

# BENNAN VIEWPOINT

- **Linear forest walk with viewpoint**
- **4.5km/3 miles (return)**
- **Allow 1¾ hours**
- **Hard surface tracks, beaten earth, some steps**
- **Moderate**
- **Boots or stout shoes recommended**

**PARKING** is available at the Forest Enterprise car park approximately 5.5km/3½ miles south of New Galloway and approximately 19km/12 miles north of Castle Douglas on the A762. NX653724.

Bennan Hill is within the Galloway Forest Park and sits towards the northern end of Loch Ken. It is a small hill but one which gives unsurpassed views over the loch and the surrounding countryside. It is easily accessible, being just off the road, and can be enjoyed on its own or as part of a tour around the loch. Loch Ken is part of the Galloway Hydro Electric Scheme which was completed in 1936. Part of it is in an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). The area is extremely rich in wildlife, containing a variety of habitats, making it important for greylag geese, whooper swans, great crested grebes and especially its wintering flock of Greenland white-fronted geese. The surrounding woodlands also support a number of less common birds such as willow tits, wood warblers, redstarts and pied flycatchers. The loch is the most important established water skiing centre in Southern Scotland. Windsurfing, dinghy sailing, rowing and canoeing are also available from the various Marinas around the loch.

**START** from the car park. There are two possible routes to the viewpoint. The one described here is longer but less steep.

Follow the path off to the left until it meets the forest track. Follow the waymarkers and soon you will reach an area where mature douglas firs dominate. Continue to follow the waymarkers through the forest, listening out for the abrupt screech of a jay amongst the trees. The track turns off to the right and continues to go gradually uphill. As the path becomes slightly steeper, the views start

to open out. The path soon levels out and you pass the point where the two routes meet. The viewpoint is not far from here. Once you are at the top, enjoy the wonderful views over Loch Ken to Mochrum Fell and the surrounding countryside. The viewpoint has an information board which tells you all you can expect to see in the area. On a clear day, Screel and Bengairn can be seen in the distance. You can also pick out the villages of Crossmichael and Mossdale. Keep an eye out for buzzards soaring at eye level, taking advantage of the thermals, and for red kites recently reintroduced to this part of Scotland. To return retrace your steps to the car park.



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