

Scottish Borders  
**UPLAND CLEUCH and SCRUB WOODLAND**  
HABITAT ACTION PLAN



# UPLAND CLEUCH and SCRUB WOODLAND in Scottish Borders

## Current Status

This habitat includes juniper scrub, upland montane dwarf-shrub communities (Krummholz) and upland birchwoods. This latter community may be dominated by stands of downy birch *Betula pubescens* and/ or silver birch *Betula pendula* with constituents such as rowan, willow, juniper and aspen. On more acidic soils, rowan is a prominent component. It includes areas of hill marginal ground containing hawthorn, blackthorn or gorse stands.

National Vegetation Communities (NVC) associated with this habitat include those associated with native woodland: W7 *Alnus glutinosa*-*Fraxinus excelsior*-*Lysimachia* woodland, W9 *Fraxinus excelsior*-*Sorbus aucuparia*-*Mercurialis perennis* woodland, W11 *Quercus petraea*-*Betula pubescens*-*Oxalis acetosella* woodland, W17 *Quercus petraea*-*Betula pubescens*-*Dicranum majus* woodland, W19 *Juniperus communis*-*Oxalis acetosella* woodland, W20 *Salix lapponum*-*Luzula sylvatica* scrub and W23 *Ulex europeus*-*Rubus fruticosus* scrub.

## Key Species (Species of Conservation Concern SoCC)

Ring ouzel *Turdus torquatus*, juniper *Juniperus communis*, a lady's mantle *Alchemilla wickhamiae*, globeflower *Trollius europaeus*, pale forget-me-not *Myosotis brevifolia*, chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea*, mountain melick *Melica nutans*, green spleenwort *Asplenium viridis*, hairy stonecrop *Sedum villosum*, wilson's filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii*, saxifrages, and nationally scarce mosses.

For full list of SoCC see:

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

## Key Issues (include threats and impacts)

- overgrazing
- undergrazing
- scrub clearance
- excessive burning
- inappropriate planting including afforestation
- lack of information
- illegal collecting of rare plants
- inappropriate bracken spraying.

## Opportunities

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

## Current Action

- Borders Forest Trust and partners in Borders FWAG and the Tweed Foundation have restored and created upland cleuch woodland through their Riparian Woodland and Forest Habitat Networks project in the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys and Ancient Woodland Restoration project in sites across Scottish Borders
- BFT with support from SNH and Millennium Forest for Scotland have also identified 80 juniper sites in the Borders, containing at least 6,000 bushes mostly consisting of individual plants and a few large colonies such as Juniper Crag near Peebles. Juniper restoration is being carried out at seven sites with landowners and Forestry Commission Scotland
- Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) have also carried out an exhaustive survey of all juniper sites in Berwickshire
- Tweed Foundation has carried out habitat management as part of the Riparian Habitat Network project under the Tweed Rivers Heritage project

## Objectives

1. determine the status of the habitat in Scottish Borders
2. increase area of upland cleuch and scrub woodland in Scottish Borders
3. restore and where appropriate enhance existing upland cleuch and scrub woodland in Scottish Borders
4. promote education and awareness initiatives focussed on upland cleuch and woodland.
8. improve the control and management of feral goats to reduce impacts on upland cleuch and scrub woodland
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. hold training events to improve biological recording of upland cleuch and scrub woodland habitats.

## Targets for Scottish Borders

1. complete an audit of upland cleuch and scrub woodland habitats by 2008
2. create an additional 40ha of upland cleuch and scrub woodland by 2010
3. restore 40ha of existing upland cleuch and scrub woodland by 2010
4. initiate one major education and awareness initiative focussed on upland cleuch and scrub woodland by 2008.

## Key Actions

1. maintain and enhance existing areas and create additional areas of juniper in prioritised sites
2. maintain and enhance existing areas and create additional areas of aspen in prioritised sites
3. develop and adopt robust guidance for management of upland cleuch and scrub woodland
4. develop the supply of locally sourced seed stock to ensure maintenance of genetic integrity
5. conduct a desk-top review of the requirements of priority species associated with this habitat
6. evaluate opportunities to maintain and create transitional habitats e.g. grassland/ upland cleuch and scrub woodland/ woodland
7. enhance the integrity of the local habitat network including enhanced

## Linkages to other HAPs, plans and strategies

Native woodland HAP  
Montane HAP  
Upland heath HAP  
Rivers and burns HAP  
LBAP Information Action Plan  
Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy  
Scottish Forestry Strategy  
Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

The Scrub Management Handbook: Guidance on the management of scrub on Nature Conservation sites. English Nature  
BFT Juniper report  
Braithwaite, M.E. 2003 BSBI Juniper Survey VC81 Berwickshire

### Front Cover Photos:

1. Borders Forest Trust
2. Borders Forest Trust
3. Borders Forest Trust

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**Business Services,  
Planning and Economic Development  
Department,  
Council Headquarters,  
Scottish Borders Council,  
Newtown St Boswells,  
Tel: 01835 825060, Fax: 01835 825158,  
email: [ped@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:ped@scotborders.gov.uk)  
to discuss your needs.**

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