

Blue's autumn adventures

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Join Blue, our first dog blogger, out and about in the Scottish countryside.



Blue, our handsome blogger.

My name is Blue and I stay near Loch Ness which is a beautiful part of Scotland. I am an older rescue dog, and my family have only had me a year, so we're still learning about each other – they were most surprised to find I don't bark at all, and love curling up inside a bed! I look a bit like an English pointer (but I'm probably a Dalmatian collie cross).

I have boundless energy and like two to three hours walking a day for exercise, fresh air and toilet breaks – my walkers always carry a handful of nappy bags for “gift” wrapping. At this time of year, we also stop regularly to admire the autumn colours, and take pictures of me looking handsome. My right side is best.

My walkers have found that I have no interest in sheep. None at all. This is a very good thing as our track is regularly covered in the white woolly obstacles, and they can be easily frightened by dogs I can tell you. To make sure things do stay under control though, I get my lead clipped on. This also puts the farmer’s mind at rest. My walkers also shout out “Hello ladies!” to make sure the sheep aren’t surprised by us. This gives them time to look, and walk away if they want to, before we get too close. At this time of year we’ve also been watching out for the ram and being extra careful as the ewes may be pregnant.



“Hello ladies”

My shorter walk takes us along river banks, with plenty of opportunities to splash in the shallow water, and look out for the wildlife. There are signs of squirrels, mice, deer, and even pine martins on the sandy paths. Sometimes we come across mess left from other dogs, which does spoil this path (I hear my owner cursing under his breath), but using our bags mean we leave no trace.

As winter approaches there are often huge flocks of small birds in the forestry which sometimes follow us, flying from tree to tree, which can be very spooky in the dark. It’s all very interesting for a keen observer of nature like myself. I particularly like searching for mice when I hear them rustling in the grass, but it’s very hard to sniff them out!

At the end of this walk are two fields, both full of cows with their calves, and a bull in each. In the summer we sometimes walk through the cattle field, but at this time of year, with the bulls and growing calves, we stay on the other side of the fence, or go a different

way. The bulls have been quite talkative this week, mostly to each other, but also to the cows, and sometimes even to us. The calves can be very inquisitive, and will come over to the fence to rub noses. I find this quite frightening but again I get my lead clipped on to keep things in order.



Freedom to race through the bracken.

We try to cover our longer route once a day. This goes along forestry tracks and paths, and around a local lochan. It takes nearly two hours and we regularly see squirrels, roe deer, red deer, and meet other dogs and walkers.

While I'm off the lead for much of the time to make sure I get lots of exercise, when they see strange dogs, my walkers will usually drop the lead around my neck to ensure they're in control. I love other walkers, but even though I'm quite a big dog I'm afraid of small dogs, and if they jump at me I sometimes growl and snap at them. My owner isn't sure why but thinks it may be because of an experience I had when I was younger. I'd love to tell him the real story.

So, if you see me out and about, do stop us and say hello.

Blue

Find out more about responsible dog walking at www.jessthe dog.org.uk.

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