

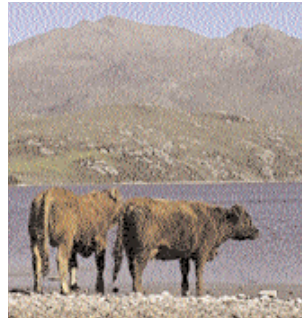
# Introduction

This booklet has been produced by a group of people who live and work in the various **scattered communities** of the area. They are proud of the **natural beauty** of their surroundings and would like to **share** this with others. The area covered has been divided into **six** geographical regions.



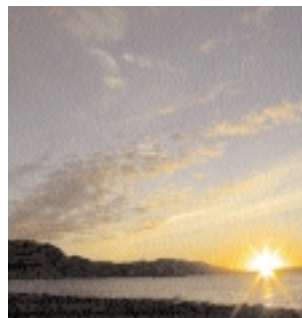
## The regions

- 2 Strath Bran & Glen Carron
- 4 Loch Torridon
- 6 Loch Maree
- 8 Loch Gairloch
- 10 Loch Ewe
- 12 Gruinard Bay & Little Loch Broom



## Things to see & do

- 14 Wildlife
- 15 Historical Extracts
- 16 Activities
- 17 Advice and information



# Strath Bran & Glencarron



The first part of your journey serves as an introduction to the North West Highlands, taking you along the new road through remote Strath Bran beside the meandering River Bran and the railway line to Kyle of Lochalsh. This area is characterised by wild, open moorland where large herds of Red Deer can be seen in winter.

Achnasheen is a remote village formed beside the railway station with a pleasant picnic area for a stop in your journey.

Turning left at Achnasheen follow the A890 along the full length of Glencarron to the shores of Loch Carron. The hills on either side of the glen provide excellent

Applecross Hills from Kishorn.

## Place Names

- **Achnasheen** (ach-na-sheen)  
**Field of the Storm** [*Gaelic*]
- **Carron** (karon)  
**Rough and Rocky River Bed** [*Gaelic*]
- **Strome** (strome)  
**Current of Water** [*Norse*]
- **Applecross** (apel-kros)  
**The Estuary of the River Crosan** [*Gaelic*]
- **Bealach na Bà** (bee-alach-na-ba)  
**The Pass of the Cattle** [*Gaelic*]

## Distances

Garve to  
Achnasheen  
16 miles/26km  
20 minutes

...

Achnasheen to  
Lochcarron  
26 miles/42km  
40 minutes

walking and climbing with stunning views in all directions. Many hill tracks lead through passes to remote adjoining glens and provide less strenuous but just as rewarding walks.

Lochcarron is a long narrow village directly beside the shore of Loch Carron, with views across the loch to the hills in the south. It has enough amenities to make it a good base for more detailed exploration of the surrounding area.

The main road out of Lochcarron quickly gains height, but soon drops down again to the village of Kishorn with views over Loch Kishorn to the Applecross Hills. ■

## Interesting Diversions

**Applecross** 18 miles/29km (45 min) from Lochcarron. Take the old drove road to Applecross over Bealach na Bà and experience the grandeur of the Applecross Hills. This provides an entertaining trip with hairpin bends on the steep climb. The tranquil village of Applecross was one of the earliest seats of Christianity in Scotland and provides a contrast to the rugged mountain scenery. You can return by the same road or continue north along the coast road which takes you to Shieldaig.

**Strome** 4 miles/6.5km (15 min) from Lochcarron. Continue west along the road by the shore from Lochcarron to Stromemore where at one time the ferry ran across the loch. You can visit the ruins of Strome Castle and return by the same route.

## Walks

OS Landranger Series Sheet 25. Here are just a few of the many interesting walks in the area. Most are on good paths or tracks.

- Scardroy from Loch Gowan (cross river at footbridge)
- Glenuaig Lodge (Gleann Fhiodhaig) from Craig
- Loch Coulin from Achnashellach Station, over the Coulin Pass
- Bealach na Lice and Loch an Eion from the bridge beside Coulags



Glen Carron.

## Services

Tourist Information Centre in Lochcarron ☎ 01520 722357

### Achnasheen

- Shops & PO
- Petrol station
- Telephone

### Lochcarron

- Shops & PO
- Petrol stations & garages
- Telephone & toilets
- Hotels & restaurants
- 9 hole golf course, 2 miles outside Lochcarron

### Kishorn

- Hotel
- Snack bar

### Craig

- Hostel

### Applecross

- Shop & PO
- Petrol station
- Hotel
- Campsite & restaurant

## Places of interest

- **Strome Castle** (NTS) ruins of 14th century castle
- **Rasaal Ashwood** protected wood & limestone flora in area beside gorge

## Rail journey

The railway line from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh via Achnasheen has great views. Service details from Lochcarron or Gairloch Information Centres, or Inverness Station.

# Loch Torridon

**S**hieldaig is a tiny village just off the main road. The road from Shieldaig (A896) follows the coast along the south shore of Upper Loch Torridon then drops down to the loch-side at Annat, before reaching a junction at Torridon village.

The main road continues through Glen Torridon with the mountains on either side towering above. You will pass below the towering

ridges of Liathach and then the long ridge of Beinn Eighe will accompany you for the full length of the glen.

Much of this area is a National Nature Reserve.

On the south side of the road the glen opens out with views over Loch Clair into the Coulin Estate.

The road follows the river A' Ghairbhe down to Kinlochewe. ■

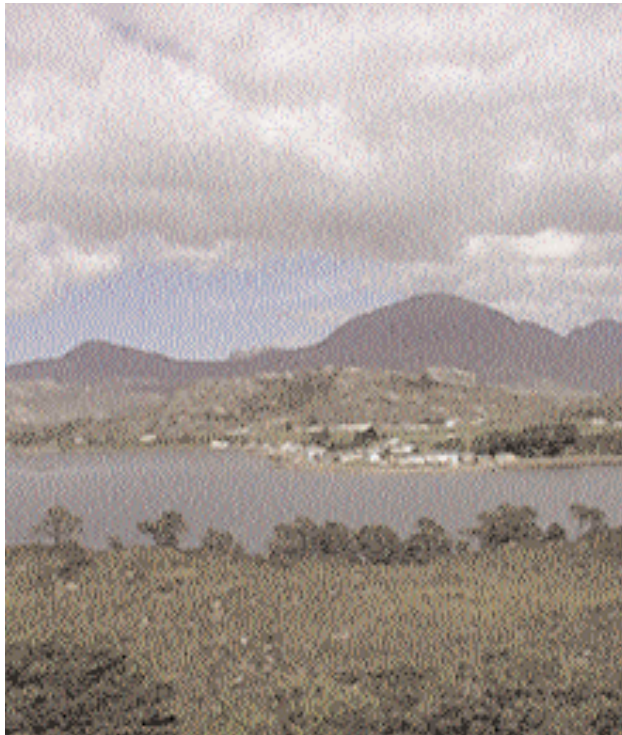
## Interesting Diversions

**Diabaig** 9 miles/15km (20 min) from Torridon village.

The road through Torridon village to Lower Diabaig is a narrow and twisting route well worth the effort, with stunning views all the way and ending up in the charming fishing village of Diabaig, with its sheltered harbour and salmon farm.

## Place Names

- **Shieldaig** (sheel-daiyg) Herring Bay [*Norse*]
- **Balgy** (bal-gi) Bubbly stream [*Gaelic*]
- **Annat** (ahn-aht) Mother Church [*Gaelic*]
- **Torridon** (torid-on) Place of transference – possibly to Loch Maree [*Gaelic*]
- **Fasag** (fahs-ahg) Dwelling [*Gaelic*]
- **Alligin** (ahl-i-gin) Jewel or Pretty Woman [*Gaelic*]
- **Diabaig** (jaiya-bek) Deep bay [*Norse*]



Shieldaig village.

## Distances

Lochcarron to Torridon  
21 miles/34km  
40 minutes

•••

Lochcarron to Torridon via Applecross  
35 miles/56km  
1 hour 20 minutes

•••

Torridon to Kinlochewe  
11 miles/18km  
20 minutes



The towering ridges of Liathach from Glen Torridon.

## Services

### Torridon

- Shop
- Petrol station/shop 2 miles from Torridon
- Telephone
- Hostel (SYHA)

### Shieldaig

- Shops
- Telephone & toilets
- Hotel/bar

### Craig

- Hostel (SYHA) access by footpath only – 4 miles from Diabaig

## Local facts

In 1893 the minister of Shieldaig broke away from the established church along with the minister of Raasay to form the Free Presbyterian Church.

## Walks

OS Landranger Series Sheet 24. Here are just a few of the many interesting walks in the area. Most are on good paths or tracks.

- End of peninsula (Eilean à Chaoil) from Shieldaig
- Coire Mhic Fhearchair from the main car park in Glen Torridon
- Bealach na Lice from Annat (with possible continuation to Glen Carron)
- Coire Mhic Nobuil from the car park on the road to Diabaig. You can return by the same route or continue to the main car park
- Craig Youth Hostel from Diabaig. You can return by the same route or continue to Redpoint (transport may need to be organised)

## Places of interest

- **Shieldaig Island** NTS bird sanctuary, covered in Scots Pine
- **Balgy Falls** series of falls on the River Balgy flowing from Loch Damp
- **Torridon Countryside Centre** (NTS) information on local Highland wildlife
- **Deer Museum** small display and enclosure with Red Deer

# Loch Maree

**K**inlochewe is a compact settlement and provides an excellent base for a large variety of walking and climbing in the area.

The road from Kinlochewe (A832) follows the side of the valley floor where the Kinlochewe River meanders into Loch Maree.

Along the south side of the road, ancient Scots Pines coat the hillside of Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve.

Beinn Eighe was the first National Nature Reserve in Britain and was initially established to protect an important remnant of ancient pinewood at Glas Leitir.

This is one of the rare surviving fragments of "The Great Wood of Caledon", which once clothed most of the Highlands. The reserve has several rare species of plants and animals, and is



Tollie Bay, Loch Maree.

also of geological interest.

Further on, the road follows the shore of Loch Maree with stunning views of Slioch and the other hills of Letterewe Forest.

As the road leaves the trees and the shore to cross Grudie Bridge you can catch a glimpse of the Torridon hills through Glen Grudie. Much of the landscape here

is wild, rugged and untouched by humans, at least, since the trees were first felled by our ancestors.

At Talladale, trees give the area a more gentle feel.

Slattadale has a few forestry roads allowing access down to the lochside. Recent, extensive tree felling has resulted in much better views over Loch Maree. ■

## Local facts

The history of Loch Maree can be traced back to the 7th century when the Irish monk, Maelrubha established a cell on Isle Maree on the loch.

In the early 17th century iron smelting took place at several sites in the area. These sites were selected because of their deposits of bog iron and abundant woodland as fuel for the furnaces.



Loch Maree & Glen Docherty.

## Interesting Diversions

**Glen Docherty car park & viewpoint** 4 miles/6.5km (10 min) from Kinlochewe.

On a good day it is worth travelling the short distance up Glen Docherty and stopping at the car park with excellent views down the full length of Loch Maree almost to the sea. There is a good interpretive panel explaining aspects of geography and wildlife.

## Walks

OS Landranger Series Sheet 19. Here are just a few of the many interesting walks in the area. Most are on good paths or tracks.

- Heights of Kinlochewe, Leckie & Gleann na Muice from Kinlochewe
- Gleann Bianasdail & Lochan Fada from Kinlochewe
- Poolewe along the north shore of Loch Maree from Kinlochewe, via Strathan Buidhe
- Woodland Trail & Mountain Trail from the Glas Leitir car park
- Poolewe from Slattadale (return transport needs to be organised)
- Loch na h-Oidhche & Poca Buidhe from Loch Bad an Scalaig
- Loch Garbhaig from Victoria Falls car park

## Place Names

- **Kinlochewe** (kin-loch-yoo) Head of Loch Ewe [*Gaelic*] Loch Maree may have formerly been known as Loch Ewe in pre-Christian times
- **Grudie** (grou-dee) Gravelly River Bed [*Gaelic*]
- **Slattadale** (slat-a-dale) Even Dale [*Norse*]
- **Talladale** (tahl-a-dale) Ledge Dale [*Norse*]

## Services

### Kinlochewe

- Shops
- Restaurant
- Petrol station
- Car park with toilets & telephone
- Hotel, bar & bunkhouse
- Caravan park
- Basic campsite at Taagan
- Craft shop near village

## Places of interest

- **Beinn Eighe Visitor Centre, Aultroy** (SNH) display of the geography, geology, natural history and its conservation on the nature reserve
- **Beinn Eighe Glas Leitir Trails** (SNH) car park & information point
- **Victoria Falls, Slattadale** Waterfalls with short woodland walk. Queen Victoria visited the area in 1877 and the waterfalls were named after her.
- **Slattadale car park on the shores of Loch Maree** lochside car park and walks

## Distances

Kinlochewe to Gairloch  
21 miles/34km  
40 minutes

# Loch Gairloch

The road from Loch Maree to Loch Gairloch (A832) follows the River Kerry down through a gorge and wooded area, recently devastated by gales. The main harbour at Gairloch is usually a tranquil spot, but can be a bustling scene of activity with fishing boats and pleasure craft using the pier.

Gairloch is a collection of settlements arranged around Loch Gairloch and consists of Lonemore, Smithstown, Mial, Strath, Achtercairn & Charlestown.

Continuing into the main part of Gairloch village you pass the golf course and beach, with the old burial ground adjacent to these.

Gairloch is a popular tourist destination with many activities available locally for families of all ages. ■

## Walks

OS Landranger Series Sheet 19. Here are just a few of the many interesting walks in the area. Most are on good paths or tracks.

- Flowerdale Waterfall from the car park near the pier
- An Ard from the pier or the beach car park
- The Old Road from Flowerdale to Loch Bad an Sgalaig
- Loch a' Bhealaich from the car park beyond Shildaig Lodge

## Interesting Diversions

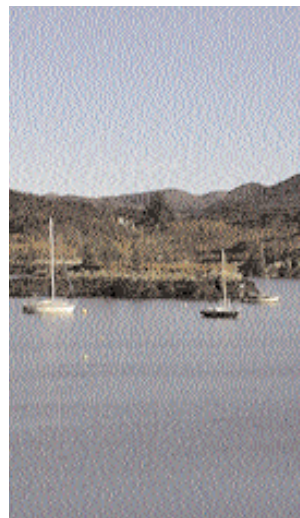
**Rubha Reidh (lighthouse)** 13 miles/21km (20 min) from Gairloch. When you head out west along the lochside from Gairloch the road passes Big Sand beach before turning inland for a few miles then back again to the breathtaking scenery of the open sea. From the cliffs, Skye and the Western Isles fill the complete horizon. The road continues through the scattered settlement of Melvaig, then up a short steep hill to further incredible views along the rugged coastline, all the way to the end of the peninsula at the lighthouse.

**Redpoint** 9 miles/14.5km (15 min) from Gairloch.

The minor road along the south shore of Loch Gairloch starts through a lush, wooded area with glimpses of the loch and surrounding hills. At Badachro there is a beautiful sheltered anchorage filled with small boats. The road reaches the open sea again, with a sandy beach at Opinan, and continues to the road end at the Redpoint car park. Paths take you either to the old fishing station or to a secluded sandy beach.

## Distances

Gairloch to Poolewe  
5 miles/8km  
10 minutes



Badachro, Gairloch.



Above: Flowerdale Bridge, Gairloch. Below: Gairloch.

## Local facts

Gairloch Heritage Museum is housed in converted farm buildings and is operated by a group of local people. The aim of the museum is to explain and interpret the local culture & Gaelic language. The museum has won several awards over the last few years.

## Places of interest

- **Gairloch Beach** safe, sheltered, sandy beach with good parking and toilets
- **Big Sand Beach** safe, sheltered, sandy beach with watersports available
- **Gairloch Heritage Museum** interesting displays of local life through the years
- **Gairloch Pier (Charlestown)** relaxed harbour with fishing boats and pleasure craft. Also has a small marine life centre



## Place Names

- **Achtercairn** (ach-ter-kairn) Field of the cairn [*Gaelic*]
- **Melvaig** (mel-vaig) Bay of the bent grass [*Norse*]
- **Erradale** (er-a-dale) Gravel-beach Dale [*Norse*]
- **Rubha Reidh** (roo-ray) Smooth Point [*Gaelic*]

## Services

Tourist Information Centre in Gairloch ☎ 01445 712130

### Gairloch

- Shops & PO
- Petrol station & garage
- Hotels/bars
- Restaurants & cafes
- Caravan & camping parks with facilities
- Telephones & toilets
- Bank of Scotland
- Police station
- Sport & leisure centre
- Library
- Museum
- 9 hole golf course with clubhouse & good parking
- Watersports centre at Big Sand Beach (access through campsite)
- Slipways at the pier and near Strath Square
- Boat trips from the pier at Charlestown
- Carn Dearg Hostel (SYHA), 2 miles outside Gairloch

### Shildaig

(on the way to Redpoint)

- Hotel

### Badachro

- Inn/bar
- boat hire

# Loch Ewe

The short section of road between Gairloch and Poolewe rises steeply from sea level to a moorland plateau and passes close to Loch Tollaidh before dropping abruptly again to sea level at Poolewe.

Poolewe is pleasantly situated at the head of the sheltered sea loch, Loch Ewe, where the River Ewe

tumbles under the bridge, forming a small bay. In earlier times it was a bustling little port where boats would ply between the mainland and the Outer Isles. Continuing around the bay is the headland, where Inverewe Gardens is situated.

The road gains height over Loch Ewe, showing the

full extent of this sheltered sea loch, with Isle Ewe at its centre. The Cove peninsula stretches along one side of the loch and the scattered communities of Mellon Charles along the other side.

Just off the main road is the village of Aultbea, stretching for almost a mile along the shore to the pier. ■

## Local facts

Founded by Osgood Mackenzie in 1862, on a barren peninsula overlooking the village of Poolewe, Inverewe Garden is recognised as one of the finest gardens in Europe, with a plant collection of international importance. With over 130,000 visitors from all over the world each year, Inverewe has become a mecca for garden lovers who marvel at the rich diversity of plants which thrive in this remote corner of the Highlands. Favoured with the milder climate created by the Gulf Stream, Inverewe Garden, now in the care of the National Trust for Scotland, is well named as the 'Oasis of the North'.



River Ewe at Poolewe.

## Distances

Gairloch to Poolewe  
5 miles/8km  
10 minutes

•••  
Poolewe to Aultbea  
7 miles/11km  
15 minutes

## Place Names

- **Poolewe** (pool-yoo)  
Pool of the River Ewe [Gaelic]
- **Cove** (cove) Place of the Cave [Gaelic]
- **Inverewe** (inver-yoo)  
Mouth of the River Ewe [Gaelic]
- **Aultbea** (awl-t-bay)  
Birch Burn [Gaelic]
- **Mellon Charles**  
(melon-charls) Little Hill of Charles [Gaelic]

## Interesting Diversions

**Cove** 9 miles/15km (15 min) from Poolewe.

The minor road to the end of the peninsula runs along the west shore of Loch Ewe and offers excellent panoramas of almost all the hills to the north west of Ross-shire & Sutherland. Scattered crofting communities stretch along almost the full length of the land beside the sea. At the road end there is some rough parking around the remains of 2nd World War fortifications. Firemore beach is reached by this road.

**Mellon Charles** 4 miles/6.5km (10 min) from Aultbea. The minor road along the east shore of Loch Ewe is also well worth a visit for the views of the hills of south & west Ross-shire and the charming townships along the way. At the road end you can walk to the cliffs beside more old fortifications.

## Local facts

During the Second World War, Aultbea became an important naval base when Loch Ewe was used as a strategic assembly point for convoys before they left for the dangerous route to Scandinavia and Russia.

## Walks

OS Landranger Series Sheet 19. Here are just a few of the many interesting walks in the area. Most are on good paths or tracks.

- Slattadale from car park/viewpoint above Tollie Farm
- Tollie Bay from car park/viewpoint
- Fionn Loch from Poolewe, via Kernsary
- Loch Kernsary from Poolewe, start at Sronduh and return by Riverside
- Loch an Draing & Camas Mor from Midtown (parking difficult)
- Leacon Donna from Mellon Charles road end (parking not easy)

## Services

### Poolewe

- Shop & PO
- Garage (no petrol)
- Telephone & toilets
- Hotels/bars/restaurants
- cafes
- Caravan & campsite
- Indoor swimming pool
- Children's playground

### Inverasdale

- Shop & PO

### Aultbea

- Shops & PO
- Hotels/bars/restaurants
- cafes
- Garage (no petrol)
- Telephone & toilets
- Children's playground

## Places of interest

- **Firemore Beach** (on the road to Cove) safe, sheltered sandy beach
- **Old gun emplacements** (Cove road end) look out for the information board
- **Cave** (2 miles south of Cove) used as a place of worship
- **Inverewe Garden** (NTS) extensive, sheltered garden, with restaurant & shop

# Gruinard Bay & Little Loch Broom



## Distances

Laide to Dundonnell  
14 miles/23km  
20 minutes

...

Dundonnell to  
Braemore junction  
14 miles/23km  
20 minutes

Left: Gruinard beach.  
Below: Gruinard Bay.

## Services

### Laide

- Shop & PO
- Petrol station
- Hotel
- Restaurant
- Caravan & camping park
- Small jetty

### Badluarach

- Shop
- Post boat to Scoraig

### Camusnagaul

- Hostel

### Dundonnell

- Petrol station
- Hotel

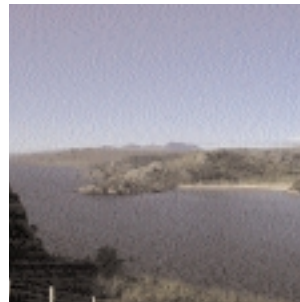
### Badrallach

- Campsite
- Bothy

As you leave Laide and gain some height above the sea cliffs, the view over Gruinard Bay opens out before you with Gruinard Island in the foreground and many of the hills to the far north of Scotland beyond.

The road twists up to the top of Gruinard Hill before dropping down to the sands of Gruinard Bay, where the Inverianvie River meets the sea. Continuing through this rocky terrain, the road crosses the Gruinard River and passes Gruinard House before climbing inland again. The carpark and viewpoint at the top of the hill gives excellent views over Little Loch Broom to the

Scoraig peninsula and the hills beyond. The road follows the lochside past Ardesie Falls to Dundonnell then winds its way up the gorge to the Destitution Road over the wild Fain and past the Fannichs, before dropping once again to Braemore junction. ■



## Interesting Diversions

**Opinan & Mellon Udrigle** 4 miles/6.5km (10 min) from Laide. The minor road from Laide follows the coast for a mile then heads inland to Achgarve, and passes Loch na Beiste (Loch of the Beast) to Mellon Udrigle beach. The road continues another mile to the coast at Opinan.

**Badluarach** 3 miles/5km (5 min) from Badcaul. As the road begins to drop down to Little Loch Broom from the carpark and viewpoint, you can turn left at Badcaul along the minor road to the road end at Badluarach.

**Badrallach** 7 miles/11km (15 min) from Dundonnell. As you leave Dundonnell and head up to the Fain, a minor road turns left and crosses an old bridge to Dundonnell House. It then takes a sharp right hand turn up through a plantation and under the cliffs. At the highest point a path leads over to Loch Broom. The road continues down again almost to Little Loch Broom at Badrallach where a footpath leads to the end of the peninsula at Scoraig.

## Walks

OS Landranger Series Sheet 19. Here are just a few of the many interesting walks in the area. Most are on good paths or tracks.

- Slaggan from track end (just past Achgarve)
- Inverianvie River from car park at Gruinard Beach
- Gruinard River and Loch na Sealga from Gruinard Bridge
- Shenevall and Achneigie from the car park at Corrie Hallie
- Lochivroan from the Loch a' Bhraoin track end (on the Fain)
- Allt na h-Airbhe from the highest point on the road to Badrallach

## Places of interest

- **Old church & Burial Ground, Laide** very early Christian site
- **Caves, Laide** one was used as a place of worship until the end of the last century
- **Mellon Udrigle Beach** safe, sheltered, sandy beach with car park
- **Slaggan Beach** secluded, sandy beach at end of rough track
- **Gruinard Beach** safe, sheltered, sandy beach with car park
- **Scoraig** isolated community at end of a peninsula
- **Ardesie Falls** series of waterfalls near Dundonnell
- **Corrieshalloch Gorge & Falls of Measach (NTS)** footbridge over deep gorge and waterfall, with parking at both sides of gorge

## Place Names

- **Laide** (lay-d) Broad slope [*Gaelic*]. Laide of Udrigil in the old days
- **Mellon Udrigle** (melon-oodrigil) Little Hill of Udrigle [*Gaelic*]
- **Gruinard** (grin-yard) Shallow Firth [*Norse*]
- **Badluarach** (bad-loo-rach) The Clump of the Rushes [*Gaelic*]
- **Dundonnell** (dun-dawn-el) Donald's Fort [*Gaelic*]
- **Badrallach** (bad-rawl-ach) Oak Clump [*Gaelic*]

# Wildlife



## The Scots Pine

The Scots Pine can be found in various locations throughout the world. Loch Maree is one of the few areas in Scotland where small pockets of the pure genetic strain can be found. This particular variety is

## Plants to look out for

- Heather (Ling)
- Cross-leaved Heath
- Bell Heather
- Spotted Orchid
- Sundew
- Butterwort
- Blaeberry
- Bearberry
- Cowberry
- Crowberry
- Cloudberry
- Bog Myrtle
- Bog Asphodel
- Alpine Ladies Mantle

believed to date back 8000 years to the end of the last Ice Age.

## The White -Tailed Eagle

The White-Tailed Eagle or Sea Eagle has recently been re-introduced into the area from northern Norway after an absence of many years.

## Marine Life

The Minch (between the Outer Isles & Mainland) has the most diverse and numerous range of cetaceans to be found anywhere around mainland Britain.

The North Atlantic Drift (a continuation of the Gulf Stream) warms the sea and provides good breeding conditions for marine life. ■

## Birds to look out for

- Ring Ousel
- Red-throated Diver
- Black-throated Diver
- Great Northern Diver
- Guillemot
- Black Guillemot
- Razorbill
- Puffin
- Merganser
- Goosander
- Ptarmigan
- Red Grouse
- Black Grouse
- Crossbill
- Hoody Crow
- Raven
- Golden Eagle
- White-Tailed Eagle
- Buzzard
- Merlin
- Kestrel
- Peregrine Falcon
- Sparrowhawk
- Green Woodpecker
- Spotted Woodpecker

## Mammals to look out for

- Minke Whale
- Killer Whale (Orca)
- Harbour Porpoise
- Common Dolphin
- Common Seal
- Grey Seal
- Otter
- Mountain Hare
- Wild Cat
- Pine Marten
- Red Deer
- Roe Deer

# Historical extracts

## Wester Ross

The name Ross, derived from Rois (meaning a headland) was probably first applied to promontories of land on the east coast and then came to be extended across the whole region to the west.

Although still Ross-shire, this region became known as Ross & Cromarty in 1698 when George MacKenzie, who owned lands throughout the area, succeeded in having his own lands recognised as a separate county of Cromarty.

## Iron smelting

At the beginning of the 17th century some lowland lairds were encouraged by the crown to gain control of the Western Highlands and Islands. In particular, Sir George Hay tried unsuccessfully to control Lewis, but concentrated his efforts in the Loch Maree area around 1607. It is possible that Hay came

across ancient, primitive iron works at Loch Maree and decided to develop the iron smelting industry when he saw the potential of the local bog iron deposits and extensive woodlands.

As local bog iron deposits were used up, imported ores from the south were transported by boat. As a result the iron works at Letterewe were relocated at Poolewe where the iron ore was landed.

The works ceased around 1668, probably as the local timber was used up. Despite the extensive spread of the works, very little trace of these activities can now be seen.

## Lighthouse

Rubha Reidh lighthouse was built by David A. Stevenson, a cousin of Robert Louis Stevenson and opened in 1912. Until the road was completed in 1962, access to the lighthouse was by sea.

## Caves at Laide

One of the caves at Laide was used as a church until the turn of the last century. Old Duncan Matheson who died recently aged 93 was the last baby to be baptised there when his family were driven off Priest Island due to extreme hardship, and landed at Coast, where they lived in their upturned boat until they built a house.

## Railway

A railway from Achnasheen to Aultbea, via Loch Maree and Poolewe was proposed in the late 1880's, but came to nothing. A copy of the bill in parliament supporting the railway can be seen in Gairloch Museum.

## Destitution Road

The Destitution Road over the Fain between Dundonnell and Braemore junction, was built after the 1851 potato famine to provide employment and relieve suffering.

## Coastal settlements

Many lairds created coastal settlements for their tenants, who were dispossessed from the straths & glens. So villages such as Strathcarron were populated by people who were encouraged to live off fishing instead of farming.

## Canonball

A canonball recently found near Flowerdale House (Gairloch), is thought to have been fired from a man-of-war in 1746 in its pursuit of Prince Charles Edward, who was on the run after the battle of Culloden. ■

# Activities

## Gairloch

- Marine life boat trips – Gairloch pier
- Quad bike trail – Flowerdale
- Sport & Leisure Centre – badminton, table tennis, short tennis, fitness room, indoor climbing wall
- Heritage Museum
- Golf

## Lochcarron

- Golf
- Guided walking holidays

## Poolewe

- Guided walks in and around Inverewe Garden, (NTS Ranger Service)
- Indoor swimming pool

## Rua Reidh Lighthouse

- Guided walks & rock climbing



## Walking

Walking is by far the most popular activity in Wester Ross with a large variety of routes throughout the area.

### Long Distance Walk – Wester Ross Route

This is a circular walk on roads and good paths, with accommodation available at some point on each stage (best to book in advance in height of season).

- 1: Gairloch to Redpoint
- 2: Redpoint to Diabaig
- 3: Diabaig to Torridon
- 4: Torridon to Coulags (Strath Carron)
- 5: Coulags to Kinlochewe (via Coulin)
- 6: Kinlochewe to Poolewe
- 7: Poolewe to Rubha Reidh
- 8: Rubha Reidh to Gairloch

- **Rambling**
- **Hillwalking**
- **Rock Climbing**
- **Cycling & Mountain Biking**
- **Sailing**
- **Angling – sea & fresh water**