

The Northwest Highlands

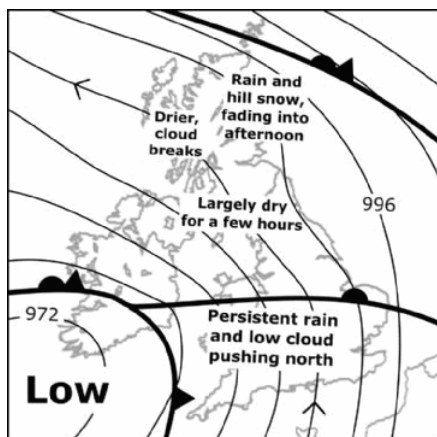
Areas north from Knoydart in the west, and the Great Glen towards the east (NB. Does not include Mull and areas west of Loch Linnhe, these are found in the West Highlands forecast.)



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General Summary for Wednesday, 21 January, 2026



British Mountain Summary:

Based on forecast chart for noon 21 January, 2026

Rain and hill snow in eastern Scotland in the morning tends to ease off; largely dry toward west. E-SE'ly gales in north, lower wind speeds S & W Highlands, but increasing again later. In England & Wales, upland gales all day, rain and initially snow on tops extending north, becoming milder from the south.

Headline for The Northwest Highlands

Gales north, widely later. Patchy rain fades, clearer hills west.

Detailed Forecast for Wednesday, 21 January, 2026

How windy? (On the Munros)	East to southeasterly, locally very variable speed, in northern areas 40 to 50mph, risk 60mph Ben Hope, powerful gusts downslope to west. Lower speeds Skye to Kintail, 20-30mph, increasing later 40mph, then widely 50-70mph after dark.
Effect of wind on you?	Difficult conditions and significant wind chill northern mountains, more moderate around Skye and south of Torridon, but some uncomfortable gusty areas. Deteriorating widely evening into night.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Rain mostly eastern hills morning and after dark. Rain most frequent over eastern areas from dawn into the morning, snow falling above 800-900m. Intermittent rain extending westwards, but small amounts much of the west coast. Fading out into afternoon widely. Then after dark, rain to upper slopes moves in from the south, patchy in northwest.
Cloud on the hills?	Most persistent east, breaks west coast Often covering eastern hills from Ben Hope to Ben Wyvis, from some mid-slopes up in the morning; patchier cloud westwards, but capping tops on and off at least; clearer near Torridon. Tending to lift and break more widely with time.
Chance of cloud free Munros?	50%, to 80% western areas particularly afternoon.
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	Glimpses of weak sun mostly near west coast, sunnier into afternoon, visibility very good, reduced around early rain further east.
How Cold? (at 900m)	0 to 2C, highest near west coast, rising slightly into night all areas. Wind chill feeling like -10C, to -15C where exposed to stronger wind on higher areas.
Freezing Level	900 to 1000m, but locally just above freezing to higher tops near west coast. Into night, rising above freezing to all tops.

The Northwest Highlands - Looking Ahead

	Thursday 22 January	Friday 23 January
How windy? (On the Munros)	East to southeasterly 50 to 60mph, in places 70mph around high mountains; powerful gusts downslope toward west.	Southeasterly 45 to 55mph, in places 70mph around high mountains early; powerful downslope gusts.
Effect of wind on you?	Difficult conditions, mobility challenging and gusts may knock you over not just on highest terrain. Severe wind chill.	Challenging conditions, mobility limited and gusts may knock you over not just on highest terrain. Severe wind chill.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Snow / rain mostly northeast In eastern areas, rain then snow to increasingly lower elevations, frequent or may be persistent Easter Ross up to Ben Hope. Further west, odd spots or flurries in the wind, but often dry toward Skye.	Snow mostly northeast Frequent to persistent snow from Easter Ross up to Ben Hope, the snow reaching to lower slopes. Further west, odd spots or flurries in the wind, but often dry toward Skye.
Cloud on the hills?	Fairly extensive, more broken west Low cloud banks likely to cover many eastern hills, some drifting over higher slopes further westwards, best breaks toward Skye and coastal Wester Ross.	Fairly extensive, more broken west Low cloud banks likely to cover many eastern hills, some drifting over higher slopes further westwards. Cloud mostly isolated to the high slopes of Skye and coastal Wester Ross.
Chance of cloud free Munros?	30%	20%
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	A little weak sun west coast, good visibility toward Skye, cloudier north and east and rather hazy, poor visibility if in snow.	A little weak sun west coast, good visibility toward Skye, cloudier north and east and rather hazy, poor or appalling visibility if in snow.
How Cold? (at 900m)	-1C in east and north, but some upper slopes near west coast up to +2C. Wind chill feels as cold as -15 to -20C.	0C Skye, to -3C Caithness hills. Lowering a degree afternoon. Wind chill feels as cold as -15 to -20C.
Freezing Level	Variable in west, just above freezing to tops west coast, but dropping to 600-800m inland and east, later below 600m.	Around 900m Skye, to 600m Sutherland and Caithness. Tending to lower to 500-600m widely.

Planning Outlook

All mountain areas of Britain from Thursday, 22 January, 2026

Sustained gale force easterlies over most mountains later this week, powerful gusts downslope toward west; severe chill factor. Colder air and lowering freezing level moves into Scotland Thursday-Friday, much mountain terrain then frozen into the weekend and early next week. Substantial snowfalls over eastern Scottish hills later this week, drier to the west. Dropping just below freezing on high tops in England and Wales - a mix of rain and high level snow; colder further south over the weekend. Circulating low pressure and cold air into next week, with further snowfalls likely. Lower wind speeds early in the new week, but then likely increasing E-SE'ly again.

Forecast issued at 16:30 on Tuesday, 20 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.