

Habitat Action Plan: Blanket Bog

Current status and Importance

- Blanket bog occurs in the wettest parts of the UK and is found in the north and west of Britain. In Kirklees it occurs in the west of the District.
- Blanket bogs have been significantly degraded over the last century due to a combination of pollution, drainage and erosion.
- A major part of the total resource of blanket bog in the European Union occurs in the UK.
- The total area of blanket bog in the UK is approximately 1.5 million ha, most of which occurs in Scotland. Approximately 4,000 ha are within Kirklees.
- Active blanket bog is also listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive.
- All of the blanket bog in Kirklees receives statutory protection through SSSI, SPA and SAC designations in the Dark Peak and South Pennines.

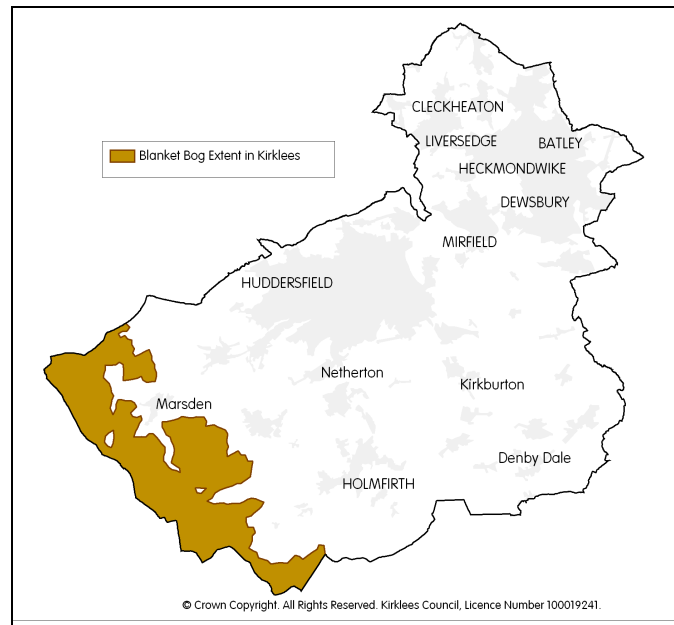


Species Use

- Blanket bog is dominated by carpets of Sphagnum bog mosses, although much of this was lost in the South Pennines due to pollution.
- A wide range of ericoids including Heather (*Culluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heather (*Erica tetralix*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) may be present on the hummocks together with Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and Deergrass (*Trichophorum cespitosum*). Heather and/or Cotton Sedge (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) are often dominant over large areas.
- There is substantial ornithological interest with species such as Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) nesting at internationally high densities.
- The streams within the uplands of Kirklees holds one of the last populations of water voles (*Arvicola terrestris*) within the district.

Conservation Issues

- Moorland drainage which has been very widespread.
- Natural erosion processes.
- Overgrazing and uncontrolled burning which can lead to increased erosion and the loss of characteristic bog species.
- Acidification and particulates from atmospheric pollution which has significantly modified the habitat within Kirklees.



Blanket Bog extent in Kirklees

Objectives

- Protection of blanket bogs from inappropriate uses or management to prevent further habitat deterioration.
- Encourage and support appropriate management of areas of active blanket bog which retain their hydrological characteristics.
- Rehabilitate areas of damaged blanket bogs where the hydrological integrity is suitable for restoration (e. g. through drain blocking).
- Manage areas of blanket bog to maximise their value for their important species' populations.
- Exploit the role of blanket bogs as carbon sinks as part of a shift towards a low carbon economy and, also, their role in water resource management.

Target areas for habitat management and creation

- All blanket bog occurs within the Upland protected areas.
- For further information, please see the Biodiversity Opportunity Zones Map at www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity

NB Natural England must be consulted on any proposal within nationally and internationally designated sites.

Targets

- See [Defra/Natural England SSSI Public Service Agreement Targets](#)

Key Links and Organisations

- Site protection: Natural England, Peak District National Park Authority, Kirklees Council.
- Management and restoration through Environmental Stewardship in Kirklees: Natural England, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.
- Management of Blanket Bog in Kirklees: The National Trust, Moors for the Future Partnership, Peak District National Park, Yorkshire Water.

See Also

- [UKBAP: Blanket Bog Habitat Action Plan](#)
- [UKBAP: Upland Heathland Habitat Action Plan](#)
- [UKBAP Upland Flushes Habitat Action Plan](#)
- Kirklees BAP Species Action Plan: Water Vole (www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity)