

Lowland Heaths



Lowland Heaths

Where?

Scattered around the UK from sea level to 300m above.



How and When?

14,000 years ago

Ice caps retreated, earth got warmer, tundra heath replaced by woodland.

5000 years ago

Humans began farming, forests were cleared, heathland re-established on sandy, acidic soils when farmers moved on as soils became nutrient depleted.



What?

Characterised by patchwork of vegetation that includes dwarf shrubs, Heather, trees and scrub with some bare areas.

Soil acidity of less than pH5.

Well-managed sites provide a range of cover for a wide variety of animal species – mammals, insects, reptiles, birds.



Vegetation

Calluna vulgaris



Erica tetralix

Erica carnea

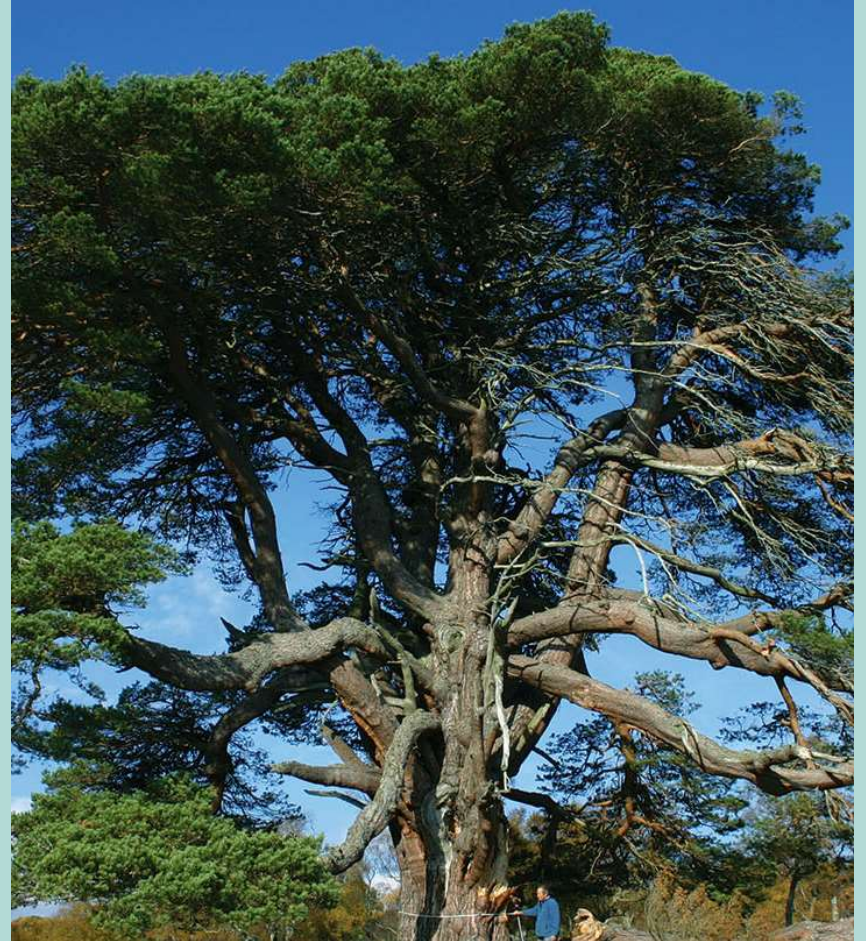


Trees

Betula pendula



Pinus sylvestris



Gorse



Ulex gallii

Ulex europaeus



Mammals

Muntjac



Bats

Common Pipistrelle



Brown Long Eared

Reptiles



Common lizard



Slow worm

adder



Birds

Dartford warbler



Night jar

Insects

Heather beetle

Identified in mid 19c. Adult and larvae feed on leaves and stems. Adult lays up to 700 eggs over 10 weeks on sphagnum moss and other ground cover.

Predated by Heather shield bug and a species of spider.



Ant-lion

One species in UK, discovered only in last 30 years.

Larva (10mm.) Preys on other insects. Pupates in the soil.



Ant-lion adult

Wingspan up to 70mm. Nocturnal. Weak flyer. Does not feed. Mates in pine trees.

