



Useful information from the Expedition Network

Welcome!

Green forms and requests for assessment should be submitted to the Scottish Network Co-ordinator, who can also assist with enquiries regarding landowners, routes, and campsites:

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Eleanor works 9-5 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Area advisor

The local area advisor is based in the area and can assist with enquiries regarding routes and campsites.

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Introduction

The area covered by the Tayside & Perthshire Expedition Area is very suitable for DofE expeditions. Covering an area in excess of 2,500 square miles, with much being very sparsely populated, it provides excellent opportunities for groups to venture into truly wild country, provided sensible routes are chosen. Routes should be chosen so as to stay in the valleys; paths as marked can be used. Off the marked path becomes very hard work. Wild camping is encouraged and mountain peaks can be tackled as part of an expedition although this may involve additional training and experience if this is to be tackled safely and independently. Bad weather alternatives need to be carefully planned. Using more intensive supervision as a bad weather option is not acceptable.

There is variability and extremes of climate that can be experienced at any time of the year and which may drastically affect the grade and difficulty of an expedition. The area contains relatively few bridges, and that mountain streams can rise rapidly and can include the risk of localised flash flooding which should be borne in mind both when camping and fording.

Area boundaries

Travelling west from Kingussie, using the A9 as the northern border, the southern shore of Loch Erich, due south across the western end of Loch Rannoch down to Killin, following the A84 south to Dunblane, via Perth and Dundee, and then heading northwards back to Kingussie. Close links are maintained with the neighbouring expedition areas: Lochaber to the north and west, Cairngorm to the north and east, and Trossachs to the south and west. Quite often, expeditions begin/finish in adjacent areas.

The DofE website includes a downloadable [PDF map](#) and [GPX of the area boundaries](#).

Route updates

Vehicle access

All groups are reminded that vehicle access is not authorised unless specific permission has been obtained from the Estate Owner/Manager. Permission cannot, and will not, be given by the Area Advisor.

Atholl estates have indicated that they will not grant permission for vehicles to drive up Glen Tilt apart from exceptional circumstances. Leaders are welcome to cycle up the Glen. If teams will be using a larger vehicle such as a minibus or a vehicle with a trailer please they let the estate know about this – they may offer alternative parking within Blair Atholl so the Bridge of Tilt carpark doesn't get blocked up preventing other visitors accessing it.

Bridges

Perth and Kinross Council have [updates on paths and bridges in the area](#).

As of March 2018:

- The plastic bridge in Aberfeldy is closed for the foreseeable future
- The Chinese bridge (NN 782 467) on the Taymouth estate near Kenmore is closed for repairs, with this also restricting headroom for waterusers passing beneath

Extreme weather in winter 2015/6 caused severe damage to many routes and washed away a number of bridges. Those bridges not yet repaired are unlikely to be repaired soon. The Cairngorms National Park provide an update on the most recent information; [Winter storm impacts](#). The unusable bridges that might have an impact on DofE teams;

- Gleann Taitneach, NO 088 724
- Moulzie footbridge, Glen Doll, NO 277 789. An expedition in the area in June 2016 reported during lower water levels fording the river near the bridge site is possible. A sign at the bridge directs walkers to follow the west bank of the river down to a footbridge near the carpark, which is the only opportunity to cross the river on a bridge.

The footbridge crossing the River North Esk at NO 492 790 has been closed by the estate due to it being unsafe. Please be aware of this when planning routes in the area.

The bridge at NN 353 468 over the Water of Tulla in Crannach woods was damaged in winter 15/16. The river is crossable by fording just upstream, when the water is low. (reported February 2016)

- There are two extra paths by the Tulla (reported Feb 2016)

- a track joining the end of the track shown on maps on the north side of the Tulla (NN 328 450) and meeting the track at Tulla croft at the A82 (NN 314 446).
- A small path goes through Crannoch wood leaving the track by the bridge at Barravourich (NN 337 451) following the Tulla water east until crossing the Allt na Crannaich (NN345 456) then ascending to the bridge over the railway (NN 349 454) and following the railway north-east, crossing back under the railway at the Allt Coire an Lochain (NN 360 466) and descending back to the bridge at NN 353 468. This path is marked by yellow arrow waymarkers.

In June 2016 a leader reported that on the Squinty bridge (NN 713 772) on Edendon water, just south of Sronphadruig lodge, the culverts underneath have become completely blocked. This means that all water is running across the top of the bridge. In dry conditions this was reported as 8 inches deep, but it could be a significant hazard in wetter conditions.

In Glen Almond there is no bridge at Dunan, NN 742 340. There is a safer crossing downstream at the weir, NN 757 334

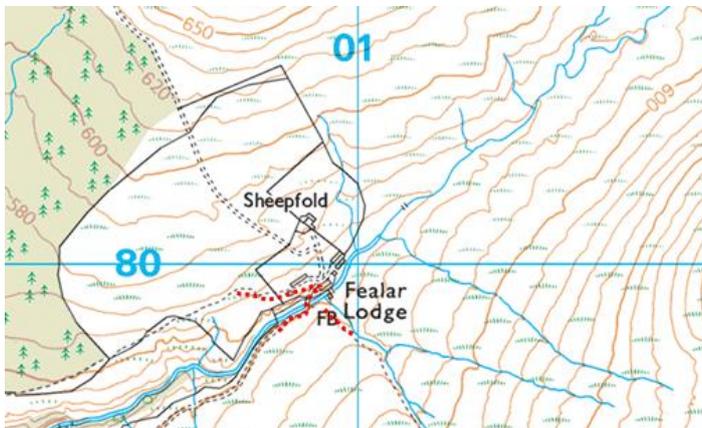
There is a new bridge in Glen Esk at NO 580 741, which has a track going east from it joining the road at NO 584 740.

Other issues

We have been informed that raw sewage is released into the Allt Feith Lair from Fealar lodge at NO 009 799. Therefore, anyone taking drinking water from this stream, or downstream in **Glen Tilt** should take appropriate precautions such as boiling or treating water. In Gleann Mor water can be collected upstream from above Fealar lodge, or from the Allt a' Ghlinne Bhig at NO 009 784 south of the lodge.

Glen Lednock, and **Glenprosen**. Both estates require knowledge of groups wishing to travel through the area. The contact details for the Estates can be obtained from the Area Coordinator.

Daldhu lodge in Gleann Fearnach (NO 024 704), **Bruar lodge** in Glen Bruar (NN 832 761), Forest lodge in **Glen Tilt** and Kilbo lodge in **Glen Prosen** (NO 249 707), are all used residentially and must be treated as occupied houses. Teams are asked to camp out of sight and respect their curtilage.



Groups following routes which pass by **Fealar Lodge** are requested to use the marked paths (highlighted in red) which pass to the west side of the Lodge and associated buildings rather than directly through the centre of the buildings. The paths are clearly marked both locally and on OS Maps.

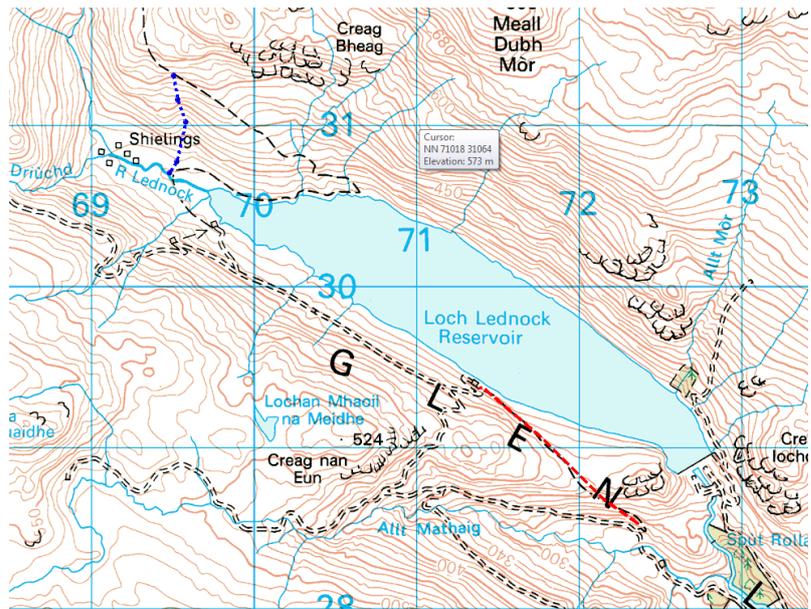
At the top of **Glen Finlet**, approximately NO 231 694, there were trees down in 2016 blocking the track and necessitating a detour around the edge of the forest.

Calliachar Wind Farm is now completed and accessible. However, routes may have changed slightly due to the development of the wind farm and paths might not always correspond to what appears on the map! The development is not shown on any OS maps yet (Feb 2016). This area lies 10km east of Kenmore, Loch Tay, between Glen Quaich and Glen Cochill.

A number of the towns in the area (Pitlochry, Dunkled, Crieff, Comrie, Blairgowrie and Aberfeldy) have networks of paths around them which are either not shown on OS maps, or not clear due to the complex cartography of urban areas. These paths are often useful to join routes up. Perth and Kinross council have leaflets showing the walking routes in these areas, these leaflets can be found in local tourist information locations, or **downloaded from the Perth and Kinross countryside trust website.**

The Forestry Commission's **Tay forest park** has maps with routes that may not be on OS maps.

Because of boggy ground along the loch **Glen Lednock** estates encourage groups to cut directly from NN 695 313 to NN 694 307 (the blue route), rather than following the path. The estate asks teams not to use the path from NN714 293 to NN 723 284 (highlighted red) during the ground nesting bird season, and instead go around by the tracks.



Way marked and long distance paths

The DofE *Expedition Guide* says “long distance footpaths should not be used, particularly by Silver and Gold teams, except in small sections to link up other paths.” (page 10, also see page 39). The quality of way-marked and long distance paths in Scotland varies considerably – some are concepts that don’t exist on the ground (for example the Skye and Cape Wrath trails) while others are clearly signposted heavily used routes (for example, the West Highland Way).

In some areas there are no alternatives to some way-marked paths. Teams may use these, but should not plan an expedition with more than half a day continuously on the same route. Heavily used way-marked paths provide little navigational challenge, undermine the sense of isolation, and potentially have negative environmental impacts, and therefore should be avoided by DofE teams as much as possible. Any such routes in this area have been highlighted in the above advice about route updates.

Scottish Hill Tracks

Scotways, the Scottish rights of way and access society, publishes ***Scottish Hill Tracks***, a book listing rights of way across Scotland’s uplands. This is an excellent resource for ideas for routes as some paths are not shown connecting on a map where historic routes exist. Scotways are also interested to hear about any issues with paths and routes.

Core paths

Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 every local authority and National Park authority (access authority) in Scotland was required to draw up a plan for a system of core paths that gives the public reasonable access throughout their area. Some of these paths do not yet appear on OS maps, and may help DofE teams link up routes. All core paths can be seen **on the SNH website**, with links to details from each council.

Campsites

Serviced sites

Comrie Croft - www.comriecroft.com

Wild camping

Scottish access rights (see the **Outdoor access code section** for further information) extend to wild Camping for small groups (i.e. individual expedition teams), although the DofE still recommends that, as a courtesy to land owners concerned and to maintain existing good relations, expedition teams inform them of their intentions. It is reasonable for owners to react by saying why a particular site might be unsuitable and to suggest alternatives.

If multiple teams from the same DofE centre intend to camp at the same location, this falls outside the definition of 'Wild camping' permitted under access rights. Therefore, centres planning to camp with multiple teams in the same location should always seek permission from the landowner.

Teams should consult the advice on camping in the *Expedition Guide* (page 101), there are also lots of useful information resources about wild camping;

- **Mountaineering Scotland** has lots of good advice, with links to their minimal impact and 'where to go in the outdoors' leaflets
- **The Outdoor Access Code website** has advice on responsible wild camping, including various information downloads.

Loch Ordie

Loch Ordie – due north of Dunkeld – All DofE groups are requested not to camp in the immediate vicinity of the Loch. Alternative campsites have been identified north of Loch Ordie and groups are requested to use these instead of the shoreline of the loch.

Bothies

Bothies are basic shelters in the hills. Many are open to the public for use and managed by the **Mountain Bothies Association (MBA)**. If teams plan to use a bothy for lunch or shelter they should be aware of the **MBA's bothy code**.

DofE teams are generally advised not to camp within close proximity to a bothy without permission from the owner because of problems that come with the pressure of numbers. This often leads to issues with pollution from human waste, so risk assessment would suggest these sites are not appropriate as a campsite. You can find more information about use of Bothies, via the DofE **'Use of Bothies information sheet'**

Travel and transport to the area

Travel by train

The main line from Stirling – Inverness passes through the middle of the region and stations north of Perth make excellent starting/finishing points for expeditions into truly wild country.

Scot Rail currently offer substantial discounts to groups wishing to use rail in order to access the area. Further information can be found elsewhere on the DofE website.

Travel by road

Several main routes feed into the area, from both Glasgow and Edinburgh. From Perth onwards, the A9 heads north skirting around the western edges of the Cairngorm plateau whilst the A85 runs west – east across the centre of the area.

Road works

Road closures and works in the area can have a serious impact on the ability of team's and leaders to get to and from expeditions, and for supervisors and assessors getting around due to the lack of quick alternative routes. Information about current or planned noticed road works in Scotland is available at **the Scottish Road Works Register**.

Hazards

Ticks

Ticks are small, blood sucking creatures found across the uplands of Scotland, especially in areas with lots of deer and sheep. Some ticks carry Lyme disease, which is treatable but can be tricky to diagnose. Teams should be made aware of the risks of Lyme disease and how to reduce the risk of being bitten. All teams should carry a tick remover and check themselves daily.

There are several useful information resources about ticks;

- The organisation Lyme Disease Action has useful downloadable **leaflets about ticks and Lyme disease**.
- **Stop the tick** has lots of infographics (some a bit graphic, but informational)

- Lime disease UK has posters and leaflets as part of their **Wake up to Lyme campaign**, as well as detailed information about the disease

Midges

The biting midge is particularly prolific in parts of Scotland, and worst in late Spring through to early Autumn. The detrimental effect midges can have on an expedition is not proportionate to their tiny size, and should not be underestimated, especially with teams unused to them. During this summer period teams should carry midge nets, insect repellent and clothes to provide full coverage (including gloves and long sleeved tops) and first aid kits should include antihistamines to reduce discomfort. Teams should also be aware of how to reduce their impact including:

- choice of campsite (in direct sunlight and breezy, ideally in both morning and evening)
- choice of clothing (pale, bright, and smooth rather than dark, wooly, or fleecy)
- campcraft (menu planning, positioning of tents, keeping tent doors closed)

Snakes

There are Adders (the UK's only venomous snake) in the area. They are not aggressive or commonly seen, but they will bite if stood on, sat on, or picked up. Because of this teams who are wild camping should always wear shoes (which the snakes cannot bite through) and not walk around bare foot, in socks, or in sandals such as flip-flops. If anyone has the unusual misfortune to be bitten, then medical assistance must be sought urgently.

Drinking water

Watercourses across Scotland can contain a variety of waterborne infections. Therefore, when wild camping it should not be assumed that streams and rivers are clean sources of drinking water, especially due to the high density of livestock and deer across large areas. Leaders should refer to the DofE *Expedition Guide* advice on taking water from streams (pg 122). Other good sources of information about health and hygiene outdoors (including issues around drinking water) are the NHS advice about **avoiding bugs and germs outdoors**, and the Mountaineering Scotland advice on **health and hygiene**.

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River crossings

Rivers and streams throughout the area rise quickly after rain, or during snow melt, and careful consideration should be given to any route which involves river crossings. Even small streams can quickly become completely impassable and larger rivers can become very dangerous even if the rain has not been falling in the immediate vicinity of the planned crossing.

All teams should understand what to do in case of streams rising – stream levels will fall as fast as they rise and often waiting overnight is all that is needed. In case of snow melt, peak levels are often late afternoon/evening, and the lowest levels in the morning. Teams planning river crossings must have an alternative plan in the event of continued wet weather.

Hours of daylight

All visitors, especially those from the south, need to be aware of the shortness of daylight hours in the expedition shoulder season; March has 11 hours of daylight and the October half term a little over 9 hours.

Emergencies and Incidents

Mountain rescue

In Scotland, responsibility for the provision of rescue facilities rests with the Police Force - who will call out/co-ordinate mountain rescue as appropriate. Teams must be clear that if they need to call for help they must ask for the police, and then ask for mountain rescue. Teams may not be connected to the nearest police control room to their location, so should be clear on the general area they are in, and their exact location. **Scottish mountain rescue** has advice about the process of calling for help, and the information that should be supplied.

Teams must be trained to supply the control room with a six-figure grid-reference for their location, including the two-letter prefix code e.g. NX 345 678 not 345 678. 'GR' is not the correct prefix for any location; it is a commonly used shorthand for 'grid reference'. There is information about six figure grid references **the**

Ordnance Survey website. Correct provision of a full six figure grid-reference is essential as the police computer system will not be able to interpret a grid reference without this two-letter prefix. Also, some Network Areas in Scotland have intersections of the letter labelled 100 km² grid squares in their centre, so a mistake may lead to significant delays in support from Mountain Rescue. DofE Scotland strongly recommend that all DofE route cards are prepared including two letter prefixes to avoid delays or uncertainty in emergency situations.

The teams that cover the expedition area are **Killin MRT**, **Tayside MRT**, and **Braemar MRT** and **Aberdeen MRT** in the east.

Remember that in case of an incident both the team's Licenced Organisation and the **Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator** should be notified using the DofE Incident Report Form (available through the resources zone in eDofE).

Mobile signal

It should be noted that in many parts of the area telephone boxes are rare and the mobile phone network reception is limited/non-existent away from centres of population and cannot be relied upon for getting assistance. Therefore, teams must know how to deal with an emergency in a location without mobile phone signal.

Teams should be encouraged to **sign up for the 999 text service** in advance of their expedition to give them the best chance of contacting emergency services in an emergency.

Outdoor access code

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has been implemented through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This provides access rights for the purposes of recreation or education across most of the land and inland water in Scotland. This includes mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of arable crop fields, paths/tracks, rivers and lochs, and the coast. These access rights are balanced with responsibilities towards the environment and the interests of those who make a living from the land.

Three key principles of access

- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment.
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For further information (including a downloadable e-book) visit **www.outdooraccess-scotland.com**

Any access issues should be reported to the **Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator** who will investigate.

Landuse

The **Countryside Calendar - Year** gives a month by month snapshot of typical activities and happenings in the farming and wildlife year in Scotland, any may be helpful in planning expeditions and thinking about appropriate aims.

Landowners

To identify the borders of estates see **www.whoownsscotland.org.uk**. There is a subscription option which gives access to see contact details.

Lambing

Sheep and lambing season is usually between around 10th April until around 25th May and lambing ewes must not be disturbed. If an apparently 'lost' lamb is seen - do not touch or intervene, as the mother will not be far away. At all other times it is advised that teams should pass through sheep quietly and if possible at a distance in an effort not to disturb and stress them.

Teams may observe traps on the high moorland. These should not be touched or disturbed as they have been set by the game keepers to catch predators to the ground nesting birds, typically the Hooded Crow.

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Scottish game seasons

During the deer stalking season teams should utilise the '[Heading for the Scottish Hills website](#)' in addition to contacting landowners to find out where and when shooting will be taking place. Teams should stay on recognised footpaths whilst in these areas for safety reasons.

Game	Season Opens	Season Closes
Salmon/Sea Trout	Jan/Feb	October (dates vary)
Trout	15th March	6th October
Roe Deer (bucks)	1st April	20th October
Red & Sika Deer (stags)	1st July	20th October
Fallow Deer (bucks)	1st August	30th April
Grouse & Ptarmigan	12th August	10th December
Snipe	12th August	30th January
Black Grouse	20th August	10th December
Wild Fowl	1st September	30th January
Partridge	1st September	31st January
Capercaillie & Woodcock	1st October	30th January
Pheasant	1st October	31st January
Roe Deer (does)	21st October	31st March
Red, Sika, & Fallow Deer (hinds)	21st October	15th February

Weather forecasts

- The Met Office provides:
 - **Forecasts with summaries for the region and 7 day detailed forecasts for the chosen town/village.**
 - **Surface pressure charts**
 - **Mountain area forecasts for South Grampian and Southeast Highlands.** This included a forecast for the region, with forecasts for individual summits available. These summit forecasts are for the summit height of the mountain, which should be considered when teams interpret them.
- **The Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS)** provides 72 hour forecasts for 5 Scottish regions. These forecasts are for the summits of the mountains which must be considered when interpreting them for DofE use. They provide some interpretation which can assist participant understanding. The forecast that covers the area is **the Southeastern Highlands.**
- Outdoor conditions forecasts are available on BBC Radio Scotland (FM: 92.8-94.7, MW: 810) at 18:25 Monday-Friday, and on Saturday and Sunday at 07:00 and 19:00.

DofE resources

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from:

www.dofeshopping.org/expedition-kit

A range of expedition downloads, such as the Green Form and spare expedition safety cards, can be downloaded from: **www.dofe.org/leaders/resources-and-downloads/expedition-downloads/**.

Further information of the Expedition section can be found at: **www.dofe.org/doing-your-dofe/activities-sections/expedition/**