Blanket Bog Decision Making Toolkit

Land Management Guidance
The six states of blanket bog are:

**STATE 1** Afforested bog
**STATE 2** Bare peat bog
**STATE 3** Dwarf-shrub dominated blanket bog
**STATE 4** Grass and/or sedge dominated blanket bog
**STATE 5** Modified blanket bog with high dwarf shrub cover but with sphagnum and other mire species
**STATE 6** Active hummock/hollow/ridge blanket bog

State 1 (Afforested bog) is not covered in this guidance.
State 2: Use Outcomes and Improvements to understand the main priorities, which will be to stabilise and revegetate bare peat. For expert advice from peat restoration projects, see p23 of FAQ booklet.
States 3–5: Use this booklet to help decide on a course of action, in conjunction with the Outcomes and Improvements.
State 6: Blanket bog in State 6 requires no action apart from monitoring check it remains in a favourable state.
State 3: Dwarf shrub dominated blanket bog

Dwarf shrub dominated blanket bog often has drainage features (such as grips, gullies or drains), lack of vegetation structure, areas of bare peat and low water table.

- Dwarf shrub cover, such as heather, can reach up to a metre in height.
- Deep drains quickly carry rainwater away from the blanket bog and lower the water table.
- State 3 blanket bog may have areas of bare peat.
- In low water tables vegetation can be represented by drought tolerant species (like this acrocarpous moss) or those with long root systems (heather).

**MONITOR AND REVIEW PROGRESS**

- Are there drainage features (grips, gullies or drains)?
  - YES
  - NO

- Are there any areas of bare peat?
  - YES
  - NO

- Reduce heather dominance and diversify sward with a mix of bog species

- Block drainage features (grips, gullies or drains)

- Revegetate bare peat
State 4: Grass/sedge dominated blanket bog

Grass and/or sedge dominated blanket bog has an absence of shrubs and a lack of vegetation structure variation, tussocks due to no grazing, heavily grazed deep peat and purple moor grass domination.

Are there drainage features (grips, gullies or drains)?
- **YES** → Block drainage features (grips, gullies or drains)
- **NO** →
  - Is the area grazed?
    - **YES** → Ensure grazing will support a diverse vegetation structure and composition
    - **NO** →
      - Is the vegetation dominated by molinia?
        - **YES** → Diversify sward by breaking up molinia and inoculate with a mix of bog species
        - **NO** →
          - Is the vegetation dominated by cotton grass?
            - **YES** → Diversify sward by inoculating with a mix of bog species
            - **NO** → MONITOR AND REVIEW PROGRESS
State 5: Modified blanket bog

Good diversity in vegetation structure, heather usually dominant species in this state, heather dominant but with good sphagnum cover, heather and cotton grass dominated bog.

- Modified blanket bog with high dwarf shrub cover but with sphagnum and other mire species (active)
- Heather and cotton grass dominated bog, lacking significant sphagnum cover
- Heather dominant bog but with good sphagnum cover. All that may be required in this situation is a reduction in the heather dominance
- Heather dominated bog with some cotton grass, lacking significant sphagnum cover and other wetland species

MONITOR AND REVIEW PROGRESS

Are there drainage features (grips, gullies or drains)?

- **YES** → Block drainage features (grips, gullies or drains)
- **NO**

Are there any areas of bare peat?

- **YES** → Revegetate bare peat
- **NO**

Is there abundant sphagnum and a diverse range of bog species?

- **NO** → Reintroduce sphagnum
- **YES** → Reduce heather dominance

Is there a canopy dominated by heather?

- **YES**
- **NO**
Uplands Management Group

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