

Scottish Borders
MONTANE
HABITAT ACTION PLAN



Our Scottish Borders
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MONTANE in Scottish Borders

Current Status

This habitat lies above the natural tree line (above 600m) and nationally includes montane heath and snow bed communities that are dominated by stiff sedge and three leaved rush, and dwarf forb communities of alpine lady's mantle, moss campion, Sibbaldia and saxifrage species. It also includes moss and lichen dominated heaths of mountain summits.

National Vegetation Classification communities associated with this habitat include:

U7, U10, U14, U17, U23, H14, H20, CG12 and W20 (*Downy willow Salix lapponum*-greater woodrush *Luzula sylvatica*)

Key Issues

- Overgrazing
- Fragmentation and isolation
- Recreation
- Wind farms
- Climate change
- Agri-environment/forestry schemes

Opportunities

- Rural Development Contracts
- Further development of Borders Forest Trust and National Trust for Scotland project

Key Species (Species of Conservation Concern)

Mountain hare *Lepus timidus*, golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*, raven *Corvus corax*, ring ouzel *Turdus torquatus*, twite *Carduelis flavirostris*, oblong woodsia *Woodsia ilvensis*, Downy willow *Salix lapponum* pale forget-me-not *Myosotis stolonifera*, hairy stonecrop *Sedum villosus*, mossy saxifrage *Saxifraga hypnoides*, sheathed sedge *Carex vaginata*, black alpine sedge *Carex atrata* alpine foxtail *Alopecurus borealis* and nationally scarce mosses and lichens.

For full list of Species of Conservation Concern see:

<http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/1220/conservation>

Current Action

- Borders Forest Trust and National Trust for Scotland have been managing sites for Downy willow *Salix lapponum* above the Grey Mare's Tail on the border between Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway.
- The Southern Upland Partnership carried out an audit of present and historic records of mountain hare in Scottish Borders.

Objectives

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

Targets

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

Key Actions

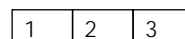
1. determine status, extent and condition of montane habitat in Scottish Borders
2. maximise opportunities for protection and enhancement under the Rural Development Contracts as they develop
3. survey and monitoring of two key species by 2012
4. promotion of appropriate habitat management including use of muirburn code to avoid burning on montane habitats, appropriate grazing management and provision of key guidance
5. support sustainable montane management through integrated habitat network initiatives.
6. evaluate and map areas of degraded montane habitat to

- prioritise areas for restoration
7. develop and implement a montane habitat restoration project
8. ensure that all relevant species and habitat data are made available to Scottish Borders Biological Records centre and the Council's Ecology Officer
9. develop and initiate education and awareness projects, including events to promote the value of montane habitat
10. Ensure protection of montane areas from inappropriate development including wind farms.

Linkage to other plans and strategies

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

Front Cover Photos:



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It is also available on our website:

www.scottishborders.gov.uk/life/environment/naturalheritage/2715.html

