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Biodiversity Conservation - Juniper Restoration

Juniper scrub is a nationally scarce woodland type, and juniper plants are so scarce in the Scottish Borders that Borders Forest Trust (BFT) has managed to count them all. The BFT survey of the status of Common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) in the Borders, carried out by McBride Habitats and funded by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust for Scotland (MFST), identified some 6,000 juniper plants scattered across the Borders. The survey highlighted that in many of these juniper plants were under threat from grazing by sheep, cattle and browsing by rabbits. Our innovative Biodiversity Conservation Project, carried out work in conjunction with private landowners and Forest Enterprise, such as fencing and individual tree protection to conserve and in some cases expand these juniper populations.

The Borders juniper population is characterized by a large number of scattered individual bushes and a few large colonies, such as Juniper Crag, a thriving juniper site near Peebles. The survey covered a total of 80 juniper sites in the Borders, 12 of which were new records and another 10, which were recorded historically, where juniper has since become extinct.

BFT has been working with landowners and Forest Enterprise (FE) to restore juniper in 7 selected areas, such as the Allan Water catchment, and some 3,000 seedlings have been raised from seed and cuttings by local nurseries and schools, such as Eyemouth High School. The challenge for BFT is to ensure that planted juniper survive and to continue the good work by protecting more sites and growing more plants.

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