

# Alba 1891: Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile

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**Area: Loch Abar (Lochaber): Geàrr Lòchaidh, Drochaid Aonachain, Gleann Fhionntaig, Gleann Glaidh, Leitir Fhionnlaigh, Sròn na Bà & Magh Comair**

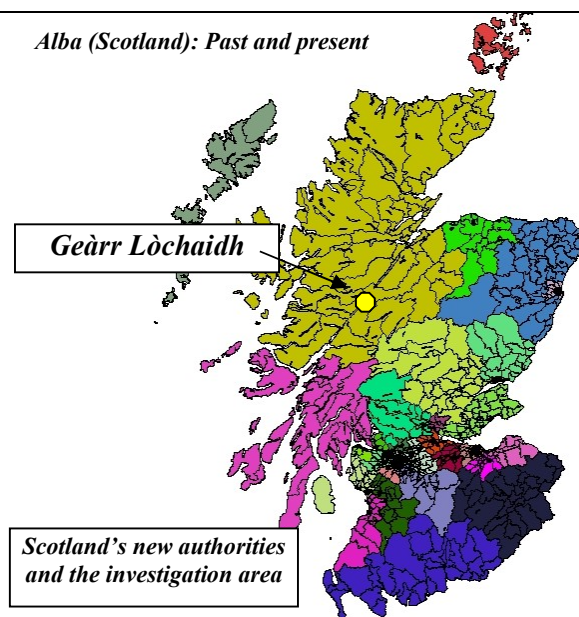
(Names of enumeration locations used on census forms: Glenfintag, Aultanreagh, Achvoire, Glenfintag, Invergloy, Letterfinlay, Stronaba, Muccomer, Gairloch Achaneich, Tirmadrish, Aldour, Spean Bridge, Blarour, Conachan)

**Number of households: 50      Population present at census night: 280**

**Share of resident population (aged three years or over) speaking Gàidhlig: 85.6 %**

County	Civil parish	Registration district	Enumeration district number	Census form pages
Inverness-shire	Kilmonivaig	Lochaber	8	1 - 2
			9	1 - 4
			10	1 - 7
			11	1 - 4

Alba (Scotland): Past and present



## State of Gàidhlig in 1891:

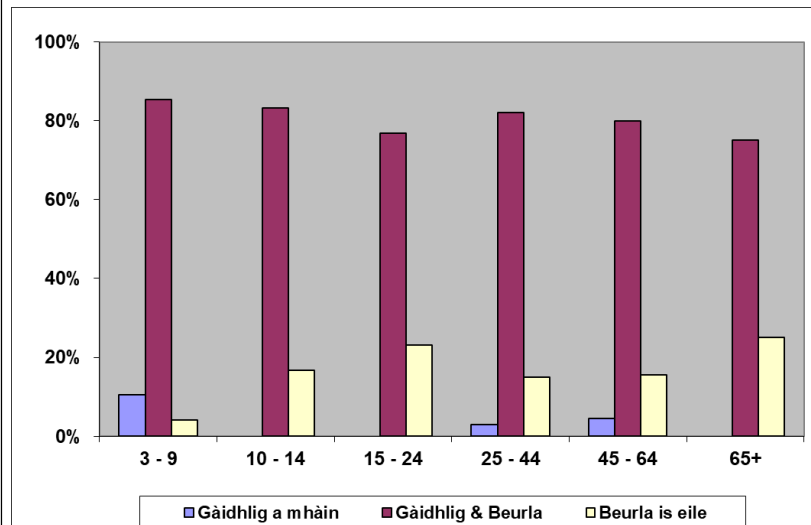
Most of the locally born and raised inhabitants still spoke Gàidhlig. Even a few of them did not speak English, mostly at pre-school age or as older people. In *Sròn na Bà* (Stronaba) and *Gleann Glaidh* (Glen Gloy) virtually all local people spoke Gàidhlig.

The language was even stronger among the very young (see figure below). The relatively notable percentages of English monolingualism in higher age groups were caused by the inhabitants of shooting lodges and guests at hotels.

## Area description:

The area of interest is situated on the southern end of the *Gleann Mòr* (Great Glen) and includes the lower parts of *Gleann Spiothain* (Glen Spean) and *Gleann Glaidh* (Glen Gloy).

The more mountainous parts were almost totally left to gamekeepers and shepherds after the “Highland Clearances”. Modern times, however, had already arrived with the building of the Caledonian Canal and associated work at the locks of *Geàrr Lòchaidh* (Gairlochy).



**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>280</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>85.6 %</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>93.9 %</b>
<b>10-14</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>83.3 %</b>
<b>15-24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>76.9 %</b>
<b>25-44</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>85.1 %</b>
<b>45-64</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>84.4 %</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>75.0 %</b>
<b>Gender</b>								
<b>Female</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>83.1 %</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88.5 %</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>								
<b>Born in parish</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>92.6 %</b>
<b>In neighbouring parish<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>95.5 %</b>
<b>Gaidhealtachd elsewhere<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>88.9 %</b>
<b>Other places</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32.0 %</b>

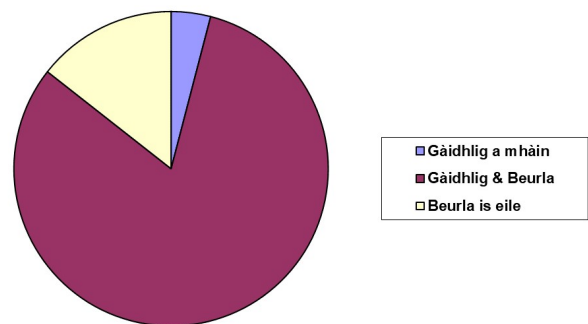
## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Parishes of Kilmallie, Glenelg, Laggan, Boleskine & Abertarff, Urquhart & Glenmoriston (all Inverness-shire), Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty) or Fortingall (Perthshire).

<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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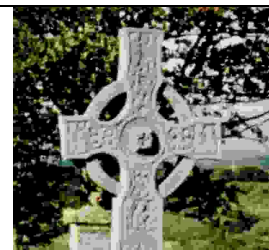
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	House -holds	Usually resident population (3+)			
		Total	Gàidhlig	Gàidhlig & English	Gàidhlig speakers (%)
<i>Geàrr Lòchaidh &amp; Drochaid Aonachain</i>	50	222	9	181	85.6 %
<b>Individual communities</b>					
<i>Gleann Fhionntaig &amp; Gleann Glaoidh</i> (Glen Fintaig & Glen Gloy)	12	48	6	40	95.8 %
<i>Leitir Fhionnlaigh &amp; Inbhir Glaoidh</i> (Letterfinlay & Invergloy)	5	27	2	17	70.4 %
<i>Sròn na Bà</i> (Stronaba)	11	51	0	51	100.0 %
<i>Geàrr Lòchaidh</i> (Gairloch)	11	47	1	39	85.1 %
<i>Drochaid Aonachain</i> (Spean Bridge)	11	49	0	34	69.4 %
<b>Language of parents</b>					
Both parents Gàidhlig speaking	19	111	7	102	98.2 %
Single parent Gàidhlig speaking	2	11	0	11	100.0 %
One parent Gàidhlig speaking	3	16	0	10	62.5 %
No Gàidhlig speaking parent	3	12	0	2	16.7 %
Households with no children (0-14)	23	72	2	56	80.6 %
<b>Occupation of head of household</b>					
Crofter, farmer, fisherman, etc.	10	54	0	54	100.0 %
Shepherd, gamekeeper or similar	10	50	9	34	86.0 %
Clergyman, teacher, physician, etc.	7	25	0	15	60.0 %
Mason, carpenter, merchant, etc.	6	40	0	34	85.0 %
Living on private means	2	6	0	1	16.7 %
Manager, coachman, cook, etc.	5	25	0	23	92.0 %
Worker, farm/domestic servant, etc.	5	17	0	15	88.2 %
Remaining occupations	5	5	0	5	100.0 %

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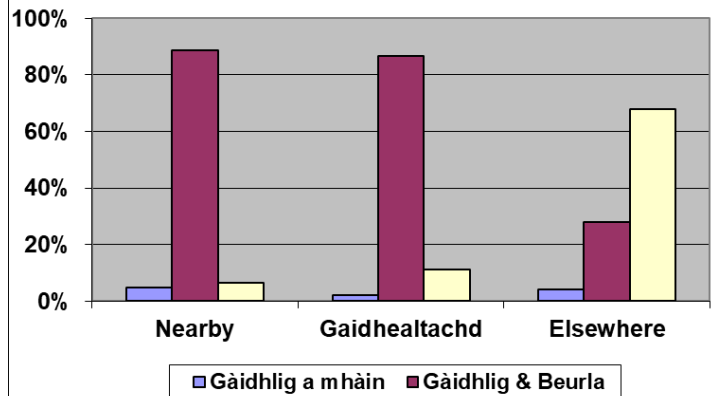
## Place of birth and Gàidhlig speaking:

The language was

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Born either in Kilmonivaig or in the adjacent parishes of Kilmallie, Glenelg, Laggan, Boleskine & Abertarff, Urquhart & Glenmoriston (all Inverness-shire), Glenshiel (Ross & Cromarty) or Fortingall (Perthshire).

<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 207 bilingual inhabitants and nine monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers out of a total population of 280 persons (77.1%). The usually resident population of 222 persons, however, consisted of 190 Gàidhlig-speakers (85.6%) including nine inhabitants “with no English”.
2. Almost all of the nine “Gaelic only” speakers were part of shepherds’s families living around *Gleann Glaoidh* (Glen Gloy).
3. Typical “English only” respondents came from guests at the lodge and hotel at *Inbhir Glaoidh* (Invergloy) as well as the minister’s households in *Magh Comair* (Mucomir) and *Blàr Odhar* (Blairour) near *Drochaid Aonachain* (Spean Bridge).