



## ISLE OF ARRAN EXPEDITION AREA

### 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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DofE Scotland  
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E: [Scotland.Assessors@DofE.org](mailto:Scotland.Assessors@DofE.org)

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

Welcome to the Isle of Arran Expedition Area. The whole of the Isle of Arran is designated as 'wild country' for the purpose of those intending to visit.

## Area boundaries

The DofE website includes a downloadable [PDF map](#).



## Maps of the area

- OS Sheet Number 69 of the 1:50,000 Landranger Series.
- Harvey Map Services/Karrimor Mountain Marathon Map 1:40,000
- OS 1:25,000 Outdoor Leisure 37 Map of Arran. (Note: some of the detail on this map, in afforested areas, can be misleading. Detail which may look like paths and tracks can in fact be badly overgrown rides and fire breaks.)

## Route updates

The areas of lowland in Arran are very limited in extent, and generally, those less than 150 m in height constitute arable farmland. This should only be traversed by recognised paths and tracks.

Most of the southern half of the island would be classified as upland, with an average height of 300m. Compared with the northern half of Arran, the gradients in this area are usually not so steep and the summit areas are more rounded. Large parts of this area are owned by the Forestry Commission with trees at various stages of growth. Care must be taken not to underestimate walking time as the terrain is more difficult than the relief map suggests.

The northern half of the island is the spectacular area of glens, peaks and ridges for which Arran is famed. In this area, care should be exercised by expedition members as some of the ridges are narrow and exposed, with paths often in proximity to extremely steep ground or near vertical cliffs. In general, traversing the high tops should be avoided for DofE expeditions, while they can remain a spectacular backdrop to journey through them.

Unless there has been a reasonable spell of dry weather, the glens will be very wet underfoot, although there is currently a path improvement programme underway which is seeking to improve conditions in some of the glens. During hot spells water should be carried for extended days on higher ground.

Arran’s shoreline can also form part of a gold expedition route. Of particular interest from the point of view of its natural history and archaeological features is the north east shore, in whole or in part, and the south of the island has long sweeping sandy beaches which can be walked at low tide. Clauchlands point in the east and Drumadoon in the west can also be incorporated into a Gold route. Account should be taken of the more substantial rivers which flow into the sea at the south of the island which may require a detour to the road to cross.

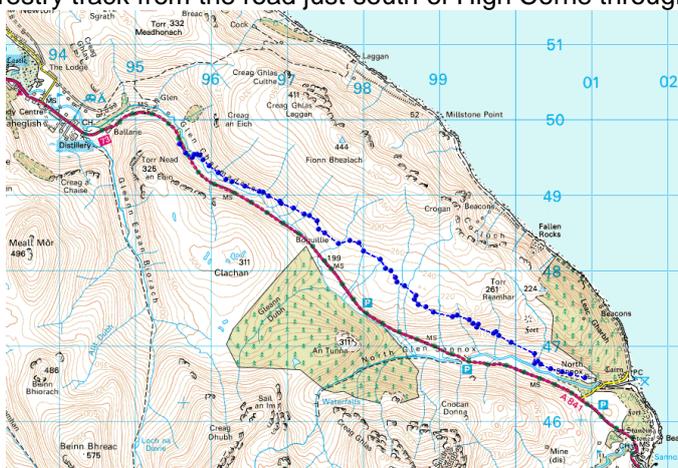
**Bennan Head (NR 994 203)** can be dangerous if groups try to go around it at the wrong point in the tide. Teams should check the tide times in advance and plan their route to go around this point at a relatively low tide.

**Public toilets on Arran** - From April 2017 all public toilets on Arran have been closed by North Ayrshire council. Media reports suggest that some facilities (Kilmory, Whiting Bay, Sandbraes and Glen Sannox) may be reopened by local community groups, but in the meantime teams should not rely on these facilities.

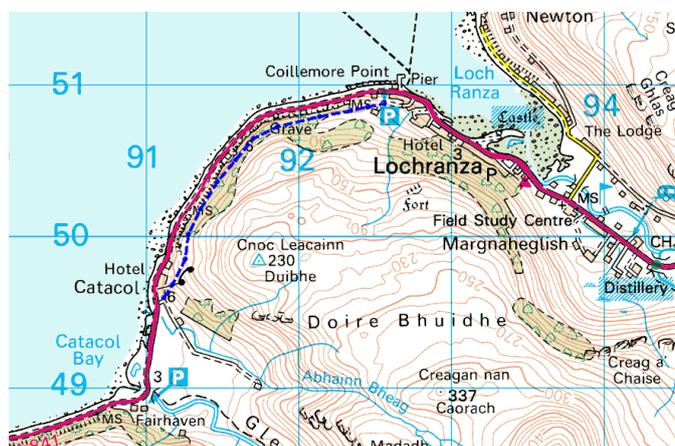
**Brodick to North Sannox**

Going via Glen Sannox and Glen Rosa to get between Brodick and North Sannox requires teams to cross the Saddle, which involves scrambling up or down a relatively narrow chimney. For many DofE teams this will be very challenging, especially with expedition packs. Supervisors should understand the challenges of the Saddle before taking teams through here. Many teams may find this easier going north to south, scrambling upwards, rather than down.

Walking along the road from Sannox to Brodick is not an appropriate alternative route to this, as “All roads must be avoided [on DofE expeditions] unless absolutely necessary when linking two sections of route together” (Expedition Guide, page 36). It is possible to find an alternative route along the eastern side of the hills, with a group who have strong navigation and are prepared to do short distances off path. Using the most up-to-date maps helps with this as there is a new forestry track from the road just south of High Corrie through to Merkland which is only on newer maps.



**North glen sannox and Glen Chalmdale new path** – there is a new path north of the road in these glens, roughly following the route shown.



**Lochranza to Catabol (the postman’s path)** - There is an off road route between Catabol and Lochranza, even when it’s shown on maps it is often not clear, and it is not on some older paths. The approximate route is highlighted.

**Significant bogs** - The 2 areas highlighted on the map are mapped as marsh land. There have been reports of DofE teams sinking to knee and thigh depth in these bogs, often delaying expeditions by 3-4 hours, even following paths. This should be taken into account when planning expeditions, planning bad weather routes, and if they are to be crossed extra time must be allowed for walking.



### Visiting Holy Island as part of an expedition

Some teams may be keen to visit Holy Island as part of their expedition, which involves taking a ferry. The first of the 20 conditions of Expeditions is “All expeditions must be by the participants’ own physical effort, without motorised or outside assistance.” Therefore, approval would never be given for using a long ferry, such as from the mainland to Arran during the expedition.

Approval may be given for the use of small short ferries with few facilities to hop between neighbouring islands to facilitate sensible routes and aims. In these cases teams must not use time waiting for the ferry or on the ferry as part of their hours of planned activity, so they must expect a longer day.

Teams wanting to do this must plan to take all their equipment with them, and would usually be expected to move campsite that day, as for most teams circumnavigation of the island would not meet the minimum requirements for planned activity that day.

Another option would be for teams to visit the island unencumbered by expedition equipment before or after the main expedition, possibly as part of an acclimatisation day.

### 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 Scotlands 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:

Glen Rosa campsite (Brodick) (NS 000 376) - <http://www.visitarran.com/where-to-stay/glen-rosa-campsite>

Lochranza campsite (NR 942 500) - <http://www.arran-campsite.com/>

Lamlash – Middleton’s caravan and camping park - [http://middletonscamping.com/Middletons\\_Camping\\_-\\_Home.html](http://middletonscamping.com/Middletons_Camping_-_Home.html)

Seal Shore Camping (NS 031 207) - <http://www.campingarran.com/>

Bridgend Campsite (NR 920 304) - <http://www.bridgendholidaysshiskine.co.uk/index.html>

### 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.

## Travel and transport to the area

For enterprising groups planning to travel to remote islands for an expedition, it is worth knowing that it is possible to travel throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland by public transport, using the improved road, rail and sea links. There are regular daily sailings to Arran from Ardrossan to Brodick, and during the summer months from Cloanaig on Kintyre to Lochranza. A timetable of the sailings and booking information can be obtained from:

Caledonian MacBrayne  
Tel: 0800 066 5000  
[www.calmac.co.uk/](http://www.calmac.co.uk/)

Ardrossan is readily accessible by road and rail and by air via Glasgow and Prestwick. Cloanaig is slightly more awkward by road via Arrochar, Lochgilphead and Tarbert.

### Public transport on Arran

The bus service on Arran generally runs in conjunction with the arrival and departure times of the ferry. <http://www.spt.co.uk/timetable/arran/>

Taxis and minibuses can be hired at reasonable prices. Contact details are available from the Tourist Information Centre, The Pier, Brodick. Tel: (01770) 302401/302140, [www.visitarran.com/](http://www.visitarran.com/)

## 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](#)

## Expedition aim ideas

There are almost an infinite number of possible projects here but some of the most productive will be those comparing different habitats, e.g. farmland with seashore, moorland, towns and parkland, or different types of the same habitat i.e. coniferous with native woodland, rock shores with sandy shores etc. It is also possible to compare the different wildlife found in these habitats, e.g. you find buzzards on the farmland but not over the sea. You can find mink almost everywhere, or it may be decided to concentrate on a group of plants or animals e.g. comparing the birds found on rocky shores with those found on sandy beaches.

**Beaches:** There are a number of beaches which can be used for comparative studies. Most of these are easily accessible from the road and could be as part of cycling, walking or water borne explorations. Suitable beaches can be found at the following places:

- Lochranza NR930510
- Cladach NS015376
- North Sannox Estuary NS016465
- Lamlash Pier - NS029313
- Sannox Bay NS018454
- Cordon NS029302
- Rosa Estuary NS013366
- Porta Buidhe NS024209
- Rubha Salach NS028412
- Torrylinnwater Foot NR953207
- Wine Port NS020381
- Drumadoon Bay NR890280
- Catacol Bay NR908491
- Whitefarland NR867428

Comparisons of the physical characteristics of these beaches and their resident wildlife can be revealing.

**Historic land use:** As soon as man arrived on Arran, he began to leave evidence of his various activities. These date from the various stone circles to modern dwellings and factories. Many of the historic and prehistoric sites are in remote areas and consequently are still well preserved. There is also a reasonable amount of background information available in various books.

**River Studies:** Arran's varied geology affects our river systems. Generally speaking, rivers in the north of the island flow over acidic rocks and so have a low ph and are lacking in wildlife. This contrasts with rivers in the south of the island which flow over sandstones and limestones which are more alkaline and have a richer fauna. The variety of insect life found in the river can also be used to assess the degree of pollution in a river.

Studies can be made using very simple, light and compact equipment, e.g. a hand net, shallow dish and some ph papers. During an exploration rivers can be studied for their ph and insect life at various points along them and compared with other rivers elsewhere on the island. Backup materials such as geology maps are freely available on Arran while the Clyde River Purification Board, produce an annual report which gives the annual ph readings for the main Arran rivers.

Similar comparative studies of some of the lochs can also be fruitful. The best lochs are:

- Loch A Mhuillin NR940496
- Merkland Wood NS012383
- Machrie Pond NR892337
- Loch Garbad NS019239
- Loch Nuis NR939379
- Loch Cnoc an Loch NR935287

The other lochs are comparatively sterile but make good comparisons. Supervisors are reminded that birds may be nesting on some of these lochs and every effort should be made to avoid disturbance. If a camp site is proposed next to a loch, it is recommended to camp about 50m away from the shoreline.

**Woodlands:** Woodlands are by their very nature, complex environments and any amount of comparative studies are possible. A list of the woods which make useful study areas is given below.

- Lochranza NR930505
- Allt Gobhlach NR877441
- Sannox Wood NS016462
- Rubha Bhan NR876450
- Merkland Wood NS024387
- Rubha Salach NS027411
- Glen Ashdale NS038252
- Dyemill Woods NS014297

Study topics could include identifying the principal tree species and assessing their relative abundance in various woods, together with noting the presence or otherwise of ground flora and its diversity. It may be

found that in a birch wood, grazed by sheep, for example, all the trees were very old, no young trees are present and that the ground flora comprised a few, close cropped species of grass.

**Dwelling sites:** A variety of sites can be visited and comparisons made. Study topics can include construction techniques and materials, functions and site selection. A list of the more interesting sites is given below:

- Drumadoon Fort NR886293
- Dun Fion Fort NS046338
- Corriecravie Dun Fort NR922232
- Sannox Fort NS017461
- Bennan Head Fort NR977208
- North Sannox Fort NS001474
- Glenashdale Fort NS031252
- GleannEasbuig Fort NR953358
- Cnoc Ballygowan NR921291
- Machrie Moor Stone and Hut Circles NR910324
- Stronach wood cup and ring marked rocks NS003364
- Carn Ban Cairn NR991262
- Auchagallon Cairn NR893346
- Giants Graves Cairns NS043246
- Tormore Cairn NR904311
- Kings Cross Cairn NS056283
- Bennan Head NR993207
- High Corrie NS023423
- Kings Cave NR884309
- North Sannox NS007467
- Kilpatrick Cashel NR906262
- Lagantuine NR999485
- Gargadale NR958262
- Cock Farm NR967512
- Clachaig NR963238
- Balmichael Estate NR922309

**Field boundaries:** Some fields are surrounded by hedges while others are surrounded by walls (dykes) or fences. Hedges differ in age and composition, while dykes differ depending on local rock, who built them and the purpose for which they were built.

**Construction methods and materials:** Again, buildings vary according to a variety of factors, e.g. materials available, accessibility of site etc. Arran has a wide variety of interesting and unusual buildings.

**Place names:** Examination of the 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey maps reveal a plethora of Gaelic names. The Gaelic language, once a distinctive characteristic of the Highlands and Islands, has survived, although not in common use. The descriptive and imaginative nature of the Gaelic language is an important key to understanding the significance of both place names and the names of landscape features. Many books about the region give lists of the more common place-name elements and it is well worth using these elements in your preparatory study of the maps of your chosen area. It will throw a useful light on both history and natural features. You will also come across some Norse names.

**Visitor pressure in mountain areas:** Whilst the main islands offer welcome opportunities for wilderness experience, there are some mountain areas, notably on Arran and Skye, where visitor pressure is giving rise to some concern. This may become apparent in serious footpath erosion, disturbance of wildlife and a loss in the full enjoyment of the mountain environment. Little data actually exists about numbers using popular mountain routes and landowners and organisations such as The National Trust for Scotland welcome reliable data. On Arran the National Trust for Scotland is keen to establish how visitors use the Goatfell Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Scenic Area.

A list of publications which may contain information particularly relevant to expedition aims is available from the Area Advisor upon request.

### Scottish Wild land areas

The Scottish Government has **defined 42 Wild land areas around Scotland**. The discussions around defining these areas and the implications of this may be of interest for teams considering aims around landuse and wildness.

## 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)
- Lyme 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](#).

## 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 refence'. 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 km<sup>2</sup> 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 Mountain Rescue team that covers the expedition area is the **Arran MRT**.

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.
- 

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 can start as early as February and can continue until the end of 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.

### **Traps**

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.

## **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.

<b>Game</b>	<b>Season Opens</b>	<b>Season Closes</b>
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 the Southwest 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 West 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](http://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/](http://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/](http://www.dofe.org/doing-your-dofe/activities-sections/expedition/)**