

HIGHLANDS

LOCHABER

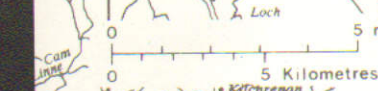
BEN NEVIS

TAYSIDE

STRATHCLYDE

ARGYLL and BUTE

CENTRAL



HIGHLAND REGION

79,600 HECTARES — HIGHLAND REGION
17,500 HECTARES — STRATHCLYDE REGION
4,500 HECTARES — TAYSIDE REGION

EXTENT OF AREA

This western Grampian Mountains area extends from Glen Spean in the north to Glen Kinglass in the south, and from Rannoch Station in the east to the mouth of Loch Leven in the west. It straddles three regions, Highland, Strathclyde and Tayside, the largest portion being in Highland, and is therefore described here.

From Fort William, which is not included in the area, the western limit follows the ridge of the Nevis Forest on the west flank of Glen Nevis to the summit of Mullach nan Coirean. From there it follows the ridge of Mam na Guaiainn, Tom Meadhoin and Beinn an Aonaich Mhoir to Rubha Cuil-cheanna on Loch Linnhe. Across the mouth of Loch Leven it follows the west slope of Beinn a'Bheithir (1001 m) and on to Sgorr a'Choise, Corr na Beinne, Beinn Fhionnlaidh and Beinn Trilleachan above Loch Etive. At Rubha Bharr on Loch Etive the southern margin crosses to Ardmaddy Bay, and follows the northern flank of Glen Kinglass through the summits of Beinn nan Lus, Beinn nan Aighenan, Beinn Suidhe, Beinn Inverveigh, Beinn an Dothaidh to Beinn Achaladair (1038m). At this point the existing National Park Direction Area boundary is resumed as far as Rannoch Station. From Rannoch Station the ridge A'Chruach is followed westwards as far as Beinn a'Chrulaiste where the limits are defined in a northerly direction through Glas Bheinn, and the eastern Stob Coire Easain to Beinn Chlianraig. From this hill the southern boundary of the Leanachan Forest and the electricity pylon line from Torlundy to Claggan are used to identify the limits of the area.

DESCRIPTION

There is a great variety of landform and scenery within this area, attributable in the main to the intricacy of its geological structure. Granite outcrops form the dominant features around Ben Nevis, Glen Etive and Rannoch Moor, while Glencoe is of volcanic origin. The variety of scenery throughout the area is witnessed in hills that may be smooth or jagged, rounded or precipitous, grass or heather covered. The glens may contain moorland, meadow, arable or forest, and swift streams or calm lochs. The sea shore may be wooded and bayed as in outer Loch Leven, or fjord-like as in the inner loch and Loch Etive.

Many people would consider that Glen Nevis ranks with Glen Affric and Glen Lyon as one of the most beautiful glens in Scotland. No other part of the country has greater relative relief. But it is not scale alone which makes Glen Nevis memorable. The lower reaches are pastoral, with an alder threaded river and woodlands clothing the glen sides. The middle section exhibits a 'Himalayan' character, while the upper glen is a place of peaceful meadows, Alpine in feeling, enhanced by the presence of the graceful Steall waterfall. On the north side of Ben

BEN NEVIS AND GLEN COE

Nevis is Coire Leis, '... the most splendid of all Scottish corries' (Murray).

South of the Mamore Forest lies the fjord-like trench of Loch Leven. The soaring mountain walls rising from the deciduous wooded shores of the deep and narrow waters of the inner loch give it a character not replicated elsewhere in Scotland. Its beauty is further enhanced by the islands at the mouth of Glen Coe, and by the swift tidal race which flows through the narrows at Ballachulish below the sharp cones of Beinn a'Bheithir.

Glen Coe itself '... must rank high among the most spectacular scenic experiences in Scotland' (Whittow). Lying between the 6 mile-long notched ridge of Aonach Eagach and the truncated spurs of Bidean nam Bian, the highest mountain in Argyll (1141 m), the glen is an ice worn valley mantled with screes and debris from the mountains. The place called The Study offers impressive vistas of the Three Sisters. Here the River Coe flows westwards over foaming cascades and through clear pools to the calm waters of Loch Achtriochtan. The peaty flats of the lower glen are in sharp contrast to the towering precipices and waterfalls around them.

Glen Etive is not of the same awe-inspiring grandeur, but nevertheless it is a deep cleft through towering peaks, notably the portal peaks of the Buachailles and the great slabs of Ben Starav. The River Etive with its numerous waterfalls is an important feature of the glen. To the east lies Rannoch Moor, probably the best known moor in Scotland. Its sometimes endless-seeming wastes have a beauty derived from the inter-relationship of water and islands with the moor, and the relationship of the moor to its surrounding mountains.

OTHER NATIONAL INTERESTS

There is a National Nature Reserve at Rannoch Moor and Sites of Special Scientific Interest at Rannoch Moor, Crannach Wood, Doire Darach, Ard Trilleachan, Bidean nam Bian, Carnach Wood, Camas Calltuinn, St. Johns Church, Callert, Ben Nevis and Lon Lianachain. Part of the Glen Roy SSSI extends into Glen Spean in the north eastern extremity of the area. The Forestry Commission owns land in Glen Spean, at Leanachan, in Glen Nevis, at Ballachulish and Glen Coe, in Glen Etive and on Rannoch Moor. The National Trust for Scotland has property in Glen Coe. The area is less extensive than and is contained within the existing National Park Direction Area.



INVERNESS

MORAY

HIGHLAND

BADENOCH and STRATHSPEY

KINGUSSIE

CAIRN GORM

GLEN AVON

GLENCOCH

BEN MACDUI

BRARAEMAR

GRAMPIAN

KINCARDINE and DEESIDE

TAYSIDE

PERTH and KINROSS

5 miles

5 Kilometres

GLEN ERROCHTY

ENOCHDU

HIGHLAND REGION

37,400 HECTARES — HIGHLAND REGION
29,800 HECTARES — GRAMPIAN REGION

EXTENT OF AREA

This area lies partly in Highland Region and partly in Grampian Region, but as the greater part of it falls within the former it is dealt with here. It extends from Glen Feshie in the west to Glen Builg in the east and from Pityoulish and Ryvoan in the north to the Geldie Burn in the south, and covers the principal summits of the Cairngorm Plateau. From the River Spey at Dalfaber the western margin is defined by the railway as far south as Dunachton, whence a line drawn through the summits of Creag Dubh, Creag na Sroine, Cam Dearg Beag, Cam Dearg Mor (857m), and Cam an Fhìdhleir Lorgaidh on the west flank of Glen Feshie, identifies the western extent of the area. From Cam an Fhìdhleir Lorgaidh and Sron na Ban-rìgh the southern limit is along the course of the Geldie Burn to Chest of Dee and up the course of the Dee to strike east o'èr Sgor Mor and Sgor Dubh and across Glen Lui to Meall an Lundain. From this summit the series of lateral meltwater channels defining the edge of the high plateau, and in which the headwaters of the Quoich and Gairn rise, is followed as far as Loch Builg. Glen Builg forms the eastern margin as far as the confluence of the Builg with the Avon, whence the ridge along the north flank of Glen Avon forms the northern limit of the area as far west as Coire Odhar of Bynack More (1090m). From here the existing National Park Direction Area boundary west to Pityoulish defines the remainder of the northern limit.

DESCRIPTION

The granite plateau of the Cairngorm Mountains forms the most extensive area of land above 1,000 metres anywhere in Britain. Its height is less immediately apparent than its bulk, but there are four summits over 1,200 metres (Cairngorm, Ben Macduih, Cairn Toul and Braeriach) while three others, Cairn Lochan, Beinn a'Bhuird and Ben Avon are nearly so. The high plateau is bleak and bare and it is the immensity of scale, once realised, which impresses. Its edges are glacially sculptured into huge corries which excel in grandeur anything to be found elsewhere in Scotland, with the exception of Coire Leis of Ben Nevis. This scale '... with the vast corries, the massive slopes, the long passes, the wide skies, and the very bareness of the ground, where the elements work with a power not known at lower altitudes, gives to these plateaux their distinctive quality.' (Murray, 1962).

The edge of the plateau, where not etched by corries, is well defined by long smooth steep slopes which, seen from Speyside or Deeside, rise in tiers. Snow lies for a long time at the top of these slopes. Lower down, deer forest, sheep grazing and forestry assume a greater importance in the appearance of the landscape. It is the forests around the plateau foot which for many people characterise the Cairngorm Mountains; three extensive and differing

THE CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS

remnants of the native Caledonian Pine Forest occur at Rothiemurchus and Abernethy, Glen Feshie, and Mar.

In Rothiemurchus the pines on the upper forest slopes give way to a mixture of pine and birch, and then to the rich policy woodlands of Strathspey. The forests are deeply carpeted with heather, blaeberry and other flora, and the woods are interspersed with lochans of varying character, and views culminating in the peaty waters of the Spey itself.

Glen Feshie is wilder and sterner, the pines mature and solitary, interspersed with juniper. The river dominates in this forest, a great, braided, mountain stream with shingle beds cast over an uneven flood plain, almost continental in scale.

Mar Forest is different yet again. Higher, and therefore less rich than Rothiemurchus in its flora, it graduates from birch, pine, and fir to massive pines alone, again with a ground cover of heather and blaeberry. Like Glen Feshie the rivers are important here but not for their scale and grandeur. They are noisy burns dashing over granite boulders washed brightly pink by their clear waters, a lively element in the landscape. These wooded flanks of the Cairngorm plateau form a setting of rare beauty for the mountain massif, and are in turn enhanced by the mountain backdrop.

OTHER NATIONAL INTERESTS

The area contains the Cairngorm National Nature Reserve, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Eastern Cairngorms, and at Inchroy, Abernethy Forest, Alvie, and at the River Spey-Insh Marshes where there is an R.S.P.B. reserve. The Glen More Forest Park as well as parts of the Queens Forest and Inshriach Forest lie within the area. The existing National Park Direction Area is also contained within the proposed area. There is a Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve at Pass of Ryvoan.