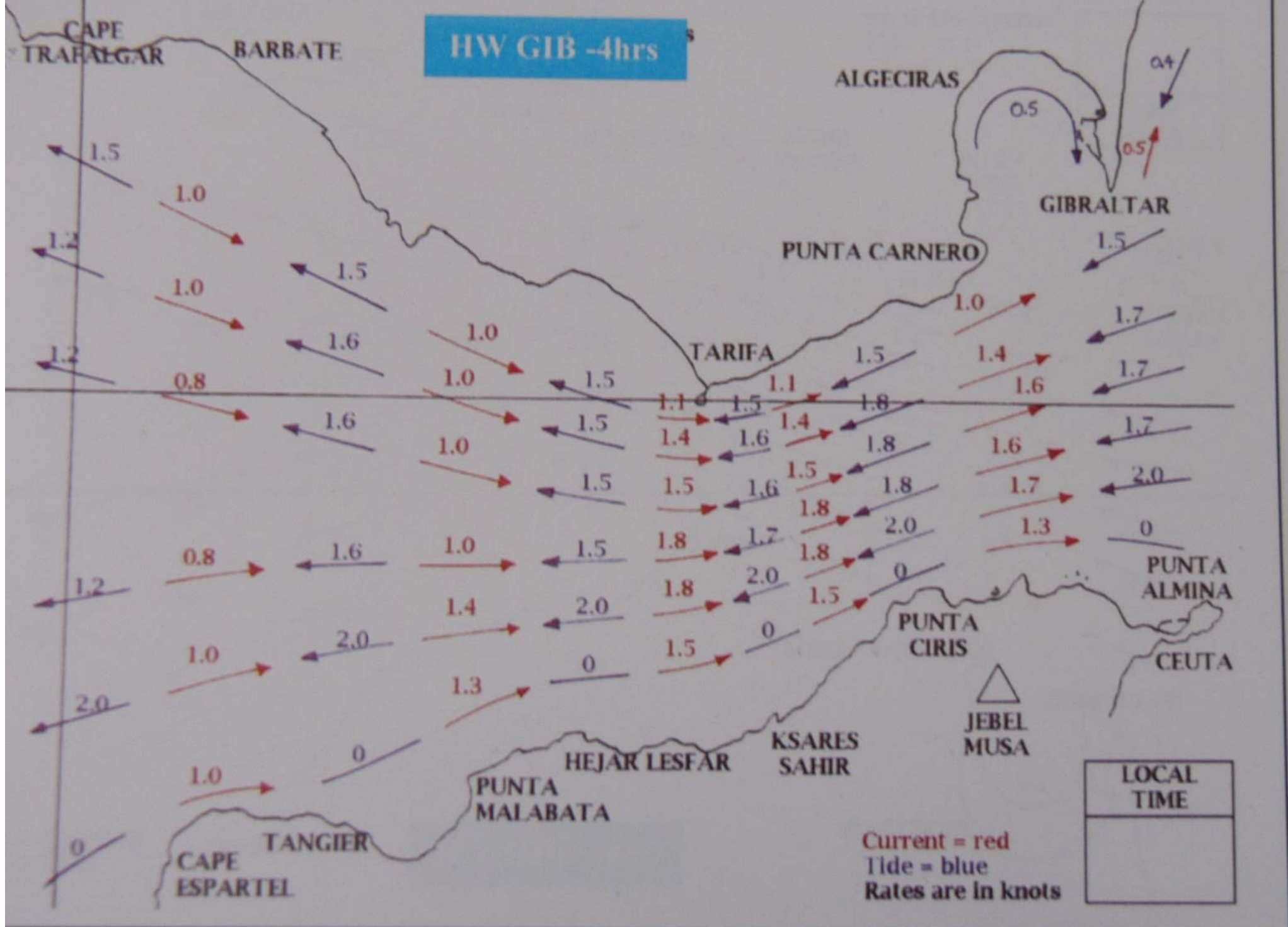
Web Sites email: martin.caruana@metoffice.com for long range weather forecast talk tour forecaster service

Nemoc Search on	www.nemoc.nay.mil marineweather.com	US Navy at Rota unclassified information and EXCELLENT
Centre for medium range forecasting	grads.iges.org	Forecasts for up to 5 days
Ant Veals Weather Centre	www.greatweather.com	Links to may other weather information sites
Worldwide Weather	www.weatheronline.co.uk	The best all round weather web site we have found
Met Office	www.met-office.gov.uk	

HW GIB -5hrs

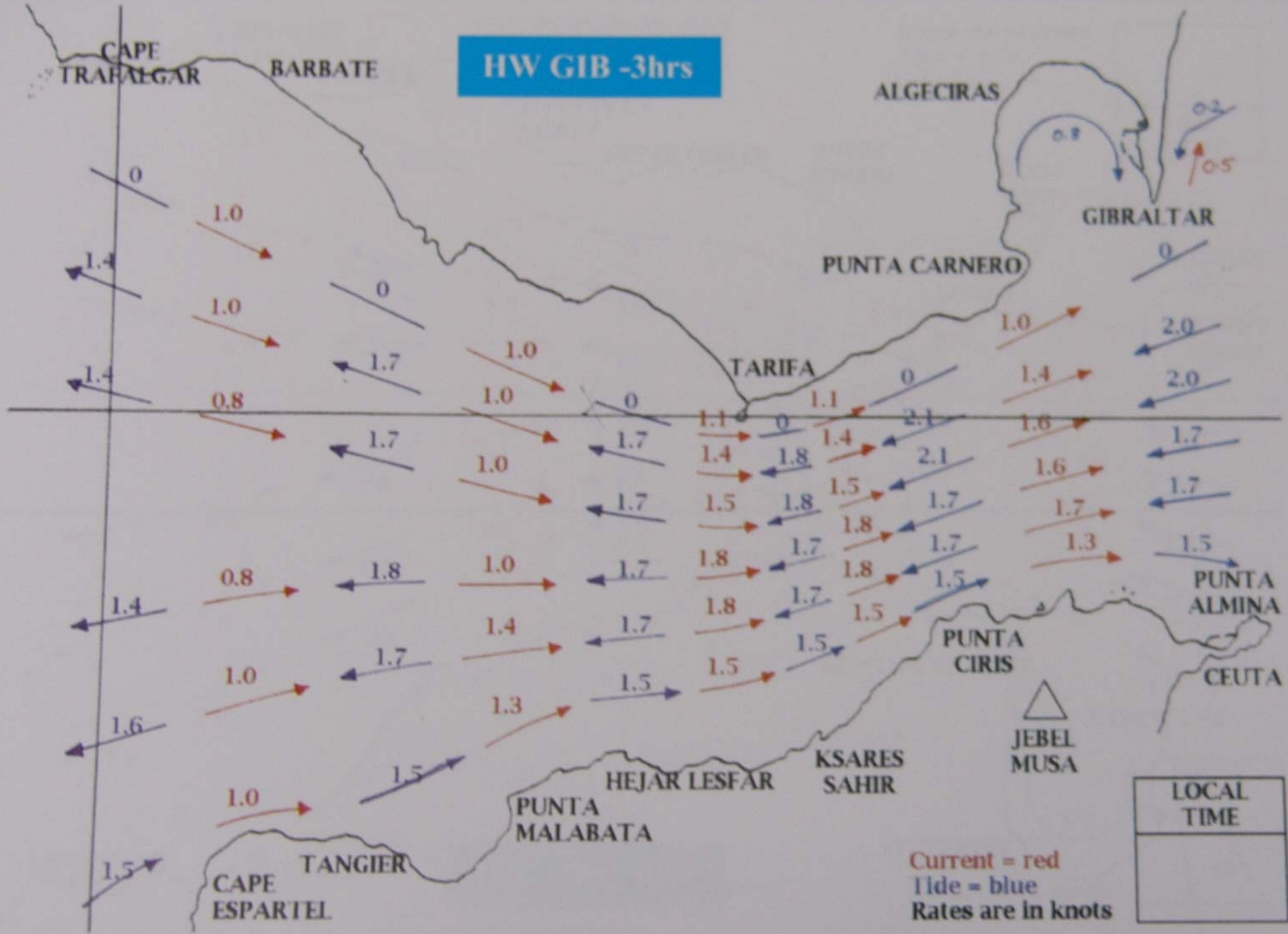


HW GIB -4hrs

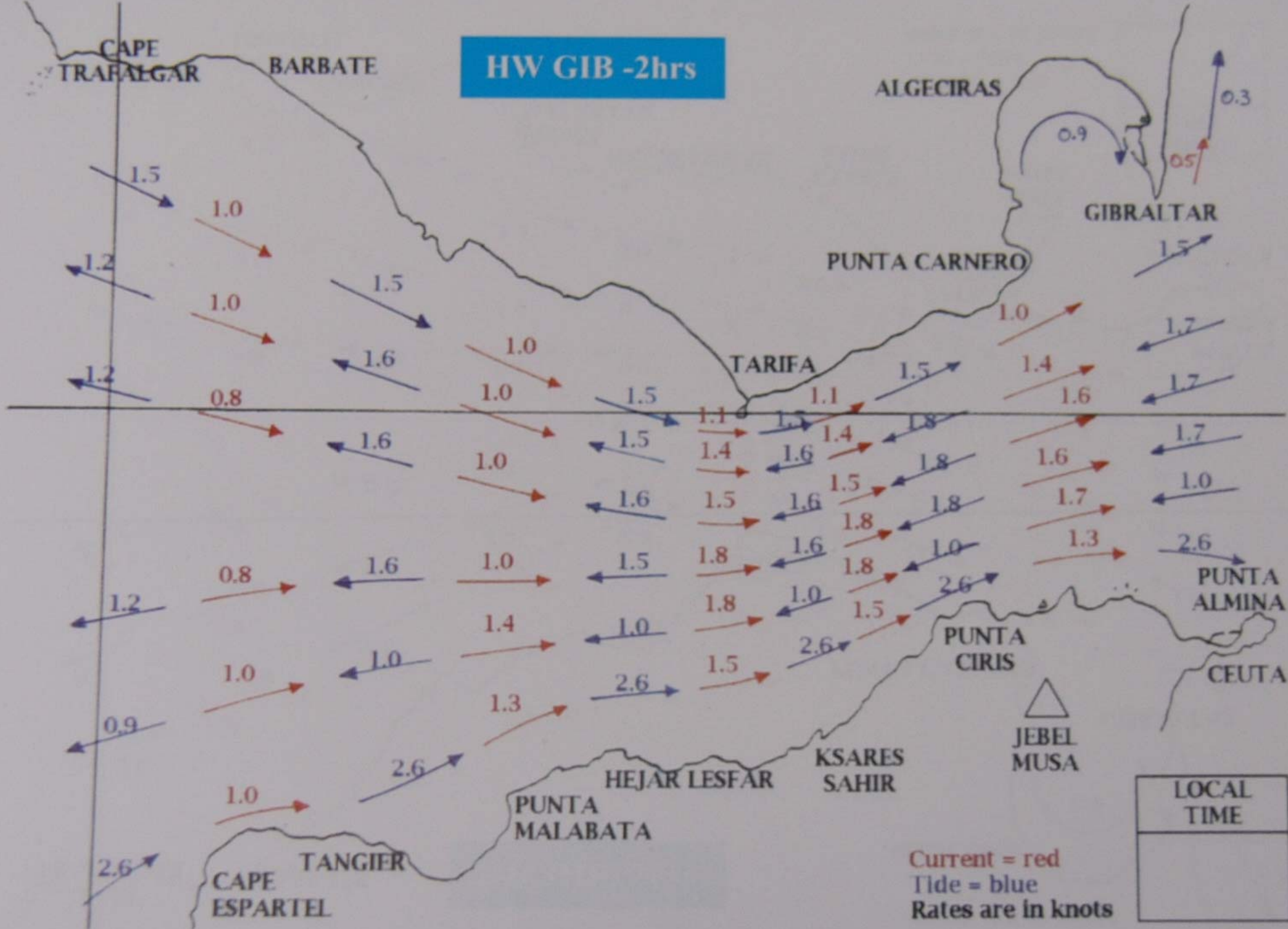


BASED ON TIMES OF HIGH WATER GIBRALTAR

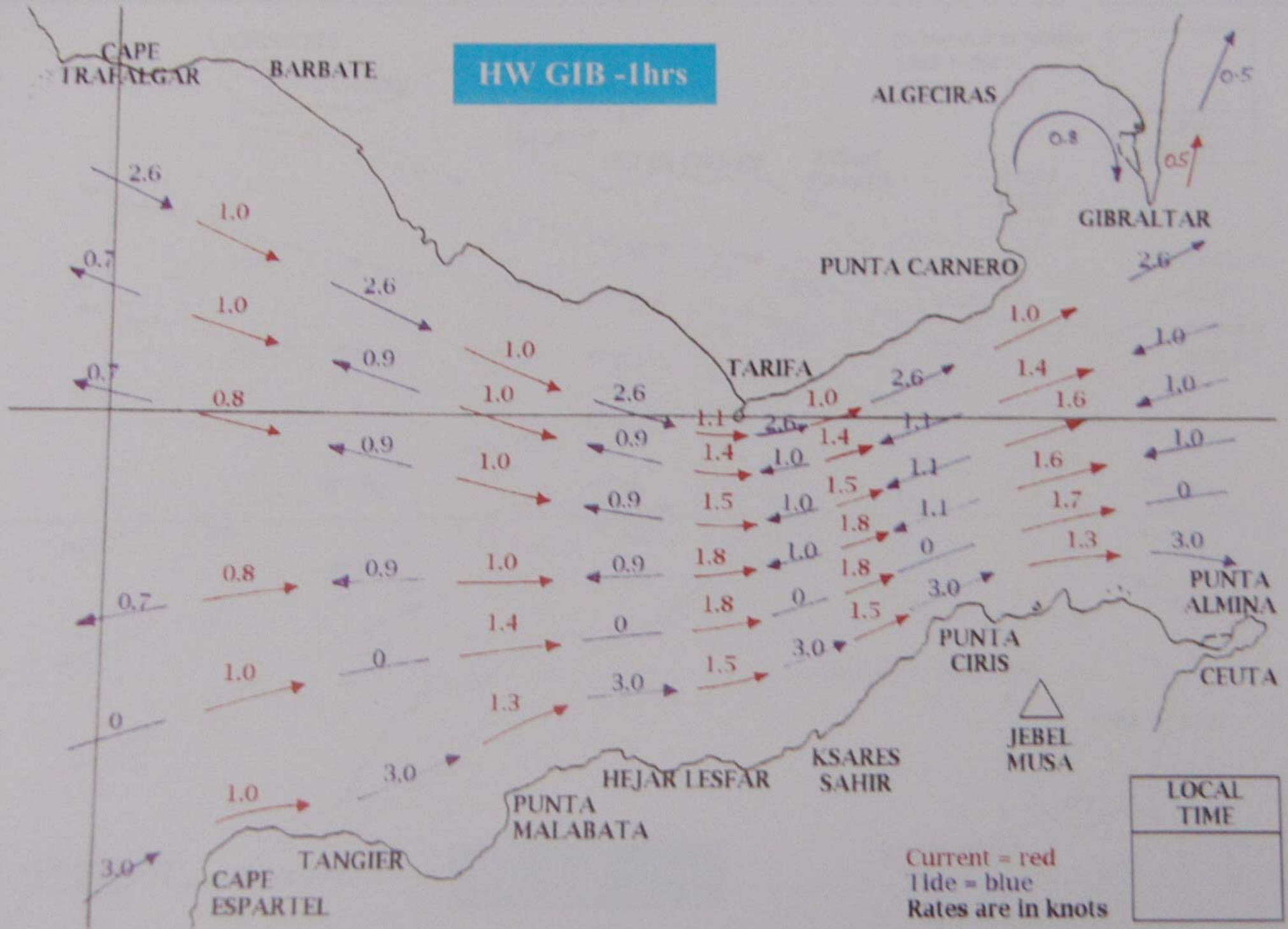
HW GIB -3hrs



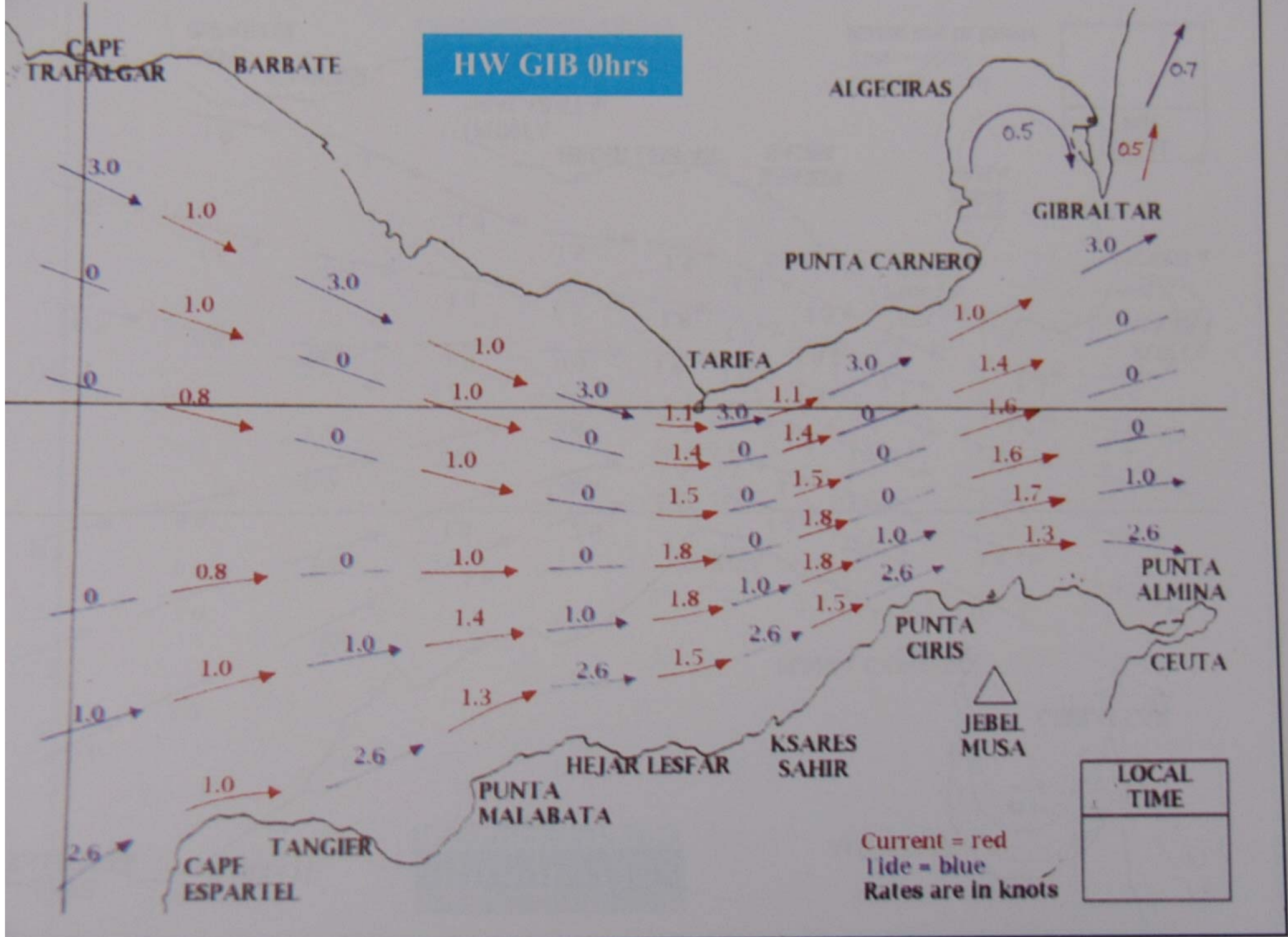
HW GIB -2hrs



HW GIB -1hrs

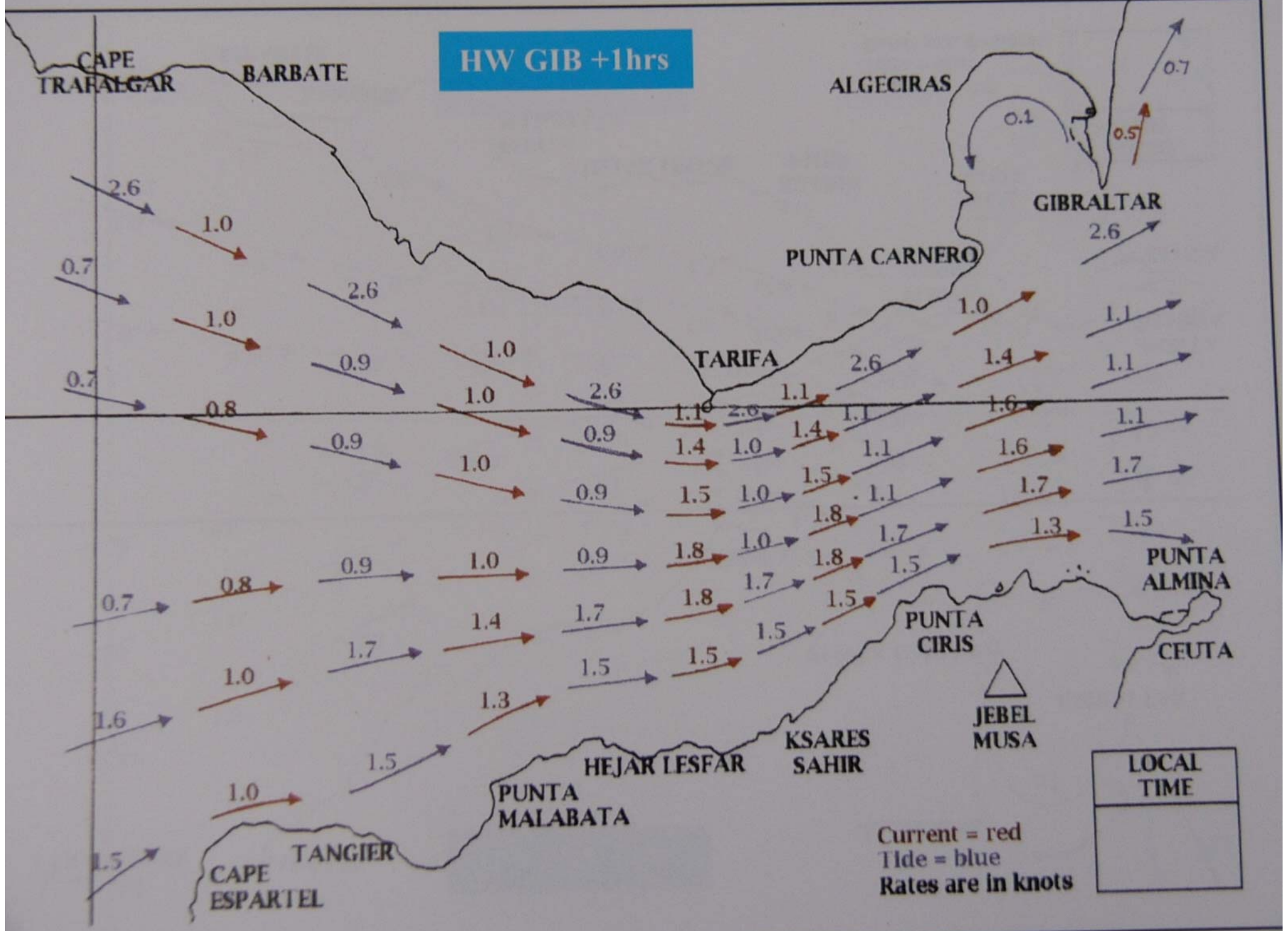


HW GIB 0hrs

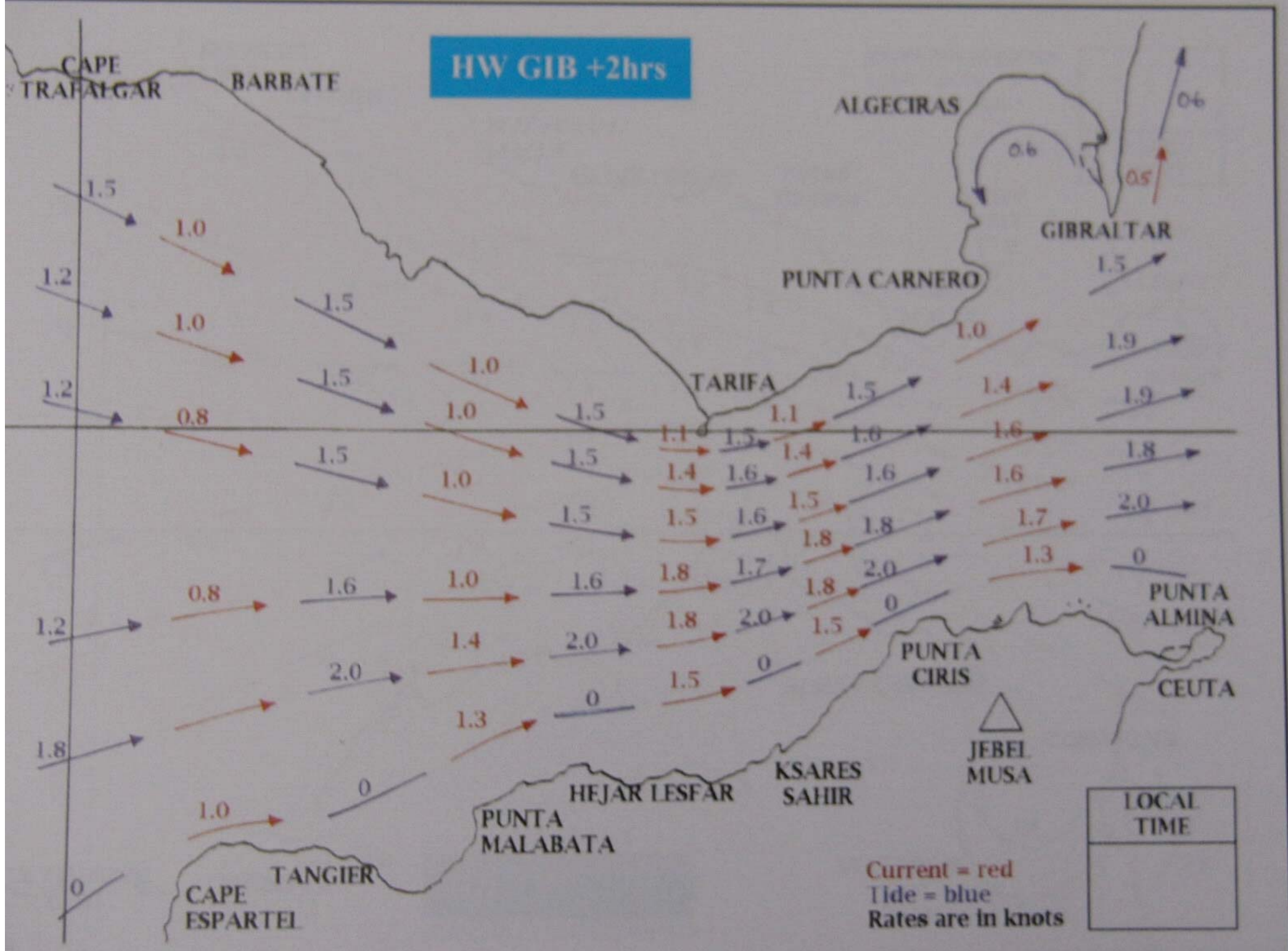


BASED ON LINES OF HIGH WATER

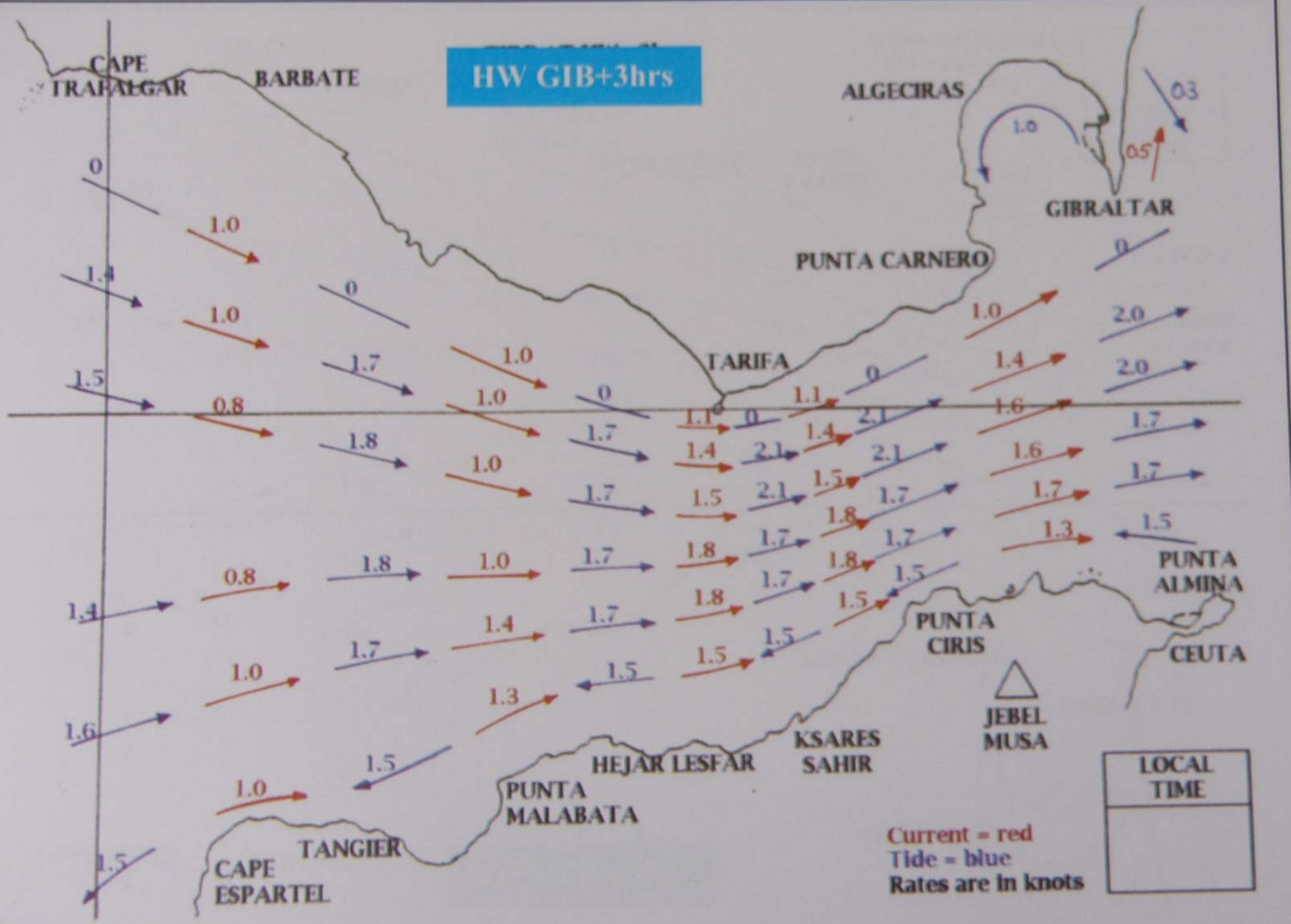
HW GIB +1hrs



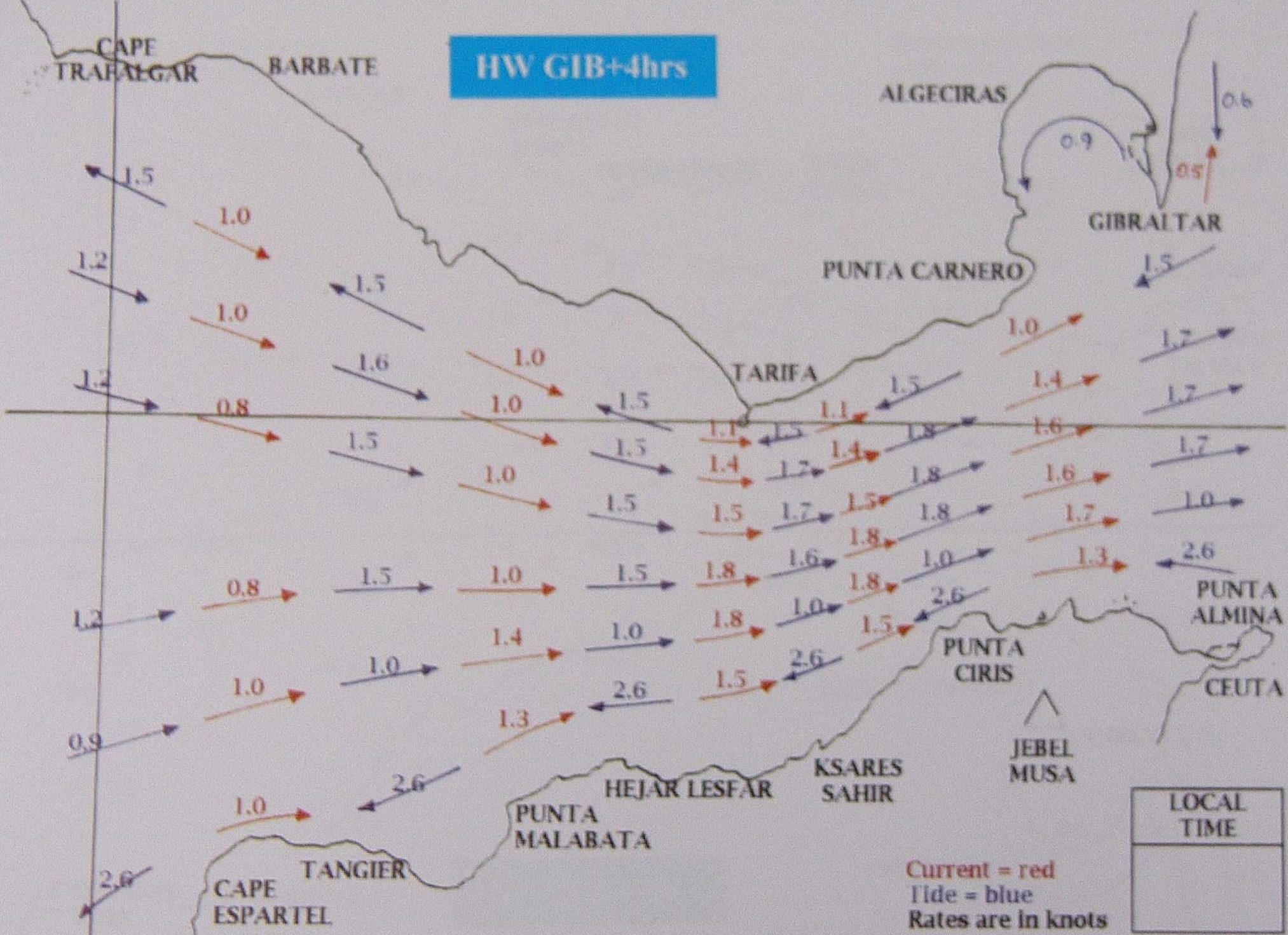
HW GIB +2hrs



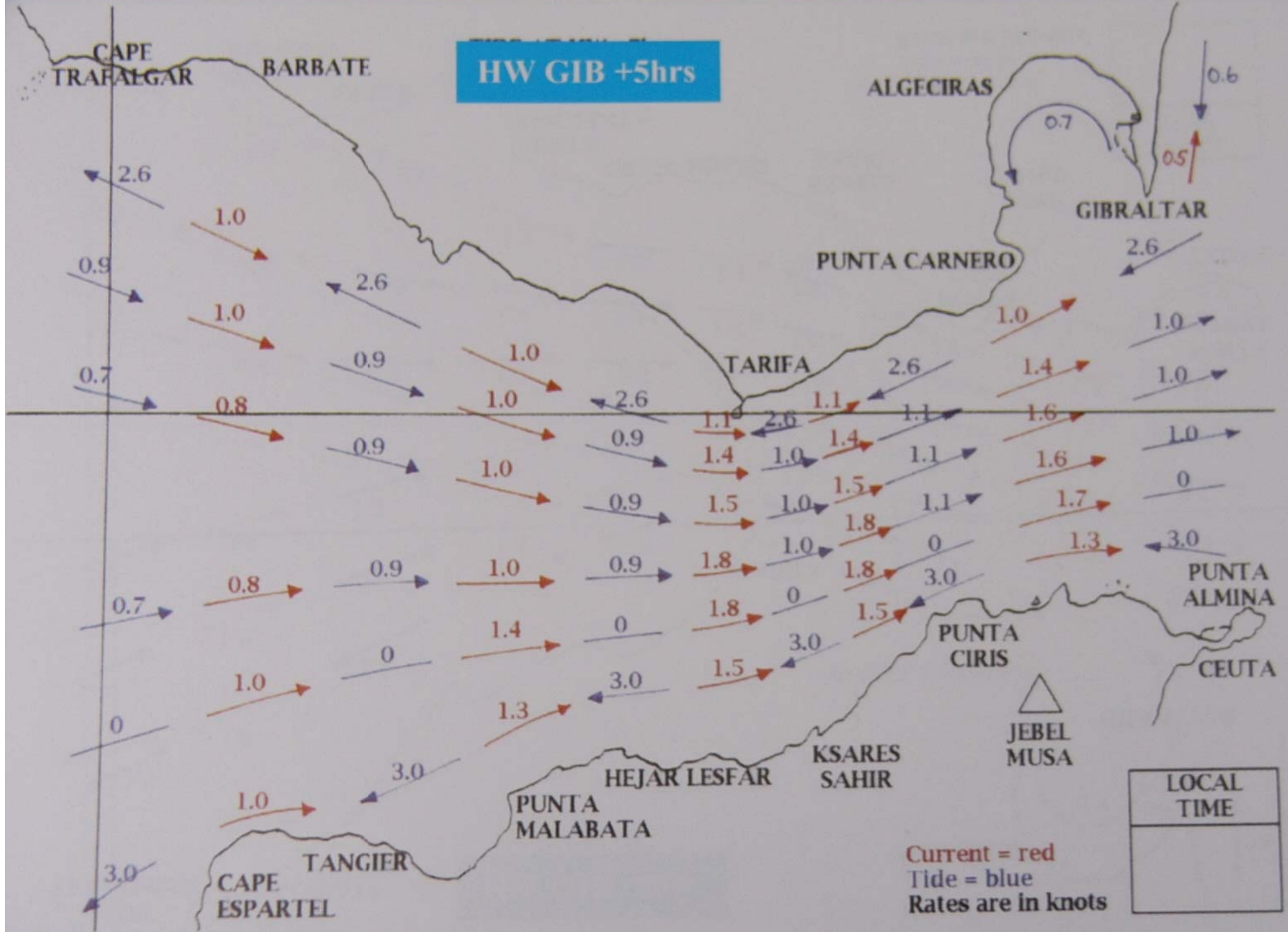
HW GIB+3hrs



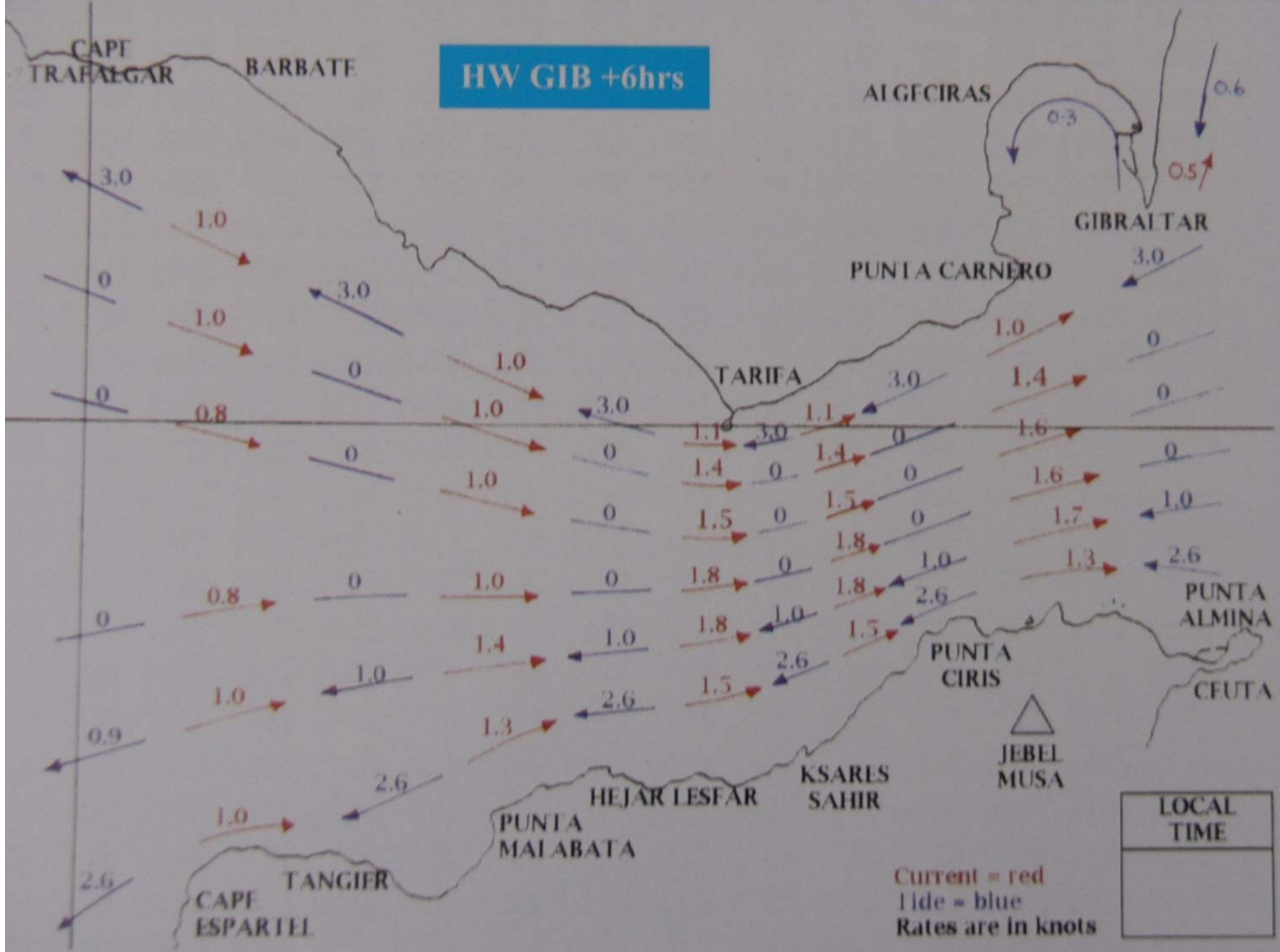
HW GIB+4hrs



HW GIB +5hrs



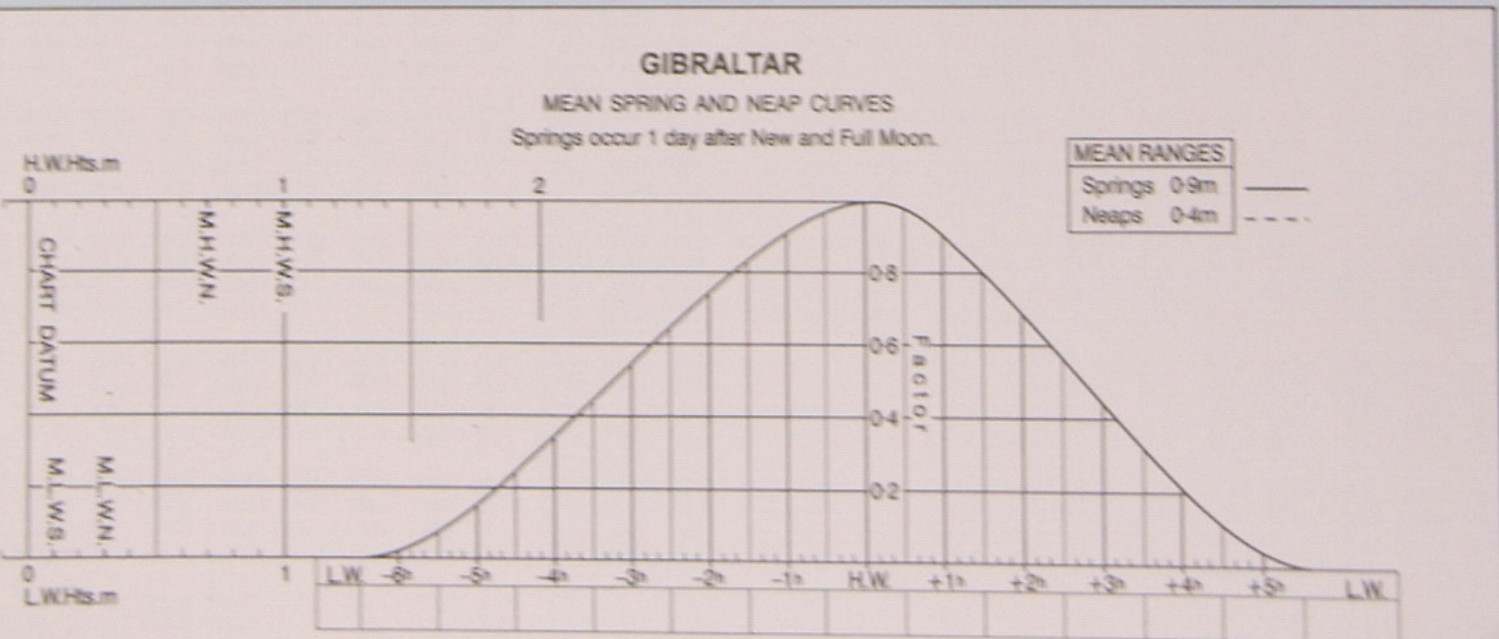
HW GIB +6hrs



Tidal Difference Table

Standard Port - Gibraltar

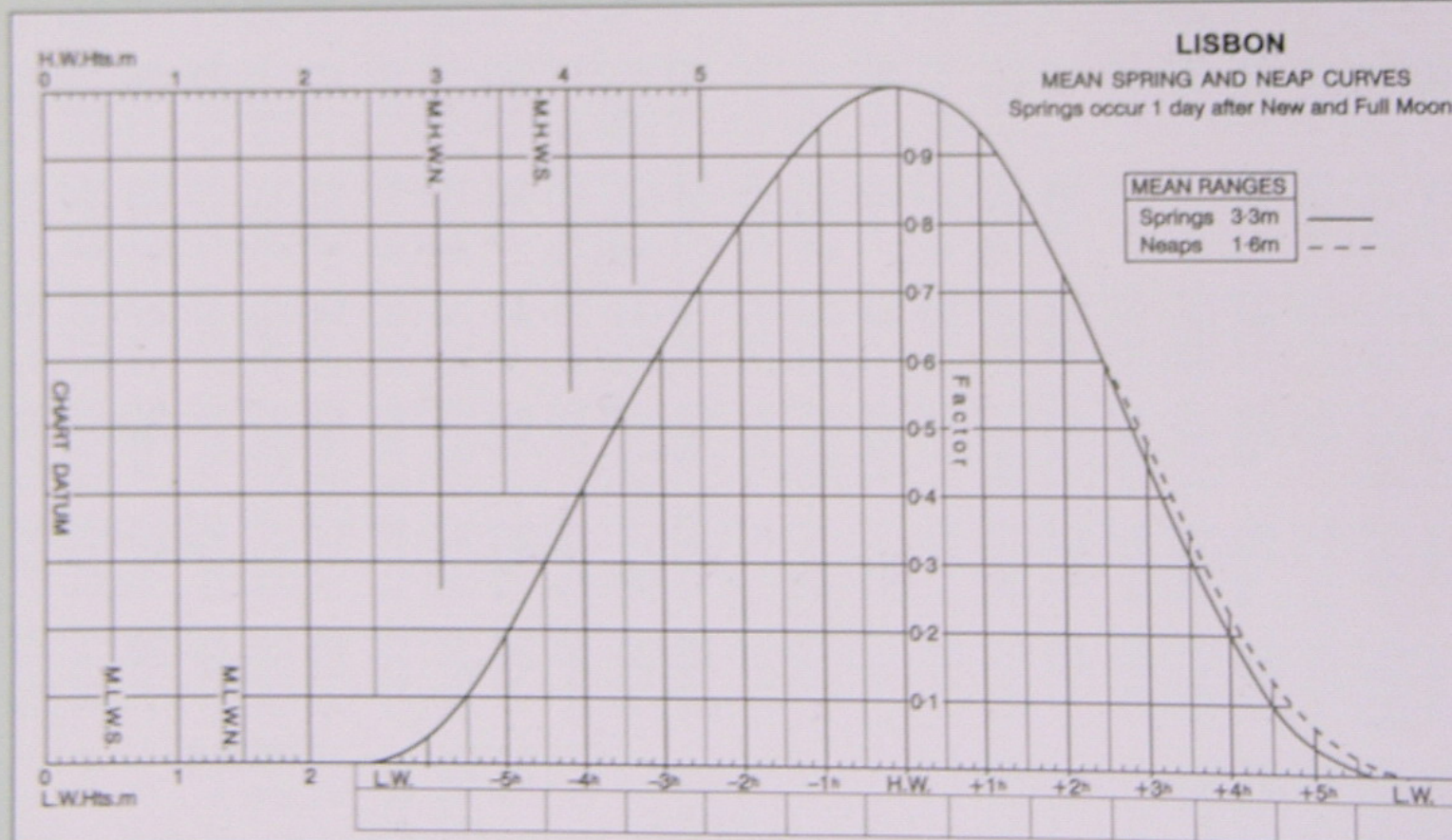
	Times				Height			
	HIGH WATER	LOW WATER	MHWS	MHWN	MLWN	MLWS		
	0000 1200	0700 1900	0100 1300	0600 1800	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.1
Differences								
Tangier(Morroco)	-0010	-0010	-0050	+0010	+1.4	+1.2	+0.7	+0.5
Tarifa	-0038	-0038	-0042	-0042	+0.4	+0.3	+0.3	+0.2
Punta Carnero	-0010	-0010	0000	0000	0.0	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1
Algeciras	-0010	-0010	-0010	-0010	+0.1	+0.2	+0.1	+0.1
Ceuta	-0040	-0120	-0140	-0040	0.0	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1
Ensenada de Tetuan	-0045	-0045	No data	No Data	-0.1	0.0	+0.1	+0.1
Malaga	+0015	+0015	+0015	+0015	-0.3	-0.2	0.0	+0.1



Tidal Difference Table

Standard Port - Lisbon

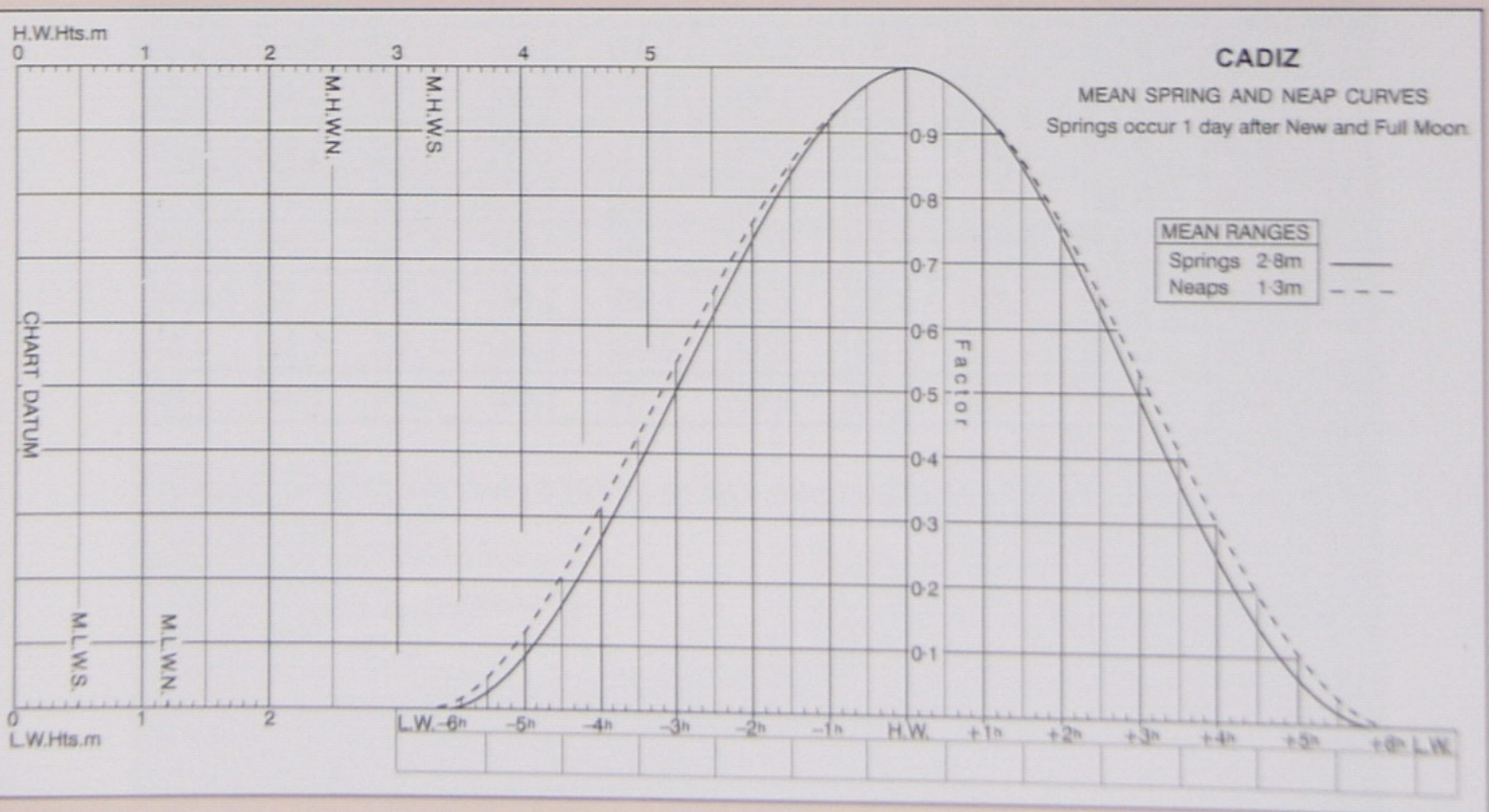
	Times				MHWS 3.8	Height		
	HIGH WATER 05.00	LOW WATER 10.00	HIGH WATER 17.00	LOW WATER 22.00		MHWN 3.0	MLWN 1.4	MLWS 0.5
Differences								
Isla Christina	+0005	+0015	+0025	+0045	-0.7	-0.6	0.0	-0.1
Ayamonte								
Mazagon	+0000	+0015	+0035	+0030	-0.6	-0.5	-0.2	-0.1
Ria de Huelva Bar								
Chipiona	-0005	+0005	+0020	+0030	-0.6	-0.5	-0.1	-0.1
Rio Guadalquivir Bar								
Corta de los Jeronimos	+0210	+0230	+0255	+0345	-1.2	-0.9	-0.4	0.0
Sevilla	+0400	+0430	+0510	+0545	-1.7	-1.2	-0.5	0.0
Rota	-0010	+0010	+0025	+0015	-0.7	-0.6	-0.3	-0.1
Puerto Santa Maria	+0006	+0006	+0027	+0027	-0.6	-0.4	-0.3	-0.1
Cape Trafalgar	-0003	-0003	+0026	+0026	-1.4	-1.1	-0.5	-0.1
Rio Barbate	+0016	+0016	+0045	+0045	-1.9	-1.5	-0.4	+0.1
Pta Camarinal (now Pta Cirus)	-0007	-0006	+0013	+0013	-1.7	-1.4	-0.6	-0.2



Tidal Difference Table

Standard Port - Cadiz

	Times				MHWS	Height		
	HIGH WATER	LOW WATER	HIGH WATER	LOW WATER		MHWN	MLWN	MLWS
	05.00	10.00	05.00	11.00	3.3	2.5	1.2	0.5
Differences	17.00	22.00	17.00	23.00				
Rota	-0010	-0010	-0015	+0010	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
Puerto Santa Maria	+0006	-0014	-0013	+0002	-0.1	+0.1	-0.1	-0.1
La Carraca	+0020	+0030	+0020	+0015	0.0	+0.1	+0.1	0.0
Cape Trafalgar	-0003	-0023	-0014	0000	-0.9	-0.6	-0.3	-0.1
Rio Barbate	+0016	-0004	+0005	+0020	-1.4	-1.0	-0.2	+0.1
Pta Camarinal (now Pta Cirus)	-0007	-0027	-0027	-0012	-1.2	-0.9	-0.4	-0.2



Tactics

The majority of yachts entering or leaving the Mediterranean do so on the Spanish side of the Strait. This is not only the natural route for yachts heading south via the Portuguese and Spanish coast but also the side of the Strait where Gibraltar is situated, both a popular port of call for arrivals and departure to both the east and west.

There are really only two alternatives when transiting the Strait and they are either wind with you or wind against you. With good timing it is always possible to make the passage with at least some favourable tidal flow.

Unless you encounter a very strong adverse wind then, without doubt, it is far simpler to enter the Mediterranean through the Strait of Gibraltar from west to east than it is to leave heading east to west. This is because your window of opportunity as far as surface water flow is concerned is far greater.

In deciding the best tactics it is essential to obtain a weather forecast (see page 30 & 31) Listen to Tarifa Traffic Control on chanel 10 as it is important you know what is happening in the Strait or more precisely what the wind direction and strength is at Tarifa as this is the narrowest part of the Strait and will be the area of maximum wind, and of course the short term outlook.

Into the Med East Bound

Much depends upon where you are but let's assume you are in the area of Cape Trafalgar close to Barbate leaving yourself about 18 NM to the north west of Tarifa.

If the wind is allowing you to reach fairly strongly south easterly towards Tarifa, then it is possible to overcome even an adverse tide although it is preferable to have at least some water flow with you or at the worse minimise that which is against you.

The tidal stream runs southeast from Cape Trafalgar towards Tarifa from about HW -3 (slack water) to HW +3, close inshore: although the current will almost certainly overcome the previous NW setting tide from HW -4 at springs and from HW -5 at neaps. This extends your window of favourable

water flow from Barbate to Gibraltar from six hours to approximately eight hours at springs or even ten hours at neaps. At springs the rate is stronger but at neaps the rate is less but the duration of flow is longer.

If the wind is unfavourable it becomes far more important to go with the flow because an adverse tide, especially at springs will not only add miles and hence take more time but will be hard work. It may be necessary to anchor to the west of Tarifa which provides good shelter in easterlies to await the next favourable tide.

If however you feel you must continue it is important that you study the charts and tidal stream atlas to determine the extent or limits of the favourable stream. Make sure you do not tack too far out and find yourself going backwards because you have entered a foul stream. Use the GPS if you have one to compare your ground speed against water speed to ensure you have not tacked too far out and entered an unfavourable stream. If you do not have GPS watch transits on the shore to check progress.

As there are only basically two directions in which either the wind blows or the water flows then it follows that you have only two possible sea conditions:

Wind with the tide *or* Wind against the tide.

Studying the sea state will therefore provide a good visible clue as to whether or not you are in a favourable stream. Once you become aware of this phenomenon, then the limits of your tacks are extremely easy to observe except in heavy weather, in which case you must rely on your GPS or the old fashioned use of transits on the shore to check your progress.

If as often happens you run out of time and the stream becomes unfavourable it is then possible to tack further out (or in) to get yourself back into a favourable stream. If the main stream is adverse there is usually a counter current close inshore.

Out of the Med West Bound

Yachts making a west-bound passage have a slight advantage with access to weather forecasts, but have the more difficult passage simply because the window of opportunity for favourable stream is much reduced.

Easterly Winds

With a strong easterly wind you will have little problem making headway against a foul stream and perhaps your only decision is one of comfort or safety. You can leave at almost any time but you will have to deal with a near, or full gale at Tarifa. If wind is against the tide fairly rough conditions can be expected as you near Tarifa and the wind increases. If you wait and go when you have a favourable stream, i.e. wind with the tide, then at least the sea state will be better and you now only have to deal with the following wind and gale. If running downwind to Tarifa do not be tempted to put the spinnaker up.

With a more moderate wind your tactics require a little more thought and you will still have a near gale at Tarifa. At springs you have about 4hrs of favourable stream but if you can make a reasonable speed then of course you can overcome a knot or two of foul stream, so you can extend your window of opportunity. Just study the tidal stream atlas and pick your time. If you get it wrong, it will soon become obvious that you're going backwards, so drop the anchor in Anse Getares just to the north of Punta Carnero and have a rethink.

Westerly Winds

It is a westerly wind that brings out a little bit of cunning in our tactics. In both light and strong westerlies your window of opportunity remains the same but it is far harder to overcome a foul stream with wind on the nose and under sail. Your tacks add distance and you need more time. At neaps its almost impossible to get out under sail alone so use the engine if you have one. At springs there is sufficient tide on the lee bow to make it under sail.

Remember that the wind is gong to decrease the further west you go. So you may well need a reef or two at Punta Carnero but as the wind eases and your speed falls its important to get the reefs out quickly. Most prudent sailors will not shake out a reef until we are satisfied the wind really has dropped and is not going to increase again, so listen to Tarifa radio and satisfy yourself it is really happening. Study the tidal stream atlas (as in the example earlier) and aim to be at Punta Carnero at about HW +3.5 just as the north counter stream goes slack and starts to run to the west (remember the wind will set up a slight drift current here).



TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME

Passage Notes.....Dangers!!!!

I would strongly advise reading this section before attempting to transit the area.

There are several tunny nets to be encountered between the geographical limits of this guide. The nets are seasonal and usually in place between March and October although there are many factors which could delay their removal or prompt an early deployment. By late August in both 2002 and 2003 most of the nets mentioned below had in fact been removed or were in the process of being removed, but this may not always be the case. Because they are laid each year they are never in exactly the same location, although they are likely to be within a cable or two of the previous years position. This cannot however be guaranteed, so beware.

Although there are appropriate cardinal marks at the extremities of the nets there is often additional buoys 20-30 metres beyond the end, possibly marking the position of the securing anchors.

Over the past few years the outer ends of the major nets became have become far more sophisticated with additional cardinal mark appearing, marking not only the outer end of the nets but the box itself (the actual trap). The box is often quite large in extent with the cardinal marks several hundred metres apart, creating a considerable hazard. *See photograph and Stay Alert!!*

As you head southeast from Cadiz towards Gibraltar the nets are found in the following sequence. Positions given are for 2005 and are GPS co-ordinates taken as I rounded the end of the net about 50m beyond the cardinal mark.

1. **2NM south of Cabo Rocha.**
West Cardinal at 36°14.3'N 006° 08.8'W
South Cardinal at 36°14.0'N 006° 08.5'W

This net (known as Punta Atalaya) runs almost perpendicular to the shore, out from a position about 200 metres off the beach, about 0.6 NM to the S/E of the village of Conil de La Frontera. The net ends at a position 36°14.3'N, 006°08.8'W and is marked by a small vessel with a vertical pole identifiable as a west cardinal. The southern extremity of the box is marked with another small vessel, again with a vertical pole identifiable as a south cardinal about 0.5 NM SE of the net end. Both are lit accordingly at night and in August 2001 both lights were working.





End of Tuna Net at Zaharra

2. **Barbate**
South Cardinal at 36°08.6'N 005°57.0'W

This net is now much shorter than in previous years and extends almost from the harbour entrance out to the SW almost perpendicular to the coast to a position 36° 08.6'N 005° 56.9'W, marked by a small anchored vessel with a vertical pole identifiable as a south cardinal and is lit at night accordingly. The outer end of the net is just inside the track most likely taken by yachts on passage from Cape Trafalgar to Tarifa but do take care as it would be easy to drift inside this line. However the inner end of the net causes considerable problems to visiting yachts as it appears not to have an inside passage although there is usually at least 50 metres between the inshore end of the net and the end of the harbour wall. In 2001 this end of the net was marked by a small (about 1 metre high) North Cardinal Buoy (Q fl) and is still difficult to see as it is very low and usually approached with the light of the harbour or town behind it (See Photo). I have marked the approximate position of this net on the small chartlet for Barbate. In 2001 all net lights were working.



Entrance to Barbate showing north cardinal at inshore end of net

3. **Zahara Atuna (5 NM SE of Barbate)**
West Cardinal at 36° 07.4'N 005° 52.3'W

This net runs out perpendicular to the shore from a position 150 metres off the beach about 1 NM to the S/E of the village of Zahara Atuna to a position 36° 07.4'N 05° 52° 52.3'W. The end is marked by a small vessel with a vertical pole identifiable as a west cardinal and is lit accordingly at night. In September 2003 the light was working and two additional south cardinals were in position to the south east of the net but inside the track you would usually take around the end.

4. **Net at Anse Bolonia**
South Cardinal at 36° 03.8'N 05° 46.8'W

This net has appeared for the past 2 years and we can assume it will now be a regular net like the others. The outer end is marked with a south cardinal mark in a small boat but on the few occasions I sailed by at night was NOT lit.

5. **0.6 NM N/W of Tarifa.**
West Cardinal at 36° 00.7'N 005° 37.2'W

This is a short net extending from about 200 metres off the beach close to the northern limits of Tarifa town to a position 36° 00.7'N 005° 37.2'W and is marked by a small vessel with a vertical pole identifiable as a south cardinal and at night is lit accordingly. This net is normally well off the track a transiting yacht would use. However vessels approaching or departing the anchorage to the west side of Tarifa, especially at night, should be aware of the danger. In 2003 the light was working.

6. **East side of Gibraltar**
Position 36° 09.4'N 005° 19.7'W

For the last 8 years this net to the east side of Gibraltar and just north of the border with Spain has not been set although it may be in the future.

7. **The net at Punta Chulera east of Sotogrande**

For the past 8 years this net has not been set but of course could be in the future.

8. **South of Ceuta Town**
Position 35° 53.0'N 005° 19.9'W

A small net not likely to cause problems to transiting yachts as it remains well inside the track to/from Marina Smir.

9. **5 NM South Punta Almina**
Position 35° 48.8'N 005° 18.6'W

This net runs perpendicular to the shore line from a position 200 metres off the beach out to a position $35^{\circ} 48.8'N$ $005^{\circ} 18.6'W$ and its outer end is marked with a small vessel but lacks any positive and recognisable identification. In September 2001 a small black and yellow bouy (but not a cardinal mark) appeared at the end of the net but disappeared within a few weeks. The net remains inside the track likely to be used by yachts rounding Punta Almina and making for Marina Smir and in 2003 had a yellow bouy marking the end.

Without a doubt the biggest danger here is the tide which can set northwards at up to 4 knots. Vessels being pushed into this net by such a tide would indeed be in danger. Stay alert!!!

Note – Temporary nets – August/September

In late August and September it is common practice among local fishermen to cast a short stretch of drift net perpendicular to and close to the shore about 200-300 mts in length. The inshore end is usually marked by an orange float with a small red flag on top, which is anchored while the outer end is motored out and similarly anchored or remains attached to the fishing vessel. The net is supported by small orange doughnut type floats. The fisherman or his friend then patrols the net and will wave if he thinks you are heading into it. This is not normal practice at night although on one occasion I ran into and over an unlit net across the entrance to Sotogrande. So if in the distance you see a small fishing boat (4-5 metres) and an orange (or white) buoy between it and the beach and a man waving dramatically then this is probably what's going on. Occasionally the arrangement is reversed – buoy to seaward and boat inshore.

It is quite normal to have to take avoiding action for several of these nets between Gibraltar and Estepona. **Once again stay alert!!!**

Other Dangers

1. Firing/military exercise areas.

The whole of the coast from Cadiz to Cape Trafalgar and the Bay of Barbate (Ensenada de Barbate) is a military exercise area, divided into several zones or areas. As such, each zone or area is prone to being declared off limits as and when exercises and/or firing is scheduled, although passage close inshore is often permitted even during exercises.

Information regarding firing is, or should be, distributed to all the local marinas and port offices advising range co-ordinates, dates and times in Spanish. Both Cadiz radio (Ch74) and Tarifa radio (Ch10) transmit these navigational warnings in English and it would be imprudent not to pay attention. See map of coast and zones (on page 74). If you are intending to transit the area check first!

2. *About 2 NM north of Isle de Sancti Petri* is a small isolated rock which just breaks. Although it is clearly marked on Admiralty Chart No 90 the small scale of the chart makes it hard to spot. Any vessel short tacking along the coast could easily find this rock.
3. *To the South of Punta Carnero* there is a shoal patch covered by sector lights at Europa Point and Punta Carnero, but the minimum depth here is 4.7 mts, and although it does break in really strong south-easterlies it is really not going to cause a problem. (The master of the merchant ship wrecked here whose superstructure is visible in the bay to the north west probably has a different view of this). I usually pass between this shoal patch and the small isolated rock close to the shore.(see page 74)
4. *To the north west of Tarifa* are several areas of overfalls. These are quite dramatic to see and are most pronounced during the strongest east going streams when vast quantities of water are deflected to the surface by the extensive area of shoals situated there. In 1989 the superstructure of a large wreck was clearly visible on the shoal. In 1990 it had disappeared below the surface. So although the charted depth is 5 mts keep well clear.
5. *Just off Punta Cirus* on the north coast of Morocco are more overalls and similarly they are at their most dramatic in strong east setting tidal streams.
6. *Traffic Separation Scheme.* With in excess of 30,000 vessels a year passing through the Strait of Gibraltar it is not surprising to find the central part of the Strait has a traffic separation scheme, which is clearly marked on all charts and monitored by Tarifa Traffic Control (VHF 16/10). This in itself is not a danger to anyone and as usual, you are perfectly entitled to cross the scheme. The danger comes in inadvertently entering the separation scheme in an attempt to seek out a favourable stream. Pay close attention to your position at all times. The vessels using the traffic separation scheme are not slowing or at manoeuvring speed. They are on the high seas and are travelling at speed.
7. *Estepona – Fish keep* A diamond shaped area immediately off the town – marked with YELLOW buoys.
8. *East of La Linea* Nine or ten floating platforms comprising a fish keep and marked by YELLOW bouys, some lit. Located just north of the AERO beacons.

Weather

The Strait of Gibraltar is perhaps one of the most consistently windy stretches of water, with a pattern that swings from one direction to the other at irregular intervals. This would typically be three or four days in one direction then going light and variable for a few hours and then switching to three or four days in the opposite direction. Needless to say this is not always so and there are often quite prolonged periods when it blows from one direction alone, sometimes dying away as if promising to change but then re-establishing itself as before.

The Strait is situated at the juncture of the two major bodies of water, the Atlantic to the west and the Mediterranean to the east, each with its own weather system. The Atlantic water tends to be cooler and the air mass over it more volatile, while the water in the Mediterranean is warmer and the air mass more stable.

If we simplify the situation by drawing an imaginary line north to south through the Strait, then whichever side of the line has the higher pressure will effectively be the more dominant weather system. Winds will then blow from the high pressure to the low, through the Strait, and will do so almost directly and not at the normal oblique angle to the isobars, but from high to low at almost ninety degrees to the isobars

This is due to the mountainous high ground bordering the Strait to both the north and the south and air, prefers to go around rather than over. The air flow is further accelerated as it passes through the confines of the Strait due to the localised lows developing in the Strait as the land masses warm up and pull air up, off the Strait. This phenomenon is well known locally and will typically turn a F4 at the windward end into a F6 at the downwind end of the Strait (in both easterly and westerly winds).



The effect is however slightly more pronounced in an easterly, due to the fact that the Strait is narrowest at the western end.

The good news is that this area of high wind is usually small in extent and limited to the downwind end of the Strait, but without the large seas normally associated with winds of that strength. A transit through the Strait with a following wind will mean a steadily increasing wind peaking as you exit the confines of the Strait. A transit to windward, will mean a steadily decreasing wind with the maximum wind strength being experienced at the start of the passage.

In dealing with the wind, most small craft can prepare themselves for this quite easily and by being prudent, rather than gung-ho. The lack of sea and gentle breeze often tempts the unwary into believing the wind is less than it is and it would be understandable but imprudent to doubt the accuracy of the forecast in these circumstances. Do not be tempted to run down wind with the spinnaker up. That gentle F3-4 at Gibraltar will most certainly be a F6-7 at Tarifa and the increase in wind strength is so gradual it gives no cause for alarm until it is too late. Two or three reefs in the main and a periodic reduction in the Genoa is often the wise man's tactic.

Of course, if it is only blowing a force 2 then an increase to force 4 is hardly going to cause you much problem but do beware. Sea breezes can develop especially on hot, sunny days. A localised low will form in the middle of the Straits and within a short period of the situation changes.





Fig 1. A cold front moving from the north west towards the Balearics causes pressure to fall across the western Mediterranean. With high pressure maintained to the west of the Strait a westerly airflow is established through the Strait of Gibraltar and into the Alboran Basin. This would typically result in a force 5/6 in the Strait possibly gale force 7 in the eastern part.



Fig 2. The cold front has now moved away allowing pressure to recover and a ridge of high pressure to become established across the western Mediterranean. With pressure now lower to the west of the Strait than to the east, an easterly wind develops through the Strait. Even a small pressure gradient, as in this example, would produce quite strong easterly winds, typically force 4/5, at Gibraltar gale force 7/8 at Tarifa.

Fog is also a common feature in the Strait especially so in the summer months from June to September which, when you consider the volume of shipping transiting the Strait, is a major concern to small craft. Warm moist air can blow through the Strait from both east and west. If this air mass passes over relatively cold water then fog will often form. What is unusual is that fog banks can, and often do, limit themselves to the cold water streams. Where there are distinct streams running in different directions then you can experience the somewhat bizarre phenomena of say a fog bank off Ceuta where the stream is east setting (cold water), clear in the centre of the Strait where the stream is west setting (warm water) and fog again on the north, Gibraltar, side where the stream is again east setting (cold water). It is quite common for all the fog to disappear when the tide turns and brings warmer water into the Strait, and then reappear later in the day as the tide turns yet again.

So if you find yourself fog bound it may well be that a short wait will see the fog clear but do not be surprised if you find it again.

Statistics

Accurate statistics are only available for Gibraltar where there exists a full Met Office serving the airport. Other locations will naturally be modified by local effects, but what happens at Gibraltar will be a good basis from which to work. There really is no norm. January in one year can be fine with lots of sunshine and the following year it will be predominately wet and windy. October 1998 was glorious while October 1999 was dominated by the passage of successive cold fronts bringing high winds, lots of rain and generally overcast skies.

Statistically the winds generally follow a pattern similar to the following:-

WIND STRENGTH

Calm	Force 1-3	Force 4-5	Force 6-7	Force 8+
0.014%	43%	49%	7%	0%

WIND DIRECTION

Northerly	Easterly	Southerly	Westerly
1%	46%	4%	49%

Looking at this table we can see that as far as wind strength is concerned almost half the time it is F4-5. With an almost equal distribution in direction between easterlies and westerlies. Only 5% of the time was the wind from another direction.

The following table shows statistics for 1997 but there is no normal winter weather pattern. January 1997 was predominantly wet, but January 2000 and 2001 were fine. April 1997 was fine, but April 2000 was wet. These statistics are however typical for the summer months May-August.

	<i>RAINFALL (mm)</i>		<i>SUNSHINE</i>		<i>No. OF DAYS</i>	
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>MAX</i>	<i>TOTAL HRS</i>	<i>O/CAST 24hrs.</i>	<i>CLEAR SKY</i>	<i>FOG</i>
Jan	212.0	78.8	77.1	6	0	0
Feb	Trace		201.3	0	5	1
Mar	3.7	3.7	238.0	0	2	0
Apr	24.1	11.7	250.4	2	2	0
May	38.9	19.9	305.8	0	2	3
June	5.2	4.2	357.9	0	9	0
July	1.8	1.4	363.3	1	14	1
Aug	1.0	0.6	318.3	0	11	2
Sept	30.2	24.3	211.8	0	1	1
Oct	70.0	19.2	191.9	1	3	0
Nov	230.0	108.7	142.5	4	2	0
Dec	181.9	34.6	156.3	4	3	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>798.8</i>	<i>108.7</i>	<i>2814.6</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>8</i>

Weather Information

General

Almost all port and harbour master's offices display a weather bulletin, which can usually be copied for you to take away.

Naturally in Spain these forecasts are in Spanish although in Gibraltar they are in English. You should have little difficulty in understanding the former. Some will be local forecasts, dealing only with the immediate area in which that port or harbour lies. Others will be of a wider scope.

It is possible for you to be able to receive the BBC shipping forecasts but this will be far more general in nature as the only area relevant to this guide will be Saint Vincent (Previously Trafalgar) which covers a vast area of sea.

The Met Office at RAF Gibraltar has been established since the early days of RAF operations. It is no longer manned continuously but remains by far the best source of weather information and forecasts for the Strait of Gibraltar. Forecasts of up to five days for routes through the Mediterranean to the Canaries or the UK are also provided.

As in the UK, the days of free forecasts are at an end and in order to offset costs to the RAF the Met Office now charges £17 for non military forecasts. This system has been in place since the spring of 1999.

The Met Office Gibraltar can now provide a consultancy service and for this one can contact the Met Office forecaster between the hours of 0900 and 2200hrs, seven days a week on an ex-directory telephone number. Two new toll lines costing 25p per call have been introduced during 2001 but are only accessible from Gibraltar based land-line telephones (not from mobile telephones).

Spanish Forecast Areas



English Forecast Areas

