



Scotland's
National Nature
Reserves



Inchcailloch Management Plan 2026-2036



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba



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National Nature
Reserves

Inchcailloch Management Plan 2026-2036

This plan covers Inchcailloch which lies within the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve.

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Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve sits within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. It is managed in partnership by NatureScot, RSPB Scotland and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. Together we are working to make this reserve an even better place for nature and people.

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1 Introduction

Inchcailloch is an island within Loch Lomond which forms part of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve (NNR). The NNR itself lies in the southeast corner of Loch Lomond, in the southern part of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP). The NNR is divided into three very different sections, each managed by different organisations: NatureScot (NS), RSPB and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) This management plan covers the area managed directly by the LLTNPA.

The two organisations also work in partnership with RSPB Scotland who own the Wards Estate section of the NNR south of the river Endrick. This Loch Lomond NNR Partnership has been established in order to achieve coordinated delivery of management across the whole of the NNR.

Inchcailloch is managed by two organisations, NatureScot and the LLTNPA, who work collaboratively to manage Inchcailloch for nature and people. As members of the Loch Lomond NNR Partnership, NS and LLTNPA have worked together to produce this management plan for Inchcailloch, setting out how they will achieve a positive outcome for nature and people. This will allow more detailed work programmes and projects to be drawn up to address the management needs of the island, which work towards protecting, enhancing and restoring nature and the Special Landscape Qualities that Inchcailloch is recognised and valued by people.

Loch Lomond NNR as a whole is 430 hectares (ha) in size and is incredibly diverse. The reserve includes some of the woodlands for which Loch Lomond is renowned, including the wooded shores on the mainland, the islands of Inchcailloch, Clairinsh, Torrinch, Creinch and Aber Isle, and the wetlands at the mouth of the River Endrick. Oak woodlands cover the islands, and a mosaic of open water, wetland, grassland and woodland habitats occupy the mainland. The diversity is high because of its geographical position; it sits on the dividing line between the Highlands and Lowlands so habitats and species at the limits of both their northern and southern ranges in Britain are found here.

Inchcailloch sits within the Loch Lomond National Scenic Area (NSA) and the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. It is situated on the geological fault-line of the Highland Boundary Fault. This gives the island its distinctive shape and geology and means that it is part of the line across Scotland where the Scottish Lowlands meet the Highlands. The ecology, history and scenic beauty of the island are all profoundly influenced by this.

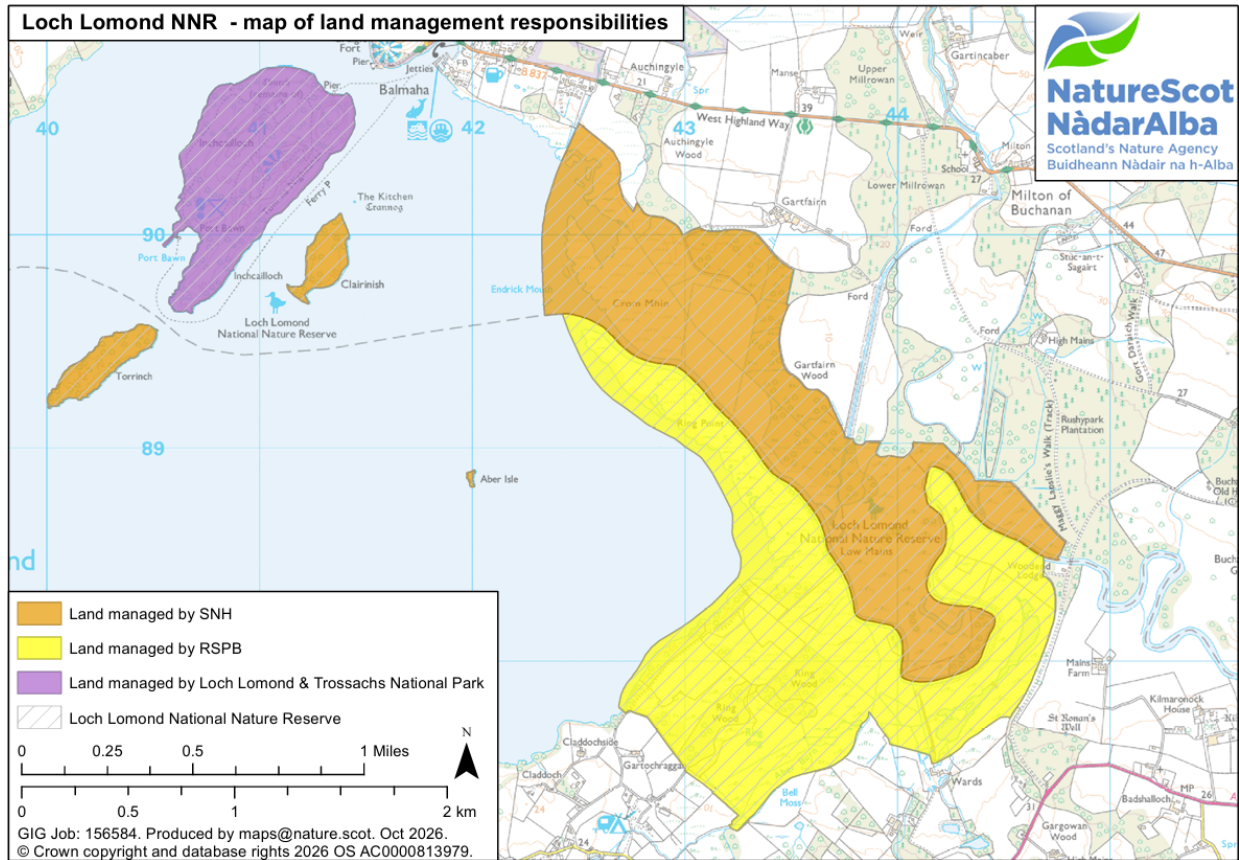
The land and water in Loch Lomond NNR have been managed for a variety of different purposes over the centuries, but today these woodlands, wetlands and grasslands are managed primarily for wildlife and for people to enjoy.

The onsite visitor experience on the NNR is provided by RSPB and LLTNPA who manage the main access points and are best placed to deal with large numbers of visitors. People can experience the less accessible NS area through participation events and volunteering. There is also informal access to this area under the rights introduced by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (LRSA), and in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). All partners of the NNR work together to promote awareness of the whole NNR through off-site interpretation and social media. A joint communication plan sets out the joint promotion of the NNR as a whole rather than individual sites to increase the effectiveness in raising awareness of this special place and the partnership work ongoing for nature.

Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) agreed with Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) in 2004 that LLTNPA would take over visitor and infrastructure management of the island. In 2012 RSPB Scotland purchased the Wards estate on the south side of the Endrick and they now manage this area as RSPB Loch Lomond.

The map below shows the area managed by each organisation within the NNR.

2 Land Management Map of the NNR



3 Legal tenure, liabilities and rights over Inchcailloch

Legal tenure, liabilities and rights over the island are as follows:

Rights Granted by Others to the NPA	
Formal Tenancies:	<p>The whole island is owned by NatureScot and has been managed by the National Park Authority since 2004. The current lease started on 1st April 2014 and is now running on tacit relocation. A new lease is under negotiation.</p> <p>Under the lease, NatureScot retain the rights to carry out deer control, carcass removal and browsing habitat impact assessment.</p>
Wayleaves and Servitudes:	None
Other Agreements including informal arrangements:	<p>A Management Plan for the island is in place detailing the management aims and collaborative work carried out by NatureScot and the Park Authority on the island as part of the wider Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve Partnership</p> <p>As an island in Loch Lomond, access to the property is only via water.</p>
Rights Granted by the NPA to Others	
Formal Tenancies:	None
Wayleaves and Servitudes:	None
Other Agreements including informal arrangements:	<p>Rights granted to Scottish Wildlife Trust to carry out grey squirrel control.</p> <p>Permits granted to commercial boat operators for the use of the Port Bawn pontoon and the North Pier jetty.</p>
Filming and Event Requests	Activities that fall outside Land Reform Act access rights and which are contrary to SOAC are not likely to be compatible with the aims of the management plan and will generally not be permitted.

Byelaws and other legal measures	
Loch Lomond Byelaws 2023	The Loch Lomond Byelaws 2023 apply to Inchcailloch. These cover a wide range of measures pertaining to boating and water safety on the loch. They include provisions in relation to the navigation and mooring of vessels, damage to nature and amenity, and nuisance that are pertinent to the management of Inchcailloch.
Tree Preservation Order	The trees on Inchcailloch are protected under a Tree Preservation Order.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	Inchcailloch is part of the Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI designated area under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
Natural Habitats Regulations 1994	Inchcailloch is part of the Loch Lomond Woods Special Area of Conservation and the Loch Lomond Ramsar site protected under the Habitats Regulations (as amended).
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act	The burial ground is a Scheduled Ancient Monument protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act.

4 Site Description

At 52 hectares, Inchcailloch is the NNR's largest island and is cloaked by oak woodland, part of Scotland's rainforest, which is particularly important because of its rich flora and distinctive communities of ferns, mosses, lichens, invertebrates and birds.

On Inchcailloch the woods are mainly sessile oak *Quercus petraea* with alder *Alnus glutinosa* coppice in the wetter areas and Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* on the two summits. The ground flora is somewhat variable, dominated by great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*, blaeberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*.

The woodlands are important for breeding tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*, redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, and the occasional pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*.

The bryophyte flora of the woodlands is of some interest, and contains Atlantic elements, although they are much less rich than woodlands further to the north-west, including those on the west banks of Loch Lomond.

The site is rich in invertebrates including the endangered beetle *Eutheia linearis* that lives in rotting vegetable material on Inchcailloch. Dor beetles, a type of dung beetle, are regularly encountered on the woodland floor.

Exposed rock outcrops on the island such as the north pier and summit path show pudding stone and other rock types of the Highland Boundary fault.

The history of the island includes its use as a nunnery in the 8th Century, then later a church and graveyard that are now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The remains of an old farmhouse are also present. Much of the island was farmed at one time and then planted with oak trees to produce bark for tanning leather. This history explains the fairly even age and species composition of many of the mature trees on the island.

The island offers some exceptional viewpoints and experiences. These include the tranquillity of the woodland experience along the path network and the depth of history revealed at the old church and burial site. The spectacular views north from the summit and south to the rest of the NNR from the summit trail are highly valued. The beach and small campsite at Port Bawn provide another unique and tranquil experience of the woodland and loch. The island provides the opportunity to engage with several of the Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park in an immersive way.

5 Our Vision for Inchcailloch

The woodland is comprised of trees of an increasing range of ages. It is a dynamic habitat with areas where regeneration is rejuvenating the woodland from its field layer to its canopy. Gradually a wider range of native tree species are being recruited to the canopy. Glades are dotted through the woodland and there is plenty of dead wood habitat to support the wide range of species that depend on it.

Inchcailloch is known as one of the best locations in the National Park for people to enjoy and learn about wildlife. The facilities for visitors are as accessible as possible so that the island can be presented to the widest possible range of people with different abilities and social backgrounds. The local community takes pride in the island and its relationship to the Balmaha area and is engaged in how it is managed. The effects of people's use of Inchcailloch on wildlife and on the quality of a visitor's experience are monitored and managed so that it can always remain a place for nature.

The main visitor management objective for Inchcailloch is for it to be an appropriately managed place for tranquil engagement with nature, including the ecology, geology and landscape of the island, as well as its rich history.

To achieve this vision, the following principles will be applied to the management of the island.

1. The nature conservation status of the island as part of the NNR, SAC, SSSI and Ramsar sites, its special landscape qualities and the protections applied to the Scheduled Ancient Monument mean that these features and their management will often need to take precedence over other forms of management or the aspirations of visitors. This is in line with the Sandford Principle for National Parks.
2. The protection and management of the natural heritage and historic features mean that there is little or no capacity for increasing the footprint of the infrastructure on the island. There is no scope for introducing running water or sewage treatment. There is very limited scope to facilitate 'all-abilities' access due to the nature of the habitats present and the character of the terrain.
3. Infrastructure standards and tree management need to comply with UK Visitor Safety Group 'Discovery Site' standards¹.
4. Visitor numbers, activities, impacts and behaviours need to be managed to protect the conservation features and facilitate tranquil engagement with nature.

¹ This site is considered to be similar in recreational terms to country parks and recreational forests. Easy to access, country park feel paths are appropriate. There is an expectation that the visitor will have a good understanding of personal responsibility and self-reliance is encouraged but not expected. It is also expected that the visitor will have some experience and knowledge of their surroundings. There will be some physical measures making hazards more obvious OR some local warning signs, leaflets, OR occasional staff presence. See <https://www.visitorsafety.group>

6 Overview of Management Objectives

The management objectives for Inchcailloch are listed here, with fuller details in the following sections

Management of the Natural Heritage	
Objective NH1:	Ensure Inchcailloch's woodlands are in favourable condition, and they can continue to develop under natural processes.
Objective NH2:	Management to maintain and enhance the animal biodiversity of the island.
Objective NH3:	Management to maintain and enhance the geodiversity of the island.
Objective NH4:	Management to maintain the Special Landscape Qualities, landscape character, experiential qualities and key viewpoints on the island.
Management of the Cultural Heritage	
Objective CH1:	Management of cultural heritage features
Management for People	
Objective VM1:	To provide a high-quality visitor experience for tranquil enjoyment and engagement with the natural and cultural heritage of Inchcailloch.
Objective VM2:	To provide high-quality opportunities for Education, Outreach and Volunteering
Infrastructure Management and Maintenance	
Objective IM1:	Provide and manage infrastructure to facilitate visitor enjoyment of the island that is compatible with its protected status.

7 Management of the Natural Heritage

Protected Areas and Special Features

Inchcailloch became part of the Loch Lomond NNR after its purchase by the Nature Conservancy in 1962. It was originally designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (now part of the Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI) for its nationally important oak woodland and its woodland breeding bird assemblage. Inchcailloch's woodland is of international importance and has been designated as part of the much larger Loch Lomond Woods Special Area for Conservation (SAC). This SAC also has otters as a qualifying feature and this charismatic species is known to frequent Inchcailloch.

Inchcailloch is part of the Loch Lomond Ramsar site for wetlands of international importance, designated for its Greenland white-fronted geese, three species of wetland plants and fen. These are not found on Inchcailloch.

Inchcailloch lies outside but near to the Loch Lomond Special Protection Area (SPA), a designation which recognises the international significance of the Loch's population of Greenland white-fronted geese. These geese don't use Inchcailloch, but they do roost elsewhere on the NNR. The SPA was also designated for its population of capercaillie, and they were occasionally recorded on Inchcailloch. Although they are now extinct in this part of Scotland, if they return in future, the protection of the SPA would still apply.

Although the species and habitats of the Ramsar site and SPA that led to designation are not found on Inchcailloch, the management of the island needs to take them into account in order to avoid any actions or other uses that could be deleterious to them.

The island's trees and woodlands are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, created in 1961. The TPO makes it an offence to 'cut down, top, lop or wilfully destroy or cause or permit the cutting down, topping, lopping, or wilful destruction of any trees specified in the First Schedule' without permission. The current TPO is due for review.

Inchcailloch is part of the Loch Lomond National Scenic Area. NSAs are a 1980's landscape designation and are the only Scottish designation that is based solely on the scenic quality of the landscape rather than its nature or cultural value. 40 areas in Scotland were identified including Loch Lomond as being of 'outstanding scenic beauty' that required to be safeguarded as part of Scotland's national heritage.

In 2000 the National Park (Scotland) Act came into being and in 2002 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park was designated. The Natural Environment Act 2026 has updated the National Parks Act. The National Park has four aims.

- (a) to conserve and enhance the area's natural and cultural heritage,
- (b) to promote sustainable management and use of the area's natural resources,
- (c) to promote public understanding and enjoyment of the area's natural and cultural heritage, and
- (d) to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development of the area's communities.

In 2012 work was commissioned to determine the Special Landscape Qualities of the National Park. The 2012 report “Special Landscape Qualities of the LLTNP” subsumes the NSAs within the National Park and identifies the Special Landscape Qualities for both designations. These are the qualities that make the landscape and scenery special and hence underpins the reason for the designation of both the NP and NSAs within it. They are qualities that are perceived and experienced by people, affecting the sense of place.

Seven Special Landscape Qualities were identified that are particularly significant to Inchcailloch. These are listed in the table below. These are experienced, enjoyed, and valued on Inchcailloch. The island also contributes strongly to the SLQs of the wider Loch Lomond landscape.

Ecological and Geological Feature	Protected Area
Beetle assemblage	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Breeding bird assemblage	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Bryophyte assemblage	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Fluvial Geomorphology of Scotland	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Greenland white-fronted goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>), non-breeding	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI/ Loch Lomond SPA/ Loch Lomond Ramsar Site
Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>), non-breeding	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Hydromorphological mire range	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	Loch Lomond Woods SAC
Upland oak woodland	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Vascular plant assemblage	Endrick Mouth and Islands SSSI
Western acidic oak woodland	Loch Lomond Woods SAC
Greenland white-fronted geese	Ramsar
Tufted loosestrife	Ramsar
Scottish dock	Ramsar
Eight-stamened waterwort	Ramsar
Fen community	Ramsar
Special Landscape Qualities	Protected Area
A multitude of Beautiful Islands	National Park and NSA
Immensity of Loch and Landscape	National Park and NSA
Two Lochs in One	National Park and NSA
Tranquillity	National Park and NSA

Ecological and Geological Feature	Protected Area
Banks of broadleaved woodland	National Park and NSA
The easily accessible splendour	National Park and NSA
World-renowned landscape famed for its rural beauty	National Park and NSA

Management Objectives for Natural Heritage Features

Objective NH1:

Ensure Inchcailloch's woodlands are in favourable condition, and they can continue to develop under natural processes.

The woodlands on Inchcailloch are very much a reflection of past periods of more intensive management. Cattle would have grazed the woodlands in the past and this would have helped to diversify the woodland and reduce the spread of plants like bracken, which can prevent tree regeneration. On Inchcailloch oak was selectively encouraged and planted for the leather tanning and charcoal industries. These woods are now dominated by oak with many trees being around 200 years old.

In more recent years, these woodlands have been managed with a relatively light touch and left to develop under natural processes, allowing them to very slowly diversify, both in terms of the range of tree ages in the woods and the species found within. Inchcailloch has a healthy range of age classes but there is limited potential for woodland regeneration because of the intact canopy, bracken cover and deer browsing.

The spread of bracken and invasive non-native plant species (INNS) pose a threat to the ecological integrity of the woodlands. Over the course of the last plan considerable effort has gone into making the island INNS-free and this work will continue. This has included removal of Himalayan balsam and invasive rhododendron whenever they have appeared on the island. It has also meant removal of self-seeded beech and larch seedlings. There are a few large over-mature beech trees near Port Bawn and a stand of larch on the summit near the north end of the island that have been allowed to remain for the structural diversity they add to the woodland. However, the larches are now at risk from the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum* and some are fire damaged and need to be considered for removal.

The highly invasive aquatic plant New Zealand pigmy weed *Crassula helmsii* is now widely present in southern Loch Lomond, including round the shores of Inchcailloch. As it is largely submerged, there are no available mechanisms for effective removal of this species.

Deer browsing is an important influence on the island woodlands too. Deer are heavy browsers of young trees, having a profound effect on the rate at which woodlands can regenerate. The deer on the island are almost exclusively fallow deer; part of a historic population that has lived on the Loch Lomond islands for centuries. Deer densities are high across the islands and Herbivore Impact Assessments (HIA) show that deer-browsing is too high, and further Loch Lomond wide action is required to ensure natural regeneration. We will therefore be working to reduce the impact of deer on the island woodlands. We will continue to monitor herbivore impacts.

An assessment in 2025 of the lower plants that are rainforest indicator species on the island has shown that several are at risk of long-term decline due to the even-aged nature of the mature trees. Targeted woodland management needs to be considered in order to ensure a new generation of suitably mature trees and shading conditions for future survival including colonisation of new trees by epiphytic species of lower plants.

We will work with neighbouring landowners and the Loch Lomond Islands Deer Management Group to co-ordinate deer management of the fallow deer herd.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective NH1:

Task No.	Task description
NH1.1	NPA to remove all terrestrial INNS plants on Inchcailloch.
NH1.2	NPA to manage bracken encroachment onto paths and visitor areas.
NH1.3	NPA to monitor and remove larch at risk from or infected with <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> .
NH1.4	NS to continue to carry out regular HIA to assess deer impacts; results will inform deer management to achieve favourable habitat and species condition.
NH1.5	NS and NPA to contribute to the implementation of the Loch Lomond Islands Deer Management Group, reviewing and setting cull figures
NH1.6	NS to continue to cull deer to reduce grazing and browsing impacts (in conjunction with deer control on Torrinch, and Clairinsh).
NH1.7	NPA to restrict campsite opening and restrict commercial boat access to the period from April to September inclusive each year. This is to facilitate safe management operations during the winter months, including deer and squirrel control and essential infrastructure maintenance.
NH1.8	NS to carry out Site Condition Monitoring in line with national programme.
NH1.9	NPA and NS to promote research into the extent to which the island's bracken and other ground flora and canopy shading have an influence on regeneration levels.
NH1.10	NPA and NS to investigate the need and options for targeted woodland management to secure the long-term ecological health of the woodland and presence of rainforest indicator lower plant species, including discussions with NNR partners about the outcomes of other rainforest management works
NH1.11	NPA to evaluate the approach to the use of campfires and barbeques on Inchcailloch, including at Port Bawn in relation to the new Scottish Wildfire Action Plan, to ensure that the woodland is protected from wildfire risks.
NH1.12	NPA to review the current Area TPO and replace it with an updated woodland TPO.

Objective NH2:

Management to maintain and enhance the animal biodiversity of the island.

The Loch Lomond islands have historically been and continue to be refuges for rare native fauna. For this to be maintained non-native fauna, such as American mink and grey squirrels, need to be controlled to allow native fauna to flourish.

Mink control is carried out on parts of the mainland NNR as part of ongoing work to ensure the safety of a reintroduced population of water voles. Mink are also a significant predator of ground-nesting birds and other native species. If resources become available to expand the mink control area to include more of Loch Lomond, this work should be extended to include Inchcailloch and the other NNR islands.

Whilst there are now no capercaillie left in Argyll, Perthshire or Stirlingshire it is possible that in future, the Scottish capercaillie population could recover and eventually recolonise this area. In that event, mink control would also likely benefit capercaillie as they are a ground nesting species.

The population of native red squirrels has been steadily increasing on either side of Loch Lomond in the last two decades, due to a sustained programme of grey squirrel control and the recolonisation of the area by pine martens, an arboreal predator well-equipped to hunt grey squirrels. Non-native grey squirrels pose a threat to native red squirrels both through competition and via the transmission of squirrel pox, which is usually deadly for red squirrels. Both species of squirrel are competent swimmers capable of moving freely between the islands and the mainland. Grey squirrels can feed well on large seeds such as acorns, and they generally outcompete red squirrels for resources in broadleaved woodlands in Scotland. Humanely controlling any grey squirrels from Inchcailloch and the other Loch Lomond islands will therefore help maintain a healthy population of red squirrels in the Loch Lomond area and lead to the recolonisation of the islands by red squirrels.

Inchcailloch's native woodland and separation from the mainland make it an important site for locally rare passerine bird species, such as spotted flycatchers and a wide range of other woodland species that are sometimes of interest for scientific research projects. The principle of monitoring and research into these species will be generally supported.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective NH2:

Task No.	Task description
NH2.1	NPA to consider scope for mink control on Inchcailloch if a wider mink control programme is set up for the whole NNR and the wider Loch Lomond catchment.
NH2.2	NPA to facilitate control of grey squirrel numbers by trapping and humane despatch carried out by SSRS or others, as part of a programme for the Loch Lomond islands.
NH2.3	NPA to support requests for scientific research projects where these are compatible with the conservation objectives of the island.

Objective NH3:

Management to maintain and enhance the geodiversity of the island.

The geological features on Inchcailloch are not qualifying interests of the designated sites but they are a valuable and interesting part of the story of the island and its position on the Highland Boundary Fault. The path network provides opportunities to stand on and inspect outcrops of these rocks and to view the geology at a landscape scale.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective NH3:

Task No.	Task description
NH3.1	NPA to incorporate the geological features and the processes that created them into educational work and interpretation of the island, including linkages to the interpretation at Balmaha Visitor Centre.

Objective NH4:

Management to maintain and enhance the Special Landscape Qualities, landscape character, experiential qualities and key viewpoints on the island.

In order to protect, conserve and enhance the key Special Landscape Qualities experienced and valued on Inchcailloch, this management plan sets out objectives to manage change and pressures specific to each SLQ. This will ensure that Inchcailloch continues to provide a unique opportunity to experience distinctive SLQs and contribute to the iconic landscape character and scenic beauty of Loch Lomond and the wider National Park.

The Key Special Landscape Qualities that are experienced on Inchcailloch are:***A multitude of Beautiful Islands***

Inchcailloch is one of only five islands within the National Park which align along the Highland Boundary Fault Zone. It is a significant geological feature that separates the Highlands and the Lowlands. These islands specifically express the parallel ridges that have formed due to the interaction between the rock masses affected by the fault line. The Islands stretch diagonally east to west along Loch Lomond. They are highly visible important landmarks in the Loch Lomond landscape and are significant geological structures that provide insights into the past environments and processes that have shaped what we now call Scotland.

Inchcailloch alongside the other Loch Lomond islands, form part of a unique and distinctive 'islandscape', which are a defining scenic characteristic of Loch Lomond which is appreciated from the surrounding slopes, the south and the Loch. The island studded scene is one of the most distinctive, well-known images of Loch Lomond. The islands form a contrast with the surrounding mountain ranges, especially those to the north and west. This makes the islands strongly appealing, inviting and tantalisingly accessible. Each island is highly distinctive, each varying in character. Some are inhabited, and many have a long history of habitation, with important remains still visible.

For this SLQ, management is needed to

- Retain or reinstate and provide more opportunities to good open views to experience the unique position of Inchcailloch on the Highland Boundary fault Line.
- Provide sensitive and well-designed interpretation opportunities to learn about the unique location of the island in geological terms and significance in Scotland's creation.
- Retain the prominent wooded character to link with Loch banks and shores and retain consistent and distinctive character and pattern of the 'isandscape' in line with Section NH1 of this plan.

Immensity of Loch and Landscape. Two Lochs in One.

Inchcailloch sits within the southern 'Lowland Lake' end of Loch Lomond. Due to its location on the Highland Boundary Fault Line the island provides people with a tangible and unique experience of the vastness of the Loch and the contrast between the southern settled 'Lowland Lake' and northern wilder 'Highland Loch' parts of Loch Lomond. This is expressed and experienced strongly at the summit viewpoint and where the existing network of paths leads to the water's edge on the southern and northern shores of the island.

The character of the 'Lowland Lake' is heavily influenced by past and modern human activity, settlement and land management. Inchcailloch bears evidence to this with its long and rich history of habitation, both ancient and more modern structures. Human activity and changes in land management have had a strong influence on the present character of the island.

The historic remnants of habitation and past land management such as the rare timber crannog and medieval church create prominent landmarks and convey a strong sense of history and place. The story these features tell of the rich and diverse past of the island are valued and enjoyed by people visiting the island.

Inchcailloch is valued for the accessible and perceptible experience it offers of the immense and diverse Loch.

For this SLQ, management is needed to:

- Retain or reinstate and provide more opportunities to good open views to experience the vastness and two lochs in one character of Loch Lomond.
- Provide sensitive and well-designed seating areas and interpretation opportunities to learn about the unique location of the island.
- Undertake management of the historical and cultural landmarks and features should be in line with section 6 of this plan.

Tranquillity

Despite Inchcailloch's accessibility and proximity to Balmaha, people can experience tranquillity on the island. A strong sense of peacefulness is expressed through the predominance of natural sounds, sights, dark skies and apparent absence of human settlement.

The interlock of land and water between the island and the loch shore fringe creates contrast between a diversity of enclosed and expansive waters which create areas of tranquillity, reflections and aquatic plants, and more exposed areas with waves and

lapping water. This is strongly experienced at Port Bawn, but it needs the careful management of camping numbers and facilities provided.

The limited intervention to the natural environment and landscape of Inchcailloch is valued for the experience of tranquillity that it provides and is experienced on the island.

For this SLQ, management is needed to:

- Retain the sense of peacefulness and predominance of natural sounds, sights, low levels man-made development and of light pollution on the island and surrounding waters.

Banks of Broadleaved woodland

Most of the islands on Loch Lomond are tree covered which provides a sense of unity with the wooded loch shores and a sense of seclusion when visited, a quality which in earlier times would have added to their attractiveness for settlement, defence and religious retreat. The heavily native wooded islands contribute to the mosaic of pattern, colour and textures of the Loch Lomond area.

Inchcailloch is densely wooded, predominantly native deciduous oakwoods. The oak woods tell the story of a time the island owners tapped into the demand for tannin a naturally occurring material found in oak bark to soften leather for leather belts used in machinery. The oak woodland and damp humid climate provide the perfect conditions for the wild hyacinth (bluebells). The carpet of bluebells is a renowned seasonal feature of the island. The bluebells are highly valued for their visual and aromatic qualities.

The oak woodlands of Inchcailloch are a key contribution to the SLQs of the Loch Lomond landscape and the island. They are valued for their:

- Sense of seclusion/shelter/refuge/tranquillity
- Cultural story of the past uses of the island
- Mosaic of pattern, colour, and texture
- Sensory qualities of movement, aromas and sounds
- Unity with the loch shores
- Habitat for nature

For this SLQ, management is needed to:

- Retain the enclosure, diversity and distinct pattern and density of woodland.
- Retain important ground level conditions for bluebells.
- Look for opportunities for woodland interpretation telling the story of the woodland landscape.

The easily accessible splendour. World-renowned landscape famed for its rural beauty

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is easily accessible from the major centres of population within the central belt and a major draw for visitors locally and worldwide. Loch Lomond has iconic status and for many is their first experience of the highland

landscape. The Loch and surrounds epitomise Scotland, a distinctive and inspiring country of loch, farmland, glens and mountains.

Inchcailloch is a stone's throw away from Balmaha, a prime tourist destination within the National Park. It is the most publicly accessible island on Loch Lomond and is a key contribution to these SLQs. The Island is valued for its accessibility, offering:

- An island experience on Loch Lomond
- Dramatic and stunning contrasting views
- A semi-wild camping area
- A network of good paths
- Secluded beach
- Toilet and picnic facilities
- Cultural experience
- Nature

For this SLQ, management is needed to:

- Retain and improve sensitive and landscape-led accessibility to the island, using low impact toilet, picnic, seating and camping facilities in appropriate locations.
- Retain and enhance views, interpretation, nature and cultural experience.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective NH4:

Task No.	Task description
NH4.1	NPA to manage vegetation and infrastructure at the summit viewpoint and viewpoints along path network to ensure that views are retained
NH4.2	NPA to set visitor management objectives to protect and improve opportunities for tranquil engagement with nature and the other SLQs of the island.
NH4.3	NPA to maintain accessibility for people to enjoy the special landscape qualities of the island and to retain them through appropriate design and maintenance of infrastructure including paths, toilets and jetties
NH4.4	NPA to manage the historical and cultural landmarks and features should be in line with section 6 of this plan.
NH4.5	NPA to include the landscape attributes in suitable non-technical language in interpretation and information about the island.

8 Management of the Cultural Heritage

Objective CH1:

Management of cultural heritage features

Inchcailloch is no longer inhabited on a permanent basis aside from the seasonal camp site at Bawn Port. However, in the past the island was inhabited, and has a rich cultural heritage. The island has been used as a Christian retreat, farmed, a deer park, utilised for its oak woodlands and is now enjoyed and valued for its nature, geological, cultural and recreational aspects. The island itself is named Inchcailloch, which, in Gaelic means 'island of the old or cowed woman'. after the legend of Saint Kentigerna, a daughter of an Irish King and mother of Saint Fillan, who settled here and set up a nunnery. She died here in 734AD and 500 years later a church was built here and dedicated to her memory. The church was in constant use until 1770, long after the church fell into ruin the local people continued to use the cemetery. The last burial took place on the island in 1947. The church and burial ground are recognised as the only Scheduled Ancient Monument in or around the Loch Lomond area.

The historic remnants of habitation create prominent landmarks and convey a strong sense of history and place. The story these features tell of the rich and diverse past the Island are valued and enjoyed by people visiting the island.

Management of the historical features of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and the space around them should be retained and cleared of overgrown vegetation and kept to a standard that they are still readable landmarks on the island. There are interpretation opportunities for upgraded or new sensitively designed and sited panels and seating to allow people to enjoy and immerse in the story about the historical aspect of the island.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective CH1:

Task No.	Task description
CH1.1	NPA to develop a detailed work programme for cultural heritage features.
CH1.2	NPA to obtain approval from HES for the proposed actions over the life of the plan
CH1.3	NPA to progress the protection of SAM features e.g. gravestone shelter
CH1.4	NPA to undertake management of SAM to allow visitors - e.g. tree safety, bracken and rush strimming
CH1.5	NPA to undertake management or removal of the fallen tree and its problematic root plate
CH1.6	NPA to incorporate the history of the island and its historical features into educational work and interpretation of the island.
CH1.7	NPA to investigate options for on-site informational signage and interpretation about the historical features, including reviewing linkages to the interpretation at Balmaha Visitor Centre.

9 Management for People

Objective VM1:

To provide a high-quality visitor experience for tranquil enjoyment and engagement with the natural and cultural heritage of Inchcailloch.

One of the main aims for NNRs in Scotland is to connect people with nature. Inchcailloch's proximity to and accessibility from the Central Belt make it a "flagship" resource, hosting in the region of 25,000 thousand visitors annually. Its unique position on the Highland Boundary Fault and in the National Park and NSA also make it a uniquely inspiring part of the NNR suite, with remarkable viewpoints and opportunities to connect with nature.

To facilitate this, Inchcailloch has a network of paths and boardwalks, visitor lavatories, a rangers' hut, picnic tables, a camping ground, signage and interpretation for visitors and a jetty at the northeastern end of the island where the ferry from Balmaha docks.

Whilst providing an excellent visitor experience, these facilities are in a variable state of repair, and in some cases require significant replacement as addressed in Section 10 below.

Inchcailloch has no drinking water supply, no mains power supply and very limited sewage treatment capacity. There is limited boat access for transporting tools, materials and people for undertaking management or maintenance work.

Visitor usage information and data for Inchcailloch have been collated and reviewed. See Appendix 1. It shows that there are a number of visitor management issues that need to be addressed. Options that can be considered to help address these include:

- Reviewing and updating the existing visitor guidelines and information on our website and signage on the island to promote responsible behaviour in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- Using the existing Loch Lomond Byelaws for setting expected standards and where necessary undertaking enforcement. These include Byelaws:
 - 3.5(1) Reckless or Negligent Navigation or Use - all Vessels
 - 3.5(5)(a) Securing a Vessel and tying up, anchoring and mooring - all Vessels
 - 3.13(2) Damage to natural and cultural heritage
- Putting in place formal Management Rules for Inchcailloch that are enforceable under civil law

Campfires at Port Bawn should only be lit in the metal fire pits provided but are frequently recorded elsewhere, causing damage and fire risk. The use of BBQs and fire pits at the campsite and Port Bawn needs to be reviewed, in particular in relation to preventing damage to vegetation and infrastructure and managing wildfire risks during dry periods.

There have been several recorded instances of unbooked campers pitching at the Port Bawn campsite, sometimes causing disturbance or concern to booked campers. Management of the campsite needs to be reviewed to see if unauthorised use of it by unbooked campers can be better controlled.

The pontoon at Port Bawn is essential to use of the island by larger vessels including water bus services. However, it is also subject to repeated misuse for unauthorised mooring by many leisure craft. The management and use of the pontoon needs to be reviewed. The use of the bay for mooring by pleasure craft can also lead to noise including amplified music and antisocial behaviour at night. Management options for moorings should be considered.

The pontoon infrastructure makes it possible for larger numbers of passengers including larger groups to visit the island. There can be occasions where some groups, particular types of activity or sheer numbers can dominate the available space. The Terms and Conditions in our usage agreements with commercial boat operators can be reviewed and applied more robustly to set parameters round the types and timings of activities and group sizes to help ensure that management objectives for Inchcailloch are being met.

Dogs brought by visitors, often in private boats, can sometimes run loose on the island with the potential to cause disturbance to wildlife and other users. Measures to better manage dogs should be considered.

In addition, and as per the lease, the NPA is responsible for managing the Health and Safety of all visitors, enforcing any NPA byelaws and management rules that are in place, and upholding the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. It is accepted that the effectiveness of visitor management measures will be influenced by the staff resources available for visitor engagement and enforcement. Targeting of staff presence will be needed in relation to particular issues or problems to help set visitor expectations and patterns of behaviour. Blanket compliance by all visitors all of the time is not likely.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective VM1:

Task No.	Task description
VM1.1	NPA to review operation of campsite and use of fire pits and BBQs, updating guidelines, campsite terms and conditions, website content and signage where required.
VM1.2	NPA to review usage agreements with commercial boat operators and organised groups to support the island management objectives.
VM1.3	NPA to collate and review visitor usage and impact data and analysis for monitoring of pressures and for determining Limits of Acceptable Change and parameters for determining acceptable group sizes, types of activity, dog management and usage by commercial operators
VM1.4	NPA to determine best options and undertake production of updated visitor guidelines, more formal Management Rules or application of the Loch Lomond Byelaws to help control usage of the island in line with management objectives.
VM1.5	NPA to monitor and report on visitor numbers, activities, impacts and management tasks
VM1.6	NPA is responsible for visitor H&S and implementation of SOAC and any visitor guidelines, and enforcement of management rules or byelaws laws which support responsible visitor access.

Objective VM2:

To provide high-quality opportunities for Education, Outreach and Volunteering.

Inchcailloch is ideally suited for providing unique opportunities for education, outreach and volunteering work. This needs to be reviewed and refreshed in relation to the rest of the NNR and the new opportunities now in place on the RSPB section on the mainland. It also needs to be reviewed in relation to the other education, outreach and volunteering activities in the National Park, particularly those at the Balmaha Visitor Centre and other locations on east Loch Lomond

Inchcailloch provides a unique location for both formal and informal engagement opportunities, either led directly by the National Park Ranger Service, or from a self-led perspective. It offers an immersive journey accessed via a ferry which may be a first-time experience for many audiences. A guided day visit, with place-based related activities, a practical conservation task or nature connection themed session may be the first introduction to the island for participants. Being in green and blue spaces and connecting to nature has proven positive impacts on wellbeing and is one of the core reasons for encouraging schools, young people, people with lived experience and from seldom heard or seen communities to visit.

Learning for Sustainability, an entitlement for all learners in Scotland, combines global citizenship, sustainable development and outdoor learning to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences. Inchcailloch can provide the ideal location for outdoor learning and community learning engagement with its rich natural and cultural heritage. For many of the participants it also provides a day to escape, to feel relaxed and free. Retaining this quiet form of engagement is vital. Suitability for smaller groups is key to providing a high quality of experience.

There are various barriers to some audiences accessing and visiting the island. Costs of the ferry being highlighted by many and a core reason that this is included in the National Parks Travel grant process. Other physical barriers remain, but some cannot be avoided due to the nature of the island's geography and path infrastructure.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective VM2:

Task No.	Task description
VM2.1	Review and refresh the Inchcailloch Teaching Guide pack.
VM2.2	Monitor and report on travel grant applications for Inchcailloch sessions
VM2.3	Investigate case study resource gaps – consider how Inchcailloch can complement the refreshed National Park Nature and Climate Education pack.
VM2.4	Develop promotional resources to encourage more communities facing barriers to visiting, such as videos, story books and case studies.

10. Infrastructure Management and Maintenance

Objective IM1:

Provide and manage infrastructure to facilitate visitor enjoyment of the island that is compatible with its protected status.

Much of the infrastructure on Inchcailloch is constructed using wood and was installed over 20 years ago. Significant repairs and replacements need to be planned and delivered. In particular:

- The north jetty, and public lavatories need significant work. Full replacement may be necessary.
- The management and use of the ranger base needs to be reviewed to determine its requirements and the specifications of any replacement building if required.
- Extensive repairs on a like for like basis have been carried out on the board walk and other sections of path. The specifications for this work need to be reviewed to consider the use of other materials with a longer working life than wood.
- Much of the signage should be updated to include updated information, correct logos and imagery and to replace damaged signage where applicable in accordance with the agreed Loch Lomond NNR Communication Plan 2026.

The maintenance of the site infrastructure will be carried out in line with the standard approach outlined in the National Park Authority's Estates Asset Management Policy, which is to a standard that at the very least meets all legal and regulatory requirements respective to the asset type. Programmes are in place for statutory and regulatory compliance, planned preventative maintenance, reactive maintenance and property development. Some infrastructure will require complete replacement in the lifetime of the plan, needing capital investment projects.

Tasks planned to inform and achieve Objective IM1:

Task No.	Task description
IM1.1	NPA to produce a new Planned Preventative Maintenance schedule to cover all elements of Statutory Compliance and cyclical maintenance activities to keep our infrastructure including trees near them in a safe condition. This will be managed through the NPA's management system.
IM1.2	NPA to manage reactive maintenance and record it through the NPA estates management system. This will cover all general reactive maintenance tasks relating to the estate's assets following inspections and reports.
IM1.3	NPA and NS to develop, seek funding for, and implement capital funding projects to replace or refurbish the North Jetty and Public Toilets and other infrastructure where required.
IM1.4	NPA to maintain, update, and as necessary replace, the signage in accordance with the Loch Lomond NNR Communication Plan and any signage strategy that addresses the whole NNR.
IM1.5	NPA to maintain all paths and demarcated routes for suitable public access.
IM1.6	NPA to maintain all other existing infrastructure, including picnic benches, boardwalks and buildings.

11. Management Plan delivery

Objective MP1:

Implement the management plan, including annual resource planning, work programmes and reporting.

A management group of NPA staff from relevant teams needs to be re-established to ensure that delivery of this plan is resourced, progressed, monitored and reported on. There also needs to be close coordination with NatureScot over the Inchcailloch Management Plan, with all NNR partners through the NNR Working Group and reporting to the Loch Lomond NNR Board.

This management cycle will require the recording and analysis of relevant data and information about the management of Inchcailloch. The available information used to inform this plan has been compiled from a variety of sources and reviewed and is presented in Annex 1. There is patchy or limited data on several matters, and the several available sources aren't co-ordinated. There is scope to improve this.

There is also scope to improve the approach to PR and communications about Inchcailloch as a high-profile part of the Loch Lomond NNR. A communications plan is to be produced and delivered.

Task No.	Task description
MP1.1	NPA to produce annual work programmes for all actions assigned to the NPA.
MP1.2	NPA and NS to arrange scheduled Inchcailloch Management Liaison Meetings to ensure coordination and collaboration as required.
MP1.3	NPA and NS to ensure that a combined report on delivery of the plan is produced annually and provided to the Loch Lomond NNR Board.
MP1.4	NPA and NS to provide appropriate updates to the scheduled meetings of the NNR Working Group.
MP1.5	NPA and NS to ensure that matters pertaining to Inchcailloch are addressed in the Loch Lomond NNR Communication Plan
MP1.6	NPA and NS to develop and agree processes for recording relevant management information to facilitate efficient and effective resource planning, management, monitoring and reporting.

12. Document properties

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Date: 23/10/2026

Links

For information about Scotland's National Nature Reserves and further information about Loch Lomond NNR please visit the [NatureScot](https://www.nature.scot) website.
(www.nature.scot/loch-lomond)

For information on the protected areas associated with Loch Lomond NNR please go to the [NatureScot data services](https://www.nature.scot/data-services) webpages.

For information about Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, please visit the National Park Authority website. (www.lochlomond-trossachs.org)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Inchcailloch Management Plan update 2026. Data sets and testimonials

[Inchcailloch data sets review May 2026.docx](#)