



**WING IT** To UK's first nature film fest

## GO WILD FOR NATURE FILMS

**An exciting wildlife-themed movie festival launches in southern Scotland next year.**

The Wild Film Festival Scotland will take place on March 24 to 26 in Dumfries.

It's being claimed as "the UK's first and best celebration of top wildlife and nature movies and photography from at home and worldwide".

The weekend, organised by the Southern Uplands Partnership, will also include speakers, events and exhibitions, with something for people of all ages.

■ See Wild Film Festival on Facebook for information.

## KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET

**People of all ages are invited to submit entries to the 2017 Peebles Outdoor Film Festival's Outdoor Shorts competition.**

The films must be outdoor-themed, either documentary or fictional work, of no more than five minutes in length and demonstrate creativity, originality and storytelling skill.

The competition, whose deadline is January 9, is split into two categories: Under-18s and open.

■ See [www.eastgatearts.com](http://www.eastgatearts.com) or call the box office on 01721 725777 for further details.

## GEAR OF THE WEEK

**SunGod have created an innovative design for their new ski goggles.**

The SunGod Revolt goggles are fully customisable with four frame colours, six tints of easy-switch interchangeable lenses and 10 strap designs.

The frames are made from super-flexible TPU that forms to your face and gives a great fit, while 16 air vents aid airflow.

The SunGod Revolt goggles cost £95. See [www.sungod.co](http://www.sungod.co) for more information.



**TEAM WORK**  
Participants were able to take part individually or in relay squads

# Ultra enthusiastic



**FIONA RUSSELL**

A run through one of the country's most beautiful corners sounds idyllic... until you consider that it's 55km long. But the phenomenal feat of endurance was part of the rush for runners and relay racers in the first-ever Dunoon 55k

**More than 200 runners took part in the inaugural Dunoon Ultra 55k on the Cowal Peninsula last month.**

Competing solo or as part of a three-person relay team, the runners started the race at Benmore Botanic Gardens, just north of the ferry port town.

The event – nicknamed the Wee Eck Ultra – is one of a growing number of ultra distance events in Scotland.

It is also part of a stable of new events that have sprung up around the town in recent years, including a half marathon, 10k, cycle sportive and a mountain biking enduro.

Pipers and a booming canon at the start gave a wow factor to the first 13.5-mile (21.5km) stage of the run on October 8.

Runners were faced with a steep ascent of stunning Puck's Glen in Benmore Forest to reach a height of 475ft (145m).

The route then headed north high above the eastern shore of Loch Eck and to a height of some 1000ft (300m).

The descent on a forest track provided beautiful views of Argyll Forest Park and nearby hills and mountains.

For the relay runners, the first transition came at the northern end of Loch Eck

Susie Gillies, of Greenock Glenpark Harriers, said: "I was the first runner in our relay team and I really enjoyed the stage.

"It was hillier than I thought it would be and it felt longer than I'd expected but the climb through the glen was worth it for the views."

The second leg was billed as the "flatter stage". The 10.5 miles



**EMBRACE LEADERS** The relief at the finish line is palpable

(17km) hugged the western shoreline of Loch Eck.

The key to ultra distance racing is to set a pace that is achievable and comfortable for many hours of running.

Competitor Lucja Leonard, of Edinburgh, is an experienced ultra runner who has taken park in many races worldwide.

She said: "I find that I run at pretty much the same pace for all long-distance events and that I am better at long distances compared to shorter, faster events."

As the race headed along the loch side the runners spread out, with solo leaders Michael Tweedley, Richard Cooper and Kevin Rogers, setting an impressive pace.

The second relay runners enjoyed the rolling trail through woodland and the views of the loch and hills ahead.

Richard Longster ran the second leg for his Dunoon Hill Runners team. Being a local was an obvious advantage although

the fast pace required posed a challenge.

Richard said: "I think I had the easier stage and I enjoyed being able to push quite hard."

I also ran the second stage in a relay team with my friends Lucja and Nick Green, of Milngavie.

It was my first ultra race and I found the atmosphere friendly and welcoming.

The winning solo competitor was Michael Tweedley, 45, of Dunoon Hill Runners.

His impressive time of four hours 13 minutes was faster than all the relay teams.

The first female was Madeline Robinson, 22, from Helensburgh – the sixth soloist overall – who finished in five hours and three minutes.

Our relay team was second overall and the first-placed mixed team, finishing in four hours 55 minutes.

■ See [dunoonpresents.co.uk](http://dunoonpresents.co.uk) and [dunoonhillrunners.org](http://dunoonhillrunners.org) for details.

**Advice and ideas**

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at [www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk) – you'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running and other outdoor activities, as well as kit reviews.