



NATURE ON OUR DOORSTEP

Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire



UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

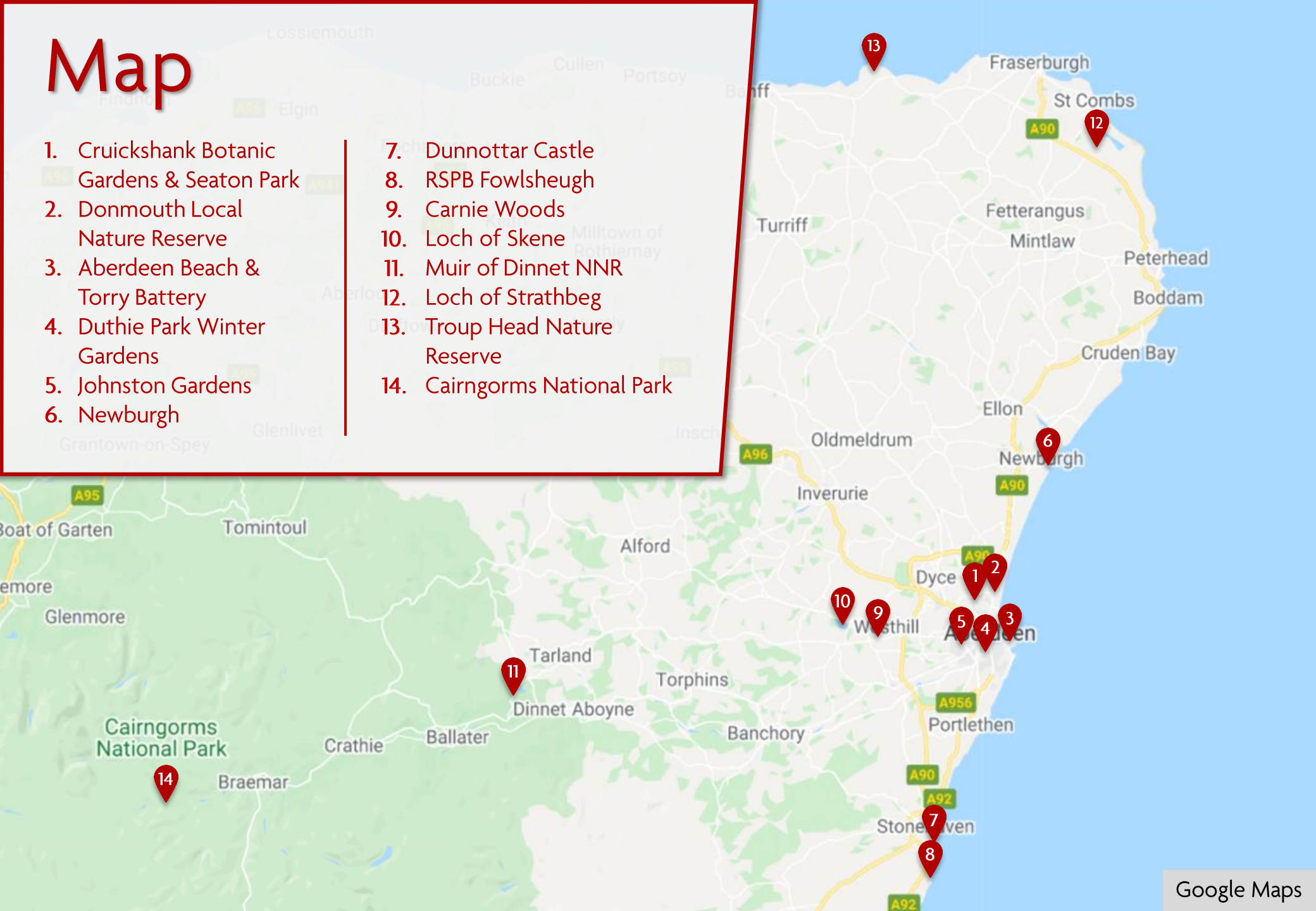


Did you know that there is a great range of wildlife in and around Aberdeen just waiting to be discovered? We have produced this handy guide to showcase what the local area has to offer and help you find and experience it. From picturesque parks and rivers, to beaches and mountains, we've got it all. Plus, getting out and about helps keep you active and fights boredom and stress. That's affa fine!!

Enjoy!

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Cruickshank Botanic Gardens



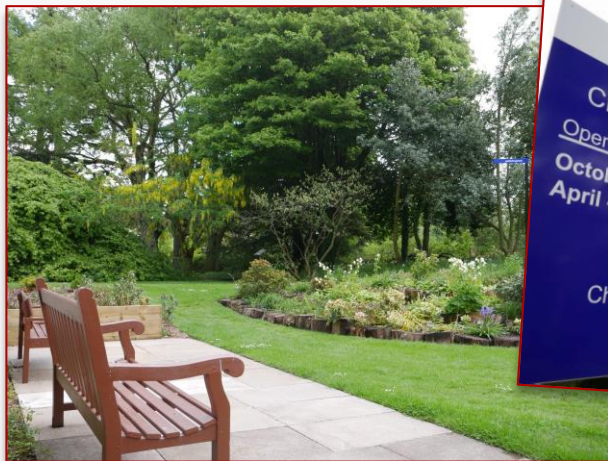
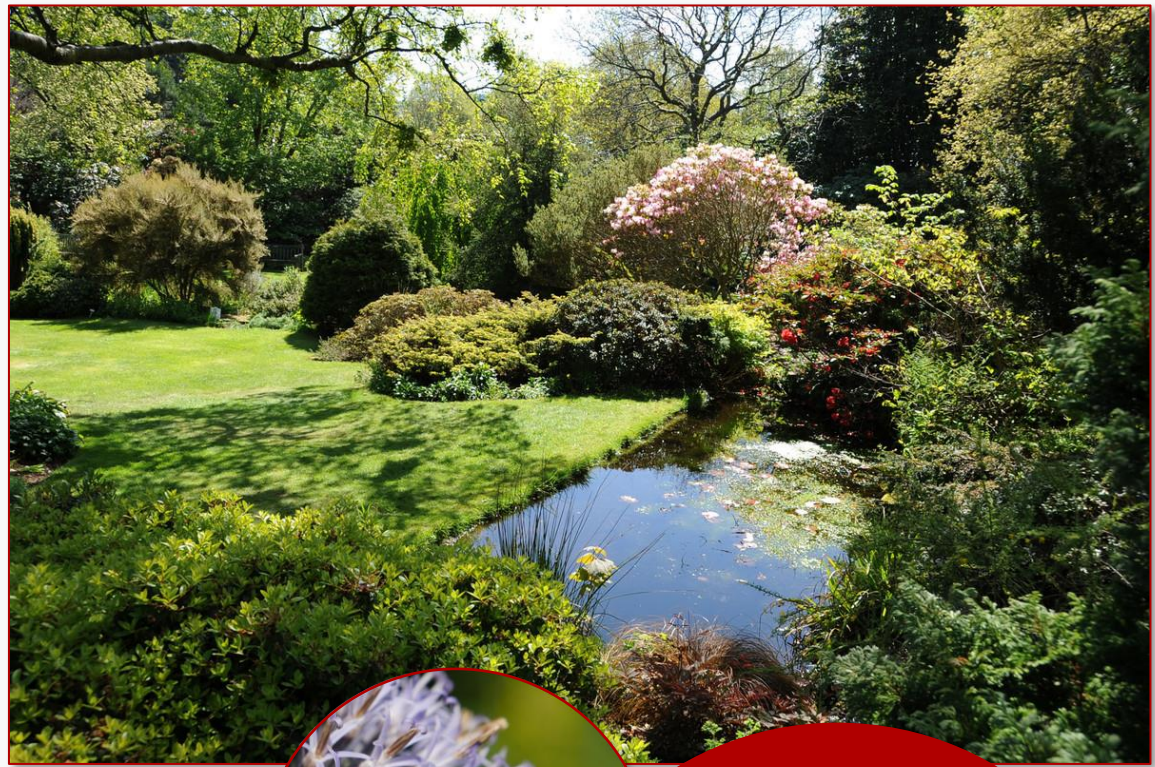
University of Aberdeen

Founded in 1898, this 11 acre garden offers a perfect array of plants, intriguing insects and bountiful birds. Sun traps for a snooze, winding paths for the 'meanderthal' and benches for a read or a chat.

It features shrub borders, a rock and water garden, sunken garden, rose garden, herbaceous border, an arboretum and houses a nationally important collection of over 2,500 labelled plants!

See www.abdn.ac.uk/botanic-garden/ to learn more.

Tip: click
on location names
to access online
maps!



The best bit about this option is that it's right on campus! The perfect spot for lunch or a mindful stroll. Have you explored every corner of this magical garden?

Seaton Park & River Don

Next door to Hillhead Student Village and a 10 minute walk up the Chanonry from campus.

Gardens full of flowers nestle against the River Don, where you can spot otters and kingfishers. Around here you can spot birds, red squirrels and even deer if you are very lucky (and up early).

[Aberdeen's famous tree seal](#) can also be seen a little further up river.



On the north side of the Don you can also find Kettocks Mill wildflower meadow – the finest example of a wildflower meadow in the city.

Visit in June/July to see it in full flower and full of insects; bats hunt over the meadow in the evenings.



Donmouth Local Nature Reserve



A 15 minute walk along the river path from Hillhead Student Village or a 20 minute walk from campus (left along St Machar Drive, left up King Street).

There are bird hides along the south bank of the Don, east of The Bridge of Don. The Bridges of Don and Balgownie are also good viewpoints for otters, herons, grey and harbour seals while the latter bridge is a historical treat worth visiting in its own right.

Spotting birds such as owls, buzzards, kestrels, kingfishers, seabirds and waterfowl. Look out for interesting estuarine vegetation such as marram grass and crow garlic.

Aberdeen Beach & Torry Battery

The beach is a 25 minute walk from campus while also within walking distance of the city centre. Torry Battery can be reached with the number 20 bus from Elphinstone Road or the number 12 bus from the city centre.



Dolphins can be spotted year round from Aberdeen but during spring and summer they are almost permanently resident at the mouth of the River Dee to the south of the city.

They might not always be there but spend some time walking up and down the beach or up around the Torry Battery and you may catch sight of an individual or pod.

The most common place to spot them is just off the tip of the North Pier directly opposite the car park at the Battery. This is where RSPB run Dolphin Watch and where the Greyhope Bay project run by one of our former MSc and PhD students, Dr Fiona McIntyre, will soon be set up.

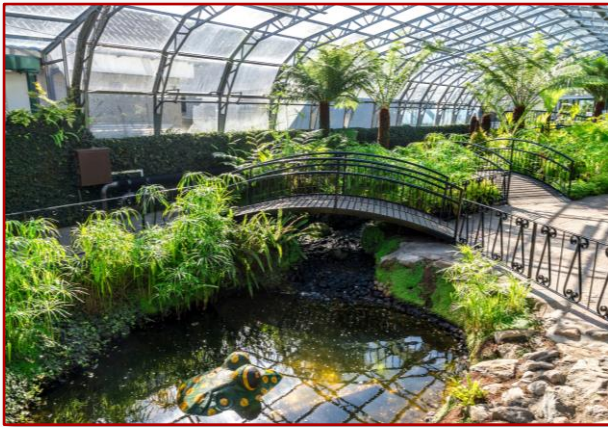


Bring a friend to increase the chances someone spots one and if you have them bring binoculars for a closer look. Take pictures too and, if they are really good, send them to us (@uoabiosci)!



Duthie Park Winter Gardens

Alongside Duthie Park's large landscaped gardens with water features there are the David Welch Winter Gardens, superb themed greenhouses (Corridor of Perfumes, Fern House) full of amazing plants, great for getting out when the weather isn't great.



Take buses 17 or 18 from Union Street, or it is a 25 minute walk from the train station.



Johnston Gardens



Small but perfectly formed: fabulous ornate gardens with winding paths, cute bridges and water features. There is even a pond where secretive moorhens may nest from March to June.

Buses 15 and 11/X17 stop at Viewfield Crescent or Road respectively, both are close to the gardens.



Newburgh

Newburgh's seal beach is famous for its huge population of resident grey seals as well as smaller numbers of common seals.



An ideal location for spotting grey and common seals!



Buses number 50 and X63 stop in Newburgh; alight by the Newburgh Inn to walk down Beach Road for the seals, while alight at Waterside Car Park (just North of Newburgh) for the nature reserve.



Meanwhile, the beach and further north at the Ythan Estuary and Forvie National Nature Reserve are excellent places to spot many species of wading bird and host a large number of breeding eider ducks in the spring.



Dunnottar Castle



Dunnottar Castle is striking in its own right but the surrounding cliffs host an array of wildlife. Fulmars nest on the cliffs in spring and summer, while out to sea spot kittiwakes, guillemots, bottlenose dolphins, harbour porpoises, and seals. Around the shingle beaches below the cliffs look out for specialist coastal plants including thrift, kidney vetch and scurvy grass.

Reach Stonehaven by train or the 7 or X7 bus from Aberdeen and walk along the cliff path towards Dunottar Castle.



RSPB Fowlsheugh

RSPB Fowlsheugh hosts more than 130,000 breeding seabirds during the spring and summer months, including fulmars, guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes and even some puffins! Get lucky and dolphins and seals can be spotted out to sea too.

Take the X7 bus south of Stonehaven, alight at Crawton Road and it is a 1 km walk to the reserve.



Carnie Woods

While there are many great forests in Aberdeenshire, Carnie Woods offer an excellent opportunity for seeing red squirrels. There is also a mixture of habitats including conifer and mixed woods, a rowan orchard, heathland, grassland, and fen, giving a high diversity of plants.



The X17 bus from the city centre passes through Elrick, alight just past the petrol station and walk down Peregrine Road for the entrance to the woods.

Loch of Skene



The Loch of Skene hosts a multitude of waterfowl including greylag geese, goldeneye ducks and pink footed geese.

In autumn, thousands of birds can fly in at dusk to roost and then leave at dawn – quite a sight!

Bus 218 stops in Skene, alight beyond Kirkton of Skene for the Loch.

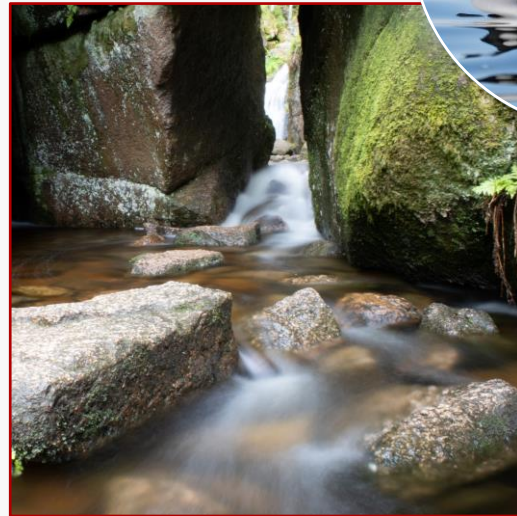
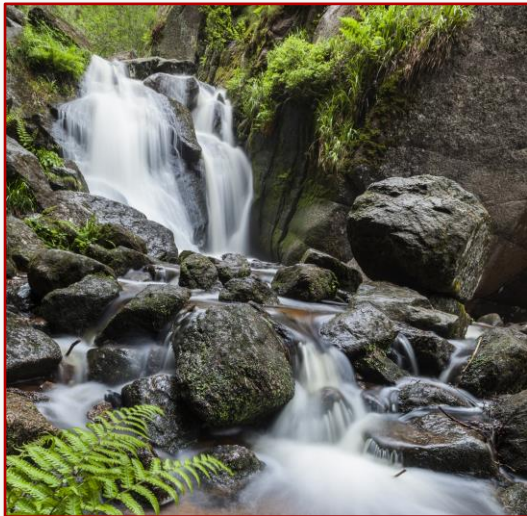
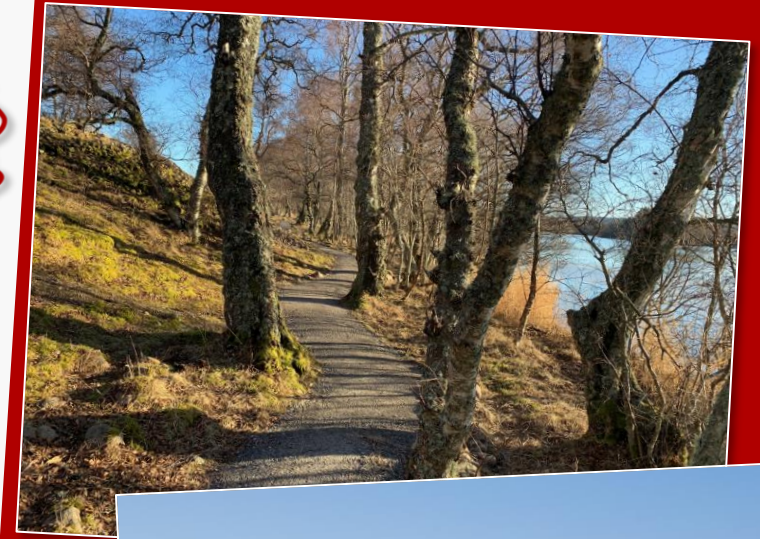
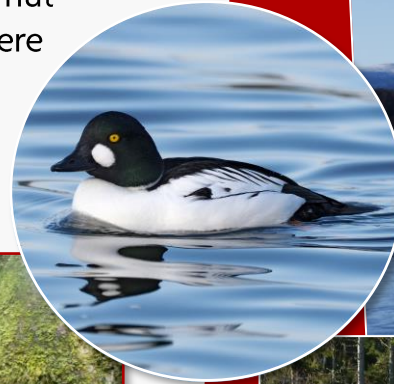


Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve



At the eastern edge of the Cairngorms National Park, we've picked out the Loch of Kincord and the Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve as a place where you can find flora and fauna in a beautiful setting, with 5,000 years of history. You can easily find geese, swans, rabbits and a high diversity of fungi, while you might occasionally find adders, otters, osprey and roe deer. There are also Iron age hut circles, a Pictish cross and islands where an Iron age 'Crannog' and medieval tower once stood.

Bus number 201 stops in Dinnet.



Burn O'Vat

Loch of Strathbeg



A shallow, freshwater loch with surrounding wetland. Find Scotland's only cranes as well as pink-footed geese and a variety of wetland wildlife.

Take bus X63 to Peterhead, then bus 69 or 69B to Crimond village and walk from there.



Troup Head Nature Reserve

RSPB Troup Head features high cliffs that host Scotland's largest (and one of only two) mainland gannet colonies (a 'gannetry') from April to September. There are also thousands of other seabirds here, including puffins, while minke whale and other cetaceans can be spotted offshore.

RSPB Troup Head is not accessible by public transport at this time.

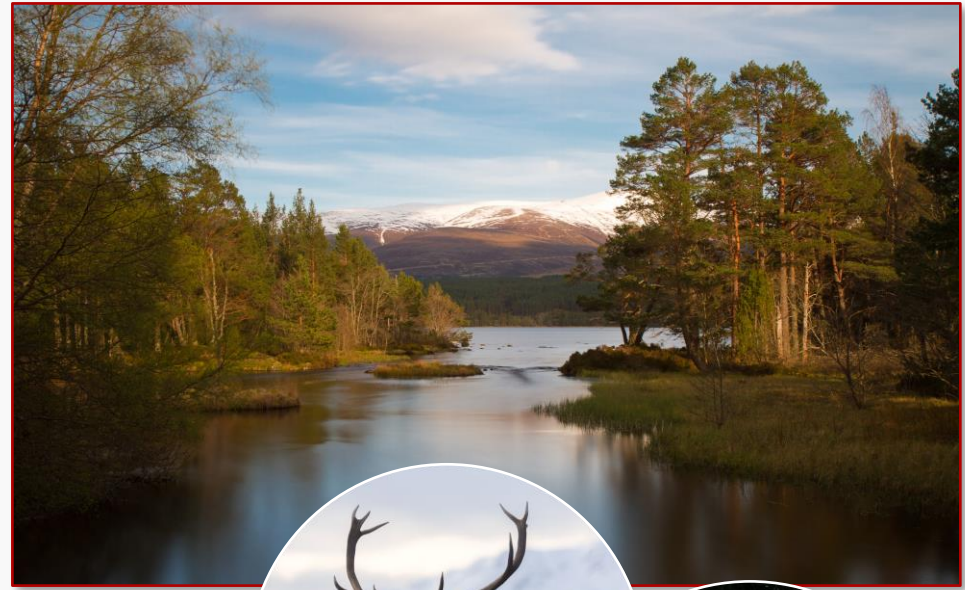


Cairngorms National Park

Last, but by no means least, we have the Cairngorms National Park. One of the most beautiful areas of the UK, it is the largest and most northern National Park and the one with the highest range of mountains. There are diverse habitats from woods and forests to wetlands, rivers, moorland and the uplands of the Cairngorm plateau.

In the Cairngorms you can find mammals such as red squirrels, pine martens, red deer, (domesticated) caribou and birds such as capercaillie, golden and white-tailed eagles, ptarmigan and many more. With fewer settlements the area also has particularly dark skies, great for star gazing. The Cairngorms is simply unmissable, do not spend time in Aberdeen without checking this wild jewel out.

The bus 201 journeys from Aberdeen city centre through Aboyne and Ballater before terminating in Braemar from where you can start your adventure.



More suggestions...

- ▶ [The Aberdeen Green Space Network](#)
- ▶ [Aberdeen City Local Nature Conservation Sites](#)
- ▶ [Forests Around Aberdeen](#)
- ▶ [Aberdeenshire's Coastal Trail](#)



For up to date information on bus routes, timetables and help planning your journey visit [Traveline Scotland's Journey Planner](#)



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