

# North Sea Trail and Creel Walk

North Kincardine has an enduring relationship with the coast which goes back thousands of years to the earliest settlers in Aberdeenshire.

There are various paths and trails between Cowie and Tormy, which are suitable for walking, cycling, horse riding and exploring the history, nature and scenery of this beautifully hidden treasure in Aberdeenshire. The North Sea Trail is an ongoing, multi-country project to develop the route that circumnavigates the whole of the North Sea coastal bay through Norway, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands and England to the North of Scotland, a lot of the trails are formed from the old farm and fishing tracks used for the transportation of fish and goods in and out of the villages.

Muchalls (Stranathrow), Newtonhill (Skateraw), Downies, Old Portlethen and Findon were all busy fishing ports both of creel fishing, centres of Salmon Fishing and locations of more leisurely Sea Angling competitions. Competitions to win the Douglas Cup (which resides at the bar in the Neuk in Old Portlethen) took place between 1896 and 1921 where local villages competed to see who could catch the most fish.

North Kincardine's coast attracts a host of wildlife. Salmon enter the rivers to spawn upstream. White beaked Dolphins have been observed from Portlethen. Bandit Pipistrelles, Geese, sea trout, wading birds and common seals feed on food around the shores and mosses. Plants and flowers only found in the area's mosses and heaths show the diversity and variety of the ecology of the area.

Around the area of Muchalls there are signs of smugglers caves which lead to the bay being known as the 'Gin Shore' and there are records of people living in the caves during the summer months. Muchalls itself wasn't the first village in the southern end of North Kincardine, previously there had been Seatoun of Muchalls, about a mile south of the centre beyond Doonie Point, which was badly hit by the loss of their fishing fleet in the late 18th century leading



to the village relocating to the community of Stranathrow now named Muchalls. Later when the railway reached Muchalls in 1849 and the fishing diminished the village became a health resort with its Hotel, leisure golf, fishing, brisk air and sea views.

The area deserves further exploration to understand the ancient heritage of the area's sea facing people.

## Level of Walk

Depending on the stage of the walk and the terrain, the route varies from easy to strenuous.

## Terrain

Natural and gravel paths rocks, roads and moss.

Care should be taken whilst walking along coastal paths and Aberdeenshire coastal path information can be found on Aberdeenshire Council website for up to date status of parts of the trail.

Walking, cycling, riding, running and prams dependent on the stage of the route. Some routes go close to the edge where care should be taken and consideration to the weather, conditions under foot, clothing and ability should be considered before attempting to navigate cliff edges.

## Distance

The whole North Sea Trail is 2,000Km/ 1,243miles long. Around 20km or 14 miles fall within North Kincardine. Parts of the walk could be walked in an afternoon, covering 1 – 5 km.

## Map

Refer to large map for points, features and viewpoints.



One of the most abundant fish in the world. Loved by cod, dolphins, seals, salmon and the fishing fleet. Fished off the shores of Kincardine reached peak fishing in 1850s, decline due to introduction of modern fishing practices.

# Map References

For more detailed routes and information refer to the following maps:

- 38 Landranger: Aberdeen; Inverurie & Pitmedden
- 45 Landranger: Stonehaven & Banchory
- 406 Explorer: Aberdeen & Banchory
- 396 Explorer: Stonehaven, Inverbervie & Laurencekirk - Howe of the Mearns



## Getting There

Various buses run between Aberdeen and Stonehaven (7A, 7B, 7C, 7N) as well as between Aberdeen and Peterculter (19, 119, 201, 202, N19) - check [www.travelinescotland](http://www.travelinescotland.com)

A2B bus services run on particular days in the Kincardine area Number 22 runs on a Thursday around the more rural and coastal villages of Kincardine including, Netherley, Cookney, Downies, Findon and Portlethen. For further information please contact [a2bdialabus@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:a2bdialabus@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or call 01224 664747 during work hours. Call for more information and timings.

Trains run regularly between Aberdeen and Stonehaven stopping at Portlethen. Check [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) for up to date timings and stations.

## Parking and Starting Point

There are various parking and starting points all along the North Sea Trail from Stonehaven to Aberdeen. The route can be tackled in one go or over a longer period of time and journeys should be planned for and prepared for to suit ability.

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

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Parking can be found in the coastal villages along the trail at Muchalls, Newtonhill, Portlethen, Downies, Findon.

The route is mainly along coastal paths, old farm routes and village tracks. OS maps should be referred to in planning a route.

## Planning Your Walk

Go prepared with suitable clothing, shoes, water and provisions. – due to proximity to the sea haar and mist can come in quickly causing temperatures to drop suddenly. Equally within any one day it is possible to have sun, rain, sleet and snow.

Mobile phones do not always pick up service in the area.

## Further Information

### Aberdeenshire Council - North Sea Trail

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/patterns-and-outdoor-access/guide-and-maps/](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/patterns-and-outdoor-access/guide-and-maps/)

### Scottish Natural Heritage

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

### The James Hutton Institute

[www.hutton.ac.uk](http://www.hutton.ac.uk)

### Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

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

### Aberdeenshire Council - Paths & Outdoor Access

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/patterns-and-outdoor-access](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/patterns-and-outdoor-access)

