

Cairngorms Nature Festival 2015

Essential info

Date: 16-17 May 2015
Place: Locations across the Cairngorms National Park
Website: www.cairngorms.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/cairngormsnature
Twitter: @cairngormsnews @CNPnature
Hashtag: #CNF15

Cairngorms Nature Festival – 150 words

Get up close and personal to nature at the Cairngorms Nature Festival

May 16-17 will be a weekend of celebration where people can get first-hand experience of some of the fantastic wildlife that lives and grows in the Cairngorms National Park.

TV's Nick Baker is our special guest and you can join him on a Bio-Blitz in Boat of Garten, or come and listen to him talk about his life as a wildlife presenter.

This year there are four main hubs of activity, Ballater, Aviemore, Tomintoul and Blair Atholl. There will be many activities and events to participate in for all ages, from hands-on experiences such as bird ringing to 4x4 safaris.

The Cairngorms Nature Festival promises to be a weekend of fun for all the family, most of these events are totally free of charge, but some require booking in advance. Visit www.cairngorms.co.uk for the full programme

Tweets

Get up close and personal with nature @CNPnature Festival in the #Cairngorms #NationalPark 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

Know your tweet from your feet? Mammal tracks and bird calls @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

How well do you know your tweets? Bird identification @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

Are you an expert tweeter? Discover some others @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms #NationalPark 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

Come and #makeabirdbox @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms #NationalPark 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

Take part in #hands on bird ringing @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

Give nature a forest #treeplanting @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

So many reasons to get dirty! @CNPnature Festival #Cairngorms #NationalPark 16-17 May #CNF15 ow.ly/LR4GV

Cairngorms Nature Feature Copy

One of the last wild places left in the UK, the Cairngorms National Park is a place of abundance. It has more high level mountain ground than anywhere else in Britain or Ireland, it has the largest Caledonian forest, some of the UK's purest rivers and despite only covering two percent of our landmass it hosts 25 per cent of the UK's threatened species, including four of SNH's 'Big 5'. This is a place for people across Scotland to enjoy our fantastic nature and landscapes.

Impressive statistics perhaps, but maintaining the international value of the Cairngorms (half the Park is designated within the Natura 2000 network) is a mammoth task and immediate action is still needed to halt the biodiversity loss that is taking place.

Cairngorms Nature is a new partnership where people and organisations come together, with one thing in common - a desire to safeguard and enhance the outstanding nature in the Cairngorms National Park. Anyone can support Cairngorms Nature they just need a passion for the Park.

More than half of the Caledonian forest exists in the National Park and has enjoyed a high profile in recent years with expansion schemes such as at Glenfeshie. Less well known is the fact that the Park also holds Scotland's largest extent of bog woodland, a European priority for conservation. It is also arguably the UK stronghold for aspen with stands that go back hundreds of years.

The numerous waters of the National Park are some of the cleanest in the Scotland. As we have seen in recent months, climate change has a significant potential to increase the event of flooding, but if we can re-naturalise our freshwater systems and slow the flow of water in the catchments we can cope with these pressures and benefit people as well as nature. Schemes are underway in the Park to trial new methods of upland water storage. One scheme at Allt Lorgy near Carrbridge has reconnected the river with its floodplain in such a way that the river is doing its own work to re-establish its natural equilibrium, rather than using engineered solutions. Across the Park in Glen Clova contour belts of trees are being planted. These trees will improve soil structure allowing more water to be absorbed. In turn this will slow the rate of sediment moving downstream by helping to reduce peak flow – by as much as 40% with strategic planting.

The large wetland and wet grassland areas in the Park are havens for wintering wildfowl and farmland waders, however there are still threats to the environment from a variety of pressures, some of which have resulted in a drastic reduction of numbers of wader species in recent years. Badenoch and Strathspey is the most important mainland area for breeding waders in the UK and the way in which farmers and crofters manage the land is a key factor in supporting the rich nature value of the area. They are leading the way in an effort to create feeding sites for wader birds such as lapwing and redshanks.

After hundreds of years of decline, montane scrub is so impoverished in the UK that many people don't even realise it is missing. The National Park has some of the last few remaining, scattered fragments; including the best and highest example of a continuous treeline in Britain. In July 2013 landowners and managers of estates in the northern Cairngorms met to discuss the feasibility of restoring montane scrub and natural treeline on a landscape scale. There was a very positive drive to take the project forwards, supported by a common desire to see landscape change.

The high altitude ground of the uplands provide some of the most exceptional aspects of the Park's biodiversity. There are extensive tracts of montane plant communities including insect and primitive organisms such as slime moulds and rare lichens. The Park has the highest tracts of blanket-bog in the UK, however some 35% of designated upland features are in a less than favourable condition.

The Green Stimulus Peatland Restoration Project is a £15million Scottish Government initiative to reduce carbon released into the atmosphere by helping to restore degraded peatlands. SNH and the Cairngorms National Park Authority have recruited a peatland restoration officer specifically to work with landowners in the National Park.

The farmland and grassland habitats of the low ground of the Park have a history of low intensity management and high nature value farming. However the economic pressures can result in more intensive practises and threaten a decline in biodiversity value. It is vital that farming systems in the Park remain well managed and productive and continue to deliver a biodiversity gain.

The challenges to conservation and biodiversity that the Park faces are very real. In order to maintain this jewel of global significance is essential that all parties come together to deliver biodiversity gain so that we can leave a rich legacy for future generations.

Cairngorms Nature is open to anyone with a commitment to enhance and conserve the nature of the Cairngorms. The Cairngorms Nature Festival takes place May 16 and 17 and will be a weekend to inspire and engage people to take an interest in the Park. For more information on how to get involved with Cairngorms Nature or for details on the Festival please visit www.cairngorms.co.uk