

# GREY MARE'S TAIL

- Linear route up steep pitched path that levels out**
- 4km/2½ miles**
- Allow 1½ hours**
- Hard surfaced uneven path with drain crossings and wet patches**
- Strenuous**
- Boots recommended**

The National Trust for Scotland's Grey Mare's Tail Nature Reserve is most famous for its impressive waterfall that gives the reserve its name. However, the remote and wild mountainous landscape above the waterfall coupled with its outstanding botanical richness make the reserve one of Scotland's upland jewels, on a par with its other famous mountain areas. The Grey Mare's Tail is a popular destination for those who wish to see its spectacular waterfall, the 5th highest in the UK, yet few people associate the waterfall with its mountains, its abundant wildlife and scenic loch. For hill walkers and natural historians, to miss out visiting the Grey Mare's Tail is to miss out on a key site in the upland landscape of Scotland.

**PARKING** From Moffat take the A708 Selkirk road. Continue for nine miles and you will reach the car parks at either side of the bridge across the Tail Burn. Park and pay at the ticket dispensers. The visitor centre is open from April to September and you may be able to view nesting peregrines on TV and learn about the nature reserve and ongoing projects.

**START** From the visitor centre cross the Tail Burn on the stepping-stones and turn left following the burn side path to the steeple seating area where you get a good view of the impressive 61m waterfalls.

Turn right just before the seating area and climb the stone pitched path up the valley side. This section has been carefully constructed to indicate the nature of the path higher up. If you find this section too challenging then you should consider an easier walk.

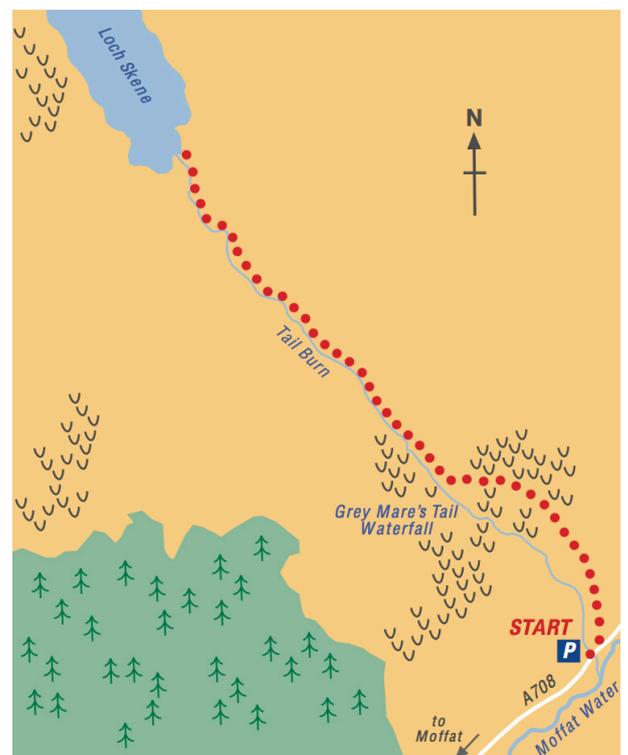
Make the most of any rest stops to take in your surroundings.

This area supports the greatest range of rare upland plants in southern Scotland. The varied bird life includes peregrines, heron, dippers, grey wagtails and skylarks. If you are downwind of feral goats their pungent scent may assail your nostrils before you see this hardy breed.

At the top of the falls the old march dyke on the opposite side of the burn leads your gaze toward White Coomb, a popular summit with hill walkers and an excellent viewpoint

for Moffat Dale. This valley is a good example of glacial erosion. The path levels off, leading you past the remains of a shepherds' bothy and enters a landscape of drumlins (glacial deposits) before reaching the delightful vista across Loch Skene. The clean waters are now populated by vendace, Britain's rarest freshwater fish, recently introduced as part of a species recovery programme after being killed by pollution in Mill Loch at Lochmaben. A donor population living in Basinthwaite Lake in the Lake District was used to successfully seed Loch Skene.

On descending by the same route you can fully appreciate the forces of the last ice age. The glacier that deeply scoured Moffat Dale chopped off the end of this side valley giving us today's dramatic feature of the Grey Mare's Tail. The falls have eroded back from their original line on their slow journey towards Loch Skene.



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Leave gates as you find them - Keep dogs under close control at all times - Keep to paths across farmland - Take care on country roads  
Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls - Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery - Take your litter home with you  
Protect wildlife, plants and trees - Guard against risk of fire - Make no unnecessary noise.