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Original thinking... applied

Bracken Control Case Studies

Tillage or Ploughing

NATURAL ENGLAND

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Department of
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This is a summary of the information that has been kindly provided by people with current experience of controlling bracken using hand pulling and whipping in different parts of the UK. It provides some real-world experience to supplement the preliminary guidance about each control method.

The detail is limited by the amount of information available. More case study information is welcomed to allow us to add to the guidance. Please email details to: **Bracken@naturalengland.org.uk**

Note

– Tillage or ploughing is not an appropriate method of bracken treatment where historic features are present. It may fall under EIA regulations, so please check before doing any work. Further information is noted in the Treatment Method.

Case Studies

Caradoc Contracting

The bracken bed in the photograph was rotovated in May prior to reseeding. Bracken had regrown and there was 40% bracken cover by late-August.

RSPB Reserves

Mechanical disturbance of ground layers can be an effective way of treating bracken, by breaking and removing rhizomes. RSPB are using this method at sites such as Rathlin Island (Northern Ireland), Arne (Dorset), Aylesbeare (Devon) and Sherwood/Budby (Nottinghamshire).

On Rathlin Island, excavators are used to reach bracken patches on slopes.

At Arne, scraped areas within bracken stands are being created.

At Sherwood and Budby, excavators are used to scrape areas, and the resulting material is built up into low banks. Whilst these banks might later become areas for bracken, this is tolerated as providing habitat variation. Scraped areas and banks provide more habitat variation, and benefits for additional species such as invertebrates.

At Aylesbeare, a wide rake mounted on an excavator is used in the winter, to comb the ground, severing and collecting rhizomes.

(No details were provided of the surveys that the RSPB undertook before commencing work to choose appropriate areas for treatment and mitigate for any damage/disturbance).