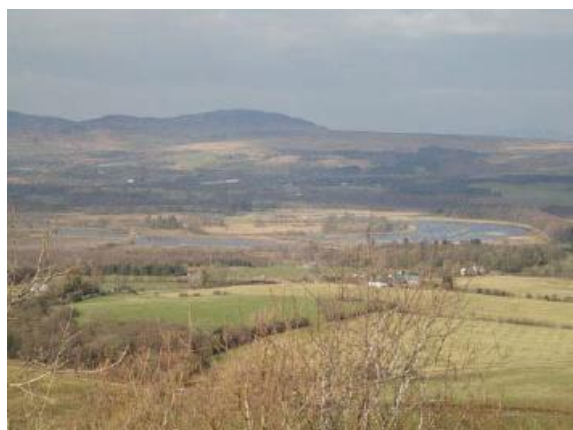


LOWLAND LOCH BASIN – LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS



Location and Context

The *Lowland Loch Basin – Loch Lomond & the Trossachs* Landscape Character Type covers the broad and expansive southern part of Loch Lomond lying below the Highland Boundary Fault Zone.

Key Characteristics

- Expansive loch basin rising to steep-sided hills and mountains to the east and west, and a low ridge to the south.
- Rivers flowing into the loch and their floodplains, with associated gently undulating valley sides, forming an integral part of the basin.
- Indented shores and some pronounced broad promontories on the west coinciding with alluvial fans from water courses flowing into the loch.
- Shoreline of rocky promontories and sand or pebble beach.
- Many wooded islands in the Loch appear to coalesce with shoreline promontories, breaking down the expanse of water visible in loch or shore views to form narrow straits and more intimately scaled areas of water.
- Extensive native oak dominated woodlands fringing the eastern side of the loch and wisps of birch threading up through narrow gullies which cut deeply into bracken/rough grass covered hill slopes.
- Well-settled loch margins with tourism and recreation developments such as chalet parks, golf courses and hotels, some accommodated in former estates.
- A number of small planned estate-influenced settlements on the shores of the Loch and the southern Luss small planned estate village. The settlement of Balloch has a more urban character.
- Loch shores a focus for estates and their designed landscapes with mixed policy woodlands and parkland contributing to the diversity of the loch basin. Twisting dead-end road providing access on the east side of the loch, contrasting with the heavily trafficked A82 aligned close to western side of the loch. Views from these roads to the Loch often restricted by shoreline vegetation. Tourist facilities located close to these routes.
- Boating activities including sailing, canoeing, kayaking, and power boats and other sport activities such as jet skis on Loch Lomond. Ferries are a feature of the water

bodies.

- Highly scenic landscape composition of island, water and indented shoreline, especially when viewed from surrounding hills and the south of the loch.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

As well as covering the expansive southern part of Loch Lomond the *Lowland Loch Basin – Loch Lomond & the Trossachs* Landscape Character Type within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park also includes the shores and lower hill slopes around the loch, extending more widely to cover the low-lying river valleys of the Endrick Water and the Fruin Water which flow into the Loch. A marked transition occurs between the narrowing 'Highland' upper Loch Lomond, constricted by the steep-sided hills which fall closer to the shoreline between Inverbeg and Rowardennan. Upper Loch Lomond is classified as the *Straths and Glens with Lochs* Landscape Character Type.

The shoreline of the loch is gently indented with some pronounced promontories on the west shore, such as at Rossdhu, Luss and Midross. These coincide with alluvial fans from water flowing into the loch from the Luss Hills and at the outlet of the Fruin Water. There are many wooded islands on the loch – the larger 11 are defined as the *Lowland Loch Basin Islands* Landscape Character Type.

Landcover

The shores of the loch are richly diverse with extensive semi-natural oak woodlands occurring on the eastern side and many estates and their wooded policies sited on the south-western shores where broader areas of flatter loch margins and promontories are present and on the more steeply sloping south-eastern edge of the loch. These estates include the 19th Century designed landscape of Ross Priory as well as relic designed landscapes that can be discerned from tree plantations. Wetlands and floodplain pastures are a feature at the outlet of the Endrick Water while gently rolling pastures extend either side of the Fruin Valley. Reed beds and wet woodlands of alder and willow are particularly associated with the Endrick Water and low-lying fields in this area are periodically submerged as loch levels fluctuate widely.

Settlement

The margins of the loch are well-settled and feature tourism and recreation developments. Many former estates accommodate tourist and recreational development with golf courses, marinas and other leisure-related development a key feature on the south-west shores of the loch. Caravan and chalet parks, hotels and piers are also commonly located on smaller promontories around the loch. Rossdhu is an outstanding parkland designed landscape, on a promontory of Loch Lomond, dating from the 18th Century, which has been adapted to a golf club. Views into the landscape are limited from the road by high policy walls but the landscape and its classical mansion are notable features from the loch and its islands. The busy A82, which follows the route of a military road, is aligned close to the western side of the loch and the eastern and south-eastern shores of the loch have a more tranquil character. Recreation facilities, such as picnic areas, lay-bys, campsites and viewpoints are located close to these routes. A section of the West Highland Way long distance walking route is close to the shoreline on the east side of the loch. The loch itself can appear less tranquil due to the movement of ferries, boats and water sports activity.

The larger settlements are mainly concentrated on the west shores of the loch, particularly on the pronounced promontories, with the hillside above characterised by scattered farms. Evidence for long-established human settlement is provided by occasional cairns and crannogs, as well as relic opencast mining close to the shore. One of the most picturesque settlements is the planned estate village of Luss. Much of the village consists of late 18th-

early 19th Century single-storey rubble stone cottages with slate roofs along the linear planned street.

At the southern end of this character area is Balloch, the most significant settlement on Loch Lomond, with a pier, slipway and associated buildings on the shoreline. It is dominated by the designed landscape of Balloch Castle on the eastern shores and the western shore has remnant ancient woodland integrated with post-industrial self-colonised woodland. Extensive tree planting also took place in the late 1990s and early 20th Century. The designed landscape is centred on an early 19th Century neo-Gothic castle, but close to the shore is a mound encircled by the remains of a moat that mark the remains of the 13th Century Balloch Castle.

Perception

A highly scenic composition is created by the interlock of island and water, and the indented shoreline, particularly appreciated in views from surrounding hills and mountains and from the *Rolling Farmland – Loch Lomond & the Trossachs* to the south of the loch.



This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs LCA (Environmental Resources Management), published 2005; updated in 2009 (SNH); and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Landscape Character Review (Carol Anderson Landscape Associates), published 2015.