

Movements of Alma in 2009

06 January 2009

Yesterday, 5th, at dawn Alma was roosting at one her old favourite sites from last winter at Moss Hill in Donside; a couple clear sunny days so the signal was accurate to 150 metres; very cold in the glens with down to -10C; more like an 'old' winter.

14 January 2009

Beautiful clear calm day. I walked in and found Alma's roosting site on Moss Hill; last night she had roosted in a different location slightly to the east, but during the morning the air was cold and still, and I saw no sign of her. Called in at Lost Art Gallery on way past and they have seen her over the forest and over a field within the forest which has a big population of rabbits.

21 January 2009

Alma roosted overnight on the mountain behind Mar Lodge in Deeside and then set off south of the River Dee to Lochnagar, overflow the top end of Glen Esk and continued to the east in to the moorlands towards Loch Lee.

23 January 2009

Today, Alma was between Mount Keen and Glen Muick, south Deeside.

03 February 2009

Alma came back north to her favourite haunts in the Ladder Hills - some bad weather at times with snow so signals sporadic, but with the sun getting higher high quality GPS signals have started to come through. At 1pm and 2pm on 28th January Alma was on The Socach and an hour later was on the south slopes of Carn Mor, while at 8pm last evening she was roosting on Sron Aonghais, Strathdon.

06 February 2009

At midday on 5th, Alma had moved back south to Deeside and was just a few hundred years from the Deeside A93 road, half mile south of Inver. At 6pm (dusk) she was 13.5 miles to east settling down to roost on the NW slopes of Clachan Yell in

the Forest of Glen Tanar, where she has been before. She was still in the same place at 7am on 6th February.

16 February 2009

Alma has remained in Glen Tanar area through the snowy period, and at midday today was in the main glen.

25 February 2009

Alma spent most of her time on Glen Tanar estate, and was still there at midday on 24th February. But at midday on 25th, she was flying along the north side of Glen Clova. She passed east over Lochs Brandy and Wharrel to perch on Ben Tirran at pm. She spent the next three hours perched or flying on the eastern flanks of this mountain. This is a new area for her.



Alma's move into Glen Clova, Angus on 25th February

01 March 2009

Alma's movements between 26th February and 1st March:

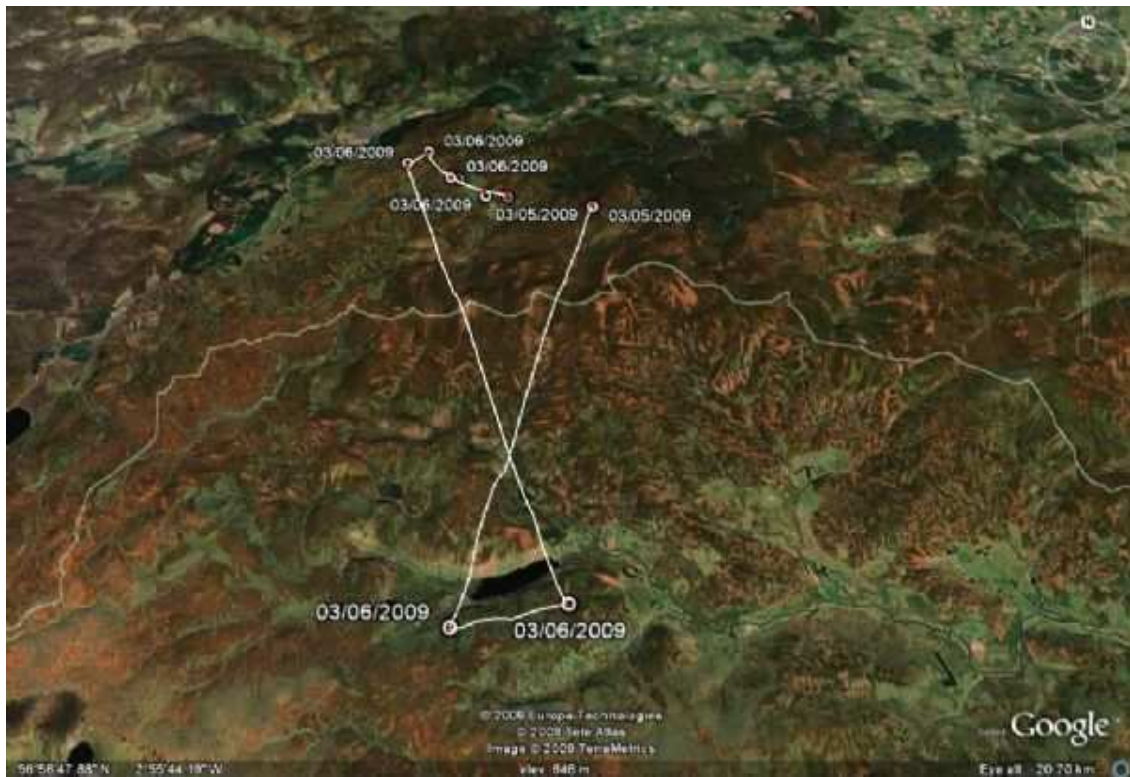


05 March 2009

Today, Alma is back in the southern part of Glen Tanar estate after visiting various parts of Deeside. In the last few days she has been in Glen Clova and then further east along the Aberdeenshire/Angus border.

06 March 2009

Alma roosted overnight at Clachan Yell in Glen Tanar and by 11am had flown south to Loch Lee in Glen Esk, she was south of the west end of the loch and an hour later was above Craig Dullet at the east end. She then flew straight back north (was she chased by resident adult eagles?) for at 1pm she was over Pannaninch Hill, just SE of Ballater and an hour later was perched at the north slope; during the afternoon she slowly moved to roost back in the main glen of Glen Tanar.



Alma's trip from Glen Tanar to Loch Lee and back 6th March 2009

13 March 2009



Alma's travels 11th 13th March - Glen Clova to Glen Tennet

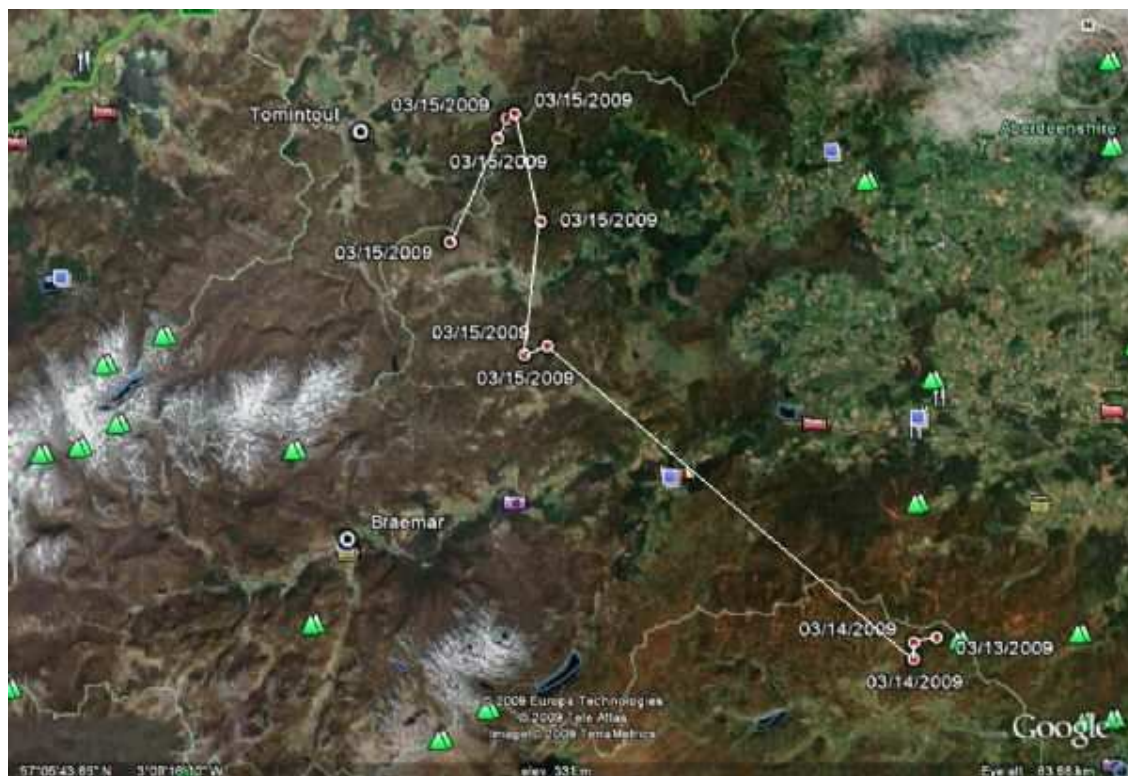
14 March 2009

On 11th March, Alma spent the whole day in Glen Clova, between Ben Tirran and White Hill. At 10am on 12th she was flying over the glen above Wheen at 63km/h, and flew west to the head of the glen. She was perched on Craig Mellon at 11am and midday, and then flew across Glen Doll to perch on the north slopes of the Driesh. At 2pm she was flying a little to the west and then flew east across the glen to perch again on White Hill. She then moved even further down the glen, before turning north to be flying fast over the Muckle Cairn at 5pm and at 6pm she flew across Carloch, Glen Esk and later roosted overnight along the Ladder Burn below Mount Keen.

On the 13th Alma worked the local area there until midday and then flew further east into new territory - at 2pm she was flying east at 20km/h over Tampie, to the south of Hill of Cat, and spent the next few hours in the glens north of Glen Tennet house, and at 6pm had moved further east and was in upper Glen Tennet, below Mount Battack.

15 March 2009

On 14th Alma remained near Mount Battack 7am and 8am, and then the next signal was at midday on 15th when Alma was north of Bridge of Gairn, she continued north and at 2pm was back in old haunts in Strathdon, and from 3pm to 5pm was around Carn Mor on the summits of the Ladder Hills. Then she flew SW over the Lecht and roosted the night on Carn Ealasaid



18 March 2009

Alma flew south from the Ladder Hills to Ballochbuie Forest, Balmoral on 16th March, where she roosted in the old pines. She was there until midday on 17th, and at 1pm was a little west flying at 40km/h over Craig Leek. At 2pm and 3pm she was perched on the top of Ben Avon (it was the first beautiful spring day), she had moved north down the slopes by 4pm and at 5 pm was flying east at 38km/h at 1068 metres over the River Avon, then she flew south to roost overnight in the Quoich water area. On 18th, she was there until 10am, an hour later she was flying SSW at 34km/h above Allanquoich, west of Braemar. At 3pm and 4pm she was perched on the east top of An Sgarscoch on the Perthshire march (we do not yet have GPS fixes for 12am to 2pm - I wonder if she went to her old haunts in Glenfeshie?). At 5pm she had moved back east to be on Carn Bhac in the very NE of Perthshire. The map below shows this very interesting flight.



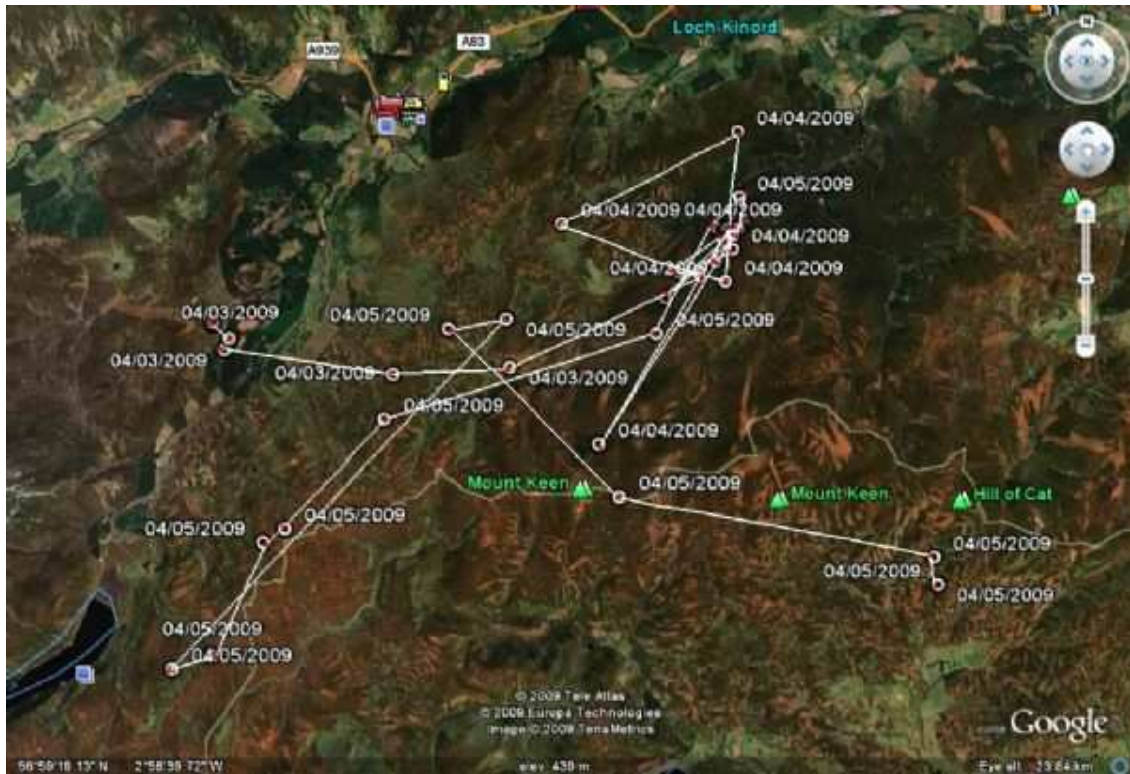
Alma around Deeside

26 March 2009

On 24th, Alma flew north from Bridge of Gairn area to Glenlivet for a quick visit at midday, an hour later she was back in Ladder Hills and then south to the Gairn.

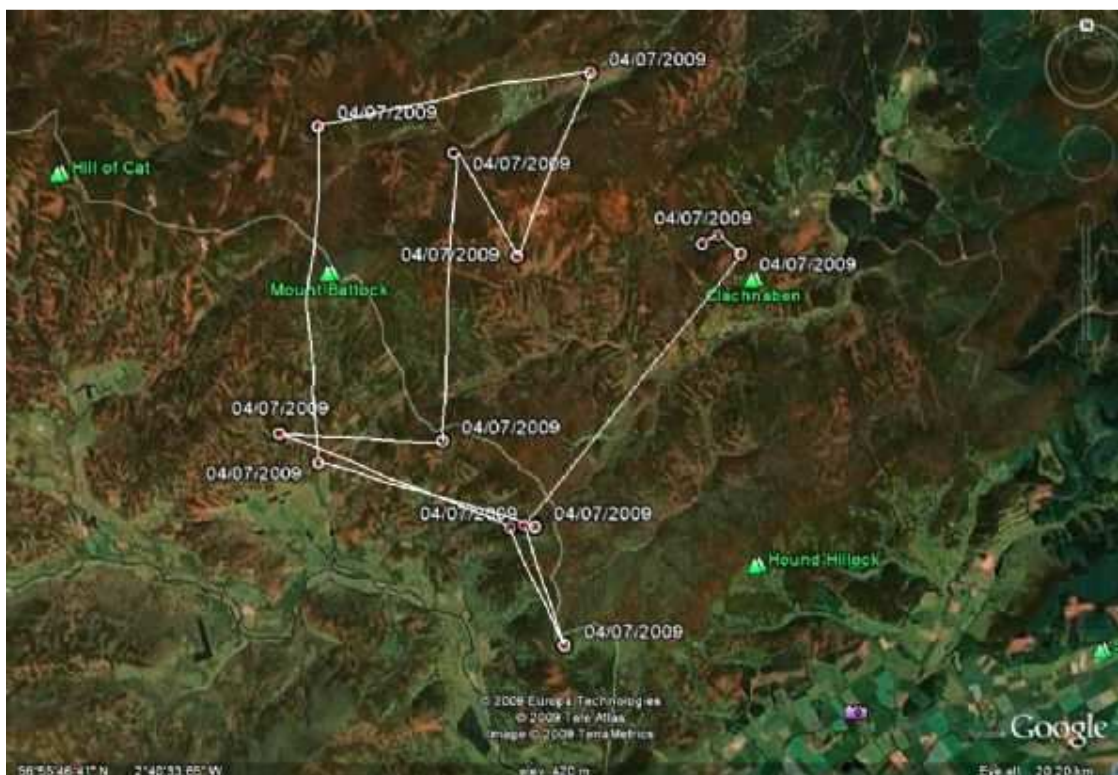
05 April 2009

Alma spent most of her time in the Glentarnar area in south Deeside, ranging into Glen Muick and south to Loch Muick, and east to Hill of Cat between 3rd and 5th April.



07 April 2009

Alma was 45 miles away from her natal eyrie on the Glenfeshie Estate, when we were there trying to find Tom.



12 April 2009

Alma has remained in the Glen Dye to Glen Esk area.

25 April 2009

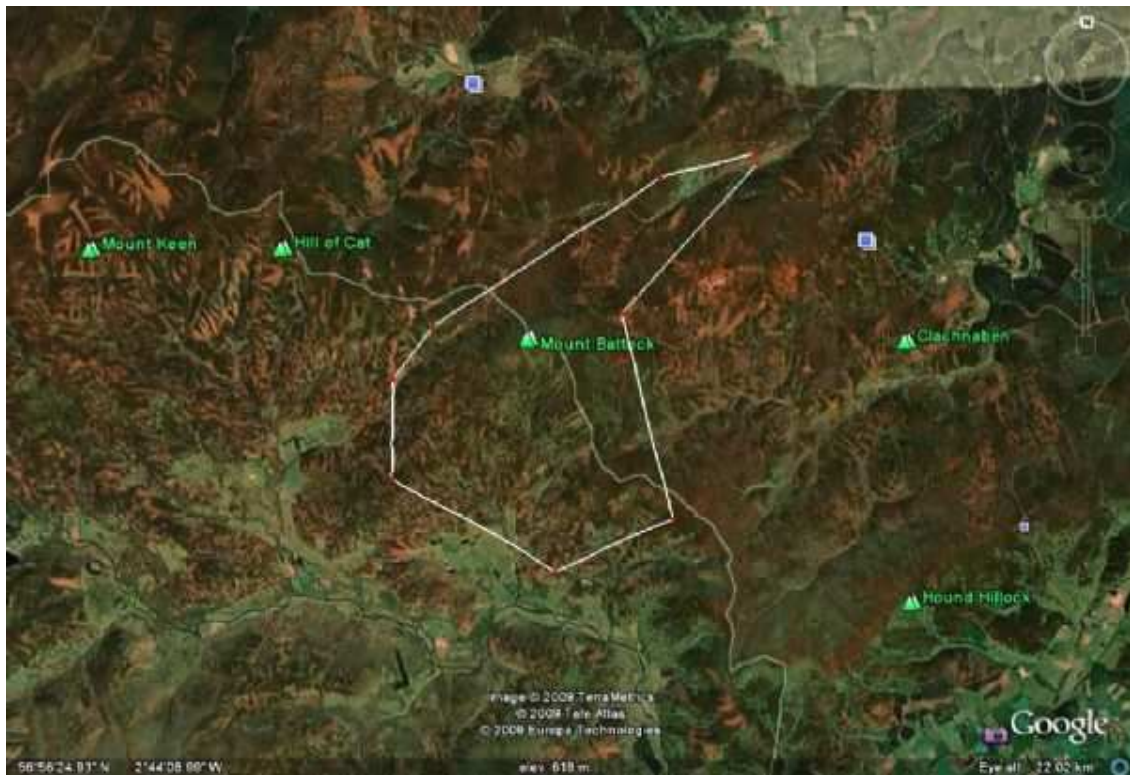
Alma has settled down for a few weeks on the extreme eastern edge of Golden Eagle range in Aberdeenshire - moving between Glen Dye and Glen Tennet in Angus, mainly centred around Mount Battock - it's presumably an area where she is not threatened by adult eagles.



Alma's range 21st - 23rd April

09 May 2009

Alma remains in the eastern mountains living between Glen Dye and Glen Esk; it looks as though she is settling for the summer.



Extent of Alma's range 7th - 9th May

18 May 2009

Alma remains in the same area between Glen Dye and Glen Esk.



Alma's locations 14th -18th May in relation to local towns

25 May 2009

Alma still in same area, on 20th and 25th May she was well down on the north side of Glen Esk - in fact on 25th May she was on the north side of Craigancash hill at an altitude of only 400m metres (1200 feet). In her travels she has visited lower ground on various occasions.



Alma's range from GPS locations 20th -25th May

05 June 2009

Alma is still in the same area and must by now have thought about starting her summer moult - last summer she moulted in the Ladder Hills and Glenfiddich.



Alma's locations June 2nd - 5th

26 June 2009

Alma's range is still in the Glen Dye and Glen Esk area, and now is narrowed down to hills between the Water of Aven to the Hill of Cammie and the Hill of Fingray.



Extent of Alma's ranging 22nd to 26th June

02 July 2009: 2nd Anniversary

Today is the second anniversary of the date we ringed Alma at her eyrie in Glenfeshie and fitted the satellite transmitter, which has revealed so much amazing knowledge about the life of a young golden eagle in Scotland. She is still in the same area.

13th July 2009; ALMA IS DEAD – POISONED

DISASTROUS NEWS ABOUT ALMA - Poisoned after two years of life.

Early this morning, Tayside Police with government staff and wildlife experts carried out an intensive search of grouse moors, houses and vehicles on Milden Estate, near Brechin. This estate is in Glen Esk, Angus and has been visited by Alma on a regular basis since early April. Much of the information about Alma's last days and the circumstances of her death are confidential while the ongoing police investigation is under way.

Tayside Police issued a statement today. Superintendent Ewen West, of Tayside police, said: "The golden eagle was part of a project being undertaken by Scottish Natural Heritage. The bird was being continuously tracked and when her movements came to an abrupt stop at the beginning of July suspicions were raised that she had died. Sadly, she had been illegally poisoned."

Roseanna Cunningham, the Scottish environment minister, said: "I am truly appalled that yet another golden eagle has been illegally killed in Scotland - the second this summer. Illegal poisoning is simply inexcusable and while the perpetrators are certainly beneath contempt they are in no way above the law.

"Poisoning of course poses serious animal welfare risks, but these offences also damage Scotland's tourism industry, our economy and can even tarnish the reputations of those working in our countryside within the law.

"The fact this eagle was tagged and the Scottish public were actively engaged in its progress, only makes this case all the more galling. The loss of this magnificent animal is a real blow to Scotland, particularly as we are renowned world-wide for our incredible wildlife."

Dr Ian Jardine, chief executive of Scottish Natural Heritage, said: "We are working with police and other partners in the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) to try and wipe out poisoning of wildlife.

"It would appear that a determined minority are continuing to spoil people's enjoyment of these magnificent golden eagles."

MORE NEWS TO FOLLOW

As the investigation proceeds we will give more information on Alma when appropriate, with photographs.

Alma the Eagle had given so many people, in Scotland and beyond, an amazing insight into the lives of golden eagles in Scotland. We followed her from those first forays with her parents in Glenfeshie to her exploration of Scotland; she lived mainly around the Cairngorms, but made some long flights - the furthest to Loch Maree in April 2007. She lived for two years and we were all looking forward to her becoming an adult and choosing a mate and a nest. Her data was building real information on the cultural behaviour of eagles. Her dreadful loss saddens us and robs us of an important scientific project, and robs her of her life.

Further information on the BBC News website
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/tayside_and_central/8176728.stm
and the Guardian website
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jul/30/conservation-scotland>

30 August 2009

There has been no update to this page because Alma's illegal poisoning is still the subject of an active police investigation by Tayside Police. Depending on the course of events I will update the tracking and other data gathered prior to the crime, when advised that I can do so without prejudicing the case.

01 January 2011: The culprit has escaped

The Tayside Police have been unable to bring the person or persons to court for the illegal killing of Alma. She died on Milden Estate in Angus, owned by Richard Hanson, but despite intensive police investigations no one has been charged with this crime. No one, so far, has come forward with information which could lead to an arrest nor has any formal apology been given for the tragic loss of such an important bird.