

FUN DAY OUT - TRACK MODEL WILDCATS



From 12 June 2010 the highland village of Newtonmore is staging an exciting new attraction – the Wildcat Experience.

Scores of life-size, accurate models of the endangered Scottish Wildcat will be sited around the village and Wildcat Trail. Every one of the cats has been differently decorated as part of a community art project. Interpreting the idea of the wildcat however they like, people have produced a wide range of representations of this iconic Scottish animal. Part of the aim of the project is to raise awareness of the plight of the Scottish wildcat, which is rarer in its pure form in the wild than, for instance, the Amur tiger. Many visitors are surprised to learn that they still exist at all and know very little about them.

Why not visit the Wildcat Experience to learn more about wildcats, and enjoy a fun day out tracking down the model cats round the village and discovering other attractions that Newtonmore has to offer. The project is supported by the Highland Folk Museum at Newtonmore, which shows life in the 18th century when wildcats were more frequently seen, and the nearby Highland Wildlife Park which houses some Scottish wildcats in captivity – the only chance you are likely to get of actually seeing a real one! The Scottish Wildcat Association and the Highland Tiger project, the Cairngorm National Park's own scheme to conserve the cat, also support the project.

The Wildcat Centre is located next to the Village Hall on Newtonmore's Main Street and will be the first port of call for those on the track of the wildcats.

Get your TrackPack with a brochure about the Scottish Wildcat, its connection with Newtonmore, and other attractions in the area. In it you will find maps of the village. Mark each cat as you find it.

If your cat tally is 25 or more you get a Wildcat Experience Certificate. Anyone tracking down every one of them will receive a prize. The first person over 18 to do so after the opening of the attraction in June will qualify for the chance to feed the Amur Tigers at the Highland Wildlife Park!



Tame cat meets model wildcat

Many of the cats are being decorated by children and we are sure that families with younger children will particularly enjoy setting out on a hunt to find as many of the cats as they can. Some artists have concentrated on word play – The Cat's Pyjamas, Cat-a-log, Cat Burglar, etc. Others have highlighted the fact that there may be only 400 pure bred Scottish Wildcats left in the wild. And, of course there will be several in shinty colours!



The project is run by the Newtonmore Community Woodland & Development Trust, a registered charity which manages the Wildcat Trail and Wildcat Centre.