

Cairngorms NP and Monadhliath

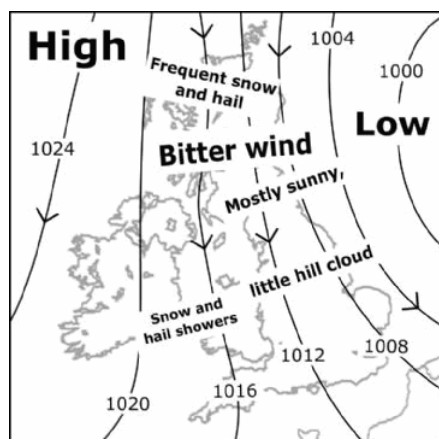
Cairngorms National Park and Monadhliath. Also includes the Ben Alder area hills between Loch Ericht and Loch Laggan.



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General Summary for Saturday, 3 January, 2026



British Mountain Summary:

Based on forecast chart for noon 3 January, 2026

Widespread sub-zero temperatures and wind, gales in northern England and Scotland; wind chill approaching -20C or lower on high summits. Near-constant snow showers in northern Scotland with snowdrifts building; snow showers into central/west Scotland and west Wales too. Mostly sunny southern Scotland and England.

Headline for Cairngorms NP and Monadhliath

Near-constant snow and gales; snowdrifts with whiteouts

Detailed Forecast for Saturday, 3 January, 2026

How windy? (On the Munros)	North to northwesterly 45 to 55mph, strongest sustained speeds on Cairngorm high tops up to 60mph for periods; squally gusts in showers.
Effect of wind on you?	Severe wind chill over the mountains, becoming extreme over the high Cairngorm plateau summits during strongest sustained wind. Challenging conditions, walking difficult on exposed high terrain.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Near-constant snow and hail Ongoing heavy snow/hail showers from the north, merging into more persistent snow for periods, snow and hail falling and accumulating into the glens. Frequent whiteout over the mountains with risk of isolated thunder.
Cloud on the hills?	Fairly extensive higher areas Often covering the mountains above 800m, bases as low as 600m in northern Cairngorms during heavy snowfalls. Higher and more varied bases southward, some breaks above 1000m more often.
Chance of cloud free Munros?	20% north, to 40% south.
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	Brief bursts of sun, mostly on lower slopes south of the Cairngorm plateau. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but intermittently very good during clear moments.
How Cold? (at 900m)	-6C, though as cold as -9 or -10C on the highest Cairngorm plateau summits. Feeling like -23C in the wind on most slopes, though wind chill approaching -30C on very highest summits.
Freezing Level	Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward.

Cairngorms NP and Monadhliath - Looking Ahead

	Sunday 4 January	Monday 5 January
How windy? (On the Munros) Effect of wind on you?	North-northwesterly 35 to 45mph, strongest sustained speeds eastern tops, locally 50mph; squally gusts in showers. Continued severe wind chill over the mountains. Challenging conditions, arduous walking on snow cover.	Northerly 30-35mph, risk speeds to 40mph in exposure at times. Shifting northwesterly afternoon. Continued severe wind chill over the mountains. Arduous walking with buffeting gusts in exposure.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Near-constant snow and hail Ongoing heavy showers merging into more persistent snow coming in from the north, snow and hail falling and accumulating into the glens. Frequent whiteout over the mountains. Risk of isolated thunder.	Near-constant snow showers Ongoing heavy snow/hail showers from the north, merging into more constant snow northeast Cairngorms; extensive snow cover with frequent whiteout conditions on high ground.
Cloud on the hills? Chance of cloud free Munros?	Fairly extensive higher areas Often covering the mountains above 800m, at times 600m in northern Cairngorms. Higher and more varied bases southward, some breaks above 1000m more often; high Cairngorms unlikely to clear. 20% north, to 40% south.	Fairly extensive higher areas Often covering the mountains above 800m, at times 600m in northern Cairngorms, lowest and most persistent east. Higher and more varied bases south of the Cairngorm plateau, some breaks above 1000m more often. 20% north, to 40% south.
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	Brief bursts of sun, best chance south. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but intermittently very good.	Brief bursts of sun, more frequent south. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but intermittently very good.
How Cold? (at 900m) Freezing Level	-6C (to -8C above 1200m). Wind chill feeling like -22C, nearer -25C or colder on the high Cairngorm plateau. Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward.	-6C (to -9C above 1200m and at dawn in glens). Wind chill feeling as cold as -25C in exposure on Cairngorm plateau. Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward.

Planning Outlook

All mountain areas of Britain from Sunday, 4 January, 2026

Terrain extensively frozen into early next week; sub-zero temperatures from the glens upward in Scotland and increasingly into valleys in England and Wales. Heavy showers streaming into northern and coastal Scotland, some containing hail, most terrain covered in snow with substantial snowdrifts in the Northwest Highlands and Cairngorms. Largely dry and sunny in southern Scotland and England. Hail and snow showers will run into north and west Wales from the sea. Bitter northerly winds, up to gale force higher tops at times.

More variable next week: some fluctuation of freezing level during next week, though most high terrain stays sub-zero, and as fronts come in from the west, upland snowfalls are possible more widely.

Forecast issued at 15:16 on Friday, 2 January, 2026

The production of the Scottish forecasts is fully funded by the Scottish Government through Mountaineering Scotland with the support of sportscotland. Forecasts are issued daily by 16:30 and are kept under review and amended as necessary. However, expected conditions can still change after issue. © Copyright Mountain Weather Information Service, 2026.