



## **Biodiversity Duty Report**

2021 - 2023

### **1. Purpose**

This report has been prepared to demonstrate CalMac Ferries Ltd's commitment to conserve biodiversity whilst undertaking its operations as detailed within the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and to fulfil the reporting requirements of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE Act). As per the requirements of the WANE Act, this report will be made publicly available on the website and will be updated every three years.

### **2. Introduction**

CalMac Ferries Ltd (CalMac) is a lifeline service provider in the Clyde and Hebrides Regions and is part of the DNA of the Highlands and islands, embedded in the local community where it plays an integral part in the economic sustainability of the area's social and business life.

CalMac is committed to supporting the outcomes of the Scottish Government National Performance Framework (2019) so that people value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment. It will minimise impact on the marine and terrestrial environments in which it operates and wherever possible, enhance biodiversity and the quality of Scotland's natural environment for future generations to enjoy.

CalMac operates 36 leased vessels across 29 routes between 56 ports throughout the West Coast of Scotland through a public service contract with Transport Scotland. It is one of the largest transport operators in Scotland and is the largest ferry operator in the UK in terms of number of routes and vessels operated.

### **3. Actions to Protect Biodiversity and Connect People with Nature**

#### **3.1. Connecting People and Protecting Biodiversity**

In line with our Environmental Strategy core priority to protect biodiversity on land and in seas, and to support the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045, the following has been achieved over the reporting period:

- ORCA Wildlife Officer position continued in 2021 and 2022 between March and October annually to actively engage with passengers.
- Social media and blog posts undertaken as part of the CalMac Ferries Marine Awareness Programme with support from the Wildlife Officer and partner organisations.
- Marine Mammal citizen science surveys run by ORCA aboard CalMac vessels to monitor mammal populations.
- Volunteer Seabirds at Sea (VSAS) citizen science scheme established and run by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) aboard CalMac vessels to gather scientific data across the network.
- Passenger engagement by Royal Society for Protections of Birds (RSBP) Ayrshire Local Group on Ardrossan – Brodick route during July and August annually.
- Passenger engagement by Wild Discovery on Ullapool – Stornoway route during August 2023.
- Environmental training for all staff including an online video (2022) and Climate Emergency Training workshops (2023) to raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage sustainable behaviours.
- Control of Non-native Invasive Species:
  - Promoting the work of Biosecurity for Life via published blog on website.
  - Signs at applicable ports to encourage customers to check their luggage and vehicles for stowaways.

- Working with RSBP on the relocation of hedgehogs on Benbecula project.

### **3.2. Reducing Waste**

In line with our Environmental Strategy core priority to reduce waste and to support the Scottish Governments recycling and landfill targets, the following has been achieved over the reporting period:

- Continued centralised management of waste contracts to ensure efficiency and maximise opportunities to recycle more and divert from landfill.
- Monthly, quarterly and annual waste reporting to recognise trends and take action where necessary to reduce consumption and maximise recycling opportunities.
- Regular internal and external communications on waste and case studies on contractors to raise awareness of CalMac's efforts to reduce waste.
- Achieved silver accreditation across 26 ports for the Keep Scotland Beautiful Port and Harbours Environmental Award.
- Litter rezoning updates completed at our ports in compliance with The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse
- Monthly litter monitoring reports conducted at the ports.
- Reduced waste sent to landfill via The Highland Council new contract to incinerate waste.
- New recycling initiatives e.g. vessel mattress recycling and exploring options to recycle staff uniforms.
- Reducing retail packaging waste by working closely with suppliers through Supplier Relationship Management programme.
- Removed single use plastics in retail outlets and introduction of sauce pumps/milk jugs etc to reduce disposable products and waste.

### **3.3. Carbon Emissions**

In line with our Environmental Strategy core priority to lower our greenhouse gas emissions and to support the Scottish Governments ambitions to net zero, the following has been achieved over the reporting period:

- Fuel Efficiency Manager in position to assess, develop, implement and embed vessel fuel efficiency measures and opportunities relating to vessels, ports and routes.
- Trialled fuel additives project.
- Continued use of fuel reporting system for all vessels to accurately report fuel consumption.
- Promotion of green travel to passengers through journey planning tools on the website.
- Integrated timetable to include train connection times for applicable ports.
- Hybrid/electric vehicles rolled out across network (port vans).
- Electrical vehicle charging points installed at various ports for staff and customer use.
- Internal communications piece on 'World Car Free Day 2022' to encourage staff to consider active travel when commuting to and from work.
- Business miles reduced through new hybrid working policy/increased home working and use of technology to host online meetings.
- Increased home-working and introduction of hybrid working policy to allow staff to work from anywhere.
- Reduced energy consumption and less waste production at Gourock Office, as a result of more staff working from home and the closure of one of the offices in 2020.
- Re-introduction of food waste collections at Gourock office (after Covid-19 pandemic).

### **3.4. Green Travel**

To support the priorities of Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy, CalMac has promoted sustainable travel options. The following has been achieved during the reporting period:

- Promotion of green travel to passengers through journey planning tools on the website.
- Integrated timetable to include train connection times for applicable ports.
- Hybrid/electric vehicles rolled out across network (port vans).
- Electrical vehicle charging points installed at various ports for staff and customer use.
- Internal communications piece on 'World Car Free Day 2022' to encourage staff to consider active travel when commuting to and from work.
- Business miles reduced through new hybrid working policy/increased home working and use of technology to host online meetings.

#### **4. Mainstreaming Biodiversity**

CalMac has embedded its environmental policies and strategies within its business plan which is subsequently cascaded through all operational activities, employees and suppliers to positively influence both its performance and passengers. It monitors progress against targets and plans and reports actions on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

Building on the Environmental Management System (EMS) and ISO 14001:2015 accreditation, 'higher impact' operations have been investigated and monitored to better understand and improve energy and fuel usage and waste production. An Environmental Strategy (2021-2023) was developed during the reporting period to identify key actions for performance improvement and key environmental performance indicators to measure progress.

#### **5. Nature-based Solutions, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

CalMac has positively contributed to protecting biodiversity to help build a resilient environment for the future. It monitors its operational activities, minimises its waste management and fuel consumption and actions processes to reduce its impact on the environment and biodiversity.

In January 2023 the Environmental Manager undertook a comprehensive review of the company's Environmental Risks based on the Environmental Legal Register and known issues that have been identified in the internal and external audit programmes. An additional 14 environment related risks and mitigations have been identified. Climate change mitigation will be embedded in the company's new 5 year business plan.

In Spring 2023, Keep Scotland Beautiful accredited 26 ports and harbours owned by Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) and operated by CalMac with a silver environmental award, acknowledging both companies' commitment to improving environmental quality and management at the sites. The Ports and Harbours Environmental Award accolade, adapted from the criteria for National Award for Environmental Excellence, recognises the achievements of both organisations across a variety of areas, including building maintenance, cleanliness, waste management and engagement with the local community. Good practices included a clear overarching environmental strategy and local support. Overall, CMAL and CalMac received a silver level award across 26 sites – and each port and harbour achieved individual awards, seven sites scooping gold, 18 silver and one bronze.

##### **5.1. Improving Access to Nature**

Green travel plans are available on the CalMac website to promote use of public transport that links with the ferry timetables. The website also provides ideas of 'things to do', including nature-based activities for all the destinations that CalMac operates, such as the 'Whale Trail' in association with the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust.

Through the Marine Awareness Programme and the Wildlife Officer, CalMac can engage with staff and passengers. Share knowledge about the marine environment and encourage better awareness of some of the pressures these habitats are under, as well as encouraging greater enjoyment of the natural world.

## **6. Public Engagement and Workforce Development**

### **6.1. Public Engagement**

The Marine Awareness Programme aims to raise the profile of the marine environment in the West of Scotland. During the reporting period, the programme has continued to deliver its original remit of conducting sea bird and marine mammal surveys through citizen science, but also engages, educates and connects people with nature.

In 2021 and 2022, CalMac has contracted a Wildlife Officer through ORCA to deliver public education on board vessels and throughout the CalMac network. The Wildlife Officer has engaged many passengers, pointing out marine megafauna and educating in identification and marine issues. They have adopted ORCAs Observation Protocol to record marine mammal sightings, the data from which feeds into a wider analysis of marine megafauna abundance and distribution. The Wildlife Officer has also visited and given online presentations to local schools, conservation organisations and charity groups. With this, JNCC continue their programme to recruit and train volunteers to collect high quality seabirds at sea data from the CalMac ferries route network – over 55 volunteers were trained during the reporting period.

CalMac also have a longstanding arrangement with the RPSB Ayrshire local group who run a Saturday stall on MV Caledonian Isles during July and August months to engage with passengers on seabirds and promote birdwatching from Arran or Ayrshire.

In August 2023, a new customer engagement project was launched which saw Wild Discovery host a free three-day event for customers on MV Loch Seaforth. The purpose of this event was to engage with customers and promote marine wildlife spotting from the ferry - it was estimated that 455 passengers were actively engaged with.

### **6.2. Workforce Development**

In 2022, to support colleagues understand the importance of the environmental strategy, a mandatory environmental awareness training video was launched. The training is 30 minutes long and outlines how CalMac impact the environment and methods that can be implemented to reduce environmental damage. Topics include climate change, emissions, waste management and pollution.

In 2023, As part of Scotland's Climate Week, CalMac asked Keep Scotland Beautiful to host two online Climate Emergency Training sessions, available to all staff. The sessions aim to help employees understand:

- The meaning of terms like 'net zero', 'global warming', 'climate change' and 'carbon footprint'.
- What are the causes and impacts of climate change.
- CalMac's response to climate change, achievements and challenges in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Practical actions you can take to reduce your own carbon footprint.

Over the reporting period the environmental team have significantly increased the number of online resources available for staff, providing guidance on complying with environmental legislation, and other policies and action plans that are being implemented, through the company management system portal. In 2023, the waste management and oil storage procedures have been re-written and simplified and new procedures and guidance have also been written for the likes of packaging compliance and nesting birds on vessels and ports.

## **7. Research and Monitoring**

CalMac support the research undertaken by Marine Awareness Partners by providing free travel for surveyors conducting citizen science. With this, CalMac conduct various monitoring activities to measure emissions and waste data – this is done monthly, quarterly and annually.

## 8. Biodiversity Highlights and Challenges

A standout highlight for CalMac is achieving silver accreditation across 26 ports for the Keep Scotland Beautiful Ports and Harbours Environmental Award. With this, our waste management continues to improve with the landfill rate at its lowest since the baseline statistics in 2017/18. Adding to this is the new retail management system was launched that enables food waste to be measured and recorded on vessels daily, with targets being set and monitored to reduce food waste across the fleet.

Another highlight is the continued CalMac Marine Awareness Programme with partner organisations reporting positive engagement with customers and more interest in environmental activities and wildlife spotting from the vessels. Our environmental communications, both internally and externally has increased through more blog posts and participation during awareness days/weeks e.g., Scotland's Climate Week, Recycle Week and World Car Free day.

The most obvious challenge was the expected overall increases in emissions and waste arisings in 2022 during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Another continuing challenge is the current financial climate and reduced funding which has unfortunately resulted in the end of the ORCA Wildlife Officer for 2023, however we have an excellent relationship with other charities to continue our marine wildlife passenger engagement activities.

Despite the challenges faced over this period, CalMac will continue its commitment to a sustainable future through new targets set out in the upcoming 5-year business plan.