

# Heath Management (Coastal, Serpentine, Lowland and Special Interest)

**Date published: 13 November, 2023**

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#).

## Aim

Heaths support a range of important wildlife and biodiversity.

The aim of this option is to benefit a range of heathland habitats by reducing or restricting grazing pressure at certain times of the year.

Depending on the type of heath being managed, this will allow flowering plants to flower and set seed during the summer, or protect heath plants from grazing damage over the winter period.

In addition, this option aims to manage mosaics of heath and grassland habitats for the benefits of waders.

## Eligibility

Land that is permanent pasture or rough grazing which contains one of the following heath types is eligible.

- coastal heath (predominantly located on Orkney, Shetland, the north coast and some of the Western Isles)
- serpentine heath
- special interest heath
- lowland heath

Eligibility will be defined as per the description of each type of heath. Please consult the [supporting guidance](#) for additional help.

If you are managing for waders, you may also enter land into this option if it is a mosaic consisting of a mix of:

- improved and unimproved grassland
- heath communities
- blanket bog
- wetland

You should not include areas of land covering rocks, scree, water, dense bracken etc. We will check this using the same approach we use to check land for the Basic Payment Scheme.

[Assessing your land eligibility](#)

## Spatial targeting

This option is available throughout Scotland.

## Application requirements

You must identify on a map the locations of the heath to be managed.

## Management requirements

You must manage the same location and extent each year for the duration of your contract.

**For coastal heath, serpentine heath and special interest heath**

Either, you must graze the site as follows:

- between 1 April and 31 August, exclude all livestock
- between 1 September and 30 November graze the site. The grazing level must not exceed 1.2LU/ha
- if grazing between 1 December and 31 March, graze at no more than 0.075LU/ha

Or, you must adhere to an approved grazing regime defining the livestock units/type and grazing dates.



[Grazing Management Plan \(MS Word, Size: 258.7 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Grazing-Management-Plan---Final\\_6.docx](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Grazing-Management-Plan---Final_6.docx) [Plan template]

### For lowland heath

Either, you must graze the site as follows

- between 1 November and the end of February, exclude all livestock
- if grazing between 1 March and 30 April, graze at no more than 0.15LU/ha
- between 1 May and 31 August graze the site. The grazing level must not exceed 0.3LU/ha
- if grazing between 1 September and 31 October, graze at no more than 0.15LU/ha

Or, you must adhere to an approved grazing regime defining the livestock units and grazing dates.



[Grazing Management Plan \(MS Word, Size: 258.7 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Grazing-Management-Plan---Final\\_5.docx](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Grazing-Management-Plan---Final_5.docx) [Plan template]

### For wader management on heath mosaics

You must be within the target area for the wader grazed grassland option, and you must stipulate in your application which waders your plan will benefit including one or more of the following:

- Curlew
- Lapwing
- Snipe
- Redshank
- Oystercatcher

You must graze the site as follows:

- restrict grazing between 15 March and 15 June to no more than 0.6 LU/ha
- you must not graze between 1 November and end of February
- and adhere to an approved grazing regime defining the livestock units and grazing dates for the remainder of the year. The approved grazing regime must address the condition and structure of the sward and the combination of habitats on the site and stipulate what waders are to be targeted



[Grazing management plan template \(MS Word, Size: 258.7 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Grazing-Management-Plan---Final\\_4.docx](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Grazing-Management-Plan---Final_4.docx) Plan template

### For all heath types above

- you must not undertake muirburn, unless you have prior approval
- you must not undertake supplementary livestock feeding, unless you have prior approval
- do not apply fertiliser, slurry or farmyard manure
- do not apply lime, unless you have prior approval
- do not allow the land to become poached or vehicle tracked

- do not spray, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)

## Payment

You can claim:

### **For coastal, serpentine and special interest heath and wader management on heath mosaics**

- £88.79 per hectare per year up to 30 hectares
- £54.43 per hectare per year for the next 40 hectares
- £3.60 per hectare per year thereafter

These rates apply per contract.

### **For lowland heath**

- £138.37 per hectare per year

## Inspections

The inspectors will check:

### **For coastal heath, serpentine heath and special interest heath**

You have grazed the site as follows:

- between 1 April and 31 August, exclude all livestock.
- between 1 September and 30 November graze the site. The grazing level has not exceeded 1.2LU/ha
- if grazing between 1 December and 31 March, you have grazed at no more than 0.075LU/ha

Or, you have adhered to your approved grazing regime.

### **For lowland heath**

You have grazed the site as follows:

- between 1 November and the end of February, exclude all livestock
- if grazing between 1 March and 30 April, you have grazed at no more than 0.15LU/ha
- between 1 May and 31 August graze the site. The grazing level has not exceeded 0.3LU/ha
- if grazing between 1 September and 31 October, you have grazed at no more than 0.15LU/ha

Or, you have adhered to your approved grazing regime.

### **For wader management on heath mosaics**

You have grazed the site as follows:

- restricted grazing between 15 March and 15 June to no more than 0.6 LU/ha
- you have not grazed between 1 November and end of February
- and have adhered to an approved grazing regime defining the livestock units and grazing dates for the remainder of the year

### **For all heath types above**

- you have not undertaken muirburn, unless you had prior approval
- you have not undertaken supplementary livestock feeding, unless you had prior approval
- you have not applied fertiliser, slurry or farmyard manure
- you have not applied lime, unless you have prior approval
- you have not allowed the land to become poached or vehicle tracked
- you have not sprayed, except for the spot-treatment of injurious weeds (requires prior written notification) or treatment of invasive species (requires prior written approval)
- you have maintained a diary

## Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this option.](#)

## Recent changes

Section	Change
Eligibility	Added text to first bullet stating coastal heath eligibility predominantly located on Orkney, Shetland, the north coast and some of the Western Isles) Reference to consult the supporting guidance for additional help on the definition of eligibility heath types
Management requirements	Insertion of 'type' to sentence in sub section 'For coastal heath, serpentine heath and special interest heath': "Or, you must adhere to an approved grazing regime defining the livestock units/type and grazing dates."

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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