

# Loch Ryan Management Plan

2014

**Using marine planning to identify  
management needs and opportunities for  
enhanced community amenity and economic  
regeneration of the surrounding area**

Solway Firth  
  
Partnership

Dumfries  
& Galloway



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The importance of waterfront regeneration at Loch Ryan has been a key issue for Dumfries and Galloway Council since the relocation of the ferry terminal from Stranraer to Cairnryan in 2011.

Significant work has been carried out to implement regeneration plans including refurbishment of the West Pier and construction of a distinctive new Stranraer Harbour Office. Public realm works at Castle Square in Stranraer have won a Scottish Design Award and there is ongoing work to develop interpretation and artwork in the town. A Stranraer Task Force has been established to help explore strategic options for the future of the town recognising the need to ensure that plans reflect the aspiration of the local community.

Through public consultation, a wide variety of potential development opportunities based on use of Loch Ryan and its coastline have been identified including power boating, yachting, wildlife watching, coastal path development, interpretation works and more. This is in addition to the many existing uses of the loch which include oyster farming and sea angling.

## 1.2 Vision

Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan (Smith Scott Mullan Associates) was agreed in November 2009 following extensive public consultation. The Masterplan set out a single vision:

‘To reposition Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination’

The regeneration proposals outline the vision for an attractive seaside town that acts as a high quality service hub for residents, businesses and visitors. To achieve this, it is recognised that public, private and community partnerships will be required to attract investment to:

- Promote Stranraer as a gateway to Scotland and a visitor destination
- Develop Stranraer and Loch Ryan as a centre of excellence for marine leisure and green tourism
- Make the waterfront a place where people choose to live, work, play and visit and create opportunities for new business, retail and leisure developments
- Provide a range of new homes and improved green spaces
- Foster and strengthen community cohesion
- Create employment opportunities

## 1.3 Objectives of the Management Plan

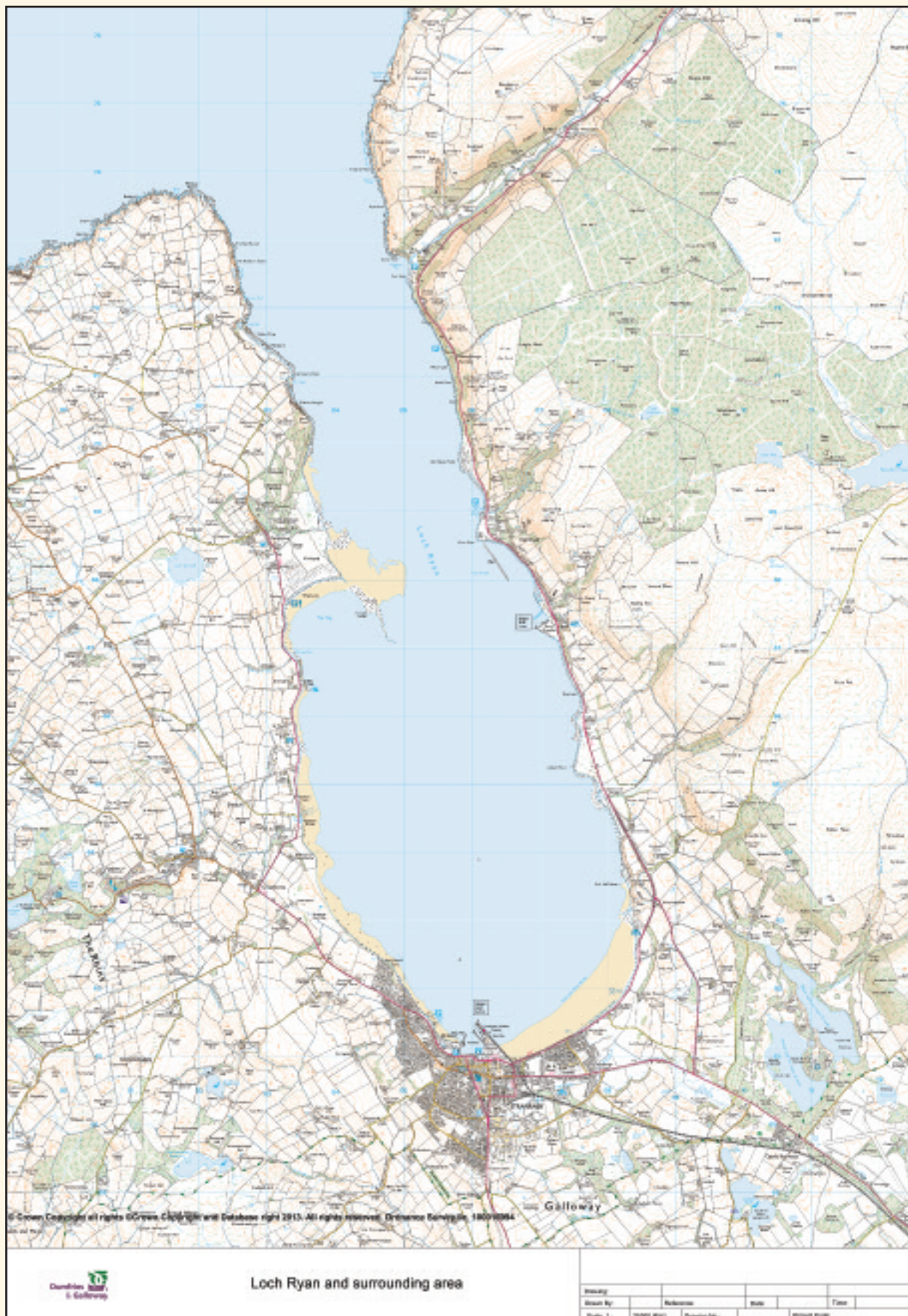
Solway Firth Partnership was commissioned by Dumfries and Galloway Council to establish a better understanding of how different parts of Loch Ryan are used so that any potential conflict arising from changing patterns of use can be managed, wildlife can be protected, and appropriate development opportunities can be identified.

# 2. Approach

## 2.1 Plan area

Work undertaken to inform this plan has been based on activities taking place in, or having a significant effect upon, the marine and coastal area of Loch Ryan.





### 2.2 Marine planning

The Marine Acts in England and Scotland aim to support sustainable use of our seas and coasts through an integrated approach to management and governance. Marine planning is a central means of achieving the objectives of the Acts and Solway Firth Partnership has been gathering information about activities in the local area which will support creation of a future marine plan.

Work to inform preparation of this Management Plan aimed to capture information on the nature, extent and intensity of interactions between sectors with an interest in Loch Ryan both now and as predicted over the next ten years. The quality of a future marine plan will be dependent on the accuracy of the information on which it is based and the active involvement of as many stakeholders as possible. Work at Loch Ryan has provided an opportunity to use emerging marine spatial planning methodology at a relatively small scale to explore its effectiveness in supporting integrated coastal and marine management.

### 2.3 Sectoral interactions

Solway Firth Partnership adopted an approach that has been applied recently in the Solway Firth and in other parts of the UK to improve understanding of how the sea is used and the level of perceived conflict between different interests in the marine environment.

Structured interviews were conducted with a range of key stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests. A questionnaire was used to gather information on issues including seasonality of different types of use, trends in level of use, scope for improvements in integration between users and opportunities for development of the Loch and its surrounding area as a resource for the local community and as a driver for economic development.

Representatives of different interests were provided with explanatory information<sup>1</sup>, a background questionnaire<sup>2</sup> and a customised blank matrix<sup>3</sup> to enable some familiarisation with the material prior to meeting a member of Solway Firth Partnership staff. Project staff from Solway Firth Partnership completed the questionnaire and matrix along with the sectoral representatives at one to one meetings and also sought information on ways in which management for the sector might be improved.

### 2.4 Interaction categories

Interviews included an assessment of interactions between different sectors based on a range of categories. This information has been transposed into an interactions matrix<sup>4</sup> which provides an overview of the compatibility of the different interests in the Loch.

Positive	<i>Where the activity of the other sector has a positive influence on your sector</i>
Neutral	<i>Where the activity of the other sector has no positive or negative influence on your sector</i>
Competition	<i>Where there is sustainable competition for access to the same resources or areas between the other sector and your sector</i>
Conflict	<i>Where conflict arises as a consequence of unmanaged competition between the other sector and your sector for access to the same resources or areas</i>
Incompatible	<i>Where there is a fundamental and unmanageable incompatibility between the activity of the other sector and your sector</i>

<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1: Sectoral interactions information for contributors

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 2: Sectoral interactions questions

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 3: Master table of sectors

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 4: Loch Ryan interactions matrix (this is a fold out document enclosed at the back of this publication or available as a separate download if you are viewing this file electronically)

Reading along the top axis of the matrix provides the perception of the interaction between that sectoral interest and all the others.

In some cases no interaction is recorded, for example where the use or activity does not occur at Loch Ryan. This is shown in beige colour.

Solway Firth Sectoral Interactions Matrix		Aquaculture	Shipping & Transport	Maritime Safety	Recreation & Tourism					Natural Heritage Management			
Loch Ryan		Shellfish Aquaculture	Ferries	Inc lifeboat service, HM Coastguard	Inc cruisers, yachts, sailing dinghies, sm power boats, jet skis, marinas slipways, moorings & anchorages, sea kayaking, diving, sea angling, bait digging, wildfowling, wildlife watching, eco-tourism					Inc Management of intertidal environment, communities, breeding & wintering birds, habitats			
Sectors	Subsectors	Loch Ryan Oyster Fishery Company Ltd	Slena Line, Cairnryan	Stranraer Lifeboat / RNLi	Newton Stewart Sub-Aqua Club	Scottish Natural Heritage Officer	Stranraer Harbour Users Group	Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network	Sports Shop Stranraer	Reserves Manager, RSPB	Scottish Natural Heritage Officer	Galloway Fisheries Trust	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Renewable Energy	Offshore Wind		Competition		Conflict	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	
	Wave	Neutral	Competition	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	
	Tidal	Neutral	Competition	Neutral	Conflict	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	
Subsea cables & pipelines	Electricity	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Oil/Gas Pipelines	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Telecomms	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
Inshore fisheries	Scallop dredge												
	Queenie dredge												
	Queenie trawl												
	Nephrops trawl												
	Brown shrimp trawl												
	Demersal trawl												
	Pelagic trawl												
	Static Gear (Creels & Pots)	Neutral	Conflict	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Cockling (boat)	Conflict	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Competition	
	Intertidal cockling (h& tractor)	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Other intertidal & coastal shellfisheries	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
Aquaculture	Drift netting												
	Fixed netting	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral				Conflict	Conflict				
	Electrofishing	Competition	Neutral	Neutral				Conflict	Conflict			Neutral	
	Shellfish aquaculture		Conflict		Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Tankers												
	Bulk carriers												

This cell represents interaction between divers and electricity cables based on the perception of the Recreation & Tourism industry.

## 2.5 Spatial data

Map based information was gathered in paper format during the course of one to one interviews with local stakeholders and identified the key areas of the Loch used by feeding and roosting birds, the main areas of use for leisure and commercial activities and other features of the site.

This information was then transposed into electronic format by Marine Scotland and has been added to National Marine Planning Interactive (NMPi). This is part of the Marine Scotland website and is accessible to all allowing layers of spatial information to be selected and overlaid for comparison. NMPi is intended to develop into a useful marine planning tool and also to enable ease of access for anyone with an interest in the information that underpins marine planning.

Spatial information gathered during the course of this piece of work is also included in the relevant sections of this document.



### 2.6 Consultation

Consultees were identified by Dumfries and Galloway Council and Solway Firth Partnership in the first instance based on knowledge of key local stakeholders. Initial interviews led to identification of further stakeholders for interview.

Once a reasonable body of research had been conducted, a summary of information was presented in a consultation document. This was printed and distributed to all the stakeholders who had been engaged in the process to date and was made widely available at outlets including libraries, information centres and Council offices.

This consultation document, along with draft maps illustrating activities and information about other features gathered in the process, and a draft sectoral interactions matrix, were used as the basis of a consultation event held at Stranraer Library on 17 December 2013. The event was widely advertised in local press with both a public notice and editorial content in the Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press. Posters advertising the event were widely distributed around Stranraer and individual letters of invitation were sent to all the stakeholders who had engaged in the process as well as to a range of additional contacts including local Councillors and Community Councils in the area.

### 2.7 Web and literature research

Solway Firth Partnership staff also undertook a review of information about Loch Ryan including its history, archaeology, wildlife, culture, amenities and marketing to inform development of this plan. This included:

- Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan 2009: Smith Scott Mullan Associates
- Stranraer Marine Leisure Study 2012: Leigh Fisher
- Loch Ryan Draft Management Plan 2012 prepared by Natural Capital
- Loch Ryan Management Plan 1999: Loch Ryan Forum
- Loch Ryan Coastal Path [www.ayrshirecoastalpath.org](http://www.ayrshirecoastalpath.org)
- Loch Ryan Coastal Path leaflet: The Rotary Club of Stranraer
- Assessing the economic impacts of nature based tourism in Scotland 2010: SNH
- Where to Watch Birds in Scotland: Mike Madders and Julia Welstead
- Best Birdwatching Sites - The Solway: John Miles

## 3. Environmental quality

### 3.1 Overview

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has obligations to protect and improve the environment under regulations arising from the Water Framework Directive. SEPA regularly monitors the water quality at Loch Ryan and reports that it is at the highest quality it has ever been in recent times largely due to improvements in sewage treatment. An advanced sewage treatment plant has recently been installed at Smithy Hill and serves the villages of Cairnryan and Kirkcolum. Sewage is processed and then piped across to Portpatrick to be discharged at sea.

Diffuse pollution from agricultural land and potential discharges from farms can impact on the loch although much work has been undertaken in recent years to promote good agricultural practice and to take action under pollution control regulation when necessary thereby significantly alleviating these pressures.

Similarly, the impacts of industrial discharges into the loch have been mitigated by establishment of improved effluent treatment and pollution prevention facilities.



The presence of invasive non-native species (INNS) can impact on the water environment, increasing the risk that the site does not meet conservation targets or the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Under WFD, depending on the invasive species and their extent, water bodies will not be able to reach high ecological status; the maximum level obtainable is good ecological status and, in order to achieve this, the Directive requires that INNS 'have not damaged the native aquatic plant and animal communities'. Loch Ryan is known to have several INNS present - Japanese wireweed (*Sargassum muticum*), Leathery sea-squirt (*Styela clava*), and Green sea fingers (*Codium fragile*).

There are a number of sites of contaminated land around Loch Ryan including deposits of asbestos from industrial sites and remains from World War II. Future development needs to take account of any constraints these sites present.

Marine and coastal litter is a generic problem with litter arising from a variety of sources and the most persistent problem being plastic. Plastic bottles and other plastic debris does not biodegrade but simply breaks down into small pieces which become a permanent part of the marine and coastal environment. Litter creates a hazard for people and wildlife and detracts from the scenic quality of the coast. Loch Ryan is no different in this respect to any other part of the UK coast.

Mechanical beach cleaning has been employed at Stranraer in the past. This removes the strandline which is an important habitat for many invertebrates which in turn are an important food source for birds.

### 3.2 Spatial data

Spatial information on INNS within Loch Ryan can be found on Marine Scotland National Marine Plan Interactive at <http://marinescotland.atkinsgeospatial.com/nmpi/>

Spatial information on contaminated land can be requested from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

### 3.3 Issues

Increased recreational boating activity may increase the threat of introducing INNS to Loch Ryan through increased vessel movements.

The main issue with potential development around the edge of Loch Ryan is the disturbance of contaminated land. There are a number of sites around the loch, ranging from WWII bases to industrial sites, which would need careful investigation before development could take place.

Marine and coastal litter is a universal issue.

### 3.4 Opportunities

Improvements in water quality provide an opportunity to promote Loch Ryan for bathing and other recreational activity. Improved water quality may also provide increased opportunities for local shellfisheries.

Investment in harbour and marina development provides an opportunity to promote optimum surveillance, detection, monitoring and rapid response systems for marine INNS which may pose threats to the biodiversity and economic interests of Loch Ryan and the surrounding area. A full description of this issue, resources available to address INNS and actions that can be taken can be found in the Solway Firth Biosecurity Plan recently produced by Solway Firth Partnership.

There are opportunities to support local community beach cleans to improve the quality of the site and encourage a sense of local stewardship.



## 4. Natural heritage

### 4.1 Overview

Loch Ryan is the most southerly of the Scottish sea lochs and is shallow over most of its area with an average depth of 2 to 5 metres. The loch is about 8 miles (13 km) long from north to south, and about 3 miles (4.8 km) wide at its widest point. It is divided into two sections: a northern channel and a southern basin with a shingle spit between the two.

The surrounding landscape is predominantly pastoral and can be categorised in four landscape character types: peninsula, coastal flats, upland fringe and plateau moorland.

The underlying geology is mostly Ordovician and Silurian greywackes and shales with the steep rocky shores around the mouth of Loch Ryan recognised as being of particular geological interest. The coast from Milleur Point to Corsewall Point is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Loch Ryan has been designated as a Marine Consultation Area (MCA) in view of the habitats that it contains and the presence of good examples of native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) beds. An MCA is a non-statutory term introduced in the late 1980s to highlight Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) nature conservation priorities in the near-shore marine environment. The designation recognises high quality and sensitive marine habitats and species and was prompted by emerging development pressures around the Scottish coastline.

The combination of native oyster and eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) beds in the southern part of the loch make it significant in Scottish terms with both species being a priority within the Dumfries and Galloway Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and native oyster being a UK BAP priority species. Other marine species of note include *Mycale lobata*, a sponge which has very few records in Britain; *Cereus pedunculatus*, an uncommon sea anemone; *Calyptraea chinensis*, a mollusc which reaches the most northern recorded limit of its distribution at Loch Ryan; *Aslia lefevrei*, a sea cucumber found in crevices at the entrance to Loch Ryan; and *Neopentadactyla mixta*, a sea cucumber found in coarse gravel at the entrance of the loch.

Migratory salmon (*Salmo salar*) and sea trout (*Salmo trutta*) occur in Loch Ryan and work has been undertaken by Galloway Fisheries Trust in recent years to protect and restore important watercourse habitats around the loch for these species.

Loch Ryan's importance for birds borders the qualifying threshold for Special Protection Area designation: the highest European designation for birds. Loch Ryan is nationally important for (Canadian) pale-bellied brent geese (*Branta bernicla*), scaup (*Aythya marila*), eider (*Somateria mollissima*), red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*) and Slavonian grebe (*Podiceps auritus*). It is the only regular place in Scotland to see pale-bellied brent geese and offers some of the best views of wintering scaup and Slavonian grebes in the UK. It also holds good numbers of red-throated (*Gavia stellata*) and black-throated divers (*Gavia arctica*) in winter. In late spring and early summer it holds the region's largest breeding tern colonies at the Wig and Cairnryan old pier. In all, Loch Ryan is regarded as one of the best birdwatching sites in the UK throughout the year.

Numbers of wildfowl and waders using the Loch is highest in winter with widespread distribution. Some of the key species on the Loch which reach nationally important numbers do so in late summer and appear to use the Loch as a moulting site: this affects mainly eider and great crested grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*), both of which gather in the central area of the Loch in large groups. Critical feeding and roosting areas are to the east of the Loch off Innermessan and around the Wig.

Black guillemot (*Cephus grille*) nest at both Stranraer and Cairnryan harbours, but are virtually absent as a breeding species in England, and hence are a very attractive 'novelty' species to many visitors – indeed they are something of a tourist attraction in Portpatrick harbour, where they nest in the harbour walls.

Birdwatching is an important recreational use all-year round with all parts of the loch being of interest though, in particular, the mud, sand flats, shingle and sand beaches of the southern and western shoreline. There are many suitable stopping places and vantage points from the A77 on the east and south shores, and the A718 on the west shore. Core path routes allow close access to the shoreline.

Areas noted for birdwatching include:

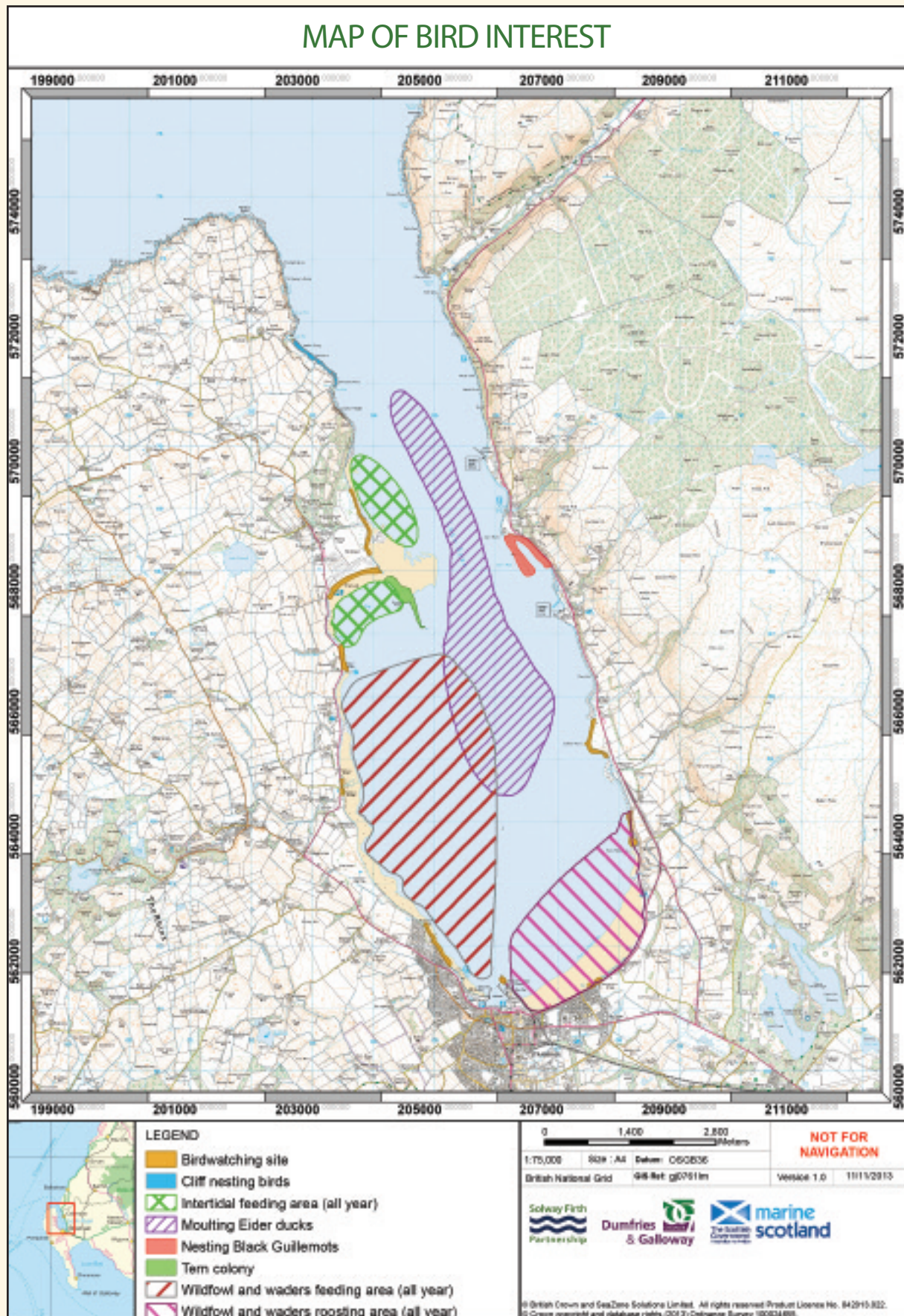
- Cairnryan;
- the south shoreline of the loch from Innermessan to Broadstone;
- the area from Soleburn to the Wig; and
- Leffnol Point.

Ringed plover - Keith Kirk



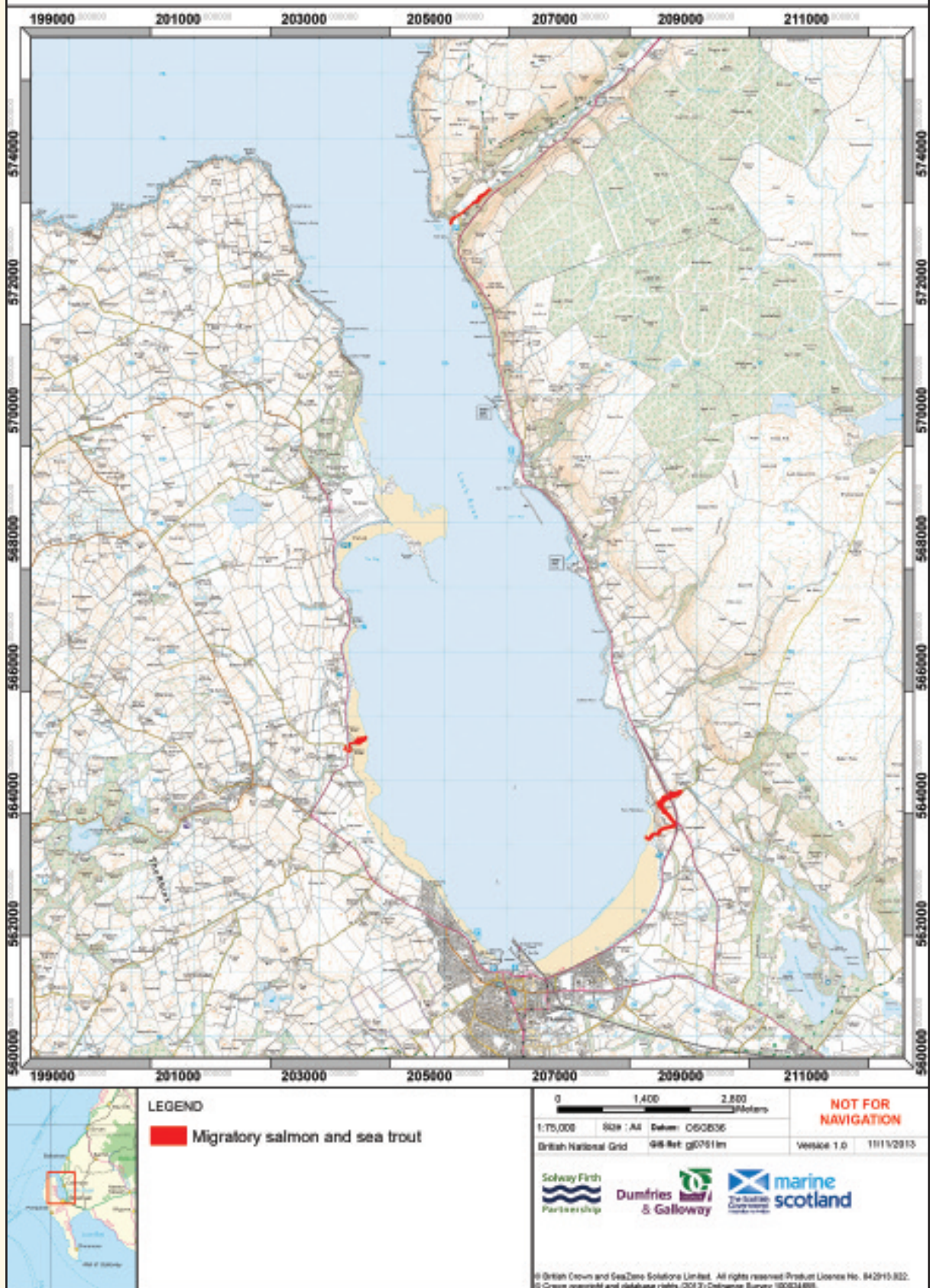


## 4.2 Spatial data





## MAP OF MIGRATORY SALMON AND SEA TROUT HABITAT WORK









### 4.3 Issues

Loch Ryan's natural heritage value is not well recognised beyond specialist interest groups.

Disturbance resulting from works to the Stena pier in the past has caused a significant decline in the numbers of breeding black guillemot at the site.

Tern breeding activity has greatly reduced in recent years. The reasons for this are not fully understood although disturbance at the area known as 'the spit' is thought to have been a factor.

There is little evidence of conflict on Loch Ryan between bird watchers and boat users as boats are mainly used in summer whereas the main bird interest is in winter. However, there is a need to monitor recreational pressures and ensure activity does not impact adversely on the wildlife and habitats of the loch. Potential conflict in summer, particularly when there are peak numbers of eider in July, could be accommodated by seasonal zoning if necessary.

Loch Ryan is particularly good for bird watching as a road runs all around the loch. However, as telescopes are needed to see the birds using the middle of the loch it is not regarded as a site for beginner bird-watchers.

A matter of concern around the east side of Loch Ryan in terms of stream management is the A77. There are a lot of burns along this coast and there is therefore a risk of a major pollution incident in the event of road-works (such as an upgrade to dual carriageway). If work on the road takes place, there is also the risk of spreading invasive species.

Coastal erosion may be an issue and further work may need to be undertaken to understand any changes to coastal processes arising from establishment of major new structures such as ferry terminals and changing patterns of use such as new ferry routes.

Any increase in sediment arising from changing patterns of use within Loch Ryan could impact on habitats and species including native oyster although this is not felt to be an issue at present.

### 4.4 Opportunities

There are significant opportunities to raise awareness of the nature conservation value of Loch Ryan including bird interests and the presence of significant native oyster beds. This could include promotional activity as well as provision of better interpretation and enhanced viewing facilities thereby realising the economic benefits associated with wildlife tourism both at the site and in the wider area. For example, there is the opportunity to make marketing links between Stranraer and the RSPB Crook of Baldoon and Mull of Galloway sites to develop a bigger and better birdwatching experience for visitors.

There may also be scope to expand community engagement and environmental education opportunities at Loch Ryan by employing a ranger. This type of staffing resource could also be helpful in terms of managing disturbance and developing and promoting good practice codes of conduct for recreational users of the loch and its coastline.

Bird interest groups have indicated that there are opportunities to install nesting boxes for black guillemots in a number of structures around Loch Ryan and specifically on the West Pier. These simple boxes attract pairs of birds which in turn become a wildlife attraction to visitors. This has been shown to draw tourists to coastal towns such as Bangor in Northern Ireland, where the birds have become part of the tourism experience and are used successfully as a marketing tool.

There are opportunities for boat operated wildlife tours from Loch Ryan. This tends to be carried out where there is an attraction such as a seabird or seal colony which is not present in Loch Ryan but with some cross sector marketing it may be possible to view historic and cultural sites alongside the bird or other wildlife interest of the Loch. Ailsa Craig, lying around 10 miles to the west of Girvan, is a prominent landmark from many vantage points on the coast around Loch Ryan and provides a potential destination for longer trips.

There is potential to further improve the habitats of burns and streams entering Loch Ryan for the benefit of native wildlife. For example the Soleburn, on the west side of Loch Ryan, has potential to be improved and there is further potential to naturalise Stranraer burns which have been heavily impacted throughout the town. This could have the benefits both to biodiversity and to the landscape of Stranraer.

During the course of consultation there have been several offers of voluntary work to support natural heritage initiatives.

## 5. Historic and cultural heritage

### 5.1 Overview

Because of its strategic geographic position, people have used Loch Ryan and lived on its shores since the earliest days of human settlement in Scotland. There are long-standing ties with Ireland given that the route across the North Channel is the shortest sea crossing between Britain and Ireland. For thousands of years prior to the advent of the railway in the nineteenth century, communication and trade was predominantly by sea. The main route up the west coast of Scotland was therefore by water and Loch Ryan offered a safe anchorage.

Loch Ryan has been the scene of significant historic events. For example, in 1307, at the beginning of Robert the Bruce's campaign in the wars of independence, he sent two forces to attempt to gain control of south west Scotland. One force, led by his two brothers and consisting of eighteen galleys, landed in Loch Ryan. They were immediately overwhelmed by local forces.

During World War II the loch was an important hub of wartime activity. Cairnryan was designated No 2 Military Port: an important port facility that was available for use should the Mersey and the Clyde become unavailable due to enemy bombing. Two large piers were constructed and serviced by a dedicated railway line although the facilities were never used to full capacity as the Mersey and Clyde never received the bomb damage that was feared.

However, large numbers of troops were based locally in military camps and, at the end of the war, the Atlantic U-boat fleet surrendered in Loch Ryan and was anchored at Cairnryan before being towed to the North Channel and scuttled in an exercise codenamed 'Operation Deadlight'.

Many of the important historic sites and remains around Loch Ryan lie close to the shoreline with sites all the way along the east coast and clusters at Stranraer and in the area around Kirkcolm. Some sites are designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments and there are also listed buildings along the coast located around settlements including Cairnryan, Stranraer and Kirkcolm.

Important sites include:

Bronze Age	Finnarts Hill and Laigh Moor
Iron Age	Balker Moor, Top of Craigoich and Jamieson's Point
Roman site	Innernessan
Medieval	The Wig, the Scar, Kempes Grave, Kilmore Stone, Innernessan, Craigaffie, Stranraer
Eighteenth Century	Lochryan House, Road up Laird's Hill
Nineteenth Century	Stranraer West Pier, North West Castle, East Railway Pier, Kirkcolm, Ace of Clubs Wood
First World War	Innernessan
Second World War	Finnart's Bay, Cairnryan Port and Mulberry Harbour, Cairnryan to Stranraer military railway, Braid Fell Moor, Various buildings in Stranraer, RAF at Wig Bay, RAF at Corsewall House.

Shipwrecked vessels are also a feature of Loch Ryan, many of which are listed on the National Monuments Record of Scotland. The Liverpool, a nineteenth century barque, had sailed all the way across the Atlantic from Quebec bound for Greenock with a cargo of timber when she was caught in a north-westerly gale off the Galloway coast on 12 December 1883. With her sails in shreds, and desperately seeking shelter, the Captain tried to bring her into Loch Ryan only for her steering to fail in the storm force wind. Anchors were dropped in a desperate bid to keep the ship off the coast but she was dashed against the rocks just north of Finnart's Bay with the sad loss of all but two of her twenty one man crew.

Loch Ryan Lighthouse, also known as Cairn Point Lighthouse, houses a short-range navigation aid at Cairnryan. The lighthouse was built in 1847 by the noted lighthouse engineer Alan Stevenson (1807-65) and automated in 1964. The keepers' cottages have been demolished and the surrounding area is used as industrial ground creating a poor setting for what is otherwise an attractive historic feature of the Loch Ryan coastline.



## **5.2 Spatial data**

Historic and archaeological spatial data can be sourced from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Stranraer Museum and the Stranraer Antiquarian and Natural History Society are valuable sources of further information about the historic and cultural heritage of Loch Ryan.

## **5.3 Issues**

Archaeologists and historians have stressed the importance of ensuring that an understanding of Loch Ryan's history and significant remains are not lost as a result of limited resources. For example, some sites have become dilapidated and overgrown making access difficult.

Erosion is an issue at some sites including Innermessen which is regarded as one of the most important historic areas of the loch.

## **5.4 Opportunities**

There are significant sites and events in Loch Ryan's past which present tremendous opportunities for improved access, interpretation and conservation of key sites.

Interpretation could include exhibitions, on-site information, themed trails, guided walks and boat tours. Appropriate themes for interpretation could be 'shelter' and 'communication' as well as the loch's importance during WW II.

There is a considerable body of local expertise and a desire to support work to interpret Loch Ryan's past on a voluntary basis. Local people hold significant archives of old photographs.

WWII look out at the Wig – Solway Firth Partnership



## 6. Shipping and transport

### 6.1 Overview

The harbour at Stranraer was established in response to the demand for piers and shelters for shipping in Dumfries and Galloway. The West Pier was completed in 1820 and work continued to extend and deepen the harbour. A second pier was developed in response to the introduction of a network rail system (Portpatrick Railway) which connected Stranraer to the rest of Dumfries and Galloway. This rail network was linked to the new east pier providing important links for trade and passengers to Ireland.

Today, two ferry services operate within Loch Ryan: P&O operate a ferry service from Cairnryan to Larne, and Stena Line operate a high speed ferry from Cairnryan to Belfast. The Stena Line ferry service operated from the harbour at Stranraer on the southern shoreline of the Loch until November 2011 when it was relocated to Cairnryan. The reason for relocation was to bring the service closer to the mouth of the Loch to reduce costs and crossing times to Northern Ireland. The relocation has also meant that expensive dredging of the shallow shores in the south of Loch Ryan are reduced, and the impacts of ferry movements such as sediment movements and erosion caused by jet propulsion of fast ferries are reduced with associated benefits for important habitats and species.

The A75 provides the major road link to the east with the A77 providing the most direct link to the north.

### 6.2 Issues

There are plans to redevelop the East Pier as part of the wider regeneration plan for Stranraer; the site is currently vacant.

Increased use of the loch by interests such as recreational boating may result in greater concern about integration with ferry services.

### 6.3 Opportunities

The old Stena Line port at Stranraer has a relatively shallow channel and is therefore of limited value for commercial use. It would be possible to develop this area for recreational and amenity use and discussions about this are underway between the local community, the local authority and Stena Line. The many potential uses for this area have been well documented in previous consultations and include aspirations for restaurants, housing, interpretive facilities and improved access for sea angling.

Ferry passing Corsewall Lighthouse – Allan Devlin





Fishing boats in Stranraer Harbour – Solway Firth Partnership

## 7. Aquaculture and commercial fishing

### 7.1 Overview

Loch Ryan is designated as a Shellfish Water under the EC Shellfish Growing Waters Directive (79/923/EEC) and contains a significant population of native oysters. Good water quality is required for the economic success of this fishery. Oysters are bivalve filter feeders, and accumulate any pollutants that are present within their habitat, such as heavy metals, sewage derived bacteria and viruses. They are an important biological indicator of the overall water quality within Loch Ryan. Oysters occur throughout the loch but the best beds occur south of Kirkcolm and Cairnryan Lighthouse.

The Loch Ryan Oyster Fishery Company operates the fishery under rights granted under royal charter from King William III in 1701 to the Wallace family of Loch Ryan House. The company has been in partnership with the Wallace family since 1996. The business aims are to manage the natural population of oysters in the loch to encourage natural recruitment and to run a sustainable and profitable business. Around 45 tonnes of oysters are harvested each year with the season starting in September and no fishing taking place during the summer when the oysters are spawning. Virtually all the Scottish native oysters on the market come from Loch Ryan to the extent that the fishery can claim to be Scotland's only wild native oyster fishery.

In addition to two oyster fishery vessels, a variety of commercial fishing boats use the harbour at Stranraer including scallop and static gear vessels. In Loch Ryan, only dredging for mussels and oysters is permitted and the scallop boats landing into Stranraer are fishing outside the loch.

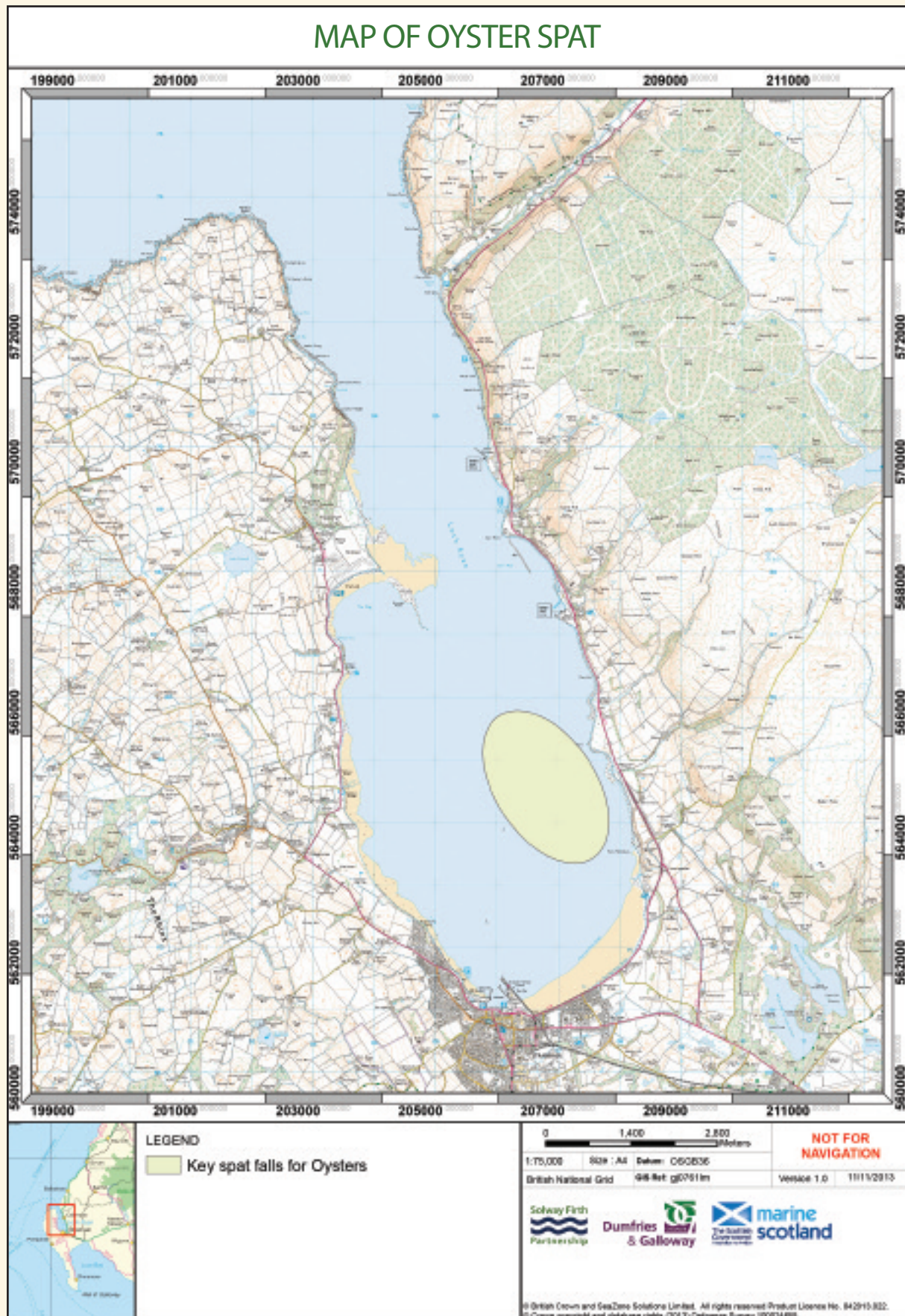
Recently, there has been some interest in small scale local harvesting of cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*) by hand from the shore at Stranraer.

Salmon netting in Loch Ryan has previously been undertaken at four stations between Port Beag and Milleur Point with boat access at Port More. The salmon netting season ran from April to September. Due to the introduction of fast ferries from Stranraer to Belfast, wave movements and stronger undertows has meant that these stations have become inoperable.

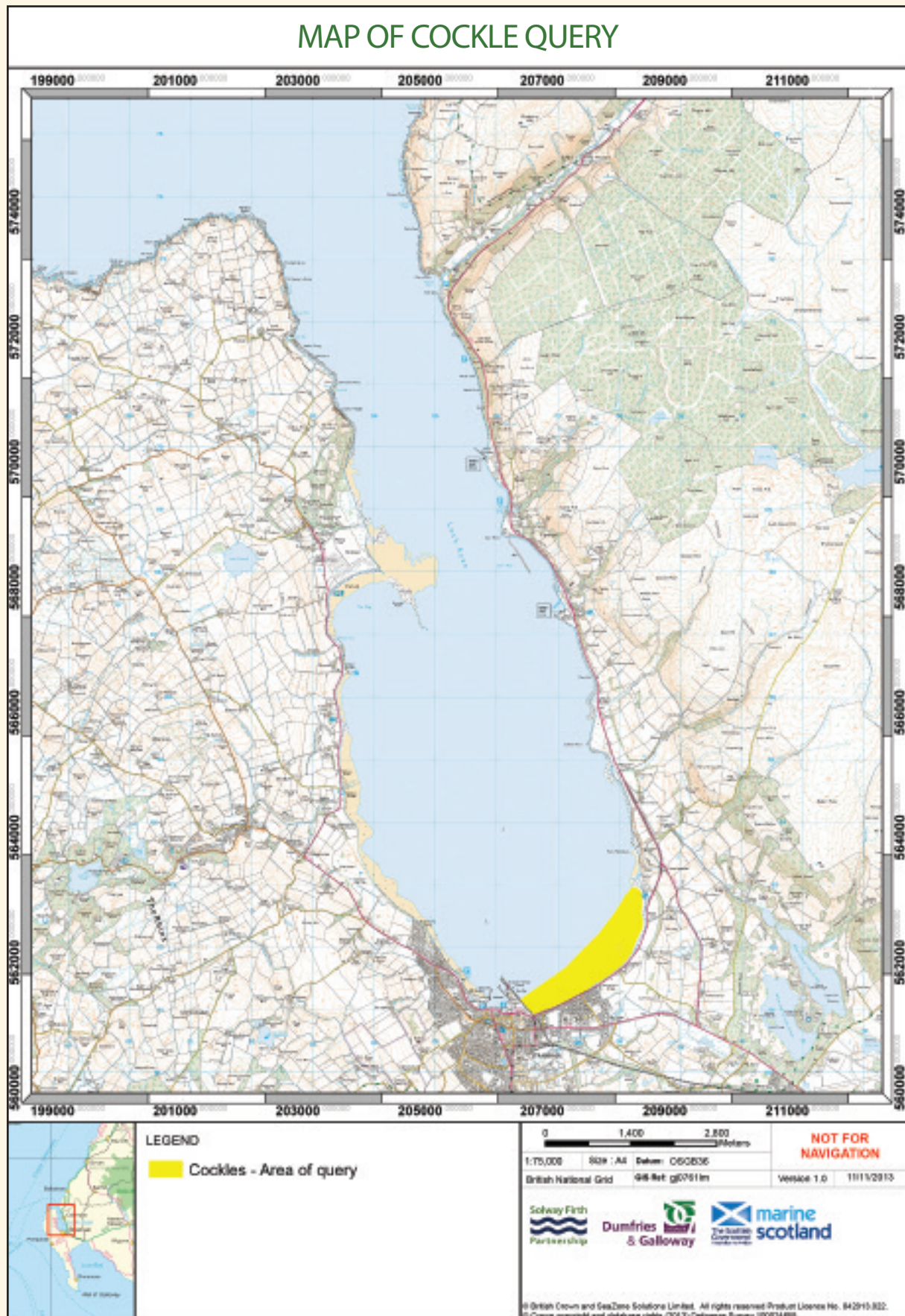
Years ago when herring were abundant, there were records of 300 sail boats in Loch Ryan at one time. Many of the boats, crew operating them and herring girls packing the fish, came from the north and east of Scotland following the herring around the coast. The herring industry was at its height between 1900 and 1910 although there was another short lived herring boom in the 1950s when vessels from Leith used Portpatrick as a base for fishing the North Channel.



## 7.2 Spatial data







### 7.3 Issues

The main issue for the oyster fishery is the generation of silt and turbidity in the loch which can result from dredging to allow access to harbours and, in the past, fast ferry activity in the southern part of the loch. Coastal infrastructure developments also have the potential to create silt to the detriment of the fishery.

Sustainable fishery management has been an issue in the past with boom and decline in the herring fishery. Native oyster fisheries also operated in Luce Bay and Wigtown Bay in the past, with fishermen coming from as far afield as Kent and Essex and records of 50 oyster smacks working in the Solway in the late nineteenth century.

### 7.4 Opportunities

The native oyster fishery provides a unique marketing opportunity for Stranraer and Loch Ryan. The fishery has been recognised for its sustainable management and is providing a premium product. There is the opportunity to develop and capitalise on the fishery through events, branding, marketing, interpretation and linkages with other local assets such as other local fisheries, the bird-watching offer and the development of recreational boating activity.

The Loch Ryan Oyster Fishery Company believes that there is significant potential to increase the oyster harvest with positive management.

There may be potential to establish a small scale cockle fishery with added value through local processing in time though this would need to be subject to much further consultation with existing users of the site, the local community and regulatory bodies.

## 8. Recreation and tourism

### 8.1 Overview

In the past, recreational boating and the use of light water craft within Loch Ryan was hampered by the regular passage of ferry transport. As a key element of plans for regeneration of Stranraer, development work took place at the harbour in 2012 to install a marina and associated facilities along with the first stage of a breakwater just outside the harbour mouth. There are further plans to expand the number of berths in the marina once the second stage of the breakwater is complete. The Stranraer Waterfront Urban Design Strategy and Masterplan proposes a phased expansion with a final target of 250 berths.

Loch Ryan Sailing Club is located on the west shore of Loch Ryan to the south of the Wig. Wig Bay Sailing School, previously run and funded by Dumfries and Galloway Council, is no longer in operation. It is proposed that a base for a water sports centre at the marina in Stranraer would be developed as part of the Stranraer regeneration process.

The principal area of importance for recreational boating is the west side of the Loch between the marina and the sailing club. Peak activity is in summer.

Some kite surfing takes place in the southern part of the loch, generally close to the shore.

A company operating RIB outings has established recently and some charter angling boats operate from Stranraer.

A recent marine leisure study by Leigh Fisher Management Consultants has recommended that water based recreation at Loch Ryan should be predominantly low impact taking into consideration existing uses, wind and wave conditions, the shallow depths and the environmental sensitivity of the Loch. This includes dinghy and yacht sailing, as well as activities such as diving, sea angling, wildlife watching and sight-seeing using personal or charter craft. Stranraer harbour's shallow and sheltered waters are also recognised as making it an ideal location for a marine training facility, although improving the facilities for a greater number of users and an increased variety of craft may result in the need for dredging activities.





Shore angling – Alan Cairns

Sea angling is a popular pastime for both local people and visitors to Galloway. Loch Ryan Sea Angling Association promotes sea angling in the area and this occurs informally throughout the year with parts of the coastline, including Milleur Point and Lady Bay, also being used at times for organised matches.

Rod and line fishing is undertaken from boats in Loch Ryan mainly in the summer months. There is a concrete slipway at Lady Bay to launch small boats and local charter angling trips are operated by several small businesses.

Loch Ryan provides a launching point for sub-aqua diving both within and out-with the loch. The main launch points are Wig Bay, Daly Bay and Lady Bay. In the past, the volume of sediment in the water column and turbulence created by ferry traffic posed a problem for sub-aqua diving. Information provided by local divers suggests that visibility has improved and that there are improvements to habitats arising from the absence of ferry activity in the southern part of the loch. Some of the more sheltered parts of the loch – Wig Bay and Finnart's Bay – are used for dive training purposes.

The preparation of a Core Paths Plan is a requirement of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act which came into effect in 2005. The Act establishes a right of responsible access to most land in Scotland for people taking access by non-motorised means. The Act places a duty on local authorities to create a 'core path network'.

There are a series of core paths which follow the coastline of Loch Ryan in addition to informal car parking and picnicking at number of coastal locations including:

- Finnarts Bay
- Cairnryan
- Balyett
- Stranraer Seafront
- Agnew Park
- Broadstone
- Wig Bay
- Lady Bay

The Rotary Club of Stranraer has carried out considerable work to develop and promote a coastal path around Loch Ryan and to link this with other coastal path development in the area including the Mull of Galloway Trail.

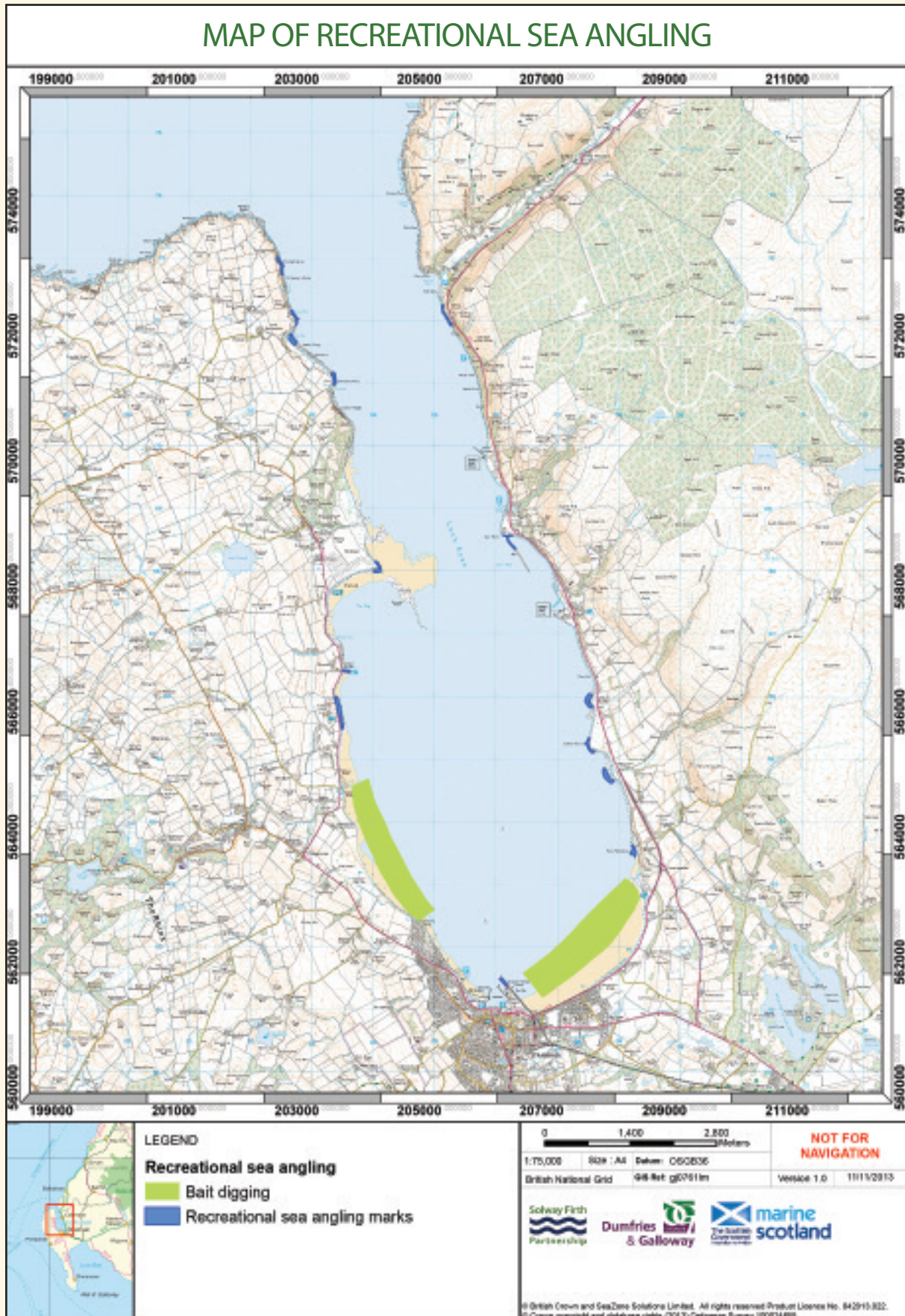


## 8.2 Spatial data



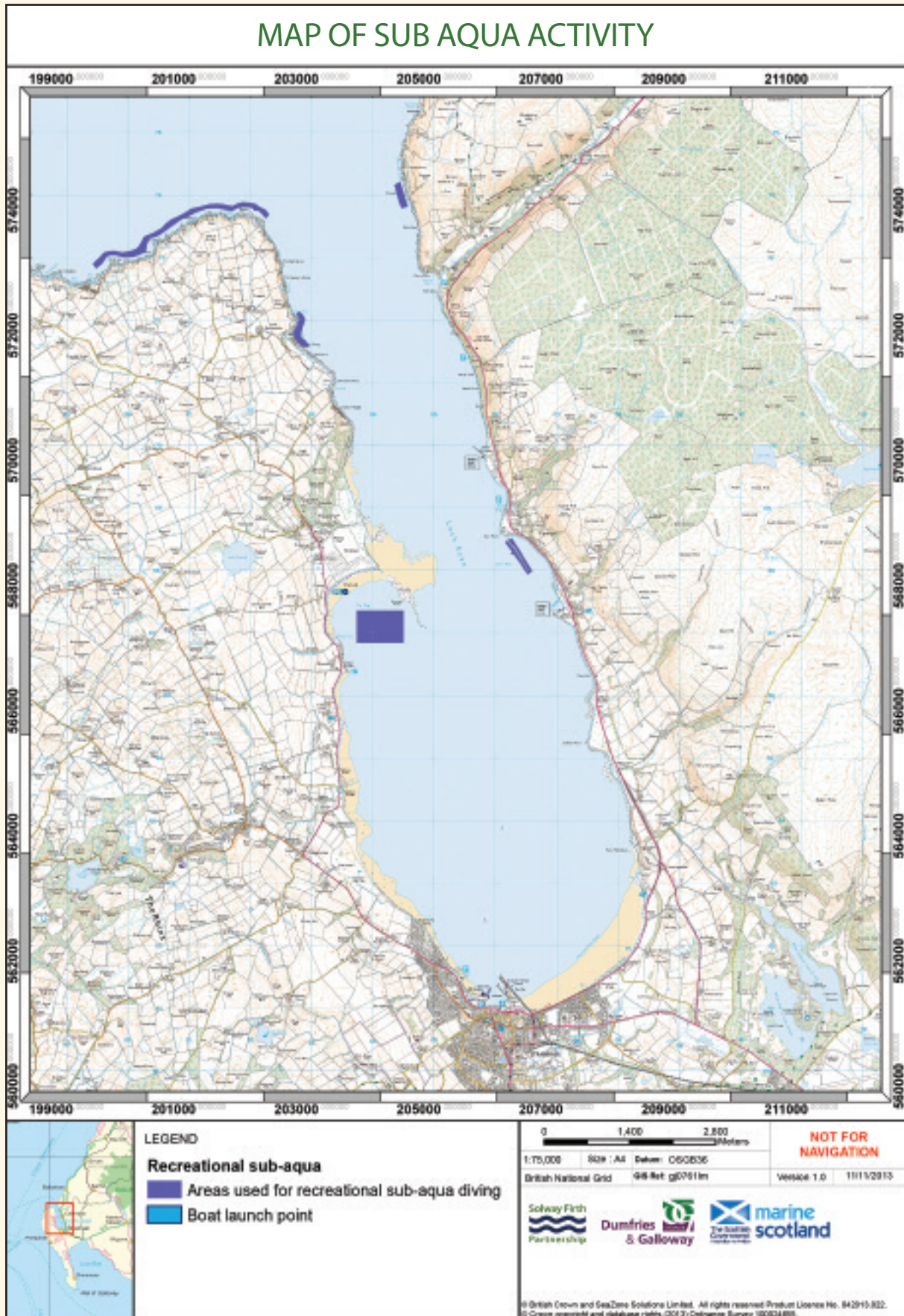


## MAP OF RECREATIONAL SEA ANGLING





## MAP OF SUB AQUA ACTIVITY





### 8.3 Issues

Issues that need to be addressed in light of increasing recreational use of Loch Ryan include:

- existing berths and onshore facilities may be unable to meet demand; and
- limited depth of water caused by the tidal nature of Stranraer Harbour and movement of sediment in the southern end of the loch may pose restrictions on launching times for specific types of craft and regular dredging of the marina and berthing facilities would have cost and environmental implications.

Recreational boats cannot anchor in areas used for oyster fishing and an increase in boat numbers to the loch would require installation of new moorings.

The current location of sailing facilities at Wig Bay is some distance from Stranraer which has the potential to cause issues for visitors, including:

- a lack of onshore facilities/amenities; and
- limited parking at Wig Bay, which would require expansion in order to cater better for long vehicles and trailers which are required for various water sports.

Any promotion of jet skiing and power boat usage in Loch Ryan would need to be developed in light of the consideration of potential impacts on wildlife and any conflict with other water sport activity (i.e. sailing, diving and fishing). A suitable management regime would need to be developed.

Recreational anglers raised considerable concern about the decline in fish species and the need for marine management that satisfactorily addresses this. In part due to reduced numbers of fish, angling competitions have declined in scale and number and there are fewer young people taking up the activity creating difficulty sustaining local clubs.

Any increase in diving activity or development of suitable facilities to encourage an increase in diving would need to be considered in consultation with other site users.

### 8.4 Opportunities

There has been a strong steer from many consultees towards addressing positive management of the loch through provision of appropriate personnel, particularly an able harbourmaster, and towards voluntary codes of practice rather than introducing zoning or byelaws in the first instance. While there is potential for conflict between users this is not a significant issue at present. It is felt that effective management can be best achieved by a good site manager with:

- a thorough knowledge of maritime, safety and harbour regulations;
- an understanding of all the users of the loch; and
- strong interpersonal skills, diplomacy and authority.

Should it be felt that zoning is required as a further step in future, the spatial information included in this plan should underpin this process.

There is an opportunity to establish a small safe area for recreational watersport beginners close to the marina at Stranraer and for private watersport business development.

While previous studies have recognised that Loch Ryan is underused from a marine leisure point of view and work is underway to improve infrastructure, there are opportunities to ensure that effective links are made between marine recreation and other activities and assets at the site to ensure that Loch Ryan, and indeed Galloway, is effectively promoted.

There is an opportunity to support measures such as habitat restoration to improve conditions for migratory fish and to promote recreational angling to encourage more young people to take up the activity. Sea angling projects based on education about fish species and provision of introductory sessions have been successful in other parts of Dumfries and Galloway in engaging young people in the natural environment. Sea angling can be a low cost activity, providing an opportunity for outdoor activity and socialising for people with limited means.

There are opportunities for enhanced access facilities for anglers at key points and the sites of disused piers are the most sought after locations providing access to deeper water which is not possible from the shore.

Despite challenges, the existing sea angling community is active and is interested in working with partners bodies on conservation, education and promotional activities. The local angling community has indicated that it would like to see more sea angling festivals and events which would bring visitors to the area with associated economic and social benefits.

There is a need for improved recreational infrastructure including work on interpretation signage and paths and it is recommended that this is approached on a site by site basis in partnership with the local community in each location. Wig Bay is a high priority location due to environmental sensitivities (such as the need for improved understanding of the impact of disturbance of breeding birds) and the poor quality of existing infrastructure including picnic benches, interpretation and signage. There is an opportunity to develop the WW II look-out at the Wig to create a bird watching shelter.

The existing hazard signs which warn of the dangers of ferry wash are now no longer required in some locations and could be removed. Site signage, information and interpretive material should be sensitive to the site and should seek to avoid urbanisation of the natural environment.

Web based, print material and promotional activity is needed off site as well as at key locations on site to realise the economic potential of recreational use and nature based tourism at Loch Ryan.

The ferry terminals provide a perfect opportunity for provision of promotional and interpretive material about all aspects of Loch Ryan's assets including cultural, historic, natural heritage, commercial and recreational qualities.

## 9. Maritime safety

### 9.1 Overview

Stranraer lifeboat is operated by Royal National Lifeboat Institution volunteers from a base on the waterfront at Agnew Park. The lifeboat covers Loch Ryan and the coastline to the north up to Ballantrae and to the south as far as Portpatrick. The lifeboat also operates in Luce Bay at times and is taken overland and launched from Sandhead in this event.

### 9.2 Issues

Any increase in use of the loch would inevitably result in increased demands on the Stranraer lifeboat. However, it is envisaged that resources would be made available if required for increased use of the facility.

### 9.3 Opportunities

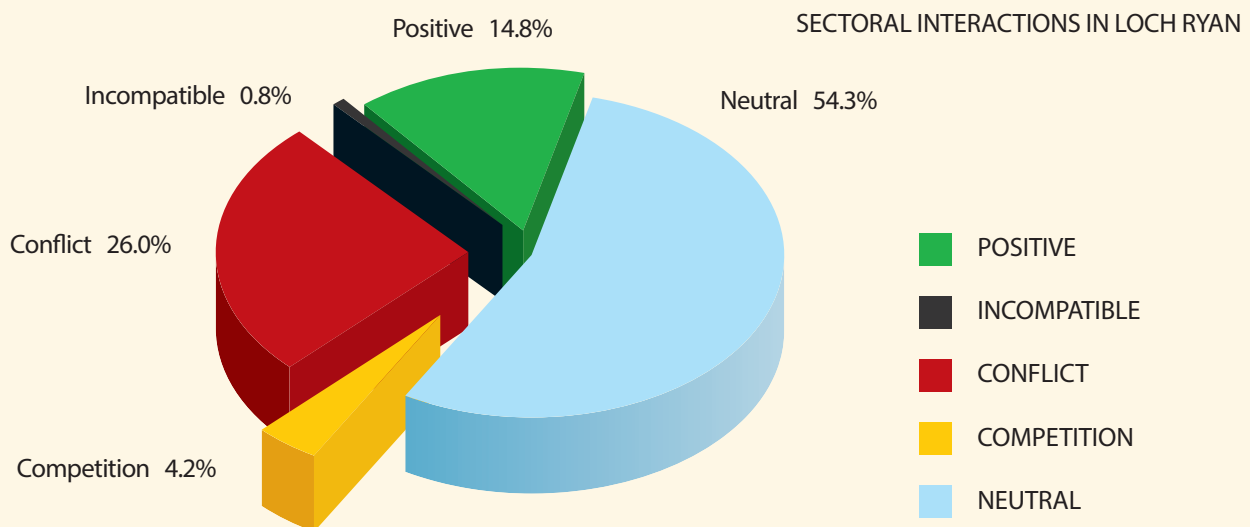
It is important to ensure that events and activities at Loch Ryan take full account of the demands on the RNLI and that appropriate support is provided as necessary to maintain this resource.

## 10. Conclusions of sectoral interactions work

### 10.1 Analysis of results

After deduction of no responses (due to the use or activity not taking place), or where the sector identified itself, 1,010 interactions were recorded. Of these:

Positive	149 interactions were regarded as having a positive effect on another sector
Neutral	548 interactions were regarded as having no effect on another sector
Competition	42 interactions were regarded as competing with another sector
Conflict	263 interactions were regarded as conflicting with another sector
Incompatible	8 interactions were regarded as being incompatible with another sector



#### Key points:

- The majority of interactions were perceived as neutral (54.3% of all interactions)
- There were a large number of positives associated with the lifeboat and coastguard services
- Environmental quality management was generally regarded as being positive
- Wildlife watching and ecotourism were regarded overall as a positive or neutral activity with only one potential conflicting interaction
- There were very few incompatible activities: jet skis and small power boats were regarded as being potentially incompatible with bird interests; naval defence exercise areas and munitions dumps were regarded as being incompatible with ferry services
- Another sector regarded as rising to competition or conflict was renewable energy: many sectors felt that offshore wind, wave and tidal developments would be detrimental particularly to recreation and tourism, natural heritage, landscape and seascape.



### 10.2 Evaluation

Conflict between different types of use of Loch Ryan is not currently a major issue. Stakeholders have stressed that there is considerable potential for conflict should there be a significant increase in the level of use. Key areas of concern are increased use of power boats and jet skis and their potential for disturbance of birds and conflict with users including recreational anglers.

Some contributors felt that a zoning plan could satisfactorily address potential future conflict. However a greater number of respondents stressed the importance of good site management and the input of a respected harbourmaster who understood the needs of all interests. This, it was felt, could be more effective in managing issues on a voluntary and informal basis, potentially negating the need for more formal measures such as zoning plans and byelaws.

Similarly, a countryside or coastal ranger working with local communities and site users was felt to be the most effective way to address issues such as disturbance to breeding birds as well as providing a means of interpretation and education and an opportunity to progress practical projects on the coast.

A Loch Ryan Forum met regularly in the past and brought together all interests in the site. Some of the people and organisations consulted during the course of preparing this plan were active members of this forum and stressed its effectiveness in dealing with issues at an early stage. There is an opportunity to re-establish such a group to help progress many of the potential actions identified. This has clearly been a well-regarded and effective mechanism for fostering co-operation and understanding between users and also for identifying and progressing positive management actions previously.

Wildlife watching at Loch Ryan – Solway Firth Partnership







## 11. Conclusions of consultation

### 11.1 Analysis of results

A wide range of suggestions for improvements to the amenity value of Loch Ryan for the local community and development of its economic regeneration potential for the surrounding area have been proposed during previous community consultations and during the course of the interviews carried out by Solway Firth Partnership. The preceding sections of this plan set out the issues and opportunities which have arisen in more detail.

A full summary of consultation responses is included as an appendix<sup>5</sup> to this document. However, rather than provide a long list of actions without the availability of resources to progress all of these, proposals have been evaluated on the basis of feasibility including any capital and maintenance costs and the extent to which they help to realise the objectives of enhancing community amenity, protecting the quality of the site and realising economic development potential.

As part of this evaluation process, Solway Firth Partnership undertook a full walkover survey of the coast to help assess the condition of existing small scale infrastructure. The Partnership brought its collective experience to this process and took a strategic view of opportunities. Following this, a series of actions were proposed which were considered to be most effective, achievable and to offer best value. These options were presented to the local community to obtain further feedback prior to finalising this document.

Therefore the recommendations which follow are regarded as the highest priority and best value options to emerge from this process. Lead partners are not identified as is so often the case in this type of document when, in reality, partners are identified who have neither the financial nor the human resources required to make progress. Rather, it is hoped that this plan will provide the material for community and agency partnerships to form based on shared areas of interest and that the content of this document can be used to progress applications for funding from sources including Heritage Lottery Fund, the Coastal Communities Fund and, in due course, the new LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund programmes amongst others.

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix 8: Summary of all consultation responses



## 11.2 Recommendations

### Site Management

A full time harbourmaster, a dedicated countryside ranger and the re-establishment of the Loch Ryan Forum are the best ways to support good site management. More information on the activities that could be addressed through these means is included in the relevant sections of this report and includes education, development and promotion of good practice voluntary codes of conduct and progression of actions on a project and site focussed basis working in partnership with local communities.

A zoning plan should be developed if required in accordance with increased levels of use in future. The spatial data in this document provides the information needed to develop this if necessary. Byelaws should only be instated in the event that the measures above have been fully explored.

### The Wig

The area adjacent to the village of Kirkcolm known as the Wig is a popular spot for locals and visitors. There is an attractive circular walk taking in a scenic part of the shoreline with considerable historic and natural heritage interest.

Most of the existing small scale infrastructure including picnic benches, interpretation and signage is in very poor condition. There is a derelict WW II lookout building on Kirkcolm Point which has potential for interpretation and improvement to create a birdwatching shelter. There may be opportunities for habitat improvement works at the site such as for breeding birds and control of invasive non-native species.

The proximity of Kirkcolm community including its Primary School provides an opportunity for a collaborative approach involving community engagement and education initiatives as part of an overall package.

### Angling development

Both shore and boat based recreational sea angling are popular in Loch Ryan and the surrounding area. There is an active Loch Ryan Angling Association, a long-established tackle shop in Stranraer and charter boats operate from the marina. Slipways around the Loch provide additional access for boats and access for shore anglers is generally good. The main issues raised by anglers were the decline in fish stocks and a lack of young people taking part.

Galloway Fisheries Trust is undertaking some habitat improvement works to burns around the Loch. Improvements in water quality in the Loch in recent years along with changes in wider marine management may all help to improve fish stocks.

There is an opportunity to develop a community engagement, education and habitat management programme to improve understanding of fish species and encourage young people to take up angling.

### Black guillemot nest boxes

Installation of black guillemot nest boxes at the West Pier and at other suitable structures around Loch Ryan is a relatively low cost action for early progression. The work would provide a further potential opportunity to follow up with interpretive activity.

Rob Lamont – fisherman and  
skipper of the Vital Spark oyster  
fishing boat – Andy Smith



## The West Pier

Investment in infrastructure on Stranraer waterfront and in the town centre is helping to create the ambience of a distinctive and successful marine leisure destination in line with the high level vision for Stranraer. The construction of the new West Pier along with the distinctive Harbour Office building are significant steps along the way.

There is an excellent opportunity to supplement the new building work in this area with interpretation about the history, wildlife and commercial use of the Loch and harbour.

A powerful telescope or binoculars on the end of the West Pier would add to the amenity value of the waterfront complex and provide encouragement for people to walk out onto the structure.

## Marketing

Consultation highlighted the need to supplement investment in infrastructure at Loch Ryan with a comprehensive marketing package. This would support actions to promote the Loch for leisure boating as well as raising awareness of the quality of the natural and cultural heritage of the area. There are opportunities to improve marketing linkages between Loch Ryan and other birdwatching sites in Dumfries and Galloway including Mull of Galloway as well as with initiatives such as Wild Seasons.

A marketing strategy needs to span a wide range of media and web based material is clearly a key component of this. However, visitors interviewed during the course of site surveys commented on the patchy availability of internet access in the Loch Ryan area illustrating the need for print material as well. A key marketing opportunity is presented by the ferry terminals and an innovative approach to this could include production of a short film about Stranraer and Loch Ryan for screening on the crossing.

## Loch Ryan Oyster Festival

Reflecting on the aspirations for Stranraer and Loch Ryan and ways in which the area can attract visitors in a highly competitive marketplace led to careful consideration of a unique selling point. This is provided by the Loch Ryan oyster fishery: the only native wild oyster fishery in Scotland.

The fishery has won a variety of awards for sustainable management and is providing a premium product with excellent marketing potential for Stranraer and the surrounding area.

The potential for seafood festivals to supplement the events calendar in Dumfries and Galloway has been recognised in a recent sea fisheries socioeconomic study for Dumfries and Galloway Council. A Loch Ryan Oyster Festival provides an opportunity to market other local seafood and to make linkages with a range of other sectors under this marketing theme.



# Appendix 1: Sectoral interactions information for contributors

Solway Firth Partnership | Sectoral Interactions in Loch Ryan | Explanatory Notes for Contributors

## 1 Introduction

The Marine Acts in England and Scotland aim to support sustainable use of our seas and coasts through an integrated approach to management and governance. Marine planning is a central means of achieving the objectives of the Acts and Solway Firth Partnership is gathering information about activities in the local area which will support creation of a future marine plan.

Solway Firth Partnership is an independent charitable company that supports integration between people and policies related to the local marine and coastal area.

Marine planning will be an open and inclusive process based on the shared knowledge and engagement of everyone with an interest in the local marine and coastal area. As a key stakeholder, we would be very grateful for your input to this preparatory work.

## 2 Consultation

### 2.1 Purpose and outcomes

The consultation aims to capture information on the nature, extent and intensity of interactions among sectors within Loch Ryan now and as predicted to develop over the next ten years. The quality of a local management plan and future marine plan will be dependent on the accuracy of the information it is based on and the active involvement of as many stakeholders as possible.

Information arising from this consultation will be fed into a matrix summarising the nature and significance of interactions among sectors. This will be supported by a report providing an overview of findings. Subject to your agreement, map based information will also be gathered which will be used in the development of future marine plans for the area.

### 2.2 Process

Interviews will be carried out with key stakeholders based on a series of questions and completion of an interactions matrix (see Figure 1) for each sector. Meetings to facilitate this process will be arranged by Solway Firth Partnership and all contributors will be invited to comment on a draft matrix and spatial data prior to publication.

Where more than one individual or organisation responds on behalf of the same sector, Solway Firth Partnership will aim to provide an accurate collective response in the final matrix. The full range of responses will be explained in the accompanying report.

The main purpose of the interviews is to enable Solway Firth Partnership to develop a greater understanding of the nature, intensity, location and scale of interactions and to explore marine management issues arising from these. The meetings also provide an opportunity to consider how current interactions might be anticipated to evolve over the future ten years.

Solway Firth Partnership is also interested in seeking ways to improve integration between different users of the area, investigating innovative management approaches and identifying opportunities to maximise sustainable use of the area.

Map based information will be recorded on large paper copies of local admiralty charts and Ordnance Survey maps which we will supply. Any maps included in the final sectoral interactions report will be illustrative highlighting locations of key issues, activities, resources or opportunities. The use of map based information in future marine plans will be subject to the agreement of the original contributor/s.

Interviews will be carried out during 2013 and, following consultation, a final matrix and Management Plan will be produced.

### 2.3 What is a sectoral interactions matrix?

A sectoral interactions matrix categorises perceptions of interaction between different interests in the marine area. This is illustrated on a table of intersecting rows and columns. Each cell in the table characterises the interaction between the subsectors named in the intercepting row and column from the viewpoint of the subsector named in the column.

Solway Firth Sectoral Interactions Matrix		Aquaculture	Shipping & Transport	Maritime Safety	Recreation & Tourism						Natural Heritage Management		
Loch Ryan		Shellfish Aquaculture	Ferries	Inc lifeboat service, HM Coastguard	Inc cruisers, yachts, sailing dinghies, sm power boats, jet skis, marinas slipways, moorings & anchorages, sea kayaking, diving, sea angling, bait digging, wildfowling, wildlife watching, eco-tourism						Inc Management of intertidal environment, communities, breeding & wintering birds, habitats		
Sectors	Subsectors	Loch Ryan Oyster Fishery Company Ltd	Stena Line, Cairnryan	Stranraer Lifeboat / RNLI	Newton Stewart Sub-Aqua Club	Scottish Natural Heritage Officer	Stranraer Harbour Users Group	Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network	Sports Shop Stranraer	Reserves Manager, RSPB	Scottish Natural Heritage Officer	Galloway Fisheries Trust	Dispersal
Renewable Energy	Offshore Wind		Competition		Conflict	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	
	Wave	Neutral	Competition	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	
	Tidal	Neutral	Competition	Neutral	Conflict	Conflict	Competition	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	Conflict	
Subsea cables & pipelines	Electricity	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Oil/Gas Pipelines	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Telecomms	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
Inshore fisheries	Scallop dredge												
	Queenie dredge												
	Queenie trawl												
	Nephrops trawl												
	Brown shrimp trawl												
	Demersal trawl												
	Pelagic trawl												
	Static Gear (Creels & Pots)	Neutral	Conflict	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Cockling (boat)	Conflict	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral			Conflict	Competition	
	Intertidal cockling (h& tractor)	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral			Conflict	Neutral	
	Other intertidal & coastal shellfisheries	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral			Conflict	Neutral	
	Drift netting												
Aquaculture	Fixed netting	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral				Conflict	Conflict				
	Electrofishing	Competition	Neutral	Neutral				Conflict	Conflict			Neutral	
	Shellfish aquaculture		Conflict		Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Conflict	Neutral	Neutral	Conflict	Neutral	
	Tankers												
	Bulk carriers												

This cell represents interaction between divers and electricity cables based on the perception of the Recreation & Tourism industry.

### Interaction categories

Positive	<i>Where the activity of the other sector has a positive influence on your sector</i>
Neutral	<i>Where the activity of the other sector has no positive or negative influence on your sector</i>
Competition	<i>Where there is sustainable competition for access to the same resources or areas between the other sector and your sector</i>
Conflict	<i>Where conflict arises as a consequence of unmanaged competition between the other sector and your sector for access to the same resources or areas</i>
Incompatible	<i>Where there is a fundamental and unmanageable incompatibility between the activity of the other sector and your sector</i>

### 2.4 Contributors

Solway Firth Partnership will seek responses from stakeholders based on contributions across a range of sectors. While everyone with an interest in the local marine and coastal area is a potential stakeholder in future marine planning, the aim of this interactions matrix consultation and associated Management Plan is to support the objectives of enhancing community amenity, protecting the quality of Loch Ryan and realising its economic development potential.

### 2.5 Geographic scope

The study will be based on activities taking place in, or having a significant effect upon, the marine and coastal area of Loch Ryan.

## 3 What happens next?

This explanatory note has been issued so that you can ask any questions, consider your responses or consult more widely with colleagues before we meet.

Please feel welcome to contact us at [info@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk](mailto:info@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk) or 01387 702161 if you have any queries. Otherwise, we look forward to contacting you shortly to arrange our meeting.

Thank you very much for your help.





## Appendix 2: Sectoral interactions questions

### Loch Ryan Sectoral Interview Questions

1) Your contact details

.....

2) What sector are you representing?

.....

3) Are you responding as an individual or as the representative of an organisation?

.....

4) What are the aims of your organisation?

.....

5) What is the nature of your organisation? (eg statutory, voluntary, private company)

.....

6) How long has your organisation been operating

.....

7) How many members do you have?

.....

8) What area does your organisation cover?

.....

9) Is your activity likely to increase, decrease or stay the same over the next ten years?

.....

10) What factors are driving change?

.....

11) Is your activity seasonal?

.....

12) Is there scope to improve integration between your sector and others?

.....

13) Are there opportunities for improved management of your sector?

.....

14) Are there opportunities for development of your sector?

.....

15) Please provide an assessment of interactions between your sector and the others on this list using the categories on sheet.

.....

16) If an interaction is categorised as Positive, Competition, Conflict or Incompatible, please provide details indicating the basis for your choice.

.....

17) Please provide information on the nature, significance to your sector, timing (e.g. year round, summer only) and spatial extent (e.g. whole of the Solway Firth, Loch Ryan only) of the interactions.

.....

18) Please illustrate the extent of your activity and any key issues on a relevant admiralty chart (provided).

.....

19) Can the map based information you have provided be used for future marine planning purposes?

.....

20) Are there any other marine and coastal activities, issues or opportunities you would like to comment on?

.....



## Appendix 3: Master table of sectors

NAME: _____						
SECTORAL GROUP	SECTOR	Positive	Neutral	Competition	Conflict	Incompatible
Renewable Energy	Offshore Wind	---	---	---	---	---
	Wave					
	Tidal					
Subsea cables and pipelines	Electricity					
	Oil/Gas Pipelines					
	Telecomms					
Inshore fisheries	Scallop dredge	---	---	---	---	---
	Queenie dredge	---	---	---	---	---
	Queenie trawl	---	---	---	---	---
	Nephrops trawl	---	---	---	---	---
	Brown shrimp trawl	---	---	---	---	---
	Demersal trawl	---	---	---	---	---
	Pelagic trawl	---	---	---	---	---
	Static gear (creels and pots)					
	Cockling (boat)					
	Intertidal cockling (hand and tractor)					
	Other intertidal and coastal shellfisheries					
	Drift netting	---	---	---	---	---
	Fixed netting					
	Electrofishing					
Aquaculture	Shellfish aquaculture					
Shipping and transport	Tankers -----	---	---	---	---	
	Bulk carriers	---	---	---	---	---
	Container vessels	---	---	---	---	---
	Coastal bulk cargo	---	---	---	---	---
	Ferries					
	Cruise ships					
Ports and harbours	Principal ports					
	Small ports					
	Piers and jetties					
	Dredging					
	Navigation aids					
Maritime Safety	Lifeboat service					
	HM Coastguard					
Recreation and Tourism	Cruisers					
	Yachts					
	Sailing dinghies					
	Small power boats					
	Jet skis					

SECTORAL GROUP	SECTOR	Positive	Neutral	Competition	Conflict	Incompatible
	Marinas					
	Slipways					
	Moorings & anchorages					
	Sea kayaking					
	Diving					
	Sea angling					
	Bait digging					
	Haaf netting	---	---	---	---	---
	Wildfowling					
	Wildlife watching					
	Wind / kite surfing	---	---	---	---	---
	Landsailing	---	---	---	---	---
	Eco-tourism					
Defence	Coastal infrastructure					
	Submarines	---	---	---	---	---
	Surface vessels					
	Restricted areas					
	Exercise areas					
	Munitions dumps					
	Radar					
Natural Heritage Management	Intertidal environment/ communities					
	Seabed environment/ communities					
	Breeding and wintering birds					
	Other mobile/ migratory species					
	Management of coastal habitats					
	Marine invasive non-native species					
Landscape and Seascape Management	Landscape management					
	Seascape management					
Environmental Quality Management	Bacterial quality					
	Biological quality					
	Chemical quality					
	Physical quality					
	Marine and coastal litter					
Historic / cultural heritage Management	Coastal monuments and archaeology					
	Marine monuments and archaeology					
Coastal Development	Power stations					
	Residential					
	Industrial					
	Coastal defences					
Waste Management	Sewage disposal					
	Rubbish disposal					

## Appendix 4: Loch Ryan interactions matrix

This is enclosed as a fold out document at the back of this publication.

## Appendix 5: Sectoral interactions consultees

All the following consultees except one were interviewed in person. One person provided information remotely based on telephone discussions and a written exchange. All completed sectoral interactions questionnaires.

Name	Representing	Sector Represented
Tristan Hugh-Jones	Loch Ryan Oyster Company	Aquaculture
Andy Kane	Stena Line	Shipping and Transport
Lesley Smith	Stranraer Harbour Master	Ports and Harbours
Terry Simpson	Stranraer Lifeboat - RNLI	Maritime Safety
Chris Harrison	Newton Stewart Sub-aqua Club	Recreation and Tourism
Gordon Baird	Stranraer Harbour Users Group	Recreation and Tourism
Ian Burrett	Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network	Recreation and Tourism
Eric McLean	Sports Shop, Stranraer	Recreation and Tourism
David Goupillet	Loch Ryan Sea Angling Association	Recreation and Tourism
Andrew Bielinski	Reserves Manager, RSPB	Natural Heritage Management
Christine Welsh	Scottish Natural Heritage	Natural Heritage Management
Jamie Ribbens	Galloway Fisheries Trust	Natural Heritage Management
Mark Pollitt	Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre	Natural Heritage Management
Paul Collin	Scottish Ornithologist's Club	Natural Heritage Management
Peter Norman	Biodiversity Partnership	Natural Heritage Management
Gillian Flack	Contaminated Land Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council	Environmental Quality Management
John Gorman	SEPA	Environmental Quality Management
Andrew Nicholson	Regional Archaeologist, Dumfries and Galloway Council	Historic and Cultural Heritage
Barry Miller	Stranraer Tourism, Leisure and Culture	



## Appendix 6: Attendees at consultation event

The following people attended an open consultation event on 17 December 2013 at Stranraer Library and provided their details. These are shown as provided along with an indication of their area of interest.

Bob Hill	Marketing interest
Mr Robinson	Boat owner (moored at Stranraer, resident at Gretna)
James Coulter	Cairnryan Community Council
Philip Taylorson	Sailing Club / Stranraer Harbour Users Group
Harry Harbottle	Portpatrick interest
Gilbert Kelly	Commercial vessel interests
Steve Stringer	Powerboat business owner
Alan Richards	Aldouran wetland garden / Woodland Trust
Pam & Morris	Local and Glasgow Scottish Ornithologist's Club interests
Richard Carr	Railway interest
John Picken	Wigtownshire Natural History and Antiquarian Society
Iain Baird	Windsurfing and sailing interests
Tom Stevenson	Coastal walking
Archie Bell	Coastal walking
John Cooper	Sailing interests
Wolf Richthofen	Wigtownshire Chamber of Commerce
Eric McLean	Sea angling interests
Chris Rollie	RSPB

Many other people attended the event and did not provide their details. Their comments were noted and have been included in preparation of this document.

## Appendix 7: Verbal and written consultation respondents

The following people were consulted on a one to one basis:

Wolf Richthofen	Wigtownshire Chamber of Commerce
Grant Torbet	Commercial fishing interests
Gav Thomson	Commercial fishing interests
Wendi Cuffe	Economic Development Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Karen Morley	Countryside Development Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council

Oral responses to consultation were received from:

Ben Wallace	Coastal landowner and owner of rights to the Loch Ryan oyster fishery
Peter Roberts	Kirkcudbright Harbourmaster

Written submissions to consultation were received from:

Chris Rollie	RSPB
Mr S Milner	Boating interests
Paul N Collin	Ornithological interests
Vicki Warren	Scottish Natural Heritage
Dylan de Silva	Scottish Natural Heritage

## Appendix 8: Summary of all consultation responses

Responses have been grouped together under broad themes and are non-attributed. Some comments address several themes in which case they are recorded under the main theme to which they relate.

Under each theme, the order in which comments appear is not a reflection of their significance. Verbal feedback has been paraphrased and written responses have been summarised to keep this section reasonably concise.

### Marketing and promotion

'Stranraer as a gateway to Scotland': This is not an objective and is not achievable. A marketing plan is required. The 'gateway' should be to the Rhins (both north and south) and to Loch Ryan. This would make more sense from both Ireland and Scotland.

There would be benefits of making links to other ports - Portpatrick and the northern coast of Ireland.

There needs to be a champion for works to Stranraer.

Stranraer could be a meeting place for Celtic sea countries - 'Council of the Isles'.

Birds are a key feature for promotion. Local SOC group and the Glasgow group come to visit the loch. Promotion of the site would benefit local business. Could produce a bird watching guide / link with music town / use birds as a marketing tool.

Promote birdwatching, sailing school, weekend packages, heritage/history, nature based tourism, food tourism, and better promotion of the shuttle bus between Stranraer and Cairnryan.

Joint marketing of sailing and watersports should be undertaken for Sandhead and Loch Ryan.

Ferry businesses based at Cairnryan have previous experience of working with tourist boards on events marketing and this is a development opportunity at Loch Ryan.

Ferry businesses may well be receptive to provision of interpretive / promotional material for Stranraer and Loch Ryan at ferry terminals.

The internet could be better used as a way of providing information about what to do in the area – it is poorly marketed

Stranraer and the surrounding area needs to be marketed as a destination

West Pier – most people wouldn't know what was meant by the term. A map of facilities is needed.

Didn't know there were any angling charter boats in Stranraer 'til read the consultation document! Marketing is poor.

People come from Birmingham and the Yorkshire area to stay in a local holiday home. They are looking for peace and solitude and escape from electronic devices. Offer to read the visitor book for verification!

Loch Fyne is renowned for its oysters – these are Japanese seed grown on in Scottish waters not native oysters. Loch Ryan produces 99.4% of native Scottish oysters.

Loch Ryan's bird interest is appreciated by many serious birdwatchers, who regularly visit the site, including some who come year after year. Equally, though, there are many more who would visit if they realised just how good a site it was and just what it had to offer. Promotion of the site as a birdwatching destination has been relatively poor, with one or two notable exceptions including Dumfries & Galloway Council's recent Birdwatching in Dumfries & Galloway booklet and our own Places to enjoy wildlife in Dumfries & Galloway. There has been no dedicated marketing of the site as a birdwatching destination and this really needs to be addressed to maximise the nature based tourism potential of the area, with resultant economic spin-offs for Stranraer and neighbouring communities.

Clearly, there is an opportunity to highlight and promote Loch Ryan as a birdwatching destination, and this could be done through web sites, leaflets, on-ferry and on-shore interpretation. There is also an opportunity to provide facilities for birdwatchers, such as hides/shelters, but this would make much more sense if it was allied to an initiative to market the birdwatching potential of the loch and wider area.

In addition to comments made about the urgent need for both dedicated birdwatching and integrated marketing of Loch Ryan's interests, we completely endorse the need to link with nearby attractions such as Mull of Galloway (the region's largest breeding seabird colony and Scotland's most southerly point) and Logan Botanic Garden and fishpond, for example. The early- and pre-Christian memorials at Kirmadrine, Whithorn and indeed throughout the Machars offer a unique opportunity for integrated marketing of the area. The ferry terminals and on-board opportunities are untapped, whereas Northern Ireland has successfully packaged its offer very well to visitors from Scotland and northern England.

Create a Loch Ryan Birdwatching Trail.

Possibility of Stranraer linking up with the RSPB Crook of Baldoon and Mull of Galloway sites to develop a bird watching experience for visitors. There is potential to bring more visitors into the area.

Seafood festivals and events work well in other parts of the UK and can attract large numbers of people. Stranraer could provide an excellent location for this type of event which could be coupled with sailing, birdwatching, history and heritage based activities.

Commercial interests could be considered as potential leads for seafood events.

'Raids' have been suggested: more information <http://www.sailing-raids.com/> 'We were trying to think of something that suggested a spirit of adventure, that seemed a bit 'tough'. Then someone came up with 'raid' and it was the perfect word.' Raids are competitive sailing events associated with scenic places and a relaxed social setting and have been used as an effective coastal marketing tool. Loch Ryan provides an excellent setting for a raid with its natural amphitheatre - this could combine well with an oyster / seafood event.

Promote Loch Ryan as a bathing water site due to improved water quality.

Promote integrated boat / train travel. Also explore water taxi opportunities.

Opportunities for the loch include walks (particularly based on archaeological sites), hang gliding, parascending, regattas, disabled sailing facilities, marine festival and rib rides. Also possibilities of arts/interpretation, intertidal statues and using the dark skies theme as a marketing tool.

### Harbour, marina, sailing and marine leisure

Loch Ryan is the second best loch site in Britain for dinghy sailing in terms of safety and facilities. Develop a dinghy school / sailing school with 2 centres: the Wig and Stranraer would be ideal.

Disabled watersports and sailing - ideal at south end of loch for this activity. Requires additional marina facilities. Loch Ryan could be promoted as a suitable site for novice and disabled sailors in summer.

Want to see a watersports centre at bottom of loch – it needs to become a holiday destination.

An area of water at the south west end of the loch needs to be zoned for learner activities.

Interest in getting excluded children (disabled and socially excluded) out onto water: 'wet wheels' (a fully accessible powerboat). Armed forces disabled could also be included.

Potential to develop more boat trips. Currently, a few trips running to Ailsa Craig from Stranraer and Portpatrick.

Loch is safe area for wind surfing but need facilities for sailors and windsurfers - slipway, toilets, showers etc. Potential to develop sailing school type businesses as at Loch Ken. Need to have links with schools.

Rib / power boat business has been established. A garage delivery service for fuel could be established.

RYA disabled sailing opportunity. This requires floating pontoons and a shed / shelter with a hoist on the roof. Provision of privacy is important. Ancillary facilities are needed to complement the slipway such as toilets and showers.



Tremendous opportunity for development of watersports. Windsurfers and sailors used the loch more in the past and the high speed ferry put a stop to a lot of that. Opportunity to develop a local club / business for kayakers / windsurfers / kitesurfers etc along the lines of Galloway Activity Centre. Loch Ryan can provide a safe area for beginners and an area could be designated for juniors and novices at the south west edge of the Loch. Barassie is an area where Loch Ryan could be promoted for watersports. Links should be made with schools to encourage use of the site for outdoor education.

Concern about noise and disturbance arising from power boating.

Didn't expect the marina in Stranraer to be a success and proved totally wrong. The berths have been filled though boats don't seem to be out much – perhaps owned by those who like to have a boat as a status symbol rather than being very active sailors! Would like to see a busy, vibrant Stranraer and Loch Ryan, with lots of recreational boating.

The Sailing Club has an excellent site – a better position for launching a small boat than Stranraer itself.

Most marinas have a boat lift that transports boats into the boat park and onto cradles. If the marina wants to make a profit they need to cater for boats of all sizes. The bigger boats pay more in berthing fees and are more likely to remain on site all year. A standing area for boats needs electrical points and water as well as facilities for the owners when the boat is out of the water such as showers and toilets. The majority of marinas all around the world have their boat parks next to them and this encourages bigger boats and higher berthing fees. With the right facilities, boat owners from Troon and Largs may be encouraged to move to Stranraer. Boat parks encourage the public to linger longer and spend money in the area. Anyone who has a trailer for their boat would take it home for the winter and the marina would miss out on winter storage fees and haul-out and cradle rental charges. Stranraer can become a fantastic marina with its access to Ireland and the West Coast cruising areas, but to do this properly it must have the correct facilities, including an on-site chandlers, which is a necessity to sailors.

The potential for yachting development is not sufficiently recognised.

A water sports centre for schools could be developed.

Interests other than marine leisure / boating need to be catered for the area – this supports the overall offer of the marina.

Need private enterprise to develop the marina/harbour area as it needs to be a lot bigger than it is. There is an opportunity to have a lot more than the 50 or so berths available at present.

There are not enough water activities in the loch. There are no ferries at the bottom of the loch now so there is an opportunity to develop water sports and activities. There needs to be more marketing. The marina also needs to be extended to help promote the site. The charges for the marina are cheaper in Stranraer than most other nearby sites and a lot more boats could be accommodated to make more money.

There is a waiting list of 20 boats for the marina at the moment.

The loch is underused from a leisure point of view and would benefit from improved infrastructure. Loch Ryan is the only accessible harbour between Liverpool and Troon and so is strategically very important. There is a moorings association being formed at present to promote putting moorings into the loch for boat users.

Would like to see the harbour developed as a combined commercial and leisure facility. Can see the commercial fishery will attract tourism. There is a problem of the harbour falling in and nothing being done about it. There is space for both commercial and leisure boat users.

Concern that new marine legislation may affect diving. Wreck protection levels may change in future and could potentially affect diving activities.

### Sea angling

Potential for more charter boat angling from Stranraer

Great potential to develop disused piers for angling

Opportunity for development of sea angling off piers - access and safety issues would need to be addressed.

Creation of laybys for angling access is required on the east side of the Loch as well as creation of car parking at Leffnoll Point.

Never heard of fishing classes (referring to the angling development suggestion in the consultation document).

Shore and boat-based angling are perfectly compatible with the use of Loch Ryan by birds and birdwatching in most instances. The only likely impacts conservation bodies are aware of are the disturbance to breeding birds at the scaur (Wig) by shore-based anglers, and disturbance to feeding birds and removal of food through bait-digging. Provided the latter is undertaken at a low-level and non-commercial way, it is not likely to impact significantly on birds. However, it is important that the potential to disturb important breeding terns at the scaur is integrated into any initiative.

Fish stocks are poor compared to the past.

There could be set aside areas for sea angling and prohibition on destructive forms of fishing.

Opportunity to have:

- Sea angling festival
- More promotion generally
- Angling trail to include Lady Bay and Daly Bay

There is a lack of young people getting involved in angling and the number of members in local clubs is dwindling.

The local angling association has a summer league and a winter league with most fishing taking place from the shore.

Angling competitions are a development opportunity.

Protect some areas from commercial fishing to improve habitats and increase fish stocks. There is an inshore netting prohibition in Loch Ryan.

Would like to see greater environmental protection and access improvement for anglers.

### Harbour and loch user management

Need a building like the new harbour office to be managed by someone who understands boat users.

Would like to see marine training centre for yachts, fishing boats, oil rigs, - all aspects of marine work that requires training.

Concern that the price of the berths is too high so not catering sufficiently well for local boating enthusiasts.

Concern that this could create a division between users of the marina and local people. Could a local discounting scheme be applied to give better rates to locals versus non-locals?

Potential for conflict between other users and the oyster fishery though feeling that this can be effectively managed by a good site manager / harbourmaster who needs to have excellent interpersonal skills, diplomacy and authority.

The Loch Ryan Forum was first conceived in the 1990s as an extension to the wider coastal zone management initiatives around the UK that included the formation of Solway Firth Partnership. Following RSPB's presentation to the then Area Committee, the forum was duly established and work began to collate interests and information, which culminated in the Loch Ryan Management Plan (1999). This initiative was in itself extremely useful in drawing together the users of the loch and its immediate surrounds, and led to a shared understanding of the importance of the loch to different sectors, visitors and local communities. The management plan set out the interests, issues and opportunities with a clarity and purpose unknown hitherto.

However, lack of resources to deliver suggested outputs, changes in key D&GC officers and emphasis, and the relocation of Stena to Cairnryan combined to remove focus from the forum. In addition, it became a sounding board for local issues that had little or nothing to do with Loch Ryan, and while these issues were extremely important in their own right, they couldn't be solved by the forum, but often rather served to dilute and divert attention away from the loch itself.

In conclusion, it is felt that the Loch Ryan Forum was an excellent initiative and succeeded in various ways. It is also believed that it could again be a most useful initiative to carry forward Loch Ryan issues, but only if it was allocated sufficient staff and financial resources.

Loch Ryan Forum was a good discussion group and it would be good to re-engage that group.

Having worked to help get Loch Ryan Forum together it has now dwindled. It would be a good idea to re-instate it to help ensure integration between different interest in the loch.

Zoning is not the best management approach – it tends to imply that one activity has complete precedence over another - a co-operative approach is better but needs knowledgeable on-site management

A full time harbourmaster is essential to ensure the smooth running of the marina and harbour (this comments was made several time over by different respondents)

The Port Marine Safety Code provides critical guidance for harbour and loch user management.

Jet skis can be a problem but the level of activity in Dumfries and Galloway is very low – estimated around 3 a year launching from Kirkcudbright. People can be encouraged to go to other parts of the coast where they are likely to cause less conflict with other users than in busy areas such as close to marinas. Most people are reasonable. Establishing regulation, including byelaws, for exceptional cases is not appropriate or effective. Byelaw fines are often small so regulations can be disregarded by those who are not inclined to act responsibly. On site presence by a fair but authoritative figure is a better way of managing and encouraging responsible behaviour.

Marinas can fail if they are not properly maintained and promoted. A trend of increased use is usual when a facility is new but can fall away. There is a need to protect investment in infrastructure at Stranraer by ensuring ongoing site management is adequate

Safety issues around the ferry terminal need to be taken very seriously – the consequences of a ferry running aground in rough weather could be catastrophic.

There is potential for better links between land and sea orientated organisations. Land based work is well integrated with partner organisations but integration with sea based organisations is not so good e.g. there was no consultation with local conservation bodies on the ferry terminal development.

There is not much conflict between conservation of birds at Loch Ryan and boat users who mainly use the site in summer whereas the main bird interest is in winter. However, there is some interest in summer e.g. there are peak numbers of eiders in July. Increased activity could be accommodated by seasonal zoning.

The biggest concern for ferry companies is the presence of pleasure boats with the associated risks with. If there was significant increase in boating this could cause problems.

The old port at Stranraer has a shallow channel and is therefore limited for commercial use.

Potential of having a loch manager / coordinator / ranger for a 2-3 year post.



## Loch Ryan Oysters

*(Note that these suggestions came from a number of different consultees and not from the Loch Ryan Oyster Company in the first instance)*

An Oyster Festival would be a good idea and could include sailing and music as well.

Loch Ryan Oysters should be promoted with a Loch Ryan Oyster Bar.

Oysters breed in summer so there is no fishing then. The skipper of the oyster fishery boat, the Vital Spark, hauls creels in summer. The vessel could be used in summer to take tourists out to learn about the oyster fishery, try a short tow and look at the catch and haul a few creels to see a lobster.

## Cockle fishing

There is potential to develop a small scale cockle fishery which would provide jobs for local people and the potential to develop local processing for shellfish.

## Coastal infrastructure and interpretation

Like the idea of a powerful telescope – the best site would be on the Old Pier. This is currently derelict but should be a brilliant site for a seafood restaurant and shops.

Install large telescopes at key points around the loch.

Facilities / toilets at Innermessen have had lots of complaints by visitors and could do with upgrading.

Need to connect the town with the sea by removing buildings and road on loch side. Remove barriers to loch.

Need something big on water front- theatre, conference, public facilities.

Need a proper breakwater in Stranraer.

Are some derelict buildings such as Finnart's Bay old fish farm which could be re-developed. Need several sites to provide premises for exhibitions / workshops / art / activities etc. around the loch.

A maritime museum / art gallery would be a good idea.

Anne House, next to Morrison's supermarket in town could be used as a hub for exhibitions and activities.

Develop the East Pier perhaps through a development company or through the Common Good Fund.

A key opportunity would be waterfront accommodation - quality hotels/accommodation is needed.

Opportunity to develop a maritime museum / art gallery.

A community access facility could be created at the Old Pier to enable people to view the loch through a big telescope.

Provide facilities for birdwatchers, such as hides/shelters.

Development of the West Pier offers a good opportunity to view and interpret wildlife, especially birds on Loch Ryan, as good close views can often be obtained of divers, grebes and sea duck from the existing pier that are often difficult to get elsewhere. The quality of images from any permanent telescope are unlikely to be ideal, given the likely detrimental effects of weather, salt spray and human use/abuse, but it might provide a focus and encouragement for those people who don't have their own optical equipment. A sheltered viewing area at the end of the pier would be welcomed by birdwatchers, and a possible alternative or addition to a telescope might be indoor binoculars fixed to an internal window ledge, which work well on some nature reserves.

A heritage centre in Stranraer has been talked about and might be a good addition to help give the town a sense of pride.

A submission was received for a Loch Ryan Bird Hide project proposing construction of ten or more hides around the loch.

A second mooring site is needed and hotel accommodation.

### Railway

The railway is an asset and the station could be done up as a heritage centre with heritage train trips - steam and a cafe. At present there are only 6/7 trains a day between D&G and South Ayrshire.

### Natural heritage

Loch Ryan is nationally important for (Canadian) pale-bellied brent geese, scaup, eider, red-breasted merganser and Slavonian grebe. It is the only regular place in Scotland to see pale-bellied brent geese and offers some of the best views of wintering scaup and Slavonian grebes in the UK. It also holds good numbers of red-throated and black-throated divers in winter. In late spring and early summer it holds the region's largest breeding tern colonies at the Wig and Cairnryan old pier. In all, Loch Ryan is one of the best birdwatching sites in the UK throughout the year.

Environmental education needs to be integrated into the programme of works. Need children to be engaged with environment: Loch Ryan and also the surrounding area. Needs to be inclusive for all disability, mental health etc.

Good to employ a ranger to take kids out into the countryside. This would be a resource for schools.

Education should include geology and nature. Dove Caves is a good geological site on west coast of the loch. Could establish an interest group for kids. It would be good to get groups of kids from different places / schools together. Not necessarily just focus on the loch but bring in all of surrounding countryside.

Ranger to lead guided walks / develop education opportunities.

There is the potential of employing a coastal ranger at Loch Ryan.

There is a lot of geological interest around the loch including Claughan Heughs sandstone.

Some of the key species on the Loch which reach nationally important numbers do so in late summer and seem to use the Loch as a moulting site: this affects mainly eider and great crested grebes, both of which gather in the central area of the Loch in large groups.

West Pier: Despite lengthy discussions which took place within the marina sub-committee of the Loch Ryan Forum and a general agreement that black guillemot nest boxes would be incorporated into any refurbishment of the pier – it is noted with disappointment that there are no boxes under the pier following its recent refurbishment. With the increasing dilapidation of the old Cairnryan pier (key site for breeding black guillemots ca 20prs) the West Pier presents an ideal opportunity to establish a new strong colony. The West pier being of timber construction is by far the easiest onto which boxes could be installed.

A most welcome and needed addition at Loch Ryan are nesting boxes for black guillemot, which nest at both Stranraer and Cairnryan harbours, but which are virtually absent as a breeding species in England, and hence are a very attractive 'novelty' species to many visitors – indeed they are something of a tourist attraction in Portpatrick harbour, where they nest in the harbour walls. Incorporation of boxes in the West Pier and/or elsewhere in Stranraer harbour could encourage more birds to breed and improve the spectacle for visitors. Conservation bodies would be happy to advise further on the design and siting of nest boxes.

For the first time this year black guillemots have nested on the East pier.

Improvements to interpretation at the Wig: The old SOC 50th Anniversary interpretation boards at the Wig and elsewhere around the loch were well-received and appreciated by locals and visitors alike, as were more recent Solway Heritage/Council-led signage. However, there is a current need to upgrade such interpretation. An issue at the Wig is disturbance by a small minority of sea-anglers and dog walkers who access the scaur at low tide during spring and early summer, at which times disturbance to breeding terns and waders can be significant. Ideally, new interpretation should also inform visitors of the desirability of avoiding disturbance during the bird breeding season. A sheltered viewing area would be welcomed by birdwatchers at the Wig, and indeed this is one of several locations that can be recommended for such facilities, others being at Leffnoll Point, the pier, Soleburn etc.

The control of non-native invasive species would be welcome, but any additional habitat creation works would need to be very carefully considered so as not to compromise existing important habitat. Conservation bodies and local ornithological experts would be happy to provide advice on this.

It would be wonderful to embrace the opportunity and desire to collaborate with local schools in educating children on the importance of Loch Ryan for birds and the people who come to watch them.

Looks like all positive stuff (in response to consultation document). It brings to mind a whole raft of projects in Orkney that were based around Scapa Flow, which had all the cultural, historical, heritage aspects to it and involved the local and wider visiting communities in a celebration of the Flow. It may still be on-going or nearing the end of its 5 years. I think there was a big HLF bid successfully applied for, which allowed them to employ a ranger who planned and organised a range of projects from traditional boat building, wildlife trips on boats, schools visits, arts and music events etc, etc. all based around Scapa Flow. This seems to be more on the lines of long-term development aspirations, but nevertheless a similar project might be a good way to kick start things? It might be useful or informative to the Loch Ryan project to get in touch with those involved with Scapa Flow project.

Points to consider in any development planning and future proposals would be assessment of potential impacts on European Protected Species: seals, cetaceans and otter and, of course, the native oyster beds.

A biosecurity action plan to prevent, control or eradicate INNS should be included.

Interested in the idea of putting in bird hides / bird town initiative. This needs to be developed.

An increased interest in the marine environment and recognition of the economic benefits of nature based tourism is driving change.

There are opportunities for interpreting the wildlife on Loch Ryan and improving the opportunity for viewing the wildlife. The Wig has suffered from loss of habitat and would perhaps benefit from re-instatement.

Loch Ryan is recognised as a Marine Consultation Area. This is not a designation but an identified area of high marine sensitivity. The high numbers of wintering birds reaches the threshold for the SPA designation. The site is also listed in 'Important Bird Areas in the UK'. There used to be breeding terns on the Spit but these have more or less gone. There may be occasional black guillemot on the disused pier at Cairn Ryan. There are pale bellied Brent geese coming in during winter. There is one of the largest native oyster beds in Scotland.

The Spit used to be a tern colony in summer although is not any longer. There was also a roost in winter but this was washed away.

It may be possible to enhance the Spit to encourage nesting birds/winter roosting ground, unless the erosion is caused by natural processes. Sheltered viewing area at the end of Wig Bay near the Spit would be good. Opportunity for Interpretation at the Spit.

The best bird watching sites around Loch Ryan are at: Wig Bay and the Spit; on east side – viewing across to pier; Bishop Burn Bridge; Innermessen.

There are possibilities for more wildlife recording from groups such as boat users, cetacean watching etc. which would support the work of the local records centre.

If there was a boat operating wildlife tours this could promote wildlife recording, however this tends to be carried out where there is an attraction such as a seabird or seal colony.

There is the potential for bird watching tours and developing bird watching interest as this is one of the best bird watching sites in the UK. The Loch Ryan Management Report produced in 1999 is still relevant and the maps could be used as a basis for zoning.

The best bird watching sites around the Loch Ryan coast are:

- The Scar – formerly had a colony of around 200 pair of terns (4 species) but down to very few numbers. Work could be carried out on this site
- Lefnoll Point – an area of waste ground owned by Barr which is particularly good for viewing ducks and divers in the loch. It would be suitable for developing as an attraction by digging out some freshwater lagoons. A hide could be sited here for visitors.
- Bishop Burn – this is the best area for gulls and waders which use the foreshore.

Loch Ryan is particularly good for bird watching as a road runs all around the loch. However, you do need telescopes to see the birds using the middle of the loch. It is not regarded as a site for beginners.



## Loch Ryan Management Plan 2014

The wildlife watching opportunities at Loch Ryan have never been developed.

There is the opportunity to develop wildlife tourism. Wig Bay and the Scar are the best bird watching sites in Loch Ryan but there are also opportunities at Kirkcolm Point and the layby near Innermessan.

The local dive club currently takes part in the Sea Search programme which contributes to marine wildlife recording. There is lots of scope to discover new diving sites and to chart seabed species.

### Environmental quality

Water quality is important. Need to check for pollution / radiation and impacts of outflows from commercial premises.

The Barrs area used to stockpile aggregate is a mess. Barrs should be approached about the future of this area which is an eyesore.

There is concern about potential contamination with blue asbestos and open public access to such areas.

There has recently been a state of the art sewage treatment plant installed at Smithy Hill. This has hugely improved the water quality of Loch Ryan. It services the villages of Cairnryan and Kirkcolm and the sewage is pumped to Smithy Hill where it is processed and then piped across to Port Patrick to be discharged to sea.

The water quality at Loch Ryan is as good as it has ever been due to the improvements in sewage treatment. This would be a good time to improve/promote the site for bathing.

Local interest in conserving the quality of the environment is increasing, for example a project is being developed on the Innermessan Burn by the local angling club.

There is potential to naturalise Stranraer burns – they have been heavily impacted in the town.

An Innermessan burn restoration project is underway involving a partnership between a local conservation body and the local community.

The Soleburn has potential to be improved but there is no obvious driver apart from the Water Framework Directive.

Mechanical beach cleaning machines can cause problems by removing important feeding habitats for birds and destroying local ecosystems.

Litter on the coastline can be an issue.

### History / heritage / archaeology

Wigtownshire Antiquarian and Natural History Society are a resource. There are many archaeologically important sites including Innermessan Motte site. There is Robert the Bruce interest.

History / heritage could be promoted more. Local people have a huge historic photographic catalogue. There is a very strong local history group. Offer of voluntary support - very strong local goodwill to support projects that help to promote the area.

There are a number of prehistoric settlements to the east of Stranraer as well as important World War 2 structures around the loch. Some of these elements are regionally important. Cairnryan House is an A listed building within a designed landscape of national significance as well as having archaeological interest. Some sites in the area are promoted through the museum trail. The cluster of sites at Innermessan is most important in terms of archaeology. On the west side of the loch, Corsewall House and Kirkcolm Church and Cross are important. There is also a possible Roman naval supply base at Loch Ryan.

Cairnryan and the Wig have promotional panels about WW2 and are important for military tourism.

It is very important that the historic uses of Loch Ryan is not lost for the public to see. The WW2 use of the loch dramatically affects the landscape of the site and development of the land. There is a lot of information held in an archive on WW2 sites.

The most important sites in historic and archaeological terms are:

- Military Port No 2 and the Wig.
- Innermessen – a prehistoric settlement.

### Coastal walking

Develop walking trail with added information / interpretation.

Access is important - Rhins walk up west coast could do with a link to get all round the coast.

Walking is important - Loch Ryan coastal path to connect to Mull of Galloway Trail.

Development of coastal paths - Scotland's Great Trail.

Very keen to see the development of walking and coastal paths and offer of voluntary support. Mention of Scotland's Great Trail.

Parts of the coastal path could be upgraded.

### Coastal cycling

Access along loch-side from Stranraer: cycleway goes to Craig cafe but stops. Need it to progress to Cairnryan. Bikes have to go on road which is quite dangerous. 1st part of path finished 6 or 7 years ago but no further progress. Very dangerous.

### Funding

Accessing European funds is key.

Sport Scotland is a potential funder.

There doesn't appear to be any mention of funding in the Loch Ryan proposal and maybe HLF would be a thing to look at.

### In response to the Loch Ryan consultation document

That's the first time I have felt it worthwhile reading a document relevant to this area. It was excellent.

## Appendix 9: References

Assessing the economic impacts of nature based tourism in Scotland 2010: SNH  
Best Birdwatching Sites - The Solway: John Miles  
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Prepared by :

Solway Firth Partnership  
Campbell House  
The Crichton  
Dumfries  
DG1 4UQ  
01387 702161  
[info@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk](mailto:info@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk)