

Dry heath

MAIN INDICATORS

IMPACT

Percentage cover - these are used as **indicators of past grazing history**

Heather as continuous cover, or [where muirburn mosaic] continuous at least within heather patches	Continuous Light
Heather patches show some grass/intrusion	Past Moderate
Heather present as individual plants within acid grassland matrix	Past Heavy

Indicators of Current grazing pressure:

Growth form

Individual plants, or heather blanket:	shaggy-topped	Light
	smooth cushion/topiary effect	Moderate
	flat-topped/carpet	Heavy

Composition

In sites where blaeberry known to be 'potentially present'		
◆	Blaeberry widespread and bushy emergent above heather canopy	Light
◆	Blaeberry abundant within heather clumps but current year's shoots only	Moderate
◆	Blaeberry sparse or absent	Heavy

Direct impacts

Stem and branch breakage of heather	Not obvious	Light/Moderate
	Conspicuous	Heavy

More formal measures if required

% of current year's shoots browsed: of heather or blaeberry	33%	Light
	33-66%	Moderate
	>66%	Heavy
% flowering and fruiting of heather (summer browsing)	abundant	Light
	patchy	Moderate
	sparse	Heavy

Other indicators:

herbivore dung (sheep/deer); presence of clear tracking, or areas of eroded peat

Wet heath

MAIN INDICATORS

IMPACT

Percentage cover - past grazing history

Relative proportion of *Erica/Molinia* not a particularly good indicator, but relative 'grassiness' in terms of acid grassland species can be

Heather plants are usually scattered as individual plants anyway, but heather plants relatively abundant, abundant *Molinia*/cotton grass, relatively low proportion of other acid grassland species

Continuous Light

Increasing proportion of acid grasses/suppression of heather

Past Moderate or Heavy

Some indication can also be gained from condition of ling heather on any drier, emergent knolls, using dry heathland indicators.

Current grazing pressure:

Growth form

Individual plants, or heather blanket: shaggy-topped
smooth cushion/topiary effect
flat-topped

Light
Moderate
Heavy

Direct impacts

Stem and branch breakage of heather Not obvious
Conspicuous

Light/Moderate
Heavy

In sites where blaeberry known to be 'potentially present'
use indicators as for dry heath

In sites where bog myrtle present

- ◆ Browsed shoots absent/difficult to find
- ◆ Browsed shoots easy to find
dense, irregular branching
- ◆ Closely browsed; dense branching

Light
Moderate
Heavy

More formal measures if required

% of heather shoots browsed: 33%
33-66%
>66%

Light
Moderate
Heavy

% flowering and fruiting of heather abundant
(summer browsing) patchy
sparse

Light
Moderate
Heavy

Other indicators:

- ◆ herbivore dung (sheep/deer); presence of clear tracking, or areas of eroded peat
- ◆ Also look closely at *Sphagnum* patches for evidence of hoofprints or actual 'breakage' with loose or bleached moss parts broken off.

Smooth grassland

MAIN INDICATORS

IMPACT

Current grazing pressure:

Composition

Percentage inclusion within sward of small, rosette-forming, creeping, or mat-forming species	- low (significantly less than grass)	Light
	- medium	Moderate
	- high (more than grass)	Heavy
Moss cover	- sparse	Light
	- <50% cover	Moderate
	- >50% cover	Heavy
Bare ground	None/very local	Light
	Widespread	Moderate or Heavy

Direct impacts

Overall sward height	>6cm	Light
	3-6 cm	Moderate
	<3cm	Heavy
Flowering of grasses and herbs	abundant	Light
	scattered	Moderate
	sparse/absent	Heavy

More formal measures if required

% leaves of 'fine-leaved' sweet grasses (bents, fescues) grazed:	<25%	Light
	25-75%	Moderate
	>75%	Heavy
Accumulation of litter in the sward	>3cm deep	Light
	1-3 cm	Moderate
	<1 cm	Heavy

Other indicators:

herbivore dung (sheep/deer); presence of clear tracking, or eroded areas of bare soil

[Herbivore dung: pellet groups per 100m ²	<10	Light
	10-30	Moderate
	>30	Heavy]

Acid (Coarse) grassland

Composition

Moss cover	- sparse - <50% cover - >50% cover	Light Moderate Heavy
Bare ground	None/very local Widespread	Light Moderate or Heavy

Direct impacts

% leaves of palatable grasses grazed: (bents, fescues, wavy hairgrass, sedges)	<50% >50% nearly all	Light Moderate Heavy
Signs of grazing of less palatable species (rushes, thistles, potentilla, moss)	Absent Present	Light or Moderate Heavy
Signs of grazing of mat-grass (<i>Nardus stricta</i>)	Absent Present	Light or Moderate Heavy
Flowering of herbs between tussocks	abundant scattered sparse/none	Light Moderate Heavy

Blanket bog

Indicators of Grazing/Browsing pressure:

Cotton grass flowers (<i>Eriophorum</i>)	abundant patchy few/none	Light Moderate Heavy
Browsing on heather/blaeberry	not obvious obvious extensive	Light Moderate Heavy
Cloudberry flowers and fruit	mostly present mostly absent	Light/Moderate Heavy

Indicators of trampling impact

Trampling to <i>Sphagnum</i> hummocks and lawns, with loose, bleached fragments	mostly intact local widespread	Light Moderate Heavy
Hoofprints in exposed peat	rare patchy extensive	Light Moderate Heavy
Herbivore dung	scarce easy to find	Light Moderate/Heavy