

Water based recreation

LOCH LOMOND BYELAWS



Loch Lomond is the largest area of freshwater in mainland Britain. The loch and its islands are used by visitors throughout the year for a range of recreation interests. In addition the loch is important for a range of environmental reasons, as the source of drinking water for many, and as a key attraction for businesses and communities.

A wide variety of groups use Loch Lomond. These include fishermen, canoeists, jet skiers, powerboats, yachts, sailing craft and even sea planes. The banks and beaches of the loch are also used for activities such as open water swimming and picnics.

Problems can include:

- The noise from sea planes, speedboats and jet skis disturbs wildlife, residents and other visitors.
- Long trawling lines from fishing boats can be cut by other craft passing too near their sterns.
- Speedboats and jet skis also produce large wakes (waves) behind them which can cause erosion of the banks of the loch.
- Oil and diesel spills from boats pollute the environment.
- People having picnics beside the loch can leave litter, broken glass and scorch marks from barbeques and camp fires.

There is a real need to balance environmental, economic and social pressures on Loch Lomond, to ensure that the loch can be used safely and responsibly, and prevent the things that make it special from being overused or degraded.

Conflicting National Park aims:

As a National Park Authority we regularly have to make difficult decisions over what is the best way to proceed. At the heart of these decisions are, sometimes conflicting, National Park Aims.

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Park
- To promote enjoyment (including recreation) and understanding of the special qualities of the Park
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the Park's communities.

Resolution and role of the National Park Authority

The Loch Lomond Navigation Byelaws were introduced in 1996 by the Loch Lomond Regional Park Authority. Their purpose is to protect the islands, the National Nature Reserve and wildlife, provide a larger area for quieter activities and further improve safety.

The main aim of the Loch Lomond Byelaws is to help achieve this balance, by protecting the loch from environmental damage, whilst supporting the many types of recreational activity to be undertaken safely and responsibly.

The National Park Ranger Service undertakes most of the byelaw enforcement and compliance activity on the loch. The Park Authority operates a public launch facility for Loch Lomond at Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway in Balloch. The facility is open seven days a week. It employs staff throughout the year to manage the work associated with the Loch Lomond Byelaws, takes on extra staff during the summer season and operates three patrol boats.



Boat Registration

Loch Lomond remains a very popular destination for visitors seeking water-based recreation. In the current byelaws there is a requirement for the owner of a power-driven boat to register their boat with the Park Authority before using it on Loch Lomond. The table below shows the boat registration data for five years between 2015 and 2019.

Type of craft	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Canoe	13	15	15	13	17
Dinghy / Inflatable Dinghy	97	97	105	96	86
Jet ski	1,240	1,240	1,239	1,240	1,240
Motor Boat /Motor Cruiser	1,245	1,245	1,245	1,245	1,257
Sailing Boat	253	253	251	253	248
Rib	456	454	455	453	239
Speedboat	1,276	1,270	1,278	1,276	1,279
Tender	544	456	556	456	556
Fishing Boat	823	825	833	822	825
Other	152	174	165	168	56
Unspecified	30	31	29	23	22
Total Number of registered Craft	6,129	6,060	6,171	6,045	5,825

Use of the Loch

Since 1989 the University of Glasgow has made an annual survey of recreational craft use on Loch Lomond during peak activity periods (May to September). Over 22 years from 1989 to 2011 a total of 103,112 craft were recorded. During the 2011 survey a total of 352 craft were recorded on any single day (Saturday 30 July). The daily mean craft use in 2011 was 153 ± 92 (mean \pm standard deviation).

This represents a gross (whole loch) density of 5.00 craft per km² during the 2011 survey period. There have been changes to the pattern of use, with some zones seeing an increase in usage. The long-term data also shows a significant increase in the following types of cruising craft: tour boats, ferry boats, canoes, fishing boats and rowing boats. The same data shows a significant decrease in day boats, speedboats, windsurfers and yachts.

Byelaw Violations

The tables below outline the types of craft breaching byelaws and the type of violations for a 3 year period. The predominant craft types encountered breaching byelaws are jet skis and speed boats. The violations have predominantly been for speeding, with Annual Mark missing/not visible being the second highest recorded offence.

Type of craft	2019	2018	2017
Jet ski	73	99	75
Motor Boat / Motor Cruiser	36	56	18
Sailing boat	1	0	0
Rib	2	5	3
Speedboat	33	54	37
Tender	1	2	1
Fishing Boat	8	8	6
Other	31	23	10
Total Number of violations	185	247	150

Type of violation	2019	2018	2017
Failure to Register	21	16	6
Letter/Numbers missing/not visible (not clear)	9	28	14
Annual Mark missing/not visible	58	69	29
Failure to notify Authority of transfer of boat ownership	1	0	0
No authority to transfer number/annual mark	1	0	0
Failure to obey and conform to the directions of a Ranger, Police Officer or any other authorised person	1	0	0
Enforcement - refusal to provide or provision of false/misleading details	1	0	0
Non compliance with lighting byelaws for craft under 12m	1	0	0
Navigating any craft in a reckless manner - Byelaw 3.5(1)(a)	0	0	2
Navigating any craft in a reckless manner - Byelaw 3.5(1)(b)	0	0	4
Navigating any craft without due care and attention	0	1	0
Failure of Master to ensure sufficient and suitable life jackets available for crew and passengers	1	7	1
Failure to wear a lifejacket on a Powered Water Craft	1	1	4
Failure to observe speed limit in speed restricted areas	86	114	79
Failure to observe speed limit within 150m off shoreline - Byelaw 3.7(1)(a)	4	10	8
Failure to observe speed limit within 150m off shoreline - Byelaw 3.7(1)(b)		1	3
Total Number of violations	185	247	150

Questions and pupil enquiry

- What are the key reasons that Loch Lomond is so popular for water based recreation?
- How do the Byelaws on Loch Lomond reduce the noise disturbance to residents and visitors along the shores and on the islands?
- What are the most popular craft registered to use Loch Lomond, and why do you think this is?
- Why is speeding the most common Byelaw violation recorded?
- Long term data shows trends in the types of craft using the Loch. Can you give reasons why there may be increases in some types, but decreases in others?

FURTHER GUIDANCE

Online

➤ [Loch Lomond Navigation Byelaws](#)

Video clip

[VisitScotland: Scotland's Spirit](#)
A short film of Rangers on Loch Lomond

Site Visits

- Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway, Balloch
- Milarrochy Bay, east Loch Lomond