

Mires on the Moors Research and Monitoring Activities

Dartmoor Mires Project 2010-2015

A range of survey and monitoring is being undertaken as part of the project. Much is in association with, or with reference to the Exmoor Mires on the Moors Project (EMMP) or its predecessor the Exmoor Mire Restoration Project (EMRP).

The Dartmoor Mires Project is a pilot, and identified potential restoration sites are relatively modest in extent. This means that regular monitoring of all restored areas is feasible for the duration of the project.

Restoration

Fixed point photographic surveys are undertaken at all restoration sites and monitoring undertaken on a fixed schedule following restoration.

A project by Plymouth University has begun to establish baseline conditions at one restoration site. Monitoring of a range of factors will take place in each year to assess any post-restoration changes. In particular it is hoped the conditions indicating peat accumulation/carbon sequestration can be established.

Biodiversity

Vegetation Surveys

Baseline surveys are undertaken prior to restoration on all sites, and then monitored under a schedule in subsequent years. Methodology to date has varied from site to site with experience, from methodology developed for the EMRP. For future sites methodology will be largely consistent with that used on EMMP sites.

Birds

A baseline survey of breeding birds, focusing particularly on dunlin, associated with identified and potential future restoration sites (including known dunlin areas) has been undertaken. Subsequent monitoring is programmed for later in the project, certainly in the final year, but possibly also mid-project depending on advice.

Invertebrates

A baseline survey of invertebrates of Dartmoor blanket bog, including 'pristine', bare peat and proposed restoration areas, has been undertaken. Monitoring on restored sample sites is programmed for the final year of the project.

Hydrology (water quantity and quality)

A comprehensive joint monitoring programme is being developed by the Environment Agency (quantity) and Exeter University (quality) for both Exmoor and Dartmoor Mires on the Moors

projects. One monitoring site on Dartmoor will be established and monitoring will be consistent with but not identical to the two Exmoor sites, due to the different characteristics of the sites.

Historic Environment

Archaeological and palaeoecological assessment

Archaeological and palaeoecological assessment is being undertaken by Plymouth University, across all proposed restoration sites both to identify any artefacts or structures associated with the area and also obtain palaeoecological information prior to restoration, and relevant advice for subsequent restoration. Ground penetrating radar is used to search for artefacts/structures and also to obtain peat profiles. Cores are taken from selected sites for analysis.

Historic peat cutting

A survey of historic peat cutting focusing on three extensively worked areas has been completed.

Remote sensing

LiDAR and CASI surveys have been undertaken covering all blanket bog areas. Geomatics Group who undertook the survey have undertaken some analysis of blanket bog sites.

For further information on any of this work please contact Frances Cooper, Dartmoor Mires Project Officer on 01626 831027 (direct line) or fcooper@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk