

# Discover the forests of the Great Glen

## Lorg na coilltean anns a' Ghleann Mhòr

### Is there anywhere better to experience the unique atmosphere of the Highlands?

The Great Glen (An Gleann Mòr) cuts a line across the country from Fort William in the south to Inverness in the north. It's a fantastic natural route with iconic Loch Ness at its heart.

This area is steeped in Highland history and myth but it's also full of life and wonder. Explore the forests and woodlands of the Great Glen for tranquillity, wonderful wildlife and amazing views of distant mountains and Scotland's most intriguing loch.

### Affric Kintail Way

Have an outdoor adventure on the 44-mile trail from Loch Ness to Kintail via magical Glen Affric. [www.affrickintailway.com](http://www.affrickintailway.com)

### 3 Allt na Criche

Explore the woodland and enjoy sweeping views of Loch Ness from above.

### 2 River Oich & Torr Dhuin

Walk along the banks of the River Oich or gaze over the Caledonian Canal from high Torr Dhuin's ancient ramparts.

### 1 Glengarry

Explore ancient Caledonian pine forest at Glengarry, where red squirrels, crossbills and wood ants find sanctuary.

### Loch Arkaig, Chia-aig Falls & Allt Mhuic Butterfly Reserve

Enjoy a picnic by magical Chia-aig (say: Kaig) Falls on the shores of secluded Loch Arkaig and visit nearby Allt Mhuic (say Allt Vooik) for a chance to spot the rare chequered skipper butterfly.

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### Great Glen Way / Slighe a' Ghlinne Mhòir

If you've got time, the Great Glen Way, which stretches 79 miles (127 kms) between Fort William and Inverness makes a fabulous multi-day adventure. It's a rewarding walk, cycle or horse ride, mainly following towpaths and woodland tracks. You can also travel the glen by boat, canoe or kayak. Find out more at [www.greatglenway.org](http://www.greatglenway.org)

Photo: Colin Leslie



### Divach Falls (say: YeevuhK)

Stroll through atmospheric oakwoods to a viewing platform overlooking the dramatic falls. Wood warblers, spotted flycatchers and redstarts can all be heard here.

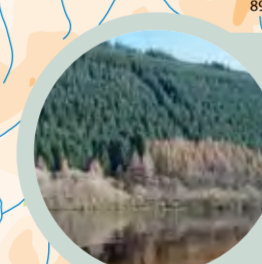
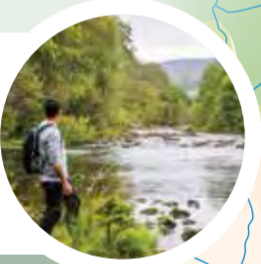
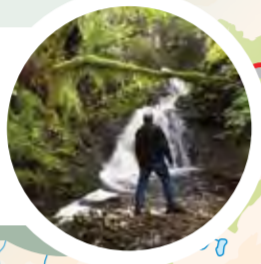


### 5 Craigmorie

Walk to a rocky crag by a woodland wildlife refuge at Craigmorie, and look beyond giant redwoods towards Loch Ness.

### 4 Balnain

Get away from it all on an extensive network of forest trails off the beaten track.

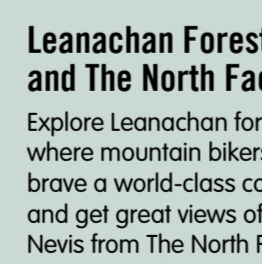


### Loch Oich picnic site

Don't miss the chance to get down to the water's edge. Enjoy a walk on the shore, lovely views and easy access to the water if you fancy a paddle.

### South Loch Ness Trail

Stretching approximately 28 miles from Loch Tarff near Fort Augustus to Torbreck on the edge of Inverness, this long-distance route offers an alternative way to explore the south side of Loch Ness. [www.visitinvernesslochness.com](http://www.visitinvernesslochness.com)



### Leanachan Forest and The North Face

Explore Leanachan forest, where mountain bikers brave a world-class course and get great views of Ben Nevis from The North Face Trail near Torlundy.

### Glen Nevis

Discover beautiful views, lovely walks and Highland history in this iconic glen near Fort William.

**Map key**

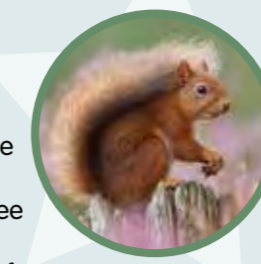
- Forestry Commission land
- Forestry Commission woodland
- Woodland Trust land
- Other woodland
- Parking
- Parking (easy access)
- Easy access facilities
- Toilets
- Information
- Viewpoint
- Plenic place
- Ancient monument
- Wildlife hide
- Visitor centre
- Campsite
- Caravan site
- Cafe / refreshments
- Great Glen Way / West Highland Way
- Other long-distance routes

**Please note:** Any symbols that appear black indicate they are not Forestry Commission facilities.

## Wildlife stars of the Great Glen!

### Red squirrel

Smaller and daintier than grey squirrels, red squirrels have distinctive fluffy tufts on their ears. They don't hibernate so you have a chance to see one at any time of year. Listen out – you may hear the scratching sound of a red squirrel's claws in the branches before you see it.



Red squirrel. Pete Cairns/2020VISION

### Scottish crossbill

The Gaelic name for a crossbill is **cam ghab** (literally 'squinty beaked') and it's this clever tool which enables the adult bird to open conifer cones and get the seeds out. What does it sound like? Listen out for a clear metallic 'jip jip jip' in the forest.



Male Scottish crossbill. David Whitaker

### 6 Change House / An Taigh-Seinne



### Trail information

#### Change House Trail ○○○

Wander through hazel woods along the shore of Loch Ness to the ruins of the Change House.

Mostly firm but sometimes uneven gravel path with a short steep slope.

½ mile / 0.8 km  
Allow ½ hr  
moderate

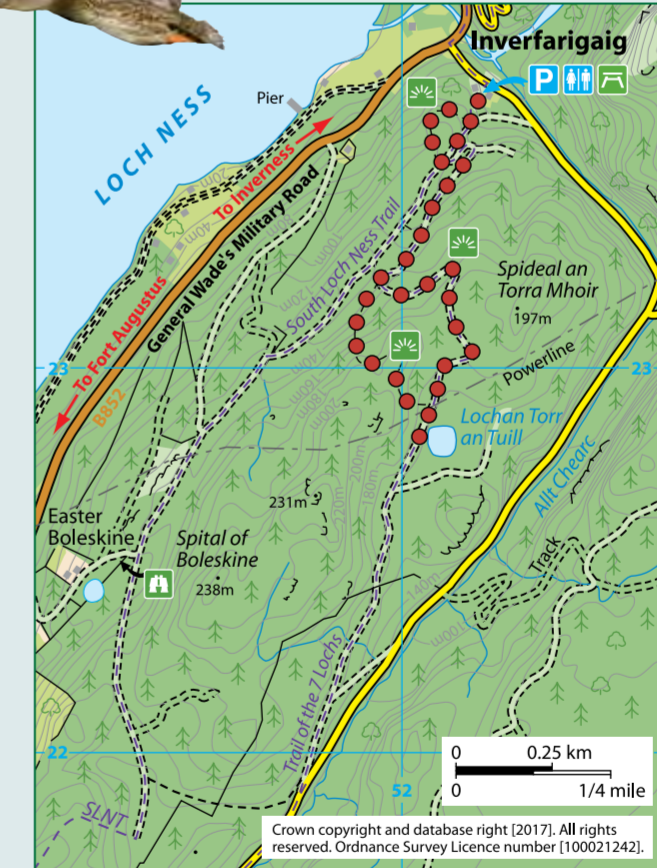
### 7 Farigaig / Farragaig



Discover the **secret side of Loch Ness** at this much-loved spot with views across Loch Ness and towards the ancient fort of Dun Dearduil.

The rocky trails wind through tall conifers to reach a secluded lochan, **Lochan Tòrr an Tuill**, known locally as the 'Magic Loch'. This peaceful spot is a lovely place to soak in the atmosphere and enjoy a picnic.

For a longer walk, try the **Farigaig Circular** – continue on past the lochan following the Trail of the 7 Lochs, cut across to the South Loch Ness Trail when you reach the main road and return via the forest road. If you're short of time, you don't have to go far to enjoy the scenery – the **viewpoint at the start of the trail** is a great place to take in the view.



### Trail information

#### Lochan Tòrr an Tuill Trail ●●●

Climb steeply on the rocky shoulder of Spital of Boleskine for magnificent views of the ancient fort on Dun Dearduil, before continuing on to the hidden Lochan Tòrr an Tuill.

Section of rough and narrow earth path with muddy and rocky parts. Long steep slopes for up to half a mile.

1¼ miles / 2.9 kms  
Allow 1 hr  
strenuous



## Discover the forests of the

# Great Glen and Loch Ness

Magical forests on the natural fault line between Inverness and Fort William



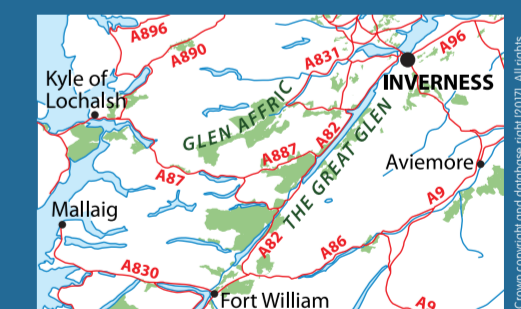
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## Give Gaelic a go!

Gaelic language is closely connected with nature and Gaelic place names often tell stories of the landscape and the people who lived here.

As you travel through the Great Glen look out for these common Gaelic words that often appear in hill and place names:

- Allt – stream
- Mor or Mhor – big
- Torr – rocky
- Dun or Dhuin – fort
- Beag (say *bake*) – small
- Dubh (say *doe*) – black
- Bahn – white
- Taigh (say *tie*) – house
- Beinn (say *ben*) – mountain
- Garadh (say *garve*) – rough
- Drochaid (say *droch-itch*) – bridge
- Meall (say *my-owl*) – rounded hill

Eas is 'Falls' as in Divach Falls

And the last word goes to Gaelic itself – say *gaa-lick* (not *gay-lick*)



## Wildlife stars of the Great Glen!

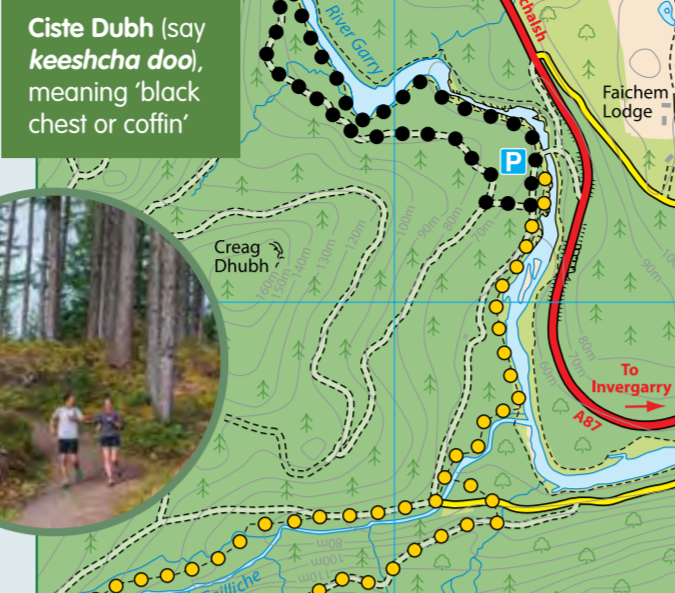
### Pine marten

These beautiful, elusive creatures were almost wiped out by hunting in the 1800s. While there are very few in the rest of the UK, pine martens continue to thrive in highland forests. In summer blaeberrys make up a large part of their diet – look for the distinctive blue-ish droppings.



Pine marten: Terry Whitaker/2020/OSDN

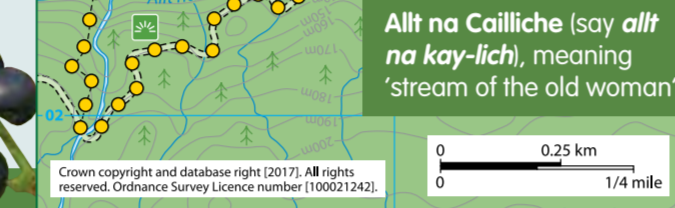
## 1 Glengarry / Gleann Garadh



**Ciste Dubh** (say *keeshcha doe*), meaning 'black chest or coffin'



Tucked away just off the main Fort William to Inverness road, you'll find two trails that explore the **big river, big trees and big views of Glengarry**. Explore the riverbank trail among oak, birch and Caledonian pine and stop to pick some delicious blaeberrys among the pine trees at **Allt na Cailliche**. As well as **Scottish crossbills** and other birds on the water, you might spot kayakers playing in the rapids or people fishing for **salmon** in the calmer stretches of the river.



**Allt na Cailliche** (say *allt na kay-lich*), meaning 'stream of the old woman'

### Trail information



#### Ciste Dubh Trail ●●●

A short loop beside the cascades of the River Garry, where you may see red squirrels, deer and even pine marten in the peaceful forest.

**Largely firm gravel surface. Uneven earthy sections with exposed tree roots and short rocky patches. Short steep slopes. Some parts may be muddy.**



**1¼ miles / 2 kms**  
Allow ¾ hr

moderate



#### Allt na Cailliche Trail ●●●

Follow the Allt na Cailliche stream to a stunning waterfall and discover remnants of the ancient Caledonian pinewood.

**Sections of uneven earth and gravel surface. Some exposed tree roots and muddy patches. One long steep slope with short rocky section. Includes two bridges and a quiet road crossing.**



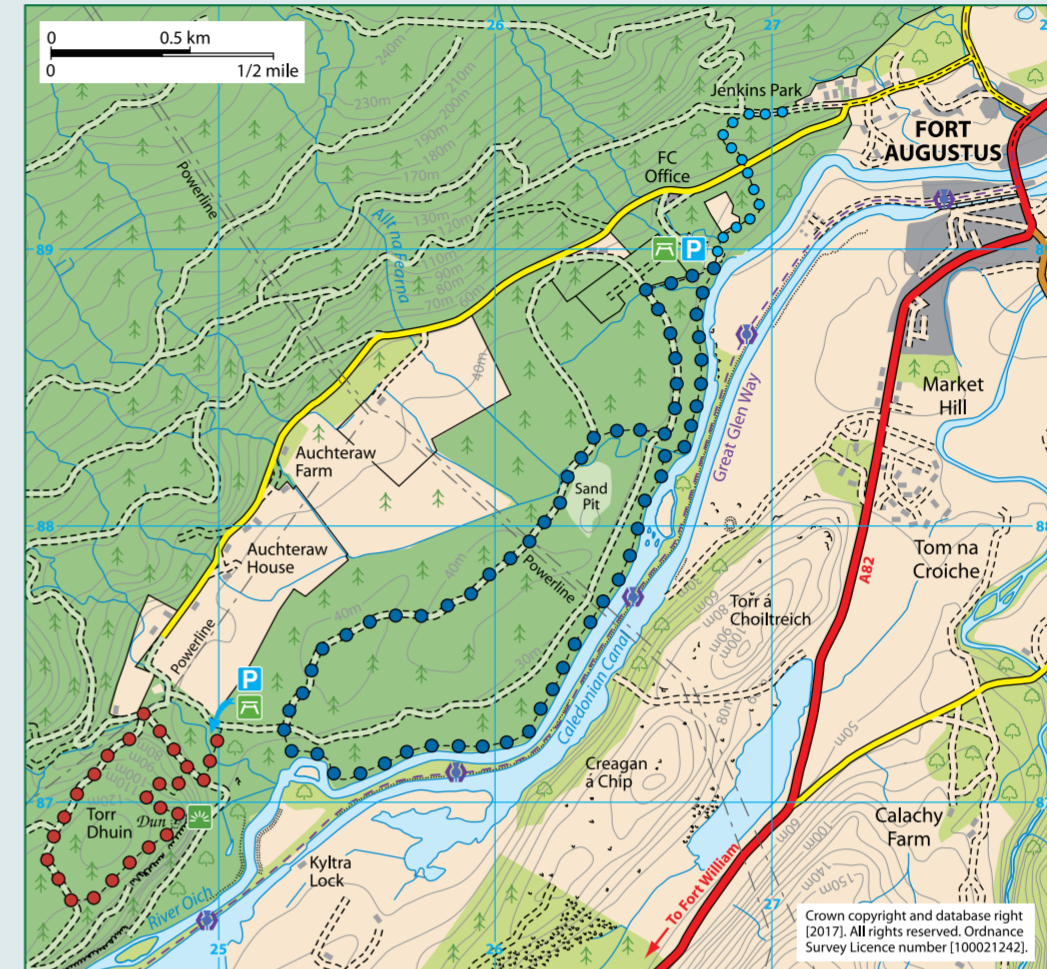
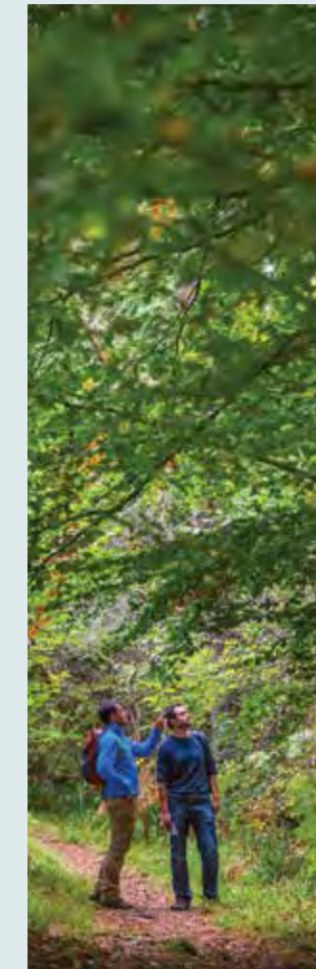
**3 miles / 4.8 kms**  
Allow 2 hrs

strenuous

## 2 River Oich & Torr Dhuin / Abhainn Omhaich agus Tòrr Dhùn

**Picnic by the River Oich** and explore a meandering trail through the woods and along the river bank. Keep a look out for water birds such as **cormorants and goosanders** by the river, and if you're lucky, you might spot an **otter** out fishing.

The **hill-top iron age fort at Torr Dhuin** once played a crucial role in defending the area – now it offers us a fantastic viewpoint and a glimpse of the past lives in the glen.



## Trail information



#### River Oich Trail ●●●

Follow the beautiful River Oich through towering Norway spruce, larch and Scots pine, and look for squirrels, otters and water birds.

**Uneven earth and grass surface with exposed tree roots. Some rough, narrow and muddy sections. Generally flat with some short steep slopes. Riverside path floods in heavy rain.**



**3¼ miles / 6.2 kms**  
Allow 2 hrs

moderate



#### Torr Dhuin Trail ●●●

Climb steeply to an ancient hill fort perched on a precipice with surprising views over the Great Glen and Caledonian Canal. Follow the trail anticlockwise for a less steep climb.

**Narrow and steep firm gravel path with tight corners. Includes low stone steps, uneven surface and low branches.**



**1½ miles / 2.4 kms**  
Allow 1 hr

strenuous

●●● This path links the River Oich trails through Jenkins Park towards Fort Augustus

Evening light from Torr Dhuin (say *tor-doon*), meaning 'fort on a rocky hill'



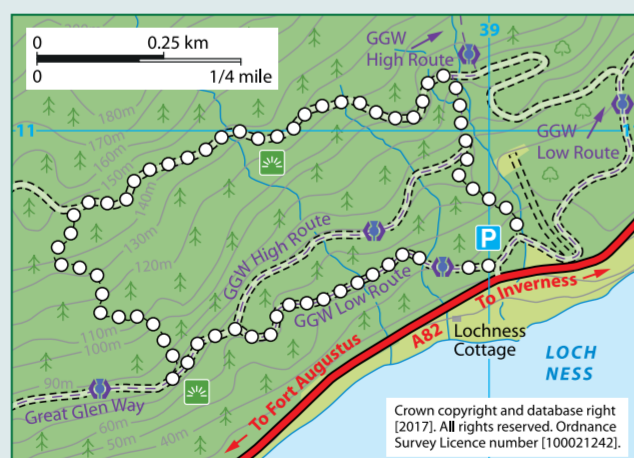
## 3 Allt na Crìche

say *allt na creecha*, meaning 'boundary stream'

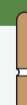
Explore Allt na Crìche for **stunning views** and a variety of trail options in a hillside forest overlooking Loch Ness. If you're travelling north from Fort William, this is the first chance to get out into the woodland for **lovely views of Loch Ness** and the stone towers of Fort Augustus Abbey below.

This mixed birch and conifer pine woodland is an ideal home for wildlife including **red squirrels, pine marten and red deer**.

For truly breath-taking views, branch steeply off the Allt na Crìche Trail to join the **high route of the Great Glen Way**. You'll be glad you made the effort!



### Trail information



#### Allt na Crìche Trail ○○○

An invigorating climb up the cascades of the Allt na Crìche burn is rewarded with some marvellous views over Loch Ness and the crannog of Cherry Island.

**Firm gravel surface, with some earth sections that are narrow, rocky and muddy in places. Long steep slopes. Includes several sections of boardwalk and some steps.**



**1¾ miles / 2.9 kms**  
Allow 1 hr

strenuous

## Wildlife stars of the Great Glen!

### Red deer

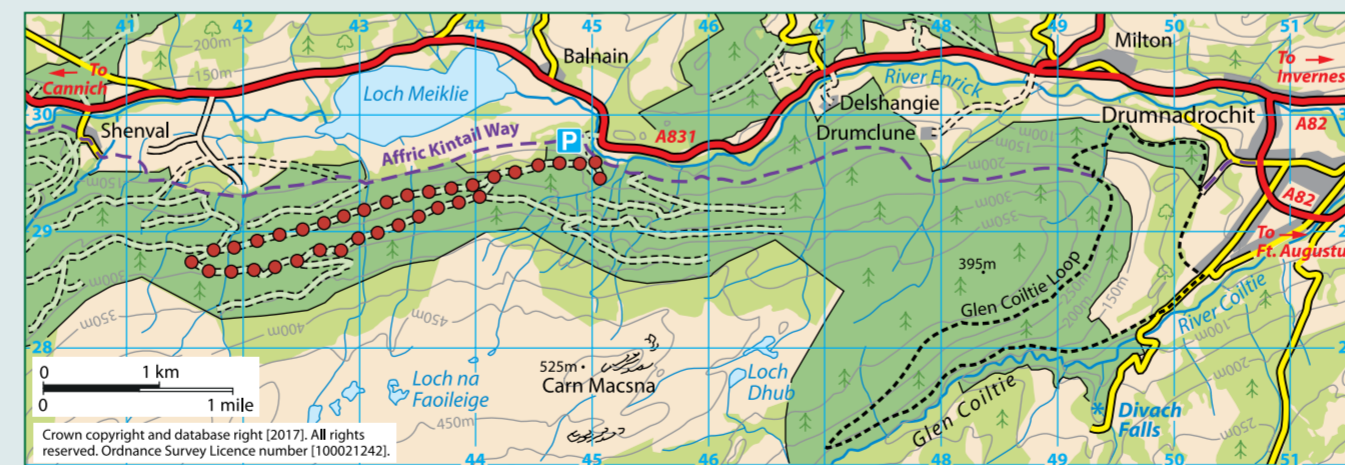
The best time to spot red deer is early morning or in the evening when the woods are quiet. They spend more time among the trees in the autumn and winter, but you'll need sharp eyes to spot them: their rusty-coloured coats are excellent camouflage.



Red deer stag: Danny Green/2020/OSDN

## 4 Balnain / Baile an Àthain

Enjoy some **peace and quiet** off the beaten track at Balnain. This peaceful spot is at the heart of some of Scotland's best long-distance walking routes: the **Affric Kintail Way** passes right through the forest here and you can also follow the trails to join the Great Glen Way at nearby Drumnadrochit. Alternatively, stretch your legs on the **Loch Meiklie View Trail** or simply **explore the network of informal forest tracks** on foot or by bike.



### Trail information



#### Loch Meiklie View Trail ●●●

A long circuit through the varied conifers of Glen Urquhart Forest with a magnificent viewpoint overlooking Loch Meiklie. A fine long walk or great off-road cycle ride.

**Wide, firm but uneven gravel surface throughout. Long fairly steep slope for half a mile. Includes one gate.**



**5¼ miles / 8.6 kms**  
Allow 3½ hrs

strenuous



### Explore further: Glen Coltite

Start at **Craigmonie** for a fantastic hike or challenging mountain bike ride along the **9 mile Glen Coltite Loop**. Take a picnic and enjoy great views over Loch Ness.



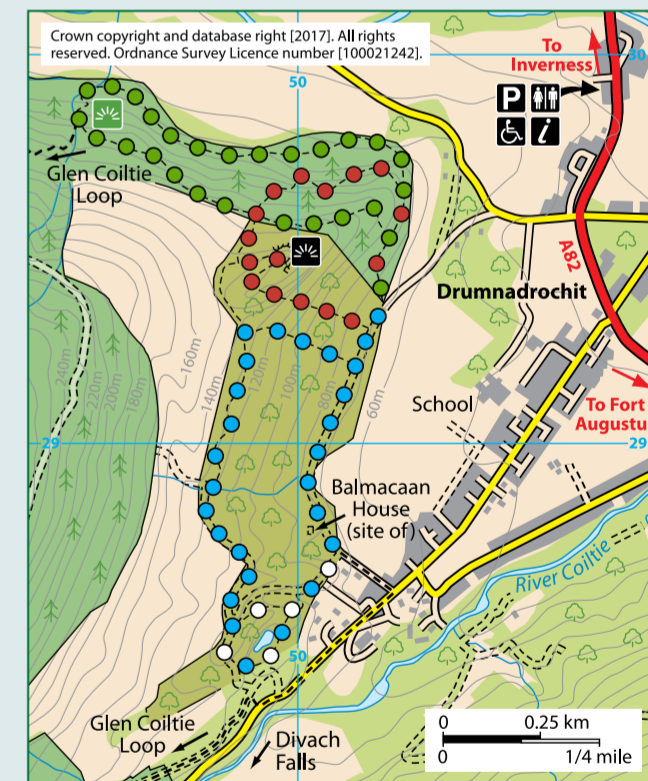
## 5 Craigmonie / Creag Monaidh



Stop off at Craigmonie community woodland\* for a walk through attractive woods to a **dramatic lookout over Urquhart Bay**. The woods here have ancient origins but are also home to some unusual trees - the two **towering redwoods** at the start of the trails were planted by former estate owners 200 years ago.

Keep an eye and an ear open for wildlife – **red squirrels and badgers** make their homes here, as well as a host of woodland birds, including **blackcaps and woodpeckers**.

\*These woods are managed in partnership with Craigmonie Woodland Association.



### Trail information



#### Craigmonie Trail ●●●

Climb up through the atmospheric pines to this historic look out over Loch Ness. The crag was named after a Viking prince who was mortally wounded in a siege here.

**Long steep slopes for up to 600m. Uneven earth and grass paths, with rough, narrow and muddy sections. Includes some steps and exposed tree roots.**



**1¼ miles / 2 kms**  
Allow 1 hr

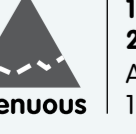
strenuous



#### Milton Trail ●●●

An enjoyable walk through varied woodland of birch, spruce and Douglas fir to a viewpoint overlooking Milton where you can discover the story of the village.

**Uneven earthy surface with exposed tree roots. Several narrow and muddy sections. Long steep slopes for up to 400m.**



**1½ miles / 2.6 kms**  
Allow 1 hr

strenuous

