



(Slide 1)

**Introduction:** Today I want to talk about some very special habitats called Moorland and Blanket Bogs. You are going to get a chance to learn about some of the very special birds, animals and plants that live on the moors and why we need to protect and look after these unique habitats.

To help you learn about this special place I am going to tell you a story about one of the animals that lives on the moors, a small lizard called Lizzy (Slide 2 – Lizzy the Lizard)

## Lizzy the Lizard's Bog Disaster

(Slide 3 – Lizzy's Bog)

Once upon a time, a few summers ago a small lizard called Lizzy, lived in a small group of rocks, surrounded by a small wet bog, high up on the moors. That summer had been really hot, for days on end and the Heather was flowering purple all across the tops of the moors. Even though the wet bog where Lizzy the lizard lived was getting drier by the day, this was Lizzy's favourite time of year. She loved seeing the bees and birds flying around in the Heather and Lizzy spent her days basking in the sunshine on her favourite rock.

(Slide 4 - People on the moors)

One very hot day Lizzy was basking on her rock when down the hill she heard a loud commotion. Lizzy climbed to the top of the biggest rock and looked down the hill. Two families with lots of children had arrived. The parents were setting up a barbeque by the stream and the children were running around in the heather playing hide and seek. Lizzy had a quick look at the people enjoying themselves and then quickly scuttled back to sleep on her rock.

(Slide 5 - Rubbish by stream)

Later that day after the birds had stopped flying, Lizzy climbed back on top of the biggest rock to look over her little Bog and across the purple moors to see the setting sun. As she looked around she saw that the people had left all sorts of rubbish by the stream including the barbeque which was still smoking in the evening light. "What a pity all the rubbish is spoiling the stream" she thought.

(Slide 6 - Fire on the moors)

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During the night as Lizzy was safely curled up under her rock she heard the wind start to blow and it was getting stronger and stronger. Then all of a sudden Lizzy could hear a different noise. As well as the wind blowing, Lizzy could hear a roaring sound. She dug down further under her rock and went back to sleep.

The next morning Lizzy came out from under her rock, it was another lovely summer's day. She climbed on her rock and settled down in the sun shine. As she lay there she noticed a funny smell and that it was very quiet. She couldn't hear any birds singing or bees buzzing. Lizzy climbed to the top of the biggest rock and looked out. To her shock the lovely purple heather had all gone. The whole hillside beyond her bog was black and burnt. What had happened?

(Slide 7 - Burnt moorland)

Lizzy quickly climbed down off her rocks and made her way through the wet muddy bog to the edge of the heather. She hid in the cotton grass and looked out. All the beautiful purple flowers were gone and all that was left were black burnt sticks. Lizzy could still feel the heat. Even the soil was hot and smoking. 'What has happened to the moors?' said Lizzy.

Suddenly near Lizzy a clump of brown grass started to move. As quick as a flash Lizzy scuttled under a nearby rock to hide. As Lizzy watched the clump of grass stand up, it had long thin legs and a long thin beak! Lizzy realized it wasn't a clump of grass but a beautiful Curlew.

(Slide 8 - Curlew)

The Curlew looked down at Lizzy 'It was a fire' said the Curlew, 'The fire came during the night and burnt all the heather apart from this little Bog'.

Lizzy stuck her head out from under the rock 'A fire, where did it come from? How did it burn all across the hills?' she asked.

The Curlew looked at Lizzy 'The wind blew the flames and the dry weather meant the heather and the soil was dry and the flame spread so quickly it burns right across the hills, I've seen it before' said the Curlew. 'People come and start the fires and then very quickly it burns out of control. Now I have to leave, most of the other birds have already flown away' continued the Curlew.

'Why?' asked Lizzy, 'where have they gone?'

The Curlew looked around, 'Look, the heather has gone, all the bees and insects have disappeared and so our food has gone. If we want to eat we have to leave here and find a new home'.

Lizzy looked at the Curlew 'You could stay here in my Bog - I don't mind'.

'Thank you' said the Curlew, 'but your Bog is too small, there would not be enough food for me. I must fly away with the other birds'. The Curlew spread its large wings and disappeared across the black hillside.



Lizzy felt sad that the moorland was so quiet and all the bees and birds had gone. Lizzy came out from under her rock and went to look round her Bog; she climbed to the top of the biggest rock and looked out over the black hills. As Lizzy looked around, all she could see was black burnt heather. Her little Bog was the only bit of green remaining.

(Slide 9 - Hare)

'Ruined! All ruined!' came a voice. Lizzy looked down, and lying next to the rock was her friend Hector. Hector was a hare and he looked very sad. 'This is my favourite time of year' said Hector 'and now it's all ruined'.

'Don't worry Hector' said Lizzy, 'It will all grow back for next summer... we'll just have to wait'. Hector looked up at Lizzy, 'No Lizzy, I'm sorry it won't come back, it's all ruined. I've seen it before. Can you see the soil smoking?' asked Hector. 'That's the soil burning. The fire burns down into the soil. If I was to dig down to make a burrow all the roots would be burnt, even the seeds in the soil are burnt so the plants can't grow back. Lizzy, I'm sorry but I'm going to have to leave here, the Bog is just too small for me. There's just not enough food'.

Lizzy felt very sad that her friend was going to leave and the heather was not going to come back. 'It's going to look like this for a very long time' thought Lizzy.

Lizzy watched as her friend Hector disappeared across the black hillside. She was very lonely as all the birds and animals had gone. Even the Heather had gone and would not be growing back. She realised that meant the birds and bees, and even Hector would not be coming back either. Lizzy wanted to leave as well but she was just too small to cross the black hillside.

(Slide 10 - Dragonfly)

The next morning Lizzy woke to lots of noise. Lizzy crawled slowly from under her rock, and climbed to the top of the biggest rock. On the burnt heather were lots of people. 'Not more people' she thought. 'Maybe this time my Bog will get burnt as well'.

'Oh good' said a voice above her.

Lizzy jumped and looking up above her, she noticed a beautiful dragonfly was hovering.

'What do you mean "oh good"?' asked Lizzy. 'They are going to set fire to the moors again and this time my Bog might burn and I will have to leave'.

'Oh no, the moors are not going to burn again, they are here to fix things' said the Dragonfly.

'What do you mean "fix it", they can't undo the fire or fix the whole hillside. It's too big' said Lizzy.

'They can't undo the fire', said the Dragonfly landing on the rock, 'but they can try and fix the landscape. I've see it before'.

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'These people have a giant metal dragonfly that rains seeds from the sky and then the plants start to grow again. Just wait and see'.

'Do you mean the heather will come back and the birds will come back?' Lizzy asked hopefully. 'Yes' said the Dragonfly, 'it takes time but I saw a fire on another moor long ago and then these people came. The next time I flew over it again it was all green, just wait and see'. Then the Dragonfly flew away.

(Slide 11-13 Seed bags, Helicopter working)

Lizzy waited hopefully, and then one day out of the blue sky a giant metal dragonfly appeared, just as the Dragonfly had said. The giant metal dragonfly rained down seeds all over the burnt moorland. Lizzy was so happy that the Dragonfly had been correct that they were trying to fix the moorland. Lizzy watched the people and the big metal dragonfly come and go over many weeks, as they fixed the moorland. Lizzy waited and waited, the winter came and went, and the days started to warm up. Lizzy was waiting for spring.

(Slide 14 - Moorland recovering)

One day Lizzy woke under her rock and she could feel the day was warm and bright already. Lizzy rushed out and climbed to the top of the biggest rock and looked out over the black landscape. This time it looked a little bit different. Lizzy could see tiny bits of green all over the hillside. Grass and young Heather was starting to grow. Lizzy was so excited. She knew it would take time for the Heather to grow back and for the birds to return but it had started. Lizzy felt happy that her friends the Curlew, Hector the Hare and the Dragonfly might come back soon now the moorland was re-growing.

(Slide 15 - restored Moorland)

## **What Next?**

What else can you do?

1. Find out more about Lizzy, Hector or the Curlew. Can you find three special facts about each?
2. Can you find out about other animals, plants or birds that also live on our Moors or Blanket bogs?
3. Help protect our countryside by designing a poster to educate others about Moorland fires or not dropping litter.
4. Discover for yourselves what makes Blanket Bogs special...go and visit one yourself. They are not that far away!
5. There are many more things you can do, think of your own Moorland activity.

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