

# Marine and Coastal Conservation of Loch Linnhe (MaCCOLL)

## Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended 31 January 2026

**Scottish Charity Number:** SC053088

**Legal form:** Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

**Date established:** January 2024

**Reporting period:** 1 February 2025 - 31 January 2026

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## 1. Reference and administrative details

**Charity name:** Marine and Coastal Conservation of Loch (MaCCOLL)

**Scottish Charity Number:** SC053088

**Legal form:** Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

**Principal/registered office:**

Duror and Kentallen Community Centre

Duror

PA38 4DS

**Trustees during the reporting year:**

Elizabeth Paul

Campbell Thomson

Alan Young

Paul Williams

Paul Davies

Jennifer Bodde

Natasha MaCallum Miller

Robin Stopford

Adrian Ezard

Jonathan Baxter

Alisdair Salmon

**Trustees at the date of approval of this report:**

Elizabeth Paul

Campbell Thomson

Alan Young

Paul Williams

Paul Davies

Jennifer Bodde

Natasha MaCallum Miller

Robin Stopford

Adrian Ezard

Jonathan Baxter

Alisdair Salmon

**Independent examiner/accountant:**

Brian Morton

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## 2. Structure, governance and management

MaCCOLL was established in January 2024 by members of the communities of Duror and Kentallen as a community-led conservation charity dedicated to the protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment of Loch Linnhe.

MaCCOLL is constituted as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and is governed by its constitution and the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

The trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, ensuring that its activities further its charitable purposes and that its resources are appropriately managed.

During the reporting year, MaCCOLL continued to develop its governance arrangements, volunteer network, partnerships and operational capacity.

### **Trustee recruitment, induction and training:**

In 2024/25 Trustees undertook training and development to support effective governance and oversight. This included induction for all trustees led by independent consultant Jane Isaac. This covered key policies, procedures and approval processes. Further training was provided by Fauna and Flora looking at Trustee responsibilities.

New trustees are directed to the shared folder where we keep our organisations policies and procedures and asked to familiarise themselves with these as part of their induction.

The policies and procedures were revisited at a board meeting in Spring 2026, when trustees reviewed and formally signed off the policies and procedures.

### **Changes to trustees during the year:**

None

The trustees meet regularly to consider the charity's activities, finances, governance, projects, risks and future development.

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### 3. Charitable purposes

The organisations purposes are:

- to advance education and research in the marine and coastal environment of Loch Linnhe through a programme of conservation events and activities for the benefit of the communities of Duror and Kentallen, as defined by the Duror and Kentallen Community Council boundary, and the wider general public;
- to provide or organise recreational activities to promote the value of the marine and coastal environment of Loch Linnhe for the benefit of the communities of Duror and Kentallen and the wider general public;
- to advance the environmental protection and conservation of Loch Linnhe, including promoting the sustainable management of its natural resources through educational and recreational activities for the benefit of the general public;
- the advancement of community development and resilience through the design and delivery of a range of activities designed to help Duror and Kentallen be vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities for all who live and work there; and
- any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to the preceding purposes.

MaCCOLL is dedicated to preserving and protecting the marine and coastal environment of Loch Linnhe. Its vision is based on community-led conservation, working closely with local communities and other stakeholders to develop understanding, promote sustainable management and support the long-term health of the area's marine and coastal environment.

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### 4. Objectives and approach

MaCCOLL's primary aim is to identify, monitor and record key species and habitats within the Loch Linnhe area, generating ecological information to improve understanding of the region's marine and coastal biodiversity.

Records generated through MaCCOLL's monitoring activities are submitted, where appropriate, through established recording portals and national biodiversity recording schemes. This allows locally collected information to contribute to wider scientific understanding and provides an evidence base to

help inform, prioritise and measure future conservation and restoration initiatives.

Drawing on the area's maritime heritage and strong community interest in the natural environment, MaCCOLL's biodiversity monitoring programme is centred around four interconnected project areas:

- Atlantic salmon and freshwater habitats;
- flapper skate and marine biodiversity;
- Eurasian otter; and
- coastal and seabird monitoring.

While these flagship projects provide a focus for activity, MaCCOLL's broader objective is to record and better understand all species and habitats encountered through its surveys.

Together, these projects contribute to a community-led, source-to-sea approach to understanding, protecting and restoring biodiversity across the Cuil Bay and wider Loch Linnhe area.

The organisation's longer-term vision is to support the recovery of biodiversity and natural ecological processes across interconnected marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments. Alongside this, MaCCOLL aims to foster an informed and engaged community that understands local environmental challenges and actively participates in conservation.

The organisation is committed to developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of volunteers through training, mentoring, citizen science, practical survey work and community events.

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## 5. Activities and achievements during the year

The year ended 31 January 2026 was a significant period of development for MaCCOLL.

Projects that had previously been at an early planning stage developed into active programmes, membership remained strong, the volunteer network broadened, partnerships strengthened and the organisation secured funding to increase its staff capacity.

## Membership and volunteering

MaCCOLL' s membership remained strong during the year and increased slightly to **235 members**.

This provides the organisation with a committed community base for volunteer recruitment, fundraising, biodiversity monitoring, education and conservation activities.

Volunteer involvement broadened across the organisation, with more people participating in a wider range of projects. Structured training increased and new groups were established, including the **Seabirds & More Group**.

Three additional **BSAC-qualified snorkel guides** joined the volunteer team, significantly increasing MaCCOLL' s capacity to undertake in-water surveys and marine monitoring.

The trustees consider the development of a wider and increasingly skilled volunteer network to be an important achievement and an essential part of MaCCOLL' s community-led approach.

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## 6. Marine biodiversity and flapper skate monitoring

The flapper skate and marine biodiversity team has established a structured survey programme developed in close collaboration with **Seasearch Scotland and NatureScot**.

To date, **41 surveys have been submitted to Seasearch**, incorporating snorkel, SCUBA and Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV) methodologies.

Although flapper skate have remained elusive, surveys have documented a range of ecologically important species and habitats, including Priority Marine Features such as:

- seagrass beds;
- tall sea pens; and
- spiny dogfish.

The surveys are contributing to a growing local evidence base about marine biodiversity and ecological conditions within Loch Linnhe, while providing opportunities for volunteers to develop marine survey and recording skills.

Marine monitoring increased during the reporting period, with surveys using a wider range of methods. Notable records included **two Spurdog sharks**.

Data collection and analysis are supported by *Galathea*, a bespoke computer application developed by MaCCOLL volunteers to assist with the storage, coding, analysis and reporting of biodiversity information, including survey imagery and video.

Subject to additional funding, MaCCOLL intends to enhance survey capacity through the acquisition of a drop-down camera system to complement existing methodologies. This would lower barriers to participation and allow a wider range of volunteers to contribute to subtidal biodiversity monitoring.

MaCCOLL also led a collaborative funding application to the **COAST-R Network Small Grants Programme**, involving NatureScot, Edinburgh Napier University and community groups from across the Argyll Coast and Islands Hope Spot, to support community-led flapper skate and egg nursery surveys. At the reporting date, the outcome of this application was awaited.

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## 7. Atlantic salmon and freshwater habitat

MaCCOLL has developed a programme of Atlantic salmon habitat and population monitoring in partnership with **Lochaber Fisheries Conservation Trust** and other stakeholders, with strong support from local landowners.

The programme focuses on the **River Duror and Salachan Burn catchments**, historically important salmon rivers flowing into Loch Linnhe.

Planned activities include habitat assessments, electrofishing surveys, genetic sampling of salmonids, including Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), and water quality and temperature monitoring.

A habitat assessment undertaken in 2025 identified excellent habitat potential within the River Duror catchment to support juvenile salmonids. This provided strong justification for further survey and potential restoration work.

MaCCOLL has also secured access to valuable historical datasets. Combining this information with new community-based monitoring will help establish a stronger evidence base to inform future restoration activity, potentially including habitat enhancement, riparian woodland expansion and measures to improve freshwater resilience.

At the reporting date, funding for the next stage of this specific project was being sought.

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## 8. Eurasian otter monitoring

During 2025, MaCCOLL established a structured two-year monitoring programme for Eurasian otters.

Trained volunteers undertake regular surveys of defined coastal and riverine areas, recording signs, sightings and habitat conditions. Data is shared through appropriate national recording schemes.

The project also contributes to wider understanding of potential threats affecting local otter populations through the collection and analysis of mortality records.

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## 9. Coastal and seabird monitoring

The newly established **Seabirds & More Group** meets monthly and contributes records through **BirdTrack** and **Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)** activities.

The group is developing local expertise in bird identification and monitoring and provides additional opportunities for volunteer training and participation.

Plans are being developed for a bird-ringing programme on **Eilean Balnagowan** during the spring and summer. Subject to the necessary permissions and arrangements, this work will improve understanding of local bird populations and migration patterns while providing additional volunteer training opportunities.

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## 10. Environmental education and community engagement

Education and community engagement remain central to MaCCOLL's charitable purposes.

The **Duror Nature Club** developed into a successful weekly after-school programme for local primary school children and became an established part of wider school learning.

The club provides hands-on opportunities for children to explore their local environment and develop an understanding of biodiversity, conservation and the importance of protecting natural habitats and species.

MaCCOLL also supported community engagement through newsletters, social media, educational activities, expert talks and film events.

These activities have helped raise awareness of local environmental issues, strengthen community participation and foster a growing sense of stewardship for the area's natural heritage.

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## 11. Events, outreach and fundraising

MaCCOLL continued to use community events and activities to promote awareness of the marine and coastal environment and support the charity's work.

The screening of **Riverwoods** was a particular highlight during the year.

Fundraising activities, including the **Race Night** and **100 Club**, continued to provide financial support for MaCCOLL's conservation and community activities.

MaCCOLL also attended the **Coastal Communities Network conference**, providing an opportunity to raise the organisation's profile, share experience and develop wider networks.

The organisation contributed to wider community initiatives, including the **Oban creel Christmas tree** project.

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## 12. Partnerships and collaborative working

MaCCOLL works closely with a wide range of organisations that provide advice, technical expertise, organisational support and collaborative opportunities.

**Fauna & Flora International** continues to provide organisational support.

The **Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS)** provides scientific advice and opportunities for knowledge exchange.

The **Argyll Coast and Islands Hope Spot** provides opportunities to promote community engagement and awareness of marine conservation.

Project-specific collaborations include:

- NatureScot;
- Seasearch Scotland;
- Orkney Skate Trust;
- Lochaber Fisheries Conservation Trust;
- Lochaber District Salmon Fishery Board;
- Loch Abar Mòr; and
- Local landowners and other stakeholders.

MaCCOLL is also an active member of the:

- Coastal Communities Network;
- Loch Abar Mòr Partnership; and
- Scottish Seagrass Collaborative.

The organisation is developing relationships with other community-led conservation groups across Scotland, including Loch Leven Seasavers, Ullapool Sea Savers, Moray Ocean Community, Arran's COAST, CAOLAS, Friends of the Sound of Jura, Sea Wilding and CROMACH.

These relationships provide opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing and the exchange of practical skills and resources.

The trustees consider that partnership working strengthens MaCCOLL's ability to combine local knowledge and community participation with specialist scientific and technical expertise.

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## 13. Organisational development and HIEF funding

A major development during the year was the successful award of **£15,000** from the **Highlands and Islands Environmental Fund (HIEF)**.

This funding enabled MaCCOLL to recruit dedicated staff, including a **Biodiversity Baseline Project Coordinator** and a **Community Engagement Worker/Officer**.

This represents a significant stage in the development of the organisation. MaCCOLL had previously operated entirely through volunteers and now has dedicated staff capacity to support project coordination, community engagement, partnership development, data management, volunteer support and funding development.

The trustees consider this development to have significantly strengthened MaCCOLL's ability to deliver its charitable purposes while retaining its community-led ethos.

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## 14. Impact and outcomes

The trustees consider that MaCCOLL made significant progress towards its charitable purposes during the reporting period.

Key achievements included:

- membership reaching **235 members**;
- 41 marine biodiversity surveys submitted to Seasearch;
- increased marine survey activity using snorkel, SCUBA and BRUV methodologies;
- recording of Priority Marine Features and other ecologically important species and habitats;
- recording of two Spurdog sharks;
- establishment of structured Eurasian otter monitoring;
- development of Atlantic salmon and freshwater habitat monitoring;
- establishment of the Seabirds & More Group;
- weekly delivery of the Duror Nature Club;
- recruitment and training of additional marine monitoring volunteers;
- development and use of *Galathea* to support biodiversity data management;
- strengthening of regional and national conservation partnerships; and
- securing £15,000 HIEF funding to increase organisational and staff capacity.

These activities have increased MaCCOLL's ability to generate and share environmental information, develop local conservation skills, engage the wider community and contribute to wider biodiversity conservation initiatives.

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## 15. Future plans

MaCCOLL intends to build on the progress made during the reporting year.

Key priorities include:

- continuing and expanding marine biodiversity monitoring;
- developing the flapper skate and egg nursery survey programme;
- continuing Atlantic salmon and freshwater habitat investigations;
- continuing the Eurasian otter monitoring programme;
- expanding coastal and seabird recording;
- continuing the Duror Nature Club and wider environmental education;
- increasing volunteer training and participation;
- developing the use of *Galathea* and other appropriate technology;
- seeking funding for additional marine survey equipment;
- strengthening existing partnerships and developing new collaborations;
- exploring the potential expansion of the Argyll Coast and Islands Hope Spot to include the MaCCOLL area of Loch Linnhe; and
- developing more diverse and sustainable sources of income.

MaCCOLL will also seek continued funding to support the Biodiversity Project Coordinator and Community Engagement Worker roles, which are central to maintaining partnerships, coordinating volunteers, managing data, delivering community engagement and developing future funding opportunities.

The trustees will explore community fundraising and crowdfunding opportunities to diversify income and strengthen the organisation's long-term financial sustainability.

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## 16. Financial review

MaCCOLL received **£15,000** from the Highlands and Islands Environmental Fund during the reporting year.

The funding supported the development of dedicated staff capacity and contributed to the organisation's ability to expand its activities.

**Total income:** £25058.38]

**Total expenditure:** £11849.69

Net income/(expenditure): £13208.69

Total funds at year end: £15556.64

Further financial information is provided in the accompanying annual accounts.

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## 17. Reserves policy

The trustees recognise the importance of maintaining sufficient unrestricted funds to enable MaCCOLL to meet its ongoing commitments and continue its charitable activities in the event of unexpected expenditure, delays in grant funding or fluctuations in income.

The trustees review the charity's reserves position regularly, taking account of planned activities, staffing commitments, anticipated income and expenditure, project commitments and the principal financial risks facing the organisation.

MaCCOLL aims to maintain an appropriate level of unrestricted reserves to provide a reasonable financial buffer while ensuring that funds are used effectively to further the charity's purposes.

The appropriate level of reserves will be reviewed annually by the trustees and may be adjusted as the organisation develops, particularly in response to changes in staffing, project commitments, funding arrangements and the scale of its activities.

The trustees have considered the level of unrestricted reserves held at the year end and **consider it appropriate for the charity's current circumstances, commitments and planned activities.**

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## 18. Risk management

The trustees recognise that MaCCOLL's activities involve operational, financial, environmental and governance risks.

The trustees regularly consider the principal risks facing the organisation and seek to manage these through appropriate governance, financial oversight, project planning, volunteer training, partnership working and compliance with relevant requirements.

Areas considered include:

- financial sustainability and dependence on grant funding;
- maintaining sufficient volunteer and staff capacity;
- health and safety associated with fieldwork and marine activities;
- appropriate training and supervision of volunteers;
- data management;
- delivery of funded projects;
- governance and regulatory compliance; and
- maintaining effective partnerships.

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## 19. Volunteers

Volunteers remain fundamental to MaCCOLL' s work.

The organisation has developed from a small volunteer-led initiative into a wider community network involving people with a range of interests, knowledge and skills.

Volunteers contribute to biodiversity surveys, environmental recording, community events, education, fundraising, data management, administration and project development.

The trustees are extremely grateful to all those who give their time, skills and enthusiasm to support MaCCOLL.

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## 20. Going concern

The trustees have considered the charity' s financial position, current activities and future plans and are satisfied that MaCCOLL has adequate resources to continue its activities for the foreseeable future, subject to the successful management of its funding and expenditure.

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## 21. Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records and for taking reasonable steps to safeguard the assets of the charity and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are also responsible for ensuring that the charity operates in accordance with its charitable purposes and relevant regulatory requirements.

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## 22. Approval of the report

This Trustees' Annual Report was approved by the trustees of Marine and Coastal Conservation of Loch (MaCCOLL) on:

**Date:** 17th August 2026

and signed on behalf of the trustees by:

**Name** Alan Young

**Position:** Trustee

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_Alan Young\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_18th September 2026\_\_\_\_\_

Tab 2



Tab 3

