

Argyll and Lochaber area management plan catchment summaries

Island of Mull coastal catchment summary

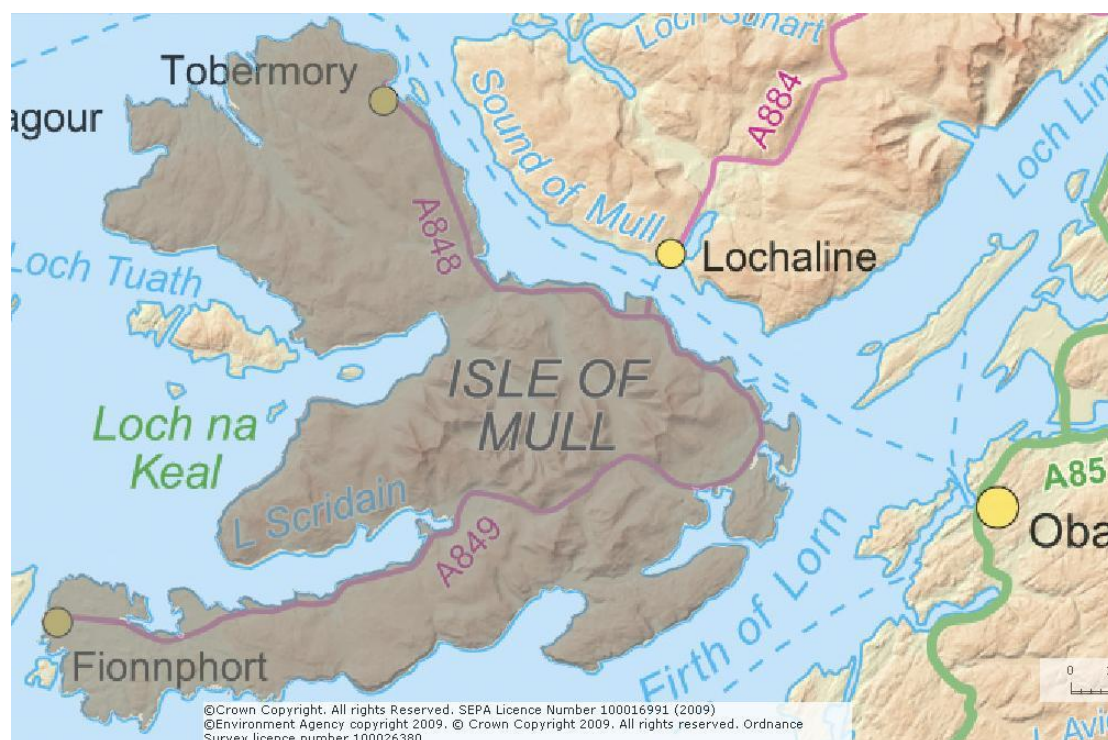
Introduction

The Island of Mull coastal catchment covers 883 km² and includes all the freshwater on the Island of Mull as shown by the grey shading in Map 1.

The catchment:

- contains 26 water bodies, 2 of which are heavily modified water bodies (HMWBs);
- is adjacent to 17 coastal water bodies;
- contains/is adjacent to 15 water dependent protected areas.

The Island of Mull is largely rural with small populations, mainly in the coastal areas. Much of the region is mountainous and land use is dominated by low intensity agriculture and forestry.



Map 1: Area covered by the Island of Mull coastal catchment shown in grey

Further information on the Island of Mull catchment can be found on the river basin planning interactive map – www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx

Classification summary

Ecological status (ES) or potential (EP)	No. WBs	WB ID	Name	WB category
High ES	4	10330	Beach River/Abhainn a Ghlinne	River
		10338	Ensay Burn	River
		10344	Allt a Chlogaid (u/s Loch Frisa)	River
		200083	West Mull	Coastal
Good ES	25	100229	Loch Frisa	Loch
		100249	Loch Uisg	Loch
		10327	Abhainn a Ghlinne Mhoir	River
		10331	Leidle River	River
		10332	Coladoir River	River
		10333	Lussa River	River
		10334	River Ba (d/s Loch Ba)	River
		10337	River Forsa	River
		10339	River Bellart	River
		10340	Mingary Burn	River
		10343	Aros River/Ledmore River (d/s Loch Frisa)	River
		10347	Abhainn Doire Dhubhaig	River
		200059	South Mull	Coastal
		200060	Loch na Lathaich	Coastal
		200061	Loch Buie	Coastal
		200063	Sound of Iona	Coastal
		200064	Loch Scridain	Coastal
		200065	Loch Spelve	Coastal
		200071	Loch na Keal	Coastal
		200074	Loch Tuath	Coastal
		200346	Firth of Lorn South	Coastal
		200350	Loch Chumhainn	Coastal
		200351	Loch Chumhainn. Mull	Coastal
		200465	Tobermory Bay	Coastal
		150073	Island of Mull	Groundwater
Moderate ES	11	100241	Loch Ba	Loch
		10329	Abhainn Tir Chonhuill/Allt an Fhir eoin	River
		10335	River Ba/Glencannel River (u/s Loch Ba)	River
		10336	River Clachaig	River
		10342	Allt nan Torc	River
		10345	Allt an Lon Biolaireich	River
		10346	Abhainn Bail a Mhuilinn/Allt Chreaga Dubha	River
		200066	Firth of Lorn (North)	Coastal
		200348	Loch Don	Coastal
		200349	Leth-fhonn Lagoon. Mull	Coastal
		200464	Sound of Mull	Coastal

Moderate EP	1	10341	Tobermory River	River (HMWB)
Poor ES	1	10328	Bunessan River (d/s Loch Assapol)	River
Bad EP	1	100253	Loch Assapol	Loch (HMWB)

Protected areas

Protected area (PA) designation	Condition	PA ID	Name
Drinking water protected areas	Meeting required standards	100253	Loch Assapol
		10339	River Bellart
		10341	Tobermory River
		10763	Scallastle River
		10914	Scallastle River
		150073	Island of Mull
Shellfish protected areas	Meeting guideline standards	UKS79923114	Isle of Ulva, Mull (Loch Tuath)
		UKS7992364	Loch a' Chumhainn
		UKS7992386	Loch Scridain
		UKS7992399	Tobermory
	Not meeting guideline standards	UKS7992314	Loch Spelve
Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for, amongst other non-water dependent features, vegetated sea cliffs	Favourable ¹	UK0012958	Ardmeanach
SAC for freshwater pearl mussels	Favourable/unfavourable recovering	UK0030206	Mingarry Burn
SAC for mixed woodland and otters	Favourable for otter (water dependent feature) ¹	UK0030219	Mull Oakwoods
SAC for bogs (upland)	Favourable ¹	UK0019772	Coladoir Bog

¹ In some cases, other non-water dependent features are in unfavourable condition, but these are not discussed further here. If a water-dependent feature is unfavourable due to a non-water related pressure it is also not discussed further here. Included within sites in "favourable condition" are sites that are "unfavourable recovering". This is because some features will take a long time to recover even when all appropriate measures are in place. When a feature is reported as "unfavourable recovering", everything has been done to allow a feature to recover, but more time is needed before it could be reported as being in favourable condition. The target for Natura 2000 sites is therefore to reach "favourable" or "unfavourable recovering" condition.

Pressures, measures and objectives summary

No pressures – no deterioration objectives

No pressures exist on the water bodies at high or good ecological status. The objective for these is no deterioration in status by 2015.

Diffuse pollution

Loch Ba on Mull (100241) is at moderate ecological status due to diffuse pollution from sewage. Measures are scheduled to be effective by 2026 in line with the priority catchment cycle and will need to be discussed further with landowners in due course. It is anticipated to reach good ecological status by 2027.

The River Clachaig (10336) is at moderate ecological status from acidification thought to be due to atmospheric deposition from a range of sources which can only recover naturally over many years. No measures have therefore been scheduled and the water bodies are predicted to remain at moderate ecological status until at least 2027.

The River Ba/Glencannel River (10335) is moderate for fish ecology which could be for one of a number of reasons. Low natural productivity has been noted in the lower catchment and the low numbers could also be result of marine survival issues. Investigations into the reasons for this are required and at present the water body is anticipated to reach good ecological status by 2027.

Water resources

Bunessan River (d/s Loch Assapol) (10328) is affected by flow regulation and abstraction pressures from the Bunessan new Water Treatment Works (WTW) which are due to be mitigated by Scottish Water by 2024. A longer timescale objective of being good ecological status by 2027 has therefore been set.

Morphology

Abhainn Tir Chonhuill/Allt an Fhir eoin (10329), Allt nan Torc (10342), Allt an Lon Biolaireich (10345) and Abhainn Bail a Mhuilinn/Allt Chreaga Dubha (10346) are all at moderate ecological status because of morphology pressures from forestry. All except 10356 are due to be restructured by 2026 allowing these water bodies to reach good ecological status by 2027. Abhainn Bail a Mhuilinn/Allt Chreaga Dubha (10346) is due to be restructured by 2020 and will therefore reach good ecological status by 2021. To implement these measures any sooner would impose a disproportionate burden on the Forestry Commission so longer timescales to reach good ecological status have been set.

Coastal water bodies

The Firth of Lorn (North) (200066), Loch Don (200348), Leth-fhonn Lagoon (200349), Mull and the Sound of Mull (200464) are part of a group of 10 coastal water bodies that were all classified as moderate ecological status for benthic invertebrates in 2008. This moderate classification was based on the combined results of monitoring at five sites in Loch Linnhe, five sites in Loch Creran and five sites in Loch Sunart. Samples obtained from deep water in Loch Linnhe returned the poorest results, but it is thought that this was due to the sea water column being highly stratified, such that levels of dissolved oxygen at the sea bed were very low. The low levels of dissolved oxygen were not considered to be attributable to any human activity, and the results from these sites were not therefore thought to be representative of conditions across a large proportion of the 10 water bodies in question. For this reason a new set of more representative monitoring sites was selected for the purposes of producing

future classifications, and results will be reviewed when the 2009 classification is produced.

The Firth of Lorn (North) (200066) only reaches a maximum status of good for the INNS part of the classification, due to the presence of Common cord grass, an invasive non-native species.

Heavily modified water bodies (HMWBs)

Tobermory River (10341) is heavily modified due to the abstraction and flow regulation pressures from Tobermory hydroscheme and WTW. No mitigation measures were required because of a natural barrier downstream and the fact that less than 1.5km is affected. However, it is currently at moderate ecological potential because of the remaining abstraction and flow regulation pressures from Tobermory distillery which will be mitigated for by 2020 allowing it to reach good ecological potential by 2021.

Loch Assapol (100253) is heavily modified due to the abstraction and flow regulation pressures from Bunessan WTW, These pressures, together with diffuse pollution pressures from agriculture is causing the water body to be at be bad ecological potential. Scottish Water is scheduled to provide mitigation measures for the abstraction and flow regulation pressures by 2024. The diffuse pollution pressures are to be mitigated by 2026. It is therefore anticipated to reach good ecological potential by 2027.

Protected areas

For the protected areas meeting their required standards the objective is no deterioration by 2015.

Shellfish waters

Please see the Argyll and Lochaber Area Management Plan for further information on planned source tracking and measures for shellfish waters including the use of Food Standards Agency Sanitary Survey Reports.

Loch Spelve (UKS7992314) is not predicted to meet the guideline value for faecal coliforms until 2027, and source tracking studies will be required at the earliest opportunity to identify the main sources of diffuse pollution at this site.