

In brief

Category: Moderate/Difficult

Map Reference: OS Landranger Map 18 (Sound of Harris, North Uist, Taransay & St Kilda) and OS Explorer Map 454 (North Uist & Berneray)

Start and End Grid Reference: NF 894 679

Walking Distance: 16km/10 miles

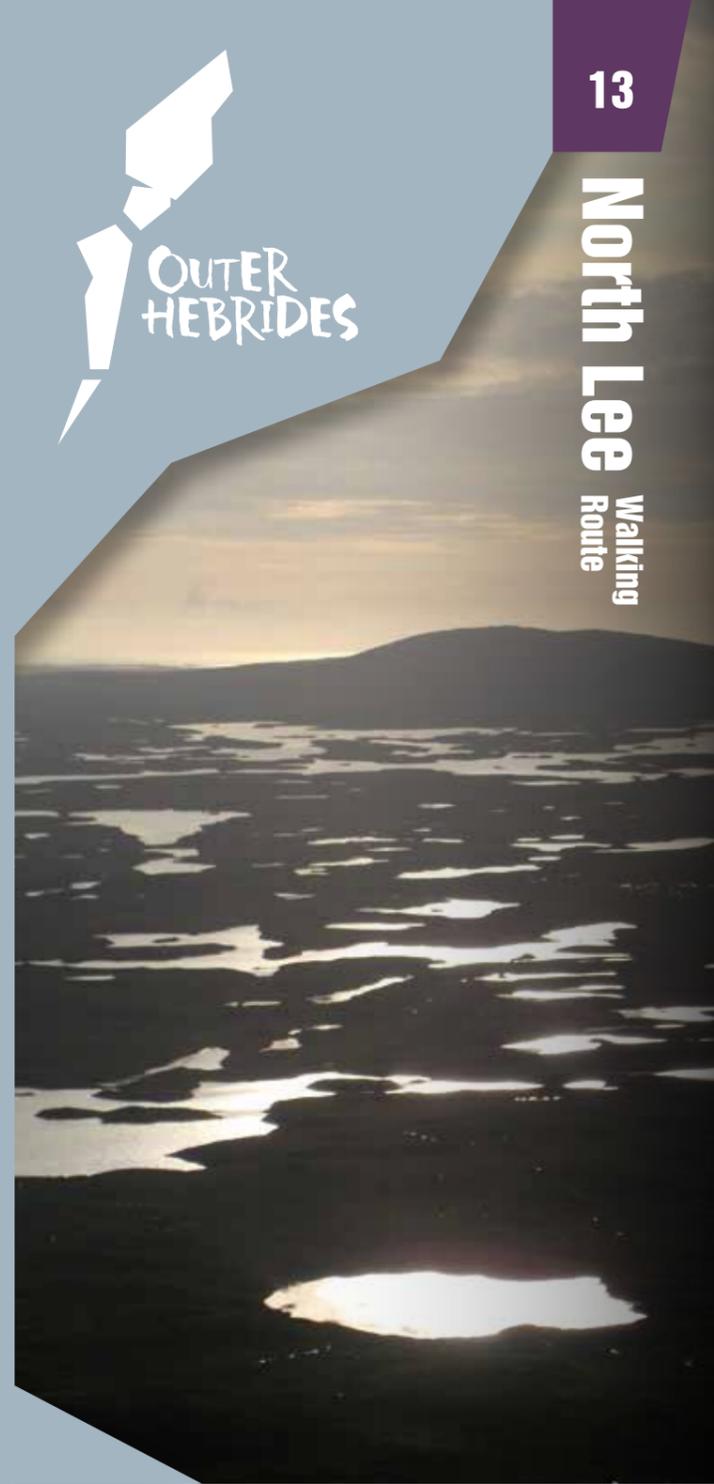
Time: 4 – 5 hours



Our walking and cycling routes are part of a series of self-guided trails through the Outer Hebrides. For more information scan here.



www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk
www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/apps



Our islands offer great opportunities to explore the outdoors, with walks providing you with the chance to get close to nature, history and heritage of our islands or just to get out, enjoy the fresh air and get fit.

Choose coastal walks around the Outer Hebrides or opt for wildlife walks, such as hiking through the nature reserves or walks to spot eagles, deer and other exciting island inhabitants.

History lovers can choose to walk the Bonnie Prince Charlie trail in Uist whole or part, while a selection of hiking trails take in historic sites and monuments providing ample points of interest along the way.

Whether you are looking for leisurely strolls along island beaches, or challenging hikes through rugged mountain terrain, walking on our islands gives you a chance to really connect with the outdoors and keep fit at the same time.



For more information and to download other walking routes, visit:

www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk

Outdoor Safety

Staying safe whilst walking is mostly a matter of common sense:

- Check the weather forecast before you set out.
- Take appropriate clothing – these walks may cover some rough, wet ground, so wear your boots. A jacket is always advisable.
- Take extra care as some of these walks are along steep cliffs. This walk is not for windy days!
- Carry water and a bite to eat.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Always bring a compass and map with you.

Scottish Outdoor Access Code

In Scotland we have some of the best access laws in the world – we have the right to walk on most land provided we behave responsibly and respect the rights of others. Full information on access rights and responsibilities can be found at

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

If you keep to the following guidelines you won't go far wrong:

- Do not disturb livestock or wildlife.
- Keep dogs under control, especially at lambing time.
- Leave gates as you found them.
- Take all your litter home.

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It then rises up the south west, slopes to 263m and then follows the ridge north at the top of North Lee - a good place to see eagles and providing spectacular views of Uist, Skye, Harris and Barra.”

Golden Eagle



The Route

This walk in the east of North Uist provides some of the most spectacular uninterrupted views, with lots of wildlife and a diverse terrain.

Beginning 1 mile south of Lochmaddy on the road to Clachan, the path crosses the coastal plain to reach the foot of North Lee. It then rises up the south west slopes to 263m and then follows the ridge north at the top of North Lee - a good place to see eagles and providing spectacular views of Uist, Skye, Harris and Barra. On a clear day, you can see St Kilda to the west. The route then descends past the site of a World War II plane crash and re-joins the path to take you back to the road.

The walk is across some of Europe's oldest rocks. Known as the Lewisian Gneiss - these rocks are more than 2.5 billion years in age and are the oldest rocks in the British Isles. The fault-toughened rocks are exceptionally erosion resistant and form the line of summits ranged down the eastern side of the Uists.

Lochmaddy has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation in recognition of the presence of a number of outstanding habitats. It is regarded as an excellent example of the feature 'large shallow inlet and bays', being the most complex and the second largest fjordic sealoch in Europe. You will walk through a haven of wildlife from assorted varieties of bog plants, to birds of prey, wading birds and deer.

Lochmaddy



Grasslands

1 Starting 1 mile south of Lochmaddy the walk is clearly signposted and the path is waymarked throughout. If you are travelling by car, you can park on the old Lochmaddy road nearby.

Go through the gate, heading through the improved grass lands and damp marshy areas. This part of the route is flat and passes to the north of Loch a'Chadha Ruaidh.

The grasslands have a rich array of wildflowers and birds including waders such as lapwings, redshanks and oystercatchers. You can also spot meadow pipits, wheatears and stonechats. Plants to look for include curled dock, sheep's and common sorrel, eyebright, tormentil, bulbous buttercups and creeping and meadow buttercups.

Once you reach a fence, go over the stile and this will take you into the open moorland.

Bog asphodel



Red Deer



Moorland

2 Carry on the route across the moorland passing between Loch na Hostrach and Loch Nighe. To the north you can see the ruin of the North Uist Estate gamekeeper's cottage, last inhabited in the early to mid-20th century. You may encounter two species of birds of prey - the hen harrier and the short-eared owl and you may also see red deer. In summer, the yellow flowers of the bog asphodel will be very noticeable, this plant used to be called "bone-breaker" as the habitat on which it grows lacks calcium, so any livestock

grazing these areas can be prone to weak bones. Carnivorous plants that can be found here and these include three species of sundew. Sundew lure, capture and digest insects using hair-like tendrils tipped with glistening droplets on each leaf. Whilst very attractive to insects, this 'dew' is sticky and when the sundew's tendrils detect the presence of prey, it curls them inwards, trapping the insect. Eventually, the whole leaf wraps around the prey, the enclosed insect is digested and the nutrients absorbed by the plant - supplementing the poor mineral nutrition of the soil in which the plants grow.

Short eared owl



North Lee

3 As you approach the foot of North Lee you will see a fence with a stile to cross over. You will then start to climb North Lee on the south west slopes, with the route rising to the summit at 263m. It's a bit of a climb to the summit, but you are rewarded with stunning views looking over to Skye, Harris, Uist, Barra and if the day is clear, you can see St Kilda to the west.

Golden and white tailed sea eagles are sometimes seen in this area. The white tailed sea

eagle is our largest bird of prey with a wing span of 2.2 metres. The head and body are much paler than that of a golden eagle, and - as the name suggests - the tail is completely white. Ravens, can also be seen, as can rock doves.

There is an abundance of heathers with three species found here; cross-leaved heath, common heather or ling and bell heather. Wild thyme can also be seen - a common plant but is often overlooked as it is so small.

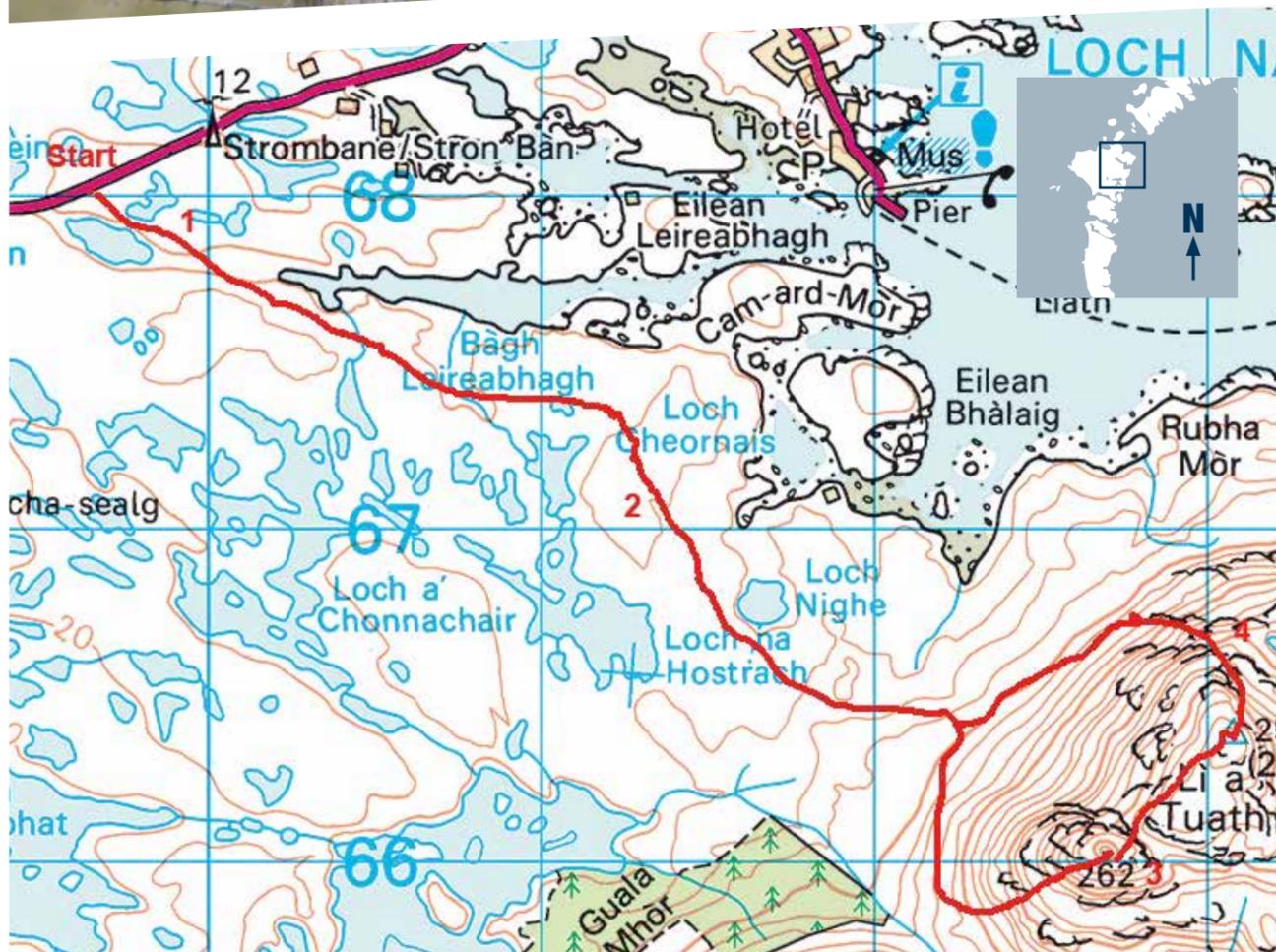
Site of World War II Air Crash

4 The route follows the ridge to trig point 251m. At this point you start to descend North Lee and you will pass the site of a World War II air crash.

On 15 September 1943, a B-24 set out from Meeks Field, Reykjavik in Iceland on a delivery flight to RAF Nutts Corner, Northern Ireland. However whilst flying very low over the Outer Hebrides in a heavy rainstorm and mist, the plane crashed at North Ben Lee. On impact, the plane erupted into flames setting off

the ammunition on board. Although a heroic attempt was made by locals to rescue the 10 airmen, it proved unsuccessful. Most of the crew died in the crash and those that survived, succumbed to their injuries a short time later. You will see the memorial plaque to the crew, which pays tribute to the people of Lochmaddy, who did all in their power to rescue the airmen.

At the foot of the hill you will re-join the path back to the road.



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