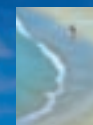




live the landscape



North West Highlands
GEOPARK
Iar-Thuath na Gàidhealtachd



A geological jigsaw puzzle

Follow in the footsteps of 19th century rock and fossil hunters and look for the evidence that puzzled and fascinated geologists for decades. One of the most famous geological features on earth runs through the Geopark and is known as The Moine Thrust. Working out how this major fault developed helped geologists understand how the world's great mountain ranges were formed. Learn more at Dumess Visitor Centre, on walks led by local Highland Council Countryside Rangers or by following one of Knockan Crag's Rock Routes through Eddrachilles, Assynt or Coigach. Find out about the fierce debate, the geologists who dedicated their working lives to solving the puzzle and the legacy they left behind.

www.knockan-crag.co.uk

How will you travel?

Catch a flight or take a train to Inverness, journey through friendly villages and wild open spaces by car, camper van, cycle, motorbike, public transport – or a combination of these! Don't forget that some natural attractions can only be accessed on foot or by sea. Experience spectacular coastal views from a different perspective by booking a diving charter or sailing to offshore islands. Enlist the help of expert local guides to help you navigate the mountain landscape, pinpoint rare plant and animal species and understand the fascinating cultural heritage of communities within the Geopark.

European Geoparks Network North West Highlands Geopark is part of a global network of territories defined by their outstanding geological features, forward-thinking local communities and unique natural and cultural heritage. www.europeangeoparks.org

www.pelican-design.com

*become a
21st century
explorer*

www.northwest-highlands-geopark.org.uk



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Cape Wrath: Moine, Eriboll, Dumess & Balnakeil



To help you get around, North West Highlands Geopark is divided into four areas.

Some of the must see attractions in and around Moine, Eriboll, Durness and Balnakeil:



Countryside Ranger service to help you make the most of your trip.

Loch Eriboll 16 km long and descending to 60 fathoms, Loch Eriboll is an impressive deep sea loch with a long history as a naval anchorage. Visit a 2000 year old Iron Age wheelhouse, high on the hillside on the west side of the loch.

Smoo Cave Underground pools, cavernous limestone ceilings, local legends, traces of human habitation stretching back thousands of years – don't miss Smoo Cave. The cave is so big that audience events are sometimes held here. Check the website for details.

Sango Bay Above the sands of Sango Bay lie the best exposed outcrops of the Moine Thrust. A geologists paradise, this is a spectacular place to view geological features.

Foinaven At a height of 911m, Foinaven and the surrounding peaks offer adventurous climbing opportunities. It's worth the effort for the panoramic views and sightings of birds of prey alone. Remember to check weather conditions and make sure you are well-equipped for the climb before setting out.



Stunning mountain landscapes...

Clean sandy beaches...

Ancient settlements...

Thriving present day communities...

Encompassing 2000 sq km of dramatic scenery, North West Highlands Geopark offers one of the best opportunities to explore wild places in Europe.

Mapping your journey

Benefit from centuries of work carried out by intrepid geologists, mariners and geographers by planning your journey with specially designed, easy-to-follow maps.

Durness Visitor Centre An ideal place to start exploring and also the base for the local Highland Council Countryside Ranger. Examine rocks from the Geopark in detail and enjoy displays on geology, local history and wildlife. Find out about local events, entertainment and children's activities.

Cape Wrath Take a breathtaking trip to the most north westerly point in the British Isles by ferry and bus or on foot. Because it is used as a military range the area is uninhabited – and truly wild!

Balnakeil church & craft village Adjacent to the sands of Balnakeil Bay is a church founded by St Maelrubha in 722. Walk among gravestones that tell of villains, poets, clans and shipwrecks. Visit the colourful craft village and view inspirational artworks by local artists and craftspeople.

Faraid Head Jutting into the North Atlantic Ocean, Faraid Head is characterised by undulating sand dunes, coastal grasses and a gorgeous beach and is an excellent place to see the Scottish primrose. Ask about the Highland Council

What's in a name?

Place names are vital clues to understanding landscape. It won't surprise you to learn that a huge number of place names in the area refer to rock features. Some are of Old Norse derivation but most are in the Gaelic language and describe the myriad qualities, uses, location – and beauty – of rock.

The Moine comes from the Gaelic A Mhòine meaning peaty moorland. Travelling from the Kyle of Tongue through the northern gateway to the Geopark, you'll see a spectacular high moorland surrounded by mountains with views to the Orkney Islands in the north. This is A Mhòine, the moorland that gave its name to the famous Moine Thrust. Here, geologists first studied the phenomenon that pushed rocks up to 100km westwards, a process that generated intense heat and changed the rocks from sandstone into schists. These rocks are also named after A Mhòine and are known as Moine Rocks.