

# Heritage Tourism and Local Livelihoods in Inishbofin, Ireland

*This document summarizes a presentation delivered by Ryan Lash, University of Notre Dame, at the 2024 North Atlantic Forum Conference held in Letterfrack, Ireland in June 2024.*

## KEY MESSAGES OF RESEARCH

Inishbofin is a small island off the west coast of Ireland. There are 184 year-round residents. Inishbofin has 40,000 visitors annually. Tourists are mostly Irish, multi-generational visitors who repeatedly visit for long period of times. Tourism is based on a strong relationship between tourists and islanders.

Inishbofin has various cultural and religious heritage, and environmental markers. These markers are:

- ❑ **Archaeological monuments:** Inishbofin hosts two main archaeological monuments, [Saint Colman's Abbey](#) and [Cromwell's Barracks](#), as well as other [archaeological sites](#).
- ❑ **Music traditions:** Inishbofin has a vibrant music scene, and visitors are welcomed to these spaces. More information can be found on [Inishbofin's website](#).
- ❑ **Biodiversity:** [Corncrakes](#), a migratory bird, are found on Inishbofin. Corncrakes depend on small-scale farming for their habitat. Many associate corncrakes with rural Ireland.
- ❑ **Walking tours:** Inishbofin hosts an annual heritage walking tour, as well as [information about walks](#). These walks help connect tourists with islanders.

## IMPACTS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Inishbofin serves as an example of heritage tourism. Inishbofin uses its cultural and religious heritage, and environment to enhance its tourism offerings. Islanders create relationships with tourists. These relationships lead to a sense of belonging. This belonging creates repeat visitors to the island.

- ❑ Rural communities, including island communities, can identify community assets to enhance tourism offerings. Examples of assets are historical sites, music traditions and biodiversity.
- ❑ Rural communities should create relationships with tourists. Strong relationships and a sense of belonging create repeat visitors.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on this research can be found on the [North Atlantic Forum website](#).

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