

**Welcome**

Welcome to issue No. 10 of the Uplands Lead Co-ordination Network Newsletter.

There is a distinct emphasis on birds in this issue, and for good reason. A great deal of work has been done on developing an inter-agency response to government on the recommendations of the **UK Raptor Working Group** (published in 2000), and this has been approved by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The paper, summarised in this issue, gives us a lead on some of the more controversial issues such as racing pigeons - raptors and grouse moor conflicts.

A multi-partner bid is being developed to help support the **conservation and management of moorland areas** - areas which are Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These constitute vital habitats for a number of rare birds such as merlin, hen harrier and peregrines, and have important habitats in their own right.

In short, so far, this seems to be the millennium of the birds, and it seems only right to reflect this in this newsletter which, after all, focuses on areas which provide a home to many of these creatures.

In related work during the last quarter, we have prepared two publications on the uplands. One is the proceedings of an Uplands Conference held in Durham, entitled **The British uplands: dynamics of change**, and the other is **An illustrated guide to British upland vegetation**. Both volumes will be immensely useful to people working in the uplands. They are both with JNCC for publication, and should be out before the next issue of the Newsletter goes to print. In addition, the new **Upland Handbook** has been published by English Nature, and is especially timely following the recent Foot and Mouth epidemic.

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We hope you find something of interest in the newsletter, and invite you, please, to make a contribution to our next issue. The newsletter has a wide distribution amongst staff of country agencies, universities, research institutions, students and other colleagues.

Finally, on a personal note (from Des), congratulations to Janette, whose story has been shortlisted for the Macallan/Scotland on Sunday short story prize.

**Des Thompson and Janette Munneke**



Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru  
Countryside Council for Wales



*The Joint Nature Conservation Committee's*

*Upland Lead Coordination Network was established to carry out the special functions with respect to GB nature conservation needs for upland habitats. It involves staff in the three country conservation agencies and the JNCC support unit.*

## UK Raptor Working Group Report

In 2000, *the Report of the UK Raptor Working Group*, the result of years of deliberation and negotiations between groups with an interest in raptors, was launched at an event in Edinburgh (see book review in this issue).

The Working Group made 25 recommendations for action by the various groups, many of which are concerned with upland birds and habitats.

### **UK Raptor Working Group**

The brief of the UK Raptor Working Group (RWG) was to:

- i. consider population status of birds of prey;
- ii. identify species alleged to be causing problems;
- iii. identify, in particular, the impact of such species on game birds and moorland management and on racing pigeons;
- iv. identify gaps in research, and future needs, and identify possible sources of funding;
- v. consider statutory and other mechanisms for the resolution of problems.

The Working Group focused on three particular issues: conflicts involving Hen Harriers, Peregrines and grouse; conflicts involving Sparrowhawks, Peregrines and racing pigeons; and conflicts involving various birds of prey and Pheasants, especially at release pens.

It also reviewed whether there was any evidence that birds of prey were responsible for the major current declines of some formerly common farmland birds.

The Group produced a single, consensus report which was published jointly by SNH and JNCC. It was presented on 3 February to the fifth meeting of the Raptor Forum (an annual meeting of representatives of at least 29 interested organisations chaired by DETR), where it met with wide support. Representatives of pigeon organisations were, however, highly critical of a research report commissioned by DETR that had informed aspects of the RWG's work.

The Department announced a formal consultation period until 31 March 2000 during which they invited written comments on the report. These would then be considered and inform the nature of recommendations made to Ministers.

It was re-presented in Edinburgh on 4 February 2000 at an event arranged by SNH on behalf of the other statutory agencies. The event was attended by representatives of about 40 organisations. Again, the report was very well received although some pigeon interests were again critical of some content.

### **Recommendations**

The RWG's recommendations included two recommendations on monitoring of birds of prey, viewing the partnership between agencies in affecting this as a very valuable aspect. There were no fewer than six recommendations on illegal killing, including broadening the implementation of the government campaign against Illegal Poisoning of Wildlife in Scotland to include other methods of illegal killing of wildlife, as does the comparable legislation in England and Wales. Recommendations on illegal killing generally called for broadening and enhancing legislation and implementation of legislation to take a stronger stance against illegal killing of raptors.

A detailed recommendation on gaps in research suggested a number of specific enhancements to current research and monitoring activity, such as 'national sample surveys of hen harrier numbers at not more than five-year intervals until such time as the UK population is not threatened by illegal killing', and 'an investigation into the causes of the current declines in peregrine numbers in parts of the Scottish Highlands'.

Additional recommendations include national surveys on particular species, and scientific trials to determine the effectiveness of current practices (such as diversionary feeding), and a wide-scale demonstration project illustrating the compatibility of good moorland management practices co-existing alongside viable red grouse and bird of prey populations.

Other recommendations are for actions which strengthen existing legislation, incentive policies, and cross-agency strategies.

A major issue is that of predation on racing pigeons. Scientific studies are recommended, as are measures to reduce straying. Also recommended are delaying starting the racing season, and re-organising race routes.

### **JNCC Response**

In March 2001, a unified response from the Country Agencies was put before, and approved by, the JNCC Committee. As well making detailed responses to each of the 25 recommendations, the following conclusions were recorded:

1. The report is a timely and significant step towards the resolution of conflicts relating to birds of prey and grouse moors, birds of prey and racing pigeons, and birds of prey and lowland Pheasant release pens. The Committee notes that the RWG has found no evidence linking increases in birds of prey with concurrent declines in numbers of formerly common farmland birds.

2. With respect to resolving conflicts with pigeon racing, the next step must involve the undertaking of research to obtain more objective information regarding the problems and possible solutions. It is important that such research is initiated by the racing pigeon community, although we will be pleased to offer technical support (for example, regarding experimental design and statistical analysis) for such research.

3. It is important not only to implement recommendations within countries, but also to share best practice and encourage other dialogue between countries. To this end, and within the statutory sector, the JNCC will encourage and promote such exchanges.

4. JNCC would now like to see the government prepare a framework of action that would include a timetable of specific actions to be undertaken by all those with an interest in the resolution of these conflicts. In this way, we can continue the positive momentum gained through the work of the Raptor Working Group.

By October 2001, the statutory agencies will have developed an action plan to implement relevant recommendations. SNH has recently advised the Minister, Ross Finnie, on the implementation of the report's recommendations in Scotland. Likewise, CCW has advised the Welsh

Assembly on how it proposes to implement the report.

The JNCC Committee believes that many of the recommendations can be effectively implemented through existing organisational mechanisms. In this regard, it is especially important that the implementation of the Upland Heathland Habitat Action Plan under the UK Biodiversity initiative has full regard to the report's recommendations. Informing other departments within government involved with the development of upland policy (for example in the agricultural sectors) of the report's recommendations is also critical.

The report's findings represent an extremely important step forward for raptor conservation. We have moved to a position where the real issues are clear and a number of mutually beneficial aims have been identified. Such an achievement of consensus has only been possible through the UK Raptor Working Group and we believe that we now have an important and strong platform on which to build for the future.

We hope to keep readers informed of progress as it happens through this forum, which will be one of many used to disseminate information and progress the recommendations of the report. Please note the Ibis review of the report in Vol. 143, No. 2.

**Contact: Des Thompson, SNH**  
(Article prepared by Janette Munneke, SNH)

## **Securing the conservation and management of moorland SPAs**

### **Moorland projects**

Loss, fragmentation and degradation of moorland habitat, along with a decline in management, have caused major problems in the conservation and management of moorland sites, in particular SPAs (areas designated as Special Protection Areas, under the European Directive on Wild Birds).

In recent months, SNH has been leading the development of various moorland bids for submission to funding bodies in 2002. If the bids are successful, a five-year project, aimed at securing the conservation and management of moorland sites, will begin in the summer of 2003.

The aim is to establish a partnership of organisations with an interest in moorlands to oversee management demonstration projects – integrating conservation interests and other land uses – on a range of moorland sites. The demonstration of sustainable grouse moor management alongside raptor populations will be an important part of the project.

The project aims to support various recommendations in the UK Raptor Working Group Report, and to assist in the implementation of the

Upland Habitat Action Plans. It is hoped that the development of management activities to benefit both SPA interests and the moorland areas.

### **Threats to birds**

Threats to the bird interests include:

- Decline in availability of foraging habitat within or adjacent to SPA boundaries.
- Decline in food abundance and/or availability in feeding areas.
- Decline in availability of moorland nesting habitat
- Decline in good moorland management
- Nest/chick predation
- Encroachment of forestry and intensive agriculture on SPAs.
- Wildlife crime - persecution and egg collecting.

### **Activities**

Proposed activities to achieve the outcomes include the development of an integrated man-

agement plan across all sectors; an increase in pest control resources (that is, gamekeeping and management activities); improvement or creation of nesting and feeding areas; supplementary feeding of raptors; support of good moorland management practices e.g. training, machinery co-ops; restoration of heather; restoration of semi-natural rough grassland, springs, flushes and scrub within and adjacent to moorlands (to enhance prey base); publications, demonstration material, web-site etc., and use of remote web-cam to promote the importance of the habitats; and investigation of functional habitat use of moorland areas.

Further issues which might be tackled are forestry / moorland edge restructuring, shepherding and/or range management, high deer numbers, heather beetle damage and acidification.

The project will include monitoring in the form of moorland habitat condition surveys, annual monitoring of nest locations and productivity of moorland birds, and annual monitoring of the prey base (invertebrates, birds and mammals) for moorland birds.

### **Partners**

A large number of organisations have been involved in discussions on the development of the bid, with several indicating an interest in becoming partners, including such diverse groups as the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, the National Farmers Union for Scotland and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In addition to the stated outcomes, the project offers the opportunity to reduce conflicts between conservation and moorland managers, and to develop a high profile means of demonstrating good practice. It is hoped that the bid, if successful, will give a clear signal on the need to invest in rural economy to produce environmental benefits.

**Contact: Sally Johnson, SNH**

### **Focus on Orkney**

One of the nine areas which are included in the bid is the Orkney Mainland Moors SPA, where the hen harrier population has declined dramatically since the start of the 1980s. Experimental feeding has shown that the population is limited by a shortage of food during the pre-lay period. Female harriers rely on their males for most of their food during this period. When males fail to provide enough food, many of the females fail to breed successfully.

During the spring, male hen harriers selectively hunt areas with lots of rough grass. The amount of rough grazing in Orkney has decreased over the last 40 years and has been largely replaced by intensive pasture.

Additionally, sheep densities on Orkney have nearly doubled since the start of the 1980s, which is also likely to have reduced the amount of rough grass. If the decline of the hen harrier population is to be stopped, creation of areas with lots of rough grass is required. This may be achieved in various ways, with perhaps the best being to reduce the grazing pressure on areas of semi-natural land and on the pastures themselves.

The development of a project to specifically address the problems in Orkney is well, underway, aiming to increase rough grassland. It is hoped that breeding of hen harriers will increase and the population will become self-sustaining.

**Contact: Arjun Amar, Game Conservancy Trust, c/o CEH, Banchory.**

#### ***Expected outcomes of a moorland project:***

- 1. Effective working partnerships between moorland land-users and managers.*
- 2. An improvement in the number and distribution of breeding moorland birds.*
- 3. An improvement in the state of the moorland habitat resource.*
- 4. Promotion of the importance of moorland habitats and species, and of best practice management, to sustain these interests.*
- 5. An improvement in our knowledge base in order to clarify the conservation and management of the wider moorland habitat and species.*

## Do raptors disturb driven grouse shoots? A study in northern England

English Nature in partnership with Yorkshire Water, RSPB and the Harewood Estate have recently begun a project to re-introduce the red kite in West Yorkshire. During the consultation process, grouse moor interests expressed concern about the potentially disturbing effects of red kites and other raptors on driven grouse shooting.

To assess levels of raptor disturbance to driven grouse shooting, a pilot study was carried out in 1999, involving systematic observations of 63 grouse drives in North Yorkshire and Durham. To gain a greater insight into the level of disturbance caused by raptors the study was repeated in 2000, and systematic observations were carried out on a further 107 drives.

During 1999, raptors were observed on 14% of drives, but were only considered to have caused disturbance to grouse on 2% of drives. During 2000, there was a small increase in the number of raptors observed and drives disturbed. Raptors were observed on 18% of drives and were considered to have caused disturbance to grouse on 7% of drives.

The survey work showed that, overall, raptors caused little disturbance to driven grouse shooting. When disturbance was observed, it was, in most cases, relatively minor. During both years the proportion of drives cancelled due to bad weather (3% in 1999 and 10% in 2000) was

greater than the proportion of drives disturbed by raptors.

When casual observations from gamekeepers were combined with data collected systematically, the proportion of drives where disturbance was recorded increased, but was still relatively low. When this combined data was compared between years, the proportion of drives where raptors were observed declined between 1999 and 2000 (25% and 20% respectively), as did the proportion of drives that were disturbed (17% and 9% respectively).

Gamekeepers who cooperated with the project agreed that disturbance of driven grouse by raptors appeared to be relatively minor during both seasons.

In years when grouse densities are higher, incidents of disturbance involving raptors may increase as high grouse densities may attract more raptors. However, although grouse numbers were higher during 2000 than in 1999, this did not result in a major increase in raptor numbers or disturbance incidents.

**The full paper, by Glen Robson & Ian Carter of English Nature, is available from Mick Rebane, EN.**

## Recent Vegetational Change in Welsh Blanket Mires

The beginning of 2001 marked the completion of a research project commissioned by CCW aimed at elucidating the nature, chronology and causation of vegetation change across a suite of degraded blanket mires in mid and south Wales. The work was undertaken by Prof. Frank Chambers and co-workers at the Centre for Environmental Change & Quaternary Research, Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education. Copies of the final report have been circulated to the statutory agencies and its Executive Summary is reproduced in full below.

**Peter Jones, CCW Peatland Ecologist**  
p.jones@ccw.gov.uk

Chambers, F.M., Mauquoy, D., Pearson, F., Daniell, J.R.G., Gent, A. & Cook, C. (2001). *Recent Vegetational Change in Welsh Blanket Mires a Palaeoecological Appraisal*. Countryside Council for Wales Contract Science Report No. 420, CCW, Bangor.

### **Executive Summary**

The rationale for this project lay in concern over degradation of blanket mire communities in Wales. Many areas of blanket mire now have limited ericaceous species and few Sphagna, but are instead dominated by graminaceous species such as *Molinia caerulea* and *Eriophorum vaginatum*. In some parts of Wales, blanket mires have also been affected by severe peat erosion. The present study followed a pilot project, which had been designed to appraise techniques to help determine the former vegetation of degraded peatlands in Wales.

Three localities were investigated in the present study: one from Mid-Wales - Drygarn Fawr (Elenydd); and two from South Wales - Mynydd Llangatwg and Brecon Beacons. Three vertical peat profiles from each locality were analysed for plant macrofossils using a quantitative leaf-count technique (QLCMA). These data were supplemented by one pollen diagram from each locality, and by a range of dating techniques and other palaeoenvironmental methods, to elicit the nature and timing of vegetational changes.

## Findings

In large part the pollen data are supportive of the plant macrofossil data, but also complement the QLCMA technique in providing additional information. For example, there is pollen evidence for the earlier presence of taxa that are now locally extinct. These taxa include *Myrica gale* in Mid-Wales, and *Drosera intermedia* at Mynydd Llangatwg.

For all but one profile investigated in this study, the plant macrofossil data suggest the former presence of a greater proportion of *Sphagnum* than currently, and the QLCMA evidence conclusively shows a diminution in the diversity of *Sphagnum* species in each locality. The QLCMA technique was rather less effective in demonstrating dominance by *Ericales*, and is better used in conjunction with pollen analysis to evaluate the relative importance of various ericaceous taxa. In the case of *Molinia caerulea*, whose epidermal tissue may break down more readily than that of some other taxa, the plant macrofossil technique will permit fresh material of this taxon in the acrotelm to be recognised easily, whereas its epidermal tissues in the catotelm may be less readily identified if they are in a more advanced state of decay. Thus the QLCMA technique might exaggerate the degree of change that has occurred in recent decades. For example, at Drygarn Fawr, where *Molinia* is now ascendant, QLCMA data show that *Molinia* has been present, if not abundant, for at least several hundred years, but suggest that its dominance is very recent. Nevertheless, pollen data do seem to corroborate its recent rise to dominance there. The implication is that *Molinia* was present but not overwhelmingly dominant at this locality for hundreds of years, but that some factor(s) encouraged its recent ascendancy. Its dominance appears to have been achieved in the 20th Century.

In each profile from each locality there was evidence for recent vegetational change. However, there was also evidence for earlier vegetational changes in each locality, and some evidence for cyclic vegetational change during the past 2000 years. Nevertheless, for each profile the pollen and macrofossil evidence suggested that the taxon presently dominant is more ascendant in the present bog vegetation than previously. The data suggest that at each locality a significant vegetational change apparently post-dated the start of the industrial revolution in Wales.

There was evidence in some of the profiles for an increase in burning activity just before the recent vegetational shift, but this phenomenon was not present in all profiles and so it seems unlikely that fire was the universal principal agent in the recent vegetational change. Rather, the effects of a change in grazer or in grazing pressure, coupled in the South Wales localities by increased atmospheric nutrient input, may have been the

mechanisms responsible. Although site factors may ultimately determine which taxon becomes dominant locally, the considerable circumstantial evidence for an increased degree of human influence upon the mire vegetation since the start of the industrial revolution may help to explain why the present dominant taxa have achieved their overwhelming ascendancy. It may be that different causal factors have led to the same result: the rise in *Molinia* may have been occasioned by a change in grazing regime at Drygarn Fawr; but at Mynydd Llangatwg increased burning, plus atmospheric input, may have produced a similar effect.

## Implications for site management

The implications of the data for site management are far-reaching. The present overwhelming dominance of *Molinia* at all localities is unprecedented. However, so also is the local dominance of *Calluna* at Mynydd Llangatwg (shown in one of the areas sampled there). Hence, the approbation often accorded to *Callunetum* may need to be tempered with the knowledge that its presence in the Mynydd Llangatwg landscape may not be long-standing. At all sites the data seem to indicate that the present vegetation is degraded. Local extinction of some taxa (*Sphagnum imbricatum*; *Drosera intermedia*; *Myrica gale*) may have taken place in late Medieval times or somewhat later, but much of the degradation and floral impoverishment has taken place within the 20th Century. Hence management attempts to reduce the pre-eminence of *Molinia*, for example, would not seem to be pushing against an impossibly long-established dominance.

## Recommendations for further research

Recommendations for further research fall into three categories: (i) refinements to existing methodologies; (ii) application of additional techniques not attempted as part of this contract; (iii) broader strategic proposals, linked to conservation needs. In order to ascertain the range of possible restoration targets for the vegetation of these blanket mires, the evidence for species extinctions and very recent vegetational changes would repay further investigation by multi-proxy palaeoecological and historical techniques, both at the existing study sites - through multiple, dated cores to track the extinctions and directional changes - and at other degraded mire sites, to ascertain their previous mire flora and so indicate possible restoration targets.

**Professor Frank Chambers**, Centre for Environmental Change & Quaternary Research, Cheltenham & Gloucester. College of Higher Education. Francis Close Hall, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ. E-mail FChambers@chelt.ac.uk.

## Projects / Research

### Air pollution levels and deposition across Scotland

CEH Edinburgh and CEH Monks Wood submitted a report to SNH of a two-year project they completed February 2001. The project considered the deposition of acidifying pollutants and nitrogen, and the exposure of terrestrial surfaces to ozone in Scotland. Fifty-four colour maps were included in the report to indicate current deposition levels, critical loads, critical levels and exceedances in relation to seven general habitats:

- peatlands,
- coniferous,
- woodland,
- deciduous woodland,
- acid grassland,
- calcareous grassland,
- oligotrophic waters, and
- heathland.

Current acidifying inputs are now mainly from nitrogen with exceedance of critical loads for acidity occurring for all six terrestrial habitats. Peatlands, calcareous grasslands and acid grasslands potentially receive the most with 87-88% of the 1 km squares within which their habitats occur in Scotland receiving quantities of acidity exceeding the critical load.

Eutrophication, on the other hand, appears to be a problem for coniferous and deciduous woodlands. The nutrient nitrogen critical load is exceeded in around 75-76% of the 1 km squares within which these woodlands occur. Oligotrophic waters indicated exceedances of around 65% of the 1 km squares in which they occur, and peatlands around 45%. Eutrophication is predicted to occur in nearly a fifth (19%) of the 1 km squares within which heathlands occur. Acid grassland and calcareous grasslands appear not to be affected by current levels of atmospheric nitrogen (exceedances were 2% and 0% respectively).

Ozone does not acidify or eutrophy but can affect the photosynthetic ability of vegetation causing yellowing and stunted growth. It is formed from reactions in the atmosphere between Volatile Organic Compounds and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) in sunlight. At night, the high levels of NO<sub>x</sub> within towns and cities actually take up ozone, so ozone concentrations in the atmosphere are depleted there but remain high over rural areas, particularly in the uplands where wind trajectories take them. Current levels of atmospheric ozone across Scotland are therefore high, particularly for forests, and exceeding 46% of 1 km squares within which semi-natural vegetation and crops occur.

This report will be published within SNH's Research, Survey and Monitoring report series. The authors are: David Fowler, Ulrike Dragosits,

Carole Pitcairn, Mark Sutton Jane Hall, David Roy and Anja Weidemann. The report is entitled, Deposition of acidity and nitrogen and exposure of terrestrial surfaces to ozone in Scotland: Mapping critical loads, critical levels and exceedances.

**Contact: Noranne Ellis, SNH**

### Scottish Golden Eagles to set up home in Ireland

Scotland has begun to donate some 65-70 Golden Eagle chicks to the Glenveagh National Park in County Donegal, Ireland thanks to a five-year project to re-establish a breeding population in Ireland for the first time in nearly a century.

Golden Eagles normally lay two eggs in a breeding season but rarely raise more than one chick. The older chick frequently kills the younger one within the first two weeks of hatching. Chicks will only be taken from Scottish nests where there are two young and the target nests will be widely spaced to ensure that there is no effect on the viability of the population here. Up to 15 birds a year will be taken annually between 2001 and 2005.

David McLavin, Press & Public Relations Officer with SNH, said, "The Irish Raptor Study Group will be using the best practise guidelines developed by SNH and the RSPB during our joint Red Kite and Sea Eagle re-introductions for their project. They have already carried out extensive consultations in the proposed release area in addition to habitat and food supply studies.

"Ireland is possibly the only country in the world that has entirely lost its Golden Eagle population and this project is an exciting opportunity for us to help return this magnificent bird to their shores.

"Scotland has been very fortunate in the past in benefiting from the generous help provided by Germany and the Scandinavian countries towards our own species re-introductions and its nice to be able to return the favour."

It's estimated that there are just 422 pairs of Golden Eagles in the whole of the UK with the population almost entirely based in Scotland.

Red Kites and Sea Eagles were re-introduced to Scotland under SNH's Species Action Programme. The Programme is designed to protect and enhance the populations of native species that are threatened or have become extinct in this country.

**Contact: David McLavin, Press & Public Relations Officer. Tel 0131 446 2270**

**Lorcan O'Toole, Irish Raptor Study Group. Tel 00353 743 7070**

7 February 2001

## **Earth observation for grassland, shrubland and woodland biomass estimate and management - EOBE: ENV4 - CT98 - 0754**

The Game Conservancy Trust and the Scottish Agricultural College have been working as partners on a European Union funded project which is using Earth Observation data to determine vegetative biomass. Scottish partners are responsible for the shrubland component of the project while grassland and woodland components of the project are undertaken by Italian and Greek partners respectively.

Scottish partners aim to assess the use of satellite imagery derived from Landsat thematic mapper data as a management tool in the uplands. Methods for monitoring heather dominated habitats on landscape scales are generally labour intensive but are increasingly important given the decline in extent of heather moorland. Landsat imagery proves now to be a useful and cost effective monitoring tool for a range of management objectives, particularly where heather biomass is managed through grazing and fire regimes.

The project has involved two field seasons of surveying the structural and compositional characteristics of heather moorland. Heather biomass and height, heather young and old shoot biomass, and the extent of grass dominance have been the

variables assessed. This data has been calibrated with spectral signatures derived from Landsat Thematic Mapper to create algorithms predicting the extent of these variables. These predictions were tested during the validation phase of the project in the year 2000 field season. Presently the project is reporting to the E.U. and is assessing the applicability of this new approach as a land management tool.

**Contact: Siobhán Egan**, EOBE Research Assistant, Game Conservancy Trust,  
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### **Monitoring upland SSSIs (and SACs)**

Janette Munneke, JNCC Network Officer, SNH

A major area of work of all LCNs for the current year has been to develop guidance at a UK level on setting conservation objectives and undertaking condition assessments for features on SACs and SSSIs.

Angus MacDonald (SNH) has been leading on this task for the Uplands LCN. A sub-group of LCN members has been formed and has met a number of times, comprising Mick Rebane (EN), Barbara Jones (CCW) and Paul Corbett (EHS) in addition to Angus.

**Contact: Angus MacDonald**, SNH

## **Resources/Recent Publications**

### **New Scottish code and guidance booklet on the use of fire for moorland management**

A new code, and supplementary booklet, on the use of fire in moorland management will be published by the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department (SERAD) in late June - early July this year. This has been a collaborative venture between SNH and SERAD. Previous codes had become dated and out of print.

The new Code will be a concise booklet, well illustrated with colour photographs, which will focus on statutory and recommended restrictions on muirburn which practitioners should follow to remain within the law and to use prescribed fire in a safe, efficient way which causes least damage and most benefit to in farming, game, forestry and conservation interests. The Code will be accompanied by a more comprehensive, explanatory booklet provisionally entitled "Prescribed Burning on Moorland. A Supplement to the Muirburn Code and Guide to Best Practice". This will cover fire fundamentals, fire behaviour, impacts of fire, setting objectives and planning for prescribed burning, alternatives to burning, and sources of further training and information, and draws on research, experience and practice from the UK and

abroad. These documents will provide timely guidance for those submitting moorland plans under the Rural Stewardship Scheme.

For further information contact:

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### **Journal for Nature Conservation**

The Journal for Nature Conservation is a scientific journal focussing on methods and techniques used in nature conservation. This international and interdisciplinary journal offers a forum for the communication of modern approaches to nature conservation. It aims to provide both scientists and practitioners in conservation theory, policy and management with comprehensive and applicable information. In particular the journal wants to encourage the communication between scientists and practitioners, and thereby explore new research avenues that integrate biodiversity issues with socio-economic concepts. Review and research papers as well as short communications

are welcome from a wide range of disciplines, such as landscape ecology, restoration ecology, theoretical ecology, ecological modelling, ecological economics, conservation biology, wildlife management, environmental planning, policy making, and environmental education.

The Editor-in-Chief is Antonio Machado, President of ECNC (European Centre for nature Conservation), Department of Ecology, University of Laguna, Tenerife.

Manuscripts are now invited for the Journal. Further information and instructions for authors is available from the website:

[www.urbanfischer.de/journals/jnc](http://www.urbanfischer.de/journals/jnc).

### **New BAP resource launched**

A new and interactive website about UK biodiversity was launched on Monday at the Natural History Museum during an event attended by the Environment Minister, Michael Meacher. The new website, [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk), has been developed by the JNCC on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Group, to allow everyone involved in implementing Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) to communicate, share information and work together. It contains the new report on UK Biodiversity (Sustaining the Variety of Life: 5 years of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan) and the species and habitat action plans. If anyone has any questions about the new website, please speak to Amelia Morgan, who has been leading on the development of the website in consultation with English Nature.

**Contact: Andy Cottam, JNCC**

### **JNCC Publications**

JNCC Report No. 308, *The Nature Conservation Value of Scrub in Britain*, S.R. Mortimer, A.J. Turner, V.K. Brown, R.J. Fuller, J.E.G. Good, S.A. Bell, P.A. Stevens, D. Norris, N. Bayfield & L.K. Ward.

This report was produced as a result of a commission research contract for English Nature with contributions from Scottish Nature Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales. It is now available on the website under 'Habitats' or can be purchased for £10 from the JNCC publications dept.

*The National Vegetation Classification Field Guide to Woodland*, J. E. Hall, K.J. Kirby, & M. Whitbread.

This is the first in a new series of practical guides which interpret the National Vegetation Classification. A handy A5 size with clear maps and keys, this two colour publication will be ideal for use in the field. Available from our distributor, NHBS, for £10, it is expected to be popular so please do your

best to promote it to others. Further books in this series are currently in progress.

**Contact: Cherry-Ann Vickery, JNCC**

### **Book Review**

*In search of nature*, Derek Ratcliffe, Peregrine Books, Leeds, 2000

Derek Ratcliffe had been told for years by friends that he should write a book about his life as a naturalist - it is a good thing that we have friends and that sometimes we listen to them. Derek's book is a valuable addition to the growing collection of publications about Britain's wildlife. It is valuable because it tells a story, and like all good stories it fills in the gaps with fascinating detail, and sends us out into the world with a more determined step. At least that's what it did for me.

*In search of nature* tells the life story of someone utterly fascinated by the natural world. It tells of his early forays into the countryside as a young boy, to watch and learn; of his dalliance with shooting as a sport; of his meetings with countless other enthusiasts; and of his increasingly active contribution to conservation and ecology. Although it never pretends to be a scientific account, it is a detailed description of specific areas at different times over a half-century, and, as such, does provide valuable historical material on sites many of which are today deemed to be Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation.

More importantly, for me as someone of a different generation, it provides a valuable source of the kind of knowledge that will be lost to us when people like Derek retire, and are no longer on hand to answer questions. What was the big deal about Upper Teesdale, for instance? Who are these people McVean and Ratcliffe whose survey results occupy a large section of our filing space, and how did their survey come about? As Derek himself says at one point, "younger people who never knew pre-conifer Galloway can hardly feel my sense of loss and outrage". For me, and people like me, 'pre-conifer Galloway' is an abstract concept; for Derek it is a memory which still stirs him to anger.

Derek stops his narrative in 1970, at the time when he gave up his professional work as a field biologist in exchange for an opportunity to have a say in higher policy. Nevertheless, the scope of the book covers a period from pre-second World War years to the seventies. When Derek says that it is on his 'earlier years' that he looks back with especial pleasure, he is referring to the forty or more years covered by his book.

The chapters I have enjoyed most have been the ones on Derek's very early years, which tell of a world and a lifestyle which we may never get back, no matter how many re-introductions we do, no matter how much is achieved on the biodiver-

sity front; a world where it is possible for a small boy to roam the fields and the lanes in search of nature, without fear of malice lurking in the shadows.

For Derek's generation it was a given that he could wander far and wide, and the only bad thing that might happen was that perhaps he would be late for supper. For my generation, it was a given that even in the towns and cities we could experience the natural world on our way across fields to school. Today's children are driven or otherwise accompanied from doorstep to doorstep, and with good reason. Few months go by without a news item of a missing child. Recent years have taught us that we can bring the white-tailed eagles back; we can halt the decline of varieties of species in the hedgerows and the meadows, we can even bring back the beaver, but after reading this book, I am left wondering if there is a far greater challenge for us all - can we reintroduce the human climate necessary to enable the simple solitary joy of a small boy watching, alone on a heath, a kestrel soar?

**Janette Munneke, SNH**

### **New handbook published on the management of the English uplands**

The outbreak of foot and mouth disease has generated much debate on the future of the English countryside. Recovery from the epidemic will provide an opportunity to promote environmentally sustainable agriculture in the uplands, and English Nature's new *Upland Management Handbook* makes an important contribution in outlining the management practices needed to safeguard upland biodiversity. The hills and mountains of England are some of the country's greatest natural assets, widely recognised as being nationally and internationally important for a wide range of wildlife and habitats, such as black grouse, hen harrier, oak woodlands, juniper scrub, blanket bog and heaths. *The Upland Management Handbook* pools the expertise of many of the country's leading wildlife, farming and land management specialists to benefit England's threatened upland wildlife.

The foreword to the handbook, written by Minister for the Environment Michael Meacher and Minister for the Countryside Elliot Morley, makes it clear that, in the uplands: "...major changes are underway and land management practices that are more sympathetic to the needs of wildlife are now being promoted and integrated into the policies, programmes and practices of Government departments and the key sectors they influence. It adds: "[the handbook] is the most comprehensive guide to the management needs of upland wildlife ever published and identifies the key priorities for action. We commend it to all those involved in the management of these important habitats and hope it can lead the way in

demonstrating how environmentally sustainable land management practices can be integrated into the English uplands."

The handbook on Uplands Management has been produced to assist those people who advise farmers and other land managers in upland areas about the best management for wildlife and other features. It is applicable to all land in the uplands, and should be particularly helpful in the implementation of agri-environment schemes. In addition, the handbook will be useful for training and educational purposes, such as agricultural and ecological courses within colleges.

*The Upland Management Handbook:*

- identifies the features of nature conservation significance in the uplands of England outlines the distribution of these species and habitats
- explains the habitat and management requirements of these features
- presents land management options and guidelines for all upland habitats and associated species
- assists in implementing the Habitats and Species Directive and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- lists the key sources of further information.

*The Upland Management Handbook* is loose-leaf format in black and white and is edited by Joanne Backshall, Jayne Manley and Michael Rebane. It contains 10 chapters, a comprehensive bibliography, a glossary and 10 'information notes', and runs to over 750 pages. It costs £25 (including post and packing) and is available from:

**English Nature**, PO Box 1995, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 Tel: 0870 1214 177; fax: 0870 1214 178;  
E-mail:english-nature@twoten.press.net

**Contact: Mick Rebane, EN**

### **Journal: Naturopa**

In case readers have not encountered it before, the Council of Europe produces a very interesting journal entitled Naturopa. Issue No. 93, 2000, is a special issue on the representation of nature in art, and issue no. 94, 2000, focuses on the environment in urban settings. There is a likelihood that both the Council and the journal may be changing in 2001, but readers who would like to receive Naturopa, or to obtain further information on the Centre Naturopa or the Council of Europe should contact the following National Agency:

**Mr John Angell**, DETR European Wildlife Division, Species Conservation Branch, Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ; Fax: 0117 987 8182, or e-mail: john\_angell@detr.gsi.gov.uk.

## **New scrub publications**

1. *Low Alpine, Subalpine and Coastal Scrub communities in Scotland*, Neil MacKenzie, Pub.: Highland Birchwoods

This reports on the collation of all known information on montane scrub sites in Scotland, running through each species and providing 10km square distribution maps. It is available from Highland Birchwoods for £3 including postage and packing.

**Diana Gilbert**, Highland Birchwoods, Littleburn, Munloch, Ross-shire, IV8 8NN

2. *Montane Scrub*, an account in the Natural Heritage Management series.

A beautifully illustrated useful account of the habitat and how its restoration might impact on other interests in the uplands. Available from **SNH Battleby** at a cost of £3.95.

## **Other matters of interest**

### **Hebridean Mink Bid**

After years of debate, research and discussion, an application was made to the EU LIFE III - Nature programme for funds to assist with a mink eradication programme for the Western Isles – and has been successful.

The Hebridean Mink Project is being carried out principally in the interests of nature conservation; specifically to conserve ground-nesting bird colonies which have been internationally recognised under the EC Wild Birds Directive, and which are believed to be under threat from mink predation. The principal species considered to be at risk are Arctic Tern, Common Tern, Little Tern, Black Throated Diver, Red Throated Diver, Corn-crake, Dunlin, Ringed Plover. If mink are not brought under control in the Western Isles there is a strong likelihood that some of the most important bird colonies could suffer serious decline or even disappear altogether.

The successful bid was for a contribution towards a five-year trapping programme aiming to eradicate mink from the Uists, and significantly reduce them in South Harris. With data obtained from phase 1, it is anticipated that there will be a phase 2 project aiming to complete the eradication of mink from the Western Isles. The cost of phase 1 is about £1.7m, with 50% from LIFE III – Nature and balance provided by SNH, CnES, SERAD, WIE, CSL and RSPB.

The Project will employ 11 people over a five year period; 10 trappers and a manager. In addition there will be a role for a Phd student to carry out the research work.

Traps will be checked at least daily and all mink caught will be destroyed immediately and humanely by shooting with an airgun (one shot to the head). Any other species caught will be noted and released, with the exception of feral ferrets, which will also be destroyed.

Other recent successful upland LIFE bids include: the Caledonian Partnership Woodlands

project; SWT's Raised Bog project and the Active Blanket Bog project, led by RSPB.

**Contact: David McLennan, SNH**

### **Cairngorms National Park**

The Cairngorms National Park consultation paper was billed as a 'best-seller' when it was released in December 2000. Over 3,000 copies were sent to MSPs, community councils, libraries, landowners, organisations, individuals and local authorities, and within a few days over 200 requests for extra copies had been received.

The consultation exercise, which closed recently, was designed to find out the public's views on issues about the proposed national park, including the area that it should cover, the make-up of the governing board, its powers, and the park's name. Over 800 responses were received.

SNH reported on its findings to the Scottish Executive in August. The main recommendations were:

- a recommended area for the Park;
- the setting up of a joint planning committee, incorporating the five local authorities and the National Park Authority; and
- a Board of 25 people, 5 locally elected and the remainder a 50:50 mix of local authority appointees and people directly appointed by Scottish minister.

If Scottish Ministers choose to proceed with the proposal, another round of consultations will follow, and the park is expected to be up and running early in 2003.

(Article by Janette Munneke, SNH, with acknowledgements to the Perthshire Advertiser)

**Contact: Mark Wrightham, SNH**

### **The State of Scotland's Environment and Natural Heritage**

**Dates: Tuesday 11 & Wednesday 12 September, 2001** (preceded by an optional site visit on Monday 10 September (p.m.))

**Hosted by:** SNH and SEPA

The environmental issues facing Scotland today include the need to care for the natural world, to use natural resources wisely, and to enrich people's lives through links between the natural environment and personal well-being. There is a continuing need to understand the world around us by investigating change and monitoring trends, and by seeking to understand the causes and consequences of change. The annual SNH conference will provide a comprehensive account of the State of Scotland's Environment and Natural Heritage.

The conference will address some fundamental questions. How can we assess the degree to which environmental resources are being used sustainably and can we anticipate future needs? What do environmental trends tell us about the composition of Scotland's air, or the effects of airborne pollutants on land and fresh waters? How are land cover patterns, land use and landscapes changing, and what are the implications for wildlife? What is the state of Scotland's freshwater environment, which is renowned internationally for sport, recreation, tourism and nature conservation? And what of the seas surrounding Scotland, which have been influenced by a long history of use, and perhaps now also by global climate change?

Venue: James Watt Conference Centre, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh

Monday 10 September has been scheduled for arrivals and settling-in, with an opportunity for a limited number of participants to take part in an afternoon field visit. Assisted by British Waterways, delegates will have an opportunity to see and discuss the restoration of the canals of Central Scotland, and their environmental, natural and cultural significance.

The conference proceedings will be published in the Natural Heritage of Scotland series by The Stationery Office.

### **Conference themes**

#### **Quality of life in Scotland**

- Indicators
- Society, environment and natural heritage
- Measuring sustainable development

#### **Scotland's place in Europe**

- A European perspective
- A Scandinavian perspective

#### **Trends & prospects**

- The state of Scotland's air
- The state of Scotland's land
- The state of Scotland's fresh waters
- The state of Scotland's seas

#### **Case studies**

- Restoration and enhancement: the canals of Central Scotland
- Interdependencies: the Atlantic Salmon

#### **Sustainability Issues**

- Climate change
- Biodiversity
- Harmful substances
- Sustainable development.

Posters and electronic demonstrations will also be on view.

#### **Target Audience**

The conference will be of interest to:

- elected representatives
- policy makers
- local authorities
- environmental organisations
- consultancies and business interests
- university researchers
- advanced school curriculum interests

in Scotland and beyond.

Information about the conference can be found on the SNH and SEPA web sites ([www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk) and [www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)) or by contacting Mrs. Helen Forster, SNH, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh EH6 5NP (Tel +44 (0) 131 446 2420; Fax +44 (0) 131 446 2406; e-mail [helen.forster@snh.gov.uk](mailto:helen.forster@snh.gov.uk))



**2002 has been declared the International Year of Mountains (IYM) by the UN General Assembly.**

The objectives of the IYM are to:

- ensure the present and future well-being of mountain communities by promoting conservation and sustainable development in mountain areas;
- increase awareness of, and knowledge on, mountain ecosystems, their dynamics and functioning, and their overriding importance in providing a number of strategic goods and services essential to the well-being of both rural and urban, highland and lowland people, particularly water supply and food security;
- promote and defend the cultural heritage of mountain communities and societies;
- pay attention to frequent conflicts in mountain areas and to promote peace-making in those regions.

At least the first three of these objectives are relevant in the UK context; though in the UK food security is less critical than other values of our mountains, such as recreation and tourism. At the time of writing, two major conferences on mountain issues are being planned in Scotland, and both NGOs and public sector agencies are considering how to use the IYM to contribute to increased public awareness of the diverse values of our mountains and the need to protect their special characteristics, as well as promoting links between NGOs, government agencies and the private sector in order to facilitate more 'joined-up thinking' and action in relation to sustainable mountain use and development. I hope that the IYM will prove a catalyst to such long-term thinking and action with regard to the UK's mountains, and that many of those who read 'Looking to the Hills' will wish to organise, or become involved in events or initiatives during 2002.

For further details on UK activities, **contact Martin Price**, Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College, UHI, Crieff Road, Perth PH1 2NX; tel 01738-877217; fax 01738-877018;

[martin.price@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:martin.price@uhi.ac.uk) ; or see [www.mountains2002.org](http://www.mountains2002.org) for the global context.

## **2nd FACT Conference: Delivering sustain-**

## **able wildlife management in the uplands**

18th – 20th September 2001 at Lancaster University.

FACT (the Forum for the Application of Conservation Techniques) is to hold its second conference at Lancaster University on the 18 - 20 September 2001 on the subject of Delivering Sustainable Wildlife Management in the Uplands - a conference for practitioners involved in the practical delivery of land management. The chosen subject is in direct response to requests received at the end of FACT's first conference in Cambridge back in September 1999.

A mixture of presentations, workshops, posters, key-note speeches and a discussion session will explore some of the practical issues currently facing land managers in the uplands. Plans to include upland site visits within travelling distance of Lancaster on the second afternoon will be included only if the situation with regard to foot and mouth disease allows. If they cannot go ahead an alternative programme will take the form of a 'mini-conference' on the subject of: 'Foot and Mouth Disease - The Facts; the Future'.

We are glad to say that we have been inundated with offers to take part from land managers at the sharp end of upland management. In addition we will welcome, hear from, and discuss upland issues with: Barbara Young Chief Executive of the Environment Agency who will open the Conference; Graham Taylor Northumberland National Park and Mark Avery RSPB as session Chairs; Professor John Rodwell as after dinner speaker; David Arnold-Forster Chief Executive of English Nature to chair the key-note speeches and discussions on the final day; key note speeches by MAFF's Head of Environment and Des Thompson of Scottish Natural Heritage, Vicky Swales RSPB amongst others and the closing address by Fiona Reynolds Director General of the National Trust.

..... and finally .... No, we have not forgotten 'the bar' ..... (where all the real work was done last time!!) ....which will be open till late! We look forward to a stimulating and productive conference. Contacts: To go on the mailing list and to receive conference details, outline programmes and booking forms when these become available in May, or to offer poster subjects, please contact: Christine McDowell, The Events Office, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL. Tel: 01767 680551. Fax: 01767 681284. e-mail: [christine.mcdowell@rspb.org.uk](mailto:christine.mcdowell@rspb.org.uk), (if using e-mail from an organisation please ensure your precise e-mail address appears for return communication). To discuss inputs to workshops please contact:

**John Bacon, FACT Co-ordinator** - tel/fax: 01694 723101.

## **Eurosite workshop 2001**

**20-23 September:** Managing for People and AGM, organised by SNH.

Preparations are underway for SNH to host the Eurosite AGM. The theme of the AGM this year is 'Managing for People', and will cover practical examples of working with local people, providing for enjoyment, site management, site interpretation and environmental education. Speakers have been invited from Slovakia and America and participants will no doubt add to the debate from their own experience throughout Europe. Visits are likely to include NNRs, Natura sites and proposed National Park for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.

**Contact:** Janice Winning, SNH East Areas

**10-13 October:** Fire and Nature Management Catalonia, Spain

**7-10 November:** River Systems Loire Valley, France

If your organisation is a member of Eurosite, staff have access to the Eurosite intranet via the website [www.eurosite-nature.org](http://www.eurosite-nature.org) (you will require an ID and password).

**Contact:** Dave Batty, SNH

### **World Mountain Symposium** **Interlaken, Switzerland**

30/9/01 – 4/10/01. On Community Development between Subsidy, Subsidiarity and Sustainability.

Themes include:

- How can sustainable mountain development be furthered through IYM2002?
- Is equitable and autonomous community development possible in view of the need for continuous subsidies for mountain communities?
- How can science and technology contribute to sustainable mountain development?

Given the importance of the theme and the need to prepare carefully for the International Year of the Mountains (2002), we are looking forward to an interesting meeting in a challenging environment. Registration is U\$100. The initial deadline for registrations has passed, but it may still be possible to obtain a place.

Details are available on the web site, [www.wms2001.ch](http://www.wms2001.ch), or by email: [cde-wms@giub.unibe.ch](mailto:cde-wms@giub.unibe.ch).

### **Press Release August 2001: Heather Trust awarded DEFRA contract to create demonstration moorland sites in England and Wales**

The Heather Trust has been awarded a 5-year contract by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to set up demonstration moors covering an area of about 3,000ha. Under the terms of the contract, the Trust will set up four sites of good practice in England and Wales. Negotiations are taking place with proprietors and the Trust expects to have sites on Exmoor (with a sib-site on Dartmoor), North Wales, the Lake District and the South Pennines.

Modelled on the successful formula used to promote the development of hill farming over the past fifty years, these sites will demonstrate and cost traditional and innovative techniques for the long-term conservation and enhancement of these upland habitats for biodiversity, domestic stock and game. There will be a particular emphasis on sustainable traditional livestock systems which will have relevance on areas ravaged by the Foot and Mouth epidemic.

In due course, parties with both a specialist or general interest will be able to visit these sites by arrangement several times each year on Open Days.

The Heather Trust is the premier independent authority on the management of heather and grass moorlands.

**Contact:** The Heather Trust, Email: [info@heathertrust.co.uk](mailto:info@heathertrust.co.uk), phone: 01786 870 808.

## Uplands Staff across the Country Conservation Agencies



### Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

**Des Thompson** - JNCC ULCN Chairperson, Principal Uplands Adviser (and CSM for National Strategy) in SNH, UK Upland conservation issues, and game management issues.

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### SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE



### Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)

**Andrew Coupar** (Uplands and Peatlands Group Manager) - Peatland conservation evaluation, Natura, peatland inventory, casework and site condition monitoring (based in Inverness)

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**Angus MacDonald** - Land management, especially fire issues, habitat condition assessment and large-scale ecology

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**Ro Scott** - Deer issues in the uplands (based in Inverness)

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**Phil Whitfield** - Upland and peatland birds, Cairngorms, montane and moorland bird inventories, Natura survey and related work.

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Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru  
Countryside Council for Wales

### Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

**Barbara Jones** - Upland Ecologist. Lead officer for all generic upland conservation science issues for CCW. Upland grassland; rock habitats; tall herb ledge; montane.

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**Peter Jones** - Peatland Ecologist covering upland and lowland habitats:- blanket bog, fens and lowland raised bogs.

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**Alex Turner** – Heathland Ecologist covering upland and lowland heath.

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### English Nature (EN)

David Townshend - Uplands Team Manager, co-ordinating the uplands, birds and licensing specialist services. Lead officer for the Upland Focus Group, which provides a focus across teams for co-ordinating work in the uplands, promoting best practice and addressing upland issues.  
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**Mick Rebane**, Senior Upland Officer; Manager of Uplands Unit, responsible for the specialist service provided by the unit and national overview of all upland matters including ecological, land management and agricultural policy issues. Particular responsibilities for overgrazing and the development of working relations with other government agencies and non-governmental organisations.  
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**Siáron Hooper**, Upland Policy Officer; lead on livestock policy across England and responsible for upland policy on agriculture, particularly LFAs, agri-environment schemes as they affect the uplands, and the implementation of Agenda 2000 in upland England. Also responsibility and main contact on commons (uplands and lowlands) and National Parks.  
e-mail: siaron.hooper@english-nature.org.uk  
☎ 01733 455 272

#### Alistair Crowle

I have started as the new Upland Ecologist in English Nature's Uplands Team. My role is to provide a specialist technical service on habitat condition, species requirements, and sustainable land management needed to deliver "favourable condition" on upland SSSIs and in the wider countryside - in short, everything and anything that people care to think of!

My background is that I have come from RSPB where I was their Conservation Officer for Cumbria and Yorkshire Dales. Prior to that, I was the Assistant Conservation Officer for Lancashire in English Nature's North West Team. Before that, I did a stint at JNCC working on the Invertebrate Site Register.

**Alistair Crowle**: responsible for the provision of specialist technical service on habitat condition, species requirements, and sustainable land management practices needed to deliver 'favourable condition' on upland SSSIs and in the wider countryside. Upland advice on ecological issues relating to the Habitats Directive; SSSIs; the Biodiversity Action Plan programme; Natural Areas; upland management, monitoring and research; agri-environment schemes; and overgrazing assessments.  
e-mail: alistair.crowle@english-nature.org.uk  
☎ 01733 455 409



**ENVIRONMENT  
AND HERITAGE  
SERVICE**

**Environment and Heritage Service (EHS)**  
(Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (DoENI))

**Paul Corbett** - Habitat Survey Team Leader; responsible for co-ordinating the survey and assessment of terrestrial habitats in NI, with the main aim of completing the declaration of Areas of Special Scientific Interest. (These are the NI equivalents of SSSIs; the NI programme of site designation lags well behind the rest of the UK); representing EHS on the Uplands Lead Co-ordination Network, and providing much of the NI input into the Natura 2000 Network and upland Biodiversity Action Plans.  
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**Bobbie Hamill** - Uplands and Peatlands Ecologist; particular responsibility for uplands and peatlands, and co-ordinator for the survey of upland sites and subsequent recommendations for ASSI declaration; also responsible for producing conservation objectives (roughly equivalent to short site management statements) for uplands and peatland ASSIs, and is developing methods for upland and peatland condition assessment that can be practically applied in NI.  
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**Any comments or views should be addressed to our editor: JNCC Network Officer, ULCN, Advisory Services, SNH, 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP. Tel: 0131 446 2475.**