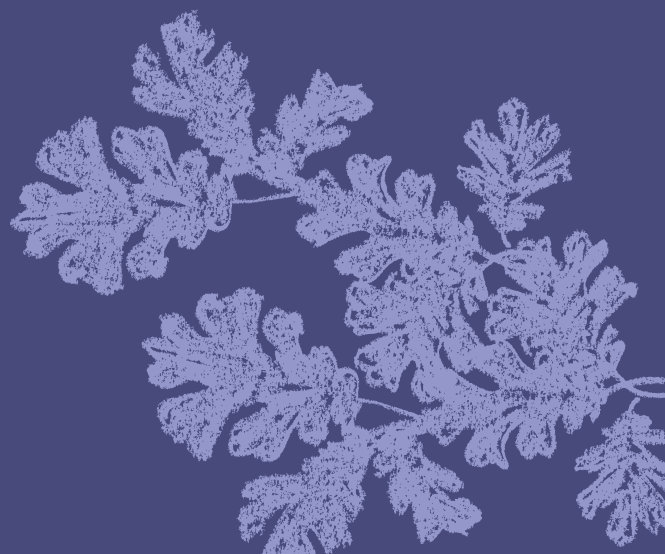


SECTION ONE

Scotland's National Parks and National Nature Reserves Ten Things You Might Not Know



Ten Things You Might Not Know...



» 1. SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL PARKS AND NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES ARE BEAUTIFUL, EXCEPTIONAL PLACES FULL OF FANTASTIC THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Whether it's protected wildlife, spectacular scenery, geological wonders, cultural heritage or adrenalin-packed activities, Scotland's two National Parks – the Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park – have something amazing to offer. With millions of visitors from all walks of life enjoying the Parks each year, it is evident that there is something for all.

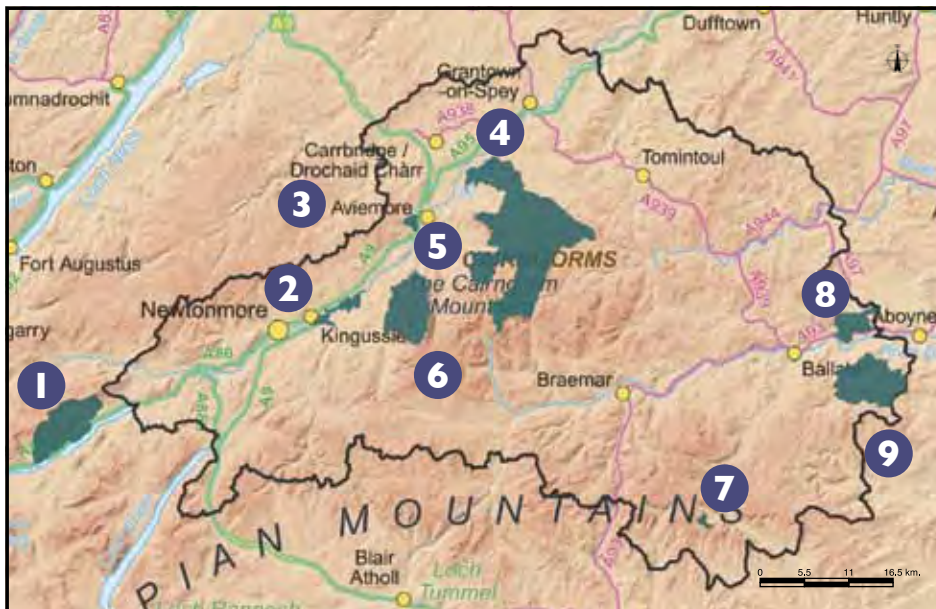
For those eager to try new experiences, the huge granite mountains, ancient forests, rivers and wild moorlands of the Cairngorms National Park offer an exceptional array of things to do and see. This is matched by the outstanding forests, world famous lochs, lochans, geology and history of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

Any one of these things would make a place special, but in the National Parks they all come together to make the Parks remarkable.

» 2. THERE ARE 15 NATIONAL PARKS IN THE UK AND OVER 50 NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES IN SCOTLAND

Scotland's two National Parks - The Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are part of this family of UK and worldwide National Parks. All of Scotland's National Nature Reserves (NNR's) are open to everyone to visit and enjoy. Some are easy to get to and have facilities for visitors whereas others are wilder and can only be reached with a bit of effort.

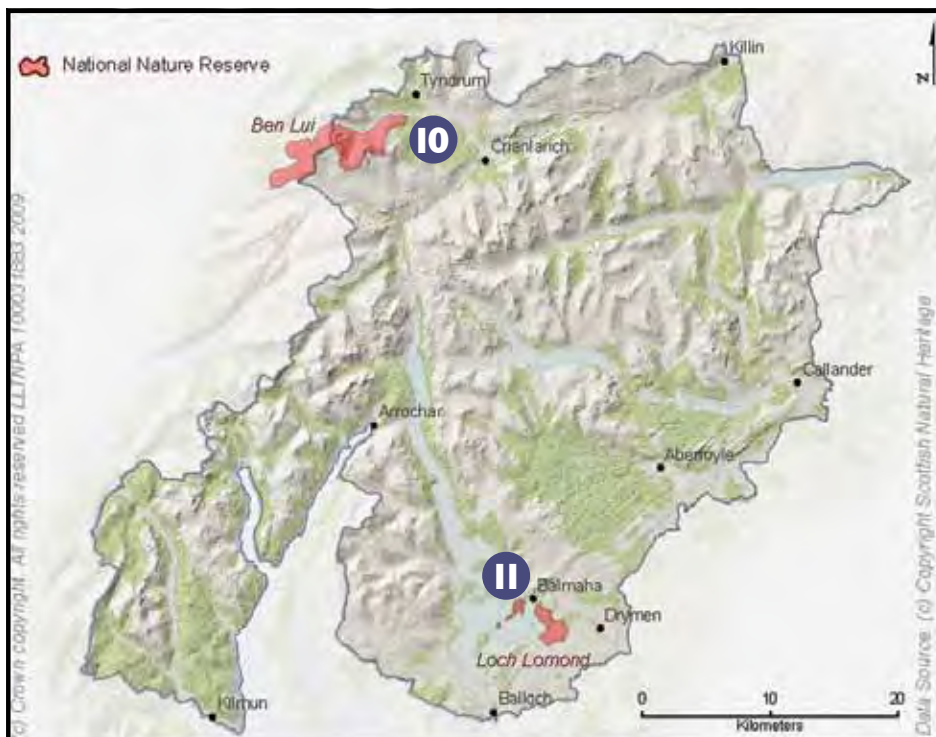
A number of NNR's can be found in Scotland's two National Parks as shown on the maps opposite. NNR's are magical places where you can experience the incredible sights and sounds of Scotland's natural world. They help protect a wide range of wildlife and landscapes, including many rare species and habitats of international importance.



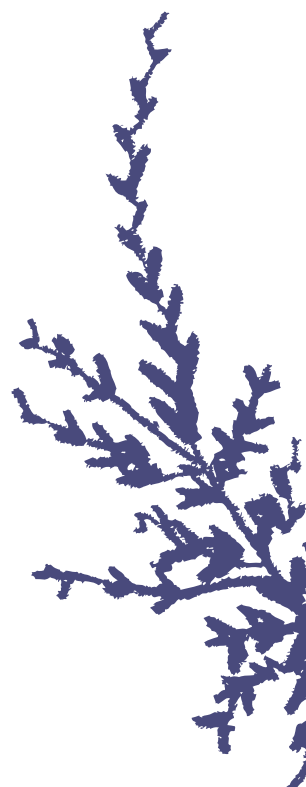
THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES

1. CREG MEAGAIDH
2. INSH MARSHES
3. CRAIGELLACHIE
4. ABERNETHY
5. GLENMORE
6. INVERESHIE & INSHRIACH
7. CORRIE FEE
8. MUIR OF DINNET
9. GLEN TANAR
10. BEN LUI
11. LOCH LOMOND



LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK



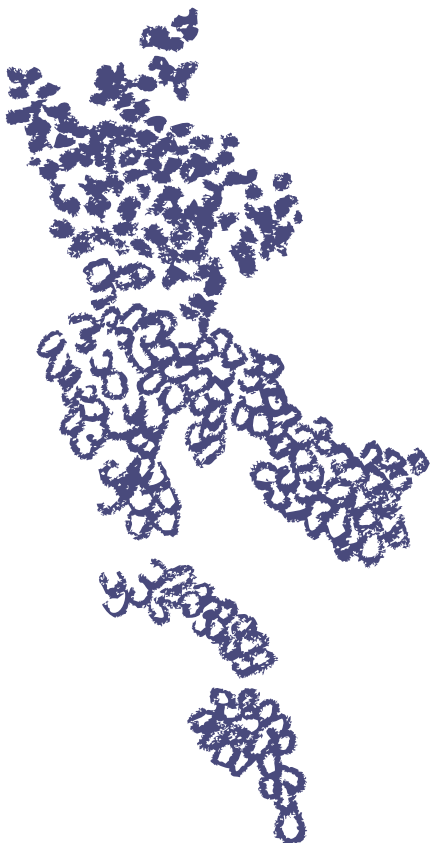
»» 3. A HOST OF AGENCIES SUPPORT PEOPLE USING THE PARKS

Each National Park is managed by a National Park Authority whose responsibility is to work with a wide range of partners to ensure that the aims of the National Parks are collectively pursued in ways which protect the natural and cultural heritage of the area now and in the future.

Across each Park there are a wide range of organisations and facilities that support individuals and groups who want to spend time and undertake activities in the National Parks. Rangers, education and learning teams and other staff within each Park Authority provide direct support or put groups in touch with other organisations that help everyone get the most out of the National Parks.

»» 4. THE PARKS ARE KEEN TO INCLUDE EVERYONE

The Parks actively seek the involvement of groups that are less well represented among Park users. This includes for example “Inclusive Cairngorms”, which brings together a wide range of relevant organisations to inform the Park Authority on equalities and inclusion issues within the Park. Both Parks have active programmes supporting young people.





» 5. THE PARKS OFFER A HUGE ARRAY OF ACTIVITIES

In both National Parks, people of all ages enjoy walking, cycling, fishing, camping, hill climbing, orienteering and wildlife watching – all in amazing environments and with spectacular scenery.

In the Cairngorms National Park, the adrenalin packed activities of snow boarding, ski-ing, rock climbing, abseiling and mountain biking, combine with more unusual activities such as dog sledding and gorge walking. A big part of life in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is water sports, with canoeing, sailing, windsurfing and water-skiing all popular. Horse riding and golf are just two examples of the amazing array of other things to do on land.

» 6. THE PARKS ARE HOME TO ENDANGERED SPECIES AND UNUSUAL HABITATS

National Parks and NNR's are one of the few places where wild nature is easy to see, with rare and threatened species of birds, fish and other animals living amongst spectacular forests and moorlands. One in four of the UK's endangered species lives in the Cairngorms National Park.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is home to all sorts of unusual plant species and charismatic animals, such as red squirrels and water voles; while in the Cairngorms iconic birds such as the golden eagle, red kites and capercaillie mix with wild cats, and deer. Ninety-five percent of the goldeneye ducks that breed in Britain do so in the Cairngorms National Park.





» 7. THE PARKS HAVE OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES

The Highland Boundary fault (a break in the earth's crust which occurred millions of years ago), runs through Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. This line defines the border between the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland, offering a landscape of striking contrasts.

The granite rocks and landforms in the Cairngorms started deep in the Earth's crust over 400 million years ago as a fiery mass of molten rock and now offer an amazing collection of different tropical, glacial and arctic landforms. With an international reputation for some of the best examples of how mountains are sculpted by ice, the Cairngorms National Park has the best arctic-alpine landforms, habitats and species in Britain; and the best collection of different landforms outside arctic Canada, with high tors, worn granite boulder fields and glacier cliffs.

The Cairngorms National Park includes 49 Munros (mountains above 3,000ft or 914m) and 4 of Scotland's 5 highest peaks. There are also 20 Munros to be climbed in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, along with 19 Corbetts (mountains between 2,500ft - 3,000ft or 762m - 914m), not to mention the 22 larger lochs, with numerous smaller lochs, 50 rivers and large burns.

» 8. FORESTS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS THE MOUNTAINS OR THE LOCHS

Forests define the Parks just as much as their mountains or moorlands; and they have been around for thousands of years. Timber and forests are a key part of the economy of the Parks and their communities. Great woodlands connect communities to forestry in a way more often associated with Scandinavia or Russia.

» 9. PEOPLE ARE A BIG PART OF THE PARKS

If you go to Yosemite or Yellowstone National Parks in the USA you will encounter other visitors but not many residents. But in Scotland, the areas covered by the National Parks are home to thousands of people and for many who make a living from the land. The Parks' lochs and rivers, mountains, forests, moorlands and farmlands have all given the areas a strong cultural heritage.

People are an important part of Park life, with local communities protecting and managing the area. They have been doing this for centuries; giving archaeologists a keen interest in the Parks, with Bronze Age and other ancient settlements evident. Droving routes and military roads linking towns and settlements help shape the area's historic past, including barracks used in Jacobite rebellions and famous battle grounds.

The rugged environment of the Parks has bred rugged people. Highland games and sports such as shinty have their roots in fractious clan battles, while field sports such as hunting, shooting and fishing, made popular in Victorian times continue today, shaping both the landscape and communities.

» 10. PARK AUTHORITIES HAVE LEGISLATIVE DUTIES

The National Park Authorities are public bodies with legal duties in relation to the Parks. This includes responsibilities for planning and access arrangements, as well as conserving the natural and cultural heritage of the area and promoting sustainable use of the natural resources found in the Parks. They are also required to encourage public understanding and enjoyment of the area and to promote the economic and social development of Park communities.

Scottish Natural Heritage is a non-departmental government body that, like the Park Authorities, has a legal duty to carry out its work. It looks after the natural heritage by helping people to enjoy and value it and by encouraging people to use it sustainably. SNH helps to co-ordinate management of the NNR's and has offices throughout Scotland that work closely with the National Park Authorities.

The 'Contacts and Information' section of this Pack will give you more information on the Parks and National Nature Reserves (NNR's).



I. Packaging the Experience



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

I AM NOT SURE WHAT THERE IS TO DO IN THE NATIONAL PARKS THAT IS SUITABLE FOR MY PARTICULAR GROUP'S NEEDS?

WOULD WE NEED TO HAVE SPECIFIC EXPERTISE TO TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES IN NATIONAL PARKS?

HOW CAN I SELL THE IDEA TO POTENTIALLY RELUCTANT PARTICIPANTS – GROUP MEMBERS AND STAFF?

HOW CAN I TELL IF THE EXPERIENCE CAN DELIVER WHAT MY ORGANISATION WANTS TO ACHIEVE FOR ITS PARTICIPANTS?

ARE THERE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NATIONAL PARKS?

SOLUTIONS

SOME ANSWERS...



All sorts of packaged activities help make it easy for group leaders. These offer various levels of support both ahead of time and for when you are on site.

They include activities suitable for the young and old, the fit and not so fit! Those with health considerations, mobility difficulties, tight budgets and varied experience of the outdoors. It also includes those looking for a very formal educational or developmental experience as well as those with a simple desire to have fun, or be stimulated by the myriad of experiences available in a National Park.

Programmes & Providers

Packaged programmes have proved popular and they continue to be developed. These include those offering opportunities to develop participants' skills and confidence. For example, The John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, The Prince's Trust, the Venture Trust, The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Fairbridge Scotland all offer popular programmes for young people in the National Parks.

Information & Activities

National Park Authorities and their partner agencies can provide information that link activities on offer to what your organisation wants to achieve through participation in the Park. For example if you are interested in healthy outcomes, or specific skills development they can offer suggestions about how certain activities are likely to deliver these.

If you feel your group has the confidence and skills to organise your own activity, National Park Authorities and other organisations can provide information packs and activity sheets. Also check out the Park websites or telephone/ e-mail National Park Staff/Rangers services.

Volunteering

Within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs volunteering experiences are also supported through the Park Authority's Volunteer Development Officer who can assist groups and individuals to participate in volunteering opportunities within the Park. Volunteering opportunities are also available in the Cairngorms National Park.

» Remember to check out the **Contacts and Resources Section** at the end of the pack for more information.



HOW OTHERS DID IT

SOME EXAMPLES...

- > A number of National Park Authorities across the UK have successfully used a range of packaged learning experiences when working with groups; something also developed with some success in the NNR's in Scotland. This approach provides more structured opportunities that are readily accessed and understood by those considering activities in the Parks. An example of how dedicated staff can help this is the appointment of a Programme Manager for the John Muir Award by the Cairngorms National Park Authority. The Escape Group in Inverness (supporting lone parents) and Tullochan Trust group from Dunbartonshire (working with excluded young people) both had good experiences in National Parks using packaged programmes. The Tullochan Trust for example, made use of Millennium Volunteer and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programmes to involve young people in volunteering within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. This got young people involved in a three month path building project with formal recognition for their efforts.
- > If people do not normally take part in outdoor activities, an outdoor instructor such as a Ranger can help people get more out of the experience. This is when their support goes beyond group supervision and they are actively involved in providing opportunities for learning. The Prince's Trust Team Programme based in Faifley made use of Ranger Service support to undertake a visit to Inchcailloch NNR. The visit was used to help the group recognise and develop their team building, group-work and communication skills - key elements of the Team Programme.

'It was important for us that young people received proper recognition for their efforts. Using the path building project as a means of completing the service element of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award proved really popular, gave young people the recognition they deserved and allowed them to spend time enjoying and learning about The National Park.'

TULLOCHAN TRUST STAFF MEMBER





- > Mobile phone technology at Craigellachie NNR (near Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park) and resource packs provided by the Ranger services on Inchcailloch (Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park) proved a great way of providing engaging information whilst in the Parks.
- > The Cairngorms National Park developed a very successful EUROPARC Junior Ranger Camp Programme. Working with 20 young people (13-16 years) from Europe and 11 from Scotland, the camp promoted inclusion and connection to protected areas. From this, further international links have been fostered and 5-day programmes offered during the summer months.
- > Groups involved in the National Parks have found that when they reflect on their experience it gives them a better understanding of how and why things did not meet expectations. The 'why' is often down to highly practical things (such as improved signage, access to equipment or information packs), that have been easily addressed and motivated people to return with good results.

“The Rangers were really good, not what I expected. I thought they would be really heavy about tree hugging and all that but they were good and told us lots of things that were dead interesting.”

PRINCE'S TRUST PARTICIPANT



2. Practicalities



BARRIERS SOME QUESTIONS...

WILL I FACE SOME PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHEN WE ARE THERE WILL WE NEED SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT,
TRAINING OR EXPERTISE?

AND COSTS – WHAT WILL THEY BE AND HOW CAN I MEET THEM?

