

P10 Marine Project



Project Overview:

This project aimed to build on survey work undertaken along the North-West Highland Seaboard based on the previous work of the CoCoast Project, whilst engaging with new groups and audiences and providing training in surveying techniques to allow for the work to continue beyond the project's life and in so doing fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the richness of the area's marine environment. This was to be supported and broadcasted through an annual festival that celebrates and promotes both the rich marine harvest available locally and the project as a whole.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved:

Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Others involved: Highland Council Senior Ranger (Sutherland and Caithness), Highland Council Ranger (Wester Ross), West Sutherland Fisheries Trust, Highland Seashore Project, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, Ullapool Sea Savers.

Project Location: Across CALL area and Ullapool

Project dates: Until August 2021

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
Survey work undertaken over 3 years (8 per year)	24 days	11	Y4Q4 USS 5 Survey days, Y5Q2 USS 3 Survey Days, Y5Q4 Isle Martin Seaweed Festival 3 survey days 2/12/20 NLHF accepted "10 days of surveying", but no formal change
Training days / workshops / school visits held per year, for 3 years	18	44	2016-2017 30 educational sessions with 426 school children and open events reached 232 members of the public. 2 Cocoast training, 8 USS on hands training days surveying 2020-21, Isle Martin Seaweed Festival 3 training days. Snorkel Training
Volunteers trained in surveying and identification skills	60	98	Y4Q3 15 Snorkel training Y4Q4 USS 9 children trained. Y5Q3 USS 8 children & 1 adult trained. Y5Q3 Seaweed Festival 65 2/12/20 NLHF accepted ""40 volunteer trained in surveying and identification skills, but no formal change."
Shore lined surveyed; records archived	3 kms	108km	SCRAPbook GIS marine pollution survey
HWDT boat-based education trip, and open boat evenings	2	2	September 2016 September 2017

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
HWDT monitoring trip	4	4	2-10 September 2016 18-29 Sept 2016
Festival / celebration events	2	2	Seafood Festival @ Ullapool Skiffs 7/7/17 Isle Martin Seaweed Festival 6-12/9/2021
Booklet produced by oral history project	1	1	Coigach Fisheries Oral History book
Oral history DVD produced	1	1	Recording deposited with Coigach Community Heritage due to GDPR issues
Oral history mobile exhibition	1	1	Exhibition boards presented at Coigach Heritage event 2019
MarClim sites surveyed	5	4 MarClim, 3 other sites	04/09/2020 Achmelvich (M), 18/09/2020 Keanachullish, 17/10/2020 Clachtoll (M), 18/10/2020 Achnahaird (M), 20/10/2020, Isle Martin East Beach, 20/10/2020 Isle Martin West Beach Mar 21 Ardmair (M) Jul-21 Keanachullish Aug 21 Isle Martin Sep 21 Achnahaird (M), Ardmair (M), Isle Martin West & East Beach (4/12/2020 NLHF accepted change to "5 MarClim sites surveyed")
Volunteer Days	180	89.2	

Scheme Outputs

How has the project contributed to the CALLP Scheme Outcomes:

Y	1. The key features of the Coigach and Assynt Landscape will better understood and restored with a fit for purpose system in place to ensure the benefits are sustained. <i>Cetacean surveys and MarClim site seaweed surveys.</i>
Y	2. Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats will be mapped. <i>Cetacean surveys and seaweed surveys.</i>
Y	3. Increased awareness and understanding amongst all individuals and groups of what makes Coigach and Assynt special and the threats to the unique heritage. <i>Work with the Ullapool Schools has been extensive.</i>
Y	4. Important elements of the built, cultural and natural heritage will be recorded, improved, made publicly accessible and celebrated by the local community. <i>Cetacean survey data recorded with the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust recorded in NBN database and seaweed surveys recorded as part of the Big Seaweed Search (Marine Conservation Society Natural History Museum, London).</i>
Y	5. People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage. <i>Training was provided for snorkelling and shore line survey. Experience of cetacean surveys.</i>
Y	6. Collected data, information and interpretation will be more accessible in the public domain including posting on appropriate websites. <i>As verified by the National Biodiversity Network the Wildlife records recorded with become available on national databases.</i>

Y	7. Local groups and individuals understand, enjoy, value and take action in the Coigach and Assynt area in ways they did not at the outset. <i>Work with the local schools and support of the Ullapool Sea Savers has ensured exposure to the local school children of the issues of the marine environment.</i>
	8. Increased access infrastructure at key strategic locations enabling people to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area.
	9. Increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits.

Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of CALLP?

Greater awareness of the Sea

The Scottish Wildlife Trust Living Seas Communities Manager extensively worked with the schools throughout the CALL area and Ullapool to promote the marine environment. Noel organised surveys by the Hebridean Whales and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) with community events to promote cetaceans during 2016-2017. The highlight for collaboration with HWDT provided a youth trip for five of the Ullapool High School students and a High School Teacher on the survey vessel *Silurian*. The trip around the coastal waters of Coigach and Assynt allowed the students to experience a marine survey for cetaceans and life aboard a sailing vessel.

What difference has this project made to the built, cultural and natural heritage of Coigach and Assynt?

The project raised awareness through 2016-2017 with over 30 educational sessions with 426 school children and open events reached 232 members of the public.

The surveys undertaken have increased knowledge of the distribution of a variety of species found around the coast including marine mammals (414 sightings of a total of 1,248 individuals) and shore surveys through CoCoast Training and Ullapool Sea Saver (USS) training. Snorkel training . Greater level of information and data obtained and made more widely available through reporting to national database.

The area's rich marine harvest is more widely appreciated, as is the importance of its ongoing sustainable future management for the area's future prosperity. The Isle Martin Seaweed festival was very successful at celebrating the diversity, heritage and importance of sea weed to 150 participants.

Coigach Fisheries Oral History interview of 10 respondents and published as book has recorded the traditional experiences of the coastal communities.

What difference has this project made to People?

The project raised marine mammal awareness through 2016-2017 with over 30 educational sessions with 426 school children and open events reached 232 members of the public.

Shore survey training provided to CoCoast volunteers and Ullapool Sea Savers, with interest to continue shore line surveys.

The Coigach Fishery Oral History has created interest in the tradition of the salmon and coastal fisheries, recording histories and unique details that are now recorded.

The project coincided with the declaration of Lochbroom as a Marine Protected Area and the subsequent unsuccessful application for kelp harvesting, that has maximised the impact of the project.

"I think one of the most heartening things about the trip was that the young people could see, and spoke about, careers in science and sailing after they finish school, and the word they all used to describe the work of HWDT was "important"."

ULLAPOOL HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

"Exceeded my expectations. We came especially for this; we've persuaded the rest of our family to stay an extra day...and we will be looking do a seaweed survey on our local coast when we return home. We feel so much more knowledgeable on seaweed. Thank you" Participant of Seaweed Identification Session at the Seaweed Festival

Useful Links

[Surveys – Ullapool Sea Savers](#)

www.highlandbiodiversity.com/seashore.asp

[Inspiring Ullapool's Future Scientists and Sailors — Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust \(hwdt.org\)](#)

[Teenage marine research expeditions in Hebrides to boost whale and dolphin conservation — Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust \(hwdt.org\)](#)

<http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/living-seas/#go-pgtab-1>

Future Plans and Legacy

The recorded surveys are deposited with the national databases and will form part of the continuing records of wildlife sightings for the future. The survey kits have been deposited with local community groups who will have the opportunity to continue the surveys. The ownership of the oral history accounts of the Coigach Fisheries is deposited with Coigach Heritage group who will reprint it as needed. The book is available through local outlets

Lessons Learned

What are the three positive lessons gained from the scheme:

1. The local community is interested in the state of the local marine environment
2. The project was able to support ongoing trends such as the Lochbroom Marine Protected Area
3. In small communities access to the local schools greatly facilitated the project

What are the three negative lessons gained from the scheme:

1. The CoCoast project had not documented survey sites so the marine project was unable to continue that work
2. New GDPR rules prohibited the circulation of interview recordings
3. The home build ROV did not work properly and in future it would be better to purchase a pre built and tested professional ROV

Funding Partners



Photographic Evidence



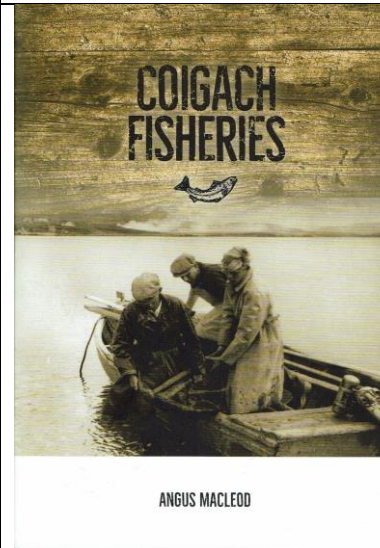
Archaeologist Cathy Dagg presenting at the 2021 Isle Martin Seaweed Festival © B Alexander/Scottish Wildlife Trust



Ullapool Sea Savers Surveying © Ullapool Sea Savers



Beach clean © Noel Hawkins/Scottish Wildlife Trust



Coigach Fisheries Oral History Publication © Coigach Heritage

Annex 1: Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust Cetacean Survey Results

4 HWDT monitoring trip Survey Results

Species	2016		2017		Total	
	Sighting count	No. of animals	Sighting count	No. of animals	Sighting count	No. of animals
Minke Whale	1	1	3	3	4	4
Common Dolphins	15	288	39	290	54	578
White-beaked Dolphins	3	15	5	29	8	44
Risso's Dolphin	3	10	6	35	9	45
Harbour Porpoise	63	163	99	205	162	368
Common Seal	6	6	40	45	46	51
Grey Seal	24	25	28	30	52	55
Sunfish	0	0	1	1	1	1
Unidentified Seal	36	52	20	20	56	72
Unidentified Dolphin	3	5	12	18	15	23
Unidentified Whale	0	0	2	2	2	2
Unknown	1	1	5	5	6	6