

## **FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK**

***The Cairngorms National Park was designated in 2003. It is one of 15 in the UK and one of only two in Scotland.***

### **A special place ... big & beautiful, wild & wonderful**

- The Cairngorms National Park is 4,528 sq km, taking in Badenoch & Strathspey in the Highlands; parts of Moray including Glenlivet and Tomintoul; Strathdon and Royal Deeside in Aberdeenshire; the Angus Glens and – following the extension of the Park boundary in 2010 – we welcome Highland Perthshire into the fold.
- The Cairngorms National Park is twice the size of our sister National Park in Scotland, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, and twice the size of the Lake District National Park. The land area covers some 6 per cent of Scotland.
- Four of Scotland's five highest mountains are in the Cairngorms National Park. For those who like the rooftop terrace of the world there are 55 summits over 900 metres in the Park.
- It's like the Arctic here – and we're not talking about the weather! With 36% of the land area in the Park above 600 metres (the 'mountain zone') that means we have the largest area of arctic landscape in the British Isles. AND, the Cairngorms National Park has the finest collection of different landforms outside of arctic Canada, from granite tors to heavings and leavings from Ice Age glaciers.
- The Park contains the most expansive tracts of Caledonian pine forest in the UK and we can also boast the best examples of bog woodland, montane willow scrub and stands of aspen. Around 15 % of the National Park is forest or woodland.
- Heather moorland – important for wildlife and the Park's economy – covers around 40% of the Park and montane habitats (the lower vegetation belt on mountains) around 30%.
- The waters of the Park, our lochs, rivers and marshes are among the cleanest in Scotland and because of this they're home to populations of endangered freshwater pearl mussels, as well as salmon, trout and rare lampreys.
- The Cairngorms National Park is home to 25% of the UK's threatened bird, animal and plant species and 39% of the Park is designated as being of national importance in terms of natural heritage, with 25% being of European importance. Impressed?

## **Leading the way is sustainable rural development ... doing things a little differently**

- The Cairngorms National Park is not owned and looked after by one particular organisation, it's owned and cared for by lots of different groups. Around 75% of the land is privately owned with 15% in the hands of Non Government Organisations (i.e. charities) with the remainder being owned and managed by a range of different public bodies, for example Forestry Commission Scotland....
- .... But “many hands make light work”, which is where the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) comes in. It's their job to bring together lots of different interests across the Park to try to ensure that the area is well cared for, so that it's robust and in good shape when our grandchildren's grandchildren want to enjoy and appreciate the Park the way we do now.
- The CNPA are like actor-directors – they help direct and guide all the other parts of the play but they also have their own role, which for the CNPA is a statutory role as the planning authority and as the outdoor access authority.
- The CNPA has a small staff (55) and a relatively small budget (£4.8m per year) and is supported by a board of 19 members. The CNPA has no visitor facing staff and instead works with and supports the ranger services already operating in the Park, the Cairngorms Business Partnership and various other groups to meet the needs of residents, visitors and the environment.
- The Cairngorms Business Partnership is a clever way of the private sector, supported by the public sector, coming together to ensure that businesses in the Park get the most out of being in a National Park!
- The CNPA also supports organisations like the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust, a charitable trust set up to help develop and deliver outdoor access projects from community to mountain paths as well as healthy walking projects.
- Groups and resources also exist in the Park to support farmers, land managers, creative-types, teachers, outdoor and land-based workers, recreation providers, cultural heritage enthusiasts – in other words, lots!
- Many different partnerships project also exist to meet a range of conservation, economic and social needs and interests including the Cairngorms Wildcat Project, the Mink Project, Rare Plants Project, Wildlife Estates Initiative and Food for Life, to name just a few.

## **Involving people ... work, rest & play**

- The Park is home to over 17,000 people with this figure expected to grow to 20,000 by 2040.
- The population is 4-6 years older than the Scottish average, healthier, unemployment is low and so is the crime rate. The downside? Earnings are a quarter less than the Scottish average while house prices are about a third higher.
- Of the population of the Park around 8,950 are working with a further 2,000 people self-employed.
- The main sources of employment in the Cairngorms National Park are: tourism (30%) – which includes winter sports, walking, fishing and shooting – housing and construction (18%), public sector (15%), agriculture, food and drink (15%), manufacturing (4%) and forestry and forest products (3%).
- Around 1.5 million people visit the Cairngorms National Park each year with most of those visitors being from our own shores – 63% from Scotland, 19% from elsewhere in the UK and 18% from overseas....
- .... And when they get here the majority say they're happy to enjoy some sightseeing and simply relax. Also popular are winter sports, wildlife watching, walking and eating out.
- According to a recent survey, 51% of visitors consider the fact the Cairngorms is a National Park is "very" or "quite important" in their decision making to come here.
- Fresh air and exercise is good for you – official! With 984km of Core Paths in the Cairngorms National Park to choose from that makes the Park good for you too.
- Summer playground? Winter playground? All-year-round playground! Watersports, walking, climbing, wildlife, whisky tasting, Highland games, golf, horse riding, shooting, snowsports, quad biking, hand gliding, fishing, castles, museums, mountain biking, shopping, eating... sleeping!