



POSITIVE INDICATORS



**X**  
 NEGATIVE INDICATORS



\*WET grassland species



**Tips**

- Positive indicators have been selected as they indicate semi-natural grasslands which have received little or no fertiliser; herbicide or other agricultural improvement.
- Grassland plots with 50% to 100% (dominant) perennial rye grass are unlikely to receive a payable score.
- Positive indicators may occur throughout; others are naturally found in clumps; while others may occur sparsely (e.g. orchids).
- Plant leaves also tend to overlap; therefore, you should look beneath other plants when recording cover for positive indicators.
- Estimate the proportion of the grassland area in the plot that is taken up by the combined cover of all positive indicators.
- On larger parcels you may find it helpful to pick a representative sample area to estimate cover.
- During the 'W' walk of the management unit, tick all positive indicators present.
- Not all positive indicators will be in flower at the same time so look for leaves as well as flowers.

**Positive indicator thresholds - A2**

<b>Rare:</b> 0-5%	A few scattered individuals or very small patches in the plot. The entire sward appears 'grassy' with few broadleaves.
<b>Occasional:</b> 6-10%	Occur in small patches or scattered over the plot, not highly visible when looking down on the sward. The majority of the sward looks 'grassy'.
<b>Frequent:</b> 11-25%	Scattered or in patches over the entire plot. Much of the sward looks 'grassy'.
<b>Abundant:</b> 26-50%	Good cover of a number of positive indicators when looking down on sward, but positive indicators will be missing from large patches of the plot. Parts of the sward may appear 'grassy'.
<b>Dominant:</b> >50%	Visible over more than half of the sward. Good diversity of leaf shapes and flowers apparent in the sward when looking down onto it. Only small patches of the sward appear 'grassy'.

**Encroaching scrub thresholds - C1**

<b>High:</b> >50%	Established dense patches or continuous saplings, typically spreading from plot boundaries. Access by livestock or machinery may be impeded. Few or no signs of farm management.
<b>Med-high:</b> 26-50%	Some well established saplings may be present. Scrub along field boundaries likely to be encroaching onto the plot. Few signs of recent management.
<b>Med-low:</b> 11-25%	Some spread of scrub from the field boundaries may be evident, particularly briars. Recent grazing or other management is likely to be evident over much of the grassland.
<b>Low:</b> 1-10%	Small patches of scrub or individual seedlings of encroaching scrub. Small amounts of briars may be encroaching from field boundaries. Grass growth may be easily seen underneath the scrub. Grazing or other management is evident.

*N.B. May be helpful to look at recent aerial photographs to estimate the proportion of scrub cover.*

**Negative indicator thresholds - A3**

<b>Dominant:</b> >50%	Occur in dense patches throughout the plot, when combined would cover more than 50% of plot.
<b>Abundant:</b> 26-50%	Occur in medium to large patches throughout the plot, when combined would not cover half the plot.
<b>Frequent:</b> 11-25%	Occur in small to medium patches in the plot, and not limited to previous feeding sites, trackways, field boundaries, water troughs and gateways.
<b>Occasional:</b> 6-10%	Scattered or small clumps of weeds / negative indicators. Where present at gateways, water troughs, field boundaries and along well-used trackways, this cover should be less than 10% and the weeds should not extend into the main body of the plot.
<b>Rare:</b> 0-5%	Either absent, or scattered individuals or very small patches in the plot.

**Poaching assessment - C4**

<b>High:</b> >50%	Extensive damage from poaching across most of plot. Often extensive rutting and compaction from machinery.
<b>Med-high:</b> 26-50%	Soil disturbance around water sources extends for >3m. Extensive areas of bare ground noticeable, and not confined to regularly used routes. Can be medium extent of rutting and compaction from machinery.
<b>Med-low:</b> 11-25%	Unvegetated bare areas noticeable in wetter soils during summer. Patches of bare ground not limited to trackways/gates or thin soil. Soil disturbance around water features extending 1-3m.
<b>Low:</b> 1-10%	Low impacts on the plot. Small patches of bare ground possibly along well used trackways/gates. Very small areas of poaching away from routes and gates but grassland as a whole is well vegetated in summer. No poaching or dunging at wet features.

