



Loch Garten in the evening

Before you go

A loop of 2.7 km (1.7 miles); about 50 minutes at a gentle pace. The path is mainly wide and firm, with some loose stones and uneven bits and short slopes all the way round, the steepest 22% for about 20 metres by Loch Mallachie. There are benches along the way.

Start at the RSPB's Loch Mallachie car park, about a dozen spaces, on the road from Boat of Garten, 0.8 km before the Nature Centre: follow the RSPB Loch Garten signs from Aviemore or Grantown-on-Spey. Stagecoach's 37 stops at Osprey Centre Road End, about 1.7 km away by the forest paths.



The walk online, with its photographs and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/the-two-lochs-trail-at-loch-garten

It starts at the RSPB's Loch Mallachie car park, NH 971 184.

In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for the police.

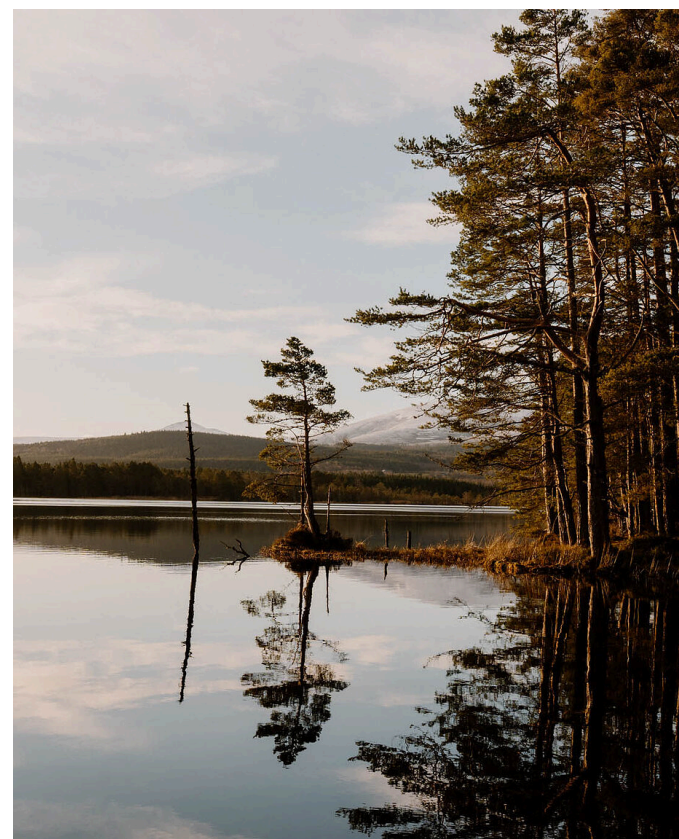
There are no toilets at the car park or on the trail; the nearest are at the Nature Centre, open from 1 April to 31 October. Dogs must be on a lead from 1 April to 31 August, when capercaillie and other birds nest on the ground.

After the walk

In spring and summer the Nature Centre, 0.8 km east along the Big Pines Trail, shows the ospreys on its nest cameras. For lunch, Nethy House in Nethy Bridge does home baking and lunches from 11.30am, every day but Wednesday. For dinner, Andersons in Boat of Garten opens Wednesday to Sunday evenings.

A WALK ROUND

Loch Garten



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

The Two Lochs Trail through the Abernethy Pines

Loch Garten lies in the old Caledonian pinewood of the RSPB's Abernethy reserve, between Boat of Garten and Nethy Bridge. The Two Lochs Trail is a short loop through it, past a viewpoint over Loch Garten and through the pines and bog woodland to a smaller loch, Loch Mallachie, and back.

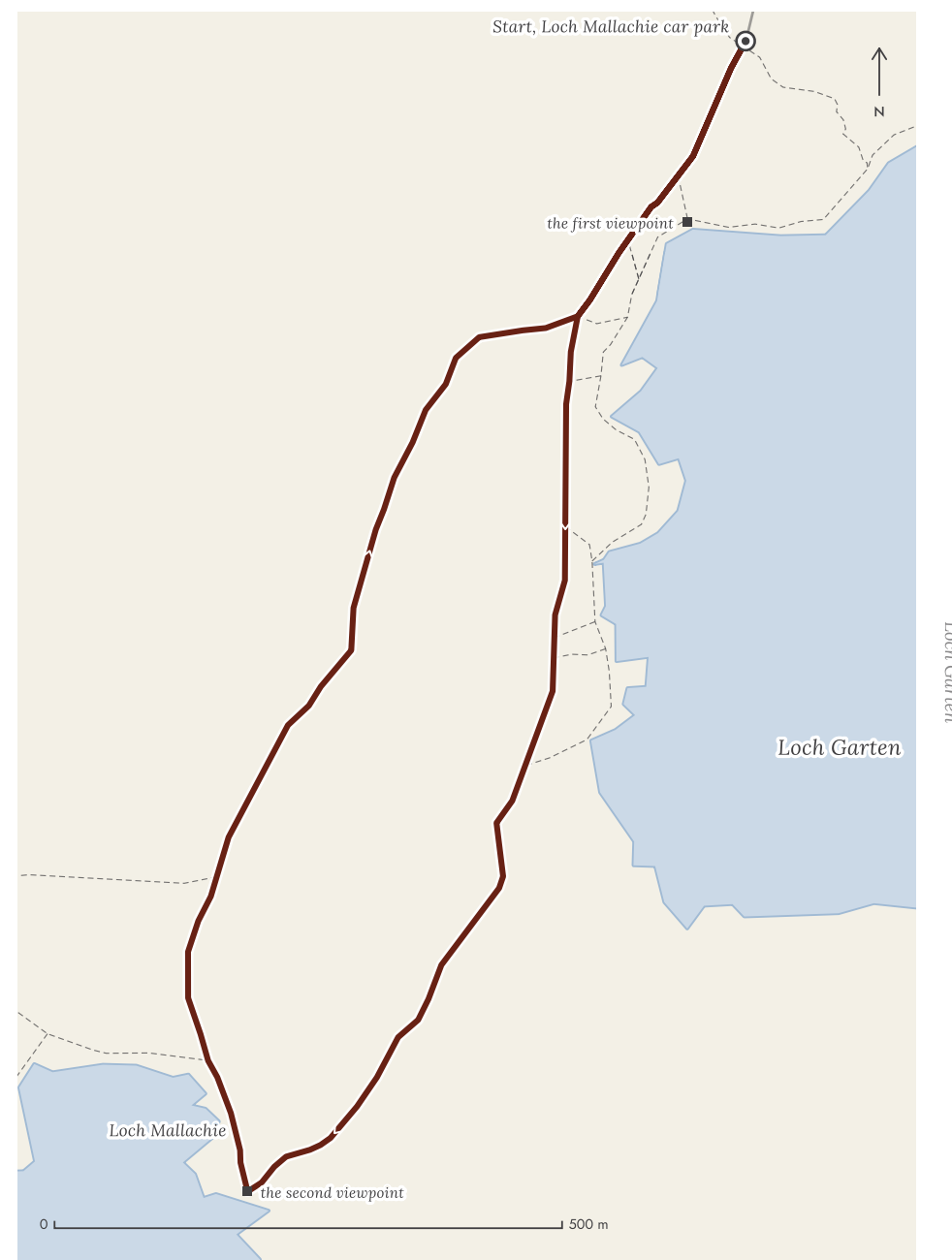
words // Hidden Scotland photography // Jack Cairney

The trail starts at the RSPB's Loch Mallachie car park, a small gravel car park by the road, 0.8 km west of the Loch Garten Nature Centre. After a couple of hundred metres a short spur drops to two benches at the water's edge: the first viewpoint, out over Loch Garten, where goldeneye and greylag geese may be on the water. In autumn and winter wild greylag and pink-footed geese arrive on the loch.

Past the fork where the loop begins, the path keeps a little back from the shore, with short paths down to the peaty brown water. South of the loch it

crosses bog woodland, where the pines grow stunted but old. At the far end, two benches look over Loch Mallachie, the second viewpoint. Goldeneye nest in boxes here, and in spring the drakes display on the water.

The way back runs up the far side of the loop through tall Scots pines. Fallen and standing dead trees are left where they are, for the insects and birds that feed, shelter and nest in them. Listen for crossbills working the pine cones, and look out for crested tits and red squirrels, before the last stretch back to the car park the way you came.



The Two Lochs Trail, a loop from the Loch Mallachie car park: about 1.7 miles, or 2.7 km.

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