

KIELDER

WATER & FOREST PARK

Your Great Outdoors

SPRING IN YOUR STEP

If it's bright sunshine, clear skies and crisp air you're after – you can't beat Kielder Water & Forest Park in the spring. Enjoy the stillness of the reservoir and absorb the peace and tranquillity at this magical time of year.

Note – it's always best to check spring opening hours before you set off. You can download this document from the home page of the website.

Day one

Blow away the cobwebs and start your adventure with a brisk spring morning walk. Leave Leaplish Waterside Park via the Lakeside Way (near to the play ground) and head in the direction of the dam. Why not stop off at the squirrel hide and see if you can spot one of the native reds?

On approach to Bull Crag Peninsula is Freya's Cabin, another part of the art and architecture programme. It forms a fairytale with Robin's Hut which is directly opposite on the north shore. Continue along the peninsula. There are sweeping views from Otterstone Lee, the former site of one of England's largest sheep farms and a series of brass rubbing locations which form part of the Kielder Keepsake interactive artwork.

Towards the end of Bull Crag the path heads around the southern side of the peninsula and briefly passes through the Bull Crag parking area. The Lakeside Way descends into the valley but by continuing straight on (and following the signs) visitors will return to Freya's Cabin and Leaplish Waterside Park as this is a circular route. Please note that the latter section on Bull Crag is on forest tracks, some of which have a rough, loose stone surface.

Head to the Boat Inn restaurant and bar where you can grab a hearty lunch to warm you to your toes.

After lunch it is definitely worth paying a visit to the Kielder Water Birds of Prey Centre. They care for a whole host of birds including owls, falcons and vultures as well as two fallow deer, two

wallabies, guinea pigs and red squirrels. Expect a 'hands on' experience through daily flying demonstrations (normally on an afternoon – check the time on the day), hunting days, hawk walks, falconry courses and school visits. You'll even get the chance to feed two of the largest flying birds in the world, a pair of Great White Pelicans.

Day two

Breathe in the fresh air with a morning stroll around the delightful Lewisburn Park at Matthew's Linn and the path descends underneath the C200 road bridge and meanders around the scenic and tranquil Lewisburn inlet, taking in the unique curved suspension bridge. From the bridge, the path climbs to give fine views over the inlet from Patterson's Pause (a natural stone table with chairs) where herons, buzzards and a variety of woodland birds are a common sight.

Continue around the inlet, back underneath the road bridge and onto the Mirage deck - a great place to stop and admire the view (to return retrace your steps).

Drive to Kielder Castle Visitor Centre and pop into the Duke's Pantry for some hot soup or a snack.

Spend the afternoon following the Bakethin circular walk (full route is covered in the Trails Guide which can be downloaded from the website). Start at Bakethin car park, turn left along the river, then turn right and cross Batteredhaugh Bridge (look out for otters). There are superb views of Bakethin reservoir and together with the old railway line and viaduct there are some great places to see local wildlife along this walk.