# Residents of Isle of Lewis plagued by persistent Hebridean Hum disrupting lives



An unsettling phenomenon has recently emerged on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, as residents report a pervasive, unexplained noise dubbed the "Hebridean Hum." This disconcerting sound, which began in February, has been described by some as akin to the persistent idling of a lorry’s engine, while others experience it as an incessant low rumble that disrupts their daily lives and sleep. The hum has particularly affected those living in areas ranging from Ness in the North to Scalpay in the South-East.

Dr Lauren-Grace Kirtley, a local doctor and university lecturer, has become a pivotal figure in the community's efforts to find the source of the noise. Speaking to BBC Radio’s Good Morning Scotland, she described the hum as "impossible to ignore," noting that it creates a range of distressing symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, and difficulty concentrating. Dr Kirtley has also created a Facebook page to offer support for those affected, as some residents express feelings of isolation due to the overwhelming nature of the sound.

Reports from the island suggest that the noise is more pronounced at night, leading to sleeplessness and a decline in mental well-being among those who can hear it. A mother from Shawbost recounted how her baby ceased to sleep at night, contributing to the family's growing distress. One resident lamented on social media about their insomnia, indicating a potential relocation to the mainland due to the unbearable nature of the noise.

In an effort to investigate the source of the hum, Dr Kirtley has collaborated with Marcus Hazel-McGowan, a physics teacher and amateur radio enthusiast, who has begun mapping the locations of reported noise. Hazel-McGowan utilised a device called a spectrograph to measure the hum's frequency at 50 Hertz, a range typically inaudible to most people. It is estimated that only 2-4% of the population can hear such low frequencies. He commented, "It’s just trying to narrow it down and hoping nobody loses their mind completely over it."

While investigations into the sources of the hum are ongoing, officials from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the local council, have stated that the reports of the sound are currently considered unrelated due to the geographical separation of complaints. Nonetheless, the community's interest has caught international attention, with theorists from as far away as Canada, the US, Australia, and France speculating on potential causes, which range from plausible to bizarre.

The discussions have also included notions of man-made origins, with some residents attributing the noise to power lines, power stations, and telecommunications. Others have suggested more outlandish explanations, including potential military interference or even obscure natural phenomena. Historically, similar unexplained low-frequency noises have been reported globally, such as the Taos Hum in New Mexico and the Windsor Hum in Canada, often leaving researchers perplexed.

Dr Glen MacPherson, a Canadian researcher in low-frequency noise pollution, has contributed to the discourse by proposing that the hum could be an internally generated perception of sound, linked possibly to individual anatomical differences or stress-related conditions. He noted, “We are reasonably certain that the Hum is an internally generated perception of sound – that is, it is not actually a sound, just as tinnitus is not actually a sound.”

Despite the various theories, the exact nature of the Hebridean Hum remains elusive, leaving many in Lewis in a state of ongoing anxiety. As researchers and locals continue to investigate and theorise, the quest for a definitive explanation intensifies, highlighting the complex interplay between sound, perception, and stress.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.visitscotland.com/info/events/hebcelt-2025-p3250591> - This VisitScotland page provides information about the Hebridean Celtic Festival (HebCelt) 2025, including its history and cultural significance in the Outer Hebrides, corroborating the article's mention of the festival's role in the region's cultural landscape.
* <https://www.hebceltfest.com> - The official website of the Hebridean Celtic Festival offers details about the event's lineup, activities, and community involvement, supporting the article's reference to the festival's vibrant atmosphere and community identity.
* <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g551858-d13530768-r897900294-Hebridean_Isle_Tours-Stornoway_Isle_of_Lewis_Lewis_and_Harris_Outer_Hebrides_Th.html> - A TripAdvisor review of Hebridean Isle Tours in Stornoway, highlighting the tour's focus on the island's history and culture, aligning with the article's emphasis on the Hebridean Celtic Festival's cultural significance.
* <https://www.9callanish.co.uk/> - The official website of the Callanish Standing Stones, a significant historical site on the Isle of Lewis, providing context to the article's mention of the island's rich heritage and historical landmarks.
* <https://www.hebrideanholidaycabins.co.uk/> - The website for Hebridean Holiday Cabins, offering self-catering accommodations on the Isle of Lewis, relevant to the article's mention of local amenities and accommodations for visitors.
* <https://www.datathistle.com/event/2575244-hebcelt-2025/> - An event listing for HebCelt 2025, providing additional details about the festival's schedule and activities, supporting the article's coverage of the event's cultural importance.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14672807/Radio-waves-aliens-Russian-subs-mating-fish-sinister-Hebridean-hum-driving-locals-mad.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data