# Police Scotland warns of escalating wildfire risks amid record heatwaves



Police Scotland has issued a warning to the public to steer clear of a recent wildfire outbreak in Cumnock, a situation exacerbated by a prolonged period of dry, hot weather. Fortunately, there have been no reported injuries, but the incident serves as a stark reminder of the escalating wildfire risk in Scotland, which has seen an extreme warning applied across the nation.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has been particularly vocal about this growing concern. On June 15, 2023, it escalated the wildfire warning to an extreme level, marking its fourth such alert within just three weeks. The 'very high' risk status not only covers the North West Highlands but now extends across much of Scotland. Group Commander Niall MacLennan emphasised that even seemingly innocuous actions, such as lighting a disposable barbecue or failing to dispose of cigarettes correctly, could lead to significant destruction. He urged residents to take these warnings seriously, noting the potential dangers posed by rampant wildfires in dry conditions.

Wildfires can have devastating repercussions, particularly for rural communities. Michael Humphreys, SFRS Wildfire Lead, highlighted the dire consequences these fires can bring, including severe damages to livestock, farmland, wildlife, and protected woodlands. He said, “Many rural and remote communities are hugely impacted by wildfires, which can cause significant damage.” The human cost can also be profound, as lives are at stake in areas vulnerable to such outbreaks. Moreover, wildfires have broader environmental consequences, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions that exacerbate climate change.

Recent data reinforces the urgency of these warnings, illustrating a troubling trend. Between March and June 2023 alone, Scotland experienced an average of one wildfire each day during peak season, with 133 incidents recorded. Of these, 48 were classified as large-scale fires, spreading over a hectare. The Highlands have been particularly hard-hit, accounting for a significant number of these fires, a situation worsened by factors such as the recent hot weather and ongoing dry conditions.

Firefighting resources have been stretched thin due to the recent spate of fires, with notable incidents like the one near Daviot, south of Inverness, drawing extensive emergency responses. Following an outbreak on June 10, which involved evacuations and multiple fire appliances being deployed, authorities have reminded residents to heed safety warnings and avoid returning to evacuated zones prematurely.

In another significant incident, a wildfire that erupted on May 28 near Cannich raised alarms for potentially being the largest in the UK's history. This monstrous blaze not only wreaked havoc on local ecosystems, including harming the RSPB Corrimony nature reserve and its wildlife, but also saw firefighters risking their lives to contain the spread. Two firefighters suffered injuries, although they were soon discharged from hospital care.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continues to stress the pivotal role citizens play in preventing wildfires through responsible behaviour, underscoring adherence to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. It is crucial for those living in or visiting rural areas to remain vigilant and proactive in safeguarding both their communities and the environment against this pressing threat.

The convergence of increasingly severe weather conditions and human activity has made it essential for the population to understand the risks associated with wildfire outbreaks. The call to action is clear: exercising extreme caution and promoting awareness around fire safety is vital in order to mitigate the ongoing threat wildfires pose across Scotland.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1
2. Paragraphs 2-3
3. Paragraph 4
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 7
7. Paragraph 8

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25165642.wildfire-breaks-cumnock-police-issue-warning/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/scotland-sees-fourth-wildfire-warning-in-three-weeks/> - On June 15, 2023, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) issued its fourth wildfire warning in three weeks, urging the public to exercise extreme caution due to the heightened risk of wildfires across Scotland. The warning, effective from June 15 to June 17, 2023, highlighted the 'very high' risk in the North West Highlands and an 'extreme' risk across the rest of Scotland. SFRS Group Commander Niall MacLennan emphasized the potential for even the smallest fire to spread rapidly and cause significant damage, urging the public to avoid lighting disposable barbecues or campfires in areas with dry vegetation and to dispose of cigarettes responsibly. The warning was extended further as the warm weather continued, underscoring the ongoing threat of wildfires in the region. ([firescotland.gov.uk](https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/scotland-sees-fourth-wildfire-warning-in-three-weeks/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jun/11/wildfire-near-inverness-daviot-firefighters> - A wildfire near Daviot, south of Inverness, Scotland, broke out on June 10, 2023, prompting evacuations and a significant firefighting response. The fire, which stretched over a mile long, led to the deployment of multiple fire appliances and specialist resources. As of June 11, three appliances and specialist resources remained on scene to make the area safe. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) extended a very high wildfire warning to June 12, citing the lack of rain, hot weather, and little wind as factors contributing to the fire risk. Residents were advised not to return to evacuated areas until further notice. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jun/11/wildfire-near-inverness-daviot-firefighters?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/31/firefighters-tackle-scottish-highlands-wildfire-that-may-be-largest-ever-in-uk> - Firefighters in Scotland were battling a significant wildfire in the Highlands near Cannich, which began on May 28, 2023. The fire was described as potentially becoming the largest wildfire in the UK's history, with smoke from the blaze photographed from space by NASA satellites. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) extended a very high wildfire warning to June 5, urging the public to act safely and responsibly in rural environments and to follow the countryside code. The cause of the fire was under investigation, and the SFRS emphasized the importance of public awareness in preventing such incidents. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/31/firefighters-tackle-scottish-highlands-wildfire-that-may-be-largest-ever-in-uk?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24154662.one-wildfire-scotland-every-day-peak-season-figures-show/> - Between March and June 2023, Scotland experienced an average of one wildfire every day during the peak season, with 133 incidents recorded. Of these, 48 were classified as large, spreading over more than a hectare each. The Highlands accounted for 50 incidents, and Na h-Eileanan Siar had ten. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) highlighted the significant environmental and economic damage caused by these wildfires and emphasized the role of public behavior in preventing such incidents. The SFRS urged the public to act safely and responsibly in rural environments and to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. ([thenational.scot](https://www.thenational.scot/news/24154662.one-wildfire-scotland-every-day-peak-season-figures-show/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannich_wildfire> - The Cannich wildfire, which began on May 28, 2023, in the Scottish Highlands near the village of Cannich, burned for two weeks and was considered one of the largest wildfires in the UK's history. The fire caused significant damage to the RSPB Corrimony nature reserve, destroying hundreds of native trees and affecting ground-nesting birds. Two firefighters were injured during the incident but were discharged from the hospital the following day. The cause of the wildfire was under investigation, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) emphasized the importance of public awareness in preventing such incidents. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannich_wildfire?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/outdoor-safety-important-as-very-high-wildfire-warning-continues-for-scotland/> - On June 7, 2023, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) issued a 'very high' wildfire warning across Scotland, urging the public to exercise extreme caution due to the heightened risk of wildfires. The warning, effective from June 7 to June 10, 2023, highlighted the potential for even the smallest fire to spread uncontrollably and devastate entire hillsides. SFRS Station Commander John Harvey emphasized the importance of following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and avoiding activities that could ignite fires, such as lighting disposable barbecues or campfires in areas with dry vegetation and discarding cigarettes carelessly. ([firescotland.gov.uk](https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/outdoor-safety-important-as-very-high-wildfire-warning-continues-for-scotland/?utm_source=openai))