



CASTLE LOCH

local nature reserve

Countryside Rangers and Water Bailiffs operate around the Loch.



You can help by:

- Keeping to existing footpaths
- Picking up litter
- Disposing of unwanted fishing tackle safely
- Observing the local byelaws

Please send wildlife records to the Countryside Ranger Service at Planning and Environment, Militia House, English Street, Dumfries. DG1 2HR. Tel. 01387 260366

Produced on behalf of the Castle and Hightae Lochs Local Nature Reserve Advisory Management Committee.

Text by the Dumfries and Galloway Council Ranger Service.

Designed by the Council Graphics Team.

Artwork by John Threlfall.

Photos by Ranger Service, Bobby Smith and Edmund Fellowes





CASTLE LOCH LOCAL NATURE RESERVE AND SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

The loch and its margin provide a home for a rich assortment of birds, fish, insects and plants.

Nationally and internationally important numbers of geese and ducks are a spectacular sight in winter, and many birds breed around the edges in summer.

Whenever you come there is always something interesting to see.



LOCHMABEN CASTLE

For over 300 years Lochmaben Castle held a key defensive position, controlling access northwards through upper Annandale and westwards to Galloway. It changed hands many times - both Scottish and English forces contributing to its massive structure. The remains are now in the care of Historic Scotland.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN SUMMER

The most noticeable birds on the loch in June, July and August are Mute Swans. There can be up to 150 birds most of which have come here to moult their feathers. Only a few of the swans will be resident breeding birds because there are only about six pairs that remain throughout the year and breed in the reeds around the edge of the loch.

Look out for swans with rings on their legs. If you manage to read the numbers and letters please report to the Ranger Service or WWT Caerlaverock.

Several pairs of Great Crested Grebes breed here. Watch out for their dramatic breeding displays in spring and early summer.



Great Crested Grebe

The Willow Tit has declined in many parts of Britain but here there are still several pairs breeding in the woodland fringes. They make their nests in rotten trees stumps and feed on insects on and within the trees. Take care not to damage any trees.



Willow Tit



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN WINTER

Castle Loch is internationally important for the high numbers of Pink-footed Geese that roost on the loch at night, and nationally important for the numbers of Greylag Geese that utilise the loch.

The best time to see the geese is at dusk when they fly in from the surrounding fields where they have been feeding, or at first light in the morning when the birds leave the loch. These times of day are also good for watching the large numbers of Rooks, Jackdaws, Starlings and various species of gulls that roost here too – at night, the total numbers of birds on the reserve can exceed 18,000.



Greylag



Goosanders

Look out for the beautiful Goosander, a fish-eating duck that occurs here in nationally important numbers. They can be on the loch at any time of day but mornings and evenings are best.

In the middle of the day the loch looks much quieter but there are nearly always Tufted Duck, Mallard, Wigeon, Goldeneye, Coot and Moorhen present. Pochard, Ruddy Duck, Gadwall and Smew all occur less frequently.



Wigeon

USER GUIDE

Fishing. Permits are available at Lochmaben from the Post Office and Halleaths Caravan Site. Coarse fish that occur include Pike, Perch, Chub, Roach, Bream and a Roach-Bream hybrid. All fish caught must be returned to the loch.

Swans and ducks are killed or injured every year by discarded fishing lines – please dispose of unwanted tackle safely.

Boating. The Annandale Sailing Club meets throughout the summer on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and at weekends from March to November.

No powered craft of any kind are allowed on the water except for the Water Bailiff and rescue boats. All boaters must wear life jackets.

All boats should keep away from the margins of the loch. Even brief disturbance of nesting birds increases the chances of nest predation by crows and gulls and, in prolonged, cases will cause birds to abandon their nests.

Wildfowling. Permits are restricted to residents of the Burgh of Lochmaben. Shooting takes place from boats, and may occur on any day from 1 September to 31 January, except Sundays. The use of lead shot is prohibited by Scottish law.

Windsurfing and Swimming. These activities are not advisable because of the shallowness of the water and deep black mud on the bottom. In the summer there is danger from toxic blue-green algae.

Caravans and Camping. Local byelaws prohibit camping on the nature reserve. There are caravan and camp sites at the Kirk Loch and Halleaths.