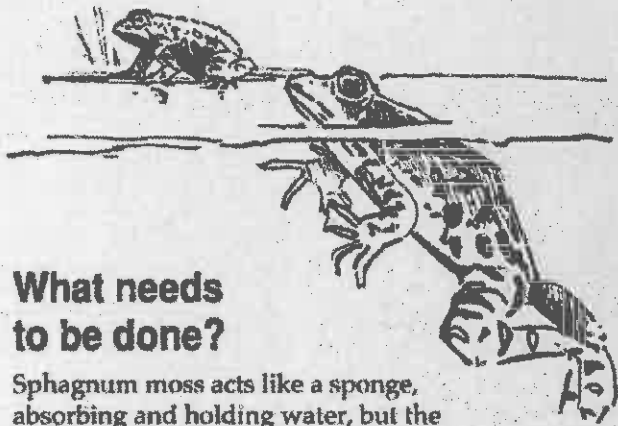


Common Frog
and Toad



What needs to be done?

Sphagnum moss acts like a sponge, absorbing and holding water, but the surface of Red Moss is drying out and this is allowing trees to establish. Left to nature the Moss would soon become a birch and Scots pine wood. Management aims to reverse this drying out by blocking drains and removing invading scrub from the dome of the moss. Around the edges of the site woodland is being allowed to develop and this brings variety.

Sundew and
dam in a ditch



Access

The presence of a boardwalk across part of the reserve makes it accessible to people with a wide range of abilities. However, care should be taken on the boardwalk as it is uneven in places, has low edges and can be slippery when wet. It is possible to return to the road along a path that follows the old aqueduct, but it can be muddy. The aqueduct once supplied Edinburgh with water from springs in the Pentland Hills.

How to get there

Red Moss is about 2.4 km (1.5 miles) south of Balerno. Take buses 44 or 66 to the terminus in Balerno; it is about a mile (uphill) along the Mansfield road from there. Car parking is available in Threipmuir car park directly adjacent to Red Moss.



The Scottish Wildlife Trust is the leading charity conserving wildlife and natural environment in Scotland. It is a partner in The Wildlife Trusts, a network of 47 Wildlife Trusts covering the UK and managing over 2000 wildlife reserves. The SWT relies heavily on donations, legacies and membership income. Please join us and support our work - *the need is urgent.*

For further information and details of membership, please contact:

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Welcome to Red Moss Wildlife Reserve

LOTHIAN



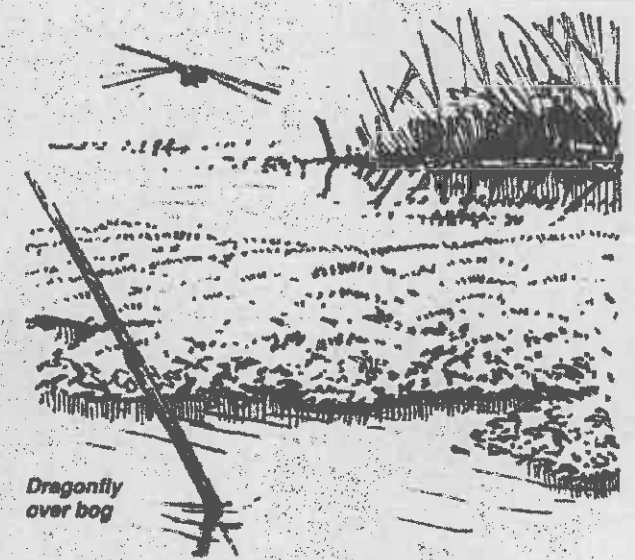
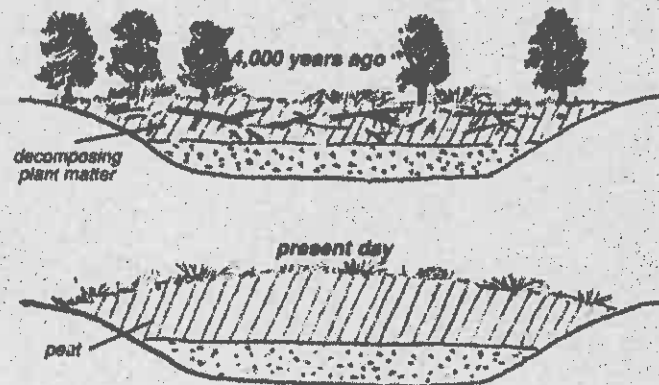
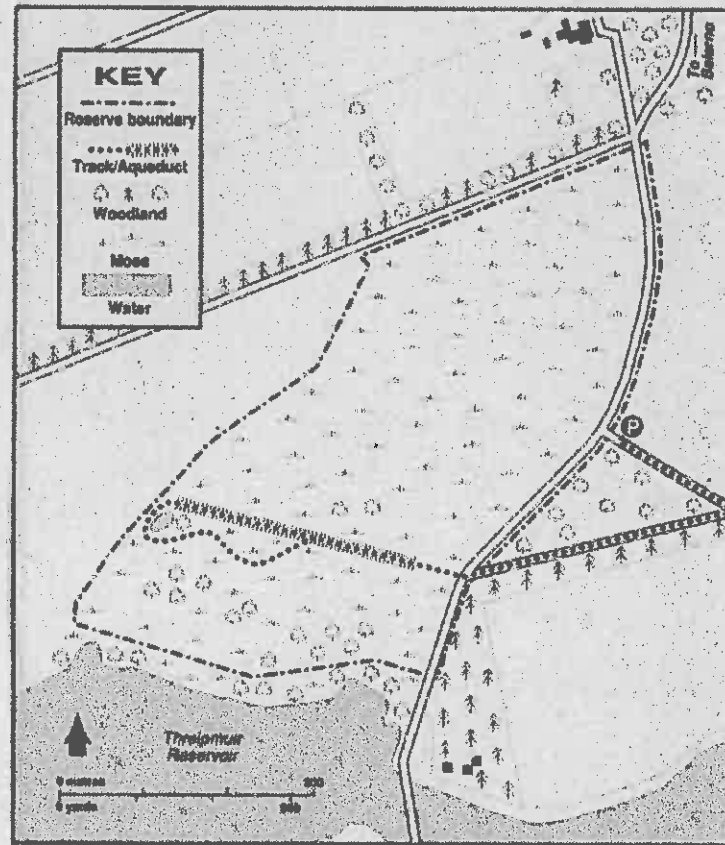
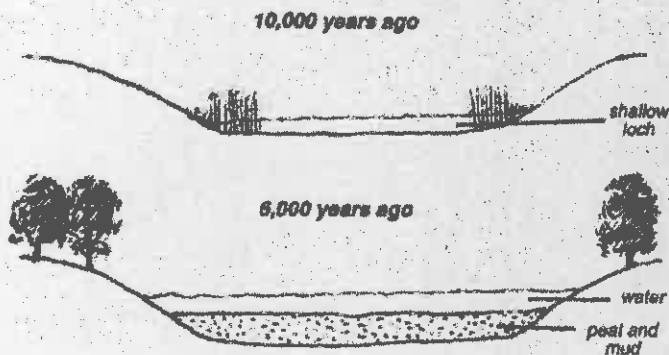
SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST

Welcome to Red Moss Wildlife Reserve

Red Moss reserve is a small but very valuable wildlife habitat, being one of the few remaining peat bogs in the Lothians. The reserve is all that remains of the much larger Balerno Common, which was broken up following the enclosure orders of the eighteenth century. There is good public access to the reserve and a number of interpretation panels give detailed information about different aspects of the Moss.

A dynamic situation

Ten thousand years ago the last Ice Age left a shallow loch. The bed of the loch gradually filled with sediments and peat, until ultimately it dried out sufficiently for birch and alder to grow on it. Then the climate took a turn for the wetter favouring moisture loving plants such as sphagnum moss, sedges, cotton grass and heather. Now Red Moss is largely composed of peat, 6m deep in some places, the accumulated remains of vegetation that has grown on the site over thousands of years. The peat forms a waterlogged dome that remarkably is more than 95% water! Abandoned peat cuttings, ditches and the tell tale signs of past burning all show that the site has a long history of human use.



A kaleidoscope of colour

All nutrients within a bog come from rainwater and this makes them very inhospitable places to live. The bog specialists are the sphagnum mosses of which ten species occur on the Moss. Best adapted of all is the beautiful tiny sundew plant, which traps insects on sticky-tipped leaves, which then close over to digest the unfortunate prey! Amongst other typical wetland plants are butterwort, bog asphodel, lousewort, ragged robin, marsh marigold and orchid species.

Animal life

The Moss is home to a wide range of animals. Emperor moths, dragonflies and damselflies are just a few of the invertebrates that breed and live here. Frogs, toads and lizards, increasingly rare as their habitats elsewhere are drained, find a refuge on the Moss. Other animals seen on the reserve include roe deer, mountain hare, stoats and weasels. Many birds enjoy the variety of habitats provided by the reserve including in summer meadow pipits and tree pipits and in winter fieldfares, redwings and bramblings.