Habitat Action Plan: Upland Flushes

Current status and Importance

- Occur in upland areas where water from groundwater, surface run-off and rainfall can reach the surface in depressions and gullies. Because these areas are wetter, the resulting type of vegetation is different to the surrounding upland habitat. Flushes are often seen in the landscape as a line of rushes, as they are associated with lateral water movement.
- Upland flushes are difficult to monitor and map by themselves as they are often made up of a number of small stands. However, they form an important mosaic in conjunction with blanket bog and upland heath. Kirklees is home to mainly acid flush habitat.
- This plan needs to be considered in the context of action plans for Upland Heathland and Blanket Bog as appropriate.

Species Use

- Flushes are important for a range of plant species which include *Sphagnum* bog mosses, cottongrass species (*Eriophorum spp.*), rushes (*Juncus spp.*) heath spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*), bog asphodel (*Narthecium* ossigfragum) and a range of other plants. Within Kirklees, ivy-leaved bellflower (*Wahlenbergia hederacea*)is also found in this habitat.
- Birds will use flushes for feeding and species such as snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*).
- Flushes may form an important non-linear habitat for water voles (*Arvicola terrestris*) within the district.

Conservation Issues

- Pollution affects this habitat both as a legacy of the industrial revolution and also as a result of current emissions of nitrogen based compounds.
- Over grazing, leading directly to habitat deterioration.

Objectives

- Identify the location of species-rich flushes and monitor their condition.
- In conjunction with blanket bog and upland heath, minimise deterioration through the promotion of appropriate management, retaining their hydrological characteristics.
- Restore damaged areas to a favourable condition through appropriate management.

Target areas for habitat management and creation

- Upland flushes occur within the blanket bogs and upland heaths most of which occurs within the Upland protected sites.
- However, some upland flushes may be found extending into the Mid-altitudinal grassland zone and higher elevation Valley Slopes although they are generally recognised as occurring above agriculturally enclosed 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

- To be decided.

Key Links and Organisations

- Site protection: Natural England, Kirklees Council, Peak District National Park Authority, Forestry Commission.
- Management 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, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.
- Survey: Natural England, Kirklees Wildlife and Landscape Advisory Forum, West Yorkshire Ecology.

See Also

- UKBAP Upland Flushes Habitat Action Plan
- UKBAP: Blanket Bog Habitat Action Plan
- UKBAP: Upland heathland
- Kirklees Water Vole Species Action Plan (www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity)