

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Crovie-Troup Head Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

There is a steep initial ascent but otherwise this is fairly straightforward walking. The route takes in a pretty and unusual coastal village, rolling farmland, and a spectacular cliff-top section with the largest mainland gannet colony in Scotland. Although a pleasure at any time of year, the walk is probably best done in the summer months when the migratory sea birds are present.

Duration: 3.25 hrs.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: There is a free car-park at the walk start/end point [see our Route Guide for directions]. No public transport.

Length: 7.94 km / 4.93 mi. **Height Gain/Loss:** 241 meter.

Max Height: 35 meter. **Min Height:** 2 meter.

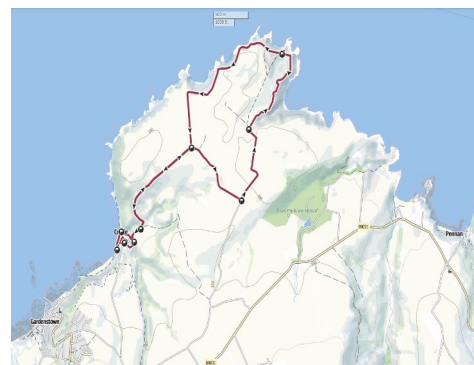
Surface: Moderate. A mix of rough roads, grassy paths and tarred roads. The circuit is not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to steps on the Troup Head path. It is possible to reach Waypoint 5 on Troup Head and take a grassy path back to the RSPB car-park (through a gate on the left) before re-tracing the outward route then visiting Crovie from Waypoint 7, to the end. However, views of seabirds will be limited.

Difficulty: Moderate.

Child Friendly: Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead on public roads and near farm animals.

Refreshments: Options in Gardenstown, Banff/Macduff, and Fraserburgh.



Description

This is an invigorating coastal walk, ascending to the RSPB Nature Reserve on the breathtaking cliff tops of Troup Head, a rugged promontory between the villages of Crovie and Pennan on the Old Banffshire coast, and also taking in a visit to the unique and eye-catching former fishing village of Crovie. *"The high cliffs of Troup Head provide a spectacular setting for Scotland's largest mainland Gannet colony. There are also thousands of Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Razorbills here, along with several other species. You may even be lucky enough to see porpoises, Minke Whales or dolphins offshore. Twenty-nine hectares of cliff-face rise to more than 90m, offering nesting perches, nooks and crannies to over 50,000 seabirds each year. In the spring, tens of thousands of these seabirds return, including Gannets and the Puffins that nest in burrows or crevices. Summer on the cliffs is a noisy affair, with a bustling seabird city crammed onto the cliffs. Offshore, Bottle-nosed Dolphins, porpoises and other cetaceans can often be seen in the clear waters."* Thanks to the RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/troup-head> . Tiny and picturesque Crovie (pronounced "Crvie"), which has no vehicular traffic through the village, was established by crofters who had been displaced from the North of Scotland by the Highland Clearances. They made a hard and precarious living from fishing, paying the local laird rent for the boats and the cottages. By the end of the 19thC, more than 50 fishing boats were based here. The village was almost destroyed in the Great Storm of January 1953. Since then most of the buildings, which all have "listed" status, have become holiday or weekend homes.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at cliff-top car-park

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Start the walk from the lower visitors car-park, which is on your right as you drive down the access road to Crovie village*. The car-park overlooks the village**. Leave the car-park and turn immediately left and down a rough road. Follow this road downhill, over a bridge, then uphill, passing a rough village access road for emergency vehicles on your left, as you ascend. Keep going, passing buildings on your right side.

** Note: do not park in the "Viewpoint" car-park, further up the hill, which is on your left as you drive down towards Crovie.*

*** Note: do not drive down to the narrow turning area at the sea-front where there is very limited parking for village residents only.*



(2) Go left and downhill

In 330 m, as you approach a new house ahead of you, go left and downhill on a rough road. This road soon crosses a bridge and rises fairly steeply to eventually pass Crovie Farm on your left. There are fine views down to Gardenstown and Gamrie Bay as you ascend. After Crovie Farm, the road more or less levels out for a long section between fields. (330 m)



(3) Left for Northfield Farm

In 1.93 km, at a t-junction, go left to pass Northfield Farm. Follow the public access road as it twists left, then right, between the farm buildings and farm-house. Keep going after passing the farm. (2.26 km)



(4) Right through gate into RSPB Reserve

In 810 m, after passing a sign for RSPB Troup Head*, and a small car-park, go right off the rough road through a pedestrian gate onto a grassy path heading for the sea and cliffs. (3.07 km)



* Note: "The high cliffs of Troup Head provide a spectacular setting for Scotland's largest mainland Gannet colony. There are also thousands of Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Razorbills here, along with several other species. You may even be lucky enough to see porpoises, Minke Whales or dolphins offshore. Twenty-nine hectares of cliff-face rise to more than 90m, offering nesting perches, nooks and crannies to over 50,000 seabirds each year. In the spring, tens of thousands of these seabirds return, including Gannets and the Puffins that nest in burrows or crevices. Summer on the cliffs is a noisy affair, with a bustling seabird city crammed onto the cliffs. Offshore, Bottlenosed Dolphins, porpoises and other cetaceans can often be seen in the clear waters." Thanks to the RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/daysout/reserves/troup-head>

(5) Divert right through gate to viewpoint

After 1.06 km, just before steps on the path, go right through the pedestrian gate to access a narrow grassy path to an area of clifftop where there is a good view of the cliffside gannet colony. Please note that the clifftop has no safety guards. TAKE CARE! When you are ready, return to the main path and proceed up the steps. In the next few hundred metres there will be other opportunities to leave the main path to observe the seabirds. Keep going for almost 2 km until the next waypoint. (4.13 km)



(6) Through gate and right

In 1.93 km, at a pedestrian gate, go right to re-trace your earlier steps, passing Crovie Farm again, now on your right side. (6.06 km)



(7) Right and downhill for Crovie

In 1.31 km, approaching your start-point in the car-park visible ahead of you and above you, go right and downhill on the emergency vehicle access road to Crovie Village, eventually crossing a pedestrian bridge which brings you to the centre of Crovie village. (7.37 km)



(8) Crovie village

In 180 m, you will have arrived at the centre of Crovie village, by the single pier. You may wish to divert right here to explore the eastern end of this unique and strikingly pretty place. Otherwise, or after that, go left to follow the sea-front walkway to the small parking/turning area at the western end of the village (the dramatic coastal path here proceeds onwards to Gardenstown if you wish to divert there - almost 2.5 km to the harbour, and back). (7.55 km)



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(9) Sharp left and uphill

In 190 m from the centre of Crovie, turn sharp left to follow the access road uphill, rising above the village towards the car-park where you started the walk. (7.74 km)



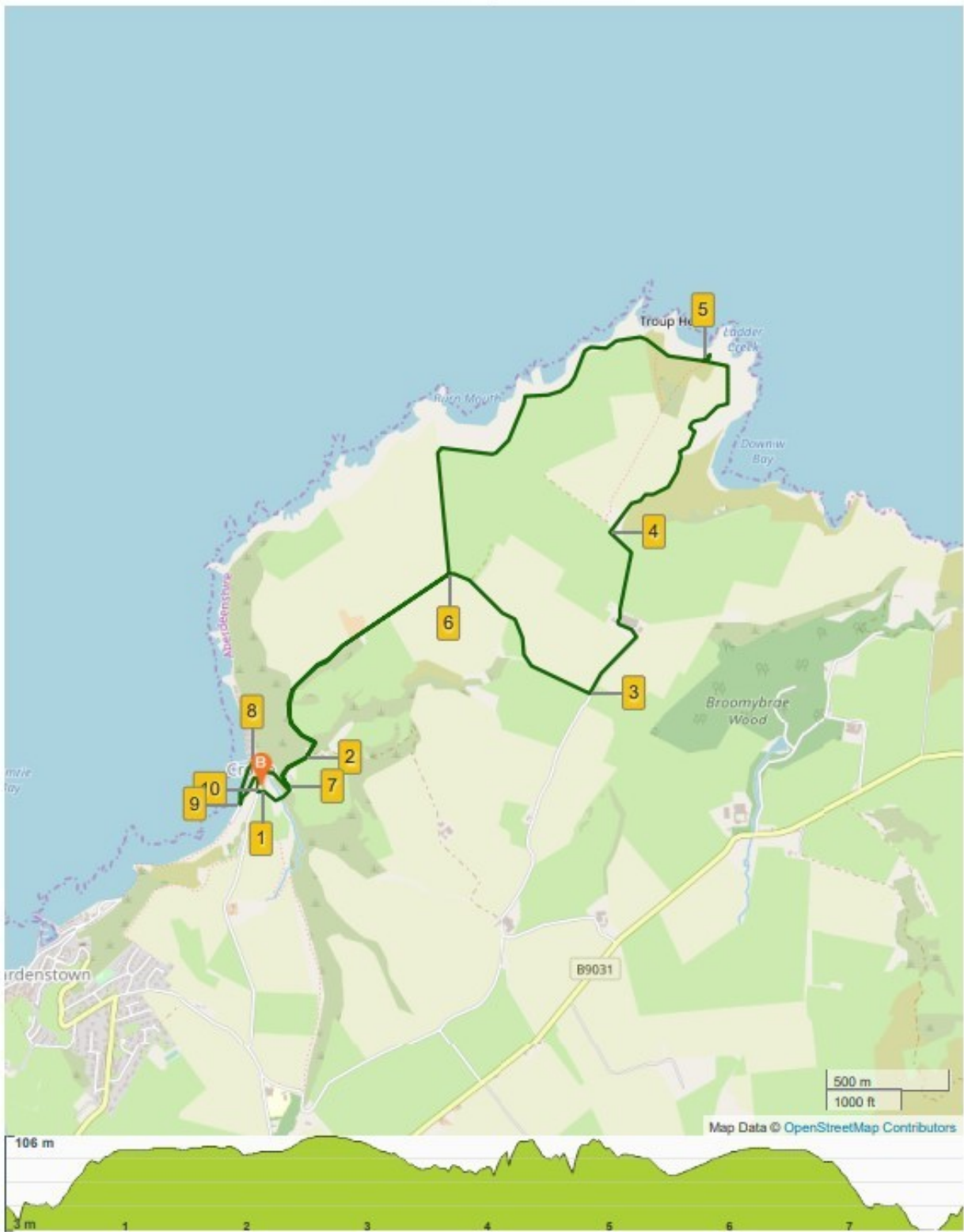
(10) Finish walk back at car-park

In 200 m, finish the walk back at the car-park where you started. (7.94 km)

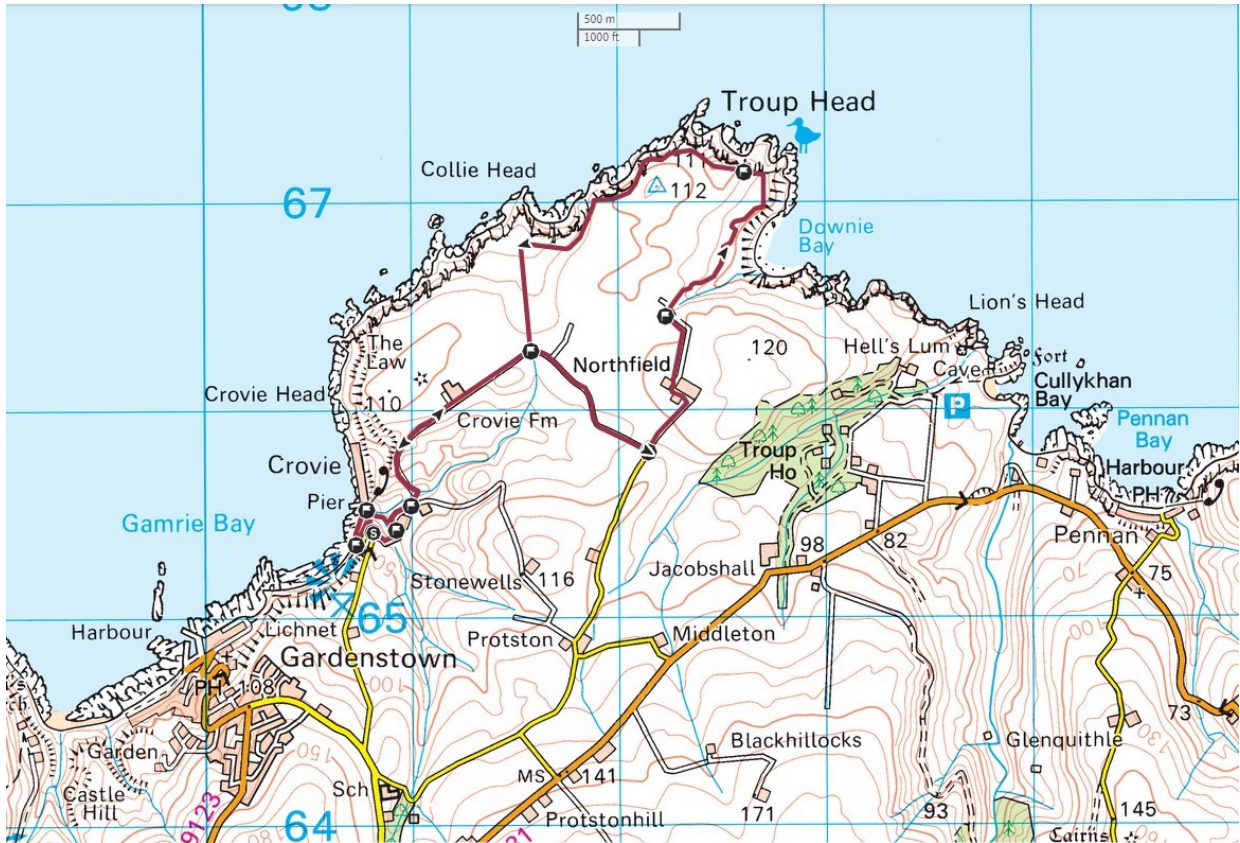


Route Map (with waypoints)

216-Crovie-Troup Head Circuit



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Alltrails](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)