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Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve

Teacher's information



As well as being the highest mountain in the central highlands at 1214m, Ben Lawers gives its name to a whole National Nature Reserve. Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve (NNR) includes nine mountains in the Lawers and Tarmachan ranges and is one of the most important nature conservation sites in Britain.

For schools, we use the managed environment of the nature reserve, which is set on the lower slopes of Ben Lawers and is 200 metres from the NNR car/coach park. The underlying geology means that there is a great diversity of plants even on the lower slopes, especially within the areas fenced to exclude grazing sheep and deer. Here regenerating habitats are now thriving ecosystems.

For older pupils studying advanced science subjects, the nutrient rich rocks outcropping at high altitude provide unique habitats for plants and the Reserve has the most extensive populations of arctic-alpine plants in Britain.

The wider Reserve is also home to exciting wildlife with several species, such as the ptarmigan, specially adapted to the extreme mountain conditions. Many other creatures can be seen on the lower slopes - from large mammals, like the red deer, to tiny insects. The site is also rich in archaeological remains which tell the story of human habitation from the past.

The school programme offers many opportunities for cross-curricular work and engaging with the Curriculum for Excellence:

The Ranger Service can offer a variety of activities relating to the specific habitats of the mountain, such as woodland and scrub, burns, bogs and moorland. We also can cover wider conservation issues, or offer activities relating to archaeology.

Resources:

- Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve leaflet - available for download - go to the Ben Lawers web page: www.nts.org.uk/Property/94/
- Ben Lawers Nature Trail illustrated guidebook - can be bought on site or from the Ben Lawers NNR office.
- Ben Lawers flora - a more detailed book about plants within the NNR - available for sale from the same office.
- Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve information sheets - relating to the management of the NNR - available for download - go to the Ben Lawers web page: www.nts.org.uk/Property/94/
- For more information for teachers, go to the NTS Learn website: www.ntslearning.org.uk
- Safety First for Outdoor Visits – available for download – go to Checklists at: www.nts.org.uk/Learn/schools_plan.php

For more information, visit www.nts.org.uk/Learn

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Planning your class visit:

- To book: Contact the Ben Lawers NNR office to discuss your visit; we can tailor interpretive activities to meet your requirements.
- Class teachers are encouraged to make a preparatory visit to the site.
- Certain times of the year are best for some topics e.g. burn dipping, mountain plants - so please bear this in mind when planning your visit.
- Maximum class size: we recommend a maximum ratio of 10 pupils to 1 adult. For logistical purposes, large classes may be split into groups.
- There are no toilets on site, so please make provision to stop en route.
- Ben Lawers is a mountainous property. The weather higher up the slopes can be quite different (and more extreme) than at lower altitudes. Please ensure that your pupils have adequate clothing. They should have both warm and waterproof clothing and footwear. For sunny days, your pupils should have protection against hot sun – for instance, a long sleeved jacket, a sunhat or cap
- The site has been risk assessed. Teachers are expected to prepare their own RA for the visit

Charges:

- There is no charge for schools with NTS educational membership. To apply contact the Ben Lawers office or go the NTS Learn website: www.ntslearning.org.uk
- Schools without NTS educational membership will need to pay a charge - charges vary depending on the activity. Please check before booking.

During your class visit:

- NTS staff will lead the school programme
- Teachers are responsible for their pupils, and for their behaviour
- Pupils do not need to bring any materials for the school programme
- Pupils/teachers may take photos on the site
- There are no buildings on site but staff carry shelters for emergency use.
- On arrival: Your class will be met by the ranger in the NNR car park

Getting to Ben Lawers:

- The NNR car park (grid Ref. NN608 378) is situated north of Loch Tay, 2 miles up hill road off A827, 6 miles north-east of Killin and 14 miles west of Kenmore.
- Please note that access to the Reserve car park is via a single track hill road which is unsuitable for full sized coaches.

For more information and to make a booking, contact:

Ben Lawers Ranger Service,
Ben Lawers NNR Office, Lynedoch, Main Street, Killin, Perthshire, FK21 8UW.
Telephone: 0844 493 2136
Email: benlawers@nts.org.uk