



the National Trust  
for Scotland  
a place for nature

# Killiecrankie

## A wildlife trail

### Description

While Killiecrankie is well known for the battle that took place between Jacobite and government troops in 1689, it is also a rich habitat for wildlife. A network of riverside paths explore the Pass and Linn of Tummel.

### Grade

Moderate

### Terrain

The paths are generally straightforward but there are steps and steep sections at the Soldier's Leap.

### Distance

From Visitor Centre:  
to Soldier's Leap ¼ mile / 500m  
to Garry Bridge ¾ mile / 1.2km  
to Falls of Tummel 1½ miles / 2.5kms

### Time

Visitor Centre to Soldier's Leap 10 mins  
Visitor Centre to Garry Bridge 30 mins  
Visitor Centre to Falls of Tummel 1 hour

### OS Map

Landranger Sheet 52

### Facilities

Toilets  
Parking  
Interpretation at Visitor Centre  
Car parking



The Trust is supported by  Scottish Natural Heritage  
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All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

The great thing about Killiecrankie is that there is something to see throughout the year. Highland rivers such as the Garry and the Tummel contain plenty of life, and are especially rich when their banks are covered in woodland. Insects, such as mayfly and caddisfly larvae, provide food for brown trout and young salmon.



**Spring** generates a floral extravaganza. White wood anemones carpet the woods on the way down to the Soldier's Leap, interspersed with primroses and violets. The air resonates with birdsong as the season progresses, with the males showing off and establishing breeding territories. Most notable are the residents – tits, finches, blackbirds, wrens and robins.



Wood anemone



Robin



Dog violet



**Summer** evenings see pipistrelle and Daubenton's bats darting through the air, each bat munching its way through 3,000 insects a night! Migrant birds such as pied and spotted flycatchers and wood and willow warblers have arrived to join the residents. Dashes of colour are still to be seen on the woodland floor, including purple devil's-bit scabious and ling heather. Look out for red squirrels and on sunny days clouds of Scotch Argus butterflies are often seen.



Scotch argus



Pied flycatcher



Red squirrel



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Ancient mixed woodlands dominate the sides of the Pass, which has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Less than 1% of Scotland's woods are considered ancient and semi-natural. The Killiecrankie woods are home to an amazing variety of wildlife. This diverse blend includes not only the obvious birds, wildflowers and mammals but also a large number of less apparent wildlife including insects, spiders, mosses, fungi and lichens.



**Autumn** in the pass is spectacular with each tree species making its own particular contribution to a mesmerising blend of gold, burgundy, saffron, amber, russet, umber and many other colours. Look out for a fascinating array of fungi – over 400 species have been identified. During

periods of rain you can see the amazing sight of leaping salmon at the falls beneath the famous Soldier's Leap and at the Falls of Tummel.



**Winter** brings the overwhelming sensation of silence and solitude. Trees stand tall, no longer burdened by their life-giving foliage, bare spars of branches supporting an interlocking network of naked twigs. Snow may be deep in a hard winter and tracks from deer or squirrels

and the runs of small mammals are common, but perhaps the most exciting discovery is the five-toed webbed print of the secretive otter.





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## A battle trail

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### Grade

Moderate

### Terrain

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### Distance

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to Soldier's Leap      ¼ mile / 500m  
to Garry Bridge      ¾ mile / 1.2 km  
to Falls of Tummel    1½ miles / 2.5 km

### Time

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Visitor Centre to Garry Bridge    30 mins  
Visitor Centre to Falls of Tummel   1 hour

### OS Map

Landranger Sheet 52

### Facilities

Toilets  
Parking  
Car parking



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Màire air fad airson Alba air fad

**The Battle of Killiecrankie** was fought on 27 July 1689 between the Jacobites, led by John Graham of Claverhouse (also known as Bonnie Dundee), and the government troops commanded by General Hugh Mackay. The Jacobites were victorious and the government troops fled down the Pass.



### ② Trooper's Den

Mackay's 4000 troops scrambled through the Pass on what was then a very, narrow muddy path with 1200 baggage horses. They were shadowed by a lone Atholl hunter – Iain Ban Beag Mac-rath. Once the troops were within easy reach, Mac-rath killed a cavalry officer here with his only bullet.

### ③ Soldier's Leap

During the flight of the government troops after the battle, one soldier – Donald McBane – made a spectacular escape. Chased by a group of Jacobites, McBane climbed down onto the rocky riverbank and made an 18ft (5.5m) leap across the fast-flowing River Garry. He later wrote that 'Many of our men were lost in that water'.

### ④ The Balfour Stone

Amongst those killed fleeing the battlefield was Brigadier Barthold Balfour of the Dutch Brigade, who commanded the left wing of Mackay's army. The stone, approximately two-thirds of the way down the Pass, is reputed to mark the spot where he died.

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- |   |                    |   |                            |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| ① | NTS Visitor Centre | ⑤ | Green footbridge           |
| ② | Trooper's Den      | ⑥ | Garry Bridge & bungee jump |
| ③ | Soldier's Leap     | ⑦ | Falls of Tummel            |
| ④ | The Balfour Stone  |   |                            |