



Argyll Sea Kayak Trail  
Slighe Curcachan Earra-Ghàidheil

# Ganavan

## ADDITIONAL TRAIL ROUTES & DEVIATIONS

As detailed in the main Description of Route section, this part of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail is one of the longest. If you want to add an extra section to the trail, please be aware of the additional time and distance involved and plan accordingly.

Paddlers have the option of navigating around the western shoreline of Kerrera, but please be mindful of the established seal colony on Sgeir Dhonn and the neighbouring islands and keep your distance. Gyle Castle is tucked away on the southern edge of Kerrera, and simply a short paddle from the main trail route. The mouth of Loch Feochan has some interest for paddlers, with fast flowing water for the experienced.

At the northern end of Seil there are a number of small islands that can be explored, especially if waiting for appropriate tides for passage through Clachan Sound.

Another alternative route is to actually pass under Clachan Bridge, the Bridge over the Atlantic. If wishing to do this, after the rest stop at Barmacarry Bay, head down the photogenic Clachan Sound. This stretch of water can be subject to fast tidal streams so careful planning is a must to ensure you can pass through with ease at a time close to high water. If passing through at low water, you may need to portage some shallow sections as these can dry out in spring tides. [Please see Hazards section.](#)

Continue paddling down through Seil Sound, passing Balvicar and then turning above Torsa to head to Cuan Sound. This narrow Sound is subject to fast tidal flows, so can only be safely paddled at close to, and at, slack water. Please see Hazards section. Continue north, following the coastline around to Easdale Island and the access point at Ellenabeich.

If wishing to bypass Ellenabeich, and continue to the access point at Arduaine, follow Seil Sound all the way down to Degnish Point. Head across the amalgamation of Loch Melfort and Shuna Sound towards Eilean Gamhna, round into Asknish Bay and then onto the Arduaine access point.

The Island of Luìng can be circumnavigated if you paddle down the Sound of Luìng, but would add a considerable distance to your journey and would require additional, careful, planning as the tide can reach 6kns in places.

Shuna is a smaller addition to the main trail, so could be circumnavigated, but at the addition of over 8km to your journey.

## HAZARDS

The main considerations for this section of the trail are the speeds of the tidal streams when at spring tides. 6kn can be expected in Cuan Sound, and 5kn at Clachan Sound and the entrance into Loch Feochan.

Careful planning must be undertaken by those intending to paddle this section of the trail, or the deviations of the trail containing Cuan sound or the entrance to Loch Feochan.

Only those with appropriate experience should attempt to paddle these sections of the trail.

There can be considerable traffic within Oban Bay, especially when entering/exiting the northern channel. At all times please avoid other vessels. This is easiest done by paddling close to the shorelines.

## GANAVAN TO ELLENABEICH 21km / 11Nm

56°26.272'N 5°28.228'W to 56°17.693'N 5°39.066'W

Grid Reference 862327 to 742174

OS Landranger Map 49 & 55

OS Explorer Map 359

## DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

When leaving the sandy beach at Ganavan, you are starting one of the longest sections of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail. You follow the coastline west to Sgeir an Eitich, and then south passing between Maiden Island and Little Ganavan. Dunollie Castle soon appears on the hillside as you start the passage into the bustling Oban Bay.

Numerous ferries leave the terminal in Oban Bay, so care must be taken to avoid them at all times (the northern channel predominantly, but also the southern channel).

After negotiating the busy bay and berthings, you start heading down Kerrera Sound. Heather Island comes and goes, as do the Kerrera ferry slipways. Either side of the sound can be paddled, depending on conditions or personal preference, although passing the lighthouse on Rubh an Fheurain is easiest from the Kerrera-side.

The route then follows the coast down past Minard Point, and the mouth of Loch Feochan. Barmacarry Bay is on the opposite side of the mouth of Loch Feochan, and provides an ideal, picturesque rest location.

From the rest bay, you make your way around the rocky coastline, when you will come to a collection of small islands. Pick your own way through, heading to the tip at Rubha Garbh Airde. Continue down the outside edge of Seil, which can be subject to rough conditions, through the Sound of Insh. You will see the isle of Easdale approaching, and you turn into the Easdale Sound, when Ellenabeich becomes visible for the first time. Being mindful of other boating movements, follow the northern shoreline until you come to the natural harbour next to ferry pier. Get out at the natural rock slipway in the far corner.



## TIDAL DIFFERENCES

FROM OBAN HW AND SPEEDS

**Sound of Kerrera** Northern Stream starts +0430 HW Oban  
Southern Stream starts -0155  
1.5kn springs

**Clachan Sound** Northern Stream starts +0555 HW Oban  
Southern Stream starts -0025  
5kn springs

**Seil Sound** Northern Stream starts +0525 HW Oban  
Southern Stream starts -0055  
0.5kn springs

**Cuan Sound** Northern Stream starts +0420 HW Oban  
Southern Stream starts -0200  
6kn springs

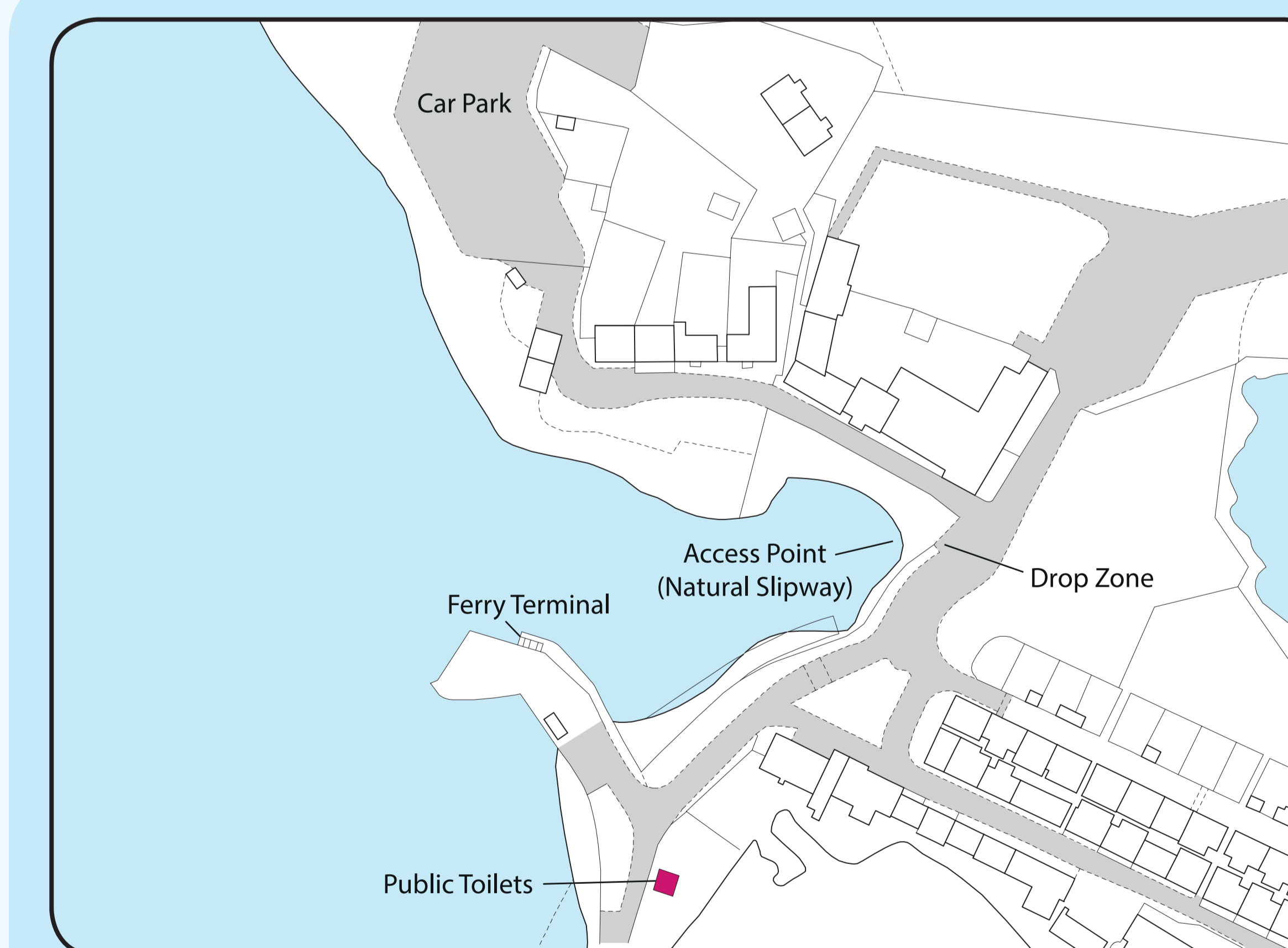
**East of Torsa** Northern Stream starts +0415 HW Oban  
Southern Stream starts -0200  
1kn spring



### Ganavan

#### LOCAL FACILITIES

- Accommodation
- Bank/Cash Point
- Food & Drink
- Public Toilets
- Regular Bus Service into Oban
- Shops & Supermarkets
- Tourist Information



### Ellenabeich

#### LOCAL FACILITIES

- Accommodation
- Food & Drink
- Public Toilets
- Shop

## PARKING

Ganavan has ample parking available, although a fee is required from 1st April to 30th September. There is also a large car park at Ellenabeich. Continue right to the end of the village, following the signs, until you come to the car park at the western end. Please avoid parking in the small car park close to the ferry terminal.

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## LITTER

Paddlers visiting any of the access points on the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail are asked to follow the Leave No Trace principle. There is no litter bin provided at the Arduaine site, so all litter must be removed by paddlers and disposed of responsibly.

## SAILING

The Argyll Sea Kayak Trail follows the Argyll coastline, used extensively by sailing vessels. Please be mindful of other water users at all times, and act responsibly.

## Please follow the seven Leave No Trace principles

- 1 Plan Ahead and Prepare
- 2 Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- 3 Dispose of Waste Properly
- 4 Leave What You Find
- 5 Minimize Campfire Impacts
- 6 Respect Wildlife
- 7 Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The member-driven Leave No Trace Centre for Outdoor Ethics teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Centre for Outdoor Ethics: [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)

## HM Coastguard

Maritime & Coastguard Agency - [www.dft.gov.uk/mca](http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca)

Stornoway 01851 706796

**Operational Area:** Cape Wrath to Ardferrn (Mainland) including South to and including Isle of Mull, Luìng and Scarba. Barra Head to Butt of Lewis and St Kilda

Belfast 02891 463933

**Operational Area:** Mull of Galloway to Ardferrn, including the Islands (North to and including Jura and Colonsay)

## Useful organisations and contact details

Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code - [www.marinecode.org](http://www.marinecode.org)  
Providing guidelines and advice when watching wildlife in Scotland.

THE THREE PRINCIPLES

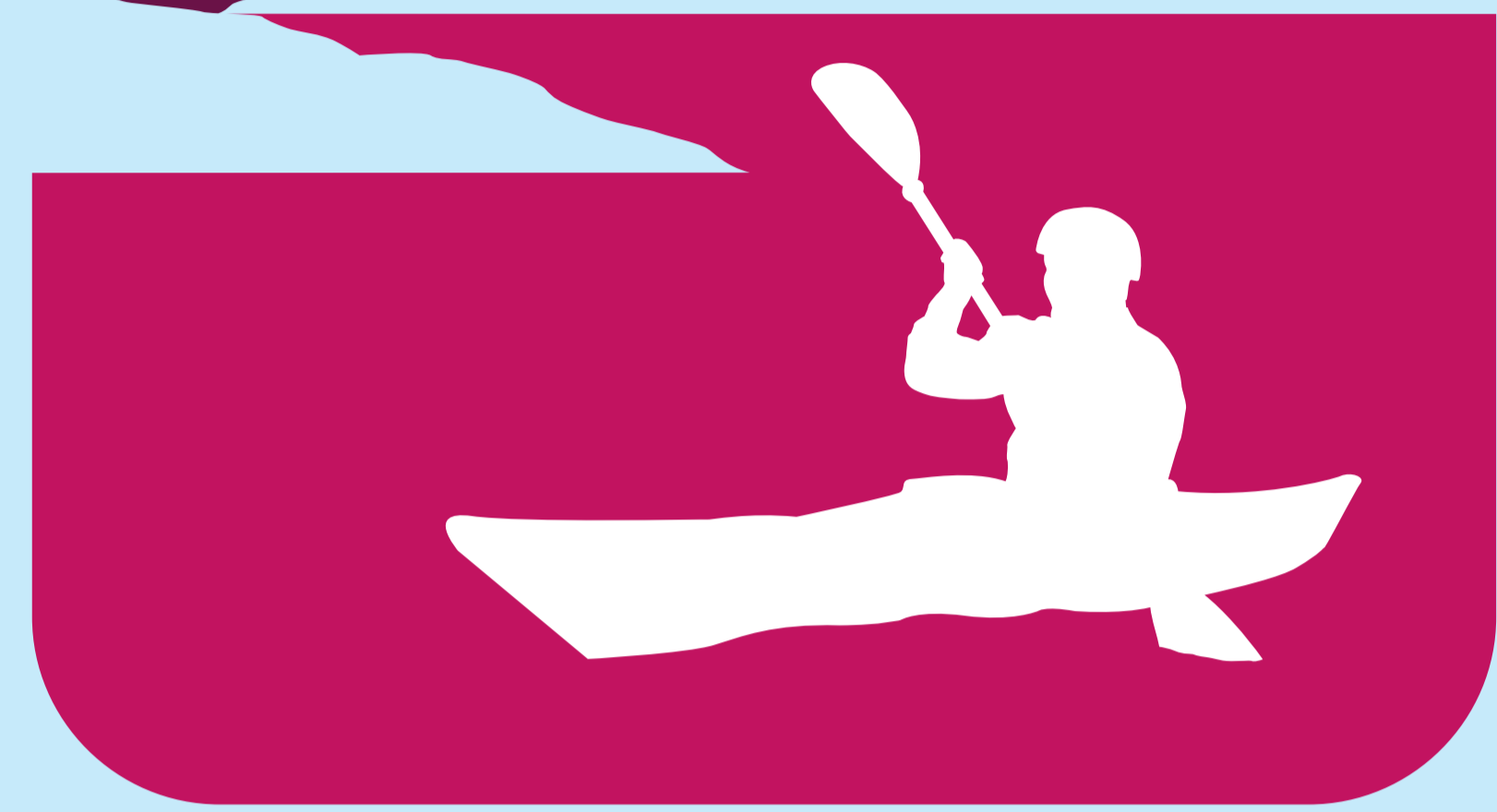
- 1 **Be Aware** by learning as much as you can about the animals
- 2 **Take Responsibility** for you actions
- 3 **Have Respect** for other people, wildlife and the environment

Marine Conservation Society, the UK charity for the protection of our seas, shores and wildlife  
[www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, pollution hotline  
0800 80 70 60  
[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)



# Argyll Sea Kayak Trail



## Ganavan

Argyll Sea Kayak Trail - Slighe Curcachan Earra-Ghàidheil

This access site is part of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail.

The 150km trail runs between Ganavan and Helensburgh, incorporating ten access points and the Crinan Canal. It has been provided for all people to enjoy the waters around Argyll, whether for a day of fun, or a multi-day expedition. If you wish to make a comment about any aspect of the trail, please use the contact us page on [www.paddleargyll.org.uk](http://www.paddleargyll.org.uk). You will also find information about other associated trails on the web site.

The table below details the routes, their distances, and potential time required to complete them based on personal ability and fitness levels. Times provided are based on totally flat conditions, and do not take into account tidal or weather conditions encountered, which can greatly affect them.

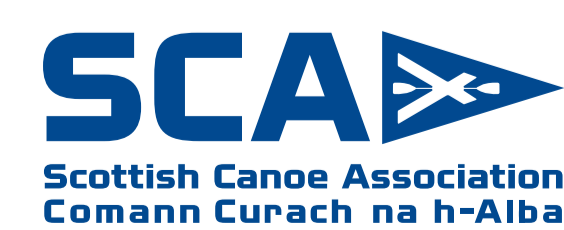
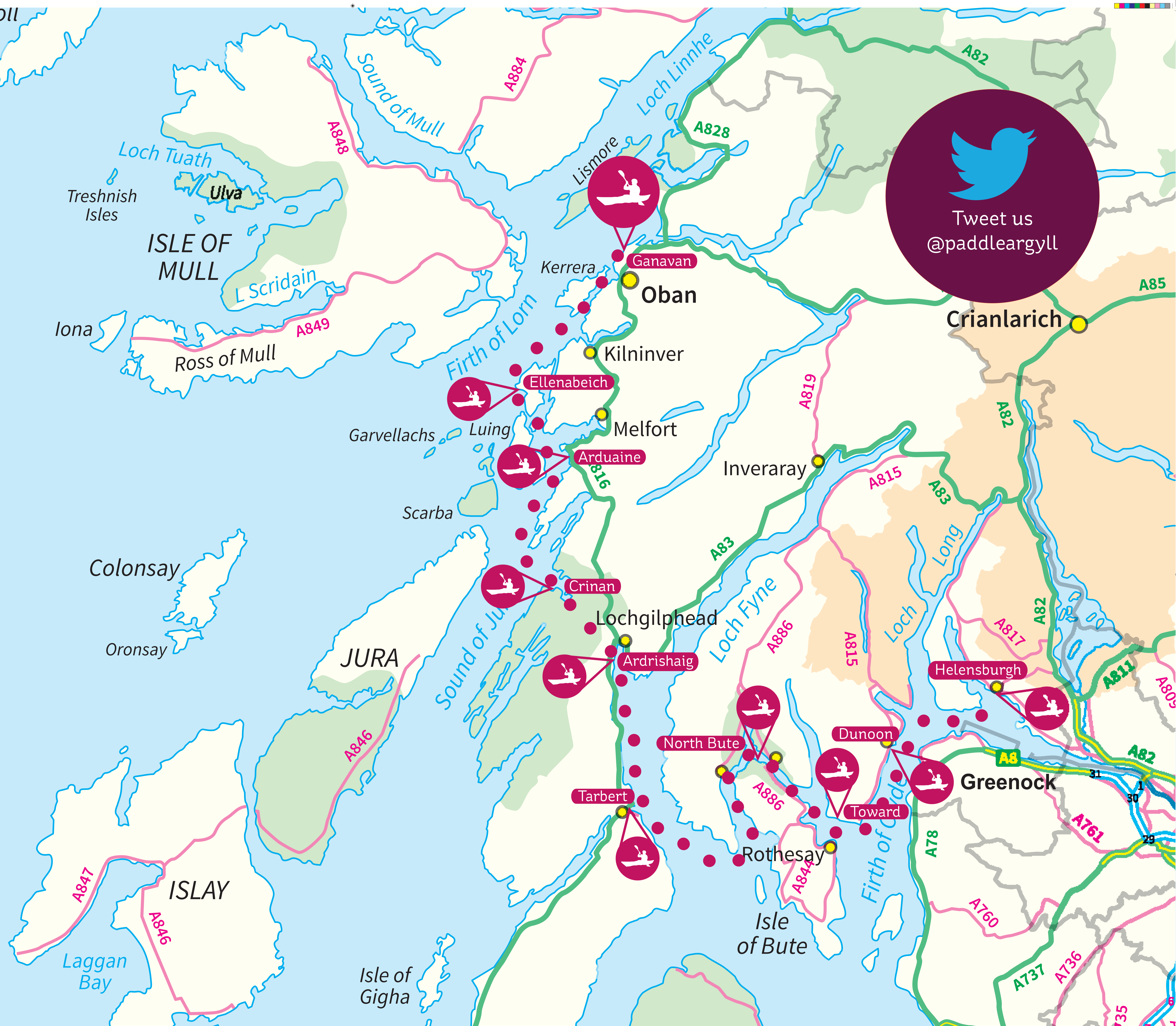
Route	Distance	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced
Ganavan/Ellenabeich	21km	7hrs	5 hrs 15 mins	3 hrs 30 mins
Ellenabeich/Arduaine	11km	3 hrs 40 mins	2 hrs 50 mins	1 hr 50 mins
Arduaine/Crinan	19 km	6 hrs 20 mins	4 hrs 15 mins	3 hrs 10 mins
Crinan/Ardrishaig	13 km	4 hrs 20 mins	2 hrs 50 mins	2 hrs 10 mins
Ardrishaig/Tarbert	19 km	6 hrs 20 mins	4 hrs 15 mins	3 hrs 10 mins
Tarbert/North Bute	29 km	9 hrs 40 mins	6 hrs 25 mins	4 hrs 50 mins
North Bute/Toward	13 km	4 hrs 20 mins	2 hrs 50 mins	2 hrs 10 mins
Toward/Dunoon	13 km	4 hrs 20 mins	2 hrs 50 mins	2 hrs 10 mins
Dunoon/Helensburgh	16 km	5 hrs 20 mins	3 hrs 30 mins	2 hrs 40 mins
Total	154 km	51 hrs 20 mins	35hrs	25hrs 40 mins

### Safety

This site is provided as a coastal access point on the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail. Persons use this access point, and the trail, entirely at their own risk. The providers of this access point shall not be liable for any damage or injury occasioned to persons or their property by virtue of their use of this access point.

Please ensure that you have researched the sections of the Argyll Sea Kayak Trail that you are intending to paddle, including tide and weather information. Always undertake your own risk assessment based on the conditions before you. Wear a buoyancy aid at all times, paddle within your limits, let someone know where you are going and what time you are likely to return, and have another option in case of un-expected conditions. Anyone new to the sport, or indeed a beginner, is advised to seek proper instruction from a paddlesport club or a commercial paddlesport provider.

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Paddle Argyll is a web-based resource designed to highlight the world class paddling opportunities that exist within the region of Argyll & Bute. Providing details of paddling trails and routes, on lochs, rivers and the sea, as well as key information about paddlesports in general. This will allow paddlers, whether new or experienced, to be introduced to all that is available to them on the water.



Pleadhagaich Earra-Ghàidheil - [www.paddleargyll.org.uk](http://www.paddleargyll.org.uk)

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Working in Partnership with Scottish Canals. [www.scottishcanals.co.uk](http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk)

For more information about paddlesports in Scotland. [www.canoescotland.org](http://www.canoescotland.org)