

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:

DofE Scotland
Rosebery House
9 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5EZ

T: 0131 343 0920

E: scotland.assessors@dofe.org

Area advisor

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

Steve McQueen

T: 07815135560

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Central Scotland Expedition Area

Introduction

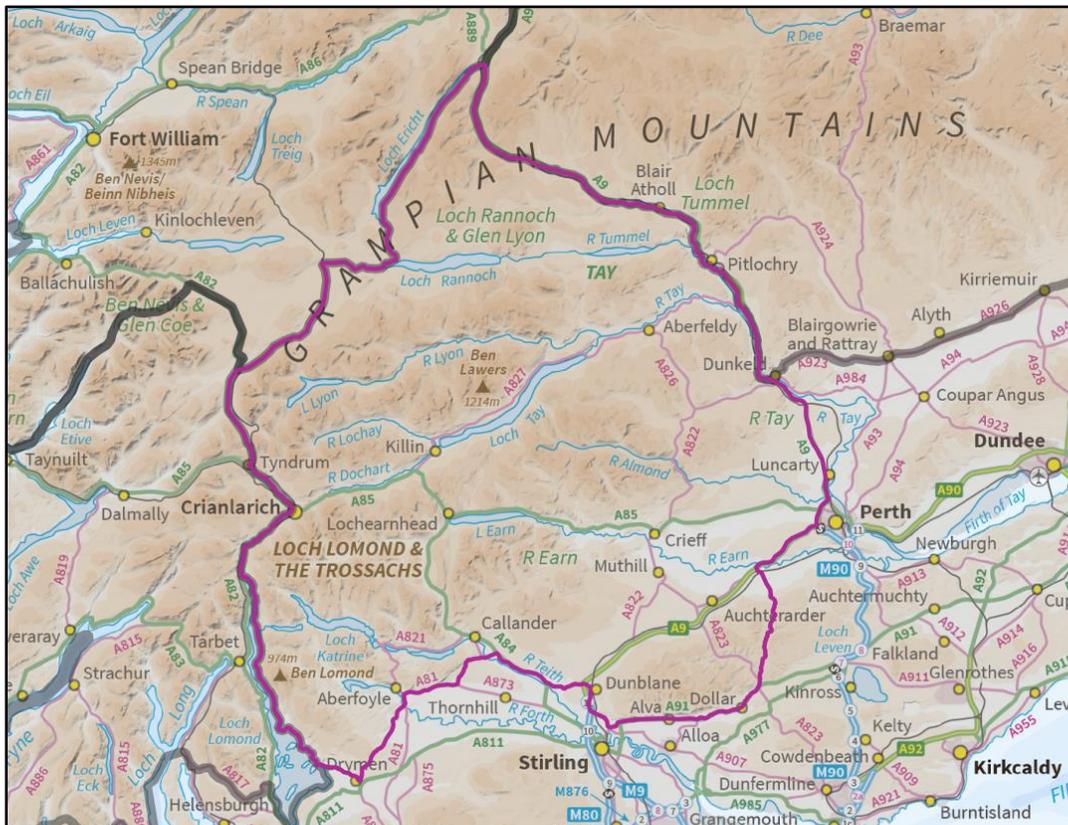
The area covered by the Central Scotland Expedition Area is very rugged and remote in places and the mountainous nature cannot be over-emphasised. The area contains some of the highest mountains in the British Isles with over 20 of the summits exceeding 3,000ft.

Due to the altitude, and the latitude of the area, many of the mountains retain snow cover well into late spring and early summer. This, combined with the steep slopes which predominate in this area, makes walking on the higher mountains hazardous for a large part of the year. In addition, as with all areas in the Scottish Highlands, the area can suffer from extreme changes in climate at very short notice. This is true for all altitudes and must be remembered and taken into consideration when planning an expedition, even in summer.

Area boundaries

The eastern boundary of the area is along the A9, from Dalwhinnie down to Perth, then along roads down to the Yetts o'Muckhart. The Southern boundary runs along roads past Dollar, Tillicoultry, Alva, Bridge of Allan, Dunblane, Doune, Gartmore, Dymen, and Balmaha. The Western boundary runs up the eastern edge of Loch Lomond then up the A82 past Crainlarich, Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy, then following the railway line across to Rannoch station. The North boundary runs from Rannoch station to bridge of Erich along the road, then up the River Erich and along the southern edge of Loch Erich to Dalwhinnie.

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



Choosing Your Route

Access Issues

Glen Turret East and Monzie Estates – Mike Readington (Gamekeeper) would like to be informed of groups travelling on the estates. Tel 01786 462 519.

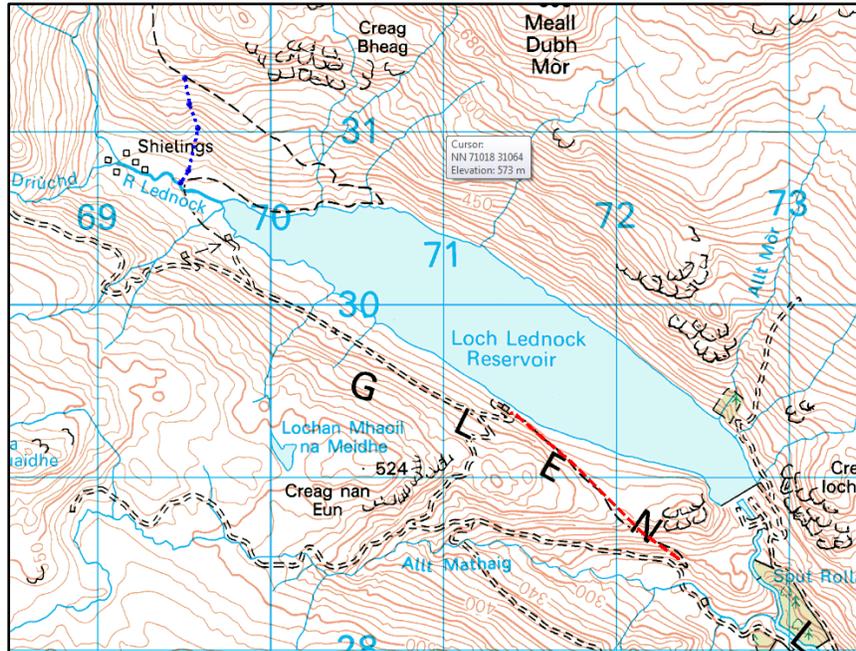
Perth and Kinross Council have [updates on paths and bridges in the area](#).

The path up towards **Glen Almond** no longer goes through Artalnaig Farm (NN 715 384), but is sign posted around it.

Glen Lednock request to be informed by groups wishing to travel through their estate. The contact details for the estate can be obtained from the Area Coordinator.

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 and lies 10km east of Kenmore, Loch Tay, between Glen Quauch and Glen Cochill.

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.



Damaged Bridges

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.

The bridge at NN 353 468 over the Water of Tulla in Crannach woods was damaged in winter 15/16.

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In Glen Almond there is no bridge at Dunan, NN 742 340.
Hermitage Bridge (NO 008 417) is out of action due to a landslip.

Bonus Paths

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.

A number of the towns in the area (Pitlochry, Dunkeld, 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](#).

Forestry and Land Scotland's (formerly The Forestry Commission) [Tay Forest Park](#) has maps with routes that may not be on OS maps.

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. **In this area walking, cycling and riding Silver and Gold teams should avoid the use of the Rob Roy Way and the West Highland Way other than in short sections to link between other paths.**

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 [Scottish Natural Heritage website](#), with links to details from each council.

Camping

Serviced sites

[Comrie Croft](#) (NN 802 230)

[Invertrossachs Scout Campsite](#) on Loch Venechar (NN 578 049)

[Immervoulin Camping and Caravan Park](#), Strathyre (NN 560 165) As of August 2018, Immervoulin will no longer be accepting bookings from youth groups.

[Dounans Outdoor Centre](#), Aberfoyle (NN 528 011) lets lots of DofE groups camp by arrangements, even though it doesn't advertise camping.

[Balquhidder Braes Holiday Park](#), Balquhidder Station, Lochearnhead (NN 577 212)

[Cobleland](#), Aberfoyle (NS 530 988)

[Cashel Forestry Campsite](#), Balmaha, Rowardennan (NN 395 941)

[Trossachs Holiday Park](#), Gartmore, Aberfoyle (NN 537 967)

[Keltie Bridge Caravan Park](#), Callander (NN 650 072)

[Inversnaid Bunkhouse](#), Inversnaid, Stirling (NN 347 094) allows camping in the grounds.

Wild camping

Scottish access rights (see the [Outdoor Access Code section](#) for further information) extend to wild camping for small groups (at DofE we consider this to be individual expedition teams). Although not strictly necessary, the DofE recommends that, as a courtesy and to maintain existing good relations, expedition teams inform relevant land owners 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 is also lots of useful information and resources about wild camping available via [Mountaineering Scotland](#) and [The Outdoor Access Code](#).

Loch Katrine and Glen Finglas water catchment areas

There are restrictions on camping in the Loch Katrine and Glen Finglas water catchment areas. These reservoirs act as the main water supplies for the local area and Glasgow District Council and while groups are still permitted to pass through the area, camping near the waters' edge is not permitted. However, if groups wish to camp in the area they should stay well away from the lochs. No distance has been defined but a fair estimation would be one kilometre.

Camping Areas in Comer Estate

The Comer Estate is a strong supporter of the DofE in Scotland and groups on Expedition often camp in the Comer area. To prevent disturbance to nesting and lek grounds for the endangered Blackcock bird several suitable campsites within the Gleann Gaoithe have been identified, which all DofE groups are asked to use. Please see the [Camping on Comer Estate download](#) for full details.

Forestry and Land Scotland youth campsites.

Forestry and Land Scotland (formerly The Forestry Commission) runs four youth campsites near Aberfoyle and Loch Achray. They have no facilities, such as toilets, but offer camping space. For more information contact the [Lodge Visitor Centre](#): Tel 03000676615

Renagour NN 498 008

Craigie NN 492 002.

Dalzell NN 494 004

Douglas NN 495 006

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The nearest public toilets are;

- Visitor Centre Carpark, Aberfoyle 1000hrs to 1700hrs
- The Lodge Visitor Centre 1000hrs to 1800hrs June & July, 1700hrs all other months

Lomond and Trossachs new camping By-laws

On 1st March 2017 new bylaws governing camping in areas around East and West Loch Lomond and the North edge of Loch Long will come into force. These bylaws create 'Camping Management Zones', restricting camping within the area covered every year between 1st March – 30th September (the majority of the DofE expedition season).

A general map of the zones can be found on the [National Park website](#). Camping outside the narrow areas covered by the bylaws remains covered by the usual Scottish laws.

For teams planning to camp within one of the Camping Management Zones, the National Park recommends that groups apply through the '[Group camping permit exemption](#)' process. This will have several advantages over the online permit system for the public:

- It will be free
- Groups will be able to apply for camping on sites outside the publicly permitted sites
- Groups will be able to apply to camp with larger groups than public permits are available for

Such applications will need to be submitted at least four weeks before the expedition. For DofE teams there is a shortened version of the application form (either an editable word version or a PDF version) which can be submitted along with green forms and route maps for the teams concerned. Submission details are in the form.

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

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

Scottish Wild land areas

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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 land use, flora and fauna and wilderness.

Physical and Human Geography

Surveying the landscape of this area from a lonely hilltop, it is tempting, and easy, to believe that it has always looked this way. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Natural features, such as the mountains and lochs, are only a few tens of thousands of years old in their present form – the mere blink of a geological eye. Much more recently, many of the smaller lochs have been dammed and their waters raised well beyond their natural levels to provide drinking water and hydro-electricity.

The landscapes of this area are the result of hundreds of millions of years of geological activity. The most important feature is the Highland Boundary Fault, which marks the junction between Highland and Lowland Scotland. The fault slices across the south of Loch Lomond and continues on to divide the Isle of Bute in two. While the forces of geology created the raw materials, it was a more recent event that shaped what we see today. A series of Ice Ages covered Scotland in ice miles thick, grinding the mountains into the form we know now.

These massive glaciers also gouged out hollows in the rock which left behind the typical steep-sided U-shaped valleys. In Loch Lomond's case, the ice smashed across the Highland Boundary Fault. When the Ice Age ended and the valley floor flooded, the water eventually spilled out onto the lowland plain, creating the loch as we know it.

In terms of wildlife, the sheer range is remarkable: plants more usually found in the Arctic or the Alps cling to the highest ridges, summits and cliffs. There are deep, dark conifer forests, sun-dappled deciduous woodland, broad sweeping fields with bobbing meadow flowers, vast stretches of heather-swathed moorland, sheltered glens and forbidding crags where arctic-alpines grow.

The largest creatures in the area are red deer, which roam across open hillsides. Roe and Fallow deer can also be found, and there are herds of feral goats near the head of Loch Lomond. The most elusive animal is the Scottish wildcat, most numerous in the forests of the eastern shores of Loch Lomond. Pine Martens have returned to the oak woods surrounding Loch Lomond and other mammals found in the area include badgers, foxes, rabbits and hares, otters, shrews, voles, stoats and weasels and at least four species of bats.

History

From the crannogs of shadowy Bronze Age peoples to magnificent medieval castles and right up to the present, this area has played a pivotal role in the telling of Scotland's story. Many of the nation's most stirring and romantic tales have been played out against the backdrop of this land – including the most famous of all, that of Rob Roy McGregor. Rob Roy MacGregor (1671-1734) used knowledge of his Trossachs homelands to steal cattle and to outwit the redcoat soldiers sent to subdue him.

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.

Some useful resources about ticks:

- Lyme Disease Action has useful downloadable [leaflets about ticks and Lyme disease](#).
- [Stop the tick](#) has lots of infographics (some are a bit graphic, but informative)
- 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 disproportionate 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). 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 barefoot, 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

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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. [Mountaineering Scotland](#) 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. The two letter prefix locates your grid reference within a 100km square; a mistake here 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 Ochils MRT, Killin MRT, Tayside MRT and Arrochar 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 and 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](#) 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.

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.

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 Southwest Highlands, South Grampian and Southeast Highlands. This includes 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.

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[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 forecasts that cover the area are West Highlands and 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.

Useful Links

Listed below are some links you may find useful. Please note that the Central Scotland Expedition Area does not directly endorse any of the sites listed.

<https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/> The official National Park website.

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/forest-parks/queen-elizabeth-forest-park> Forestry and Land Scotland (formerly the Forestry Commission) owns lots of the land in the Trossachs and also has lots of info.

<https://scotland-info.co.uk/lochlomond.htm> A tourist information site with lots of useful advice.

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/