

Biodiversity Report

2021–2023



CMAL

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd
Stòras Mara Cailleannach Eò

Foreword

We are pleased to present our Biodiversity Report 2021–2023 in line with our duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. Our report highlights the steps we have taken in the past three years to further the conservation of biodiversity while undertaking our activities and providing our services.

Introduction

Our purpose and aims

Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) is wholly owned by Scottish Ministers and is charged with owning and developing ferries, ports, harbours and associated infrastructure that support both the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) and the Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS). In addition to owning and developing these government assets, we are the Statutory Harbour Authority for a number of ports.

Our **mission** is to provide, safeguard and develop ferries and harbours.

Our **vision** is to be the pre-eminent provider of effective and leading-edge vessels and port infrastructure for the communities that we serve.

Our **goals** are to provide safe and efficient vessels, harbours and all associated port infrastructure for the operators, communities and all users in and around Scotland; through consultation and involvement of stakeholders and to adopt a robust long-term planning horizon.

To do this we:

- maintain, improve and enhance assets such as vessels and the land and property around piers and harbours
- seek extra investment to invest in ferries and harbour facilities, making a real difference for people and businesses using these lifeline services
- work with stakeholders within Scotland and the wider maritime community to be acknowledged as the principal provider of the most cost-effective yet innovative ferries and port infrastructure to the benefit of the communities we serve

Our Corporate Plan

Our three-year corporate plan sets out our key business objectives to deliver an environmentally responsible service in line with the Scottish Government's strategic objective of creating a greener Scotland. It includes the following:

- ✓ We will continue to take a seat on European research groups and consortia who are developing low carbon technologies.
- ✓ We will maintain a focus on carbon reduction and emissions by introducing new technology in both our ferry fleet and ports.
- ✓ Our ferries will continue to be designed with efficient hull forms and efficient engines, thus reducing fuel consumption whilst taking into consideration operational requirements.
- ✓ We will explore options for investment of ferry mid-life overhaul, extending useful life.
- ✓ Vessel's surplus to requirements will be either sold or recycled.
- ✓ We will actively monitor the effects of climate change on rising sea levels and design port infrastructure accordingly.

Actions to protect and enhance biodiversity

Protection of biodiversity during harbour construction works

The maintenance and development of our harbour and port infrastructure can have significant impacts on the local environment. We work closely with our consultants and regulators to identify impacted species and habitats and to put in place protection and mitigation measures. Construction Environmental Management

Plans are developed for projects to ensure that appropriate surveys are completed, mitigation is implemented and that all licence conditions are fulfilled.

SPOTLIGHT

Kyleakin Harbour, Isle of Skye

At the harbour, planned demolition of two redundant dolphin structures was suspended for two months when a nest containing three gull chicks was found on one of the dolphins. We returned to carry out the work once the chicks were fully fledged and had left the nest.

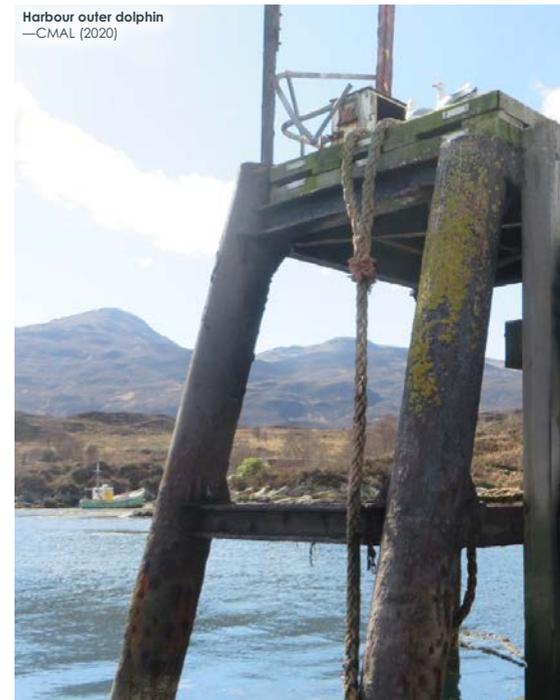
Harbour dolphins
—CMAL (2020)



Harbour outer dolphin
—CMAL (2020)



Harbour outer dolphin
—CMAL (2020)



SPOTLIGHT

Brodick Harbour, Isle of Arran

During the Brodick Old Pier Demolition project, it was identified that otter, black guillemot, harbour porpoise, shellfish and fish species were at risk of being impacted by the demolition and construction works.

Biodiversity impact mitigation measures included 'soft-start' procedures, covering of pipes and cavities at night, installation of a trail camera monitoring an identified otter holt, monitoring for unanticipated silt plumes and a Marine Mammal Observer (MMO) keeping watch and monitoring noise levels during specified works.

An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) provided oversight of all demolition works to ensure that the protected species and other wildlife were not impacted and to halt works if required.



Black guillemot nesting box at Brodick —Nadarra Ecology Ltd (2022)

Enhancement of biodiversity at ports

We are committed to improving biodiversity at our harbours and ports and we work in partnership with our Harbour Operator to achieve the Keep Scotland Beautiful Ports and Harbours Environmental Award.

Based on the results of Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Reports and Environmental Impact Assessments prepared for our projects, we routinely explore opportunities to enhance biodiversity.



Award presentation —CMAL (2023)

SPOTLIGHT

Brodick, Isle of Arran

During preparation for demolition works at the old pier at Brodick, it was identified that a number of black guillemots were nesting underneath the structure. As well as mitigation measures such as undertaking works out-with the breeding season, we worked with consultants to design and install ten black guillemot nesting boxes underneath the new pier.

The nesting boxes have been used by black guillemots for a number of years and were replaced with an improved, more robust design in 2023.

SPOTLIGHT

Clyde Marine Planning Partnership

CMAL is a member of the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership (CMPP). The CMPP is the delegated authority for marine planning in the Clyde Marine Region and is responsible for developing a Regional Plan for the area, that is statutory in nature. As a member of the CMPP we will be a statutory consultee in all marine pre-application and licence applications.

The core objectives of the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership include using the ecosystem approach to develop and implement marine planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) initiatives.



Otter —lightpoet via Envato

SPOTLIGHT

Port Askaig Harbour, Isle of Islay

It was found that investigatory works and subsequent enabling works at the harbour were likely to cause disturbance to otters, however, the risk of adverse impacts were assessed to be very low.

To enable investigation works to proceed, an Otter Protection Plan was developed to manage any such risks including the creation of a 30 metre protection zone around the otter holt for the duration of the works.

Brodick, Arran —CMAL (2023)



SPOTLIGHT

Largs, North Ayrshire

A small rocky beach within the boundary of the port was identified as an area that could be managed to encourage the establishment of native flora to benefit local biodiversity. The area is proactively managed and monitored, ensuring the vegetation growth does not impact harbour operations.

It is hoped that this management option can be replicated at other ports to enhance biodiversity.

Mainstreaming biodiversity



CMAL Office, Port Glasgow
—CMAL (2023)

Embedding biodiversity protection into CMAL's culture

A significant action as part of our efforts to mainstream biodiversity throughout the organisation, was to recruit an Environmental & Sustainability Manager in 2023. Their remit includes supporting the business to embed the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in our activities and services. This is being achieved through the revision and development of internal policies, procedures and plans.

CMAL recognises the importance of improving staff awareness to help mainstream biodiversity and combine this with supporting local projects by staff volunteering their time to help in projects such as community gardening schemes.

SPOTLIGHT

Review of internal processes and procedures

It has been identified that our internal procedures can be further developed to ensure biodiversity enhancement and climate mitigation is factored into our future construction projects and in management of our harbour and port assets. Work is underway to make these improvements.

SPOTLIGHT

Volunteering at local charitable organisations

Greenock

A number of CMAL staff spent the day volunteering at a local charitable organisation that delivers a programme of residential youth voyages at sea for disadvantaged young people.

The voyages provide personal and social development while raising environmental awareness of the marine environment.



Staff volunteering
—CMAL (2022)

Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity

CMAL's three-year Corporate Plan and Environmental Policy lays out our commitment to reducing the impact of our activities and services on the environment through the effective control and minimisation of our emissions to air, water and land.

We take action to mitigate the impacts of climate change through decarbonisation and to build resilience into the design of our activities and assets using nature-based solutions where possible.

SPOTLIGHT

New Islay vessel enabling works project

Kennacraig, Port Askaig and Port Ellen

The project includes the provision of shore power for overnight cold-ironing of the two new Islay-class vessels due to be delivered in 2024 and 2025. The ability of the new vessels to use shore power will reduce emissions and noise from running the engines overnight while the vessels are at berth.

Port Ellen
—Iain Erskine

SPOTLIGHT

Cumbrae slipway reconstruction project

Isle of Cumbrae

The project is in the design stage of the reconstruction of the existing slipway and shoreside works to develop onshore facilities. Biodiversity and climate change mitigation is being considered in the design standards for the project including the installation of eco-engineered wildlife habitats and sustainable travel infrastructure such as cycling facilities and electric vehicle charging points.

SPOTLIGHT

New terminal building at Tarbert

Isle of Harris

The significant redevelopment at the port that was completed in early 2023 included construction of a new terminal building. The opportunity was taken to install an air source heating system in the new building, significantly reducing heating energy consumption and resulting carbon emissions.



Tarbert, Harris
—CMAL (2023)

Public engagement and workforce development

The nature of our activities requires regular engagement with the public with regard to port infrastructure projects and the design and deployment of new vessels. Environmental considerations are a feature of engagement sessions where we address concerns about the potential impact on protected habitats, species and conservation areas. We engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including regulators, local community groups and conservation groups.

We support community groups and charity organisations around the CMAL network that are working to improve their environment, predominantly through monetary donations but also through donation of equipment and staff volunteers.

SPOTLIGHT

CMAL Corporate Social Responsibility Award

The award provides support to community groups and charity organisations around the CMAL network. Initiatives supported through the fund include an organisation that provides mentoring for young people about the importance of valuing and protecting the marine environment and supporting them to develop and deliver improvement initiatives.

Research and monitoring

We actively seek opportunities to support research related to our primary activities. During the period we have supported research into alternative marine fuels and low-carbon maritime technologies.

We monitor local wildlife during construction projects to minimise impact and prevent harm and we monitor the impact of climate change on sea levels and weather around our network.

SPOTLIGHT

Lifecycle Energy Solutions for Clean Scotland/UK Maritime Economy

In partnership with the University of Strathclyde we secured a grant to fund a six-month research project exploring the technical, operational and commercial viability of using zero-carbon fuels to power ferries. The key objectives of the project were to propose the roadmap to low carbon shipping and to support life cycle decision-making for policy makers and shipowners.

SPOTLIGHT

Monitoring weather and tides

After a successful pilot, we have installed wind, weather and tide monitoring equipment at eighteen of our harbours and ports, providing vessel crew with information to assist their operations and allowing us to collect data to help design climate-resilient vessels, harbours and ports.

SPOTLIGHT

HYSEAS project

In partnership with a number of UK and European partners, we secured funding for a project to bring to market the world's first green-hydrogen-powered sea-going ferry. The project included the development and shore-based testing of the drivetrain, integration within a new concept ferry design and future monitoring of its performance in a real island-to-island environment between the Orkney Islands. It included a work package aimed at rapid exploitation based on evidence from the project with the aim to overcome the capital investment barriers to replication of the vessel design.



Biodiversity highlights and challenges

We have delivered a number of initiatives to protect and enhance biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of climate change while undertaking our activities in the past three years.

Highlights for the period include:

- The employment of an Environmental & Sustainability Manager to identify opportunities and support the business to improve and enhance biodiversity when undertaking its activities
- The protection of wildlife including otters and black guillemots during large scale demolition and construction works
- The support of local organisations to raise awareness and improve biodiversity through funding and staff volunteers
- Research projects into the decarbonisation of Scottish ferries to mitigate the impacts of climate change

Challenges for the period include:

- The delay of a demolition project due to the nesting of seabirds on harbour structures resulting in additional cost to the project
- The increasing cost of materials putting pressure on projects to reduce capital expenditure

Further work to mainstream biodiversity throughout the business will identify additional enhancement opportunities and we look forward to the positive impact we can make in the future.



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