

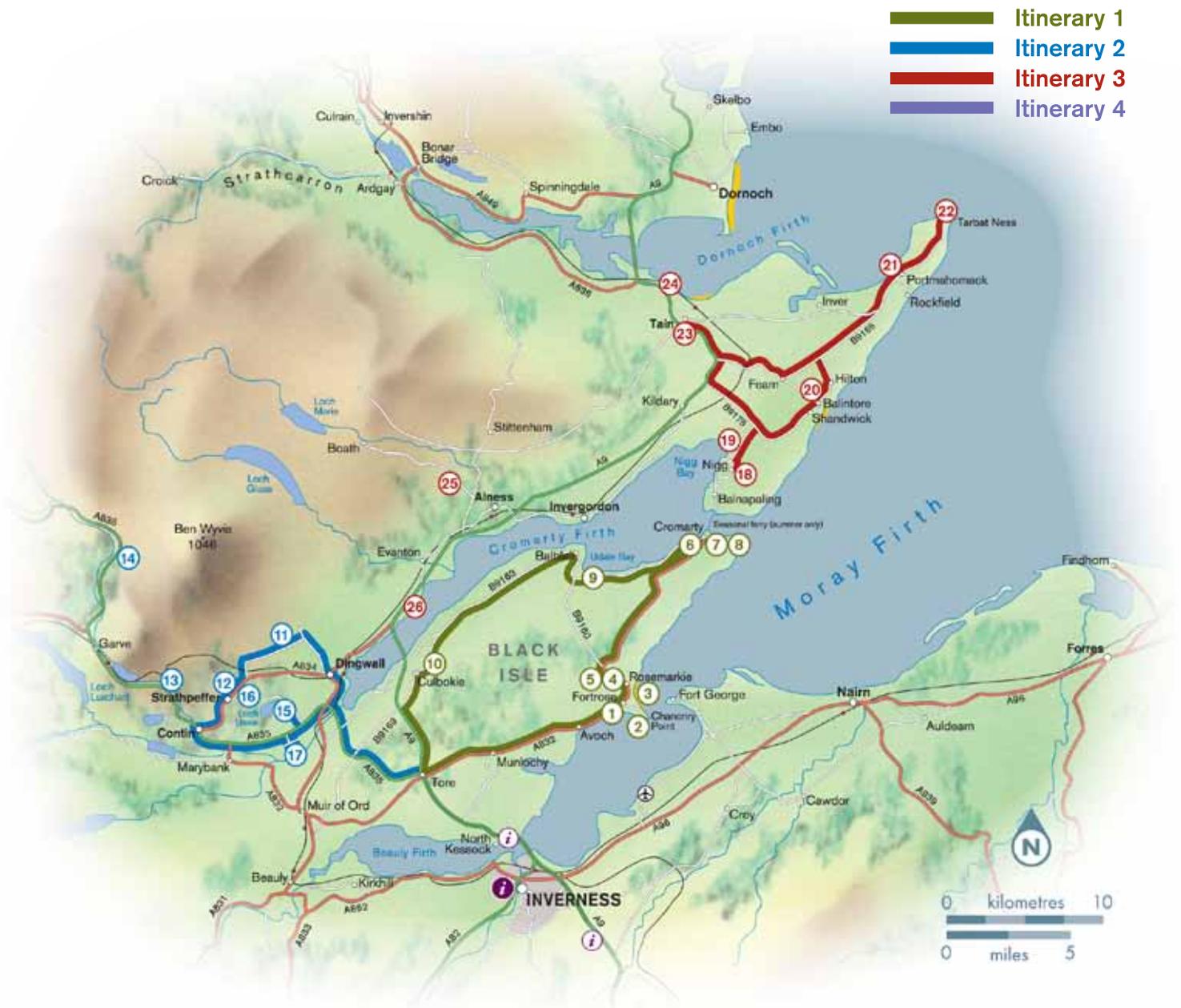
Scottish Natural Heritage / RSPB

Explore for a day

# Easter Ross



# Easter Ross



Situated just north of Inverness, **Easter Ross** is famous for its coast and landscapes, its rich cultural heritage and its varied and abundant wildlife.

From sheltered firths and craggy headlands, coastal villages and historic towns to forests and hilltop walks the area has something for everyone. Enjoy watching dolphins leap at Chanorhy Point, red kites dance at Tollie, feel the wind in your hair at Tarbat Ness or marvel at the craftsmanship of our Pictish ancestors in the seaboard villages. They'll all make your trip a memorable one.

Discover the area by either following the suggested routes, (own transport required for Itinerary 1, 2 and 3; each round trip approximately 30-38 miles / 50-60 km) or simply create your own perfect day.

Please note that sturdy footwear as well as appropriate outdoor clothing is recommended for most of the walks.

## Symbol Key

	Parking		Information Centre
	Paths		Disabled Access
	Toilets		Wildlife watching
	Refreshments		Picnic Area

Admission free unless otherwise stated.

## 1 Fortrose Cathedral

Fortrose Cathedral is thought to have been first built in the early 13th century. It was about this time that the finances of the diocese of Ross became sufficiently well established to support the staff and clergy necessary for the dignity of a cathedral foundation. It was then extended and altered in the 14th and 15th centuries. Today only the chapter house and the nave's south aisle still stand. The outline of the remainder of the cathedral complex was revealed by excavations in 1873.

Open all year: Keys available locally between 9.30am and 5.30pm in the summer and 4.30pm in the winter.

Grid reference: NH727565

Tel: 01667 460 232 [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

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## 2 Chanonry Point

Chanonry Point (Gaelic: Gob na Cananaich) is famous as the best place in Europe for seeing bottlenose dolphins. The best time to look for them is on an incoming tide when the dolphins play and feed on the fish brought in by the strong currents. The local population is the only resident one in the North Sea and the most northerly resident one in the world. The dolphins here are also the biggest in the world and they can be seen in groups of up to around 25 or more. Other wildlife, including harbour porpoises, seals and a variety of seabirds, can also regularly be spotted.

A stone memorial marks the site where the Brahan Seer is said to have been burnt to death in a tar barrel in the 17th century. On the opposite side of the Firth you can see Fort George, a fine example of 18th century military engineering.

There is limited parking on the Point. Consider parking in either Fortrose or Rosemarkie and enjoying a lovely walk (30mins / 45mins respectively) along the shore.

Grid reference: NH748556

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## 3 Rosemarkie Beach

Rosemarkie (Gaelic: Ros Mhaircnidh meaning Promontory of the Horse Stream) is a charming village with a fascinating and ancient history. The village has a beautiful sandy beach and a number of walks are available in the area. Rosemarkie is a great place to stop for a snack. The seasonal Rosemarkie Beach Café, run by the local community, is situated right on the bay. It includes a wildlife and heritage exhibition.

Café and Exhibition open daily Easter - October 11am-3pm with longer opening in good weather.

Grid reference: NH738577

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## 4 Groam House Museum

This museum is a gem! It specialises in local Pictish history dating from about 1300 years ago. They also have a film about the Brahan Seer and host interesting exhibitions about other local history or Celtic art from the museum's George Bain Collection. A magnificent symbol-bearing cross-slab is the centrepiece of the permanent collection of Pictish sculpture. All of these came from Rosemarkie, carved during the 8th century AD when the area was an important centre for early Christianity. Ever played a Pictish harp? Here you can have a go!

**Admission free** (donations welcome)

Open daily Easter to 31 October; November to early December weekend afternoons only; Closed January to Easter. Please contact the office if you would like to visit outside normal opening times.

Postcode: IV10 8UF

Tel: museum 01381 620961 / office 01463 811883

[www.groamhouse.org.uk](http://www.groamhouse.org.uk)

All facilities nearby

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## 5 Fairy Glen RSPB nature reserve

This delightful wooded glen has a stream running through it with two attractive waterfalls. The glen is carpeted with bluebells and primroses in the spring. Look out for dipper and grey wagtails along the stream. The millpond, which is at least a couple of hundred years old, was once a source of ice for the fish-houses in the village.

Fairy Glen used to be the scene of a well-dressing ceremony, where the children of the village decorated a pool, next to a spring, with flowers. This was said to ensure that the fairies kept the water supply clean.

From the car park at the edge of the village follow the signs into the glen. At the second waterfall the stream is crossed by a footbridge. The path on the far side leads up to the busy main road where there is no pavement so the best option is to return the same way. The path there and back is around 2 miles / 3 km. Allow at least an hour. The paths are rugged in places.

Grid reference: NH735578

Tel: 01463 715000 [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

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## 6 Cromarty Courthouse

This elegant former courthouse, built in 1773, now houses fascinating exhibitions about the historic town of Cromarty. In the courtroom, life-like figures give an audio re-enactment of a trial that took place here. Each year there are special exhibitions and displays. This community museum is run by volunteers and donations are welcome.

Open Easter - September, Sunday - Thursday.

Postcode: IV11 8XA

Tel: 01381 600418 [www.cromarty-courthouse.org.uk](http://www.cromarty-courthouse.org.uk)

All facilities nearby



## 7 Hugh Miller Museum and Birthplace Cottage

The museum is located in the Georgian 'Miller House' and interprets the life and work of a 'renaissance man'. Hugh Miller rose from humble beginnings as a journeyman stonemason, to international renown as a pioneering geologist, writer and social reformer. The museum includes interactive screens, fossils you can handle and the Miller's Yard "Garden of Wonders" complete with giant "fossils". The iconic Birthplace Cottage next door was built around 1698 and is the last remaining thatched cottage in Cromarty. It too has a lovely courtyard and gardens.

### Admission charge

Open daily 12-5pm April - September; Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in October

Postcode: IV11 8XA

Tel: 0844 493 2158 [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)



## 8 Cromarty shorefront and South Sutor

This varied and signposted walk from Cromarty offers plenty of interest. The path climbs through woodland to the South Sutor viewpoint with fine views over the Cromarty Firth. In spring, the wooded hillside is carpeted with spring flowers and resounds with bird song. Near the top, the remains of gun emplacements used in both World Wars can still be seen. The path can be muddy in places and includes a couple of steep sections known locally as the "Hundred Steps". The walk there and back is approx 3 miles / 5 km. The viewpoint can also be reached by narrow road, which leads to a small car park from where a path leads you up to the viewpoint (look out for the small sign).

Grid reference: NH793672



## 9 Udale Bay RSPB nature reserve

From late summer to spring thousands of waterfowl and wading birds visit this important wildlife site. At times up to 5000 wigeon can be seen feeding here on the beds of eel grass. Other species include: redshank, oystercatcher, curlew, shelduck and pink-footed geese. Ospreys are regular visitors during the summer. The viewing hide at Udale Bay enables you to get good views of the birds and provides information. The best time to visit is two to three hours either side of high tide.

Viewing hide open all year

Grid reference: NH712651

Tel: 01463 715000 [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)



## 10 Culbokie Wood

A peaceful, easy forest walk. Much of the mixed woodland is open and light, attracting a rich mix of birds, spring flowers, autumn fungi, and other wildlife. The main paths are generally good though not hard surfaced, and start from the Highland Council car park.

Grid reference: NH610597

[www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)



## 11 Neil Gunn Memorial

Neil Gunn (1891-1973) was born in Dunbeath, on the Caithness Coast. He lived in Inverness for several years before moving to Braefarm House (between Dingwall and Strathpeffer) where he wrote 11 of his 22 novels. He spent his later years near North Kessock on the Black Isle. Most of his novels (including "The Silver Darlings") have the sea, rivers and landscapes of the Highlands as a backdrop. The monument's car park has magnificent views: to the mountains of the west, south to the Cromarty Firth, and beyond to the Cairngorms. Overhead, the whistling call of red kites can be heard as they twist and turn.

Grid reference: NH519610



## 12 Strathpeffer

Between 1870 and 1939 Strathpeffer was one of Europe's most popular health resorts. Royalty and Victorian high society flocked here to drink and bathe in the restorative waters of five local springs. Enjoy the town's interesting architecture including the beautifully restored Pavillion and Pump Room off the main square. Why not visit the old railway station with its Highland Museum of Childhood and quaint shops? You could also ask locally about how to find Strathpeffer's Eagle Stone. According to a prophecy of the Brahan Seer if the stone falls over three times the surrounding valley will be flooded and the stone used as an anchor. The stone has fallen over twice already and is now set in concrete!

Postcode: IV14 9AL  
[www.strathpeffervillage.org.uk](http://www.strathpeffervillage.org.uk)

All facilities nearby



## 13 Rogie Falls

The waters of Rogie Falls (Gaelic: Eas Rothagaidh) flow from Loch Garve and continue downstream to the Cromarty Firth. During late summer there are superb views of salmon leaping the falls! Lovely woodland trails lead to a suspension bridge with an impressive view over the falls and the Blackwater River. The trails pass through mixed woodland which provides a home for pine martens, wildcats and red squirrels.

The car park lies beside the A835 road, 2 miles / 3 km west of Contin. Toilets are available here during the summer months.

Grid reference: NH443586  
Tel: 01408 634063 [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)



## 14 Ben Wyvis National Nature Reserve

A constant brooding presence on the skyline, the mountain of Ben Wyvis is a local personality and is affectionately called 'The Ben'. Stand on the summit and you'll feel like you're on the roof of the world, with spectacular views in all directions. The mossy cover on the summit hides many secrets, including summer nesting dotterel and the pure white of a winter-clothed ptarmigan. On the lower slopes a unique mix of plants have adapted to the harsh conditions of this mighty mountain.

The 6hr walk to the summit and back requires hill walking gear and experience. Access is from a car park at Garbat on the A835. You can walk part way up the track to get a view of the eastern end of the hill. On the summit ridge it would greatly assist if visitors would keep to the centre of the main route to prevent damage to this special and sensitive environment.

Grid reference: NH411672  
Tel: 01479 810477 [www.nnr-scotland.org.uk](http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk)



## 15 Tollie Red Kites RSPB Visitor Centre

With stunning views across Easter Ross to Ben Wyvis, Tollie Red Kites visitor centre provides a magnificent opportunity to watch Scotland's most graceful bird of prey, especially during feeding time. A viewing screen outside provides great opportunities for taking photographs. Ospreys, which breed nearby, often fly over during the summer. The colder months are the busiest for red kites at the feeding centre. Tollie Red Kites is a partnership between RSPB Scotland and the Brahan Estate.

Donations welcome  
Visitor centre open from 9am-5pm; access to outdoor viewing screens at all times; Feeding times: daily at 2.30pm in summer and 1.30pm in winter (Feeding times change when the clocks change)

Grid reference: NH514563  
Tel: 01463 715000 [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)



## 16 The Cat's Back and Knockfarrel Hill Fort

The remains of a Pictish Iron Age fort can be seen on the hilltop of Knockfarrel (Gaelic: Cnoc Fearghalaigh meaning "hill fort"). The neighbouring ridge is known as the Cat's Back - you'll see why when you get there! Both can be climbed from various directions but the easiest approach is from the Blackmuir Wood car park at the western edge of Strathpeffer.

For less mobile visitors, a narrow road continues past the sign for Tollie Red Kites from the main A835 road to an unsurfaced car park near the ridge. Please note: the final 220 yards / 200 metres is a dirt track unsuitable for low vehicles, trailers or caravans.

The ridge is a great place for watching soaring red kites and buzzards and the views are spectacular.

Grid reference: NH502583



## 17 Brahan Estate - Dunglass Island & Arboretum

The Brahan Estate offers a number of paths through 4000 acres of beautiful countryside. If you park at the avenue of trees there is an interesting walk down through the Estate's Arboretum to the picturesque River Conon. Keep an eye out for the hidden dog cemetery on your way through the Arboretum. Huge oaks line many of the tracks. You may see red squirrels, roe deer, pine martens, brown hares and ospreys. The story of the Brahan Seer is strongly linked with the Brahan Estate.

Grid reference: NH517547  
Tel: 01349 861150 [www.brahan.com](http://www.brahan.com)



## 18 Nigg Old Church & Pictish stone

This is a fine example of a Scottish Parish Church. The current building was rebuilt in 1626 but this has been a religious site for at least 1200 years. The church houses an eighth-century Pictish cross-slab. The carvings on this stone are intricate, the quality and skill of the carving making this one of the finest crosses of its period in all of Europe. Well worth a visit!

Church open 10am-5pm, April - October.

Grid reference: NH804717  
[www.niggoldtrust.org.uk](http://www.niggoldtrust.org.uk)



## 19 Nigg Bay RSPB nature reserve

Nigg Bay is an important area of mudflat, saltmarsh and wet grassland on the Cromarty Firth. It is one of the country's major stop-over points for migratory birds travelling between their breeding and wintering grounds. Visit the viewing hide any time between October and March and you're likely to see countless wading birds and waterfowl, such as bar-tailed godwits, knot, geese and wigeon. During spring look out for the lapwings' tumbling display flights as they prepare to breed. The summer months bring a range of breeding birds to the wetland and saltmarsh areas and ospreys can be seen hunting in the bay. Best time to visit is two to three hours either side of high tide.

Viewing hide open all year

Grid reference: NH807730  
Tel: 01463 715000 [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)



## 20 Coastal Seaboard Villages

The seaboard villages of Shandwick, Balintore and Hilton have a fascinating history. The Picts were instrumental in setting up home here. Magnificent stone cross-slabs in all three locations date from then. Roman ships are thought to have sailed past this coast and in more recent history these villages boomed as fishing communities in the 19th century, first with the herring fishery and then later the salmon fishery. Enjoy picturesque coastal walks along the award-winning sandy beaches and the beautiful rocky coastline.

Postcode: IV20 1UA  
Grid reference: NH866758  
[www.seaboardvillages.com](http://www.seaboardvillages.com)

All facilities nearby



## 21 Tarbat Discovery Centre

The Old Tarbat Parish Church makes a fitting home for the Tarbat Discovery Centre. The museum brings to life the area's Pictish past and specifically that of the large monastic settlement that once occupied this site. As well as the monastery, a large community of skilled craftsmen settled here manufacturing goods on a large scale from the 6th to the 11th century AD. The museum includes artefacts relating to early Christianity.

### Admission charge

Open Easter to end of October. Opening times vary during this period.

Postcode: IV20 1YA  
Grid reference: NH915841  
Tel: 01862 871351 [www.tarbat-discovery.co.uk](http://www.tarbat-discovery.co.uk)



## 22 Tarbat Ness

Visit the Tarbat Ness peninsula and take in the wonderful sights and sounds of the Moray Firth. Excellent views out to sea offer the opportunity to see dolphins and seals, while one of Britain's tallest lighthouses adorns the point. The site of the lighthouse used to hold a Roman fort and according to Highland folklore the site was used as a meeting place for witches' covens. Fulmars and gannets can be seen all year round and this is a good place for sea-watching. During autumn and spring the area is also a landfall for migrating birds so you might catch a glimpse of these weary travellers. For keen walkers, there is an excellent coastal circuit of the Tarbat Ness headland (8.75 miles / 14 km) taking in Portmahomack and Rockfield.

Grid reference: NH944873  
[www.walkhighlands.co.uk](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk)

All facilities at Portmahomack



### 23 Tain Through Time

One of the main attractions in Tain, this unique visitor centre illustrates the turbulent history of an ancient burgh by a combination of audio-visual presentation, live acting, artefacts, photographs and documents, in a complex of three historic buildings.

#### Admission charge

Open April - October Monday-Friday 10am - 5pm; also Saturdays 10am - 5pm in June, July and August; other times may be booked in advance.

Postcode: IV19 1DY

Tel: 01862 894089 [www.tainmuseum.org.uk](http://www.tainmuseum.org.uk)



### 24 Glenmorangie Distillery

The Glenmorangie Distillery tour gives you access to the distillery and warehouses. Shake hands with a man of Tain and stand next to the tallest stills in Scotland. With the help of an expert guide you will experience all stages of the whisky making process from mashing and fermenting to distilling and maturing - all culminating in a dram or two of your choice! Regular tours, pre-booking advisable.

#### Admission charge

Open all year Monday - Friday; also Sundays during June-August; closed during Christmas holiday period

Postcode: IV19 1PZ

Tel: 01862 892477 [www.glenmorangie.com](http://www.glenmorangie.com)



### 25 Fyrish Monument

Seen from miles around this photogenic monument represents the Gate of Negapatam in Chennai (Madras), India. It was built in 1782 on the orders of Sir Hector Munro of Novar Estate. Building the monument created much needed employment during times of shortage of jobs and hardship. Today it's a great focus of a 4 mile / 6.5 km (2.5 hour) walk boasting stunning views. The path (steep, loose surface in places) leads through forest and across exposed open moorland. In the autumn and winter look out for crossbills feeding on pine cones with their specially adapted beaks.

Grid reference: NH627714



### 26 Storehouse of Foulis

The restored 18th century Giral or Rent House is the finest remaining example of what used to be a familiar type of building in the region and now houses a restaurant and farm shop. Set on the shore of the Cromarty Firth with beautiful views out over the water and to the mountains beyond, it's a great place to see common (harbour) seals and common terns.

Postcode: IV16 9UX

Tel: 01349 830000 [www.thestorehouseathome.com](http://www.thestorehouseathome.com)



## Itinerary 1

### Black Isle

This route will take you around the Black Isle, a low-lying peninsula with the inner Moray Firth on one side and the Cromarty Firth on the other. With so much coastline, and an abundant mosaic of forest and farmland, this area is rich in wildlife. The Black Isle also has a wealth of historic interest from Pictish times through medieval to the Second World War. Beautiful views of Highland mountains complete the package.

### Chanorny Point (2) and Rosemarkie Beach (3)

Starting from the Tore roundabout on the A9, exit onto the A832 road signposted to Fortrose and Cromarty. After 2.5 miles / 4 km you pass Cloutie Well which is steeped in myth and legend. A board in the car park explains the old tradition. After a further 6 miles / 9.6 km you reach Fortrose and Rosemarkie 0.5 miles / 800 metres further on. With Chanorny Point and Fairy Glen all within a mile of the two villages, this is a splendid place to spend some time.

To reach Chanorny Point you can use the narrow road from Fortrose, but parking is limited and the road can get very congested during the summer months. Instead, consider parking in either of the two villages and walking there. The walk along the beach from Rosemarkie is particularly attractive. It is well worth spending an hour or so at the point before high tide watching for dolphins and seals. While you watch, there is plenty of beach to explore.

Alternatively visit the ruins of Fortrose Cathedral, Groam House Museum in Rosemarkie or enjoy a walk into the Fairy Glen from the car park on the right just before leaving the village of Rosemarkie.

### Cromarty (6,7,8)

Follow the A835 to Cromarty. Continue through the town along the High Street to reach the main car park near the shore, on Forsyth Place. Stroll around this historic village and visit the Cromarty Court House and the Hugh Miller Museum both on Church Street. A visit to the recently restored East Church, also on Church Street is another treat. If you want to explore further afield, the walk to South Sutor starts along Shore Street. The path is clear as it follows the coast for a while before heading up through the woodland.

If you wish to drive to South Sutor, continue eastward along Shore Street and follow this narrow road, for about a mile, as it twists through the old town of Cromarty and then leaves the village behind. Turn left at a cross-roads, continue for a little under 1 mile / 1.6 km. The road becomes more narrow and track-like but stays passable most of the year. Avoid in snowy or icy conditions.

### Udale Bay (9)

Take the B9163 coast road out of Cromarty for about 5 miles / 8 km. A lay-by on the right hand side allows you to stop at the RSPB's stunning new hide on Udale Bay. It's well worth a visit. Continuing westwards, at the junction turn right and continue on the B9163. After 0.5 miles / 800 metres you can take a short detour to Newhall Point past the ruins of Kirkmichael church. Newhall Point looks across to Invergordon with great views of the Cromarty Firth.

### Culbokie Wood (10)

Return to the B9163 and continue westwards. At the junction after 6 miles / 9.6 km, take the B9169 straight on to the village of Culbokie. Culbokie Wood can be found on the left as you enter the village (look for car park around 220 yards / 200 m past village sign immediately after passing the playing fields). The village inn offers a refreshing tea stop. Continue west on the B9169 to return to the A9 and then south to the Tore roundabout.

## Itinerary 2

### Red Kite country

Enjoy this route through the heart of red kite country. Find out about one of Scotland's famous authors who wrote numerous novels inspired by the local people and landscape. Enjoy beautiful views of where mountains meet the coast and of picturesque patchwork valleys. Find out why Victorian holiday makers flocked to Strathpeffer for health restoring treatments. After lunch marvel at the kites' twisting flight and see them up close feeding at the Tollie Red Kites. Then round it all off with a tranquil riverside or forest walk on the Brahan Estate.

### Neil Gunn Memorial (11)

From the Tore roundabout take the A835 signposted to Ullapool. At the Maryburgh roundabout take the 3rd exit and head for Dingwall on the A862. At the second set of traffic lights turn left following the signs for Strathpeffer. Follow this road for three quarters of a mile and turn right into Docharty road. Take the first left after 440 yards / 400 m which is signposted to the Neil Gunn Monument (2 miles). Carry on up an impressively steep hillside. After the road levels, the monument and its car park are on your right.

### Strathpeffer (12)

Turn right out of the Neil Gunn Memorial car park and follow the road along the hillside. After 3 miles / 4.8 km the road joins the A834. Turn right for Strathpeffer. Once in Strathpeffer there is plenty of parking in various locations around the centre of the town. Just after the '30 miles an hour' road signs look out for the Victorian Railway Station on your left. It is here that you will find the Museum of Childhood. The Pump Room and Pavilion are on your left further up the hill and the square on your right. Strathpeffer is a good place to get some lunch before heading on.

### Tollie Red Kites RSPB Visitor Centre (15)

Head west on the A834 and at Contin turn left onto the A835. Continue along this road for 4.5 miles / 7.2 km. Turn left up the hill following the RSPB Tollie Red Kites signposts. The visitor centre is 1 mile / 1.6 km up the road on the left hand site.

### Brahan Estate (17)

Turn right out of the Tollie Red Kites Centre and return to the A835. Turn right again onto the A835 and drive 0.5 miles / 800 metres. Take the first left onto the Brahan Estate. Continue down this single track road until you come to a crossroads. Turn right at the crossroads and park either at the head of the avenue of trees or at the small car park further down this track. From here you can enjoy lovely walks in the estate. Download a map of the estate from [www.Brahan.com](http://www.Brahan.com) or call in at the office.

From here make your way back to the A835 the same way, turn right. At the Maryburgh roundabout take the second exit on the A835 signposted to Inverness and return to the Tore roundabout.

## Itinerary 3

### Picts and ports on Fearn Peninsula

The Fearn Peninsula, north of the Cromarty Firth is a hub of interesting historical sites as well as being rich in coastal wildlife.

#### Nigg (18,19)

Starting at the Nigg Roundabout on the A9 (NH 794772) take the B9175 signposted to Nigg. After 3.5 miles / 5.6 km you approach the RSPB Nigg Bay reserve. The car park is on the right and from there it's only a short walk to the hide. If you can time your visit near high tide you will get splendid views of the birds.

On leaving the car park, turn right to continue on the B9175 for 0.5 miles / 800 metres. Turn left to Nigg village. At the T-junction turn right and drive another 550 yards / 500m. A car park on the right gives access to the Nigg Parish Church which holds the Nigg Stone.

#### Seaboard villages (20)

Retrace your journey through Nigg Village to the B9175 and head north for just under 2 miles / 3.2 km. Turn right (signposted to Pitcairie and Shandwick). After 2.5 miles / 4 km turn right to Shandwick. After 0.5 miles / 800 metres, park in the layby on the right. The Shandwick Stone, safely sheltered in its glass case, is a short walk further on (NH 855 747). Drive into the village of Shandwick. The three villages of Shandwick, Balintore and Hilton run along the coastline here. A walk along the seashore of Balintore will reveal the Mermaid of the North. A replica of the Pictish Hilton of Cadboll stone can be found at the north end of Hilton on the site of the ancient chapel where the original once stood (NH 873768).

#### Portmahomack (21)

Continue on the northerly road out of Hilton to join the B9165. Portmahomack lies 5 miles / 8 km further north. This attractive village has a beautiful sandy beach with refreshments and facilities available. Visit the Tarbat Discovery Centre while you are here for an excellent display of the local history.

#### Tarbat Ness (22)

For the adventurous and fit walkers among you, there is a 9 mile / 14 km circular walk around the head of the peninsula, following the coast most of the way and taking in the Tarbat Ness lighthouse. The path leaves Portmahomack along the coastline and returns overland from Rockfield.

If continuing by car, take the road out of Portmahomack heading north-east for 2.7 miles / 4.3 km arriving at a car park. Take a gentle stroll around the tip of the peninsula and below one of Britain's tallest lighthouses. Watch seaward for possible views of dolphins and seals. Take care on the coastal track, especially with young children.

Return along the B9165 past Fearn to rejoin the A9. About 1 mile / 1.6 km south (left at the A9 junction) is the Nigg roundabout.

#### Tain (24)

If you have time or are staying in the area with another day to explore, it is worth visiting the town of Tain with the excellent Tain Through Time exhibition.

## Itinerary 4

### Black Isle by Bus

The Black Isle and its attractions are easily accessible by public transport from Inverness. So why not leave the car behind for a day and let someone else do the driving whilst you enjoy the views? Buses from Inverness to Rosemarkie operate every half an hour and every other bus carries on to Cromarty (bus no 26/26A). The journey from Inverness to Rosemarkie takes approximately 35 minutes, from Inverness to Cromarty 50 minutes. Bus timetables are available at Inverness bus station. (Please note: all bus information correct at time of print, subject to change – please always double check at bus station or with bus driver).

#### Cromarty (6,7,8)

Make your way to Inverness bus station (car parking available). The bus to Cromarty will take you over the 1 km long Kessock Bridge which was built in 1982 and leads you across the Beaully Firth. As you can imagine, the Bridge transformed road transport in the Highlands and proved a key factor in the growth of the city of Inverness. After crossing the bridge the bus turns into North Kessock, a lovely village on the shores of the Beaully Firth, before carrying on to the village of Munloch. Just after the bus leaves Munloch a beautiful view across Munloch Bay will open up. The journey continues along the south coast of the Black Isle through the villages of Avoch, Fortrose and Rosemarkie and then on to Cromarty.

In Cromarty get off at the last bus stop, which is also the turning point for the bus. Information panels can be found next to the bus stop, and also in the small car park opposite. Stretch your legs as you take a stroll through this beautiful conservation village. The two museums Hugh Miller Museum & Birthplace Cottage and Cromarty Court House are well worth a visit, as well as the recently refurbished East Church which is normally open all year round. These attractions are all located on Church Street. There is a good choice of places for lunch in the village, as well as a couple of gift shops.

#### Rosemarkie (3,4,5)

Take the bus back to Rosemarkie, which will take approximately 20 minutes. In Rosemarkie you can visit the lovely Groam House Museum, take a walk up the Fairy Glen or visit the beach. There are eating places and a couple of shops in the village.

#### Inverness

From Rosemarkie you can either take the bus back to Inverness or take a nice walk along the shore front to nearby Chanonry Point and Fortrose (approximately 2 miles / 3.2 km along the beach and quiet roads). If you have time, Fortrose Cathedral is well worth a visit. Again there are eating places and a range of shops in the village. The bus stops are located on the main road that leads through the village. The journey back to Inverness takes about 25 mins.



For where to go, what to see and do and where to eat and drink visit: [www.northhighlandsscotland.com](http://www.northhighlandsscotland.com)



## Other visitor information

There are many other sites to discover in the area. Find out more at VisitScotland's local visitor information centres which are situated at:

Inverness (all year round) Tel: 01463 252 401  
North Kessock (seasonal) Tel: 01463 731 836

In the summer a small **car ferry** operates between Cromarty and Nigg ([www.cromarty-ferry.co.uk](http://www.cromarty-ferry.co.uk)).

Many sites are accessible by public transport. For bus times please contact **Traveline Scotland** on 0871 200 22 33 or go to [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com). There are also a great number of cycle routes in the area. Find out more at the local Visitor Information Centre. Please visit [www.walkhighlands.co.uk](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk) for information on local walks and [www.tidetimes.org.uk](http://www.tidetimes.org.uk) for tide times.

**Wildlife watching** Please visit the following websites for tips on responsible wildlife watching and to find accredited wildlife tour operators which offer a high quality experience: [www.dolphinspace.org](http://www.dolphinspace.org), [www.marinecode.org](http://www.marinecode.org) and [www.wild-scotland.org.uk](http://www.wild-scotland.org.uk).

## Know the code before you go...

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly!  
Find out more at [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com).

**Scottish Natural Heritage** is the government agency looking after all of Scotland's nature and landscapes, across all of Scotland, for everyone. Find out more at [www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk).

**RSPB Scotland** is part of the RSPB, which speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing - help us keep it that way. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654. [www.rspb.org.uk/Scotland](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Scotland).



Scotland's  
**Protected Places**

Explore and discover some of Scotland's natural and historic protected places.

[www.scotlandspreservedplaces.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspreservedplaces.gov.uk)

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