

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

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**Area:** *Ratharsair (Raasay): Arnais, Tòrran, Umachan, An Doire Dubh, Caolas Ronaigh, Fladaigh, Eilean Taigh, Eilean Ronaigh*

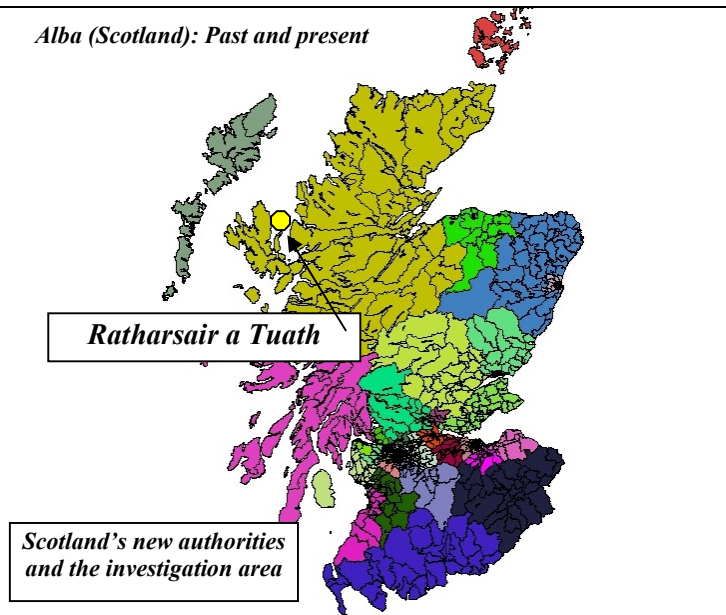
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Castle, South Arnish, North Arnish, Torran, Umachan, Doiredhu, Kylerona, Fladda, Isle Tigh, Rona)

**Number of households:** 81      **Population present at census night:** 402

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig:** 98.1 %

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Portree	Raasay	2	1 - 12
			3	1 - 10

*Alba (Scotland): Past and present*



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

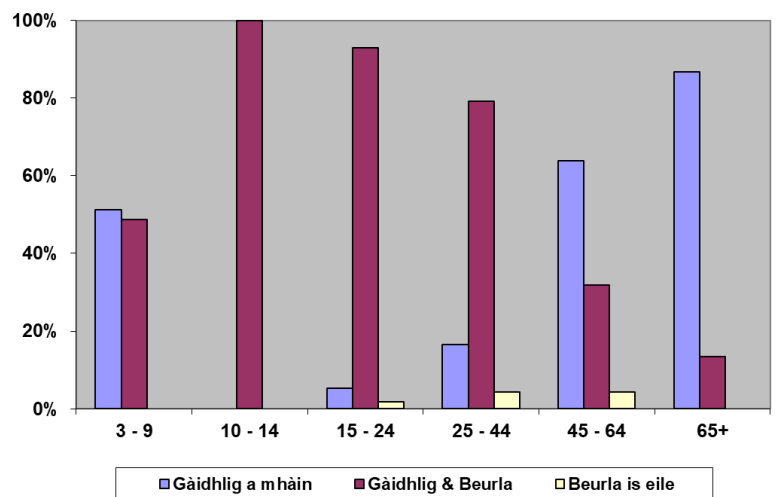
All communities in the northern part of *Ratharsair* and its neighbouring islands were without exception Gàidhlig-speaking.

Roughly a third of all Gàidhlig-speakers did not speak English. These Gàidhlig monolingual persons were mostly found in the older generations as well as among pre-school children. The “English only” speakers were the personnel at Rona Lighthouse and the wife of the schoolteacher.

## Area description:

This factsheet is concerned with the situation of Gàidhlig in the northern part of the island of *Ratharsair* (Raasay) and some neighbouring islands. Lying to the east of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye) all these islands were part of the county of *Inbhirnis* (Inverness) in 1891.

Most residents were engaged in fishing activities in the surrounding coastal waters. Additional sustenance of course was obtained by traditional crofting methods on the rather poor soil. Mainly husbandry brought some rewards.



**Age profile: Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all**

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	Population enumerated				Usually resident population (3+)			
	Total	Aged 0-2	Deaf & dumb	Visitors etc. <sup>3</sup>	Total <sup>4</sup>	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b>Age</b>								
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>98.2 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>95.6 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>95.7 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>97.4 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>98.8 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90.5 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>61.5 %</b>

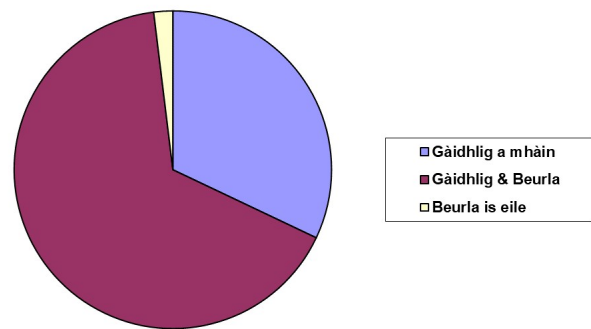
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Snizort, Duirinish, Bracadale and Strath (all Inverness-shire).

<sup>2</sup> Other parishes in Scotland with more than 50 % Gàidhlig speakers in the 1891 census.

<sup>3</sup> People described as visitors, boarders, lodgers, or other similar terms.

<sup>4</sup> Number of enumerated persons who were (1) older than 2 years of age, who were (2) not deaf & dumb and who (3) did not live only temporarily in the area.



Share of population speaking (1) Gàidhlig, (2) Gàidhlig & English, or (3) no Gàidhlig at all

## Background of Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profiles:

The 1891 census was the first such enumeration exercise with an unequivocal language question. After more than 100 years the original census forms are publicly available for detailed analysis. During research concerned with the “Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies” a vast number of such local statistics have been gathered about the Gàidhlig speaking population of Scotland in that year. As many of these results could not be included in the reports these concise factsheets are a welcome way to publish some of the “local gems”. More information is provided at [http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP\\_english.htm](http://www.linguae-celticae.de/GLP_english.htm).

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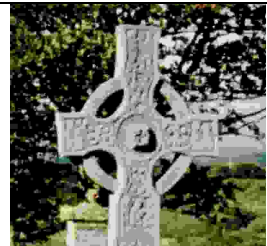
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Area: *Ratharsair (Raasay): Arnais, Tòrran, Umachan, An Doire Dubh, Caolas Ronaigh, Fladaigh, Eilean Taigh, Eilean Ronaigh*

	Households	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<b><i>Ratharsair a Tuath</i></b>	<b>81</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>98.1 %</b>
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<b><i>Ratharsair a Tuath</i></b> (North Raasay)	<b>28</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>99.2 %</b>
<b><i>Eilean Fladaigh &amp; Eilean Taigh</i></b> (Fladday & Isle Tigh)	<b>19</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b><i>Ronaigh</i></b> (Rona)	<b>34</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>96.3 %</b>
<b>Language of parents</b>					
<b>Both parents Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Single parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>One parent Gàidhlig speaking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>75.0 %</b>
<b>No Gàidhlig speaking parent</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Households with no children (0-14)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>93.1 %</b>
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
<b>Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>92.3 %</b>
<b>Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Living on private means</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>Manager, coachman, cook, etc.</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>
<b>Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Remaining occupations</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

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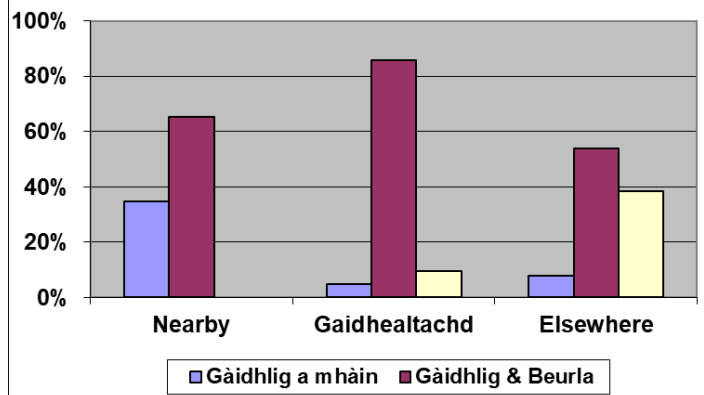
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was universally spoken by all people born locally or in the wider *Gaidhealtachd*. The handful of exceptions are described in the remarks below.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Portree or in the adjacent parishes of Snizort, Duirinish, Bracadale and Strath (all Inverness-shire).

<sup>2</sup> Born in other parishes of Scotland with more than 50 % *Gàidhlig* speakers in the 1891 census.



Speakers according to place of birth (1) nearby<sup>1</sup>  
(2) in remaining *Gaidhealtachd*<sup>2</sup>, or (3) elsewhere

## Remarks:

1. Official census figures reported 249 bilingual inhabitants and 143 monolingual *Gàidhlig*-speakers out of a total population of 402 persons (97.5 %). The usually resident population of 362 persons consisted of 355 *Gàidhlig*-speakers (98.1 %) including 116 inhabitants “with no English”.
2. There were only seven persons enumerated who did not speak *Gàidhlig*. Six of these were working on Rona Lighthouse and had Orkney or Lowland backgrounds. The remaining person was the wife of the public teacher. She came from the village of Bower in eastern Caithness and spoke her Scots tongue. But all three of her offspring spoke *Gàidhlig*, although the two older sons were born in Dunnet (Caithness) and Edinburgh respectively.