

Brief information about 2011 census results**Census 2011: Mixed fortunes in traditional Gàidhlig heartlands**

First releases of data give a very diverse picture of the knowledge and use of *Gàidhlig* in the different regions of *Alba* (Scotland).

Eilean Siar (Western Isles):

The islands have lost 1,631 speakers since 2001 but the rate of decline has decreased from 19.6 % (2001 vs. 1991) to 10.4 % (2011 vs. 2001). Nevertheless apart from parts of Barraigh (Barra) all places recorded less Gàidhlig speakers, worst hit was the parish of *Uig* with a 16.5 % reduction. With the exception of the town of *Steòrnabhagh* around 50% of the population in the islands lived in households where (apart from English) *Gàidhlig* was also used. Strongholds of “*Gàidhlig* home language” were the parishes of *Barabhas* (Barvas) with 57.0 % and *Barraigh* (Barra) with 50.4 %.

Gaidhealtachd (Highland):

This council area still lost 588 speakers but the rate of decline fell significantly from 13.9 % to 4.6 %. There were very substantial variations in the picture: Badly hit was the Isle of Skye which lost 562 speakers with only Sleat bucking the trend with additional 4 (four!) *Gàidhlig* speakers compared with 2001. Increasing numbers, however, were recorded in western parts of Lochaber, especially around Ardnamurchan and Mallaig. Other smaller growth centres on the west coast were situated at Roy Bridge/Spean Bridge, Ullapool and – to a smaller degree – at Plockton and Gairloch. Dramatic decreases on the other hand occurred in north-western parts of Sutherland, Coigeach and rural parts of Lochbroom. The central and eastern parts of the council area fared rather better with remarkable increases in the areas west of Loch Ness, in Badenoch, Easter Ross and Nairn. The City of Inverness on the other hand only held its 2001 base of *Gàidhlig* speakers.

Earra-Ghaidheal & Bhòid (Argyll & Bute):

Census results were very gloomy for the area having lost 702 speakers since 2001 with the rate of decline even accelerating from 14.5 % (2001 vs. 1991) to 16.8 % (2011 vs. 2001)!! Significant increases were only recorded in Lismore & Appin and Campbeltown with the islands of Mull and Colonsay just keeping the 2001 mark. The former “strongholds” of Tiree and Islay lost both more than a quarter of their *Gàidhlig* speakers!

Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) *Local Studies*:

The 3rd edition is now being prepared and publication will commence when outstanding statistics (especially age group distributions) become available. An additional important feature of this edition will be the incorporation of detailed census data from the 1911 census which are now publicly accessible.