

5.3 Lowland Raised Bog

Definition: *Lowland raised bogs* occur in low-lying areas where a dome of peat has accumulated high above the surrounding land. Formed on old lakebeds and waterlogged depressions, the depth of peat can exceed 13 metres. They support a wide range of plant species including common heather, cotton grasses, bog asphodel, sundew and bog mosses. A mixture of vegetation types such as fen/swamp, wet heath, woodland and semi natural grassland can be found on lowland raised bogs. The presence and proportion of each type will be agreed at the outset of the agreement and will be noted on the farm management map. Most lowland raised bogs have been cutover for peat in the past.

Aims: to maintain and enhance the conservation value of lowland raised bog and the suitability of habitat for the associated wildlife through the implementation of appropriate grazing and scrub control management practices.

Biodiversity objectives: the option contributes to the Biodiversity Action Plan targets for Lowland Raised Bog, Curlew, Marsh Fritillary butterfly and Irish hare. Some NI Priority Species such as the Red grouse, the Bordered Grey moth, Irish damselfly and Keeled skimmer dragonfly will also benefit.

Management requirements

- On cutover bogs grazing is not permitted from 1 November to 31 May inclusive.
- The stocking density for each lowland raised bog vegetation type is given in the table below:

| Vegetation type | Stocking density | Grazing period (sheep) | Grazing period (cattle) |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Fen/swamp | 0.075 LU/ha | 1 June - 31 October | 1 June - 31 August |
| Wet heath | 0.25 LU/ha | 1 June - 31 October | 1 June - 31 August |
| Semi natural grassland | 1.0 LU/ha | 1 June – 31 October | 1 June – 31 August |
| Woodland (<0.2ha) | 0.20 LU/ha | 1 June – 31 October | 1 June – 31 August |
| Woodland (>0.20ha) | 0 LU/ha | 1 June – 31 October | 1 June – 31 August |

- No cultivation, dumping, fertilisation, liming, reclamation, drainage, mineral extraction or application of slurry, farmyard manure herbicides, insecticides, sheep dip, fungicides, basic slag, sewage sludge, poultry manure or any other material is permitted.
- Supplementary feeding sites, temporary silage clamps and storage areas for big bale silage are not permitted.

- Burning is not permitted at any time.
- Spreading shrubs/trees must be controlled by hand cutting and selective spraying of stumps using guidelines in Appendix IV.
- The area cannot be used by all terrain vehicles.
- Peat cutting is not permitted on areas of intact uncut lowland raised bog.
- Peat cutting on existing cut over bog is limited to 0.1 ha for domestic use. Mechanised peat cutting is not permitted.
- Erection of new fences requires the permission of DARD.
- Trees must not be planted on lowland raised bog.

Further advice

Temporary electric fencing may be needed to prevent cattle gaining access to the uncut bog. To minimise permanent fencing, sheep will normally be allowed access to the area of uncut bog. Areas of common grazing will be eligible provided that **ALL** graziers/shareholders agree to follow the relevant management requirements. Existing drains may require infilling where DARD deems this necessary. The annual payment includes an element for routine positive management such as scrub control (see Appendix IV).

Management plans are provided for participants in the **Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Management Schemes**

