

Scottish Borders
BLANKET BOG
HABITAT ACTION PLAN



BLANKET BOG in Scottish Borders

Status

Blanket bog applies only to that portion of a blanket 'mire' which is exclusively rain-fed, mainly the watershed summits of upland areas. However, these areas are generally part of a landscape scale complex of peat-based habitat types (blanket mire) fed also by ground waters.

This plan encompasses all areas of blanket bog supporting semi-natural blanket bog vegetation, whether or not it may be defined as 'active' i.e. still peat forming or exclusively rain-fed. Species such as heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, deer grass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, cotton grass *Eriophorum* species and several of the bog moss *Sphagnum* species, occur throughout much of the range of the habitat. NVC communities associated with this habitat include: M18 *Erica tetralix-Sphagnum papillosum* raised and blanket mire, M19 *Calluna vulgaris-Eriophorum vaginatum* mire, M20 *Eriophorum* mire, M25 *Molinia caerulea-Potentilla erecta* mire.

Land Cover Map 2000 estimates that there are 8,000ha of bog habitat in Scottish Borders.

Key Species (Species of Conservation Concern)

Golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina* *Sphagnum* spp. including golden bog-moss *Sphagnum pulchrum*, rugged collar-moss *Sphagnum vasculosum*, bog bilberry *Vaccinium uliginosum*, a ground beetle *Carabus nitens*, marsh oblique-barred *Hypenodes humidialis*, a money spider *Notioscopus sarcinatus*, Cloudberry *Rubus chamaemorus*, Slender Green Feather Moss *Hamatocaulis vernicosus*

Key Issues

- overgrazing
- fragmentation and isolation
- afforestation
- inappropriate burning
- drainage
- erosion
- recreation
- wind farms
- access tracks
- climate change
- peat cutting

Opportunities

- A Borders Wetland Vision
- Natural Care- Moorland Management Scheme under Rural Development Contracts
- sustainable flood management
- carbon sequestration schemes
- development enhancements e.g. wind farm sites

Current Action

- Restoration of blanket bog under Forth and Borders Moorland Management Natural Care scheme for upland SSSIs.
- Auditing of Forestry Commission estate for UKBAP habitats
- Borders Wetland Vision LBAP project led by Scottish Borders Council has been developing since 2005, a strategic approach to wetland conservation in Scottish Borders, by identifying opportunity areas for wetlands including blanket bog. It is proposed to develop a wetland restoration project out of this Vision.

Objectives

1. determine status of blanket bog habitat in Scottish Borders
2. restore and where appropriate enhance existing habitat and enhance habitat integrity
3. promote the value of blanket bog through education and awareness

Targets

1. identify the extent of blanket bog derived from Aerial Photography Interpretation by 2008
2. maintain the 2008 baseline extent of blanket bog in Scottish Borders
3. restore area equivalent to 5% of baseline blanket bog resource by 2015
4. enhance 5% of the baseline blanket bog resource by 2015.

Key Actions

1. determine status, extent and condition of blanket bog habitat in Scottish Borders
2. prioritise areas for restoration and enhancement under the Borders Wetland Vision project
3. maximise opportunities for protection and enhancement under the Natural Care Moorland Management Scheme and Rural Development Contracts
4. survey and monitoring of two priority species by 2010
5. promotion of appropriate habitat management including use of muirburn code and key guidance
6. support sustainable moorland management through integrated habitat network initiatives.
7. under a Borders Wetland Vision evaluate and map areas of degraded blanket bog to prioritise areas for restoration

8. under a Borders Wetland Vision develop and implement a blanket bog restoration project with emphasis on erosion control, ditch blocking and forest restructuring
9. identify areas of recreational pressure on blanket bogs and implement measures to address this
10. evaluate potential of blanket bogs for sustainable flood management and implement enhancement scheme as appropriate.
11. develop and initiate education and awareness projects, including events to promote the value of blanket bog habitat
12. Ensure protection of blanket bog areas from inappropriate development particularly wind farms.

Linkage to other key plans and strategies:

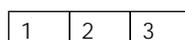
Montane HAP
Upland Cleuch and Scrub HAP
Upland Heath HAP
LBAP Information Action Plan
Tweed Cathment Management Plan
Solway - Tweed River Basin Management Plan
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

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