

HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENT FOR LARGE HEATH

Habitat condition monitoring for the Large Heath involves fixed point habitat recording on a structured walk across a site, from which an assessment can be made. A separate survey and assessment should be completed for each sub-site.

METHOD

- Encompassing the same area where you conducted your Large Heath transect, randomly choose points to conduct the below habitat assessment.
- Decide stopping distances along this route where recordings of habitat condition will be made e.g. every 10 or 20 paces. Aim to have at least 20 stopping points for a small site (<1 ha) more than 40 stopping points for a medium-sized site (1-5 ha) and more than 50 stopping points for a large site (>5 ha).
- Follow your route and at each stopping point measure (in cm) the vegetation height at the point you stop (measure to the top of the leaves i.e. ignore the flowers of grasses and plants). Then, using an imaginary box with sides of 1 m in front of you, record the presence of Hare's-tail Cottongrass and Cross-leaved Heath in one of these % cover categories (A = 75-100%; B 50-75%; C 25-50%; D 5-25%; E <5%; F None). Using the same area, record (mark with an 'X') the presence or absence of these three habitat attributes: structured vegetation, low (<25 cm tall) invading scrub with a cover of >10% and stock grazing signs (e.g. tracks, poach marks, dung).
- At the end of the assessment, provide a rough estimate the cover (%) of tall (>50 cm) scrub for the whole site/sub-site.

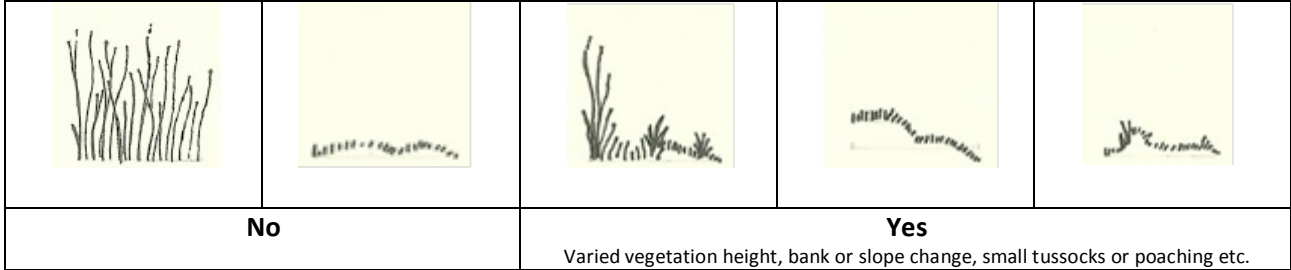
LARGE HEATH HABITAT CONDITION SURVEY FORM

SITE NAME		SUB-SITE	
OS GRID REF		RECORDER(S)	
SURVEY DATE		TALL SCRUB COVER (%)	
MANAGEMENT OBSERVATIONS (e.g. existence of surface water, enclosed, afforestation, stocking density, peat cutting, drainage, burning, etc.)			
ASPECT AND SLOPE DESCRIPTION The main aspect and a brief description of whether the site has suitable habitat covering a variety of aspects (including variation at a micro scale such as banks)			
EXPOSURE (e.g. high exposure sites would be open and/or coastal sites)			

STRUCTURED WALK RECORDS

1. Vegetation Height:	A < 12 cm	B = 12-25 cm	C = 25-50 cm	D > 50 cm	
2. Hare's tail cottongrass:	A > 75%	B = 50-75%	C = 25-50%	D < 25%	E = None
3. Cross-leaved heath:	A > 75%	B = 50-75%	C = 25-50%	D < 25%	E = None
3. Structured vegetation:	Mark with an 'X' if there is presence of any steps in vegetation or ground that provide localised protection from elements at ground level. See figure below for guidance.				
4. Low invading scrub:	Tick if low invading scrub (e.g. birch, gorse, bog myrtle) <25 cm tall and >10% cover present. The word 'invading' is important here. Do not include scrub that is an integral part of the habitat (e.g. Juniper in Juniper heath systems).				
5. Evidence of stock grazing:	Tick if localised evidence present (e.g. poaching, dung, etc.)				

Example of Structured Vegetation:



Stop number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
1. Vegetation Height																					
2. Hare's tail cottongrass cover																					
3. Many headed bog cotton cover																					
4. Cross-leaved heath cover																					
<i>Mark with an 'X' if attributes below are present at each stop</i>																					
4. Structured vegetation																					
5. Low invading scrub																					
6. Evidence of stock grazing																					
7. Water level (cm below bog surface)																					

Stop number	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
1. Vegetation Height																					
2. Hare's tail cottongrass cover																					
3. Many headed bog cotton cover																					
4. Cross-leaved heath cover																					
<i>Mark with an 'X' if attributes below are present at each stop</i>																					
4. Structured vegetation																					
5. Low invading scrub																					
6. Evidence of stock grazing																					
7. Water level (cm below bog surface)																					

Stop number	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
1. Vegetation Height																				
2. Hare's tail cottongrass cover																				
3. Many headed bog cotton cover																				
4.. Cross-leaved heath cover																				
<i>Mark with an 'X' if attributes below are present at each stop</i>																				
4. Structured vegetation																				
5. Low invading scrub																				
6. Evidence of stock grazing																				
7. Water level (cm below bog surface)																				