

BALLYGILL NORTH

Views About Management The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)

A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of Ballygill North Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the schedule on pages 1 and 2 of the attached Document B for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Heathlands are an important habitat for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the heath through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Most heathland communities need some management to retain their interest. Small patches of scrub within heathland are valuable in providing additional habitat niches but, in the absence of management, woody species can quickly take over. On the other hand, too much grazing, especially through the winter, can cause heathers to be replaced by coarse grasses.

Specific objectives include:

Low intensity grazing has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation and extension of this practice.



Ensure that disturbance to the site and its wildlife is minimised.

Where appropriate, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent wet heath from drying out.

Prevent the loss of light-demanding heathland species through the control of scrub and bracken. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases other methods of control, such as cutting, may be required.

Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the heath, such as bog, scrub and grassland through sensitive management. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife.



E Diane Stevenson
Authorised Officer

Dated the 28TH of JANUARY 2008