



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Biodiversity Management Practices Self-Assessment Tool: Linear Habitats



Teagasc

Biodiversity Management Practices

Self- Assessment Tool: Linear Habitats

Tick if Yes

Hedge Management

1. Is the height of all your internal hedges at least 1.5m above ground level (or above hedge bank if present)?
2. Is there a flowering thorn tree* in every hedge?

☐☐

Layout of Farming Platform

3. Is your average field size** less than 5 ha?

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Field Margin Management

4. Do you always retain at least 1.5m uncultivated margins when cultivating?
5. Do you avoid spraying within your field margins (except for spot spraying noxious weeds)?

☐☐

Watercourse Management

6. Are all watercourse banks on your farm fenced?
7. Is there a fenced margin over 1.5m on all watercourses?
8. Do you prevent livestock drinking access to all watercourses?

☐☐☐

What is your score? (TOTAL number of Ticks)

Target Score = 8

☐

*Flowering thorn tree

- ▶ Escaped hedges (untopped / treelines) naturally contain flowering thorn trees
- ▶ Topped hedges may contain individual flowering thorn saplings or trees **IF** retained

**Average field size:

- ▶ Owned land ha/No of fields (surrounded by permanent biodiverse boundaries) = ha
- ▶ Biodiverse boundaries include hedges, watercourses, vegetated margins, etc – Not wire fences

*** **Noxious weeds:** Ragwort, dock, thistle, wild oat, male wild hop and common barberry

Why?

Hedges

1

Hedge Height

Hedges over 1.5 m in height provides suitable nest sites for birds with cover above and below their nests



2

Thorn Trees in Hedges

Thorn trees provide flowers for bees and fruit for birds and small mammals. New thorn saplings provide song-posts and thorn trees for the future



Layout of Farming Platform

3

Average Field Size

Farmed landscapes with an average field size of less than 5 ha provide networks for nature and corridors of movement for birds, bats, bees and butterflies to move through the countryside

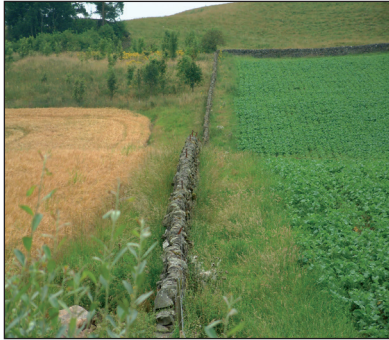


Why?

Field Margins

4 Uncultivated Field Margins

- ▶ Allow native wildflowers and grasses to grow providing habitat for biodiversity



5 Unsprayed Field Margins

- ▶ Allow native wildflowers and grasses to grow providing habitat for biodiversity



Watercourses

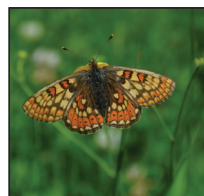
6 Fenced Watercourse Banks

- ▶ Prevent bank erosion and siltation, maintaining the bank habitat



7 Watercourse Margins

- ▶ Provide further protection for watercourses and allows space for native wildflowers and grasses to grow, providing habitat for biodiversity



8 Absence of Drinking Access

- ▶ Prevents siltation of watercourses, and protects the habitat for instream biodiversity

