

Scottish Borders
CONIFEROUS WOODLAND
HABITAT ACTION PLAN



Our Scottish Borders
Your environment



CONIFEROUS WOODLAND

Current Status

This type of woodland includes all coniferous stands where broadleaved trees make up less than 20% cover with the exception of yew woodlands. Areas of recently felled coniferous woodland are also included in this type, along with other integral features of woodland such as glades and rides. Coniferous plantations make up 85% of the woodland cover of the region. A large proportion of this is located in the uplands in the south west of the Borders. The priority areas for red squirrel in Scottish Borders are all large scale coniferous plantations in the south-west of the region. Areas of important wetlands, grasslands and upland heath remain within some of the coniferous plantations. Coniferous woodland also includes shelter belts and small farm woodland plots.

Key Species

(Species of Conservation Concern SoCC)

Red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*, pine marten *Martes martes*, goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, goldcrest *Regulus regulus*, redpoll, *Linnaea borealis*, creeping lady's tresses, nationally notable beetles, a red data pyralid moth, nationally notable hoverfly and money spider.

For full list of SoCC see:

<http://www.scottishborders.gov.uk/environment/naturalheritage/>

Key Issues

(include threats and impacts)

- ongoing forestry management
- lack of investment
- siting of wind farms
- herbivore control – deer and grey squirrel
- lack of certification/ sustainable management in private forestry
- priority areas for red squirrel and control of grey squirrels
- management and ownership of FCS estate
- restoration of priority wetland habitats within forests
- management for black grouse
- restructuring of forests
- grazing by goats.

Opportunities

- relevant elements of Land Management Contracts
- Forest Design Plans
- Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy implementation.

Current Action

- The red squirrels in South Scotland project, managed by The Southern Uplands Partnership, began in 2000 and has identified and drawn up management plans for priority forests for red squirrel in Scottish Borders. Now in its third phase 2004-7, the project seeks to ensure that management plans are implemented and is developing further community based red squirrel projects in the priority areas
- Forestry Commission Scotland continues to implement Forest Design Plans to maximise opportunities for multiple benefits of forestry including biodiversity. Red squirrel monitoring by volunteers in the three FCS Priority Woodlands - Wauchope (Hyndlee, started 2004, through RSSS), Craik (started 2005) and Newcastleton (due to start in 2006)

- Hyndlee Burn Enhancements Project has been set up to restore a stretch of watercourse and demonstrate best practice in riparian habitat management within commercial conifer forestry
- Forestry Commission Scotland has also developed in the Tweed Valley Forest Park nature-based tourism and educational opportunities including the Tweed Valley Osprey Watch Centres at Glentress, Kailzie Gardens and butterfly recording by local communities.

Objectives

1. maintain and enhance structural diversity of coniferous woodlands to support priority species populations in Scottish Borders
2. enhance species diversity within coniferous woodlands in Scottish Borders
3. create new coniferous woodlands in preferred areas identified in the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy
4. maintain integrity of priority forest areas for red squirrel in Scottish Borders
5. promote opportunities for education and awareness initiatives focussed on coniferous woodland.

Targets for Scottish Borders

1. nine Forest Design Plans (five year plans) to have been revised by 2010 (revised to ten year plans)
2. seventeen Forest Design Plans (ten year plans) to undergo five yearly review by 2010
3. most new large-scale upland plantations are being created in preferred areas of the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy by 2010 onwards
4. initiate one major education and awareness initiative focussed on coniferous woodland by 2008.

Key Actions

1. ensure adequate control of deer is carried out within key areas of Scottish Borders
2. determine status of LBAP priority species including red squirrel, pine marten, and black grouse
3. maximise opportunities in the public and private sector for delivery of biodiversity through the Forest Design Plan and Environmental Panel process
4. encourage the retention of stands (long-rotation and long-term retention) and deadwood
5. maximise opportunities for restoration of other priority habitats located within coniferous forests
6. adopt and implement guidance for management of red squirrel priority woodlands
7. ensure adequate control of grey squirrel to protect priority areas for red squirrel
8. identify twinflower and creeping lady's tresses sites within the Borders and ensure appropriate management is implemented to sustain populations
9. ensure that all relevant species and habitat data are made available to Scottish Borders Biological Record Centre and the Council's Ecology Officer
10. develop and initiate education and awareness projects including further initiatives in the Tweed Valley Forest.

Linkages to other plans and strategies

Native woodland HAP
 Upland cleuch and scrub woodland HAP
 Lowland raised bog HAP
 Rivers and burns HAP
 Upland heath HAP
 Lowland grassland HAP
 LBAP Information Action Plan
 Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy
 Scottish Forestry Strategy

Front Cover Photos:

1. Forestry Commission Scotland
2. Forestry Commission Scotland
3. Borders Forest Trust

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to discuss your needs.**

**It is also available on our website:
[www.scottishborders.gov.uk/life/
environment/naturalheritage/2715.html](http://www.scottishborders.gov.uk/life/environment/naturalheritage/2715.html)**



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