

Scottish Borders  
**UPLAND HEATHLAND**  
HABITAT ACTION PLAN



# UPLAND HEATHLAND in Scottish Borders

## Current Status

Heathland vegetation occurs widely on mineral soils and thin peats (<0.5 m deep) throughout the uplands and moorlands of the UK. It is characterised by the presence of dwarf shrubs at a cover of at least 25%. It is typically dominated by a range of dwarf shrubs such as heather *Calluna vulgaris* bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*, and bell heather *Erica cinerea*. Blanket bog is distinguished from heathland by its occurrence on deep peat (>0.5 m).



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## National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities associated with this habitat:

H12 *Calluna vulgaris* - *Vaccinium myrtillus* heath. H18 *Vaccinium myrtillus* - *Deschampsia flexuosa* heath. M16 *Erica tetralix* - *Sphagnum compactum* wet heath H4, H8, H9, H10, H15, H16, H21

## Key Species (Species of Conservation Concern)

Black grouse *Tetrao tetrix*, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, twite *Carduelis flavirostris*, adder *Vipera berus*, sword-grass *Xylena exsoleta*, nationally notable moths and ground beetles, mountain bumblebee *Bombus Monticola*, heath dog-violet *Viola canina*, bog bilberry *Vaccinium uliginosum*, chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea*

## For full list of Species of Conservation Concern see:

<http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/life/environment/natural-heritage/17531.html>

## Key Issues

- Overgrazing
- Undergrazing (bracken and purple moor grass)
- Inappropriate muirburn
- Increased predation
- Persecution
- Climate change
- Agri-environment/forestry schemes

## Opportunities

- Rural Development Contracts
- Sporting Estates

## Current Action

- SUP Black Grouse recovery project
- SNH Moorland Management Scheme
- Langholm Demonstration Project

## Objectives

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

## Targets

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

## Key Actions

1. determine status, extent and condition of upland heathland habitat in Scottish Borders
2. continue to develop and implement a black grouse recovery project
3. maximise opportunities for protection and enhancement under Rural Development Contracts
4. survey and monitoring of two key 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. evaluate and map areas of degraded upland heath to prioritise areas for restoration
8. develop and implement an upland heath restoration project



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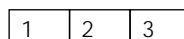
9. develop and initiate education and awareness projects, including events to promote the value of upland heath habitat
10. Ensure protection of upland heath areas from inappropriate development including wind farms.

## Linkage to other plans and strategies

Montane HAP  
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

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**[www.scottishborders.gov.uk/life/environment/naturalheritage/2715.html](http://www.scottishborders.gov.uk/life/environment/naturalheritage/2715.html)**

