

Swaling on Exmoor – 2017/18

ENPA LAND

Site	Total Burnt 2011	Total Burnt 2012	Total Burnt 2013	Total Burnt 2014	Total Burnt 2015	Total Burnt 2016	Total Burnt 2017	Total Burnt 2018	Av Rotation since 2011
North Hill	19.6 ha	16.7 ha	11.6 ha	5.7 ha	12.2 ha	0 ha	0 ha	7 ha	9.7 years
Cosgate	3.3 ha	0 ha	0 ha	7.5 ha	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha	12.7 years
East Anstey	9.6 ha	11.6 ha	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha	0 ha	20 years
Haddon Hill	20.2 ha	28.1 ha	18.7 ha	0 ha	6 ha	14.5 ha	0 ha	0 ha	11.8 years
Mill Hill	23.6 ha	23.2 ha	0 ha	30.1 ha	0 ha	25.3 ha	0 ha	0 ha	19.7 years

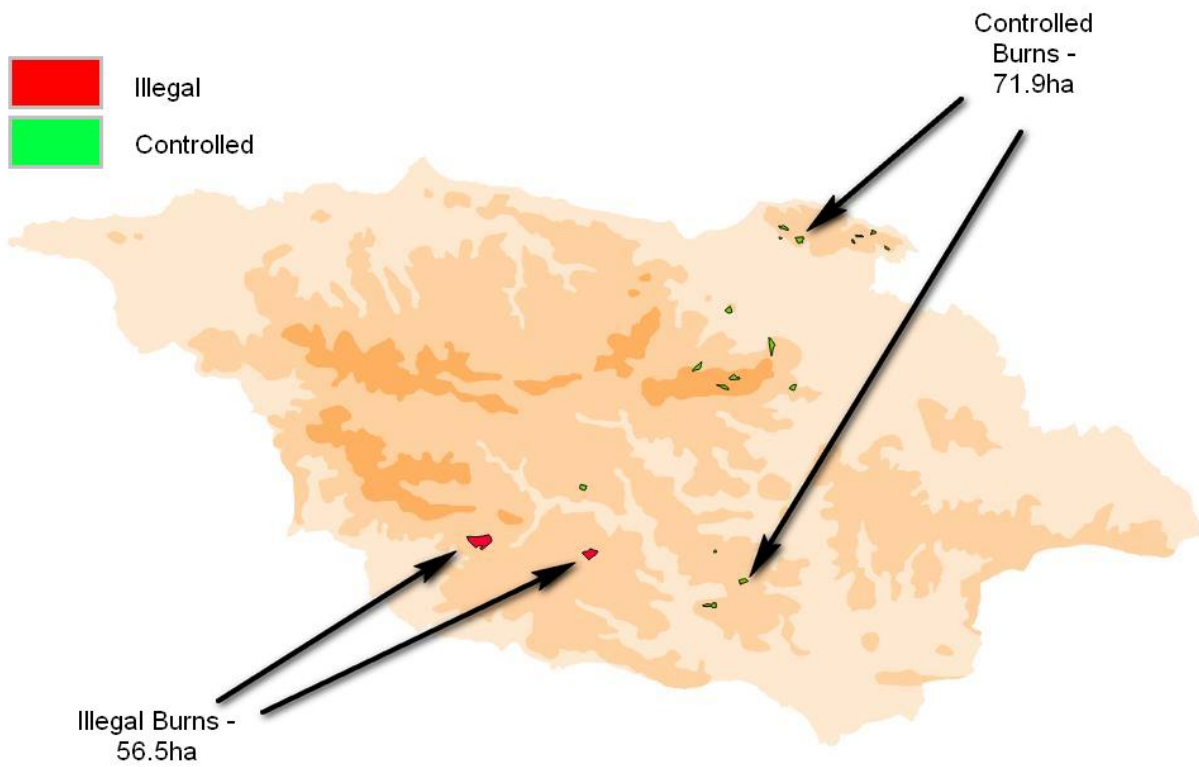
- Another very poor season. There was only 1 day of weather suitable for burning this year, just before the snow fell. The last good season was 2012:
 - 2018 – 1 day of suitable conditions
 - 2017 – 0 days of suitable conditions
 - 2016 – 4 days of suitable conditions
 - 2015 – 5 days of suitable conditions
 - 2014 – 3 days of suitable conditions
 - 2013 – 3 days of suitable conditions
- 7 ha was burnt on North Hill
- The average rotation is getting shorter. Growth rates obviously vary, but around 8-12 years seems about right.

ENPA ASSISTANCE

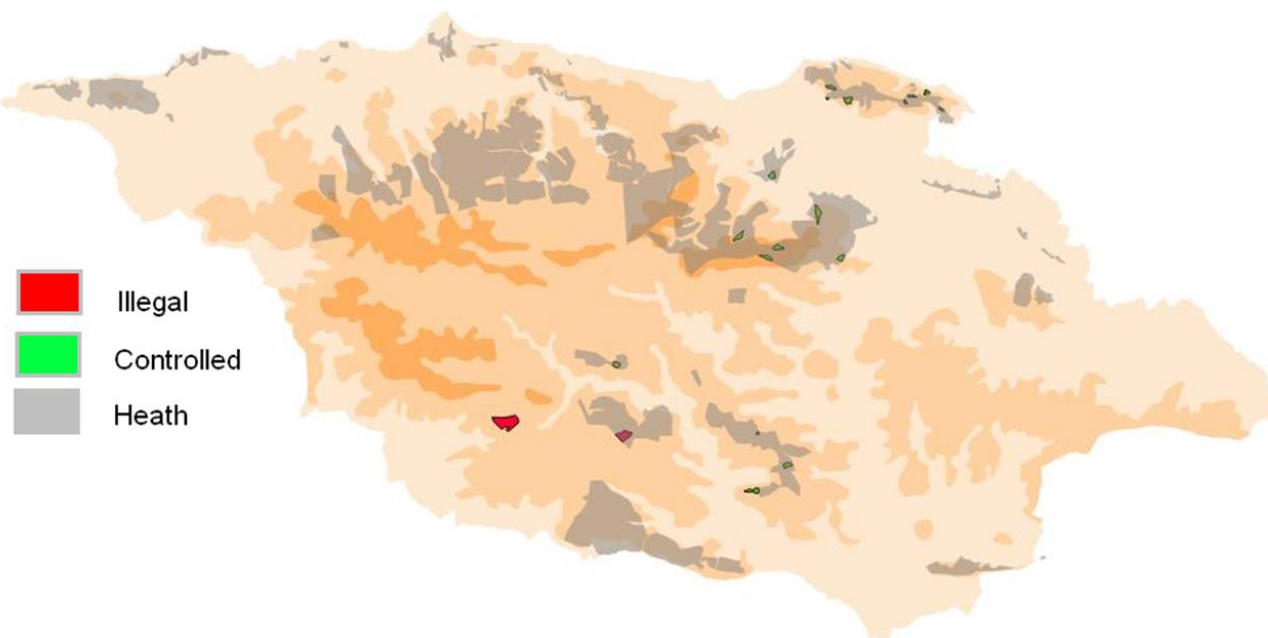
- ENPA charges landowners for help with swaling on privately owned land.
- A number of mollinia areas on Withypool Common were marked for burning by ENPA staff, but conditions never came right. Same with the Butterfly Conservation land at Upton.

- Equipment was loaned to A&B Contractors and Guy Thomas-Everard to carry out their own burns
- Advice was given to landowners on swaling throughout the year
- The swaling section of the ENPA website has been re-written to make information clearer and up to date

SWALING MAP OF EXMOOR

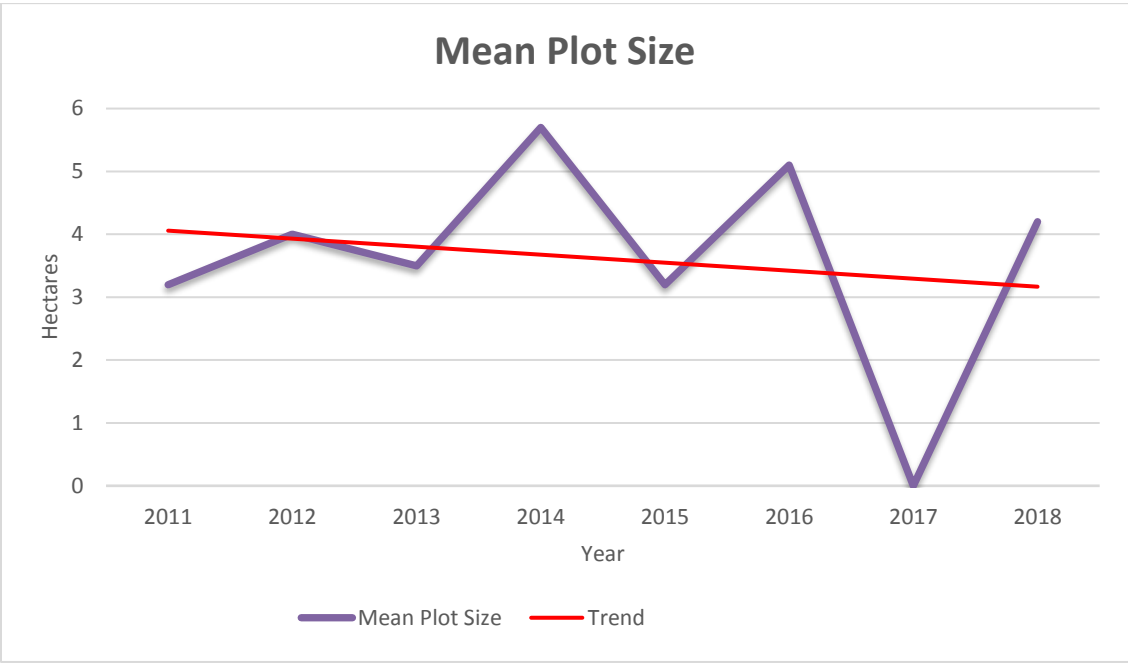
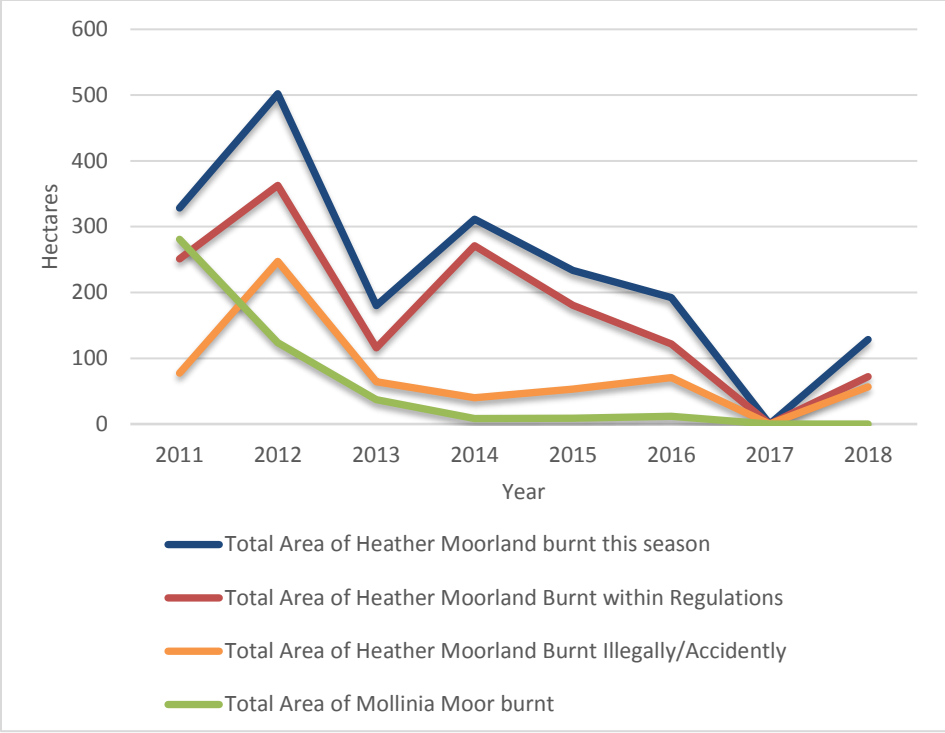


STATISTICS



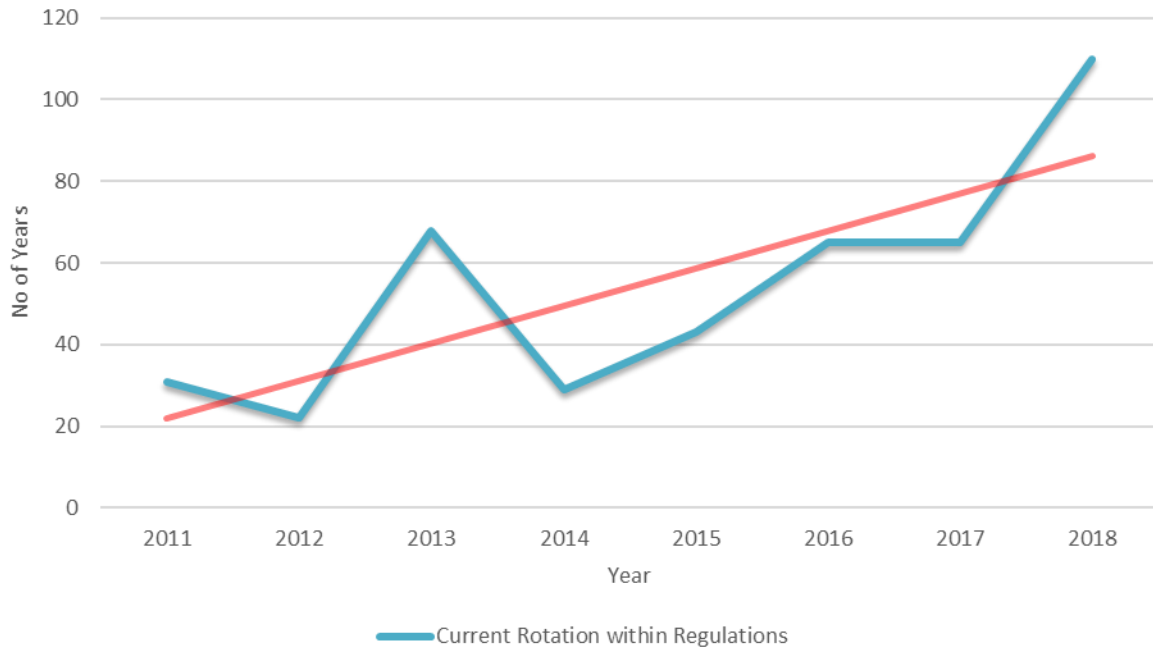
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Area of Burnable Heather Moorland on Exmoor	7910	7910	7910	7910	7910	7910	7910	7910
Total Area of Heather Moorland Burnt within Regulations	251	362.8	116	271.2	180.4	121.5	0	71.9
Number of Plots	67	90	40	47	56	24	0	17
Mean Plot Size (excluding ones that burnt outside of intended area)	3.2	4	3.5	5.7	3.2	5.1	0	4.2
Current Rotation within Regulations	31	22	68	29	43	65	65	110
Total Area of Heather Moorland Burnt Illegally/Accidentally	77.6	247.2	64.2	39.8	53.3	70.6	0	56.5
Total Area of Heather Moorland burnt this season	328.6	502.1	180.2	311.2	233.7	192.1	0	128.4
Current Rotation including all heather moorland fires	23	16	44	25	33	50.5	0	61
Total Area of Mollinia Moor burnt	280.8	123.5	36.9	8.1	8.6	11.7	0	0

All area measurements are in hectares



- Total Burning has declined heavily since 2012
- The size of burns remains small and the trend is decreasing
- The rotation length has increased from around 20 years to over 80 years in the last 8 years

Current Rotation within Regulations



POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Swaling is in an accelerating decline. You cannot have moorland without swaling and grazing, but there are so many factors that combine to make it highly unlikely that the trend will ever reverse.
- It feels like swaling is dropping fast from the collective public memory. So little smoke goes up that it causes far more excitement than it ever used to do.
- Press releases and news articles now talk about an area of moorland being ‘destroyed’ by a fire when someone lights illegally. Not helpful language if swaling is to continue.

North Devon Gazette

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PUBLISHED: 09:11 27 February 2018 | UPDATED: 09:13 27 February 2018 | Sarah Howells

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Three large fires destroy 125 acres of Exmoor

Five fire vehicles were sent to the scene last night

By **Joel Cooper** Chief Reporter
12:00, 27 FEB 2018