INTRODUCING BEN NEVIS
A mighty landscape of rugged peaks, wooded gorges and spectacular ridges

The John Muir Trust owns 1,760 hectares (4,350 acres) of land within the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Nature Areas, including the huge shape of the Ben and the spectacular Sligachan and Skye Bridges. The Trust manages this land to protect the flora and fauna and to provide a place for people to enjoy the wild landscape.

A legend of the area – Carn Mor Dearg and Sgurr Choinnich – stretch across the mountain. They are linked by a spectacular mountain saddle, dipping below the Whinys of Nevis, which plunges from towering heights of more than 2,000 feet down through the massive range of slopes and corries which make up the glacially formed granite massif.

Excavations in 2003 revealed that the mountain range was once a fabulous home for birds such as the snow bunting and golden eagle. People lived in this area in the past. The two buildings in Steall were built in the late 1700s – the Nevis Steall Lodge and the Nevis Steall Cottage – and were home to shepherds until the 1940s. Meteorologists made hourly measurements of weather conditions from an observatory on the Ben's summit from 1883 until 1904. The observatory was expanded to include a hotel which was open until the end of the First World War. Despite its closure, it continues to attract hikers during the summer months.

Exploring Ben Nevis
The path access from the visitor centre follows Gillie Lane to the pony track. This track reaches the mountain pass area where the pony track continues to the summit plateau. The pony track is usually good for walking and is suitable for people of all abilities, although sections can be stony and rough. The path becomes steeper and more difficult as it approaches the summit. The pony track normally takes around four hours to walk to the summit. Depending on conditions, it can take up to six hours.

Many visitors choose to use one of the mountain taxi services, which operate from the visitor centre at Ben Nevis. These services are available from late May to late September, and are subject to weather conditions.

The path continues to the summit plateau, offering spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The summit plateau is a windswept area, and visitors are advised to wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

The highest waterfall in Britain, the Falls of Nevis, can be seen from the summit. The waterfall is surrounded by a network of footpaths, which provide access to other areas of the mountain. The path to the waterfall is well-marked and is suitable for all abilities.

Managing the Land
Restoring habitats and minimising the footprint of visitors

The Trust works to manage the land for the benefit of both people and wildlife. The Trust’s staff and volunteers are committed to preserving the natural beauty of the area and working with local communities to ensure that the mountain remains a place for everyone to enjoy.

Wildlife surveys and habitat monitoring are carried out to assess the condition of wildlife, and to identify areas for improvement. The Trust’s staff carry out regular surveys to inform this work. The Trust also helps to manage the annual impact of 100,000 visitors to the UK’s highest mountain, and is home to golden eagle, red deer, snow bunting, ptarmigan and rare butterflies such as the mountain ringlet.

The Trust’s staff check and measure the amount of snow left at the summit of Ben Nevis. This information is used to inform weather forecasts and to assist mountain rescue missions.

The Trust now works to control deer numbers so that a wider range of habitats, including native woodland, can regenerate naturally. We carry out regular wildlife and habitat surveys to inform this work.

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