

Wildlife Walk – 3½ or 5 miles

Coniston, Lake District

Walk from the head of Coniston Water to Tarn Hows via this picturesque route created by 19th century industrialist J G Marshall to wow guests at his country estate. Pass through iconic Lake District farm and woodland, as well as the walled garden and tree collection of Monk Coniston Hall, currently being restored by the National Trust. Get the chance to spot lots of interesting wildlife while enjoying some of Lakeland's most stunning views.

Getting there

Start and finish: Monk Coniston car park – OS Explorer 7 – grid reference: 316978

Boat: Catch the National Trust's Steam Yacht Gondola from the pier in Coniston village to Monk Coniston Jetty (April – Oct). See www.nationaltrust.org.uk/gondola for sailing arrangements.

Bike: 1 mile ride from Coniston village. Some sections of this route are also cycleways.

Bus: Coniston Rambler (505) runs daily from Windermere, Ambleside and Hawkshead. Buses also from Ulverston (Mon – Sat), connecting with Kendal and Barrow.

Road: Car parks at Monk Coniston, Coniston village and Tarn Hows.

Facilities: WCs at Monk Coniston, Coniston village. Gift shop onboard Steam Yacht Gondola. Guided walks and activities for school groups available. Contact us – tel: 015394 41951

Points of interest

Woodland

Pass through a mixture of broadleaf and coniferous woodland. Look out for the huge redwoods and other exotic conifers on the way.

Animals

Look out for belted Galloway cattle (black with a white stripe around their middle), roe deer, and hares. Red squirrel are in danger of local extinction but make home here, as do otter. Common lizards and adders live on the heathland. Adders spend more time basking in the sun than most snakes so you may chance upon one, especially in early spring when they emerge from hibernation. They have a distinctive dark zig-zag pattern on their backs.

Birds

Listen out for woodland birds like woodpeckers, nuthatch and tree pipit. Raven and peregrine are seen near crags and the waterways are home to heron and dipper. In winter, goldeneye, tufted duck and grebes are found on the tarn.

Aquatic life

The key to Tarn Hows' healthy wildlife is the flow of clean water into the lake. We work with our local tenant farmers to manage the surrounding countryside to help keep it this way. Spot water beetles and dragonflies at the tarn, as well as plants such as water lobelia and lilies, floating bur-reed and greater bladderwort. Also look for newts, frogs and toads.

Steam Yacht Gondola

First launched in 1859 to carry visitors across the lake, the gondola was re-built thirty-odd years ago to bring back to life the Victorian tourist experience. It is a unique craft, a mix between a Venetian gondola and the latest in 19th-century steam technology.

NT places nearby

Steam Yacht Gondola, Hill Top, Beatrix Potter Gallery



Wood sorrel, one of the many woodland wild flowers you may see on your walk. It is found in old, undisturbed woodland

© National Trust



Beatrix Potter's beloved Herdwick sheep for which she won many breeding prizes. Lambs have dark brown bodies and white faces, becoming greyer in colour, as they get older.

© NTPL / V.Corbett



The Trust has introduced controlled cattle grazing to help increase the spread of touch-not-balsam, foodplant of the rare netted carpet moth (left). The plant requires some bare soil in order to flourish

© Graham Jones

'The views across Coniston Water are truly spectacular at any time of the year and I particularly like the autumn colours at Tarn Hows in the larch and broadleaf woodland'

Jessica Worlock, NT Community Learning Officer, Tarn Hows

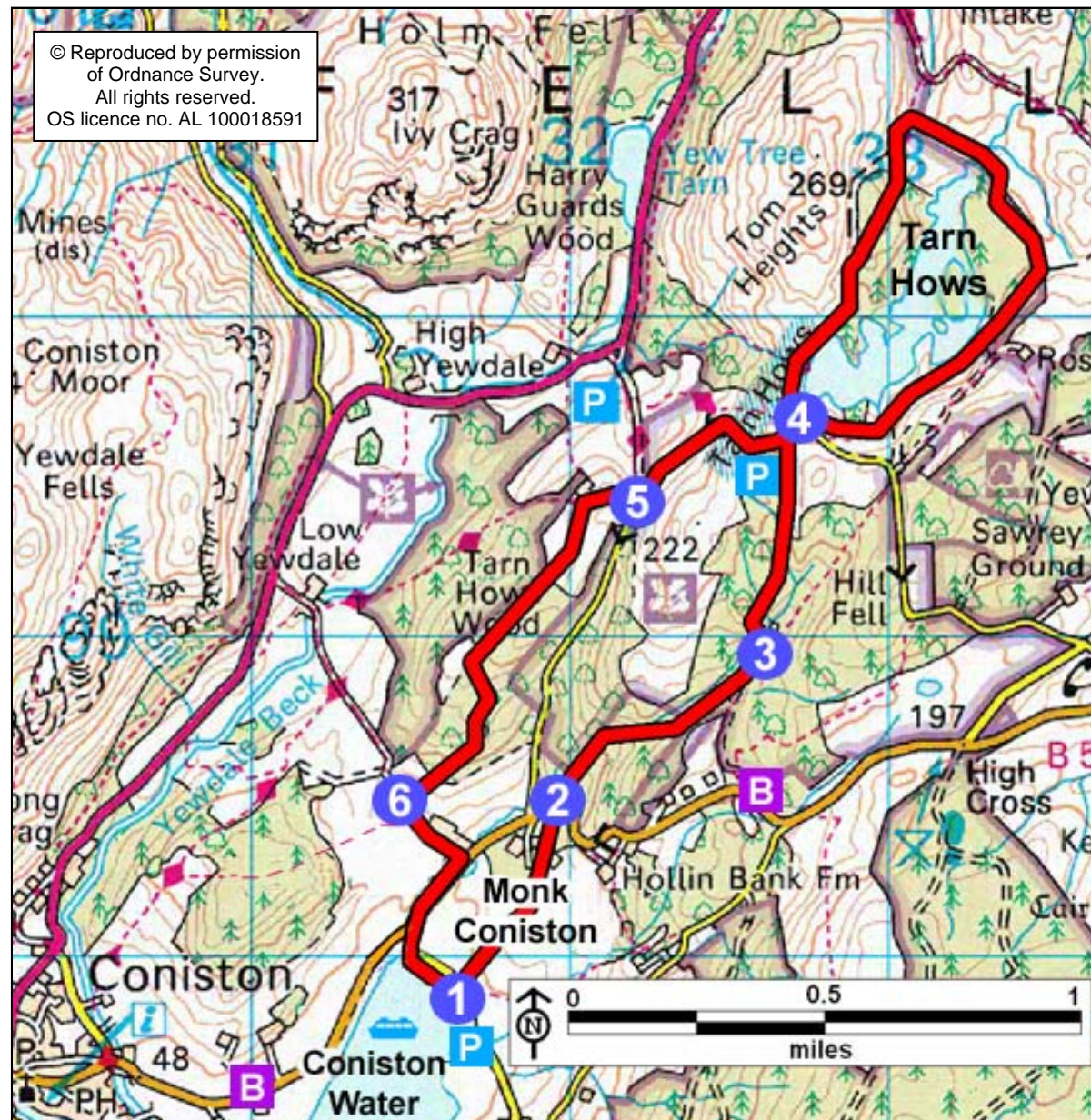
Distance, terrain and accessibility

3½ miles to Tarn Hows and back or 5 miles with a circuit of the lake.

Woodland tracks, a small section of road and farmland which may have livestock present. Can be muddy after wet weather. Several short sections are steep and not suitable for wheelchairs or ordinary pushchairs. The Tarn Hows circuit is very accessible with high-grade paths and can be reached from a car park near point 4 on this map.

Route and directions

1. Leaving Monk Coniston car park, take the path into the field, opposite. Walk up the field to the black gates at the entrance to Monk Coniston grounds.
2. Entering the grounds walk up through the woods and into the Walled Garden – which is currently being renovated. Look out for the small stone Gazebo which has information panels inside.
3. Leaving Monk Coniston grounds, take care crossing the road, as you enter the woodland. You will soon cross a narrow bridge. As you walk through the woods many forestry tracks and paths adjoin but you should ignore side routes and stick to the main path following signposts towards Tarn Hows car park.
4. Arriving at Tarn Hows you can walk around the Tarn on a circular loop where there is a good path with seats. The 19th-century landowner, James Garth Marshall, created the Tarn and planted the many trees that shape this landscape.
5. Return to the main Tarn Hows car park and follow the one-way exit road towards Coniston. Take the first footpath on your right to Tarn Hows Cottage. Before you reach the cottage, take the first footpath on the left, this winds down the hill through fields to Boon Crag Farm. Enjoy the views out over Coniston Water as you go.
6. When you reach the farm track at the bottom of the hill, turn left and continue past the farm and sawmill. At the road, turn right to join an off-road foot path which leads you back to Coniston Water. When you get to the lake, cross the road and walk left back to the car park.



As a charity, independent of government, the National Trust relies on the generosity of its supporters to continue caring for our countryside and wildlife, so that everyone can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors for generations to come

Find out more at www.nationaltrust.org.uk