

Jet Ski Behaviours on Loch Lomond - Update

Agenda Item 9

National Park Authority Board Meeting

14 September 2026

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report is intended provide members with an overview of a significant escalation of concerning behaviours by a number of Jet Ski users observed on Loch Lomond across this year.
- 1.2. The escalation in volume of byelaw contraventions, public nuisance, environmental damage and the potential risk to life of behaviours associated with jet ski use have necessitated urgent responses through focused partnership activity and a step up in byelaw enforcement. This report provides and overview of the measures that have been put in place to manage these challenges.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. That the Board **note** the contents of this report and the partnership response to manage concerning jet ski behaviours during the 2026 season.

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 and/or our Corporate Plan 2025-2030

National Park Partnership Plan

Connecting Everyone with Nature and Climate

2045 Outcome - A place for all to enjoy safely and responsibly. Opportunities for everyone to value and enjoy the special qualities / benefits of the National Park safely

Objective 4 - Support Safe, Responsible Access. A wide range of enjoyable and safe visitor experiences which are managed in a way which is compatible with nature and climate considerations and supporting thriving communities.

Action - Operating and keeping under review the Loch Lomond and Camping Byelaws to encourage positive behaviour and protect the National Park's sensitive environment.

Corporate Plan

Our Approach is Effective and Influential

Outcome 1 - By 2030 we will have increased our influence with others and delivered our organisational and statutory responsibilities in an effective and efficient way that helps achieve the NPPP vision.

Objective 1.1 - Deliver our organisational and statutory responsibilities as effective, efficient cornerstones focused on delivering the NPPP.

4. Background

4.1. The revised Loch Lomond Byelaws (LLBs) came into operation in 2024 with two key changes introduced in the interests of public safety and improved enforcement of irresponsible and dangerous behaviours.

4.2. Firstly, lower speed zones were introduced in popular lochside bays to reduce safety risks arising from growing conflicts between powered craft use and other popular recreation activities at these locations. Secondly, a byelaw was introduced which required the master of a vessel to register (not simply the owner of the vessel) through a new digital system to increase accountability and enforceability against irresponsible and dangerous behaviours.

4.3. In recent years the NPA has invested in a modern and resilient patrol boat fleet and specialist staff resource which is fit for purpose to deliver three patrols across peak days of high activity in summer months and

support focused patrols on known hotspots at Luss and Duck Bay when appropriate.

4.4. Operation Ballaton was established in 2021 by partners led by Police Scotland. It was created to provide an effective and multi-agency response to anti-social behaviour or disorder reports in Balloch Park and the wider area of west Loch Lomond up to and including Luss Village. Its main objectives are to provide public reassurance, co-ordinate Police and partner agencies targeting and sharing of resources, provide a proportionate and effective response to any instances of criminality and to develop and support water safety initiatives to ensure responsible behaviour around Loch Lomond.

4.5. In February, officers reached out to the Crown Office, to ensure we have a single point of contact for marking NPA cases. Our single point of contact was briefed on the relevant legislation and the public interest.

4.6. Officers had also been completing due diligence over the past 12 months to enable the potential piloting of new cameras and processes with a view to trialling this technology on NPA patrol boats to enhance the effectiveness of our enforcement. This provides the opportunity of using additional video footage evidence which would support prosecutions for byelaw offences. Preparations for a trial were still being progressed at the beginning of the visitor season.

5. Experiences across the season so far

5.1. The National Park Authority's Ranger and Visitor Management staff are highly experienced in delivering a prevention led approach, applying proportionate enforcement when required and in dealing with occasional challenging behaviour by some loch users. However, the escalation of more persistent extreme and challenging behaviours this year along with unprecedented levels of byelaw violations on Loch Lomond has tested our processes, capacity and resilience in recent months.

5.2. Anti-social behaviour towards, and disregard for, other loch users and National Park Rangers have also reached an all-time high with staff testimonies reflecting an increasing intimidating atmosphere in hotspot locations across peak hot and sunny periods of weather. Despite this we have ensured focussed deployment of the Boat Ranger team to tackle these issues.

5.3. The increase in reported contraventions may also be a partial result of the new registration system and process due to the easier identification of perpetrators of unacceptable behaviours where previously we had difficulties in identifying individuals who were in charge of vessels. At

the same time, there has been a rise in contraventions which can also be attributed to unregistered craft and/or masters where individuals are actively trying to avoid registration and therefore being identified.

- 5.4. The vast majority of contraventions can be attributed directly to irresponsible and dangerous behaviours from individuals on jet skis who are habitually ignoring the byelaws and putting other loch users (and themselves) in danger.
- 5.5. At the time of writing, across this 2026 season jet ski users have accounted for approximately 80% of all Patrol Boat stops compared to 72% in 2025.
- 5.6. Jet skis have accounted for approximately 90% of all conduct related offences by powered vessels compared to 83% in 2025.
- 5.7. The increasing volume and severity of incidents specifically attributed to jet ski activity has placed significant pressure on staff, with the aggressive behaviour of some jet ski users adding further intensity to enforcement activity. Police support has been essential in managing the most challenging incidents and ensuring Authority staff safety.
- 5.8. To date, the team have reported 475 Loch Lomond Byelaws contraventions this season.
- 5.9. Of those 475, 377 contraventions were attributed to powered vessels and of those 293 are attributed to jet ski activity. This represents a 106% increase from the entire 2025 level of 142 contraventions by jet ski operators.
- 5.10. Speeding violations account for 161 of the totals above and 144 of those are attributed to jet ski activity.

(Please note figures in the report are subject to revision and verification through case review processes.)
- 5.11. NPA Officers decide which incidents warrant more formal enforcement action. This year so far, officers have progressed a 415% increase in Loch Lomond Byelaw formal cases (77) compared with the 2025 season (up to 27 August). From these cases an assessment of the evidence is carried out to decide whether it is appropriate to refer a case to the Procurator Fiscal. This year we have welcomed an increase in report outcomes with attributed fines.
- 5.12. Formal notification letters have also been sent by NPA Officers to 142 registered individuals highlighting concerning behaviours on Loch Lomond but which are below the threshold for escalated enforcement.

This represents a 48% increase from 96 letters issued in 2025. Our records of previous byelaw contraventions mean that we are able to identify repeat offenders which allows us to consider where more escalated enforcement is appropriate.

- 5.13. There has also been a notable increase in members of the public proactively submitting footage of incidents associated specifically with jet skis, providing valuable additional evidence to support enforcement activity.

5.14. Additional actions taken across the season

- 5.15. As a result of this situation, an emergency meeting was convened in July with Police Scotland and Local Authority representatives to discuss the dangerous actions of jet ski users and potential enhanced responses. Specific actions were agreed at that meeting and a follow up meeting was convened in August to ensure momentum and commitments were maintained.

- 5.16. Partnership commitments to address the increasing issues and improve public safety and confidence on and around Loch Lomond included:

- 5.16.1. A [joint press release issued with Police Scotland](#) to local and national media highlighting the issues, committing to enhanced patrols by NPA and Police Scotland, the introduction of CCTV on patrol boats to gather evidence and inviting the public to submit evidence of unacceptable and dangerous behaviours if observed, including video evidence.
- 5.16.2. Increased intelligence gathering, sharing and enforcement activity at problematic land-based launching sites from both National Park Rangers and Police Scotland officers.
- 5.16.3. Enforcement strengthened through the accelerated introduction of CCTV on boat patrols – which was possible due to the preparatory work already at an advanced stage.
- 5.16.4. A commitment by West Dumbarton Council to address issue of increasing numbers of unregistered craft launching Moss O Balloch Slipway.
- 5.16.5. NPA reviewing its Terms and Conditions in respect of using the public launching at the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway with the potential to cancel a multiple launch pass or refuse launching to Masters who continue to flaunt the byelaws.

- 5.17. These measures, alongside continued Police support through Operation Ballaton and public reporting, are felt to be essential in addressing the

ongoing challenges and improving compliance and behaviour on the Loch going forwards.

5.18. Clear communication campaigns remain a key element of this work, both to influence behaviours but also to maintain public confidence and assurance. The extensive press coverage received following the joint press release in July is testament to the public and media interest in this subject. The core messages were shared across The National, Scottish Daily Mail, The Times and the Daily Express as well as numerous online news platforms. The NPA CEO also undertook interviews on several radio news outlets.

5.19. The widespread press coverage above, alongside consistent social media presence on the issue and the clear message that partners were enhancing enforcement and presence does appear to have an initial calming effect with some shifts in behaviours observed by boat patrol rangers.

5.20. It should be noted that enhanced enforcement this season has resulted in higher volumes of cases being processed for referral to the Procurator Fiscal requiring significant focussed staff resource.

6. Next steps

6.1. Our Police Scotland and Local Authority partners have committed to work with us on a post season review meeting to discuss the progress and impacts of short-term actions and to consider and agree other actions required in advance of the 2027 summer season. This will include reviewing the effectiveness of introducing CCTV and whether this could be extended. While the byelaws have only recently been reviewed and changes implemented, Officers will be considering whether further change is necessary. The Board will be kept up to date as these discussions progress over the winter months.

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