

# Moorland Management

**This is an old version of the page**

**Date published: 10 October, 2020**

**Date superseded: 20 January, 2022**

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

## Aim

The aim of this option is to benefit a range of moorland habitats, including upland heath and peatland habitats, by maintaining appropriate levels of wild and domestic stock. It is also intended to protect sensitive peatland areas at risk of soil erosion from herbivore trampling and vehicle tracking.

Moorlands cover a range of habitat types from dry and wet heath through to blanket bog. It can also include some grasslands. Sustainable grazing levels and careful use of vehicles will ensure that both the vegetation and soils remain as intact and undisturbed as possible. Moorlands support a range of important wildlife and biodiversity, and peatlands in particular can contribute to climate change by storing carbon.

This option is an entry option for all upland management, including peatland restoration, where livestock and / or deer are present. It provides a foundation to build in additional options or capital items where further benefit to the habitat or species present can be achieved from undertaking works such as grip / ditch blocking, stock reduction, muirburn or summer cattle grazing. A full list is given below.

## Eligibility

Land that is rough grazing and where livestock and / or deer are present is eligible.

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

Paragraphs 32 and 33 of Schedule 7 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 provided the regulatory powers to suspend Section 23 of The Hill Farming Act 1946 which permits 'a person to make muirburn on land only during the muirburn season'.

However, provision has been put in place to enable the 'Muirburn suspension' to be lifted and this took effect from 1 October 2020. As such AECS contract holders with muirburn in their contract can resume muirburn operations from 1 October. Please contact your case officer, if you require to discuss this matter further.

It should be noted that the ability to carry out muirburn may change if the suspension powers of Paragraphs 32 and 33 of Schedule 7 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 are reverted to at a future date. A further update will be communicated, when appropriate.

Links:

[Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)

[Suspension of Schedule 7, Paragraph 32 and 33](#)

## Spatial targeting



[Map of target area – Moorland Management \(PDF, Size: 1.0 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Updated-targeting-map---Moorland-management-16-12-2015.pdf>

This option is available within the target area shown on this map. It may be possible to apply for this option outside this area where there is strong justification as endorsed by Scottish Natural Heritage.

You can check if this option is available on your holding [here](#).

## Application requirements

You must prepare and submit for approval a moorland management plan. We strongly advise that you use the template below and provide all supporting documentation (i.e flock records) requested.

If you choose to create your own plan, you must ensure that you provide all information requested in the template. Failure to do so could result in the option being removed from your application.

Where livestock are present, the plan must detail your current livestock numbers. Where deer are present, and you are responsible for managing them, the plan must detail current deer numbers, their locations and current and proposed deer cull targets.

You must also identify on a 1:10,000 map the location of proposed supplementary feeding sites and routes where you plan regular vehicle use.



[Moorland Management and Grazing Plan \(MS Word, Size: 150.8 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS--Update-2018--moorland-management-and-grazing-plan-template---23-Nov-2017-2.docx> [Plan template]

Below is a real life example Moorland management and grazing plan with associated maps to assist you.



[Moorland Management and Grazing Plan 2018 \(PDF, Size: 1.6 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Update-2019\\_MMP-Example----11-February-2019.doc](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-Update-2019_MMP-Example----11-February-2019.doc) [Example map]



[Habitat Vegetation Example one \(PDF, Size: 550.4 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map01-MM01\\_Habitat\\_Vegetation.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map01-MM01_Habitat_Vegetation.pdf) [Example map]



[Habitat Vegetation Example two \(PDF, Size: 635.4 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map02-MM02\\_Habitat\\_Vegetation.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map02-MM02_Habitat_Vegetation.pdf) [Example map]



[Vegetation Condition Assessment Example one \(PDF, Size: 480.8 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map03-MM01\\_Vegetation\\_Condition\\_Assessment.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map03-MM01_Vegetation_Condition_Assessment.pdf) [Example map]



[Vegetation Condition Assessment Example two \(PDF, Size: 579.6 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map04-MM02\\_Vegetation\\_Condition\\_Assessment.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map04-MM02_Vegetation_Condition_Assessment.pdf) [Example map]



### [Grazing Management example 1 \(PDF, Size: 551.5 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map05-MM01\\_Grazing\\_Management.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map05-MM01_Grazing_Management.pdf) [Example map]



### [Grazing Management example 2 \(PDF, Size: 636.4 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map06-MM02\\_Grazing\\_Management.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map06-MM02_Grazing_Management.pdf) [Example map]



### [Access Routes and Feed sites Example 1 \(PDF, Size: 464.3 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map07a-MM01\\_Access\\_Routes\\_and\\_Feed\\_Sites.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map07a-MM01_Access_Routes_and_Feed_Sites.pdf) [Example map]



### [Access Routes and Feed sites Example 2 \(PDF, Size: 596.9 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map07b-MM02\\_Access\\_Routes\\_and\\_Feed\\_Sites.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map07b-MM02_Access_Routes_and_Feed_Sites.pdf) [Example map]



### [Bracken Management \(PDF, Size: 334.2 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH\\_AECS\\_2019\\_MMP\\_Example\\_Map08-MM01\\_Bracken\\_Management.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/SNH_AECS_2019_MMP_Example_Map08-MM01_Bracken_Management.pdf) [Example map]

## Management requirements

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

- where livestock are present, you must maintain agricultural livestock activity on the area subject to payment
- where livestock are present, you must adhere to the grazing regime which defines livestock units and grazing dates in your moorland management and grazing plan
- you must not carry out supplementary feeding out with the area(s) shown in your plan, unless you have prior written approval
- you must not cause vehicle rutting out with the vehicle use areas identified in your plan (the definition of rutting is where the soil is both depressed and bare soil is exposed)
- where you are applying for payment under this option for managing deer, you must maintain deer culls as agreed in your plan and send your annual cull returns to Scottish Natural Heritage
- you must not cut peat without prior approval
- if approval has been given to cut peat by hand, you must replace the turfs on top of the cut surface, with the vegetation side on top
- you must not undertake muirburn, unless you have prior approval
- do not plant trees, unless you have prior approval
- do not undertake any drainage work, unless you have prior approval
- you must maintain a diary

You must describe what management is needed to benefit the moorland habitats and species. This could include (but is not restricted) the following:



### [Deer Management Plan \(MS Word, Size: 130.4 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Deer-Management-Plan-November-2018.docx> [Deer Census Plan and Habitat Impact Assessment Plan template]



### [Peatland Restoration Plan \(MS Word, Size: 133.2 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Peatland-Restoration-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx> [Plan template]



### [Muirburn Plan \(MS Word, Size: 129.5 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-update-2018---Updated-muirburn-plan-template---17-Oct-2017-with-twe--\\_--002-.docx](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-update-2018---Updated-muirburn-plan-template---17-Oct-2017-with-twe--_--002-.docx) [Plan template]



### [Bracken Management Plan \(MS Word, Size: 136.4 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Bracken-Control-Plan-AECS-April-2015.docx> [Plan template]

Any other capital items, e.g. Fencing.

## Payment

You can claim:

- where managing livestock only: £3.60 per hectare per year
- where managing deer only: £1.24 per hectare per year
- where managing deer and livestock: £4.84 per hectare per year

There are separate capital items to support moorland management, which could include, but are not restricted to:

- [Ditch Blocking – Peat Dams](#)
- [Ditch Blocking – Plastic Piling Dams](#)
- [Muirburn and Heather Cutting](#)
- [Primary Treatment of Bracken – Manual](#)
- [Primary Treatment of Bracken – Mechanised or Chemical](#)
- [Heather Restoration](#)
- [Open-range Deer Management](#)
- [Upland Habitat Impact Assessment for Deer Management](#)
- [Deer Census – Helicopter Counts](#)
- [Stock Bridges for Bog, Fen or Wetland Management](#)

The following management options can support moorland management:

- [Stock Disposal](#)
- [Away Wintering Sheep](#)
- [Summer Hill Grazing of Cattle](#)
- [Predator Control](#)

## Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- where livestock are present, you have maintained agricultural livestock activity on the area subject to payment
- where livestock are present, you have adhered to the grazing regime which defines livestock units and grazing dates in your moorland management plan
- you have not carried out supplementary feeding out with the area(s) shown in your plan, unless you have prior written approval
- you have not caused vehicle rutting out with the vehicle use areas identified in your plan (the definition of rutting is where the soil is both depressed and bare soil is exposed)
- where you are applying for payment under this option for managing deer, you have maintained deer culls as agreed in your plan and sent your annual cull returns to Scottish Natural Heritage

- you have not cut peat without prior approval
- if approval has been given to cut peat by hand, you have replaced the turfs on top of the cut surface, with the vegetation side on top
- you have not undertaken muirburn, unless you have prior approval
- you have not planted trees, unless you have prior approval
- you have not undertaken any drainage work, unless you have prior approval
- you have maintained a diary

## Additional guidance

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

## Recent changes

Section	Change
Application requirements	Updated moorland management template Removed sample management and grazing plan Text additions to guidance
Management requirements	Muirburn Plan template updated

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

## Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.