

# The Barrier Isles

*Location · Island Chain*

**Population:** Unknown (scattered fishing villages on the outermost islands; the inner isles are uninhabited)

**Government:** None (outermost settlements are self-governing fishing communities with no formal authority)

The Barrier Isles are a ragged chain of islands stretching westward from the coast of Dracomere into open ocean. They diminish in size as they push west -- the outermost islands are little more than rock spires rising from cold water -- and the sea between them grows stranger the further one travels from the mainland shore.

The outermost fishing villages of the inner isles are the last places in the known world where ordinary people live ordinary lives. West of them, sailors report compass drift, inconsistent winds, and a quality of light that does not behave the way light should. Most ships turn back at the edge of what the islanders call the *Thinning* -- the point where the air itself seems to lose density and the horizon looks wrong.

No vessel that has sailed past the Thinning has returned. The islanders do not speak of what lies beyond it, not because they don't know, but because the question feels like the kind of thing that shouldn't be asked aloud.