

CATERAN TRAIL

Notes on multi-use access

The Cateran Trail is a circular 64 mile route following old drove roads, paths and tracks through the hills and glens of eastern Perthshire and Angus. This long distance route is now recognised as one of Scotland's Great Trails. The route was originally designed and created for walkers, albeit incorporating some sections of path and track with a long tradition of equestrian or multi-use. Since then, access legislation has changed in Scotland, and interest from cyclists and horse-riders in using the Cateran Trail has increased significantly.



Much of the Cateran Trail follows old drove roads, farm and forest tracks which in theory at least are ideal for multi-use, but there are still numerous sections of the Cateran Trail where a single kissing gate or stile presents an obstruction in the middle of a long section otherwise ideal for multi-use, with no alternative way round or past. These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to help identify location and brief details of features which may restrict multi-use of the Cateran Trail. Only those which may present an issue for experienced riders are noted below – shallow fords, bridges, cross drains, gates which can only be opened or closed if dismounted, rough ground, sheep and cattle are all part of riding off-road and so are not documented. Inclusion of a particular feature does not necessarily mean that it is impassable with a horse. Photos have been included where appropriate to help you assess for yourself whether a feature such as steps, a narrow footbridge, gate or gap less than 1.5m wide may present an obstruction to you. These notes are intended to supplement detailed route guides and other information already available from the route website (<http://www.caterantrail.org>) and other sources.

All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves whether this route, or any section thereof, is suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience, as well as season, weather conditions etc. Riders are responsible for deciding for themselves where and when it may be safer to dismount and lead their horse. Suggestions for parking and alternative routes to avoid obstructions are included where volunteers have provided relevant information but do not constitute a recommendation, and you may wish to explore other options. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Cateran Trail are urged to contact the route managers.

Make sure you have a map with you, and know how to read it. Remember that whether on foot, cycle or horseback, rights of access in Scotland depend on access takers and land managers accepting individual responsibility for their actions. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/> offers guidance on what this means on the ground. Specific guidance for horse riders can be downloaded from <http://www.bhsscotland.org.uk/responsible-riding.html>.

Courtesy, consideration of others' needs and good communication are the key to sharing paths. Always pass others you meet along the trail at a walk, and elsewhere limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility. Riders need to be particularly careful to respect other users on well used sections of the route. As this is a livestock farming area, please take particular care to leave gates as you find them. Grouse shooting and stalking are common on much of the hill ground over which the CATERAN Trail passes, as are pheasant and partridge shooting on lower ground. Access rights still apply when shooting and stalking are taking place, but you should take particular care to stick to the path or track to avoid inadvertently disturbing a shoot.

Blairgowrie to Bridge of Cally

The waymarked path along the river north from Blairgowrie is currently closed due to a landslip, with a signed diversion along Oakbank Road and Upper Allan Street. Kissing gates between East and West Gormack present an obstruction to cyclists and horse-riders, but the track north from West Gormack to Bridge of Cally although wet in places has a firm base, is very easy to follow and accessible with a horse or on a bike, albeit with a lot of cows (particularly in winter when they are fed on or near the track). All of the gates across the moor are passable but a few may require dismounting to open and close because of problems with hinges or fastening mechanism. An alternative track which avoids the cattle feeding area on the track north of Middleton, which can also be used as a circular in conjunction with the CATERAN Trail between Middleton and Bridge of Cally, is outlined below.

There is a small car park in Blairgowrie at OSGR NO181453 which, when not busy, may have space for a trailer. Parking at Bridge of Cally is by permission at the pub, or there is space for a trailer up the track in Black Craig Wood (but limited turning space).

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO179455	Steep wooden steps 	Follow Oakbank Road rather than riverside path
NO1774555	Narrow gap <1m wide between fence and tree 	As above – follow Oakbank Road
NO165463 to	Series of 7 wooden kissing gates	PKCT exploring scope for replacing

158468 East Gormack to West Gormack	across narrow fenced path along edge of field 	kissing gates with self-closing bridlegates, inc. s/c bridlegate to avoid farmyard. Meanwhile the only alternative is either to try and find a way through the fields, or to follow the track via South Gormack and Woodside, which then involves a short section on the busy A923 before turning off on the minor road north from Kinloch.
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Alternative route from Bridge of Cally to West Gormack:

From Bridge of Cally follow the waymarked CATERAN Trail west through Blackcraig Forest, turning first left at NO116511 (just before Croft of Blackcraig) up the forest track, bearing right through a gate, then left through a deer gate onto the moor. Follow the stony farm track over the moor, linking back onto the CATERAN Trail at NO147481.

Bridge of Cally to Kirkmichael

For most of this section the CATERAN Trail follows a good track, passing through a succession of gates, most of which are accessible with a horse or bike, although some may require dismounting to open and close. A kissing gate where the route diverts off the track around the cottage at Crowhill, and a stile across the path just north of Dalnabreck obstruct multi-use, although cyclists may be able to lift their bike over. Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust are exploring scope to replace these obstacles with more appropriate alternatives. North of Dalnabreck the path is damp in places, particularly after rain, but either side of the aforementioned obstructions the route is accessible, with a multi-use accessible link across the bridge over the River Ardle to Ballintruim.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO103535 Crowhill	Wooden kissing gate with fence either side 	None
NO095545	Narrow wooden bridge close to gate, passable with care	No alternative, lead horse across

		
NO088555	Wooden step stile 	No alternative
NO081564	Steep stony approach to 1m wide wooden footbridge with handrail to side, steep climb off bridge 	Passable with care with a horse

Kirkmichael to Enochdhu

Other than a couple of gates which may require dismounting to open, several wet patches, some low branches and the occasional fallen tree across the path, this section of the CATERAN TRAIL is multi-use accessible, but best avoided during or after very wet weather when the unsurfaced sections of path will chew up easily. There is a small public car park on the south side of the river/main street at Kirkmichael (OSGR NO 079600), and ample scope for parking at Enochdhu by Kindrogan Bridge.

Enochdu to Spittal of Glenshee

The track between Enochdu and Spittal of Glenshee is for most of the way a broad, firm track, with numerous gates, some of which require dismounting to open or close, but otherwise passable with a horse, until the last half mile where two kissing gates present an obstruction. There are also some tricky burn crossings inbetween these two kissing gates due to the way stones have been placed. An alternative to avoid the problems on this last section is being explored. There is ample parking at Spittal of Glenshee.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO094683 An Lairig	Narrow kissing gate	Gate and fence broken at time of survey but impassable if repaired

NO106694	Rough rocky burn crossing 	
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Spittal of Glenshee to Dalnaglar

This section of the Cateran Trail is in principle suitable for sustainable multi-use, in the main following a firm old track, with a few damp sections after wet weather. Some of the ladder and step-over stiles have been replaced with bridlegates, and at many others there is a field gate adjacent or close by which provides an alternative, but there are no readily identifiable alternatives to the stile off the A93 at Spittal of Glenshee, or the two ladder stiles in the fence either side of Broughdearg where the gates across the original track are either padlocked or have been fenced over. As of summer 2014, there was also a padlocked chain across the end of the track near Allt an Buie.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO111703	Step over wooden stile	None other than by negotiation through farm yard to north
NO1112703	Vehicular width wooden bridge – BEWARE broken plank	
NO122702	90cm wide wooden footbridge with rails either side 	Possible access to ford burn 50m upstream
NO122699	Small ford with good firm base but beware wire on ground	
NO123697	Wire on ground adjacent to metal field gate and stile	
NO128692	Step-over stile	12' metal gate 20m along fence
NO134688	Boggy section, >12" deep in places	Follow Cateran Trail marker posts across field but no alternative to boggy bits
NO134682	Step over stile	Farm gate 40m along fence
NO135675	Wooden footbridge 90cm wide 16" step	Old ford beside bridge

	down off bridge at one end 	
NO135675	Ladder stile over dyke	Old wooden gate 20m along wall
NO136675 and NO136674	2 x 1.5m long sections of narrow stoned path approx 90cm wide over culverted pipe drain, passable with care 	
NO137673	Ladder stile over fence, locked field gate across track 5m along fence – impassable with horse	None other than persuading farmer to unlock gates to use track through Broughdearg steading
NO139669	Ladder stile over dyke, old gate adjacent now fenced over – impassable with horse	As above
NO144656	Wet section either side of small ford over burn (ford has good firm base) 	
NO144652	Padlocked chain across track stapled to fence	Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust approaching landowner to get chain removed and/or to install alternative barrier to restrict illegal vehicular access without obstructing

		legitimate multi-use access
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Glenshee Lodge to Little Forter (Alternative route)

This unwaymarked higher level off-road option to the main Cateran Trail provides an alternative for the southern half of the sections from Spittal of Glenshee to Little Forter (which is where two of the problem stiles and the locked chain are situated). There are no physical obstructions to multi-use access in the form of locked gates or impassable stiles. However, although the start and end of the route are good going on solid path/estate road, the ground around and either side of Loch Beanie is very wet, even in summer, with some areas of soft peat and numerous hidden ditches. There is no obvious path for quite a way between NO163684 and NO171680. Navigating this section could therefore be tricky when visibility is poor, for example when the mist is down. Stalking takes place 1st September – 30th October, other than on Sundays, during which time access rights apply as usual but you are asked to avoid straying off paths.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO147688	Stony track ends, track becomes softer underfoot with sand-peat surface, becoming wetter downhill. 	
NO151683	Wooden footbridge approx. 1m wide, steps either end	Easily accessible ford adjacent but ground may be soft on entry/exit 

		
NO152683	<p>Bogy open gateway, used regularly by Argos but particularly difficult (and potentially dangerous) for horses after wet weather</p> 	No alternative due to fencing either side
NO158685	<p>Rotten plank bridge over awkward ditch concealed by long grass and reeds</p> 	Pick way around either side but ground generally very wet
NO161684	<p>Waterlogged Argo track along lochside</p> 	
NO168684	<p>Path line marked on map is very soft and wet with deep peat pools and bog floss, no obvious path, adjacent ground very wet. New fence erected south-east from loch, and along dyke north of mapped path.</p>	

	<p>Original gateway now fenced over. New gateway bulldozed through wall to south but on soft peat, potentially deep through gateway after wet weather</p> 	
<p>NO171680</p>	<p>Indistinct sheep/deer path runs roughly parallel to and south of fence through heather and moss, wet in places.</p>	<p>Alternative “track” south of burn used by Argos through wet reeds and mossy ground which links from new gateway but is in places very wet</p> 
<p>NO173678</p>	<p>Firm grass track leading to corner of wood</p> 	

Kirkmichael to Lair, Glen Shee (Alternative route)

The western end of this second alternative option for the Cateran Trail runs through a series of grass fields, followed by a good stone track and further access through fields around Ashintully Castle, some of which is poorly waymarked, but is multi-use accessible with care. Beyond NO111625, the route becomes more difficult without any obvious path in places through long wet grass and rushes, some concealed ditches, and areas of boggy ground. The route is only partially waymarked and navigation could be challenging in poor visibility. A single ladder stile with adjacent locked gate above Craig Dally obstructs equestrian use as a through-route. Elsewhere suitable gate alternatives to ladder stiles have been identified, although some are rarely opened and fastened with wire.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO081601	<p>Narrow path with overhanging branches, passable with care</p> 	None
NO085604	<p>Overgrown path – note path is on east side of fence rather than west as mapped. Access onto hill through old metal gate at NO086604 adjacent to ladder stile. Ground beyond poached by cattle, numerous boggy areas and concealed ditches</p> 	
NO094608	<p>Ladder stile over wall and fence, adjacent gate chained and padlocked. Impassable with a horse. Ground beyond wet in places, even in dry weather.</p>	None. No obvious other gate nearby (and wet along fenceline trying to find one!)
NO0996609	<p>Wooden stock gate easy to open but leads to bridge and steep ladder stile at OSGR NO097610, inaccessible by horses.</p>	Use alternative gate at NO097608, across easily accessible shallow ford, and old wooden stock gate with sign on saying "Lair" at OSGR NO098609.
NO103615	<p>Sign wrongly directs walkers through gateway which leads into woodland with no exit. Cateran Trail continues on stone track along field edge (without passing through gateway)</p>	
NO111625	<p>Boggy section on track (picture taken after long spell of dry weather)</p>	Skirt around boggy bit on heather bank

		
BO115627	High ladder stile over dyke	Use old wooden stock gate to south of burn at OSGR NO115627
NO126628	Very wet ground either side of Allt a Choire Liathaich, followed by wet marshy grassland with boggy patches of indeterminate depth 	
NO130630	Ladder stile. Ground to east in line of promoted path is wet and marshy with boggy patches, no obvious alternative	Use old wooden stock gate 20m north of stile at NO130631.
NO141635	Original gateway at junction of ROW sign on public road now railed and wired across, impassable with horse or with bike. Alternative stock gate at NO141632 leads into fenced off area which has now become dead end since road realignment.	Use gate several metres up fence

Little Forter to Kirkton of Glenisla

All of this section is multi-use accessible with a horse or bike, mainly following fenced and unfenced farm and woodland tracks, with some parts across open moorland. On a few days each year, the track between OSGR NO218607 and East Mill Farm is used for sheep handling. Two alternative tracks run roughly parallel to the east, the first branching east off the waymarked CATERAN Trail just south of the boathouse at Loch Shandra, leading south through several gates to East Mill Farm. The second starts at the signpost after the boathouse at the southern end of Loch Shandra, following a wide grassy track along the top of the earth dam, over a 2m wide substantial wooden sleeper bridge across the loch outlet, fenced either side, then turning south through two wooden gates to follow the track along the forest edge to Freuchies, either rejoining the CATERAN Trail through the yard at East Mill Farm, or left onto the B951 and then right into Kirkton of Glenisla.

There is a car park beyond the Glenisla Hotel between the church and hall, although the approach road is quite narrow.

Kirkton of Glenisla to Kilry

Steps, a narrow footbridge of questionable strength, stiles and tricky burn crossings restrict multi-use on the section of CATERAN TRAIL between Kirkton of Glenisla and Whitehill Wood (see below for alternative). From Whitehill through to Kilry the CATERAN TRAIL is multi-use accessible, following farm and forest tracks and a section of tarmac private road.

There is a large public car park capable of accommodating horse boxes and trailers, plus public toilets and picnic area, in Kirkton of Glenisla at OSGR NO213604.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO212603	<p>1.2m wide gap in fence off public road leading onto flight of 17 steps of varying width and tread depth</p> 	<p>The alternative is to ford the River Isla at the eastern end of the village accessed via the hotel car park, although the line of the historic ford is no longer visible and there are some boulders in the river. Once over the ford, the old track through to Whitehills is overgrown in places, with two sets of double gates tied across with string, but otherwise passable- see picture below.</p>
NO213603	<p>Footbridge over River Isla, 1m wide with iron arch each end, metal railings, timber decking, rough stones and sprung gate to southern end of bridge. Unsuitable for multi-use</p> 	

		
NO213602	<p>Tricky 0.5m wide burn crossing with 1 in 2 slop exit and access, very muddy and slippery</p> 	As above
NO214596	Wooden ladder stile over dyke.	Gap in wall 20m east at NO216597
Whitehills Farm NO226594	<p>Machinery and livestock trailer on track</p> 	Divert around farm track immediately to east
NO232576 Easter Peathaugh	<p>Cattle grid across track</p> 	<p>Use wooden gate to side (tied up with string, beware it may collapse!)</p> 



Old ford across River Isla at Kirkton of Glenisla, looking north towards hotel

Kilry to Alyth

A series of stiles and kissing gates between Knowehead and Ardormie obstruct multi-use access on a grass track which would otherwise be suitable. The alternative is to follow the public road between Kilry and Bogside, past Mid and Easter Derry, Faulds, Dykehead and New Craig. Between Bogside and Alyth the Cateran Trail follows the old drove road which is fully multi-use accessible.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO232540	Step over wooden stile	See above
NO237531	2 x wooden step over stiles over stocknet and barbed wire fence	None – no suitable gates into/out of these fields
NO237530	Wooden ladder stile over dyke and fence immediately followed by wooden boardwalk over burn.	Wooden slip hurdle 20m further along dyke which provides access into same field, then ford shallow burn
NO237526 track between Inchley and Ardormie	Wooden step-over stile	Field gate on farm road approx. 0.25m away which allows access to track through stock field
Ardormie NO233523	Wooden kissing gate in post and rail fence	

Alyth to Blairgowrie

The path through the Den of Alyth is in places narrow and unsurfaced, and although multi-use accessible should be avoided during or after wet weather. The minor road which runs parallel to the north is an easy alternative. From West Tullyfergus, a good forest track links west past Glendams, with scope for a loop to the south through the forest on existing tracks, rejoining the waymarked route near the lochan.

There is good parking south of Westfield at OSGR NO236487, and very limited parking at Bridge of Tully NO227489.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NO232487	Narrow section of path with steep drop to river alongside 	Follow public road which runs parallel to north
NO199486 Glendams	Low branches at entrance to forest 	
NO187490 western end of forest	Narrow gap alongside locked gate 	Access over grass area to south

Alyth to Bridge of Cally

Between Alyth and Gauldswell Wood the CATERAN Trail is fully multi-use accessible, following grass, farm and woodland tracks. All of the gates are passable with a horse, many with self-closing bridlegates. As the signs on the gate at the Alyth end forewarn, watch out for loose wild boar on Alyth Hill!

Beyond Gauldswell Wood, the CATERAN Trail follows quiet public road to Heatheryhaugh before branching off on a farm track to Ferns of Cloquhat. There are bridlegates adjacent to the field gates at most field boundaries on this track, but no way around or past the kissing gates at OSGR N)170519 or NO158522 (Braes of Cloquhat), other than continuing along the minor road to the south.

There is no parking at Alyth but a good public car park at Den of Alyth OSGR NO236487.

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