

Troup Head, Crovie and Pennan Marine Itinerary

The cliffs at [Troup Head](#), an RSPB sanctuary, are home to Scotland's only mainland colony of gannets and they are also one of the best spots along the Banffshire coastline for dolphin watching. Take a walk along the cliffs, but take care as the paths and trails have not been heavily interfered with so that the site retains as natural an environment for the birds as possible. The walk is on rough ground and close to the edge of the cliffs, so please do watch your step. If visiting by car you should follow the RSPB signs until Northfield Farm where you will find the car park at the top of a rough track.

The fresh sea air may well have helped you build up an appetite, so head west towards the village of [Gardenstown](#) where houses cling to the steep slopes overlooking the stunning bay. Modern development here has taken place vertically rather than horizontally, with houses simply being added in tiers. After stopping off for a spot of lunch take a wander to the harbour which is home to dozens of pleasure craft. There is a small community-run heritage centre, open seasonally, which traces the history of the village and its links to the once-thriving fishing industry.

Head back east to [Crovie](#) – the best preserved fishing village in Europe – but a word of warning if you are travelling by car! Only the very brave would consider driving their vehicle down the extraordinarily steep road into this delightful coastal village. Visitors are advised to leave their vehicles in the car park at the top of the cliff – an excellent idea as it gives an opportunity to pause and look out into the sparkling blue waters of the bay below. Is that a dorsal fin poking up in the waves? Did a flipper just cause a splash? Always have your binoculars or camera at the ready as you just never know when you might be treated to a display of dolphin acrobatics!

You may well need to stop again at the viewpoint to catch your breath after walking back up the steep hill, so there could be no better excuse to enjoy a well-earned refreshment at the picnic area.

Time to hit the road again and this time continue towards Pennan, stopping off at Cullykhan Bay. This is a sandy bay with crystal clear waters – you can understand why a group of seals have made the rocks here their home. If you visit at low tide you might be lucky enough to see them hauled out on the rocks, but please respect their home and don't get too close.



Don't miss the fantastic Hell's Lum – the old Doric word for chimney – where sea spray escapes like chimney smoke from a cave cut into the cliff.

Continue eastwards and arrive in [Pennan](#). The village was made famous by the film Local Hero and to this day you can still make calls from the iconic red telephone box. You may want to phone home to call in a sighting of a dolphin as the creatures are frequently seen from the seafront. Pennan is something of a hot spot for porpoise too: these cetaceans are much smaller than dolphins and can be a little harder to spot.

