

Langue : Anglais	Niveau : 5	Date : 11 JANVIER 2025	Durée : 1h30
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Overtourism on the North Coast 500: 'Not just the Balearics'

By Vicky Allan, 20th August 2024, [heraldscotland.com](https://www.heraldsotland.com)

Back in 2018, the Oxford English Dictionary shortlisted “overtourism” for its word of the year. Six years on, it feels like the term has now almost slid into overuse – or perhaps tourism itself has got even more “over” – overpacked, over-congested, over-trodden, over-promoted and over-littered.

- 5 The term was used often by campaigners when I was researching some of the extensive coverage which The Herald did last week on Flamingo Land’s controversial Lomond Banks development¹. Fears of “over-tourism” were often expressed.

- 10 It was also used last week, when LBC² talked with a resident on the North Coast 500³. The campaigner observed that he thought it wouldn’t be long till Scotland saw the kind of anti-tourism protests that have taken place in Mallorca and other southern European destinations this summer.

“The same problems that are happening in the Canaries and the Balearic Islands are happening here with overtourism, houses being snapped up, no jobs for the locals, Airbnbs buying everything up. It's exactly the same problems just in a wider area.”

- 15 A big question for Scotland, as for other countries, has to be how do we invite people to visit our beautiful lochs, mountains and islands, or our bustling and historic cities, without it all getting a bit too much.

- 20 Flamingo Land’s development at the southern tip of Loch Lomond was criticised by campaigners for possibly bringing “overtourism” to the area. Like most countries, Scotland is not averse to making some money out of tourists. On one level we love tourism. But increasingly the people of Scotland are expressing their discomfort.

- 25 You would think that where you stand on tourism or overtourism probably depends on whether you are making enough money out of it yourself. But it’s worth observing that many of these protests have been taking place in some of the locations most reliant on tourism. They seem to be about a recognition of what too much tourism does to a place and its culture, as well as its public services – and a questioning of whether the money it brings in is worth it.

Some academics, like Dr Guillem Colom-Montero at the University of Glasgow, describe overtourism as a very specific phenomenon that relates to the rise of low-cost airlines, home-sharing (Airbnb) and shorter stays.

¹ Refers to a plan to build a holiday resort on the banks of Loch Lomond – the largest lake in Great Britain located in southern Scotland – including a monorail, waterpark, hotel and restaurants.

² LBC is a British phone-in and talk radio station.

³ A 516-mile scenic route around the north coast of Scotland. The route was launched in 2015, linking many features in the north of Scotland in one touring route.

30 But overtourism, colloquially⁴, now seems to refer to something bigger. The campervans and motorhomes⁵ of the North Coast 500 or the woodland lodges planned by Flamingo Land at Lomond Banks are not part of that model – but they are creating similar antipathy from locals.

Often when residents talk about overtourism what they mean is that there is a level of tourism that exceeds the capacity of infrastructure within an area, and also does not give back
35 sufficiently to the location.

On Scotland's North Coast 500, the complaints voiced by Margaret Meek talking to LBC, were not just about the houses but also the 40,000 motorhomes.

"One problem," she said, "is the sheer numbers, another problem is the treating of this whole area like some sort of Disney theme park."

40 It's a reminder of another objection to mass tourism [often raised by] those who live in places – that it leaves their home feeling less real. That term "theme park" also comes up frequently when talking about overtourism – and not always in relation to theme parks themselves, but as a way of summing up the kind of tourism or tourist offer we don't want. Bella Caledonia editor Mike Small, writing of Edinburgh earlier this year, said "the entire city has been turned
45 into a theme park".

In my interviews last week, a key concern of campaigners objecting to Lomond Banks was that it might become a theme park (Lomond Banks' developers, though theme-park operators, have done their best to dispel the idea). That didn't necessarily mean rollercoasters and Mickey Mouse suits, but rather something that is inauthentic or feels unreal.

50 Often when I come across this concern, I think of an essay, *Pleasure Spots*, written back in 1946 by George Orwell, writing at a time when the "pleasure resort" he described was something planned in blueprints by an architect and included ubiquitous⁶ music pumped through grills as well as "blue lagoons: one, periodically agitated by waves, for strong swimmers, and another, a smooth and summery pool, for playtime bathers".

55 Orwell, with some irony, posed the question: "Isn't there, therefore, something sentimental and obscurantist in preferring bird-song to swing music and in wanting to leave a few patches of wildness here and there instead of covering the whole surface of the earth with a network of Autobahnen⁷ flooded by artificial sunlight?"

That, in part, is what campaigners against the Lomond Banks development fear – that a patch
60 of wildness, a piece of a National Park, will be flooded with something artificial. It's this perception, not worries over rollercoasters, that the developers are up against - and it's nothing new.

In the meantime, there are few signs of that juggernaut⁸ of over-tourism slowing. Figures for 2023 showed that overseas visitors are coming to Scotland in greater numbers than before the
65 pandemic. In April, the World Travel & Tourism Council projected a globally record-breaking year for Travel & Tourism in 2024. The protests may have started, but over-tourism is far from over yet.

⁴ generally speaking

⁵ large types of recreational vehicles (RVs) that have an integrated living area with the vehicle itself and offer many of the comforts of home

⁶ omnipresent

⁷ German word for motorways

⁸ massive powerful force that cannot be stopped

Examen Terminal - examen écrit - Semestre 1 2024-2025

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WRITE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE EXAM PAPER SHEET. THANK YOU!

A/ COMPREHENSION (10 points)

Note that you are expected to write organized answers based on the key ideas developed in the text. Use your own words (you can quote key words from the text but not extensive passages) and structure your answers, using appropriate linking words.

- 1)** Use the example of Scotland to explain why and how the concept of overtourism has evolved and become more complex since it was first introduced. (5 pts - 160 words $\pm$ 10%)
- 2)** Based on lines 40 to 62, explain the reference to Orwell's *Pleasure Spots* and why the author uses it. (5 pts - 160 words $\pm$ 10%)

B/ WRITTEN EXPRESSION (10 points)

*Choose ONE of the following subjects and write a well-organised essay of **300 words ($\pm$ 10%)**. Give strong, convincing arguments to support your ideas; choose relevant examples; and make sure your English is sophisticated enough.*

When relevant, references to the documents you studied this semester will be appreciated.

Indicate which topic you have chosen.

1) Scotland's North Coast 500 is one of 15 destinations on *Fodor's* No List 2025. Every year, the No List established by the California-based online tourism information provider serves to highlight 15 destinations to reconsider because "tourism is placing unsustainable pressures on the land and local communities there."

According to *Fodor's*, "a key factor in these challenges is often the tendency of governments to prioritize visitor experiences over the well-being of local residents. This can lead to irreversible changes in these destinations, making them prohibitively expensive, homogenized, or even destroyed. And let's face it: visiting such places rarely results in happy travelers. Navigating cities packed with tourists is frustrating; sightseeing in towns where locals resent your presence is upsetting; and wandering through nature littered with trash is depressing."

Draw from the documents and examples you studied this semester and/or your own knowledge to discuss this initiative and the issues *Fodor's* highlights.

2) According to VisitScotland.com, “Ancestral tourism [aka roots tourism] is a growing and important market for Scotland. At least 40 million people across the globe lay claim to Scottish ancestry.” With the explosion in DNA-based ancestry and the stories seen on screen, such as *Braveheart* or *Outlander*, “the scope and potential of this market for Scottish tourism is huge.”

The European Committee of the Regions defines roots tourism as “a form of tourism which invites individuals to explore the places where their ancestors once lived, tapping into the desire of these descendants to reconnect with their cultural heritage.”

Discuss the potential of roots tourism to encourage a more sustainable, meaningful form of tourism and help mitigate the harmful effects of overtourism. If relevant, you may want to mention other forms of touristic trends that offer a similar potential.

3) Chris Wallis is the founder of The St Ives⁹ food bank, which relies heavily on donations. He argues that in summer, “it’s hard to get donations from visitors because unseeing is essential to a fantasy of west Cornwall. If you know local children are living in insecure, mould-slaked¹⁰ housing and eating from food banks, it’s harder to follow your own paths into its dreamworlds.”

Draw from the documents and examples you studied this semester and/or your own knowledge to discuss in what ways tourists “unsee” or reimagine the places they visit and the consequences this may have.

⁹ a seaside town in southwest Cornwall

¹⁰ insalubrious