

NATURE'S PARADISE

CONNECT WITH NATURE & WILDLIFE



Argyll is lucky to play host to both species of British Eagle.



Otters can often be spotted in Argyll with a bit of patience.

NATURE'S PARADISE

Nature has played a new part in our life this year. As the day-to-day pace of life slowed down during lockdown, many of us took notice of the natural beauty surrounding us, just that little bit more – in our gardens, on our daily walks, through our friends and family sharing pictures and the news sharing stories of how nature was thriving.

Argyll and the Isles is known as nature's paradise. It's taken pride in this accolade for quite some time, and it's not going anywhere. Right here, on the doorstep of central Scotland, communities and visitors can enrich their own well-being through the delights of nature's paradise, which changes by the season and our ever-changing weather!

From daily escapes to longer immersive stays, explore your love of nature, on land and at sea, on the mainland or by island hopping. From white tailed eagles and basking sharks to beavers and barnacle geese, you can see it all if you just go that extra mile and wait that extra moment to seek it out.

OUR NATURE RESERVES & WILDLIFE

A haven for wildlife, Argyll and The Isles has an intimate mixture of land and sea, forest and farmland with huge contrasts in the scale and character of its many landscapes. With such a contrast, this area may hold a richer biodiversity than any comparable area in Scotland!

Home to amazing creatures, large and small

- Golden and white tailed eagles
- Minke whales
- Basking sharks
- Dolphins
- Red deer
- Red squirrels
- Otters
- Seals
- Pine martens
- Choughs
- Corncrakes
- Rare butterflies, moths and dragonflies

Where to look

- Book from a huge range of land and sea wildlife tours
- Hebridean Whale Trail
- 6 National Nature Reserves
- 4 RSPB Reserves
- 4 Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserves
- Range of trails, hides and viewing platforms
- Everywhere and anywhere!

There are many wildlife operators in Argyll and the Isles, especially on Mull and also around Oban and south to Knapdale, on Cowal and on Bute. To find out more and for great tips on spotting wildlife throughout the year visit www.wild-scotland.org.uk

"Argyll offers a wealth of opportunities for the public to enjoy our great outdoors and with numbers of visitors increasing over the holiday period this can come with some very practical challenges, particularly at popular locations. We are urging members of the public to enjoy the great outdoors safely and responsibly by following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This includes planning ahead and avoiding busy places, being kind to nature and each other and respectful of local communities. If you arrive somewhere that looks too busy, try and find somewhere quieter – as you'll see from this publication there are plenty of alternatives available.

Visitors can check ahead on our website in advance, to find out which of our national nature reserves are likely to be less busy and avoid the crowds: www.nature.scot/enjoying-outdoors/scotlands-national-nature-reserves."



SPOT SCOTLAND'S BIG FIVE SPECIES

Red Squirrels can be spotted in wooded areas on the mainland with great chances of spotting them around Dunollie and Glen Nant near Oban, and within the Argyll Forest Park on Cowal.

Pine martens and bats are often spotted in similar places.

Red Deer thrive across the mainland here, but to improve your chances of a sighting take a trip to Mull or Islay. Or better still travel to Jura where there are more than 5000 deer, meaning 250 deer to very person living on the island. Going the extra mile really does reward you!

Harbour Seals can be spotted in coastal waters all around Argyll, often resting on rocks close to the shoreline. But why not up your chances of seeing these interesting sea creatures by getting out in to the water – you may also spot dolphins, porpoises, minke whales or even basking sharks!

Otters are spotted regularly around the coastlines here. Look for the v-shaped ripples extending away from its nose and the flick of its tapering tail as it dives to distinguish it from a small seal. Otters are often spotted at Taynish.

Golden Eagles are truly majestic creatures and you'll know when you see one. Often spotted around the Isles of Mull, Islay and Jura, around Ben Cruachan and on the Kintyre peninsula. Golden Eagles are much larger than the common buzzard with a wing span of 1.8 – 2.3 metres! And we all know very well now what 2m is!

ALSO IN ARGYLL...

White Tailed Eagles are also common in Argyll and especially on Mull, where they were reintroduced in 1985. Their wingspan can be up to 2.5m and they are much heavier birds with a white tail and square edged wings, whilst golden eagles have a more streamline physique with wings tapering to long feathers.

Beavers are also at home in Argyll - due to Scottish Beaver Trial, and today there is a chance you might spot one at dawn or dusk in Knapdale Forest.

DID YOU KNOW?

42 of the 109 Sites of Special Scientific Interest within Argyll & the Isles have been designated, at least in part, for their woodland (35 for their Atlantic oakwoods). The Argyll area has around 33,100ha of ancient and long established woodland, comprising around 5% of our total land area and including around 17,400ha (3% of land area) which may be semi-natural in origin.



The Red Deer are the largest UK deer.



Keep an eye out for Red Squirrels, a protected species.



Harbour seals can be spotted along the shores of Argyll.



Knapdale Forest

DID YOU KNOW?

Argyll & the Isles is a major source of timber, mainly softwoods, for use in various products including house building, paper making as well as increasingly being a source of renewable energy as wood fuel. Around 12% of Scotland's timber supply is sourced from Argyll's forests. Argyll can be described as the birthplace of the modern day forestry movement with the Forestry Commission's first training school being based at Benmore in Cowal, and experimental plantations taking place on the slopes above the Holy Loch.

OUR WONDROUS WOODLANDS

Wandering has never felt so good as when you roam Argyll's amazing woodlands. Home to some of Europe's most significant ancient oakwoods, one of the finest examples is at Taynish near Tayvallich. Having survived here for over 7000 years, this 'temperate rainforest' is home to a wealth of wildlife. Mosses, lichens and ferns thrive in the very clear air and the mild humid climate of the west coast.

Where to lose yourself in the woodlands

Taynish is a must for peace and tranquillity. The peaceful oak woodlands of Taynish are interspersed with grassland, heath, saltmarsh and shoreline to give a truly amazing variety of wildlife. Admire the spring-time carpet of wildflowers or search out evidence left by a secretive otter as it slips through the wood. A June day on the woodland edge gives you a good chance of seeing the delicate dance of the rare marsh fritillary or the metallic flash of a passing dragonfly.

Glen Nant is to the east of Oban near Loch Awe and is also a National Nature Reserve managed by Forestry Land Scotland. Again the mild, moist climate of the glen and the oak, birch and ash trees that grow there have created a haven for a rich variety of plants, insects, birds and mammals. The wood has a long history of management including a period when the trees were coppiced to produce bark for tanning leather and charcoal for fuelling the iron furnace at Bonawe. If you are in search of natural beauty Glen Nant is a must. Footpaths, interpretation and educational activities help people to enjoy and find out about the richness of the area's natural and cultural heritage.

Glasdrum Woods National Nature Reserve

to the north of Oban on the banks of Loch Creran are truly wild and wonderful. Ash and oak dominate the woodland at Glasdrum, their trunks softened by a thick coat of mosses and lichens which drip water in the moist air. But it's the space around these forest giants that makes this place special. Where sunlight can penetrate between the trees, smaller flowering plants take hold and provide a rich larder for butterflies like the rare chequered skipper. Otters are known to slip cautiously between the woodland and the clear waters of Loch Creran.

Although not a typical woodland, Crinan's Great Moss, the **Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve**, is a remarkable remnant of one of our most ancient landscapes. It began to form over 5000 years ago and once covered a vast area. One of the last raised bogs left in Britain today, it is a bogland showpiece – a wild landscape of hummocks, hollows and pools, interspersed with lonely groups of trees and rich in spectacular wildlife. Best viewed from above, take the time to climb Dunadd or Bellanoch viewpoint.

OUR FABULOUS FORESTS

If you are keen to try forest-bathing, this is the place to do it. Immerse yourself in the captivating height of old trees and rich dense undergrowth. Forests and woodland cover over 30% of the land area of Argyll & the Isles, and as such, we have the highest proportional level of forest cover compared to other areas of Scotland.

A natural place to play and relax

Argyll Forest Park on the Cowal peninsula was the UK's first ever Forest Park designated in 1935, and arguably the best.

Most of the forests in Argyll have been managed for recreation with many paths and biking trails, picnic spots, view points and car parks. These are spread throughout the area and offer facilities suited to all abilities. There are many way marked trails with guidance as to the terrain and length of walk, but also a vast network of forest tracks to be explored on foot, by bike or on horseback.

Our Heritage Trees

Never forget to look up. Argyll & The Isles is home to some exceptional, extraordinary, uncommon and unexpected trees, which are listed in the heritage trees of Scotland, 2006. At Ardkinglas, Loch Fyne the mightiest tree in Europe thrives. The tallest tree in the UK is hotly contested and although Ardkinglas made this claim 5 years ago – sadly our specimen has been outgrown.

The stunning redwood avenue at Benmore Botanic Garden is nearly 300 metres long, 50 metres high and could live for 3,500 years. The Lime Avenue at Inveraray Castle is believed to be the oldest in Scotland dating back to 1650 and with many of the original trees surviving to this day in remarkably good health. An ancient yew perched on a rocky outcrop above Loch Lomond is believed to have sheltered,

Robert the Bruce, King of Scots and his troops, and although the Wishing Tree of Argyll recently died, the remains of this lone wind blasted hawthorn is encrusted with coins pressed into its soft bark by generations of superstitious travellers, each coin representing a wish.

OUR GLORIOUS GARDENS

The heady mix of rocky, indented coastlines shaped by the sea and warm, mild currents of the Gulf Stream, creates an interesting climate and growing conditions for a wide range of plants. Mix with naturally acidic soil and you have the perfect growing conditions for plant life from all over the world.

There was a huge influx of plant material into Argyll in the 19th and 20th centuries with conifers from North America, rhododendrons and magnolias from the Himalayas, myrtles and eucalyptus from Australasia and crinodendrons and embotriums from Chile.

Step into one of our many cared-for gardens and immerse yourself in nature's prettiest greenery and array of colours, combined with utter peace and tranquillity.

The Glorious Gardens of Argyll & Bute showcase excellence in both horticulture and our human love of nature.



Our most loved gardens

- Achamore Gardens, Isle of Gigha
- An Cala, Isle of Seil
- Angus Garden, Barguilean, Taynuilt
- Ardchattan Priory Garden, by Oban
- Ardenraig Garden, Isle of Bute
- Ardkinglas Woodland Garden
- Ardmaddy Castle Garden, by Oban
- Ardtornish Garden, Morvern, by Argyll
- Ardruaine Garden, by Oban
- Ascog Hall Fernery and Garden, Isle of Bute
- Benmore Botanic Garden, Dunoon
- Crarae Garden, Inveraray
- Geilston Garden, Dumbarton
- Glenarn Rhu, Helensburgh
- Inveraray Castle Garden, Inveraray
- Iona Hotels Gardens, Isle of Iona
- Kinlochlaich House Garden, Appin
- Linn Botanic Gardens, Cove by Helensburgh
- Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute

www.gardensofargyll.co.uk

WHAT MAKES ARGYLL NATURE'S PARADISE?



Over 3700km of coastline



Numerous sea lochs penetrating the mainland – some up to 50km long



All settlements are within 10km of freshwater lochs or the sea



Scotland's longest freshwater loch – Loch Awe



Rocky coast and impressive cliffs



Unlimited shingle and sandy beaches



More land dedicated to forestry than other areas of Scotland



Home to some of Europe's oldest oakwoods



Gulf Stream weather and mild sea climates



Very fresh clean air



Rich marine ecosystem with strong Atlantic sea currents



Significant remnants of the temperate rain forest

Go wild and plan your adventure
at wildaboutargyll.co.uk

STAY SOCIAL WITH US

@WildAboutArgyll

#WildAboutArgyll #ScotlandsAdventureCoast

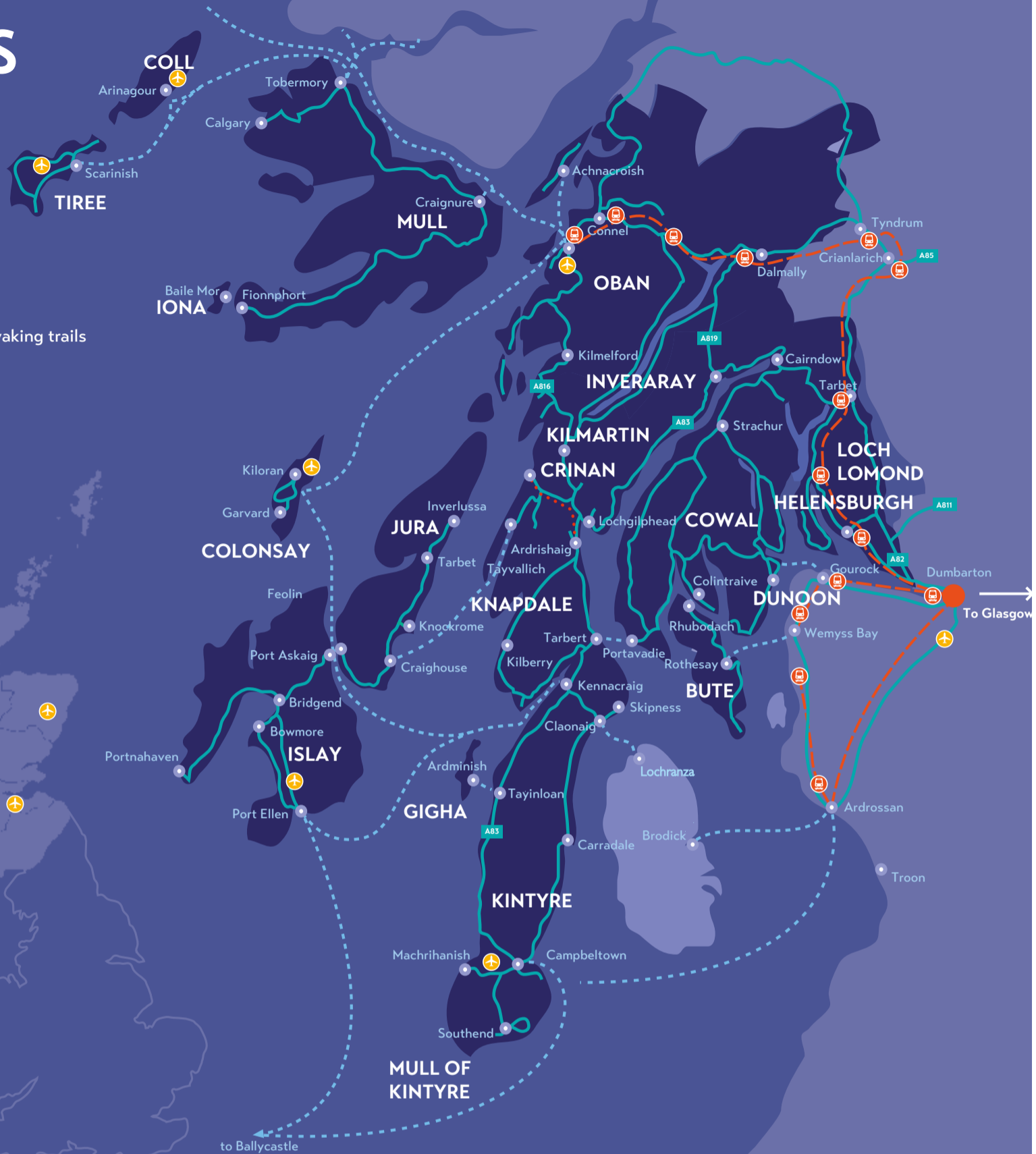
ARGYLL & THE ISLES

SCOTLAND'S ADVENTURE COAST


-  **3723km** of coastline
-  **1555km** of hiking, biking & kayaking trails
-  **61** medieval castles
-  **24** gin and whisky distilleries
-  **23** inhabited islands
-  **4** national nature reserves

-  Main Roads
-  Vehicle Ferry Routes
-  Passenger Ferry Routes
-  Canal
-  Airports
-  Train Stations


Transport links are changing regularly as lockdown lifts. Please always check before travelling and book ahead where possible.
wildaboutargyll.co.uk/travel




GET ACTIVE WITH YOUR TRAVEL

 Pack up the car and bring all your gear with you, ready to explore by land or sea with a ferry crossing. Plan your route and prepare your car for the weather.

 Take advantage of great bus services with West Coast Motors from Glasgow and the central belt, with connections throughout Argyll and the Isles with all other modes of transport. Sit back and enjoy the views or hop on and off as you please. Plan ahead at westcoastmotors.co.uk

 With a direct rail link from Glasgow to Oban, The Gateway to the Isles, you can make your journey in good time, and less stress. And with the launch later this year of cycle carriages from Scotrail, you can be as active as you like once you arrive. Plan ahead with scotrail.co.uk and check out the Rail and Sail tickets with CalMac Ferries too.

 If you are moving in and around areas within Argyll and the Isles, make the most of the great outdoors in all its

beauty, by exploring on foot. There are an abundance of walk trails to discover, inland or via the coastline. To get those legs moving check out wildaboutargyll.co.uk

 Argyll and the Isles has as many waterways as it does road and rail links. Ports and harbours are spread throughout the west coast, our islands and peninsulas to give you access to amazing sailing routes.

Or start by land at any of the many ferry ports and start your journey with a unique CalMac experience. For sailing routes visit sailscotland.co.uk and plan with ferry timetables at calmac.co.uk

 Cycling really is one of the best ways to actively travel throughout Argyll and the Isles. With carefully designed cycle routes soaking up the best landscapes and places of interest, you can enjoy a gentle pedal or step it up a gear on a more intense ride on one of our many long distance cycle routes with the Wild About Argyll bike packing trail.

Day trips, short breaks and longer holidays all start with the journey. The joy of Argyll and the Isles is that all routes to and from all areas enjoy beautiful scenery, stop off places, and points of interest.