



FP Scorecard Tip Sheet

Section A: Biodiversity

Guidance for A.1: Count the number of positive indicators – applies to all scorecards (wet grassland, dry grassland, woodland, peatland).

To start, walk the field in the shape of a 'W'. During the walk of the field, count the total number of positive indicator species which occur in the field. Stop occasionally to search under taller vegetation. Mark off each positive indicator that you see. Remember, not all positive indicators flower at the same time so look for leaves as well as flowers.

Guidance for A.2: What is the cover of positive indicators – applies to all scorecards (peatland scorecard refers to cover of sphagnum moss only)

Rare	Occasional	Frequent	Abundant	Dominant
Positive indicator species hard to find	Positive indicators not very visible (you must search to find them)	Positive indicator every couple of steps	Positive indicator every step	Positive indicator with every step and in between steps

In larger plots, it might be easier to pick a representative area to estimate the cover.

Guidance for A3: What is the cover of negative indicator species – applies to all, same approach as A.2.

Guidance for A.4: What is the vegetation structure?

	Wet Grassland	Dry Grassland	Peatland (A5)
Very Poor	NA	NA	See scorecard for explanation
Poor	Most of plot (>75%) has either tall or short sward; intermediate sward absent or confined to small patches. Few flowering plants.	Most of plot (>75%) has either tall or short sward; intermediate sward absent or confined to small patches. Few flowering plants.	See scorecard for explanation
Moderate	25-50% of plot has tall and/or short sward with occasional to frequent intermediate patches	25-50% of plot has tall and/or short sward with occasional to frequent intermediate patches	See scorecard for explanation
Good	>50% of plot with sward having variety of taller and /or shorter sward with intermediate height sward throughout.	>50% of plot with sward having variety of taller and /or shorter sward with intermediate height sward throughout.	See scorecard for explanation

Section B: Hydrology

Guidance for B1: Cover of wetland indicating species – applies to wet grassland, dry grassland, and peatland. Note: For peatland scorecard, only measure sphagnum moss cover.

During your walk through the plot, note the coverage of wetland indicating species (e.g. rushes, meadowsweet, marsh thistle etc.). Estimate their proportion in the same way that you would for the positive and negative indicator species.



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Guidance for drain function and drain depth

To assess the drains, walk along the length of the drain(s) both within and bounding the plot.

Note: the effect of the drains on the plot should be considered here. Example: if the water level seems somewhat low, but the plot feels damp and has a good cover of wetland species, it can be judged on this rather than water level.

Note: there may be more than one drain that is having an effect on the plot. If this is the case, take the 'average' condition of the drains.

See individual scorecards for further explanation on how to assess drains appropriately.

Section C: Threats

The last section on each scorecard is designed to capture any damaging activities or threats that may be present. The threats are similar for every scorecard e.g., bracken, invasive species, bare soil etc. Refer to the scorecard for a full explanation on each question in this section.

Boundary Scorecard

Note 1: Stonewalls and earthbanks should only be assessed when they are not associated with hedgerows or treelines.

Note 2: Boundaries that are not natural (e.g. wired fence) automatically receive 'Poor'

Note 3: the lowest scoring criterion determines the overall score of a boundary.

Note 4: When scoring a boundary, consider the worst 30m of the boundary.

Woodland Scorecard

For section A, decide whether the plot is scrub or woodland.

Woodland is defined as any area dominated by trees with a distinct canopy greater than 5m in height (or 4m in wet areas). Scrub is generally any area dominated by shrubs, brambles and stunted or immature trees. Canopy height is generally less than 5m (or 4m in wet areas).

For scrub dominated areas continue to A1. For woodland continue to A2.

To answer section A2, use the diagram below to differentiate between the field layer, shrub layer and canopy layer.

