

Access Point: Ballyronan Marina



The newly upgraded Ballyronan Marina is a picturesque facility boasting over 70 berths, slipways, play and picnic areas, a restaurant and full camping amenities. Ballyronan is known for its pubs and live music. The friendly village of Ballyronan Wood has a pleasant walkway along the shore of Lough Neagh. The Marina is home to the Maid of Antrim - one of the oldest wooden-hulled passenger vessels in Northern Ireland. She was built on the Clyde in 1963 and has since been restored to her original condition and now leaves from Ballyronan on regular tours.

Look out for:

- Butterflies, along the shore, including ringlet, meadow brown and orange-tip.
- Scamps, diving ducks with a resemblance to tufted ducks. Males have black heads.
- Females are brown, with characteristic white patches around the base of the bill.

Orange-tip butterfly



Male Scamp



Female Scamp



Access Point: Battery Harbour



Battery Harbour has fully serviced berths for overnight stays, plus full caravan and camping facilities. It is a good place to observe the traditional eel fishermen of Lough Neagh plying their craft. Historically a fisherman's cottage, the 300 year old Coyle's Cottage still stands today. It was primarily built of mud walls, supported by four stone-bull corners and whitewashed to help withstand weathering. The thatch, a local lough-shore reed was used because of its durability.

Look out for:

- Irish Hares, which frequent the shoreline, especially where there is unimproved grassland, hedgerows and patches of wet woodland.
- Goldeneyes, medium sized diving ducks. Males look black and white with a greenish black head and a circular white patch in front of the yellow eye. Females are smaller, and are mottled grey with a chocolate brown head.

Irish Hare



Male Goldeneye



Access Point: Washing Bay



At Washing Bay look out for:

- Rare plants, including Irish lady's tresses
- Historically been recorded in the Washing Bay area.
- Tufted ducks, medium-sized diving ducks, smaller than mallard. They are black on the head, neck, breast and black and white on the sides. They have a small crest and a yellow eye.

Irish lady's tresses



Male Tufted Duck



Access Point: Kinnego Marina



Kinnego Marina is a launching site for the Lough Neagh Rescue service and has 190 berths, a play and picnic area. The Marina is situated on Oxford Island at the edge of the Oxford Island National Nature Reserve. Oxford Island is also home to the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre which has exhibition and conference facilities. The National Nature Reserve is an excellent place to watch birds and other wildlife of the Lough from six bird hides that are located around the island. Pleasant walks wind through the woods and traditionally managed meadows.

Look out for:

- White-clawed crayfish, which occasionally can be spotted in the areas near to Ballinerry River on the west shore of the Lough.
- Pochards, stocky diving ducks, smaller than a mallard. The male is pale grey with a rusky red head and neck, and a black breast and tail. The female is brown with a dark head and blotchy cheeks.

White-clawed crayfish



Male Pochard

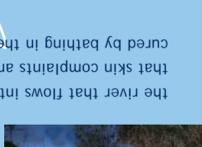


Access Point: Washing Bay



Washing Bay has a long history of attracting people hoping to be healed from their ailments. As far back as 1712, pilgrims were drawn to the place by the reputed healing qualities of the river that flows into the Lough. They believed that skin complaints and other ailments could be cured by bathing in the holy waters.

Male Goldeneye



Access Point: Rams Island



Rams Island is the largest island on Lough Neagh and was once a monastic settlement. The round tower on the island is 43 feet high and is the remains of a Celtic monastic settlement about a thousand years old. The island was only 6 O'Neill for 100 guineas in 1804, but subsequently it increased to 40 acres when the Lough was lowered!

Look out for:

- Fish. Species of interest within the Lough include pollan, eel, atlantic salmon, doliaghan trout and lamprey.
- Gadwall are very grey-coloured dabbling ducks, a little smaller than the mallard, and with an obvious black rear end. When seen close up the grey colour is made up of exquisitely fine barring and speckling.

Eel



Male Gadwall



Access Point: Antrim Lough Shore Park



At Antrim Lough Shore Park look out for:

- Bats. Several species are found hunting over Lough Neagh in late evening. One of these is the Daubentons Bat (also known as the Water Bat) which likes to hunt very close to the surface of the water.
- Great crested grebes, living here are delightfully elegant water birds with ornate head plumes. They have an elaborate courtship display in which they rise out of the water and shake their heads. Very young grebes often ride on their parents' back.

Daubentons Bat



Great crested grebe



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

In the unlikely event of an Emergency use the following numbers: Police and Ambulance 999 or 112 (all phones) and ask for the Coast Guard.

* Note that mobile phone reception is unreliable in many areas.

SAFETY

Canoeing is an adventure sport and as such should be treated with respect. If you are new to the sport, it is advisable to Join an organised club where expert coaching can be provided. (Details of clubs and courses can be found at www.canl.org.uk)

When taking part in canoeing consider the following safety advice:

1. Be aware of the limitations and needs of larger craft that are restricted to deep water channels.
2. Be aware that large sand barges operate in Lough Neagh, especially near sand quays.
3. Be aware that seaplanes may operate on the Lough.
4. Wear adequate buoyancy in the form of a personal life jacket or buoyancy aid. Canoe buoyancy should be sufficient to keep the canoe afloat if you capsize.
5. It is not recommended to canoe alone - three boats is the minimum required for most rescues.
6. Remember! A canoe may be difficult to see from a larger craft so carry a whistle.
7. You do not need to be a strong swimmer but you will need the water confidence to deal with a capsized boat and get ashore safely.
8. Wear adequate clothing. Prolonged immersion in cold water leads to hypothermia - hypothermia can kill.
9. Consider attending a recognised training course, which explores skills, safety and environmental issues.
10. Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
11. Lough Neagh can become rough in strong winds - carrying rafting poles is a sensible precaution (rafted canoes are more stable in rough conditions).
12. Leave details of your Journey with a responsible adult.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centres/Accommodation:

Antrim	T: +44 (0) 28 9442 8331
Lisburn	T: +44 (0) 28 9266 0038
Craigavon	T: +44 (0) 28 3832 2205
Dungannon	T: +44 (0) 28 8776 7259
Cookstown	T: +44 (0) 28 8676 9949
Magherafelt	T: +44 (0) 28 7963 1510
Police - non-emergency:	T: 0845 6008000

Any changes to the trail that may occur will be updated on our web site as we are made aware of them. Please log on and tell us what's old, what's new and what you thought of the trail!

www.canoeni.com

CAAN:
NITB:
www.discovernorthernireland.com

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Disclaimer:
The information on this guide may not be 100% accurate - It is designed to be used in conjunction with an OSNI 1:50,000 map. The publishers, authors and contributors can accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person as a result of information or advice given in this guide.

canoe TRAILS

Finding freedom in Northern Ireland on the

Lough Neagh Canoe Trail

LOUGH NEAGH IS THE UNITED KINGDOM'S LARGEST INLAND LAKE WITH A SHORELINE OF OVER 90 MILES/150KM. PADDLERS CAN EXPLORE THE NUMEROUS BAYS AND INLETS AROUND THE LOUGH OR THE VAST EXPANSE OF OPEN WATER WHILST OBSERVING A DIVERSITY OF WILDLIFE AND HISTORICAL SITES



Lough Neagh is the United Kingdom's largest inland lake with a shoreline of over 90miles/150km. The Lough Neagh Trail links the Blackwater Trail, which enters at the southern end, and the Lower Bann Trail, which exits at the northern end. Combining these trails it is possible to paddle from the southern part of Northern Ireland to the Atlantic Ocean on the north coast.

In the days when waterways provided a means of transporting goods Lough Neagh was an important hub which linked the Lagan, the Blackwater and Ulster and Newry canals. Today the main water based transport is by sand barges which remove sand from the lough bed and transfer it to quays on the northern and eastern shores.

A unique and diverse shoreline together with the vastness of open water provides for the novice and experienced paddlers, while the rich wild life - the lough being an important conservation area- and numerous historical sites ensures that the paddlers have a fulfilling experience.

The trail can be started at any access point and can be completed in full or in part. It can be a serious undertaking as large waves build up on the vast expanse of open water during windy periods, challenging the most competent paddler.

This guide has been designed for canoeists by canoeists. It provides practical advice on everything required for an enjoyable experience including details of camp sites, access points, phone numbers etc.

Happy paddling!




Access Point: Cranfield



On the shores of Lough Neagh at Churchtown Point lie the ruins of an ancient Irish Church and St Olcan's Holy Well. Tradition states that the well was blessed with healing properties by St Olcan who, it is reputed, lies buried at Cranfield's 13th Century church in earth brought from Rome. The well's fine spring water and amber coloured crystals were believed to protect women during childbirth, men from drowning and homes from fire and burglary. Emigrants to America carried the crystals to protect them from shipwreck.

Look out for:

- Otters, which live around most of the Lough may be sighted in early morning or late evening.
- Coots, which are all-black and larger than their cousin, the moorhen. Their distinctive white beak with 'shield' above earns them the title 'bald'.

Crane



Otters



Coot



Access Point: Antrim Lough Shore Park



Situated on the shores of Lough Neagh, Antrim Lough Shore Park is an area steeped in history and natural beauty. The Lough Shore Coffee House is open all year round and during the summer months there are a range of events from Summer Bands and Childrens Activities to Boat Trips and the Viking Boat Race on Lough Neagh. A slipway offers free access to the Lough for boats and canoes and camping is available onsite. The Park is within walking distance of Antrim Town and local attractions including Antrim Forum Leisure Centre, Antrim Castle Gardens, Clotworthy Arts Centre and Rea's Wood.

Boat at Lough Shore Park



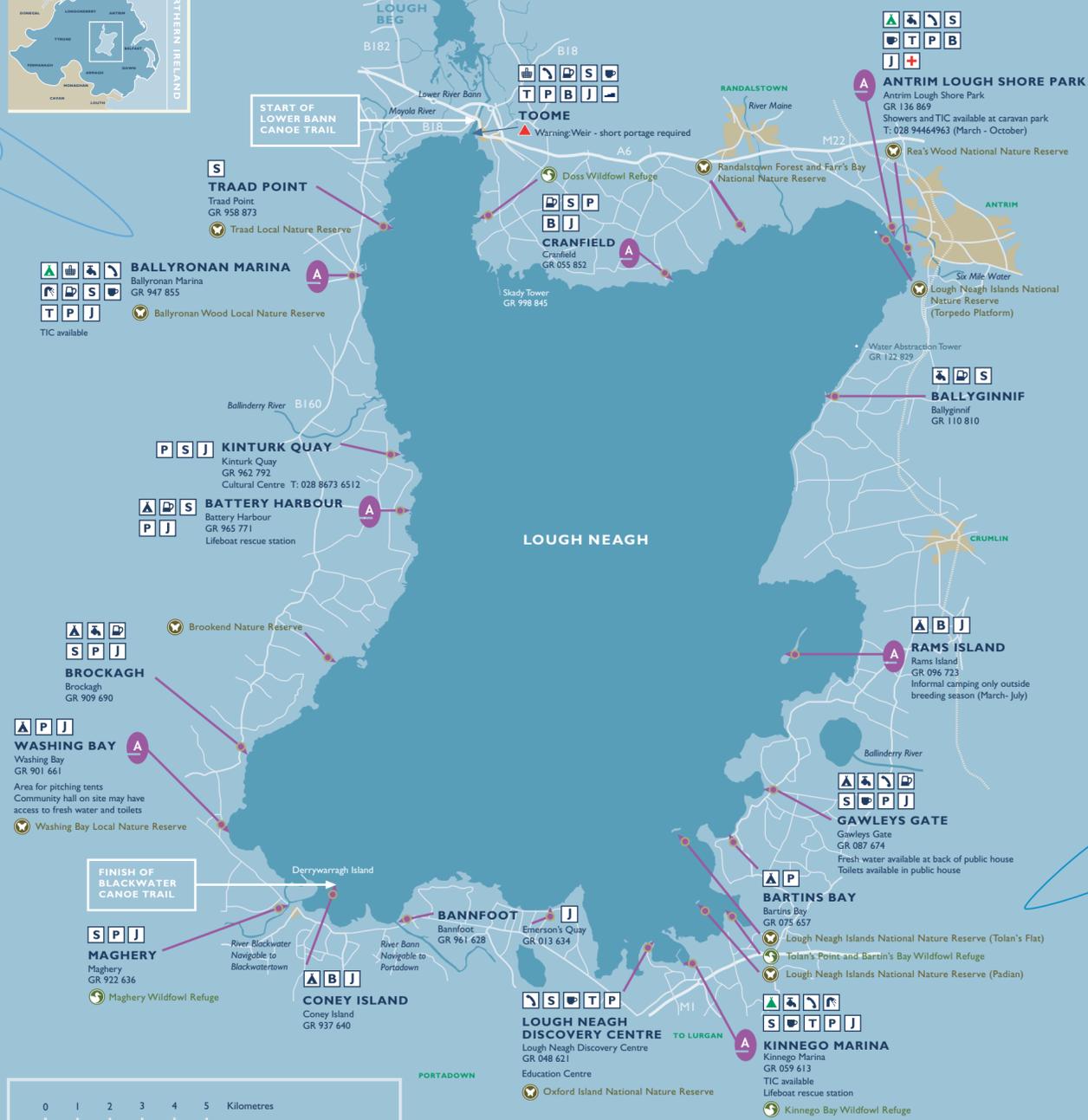
Lough Neagh Canoe Trail

Finding freedom in Northern Ireland on the

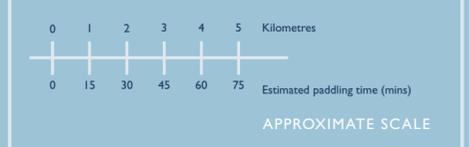
Legend has it that Lough Neagh was created by the great Irish giant Finn McCool. The story goes that whilst chasing away a Scottish rival, 'The Mighty Man' scooped out the Lough basin and threw it after the interloper, who was attempting to flee Ulster by way of the Giant's Causeway. He missed, and the piece of land fell into the Irish Channel and in doing so formed the Isle of Man.

The name means the Lough of the horse-god Eochu. He was the lord of the underworld, who was supposed to exist beneath its waters.

Scientists say that the Lough was formed in the early Tertiary period, some 50 million years ago, when a fault line occurred and an area of land sunk allowing it to fill with water. Six major rivers flow into Lough Neagh, and only one, the Lower Bann, flows out to meet the Atlantic Ocean north of Coleraine. The level of the Lough has been lowered on 4 occasions, the first in 1846 and the last in 1959.



- ### Earning a Welcome
1. Please be friendly and polite to local residents and other water users.
 2. Drive with care and consideration and park sensibly.
 3. Change clothing discreetly, preferably out of public view.
 4. Gain permission before going on to private property.
 5. Minimise your impact on the natural environment and use recognised access points.
 6. Be sensitive to wildlife and other users regarding the level of noise you create.
 7. Observe wildlife from a distance and be aware of sensitive times when birds are nesting or over wintering.
 8. Maintain positive, co-operative relationships with other water users and landowners.
 9. Please keep clear of anglers. Friendly communication can create a positive reaction.
 10. Follow the 'Leave no Trace' principles. For more information visit www.leaveonotraceireland.org.
 11. Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the water conditions and the impact on your surroundings.



OSNI 1:50,000 map used

MAPS NEEDED: OSNI DISCOVERER SERIES
 LOUGH NEAGH: 1:50,000 Sheet 14
 ARMAGH: 1:50,000 Sheet 19
 CRAIGAVON: 1:50,000 Sheet 20

Detailed Admiralty Chart 2163 available for Lough Neagh.
 Detailed Pilot Book available for River Bann and Lough Neagh
 ISBN 0 9517068 9 6.

KEY

Official campsite	Shower	Parking
Informal camping	Public house	Historical building/ruins
Shop	Slipway	Jetty
Fresh water	Cafe/restaurant	Hospital - A&E
Telephone	Toilets	Canoe Step
Access points		
National Nature Reserves		
Wildfowl Refuges		
GR Grid reference		

Town facilities include shops, banks, post offices and restaurants. Public houses on the shore are open at nights and weekends. Cafes/restaurants and official campsites are mainly open in the summer months.

All sites with slips and jetties cater for disability access with varying degrees depending on the water level. It is recommended to check before starting a journey.



Getting There

Note distances/times are based on the nearest access point on Lough Neagh. The Lough is approx 40 miles from top to bottom and 20 miles across.

To Lough Neagh from:

BELFAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
 Distance: 5 miles
 Time: 10 minutes

THE GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY AIRPORT
 Distance: 18 miles
 Time: 35 minutes

BELFAST FERRY TERMINALS
 Distance: 15 miles
 Time: 30 minutes

LARNE FERRY TERMINAL
 Distance: 22 miles
 Time: 35 minutes

CITY OF DERRY AIRPORT
 Distance: 60 miles
 Time: 1 hr 20 minutes

DUBLIN AIRPORT
 Distance: 80 miles
 Time: 1 hr 40 minutes

DUBLIN AREA FERRY TERMINALS
 Distance: 90 miles
 Time: 2 hours

ROSSLARE FERRY TERMINAL
 Distance: 180 miles
 Time: 4 hours

CORK AIRPORT/FERRY TERMINALS
 Distance: 240 miles
 Time: 5 hrs 20 minutes

Camping Facilities

Official campsites

CAMPSITE	TELEPHONE	OPEN FROM
Antrim Lough Shore Park	028 9446 4963	March - October
Kinnego Marina	028 3832 7573	April - September
Ballyronan Marina	028 7941 8399	April - September

All the above sites have toilets, fresh water and shower facilities 24 hours per day (see map and key for extra facilities). Advance booking is advised - a camping fee is charged. This fee varies per site.

Overnight camping

Is possible on the grass/beach at the public access sites but note that some sites are fairly limited with room for 2-3 tents maximum.

Site	Parking	Toilets	Shower	Water	Facilities Nearby
Gawleys Gate	•	•	•	•	Pub nearby serves food
Bartins Bay	•	•	•	•	Pub at Gawleys Gate
Washing Bay	•	•	•	•	Shops at Brockagh 3km
Battery Harbour	•	•	•	•	Pub nearby serves food
Brockagh	•	•	•	•	Pub nearby

Camping is also possible on Rams and Coney Island but there are no facilities, including water, and restricted in the nesting season.

Do not light fires at any of the above sites unless permission has been given by the landowner. Never miss an opportunity to use a proper toilet facility. If you must go in the outdoors follow the 'Leave no Trace' principles and guidelines.

CANOE TOURS

Company	Telephone	Services
Action Outdoors	+44 (0) 28 4483 2894	(instruction, guided tours)
Belfast Activity Centre	+44 (0) 28 9060 0132	(canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability)
Bluelough Adventure Centre	+44 (0) 28 4377 0714	(canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability)
Clearsky Adventure Centre	+44 (0) 28 4372 3933	(instruction, guided tours, provision for disability)
Craigavon Watersport Centre	+44 (0) 28 3834 2669	(canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability)
Mobile Team Adventure	+44 (0) 28 9180 0809	(canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability)
Outdoor Concept	+44 (0) 28 9753 1343	(canoe hire, instruction, guided tours, provision for disability)

For insurance purposes some companies may only allow you to hire their boats if you have a minimum of a BCU Level 2 coach award (or equivalent) for the craft that you wish to use, otherwise you will need to hire a qualified instructor. Bluelough offer a 50% discount to all CANI, ICU, BCU, SCA and WCA members!



RAMSAR site

Lough Neagh is an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI); a Special Protection Area (SPA) designated under the EU Birds Directive; and one of the World's most important Wetlands - listed as a RAMSAR site.

This leaflet has been produced by CANI and CAAN.

The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland is the governing body for canoeing in Northern Ireland.
 Email: office@cani.org.uk
 Website: www.cani.org.uk

The Countryside Access and Activities Network is responsible for the strategic development, management and promotion of countryside recreation across Northern Ireland.
 Email: info@countrysidecreation.com
 Website: www.countrysidecreation.com

Both CANI and CAAN endorse the principles of 'Leave No Trace'.

This project has received financial support from:

ACCESS MAP: based upon 2008 Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland 1:50,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 2008. Permit no 70101.