

Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds is used to work out the speed of the tidal flow. Tidal flow is the horizontal movement of the water

Hour of Tidal Cycle	1	2	3	4	5	6
Speed of Tidal Flow	1/3	2/3	3/3	3/3	2/3	1/3

In the UK we have roughly two high tides and two low tides each day. The technical term for this is semi diurnal tidal cycle. Therefore between each high water and low water there is a roughly a six hour time period.

From the pilot or other tidal info source you will get a maximum speed for a given area. From this figure by applying the rule of thirds you can work out the speed of the tidal flow for any particular hour of the tidal cycle.

Example

Off the North end of the Isle of Fairy, the maximum tidal speed is 9 knots on spring tides. (If only a spring rate is given then the neaps rate is generally half of it.)

Therefore if the tide starts to flow at 1200 and we will paddling past the North end of the Isle of Fairy at 3 'o clock.

What speed will the tide be flowing at?

Due to a stiff headwind we actually arrive at the North end of the Isle of Fairy at 5 'o clock.

What is the speed of the tide at now?