Peatland Scorecard

Co-funded by the European Union

Farmer ID:	Surveyor:	**Total Score** *(A+B+C)* **/100**
Plot number:	Survey date:	

Is this plot adjacent to an EPA mapped river/stream? Y/N

If yes, describe river flow: Low ☐ Normal ☐ Above normal ☐

A Ecological integrity

Total Score A *(sum of A1 to A3)*: **/60**

A1 What is the number of **positive indicators** in the plot? Tick all positive indicators below.
Note all positive indicators present as you walk a 'W' through the plot.

Low: 0–2	0	Moderate: 3–5	5	High: 6+	10

Moss layer*:*
☐ Branched mosses
☐Non-crustose bushy lichens
☐Sphagnum mosses
☐Liverworts

Shrub layer:
☐Bell Heather
☐Cross-leaved heath
☐Ling heather
☐Bilberry
☐Bog myrtle
☐Western gorse

Grass/herb layer:
☐Bog asphodel
☐Bog bean
☐Bog cotton
☐Lousewort
☐ Sundews
☐White-beaked sedge
☐Black bog rush

A2 What is the combined **cover of all positive mosses, liverworts & lichens** (*listed above*) throughout the plot?
Cover is the proportion of the field taken up by all positive mosses, liverworts & lichens present.

Low: <10% cover across the plot.	0
Moderate: 10–30% cover across the plot.	10
High: >30% cover across the plot.	20

A3 What is the **vegetation structure?**

Overgrazed: Vegetation height is uniformly low. Little or no heather present on wet heaths. Often lacking moss and dwarf shrub layer.	-15
Moderate (over-grazed): Significant areas (>25%) of the plot have low uniform vegetation, although not throughout.	10
Good: Sward in good condition; abundant grass and sedge-like vegetation on blanket bog with hummock, hollow, and pool complexes. On heath, all stages of heather/shrub growth present, mostly >30cm. Mix of bog and/or heath vegetation at various heights throughout. Well-structured vegetation with all three layers (moss, sedge/herb, and shrub) well represented.	30
Moderate (under-grazed): Significant areas (>25%) of the plot have rank vegetation although not throughout.	15
Under-grazed: Rank sward. Purple moor-grass/mat-grass and rank senescent heather dominating. Litter cover high, thatch forming in large continuous patches. Poorly developed ground layer.	-10

B Hydrological integrity

Total Score B: **/40**

B1 Surface hydrology and artificial drainage features present within the plot?

Significantly altered bog/heath hydrology: Frequent widespread free-flowing drains on plot with notable effect on surrounding vegetation of bog/heath. >20% of plot affected.	-30
Moderately altered bog/heath hydrology: Free flowing drains in plot with notable effect on surrounding vegetation of bog/heath. <20% of plot affected.	-15
Slightly altered bog/heath hydrology: Drains present in plot although are somewhat impeded and little effect on surrounding bog/heath.	0
Moderately intact bog/heath hydrology: Bog/heath surface largely intact, although some evidence of historic disturbance (cutting, drainage, erosion channels) across any part of plot. Vegetation and hydrology largely recovered/stabilised.	20
Intact bog/heath hydrology: Intact bog/heath surface, no evidence of past drainage or disturbance across plot.	40

C Threats & pressures (*C7–C10 only applicable where plot adjoins stream/river)

Total Score C *(sum of C1 to C9*)*:

C1 Is there any **evidence of damaging activities** to habitat or vegetation throughout the plot? (*excluding 20 m adjacent to any watercourse*)

High: Damage occurring across a large area (≥21%) or of a serious nature if confined	-30
Moderate: Damage occurring across a moderate area (≥6-20%) or of a moderate nature if confined.	-20
Low: Damage occurring. across a small area (≤5%) or of a minor nature if confined.	-10
None: No damaging activities.	0

Damaging activities: *(tick relevant and describe in comments)*

- ☐ Damage from supplementary feeding
- ☐ Inappropriate herbicide use
- ☐ Quarrying
- ☐ Burning
- ☐ Dumping/rubbish
- ☐ Removal of mature scrub/trees
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*

C2 What is the extent of **bare soil & erosion** throughout the plot?

High: Excessive areas of bare soil within the body of the field. Bare soil may also be extending out significantly from the main feed sites and/or water troughs and/or livestock access points, where poaching evident. Significant rutting and soil disturbance caused by vehicle/tractor access.	-20
Moderate: Bare soil mainly along regularly used stock routes or congregation areas, with minor soil loss occurring at a few points. Bare soil may extend a short distance beyond the main feed site and/or water points and/or livestock access points. Minor rutting and soil disturbance caused by occasional vehicle/tractor access may be present.	-10
Low: Bare soil more or less restricted to regular stock paths, 'pinch' points & small congregation areas. No soil loss.	0

C3a Are **non-native invasive species** present?

Present:	-10	Absent:	0

C3b What is the cover of **non-native invasive species** throughout the plot? (*excluding 20 m adjacent to any watercourse*)

High: Abundant. Some forming dense clumps, many seedlings	-20
Moderate: Frequent. Some flowering, many seedlings present	-10
Low: Scattered. Plants mostly small and not flowering	-5
None: No non-native invasive species present or < 5 self-sown conifers	0

Non-native invasive species: *(tick if present)*

- ☐ Cherry laurel
- ☐ Cotoneaster
- ☐ Giant hogweed
- ☐ Giant rhubarb
- ☐ Himalayan balsam
- ☐ Himalayan honeysuckle
- ☐ Himalayan knotweed
- ☐ Japanese knotweed
- ☐ Montbretia
- ☐ Rhododendron
- ☐ Self-sown conifers
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

C4 Is there any evidence of **damage due to turbary activity**?

High: Active peat cutting and associated works >10% of the field affected. High proportion of bare peat due to peat extraction. Sausage machine cutting taking place in any part of the field (regardless of the extent).	-30
Moderate: Active peat cutting (mechanical cutting from face-bank, hand cutting, milling etc.) and associated works <10% of the field affected.	-10
Low: No evidence of peat cutting during the most recent season.	0

C5 What is the extent of **spreading immature scrub**? *(refer to Project team if 'moderate' or 'high')*

High: Gorse-dominated scrub occurring throughout the site or concentrated in large areas.	☐
Moderate: Small areas of gorse-dominated scrub occur occasionally throughout the site.	☐
Low: Little or no scrub present.	☐

C6 What is the cover of **bracken**? *(refer to Project team if 'moderate' or 'high')*

High: Very dense stands of bracken covering over half or more of the plot, forming closed canopy.	☐
Moderate: Bracken forming dense stands covering parts of the plot, mostly forming closed canopy.	☐
Low: Bracken absent or some scattered fronds and none forming closed canopy. Can include some isolated small patches or some larger patches on steep slopes.	☐

C7 How **stable** is the riverbank?
Assess bank face (see guidance).

Poor: Bank unstable of loose soil, which is easily disturbed. Significant areas of banks cut away, undercut or showing erosion scars.	-10
Moderate: Bank moderately stable (not easily disturbed). Infrequent small areas of erosion mostly healed over.	-5
Good: Bank largely stable, held firmly by grasses, shrubs and tree roots.	0

C8 What is the cover of **non-native invasive species** along the riverside habitat?
(tick if present) Assess the 20 m from top of riverbank or water's edge (see guidance).

High: Abundant. Some forming dense clumps, many seedlings	-30
Moderate: Frequent. Some flowering, many seedlings present	-20
Low: Scattered. Plants mostly small and not flowering	-10
None: No non-native invasive species present	0

Non-native invasive species: *(tick if present)*
- ☐ Cherry laurel
- ☐ Cotoneaster
- ☐ Giant hogweed
- ☐ Giant rhubarb
- ☐ Himalayan balsam
- ☐ Himalayan honeysuckle
- ☐ Himalayan knotweed
- ☐ Japanese knotweed
- ☐ Montbretia
- ☐ Rhododendron
- ☐ Self-sown conifers
- ☐ Other (*please specify*):

C9 Is there any evidence of **damaging activities/ bare soil** along the riverside habitat?
Assess the 20 m from top of riverbank or water's edge (see guidance).

High: Damage/bare soil occurring across a large area (≥21%) or of a serious nature if confined.	-30
Moderate: Damage/bare soil occurring across a moderate area (≥6-20%) or of a moderate nature if confined.	-20
Low: Damage/ bare soil occurring. across a small area (≤5%) or of a minor nature if confined.	-10
None: No damaging activities.	0

Damaging activities:
(tick relevant and describe in comments)
- ☐ Livestock poaching/dung
- ☐ Rutting/soil disturbance due to machinery
- ☐ Inappropriate herbicide/pesticide use
- ☐ Dumping/rubbish
- ☐ Flailing/cutting/removal of riverside vegetation
- ☐ Burning
- ☐ Other (*describe in comments*)

C10 What is the extent of **gorse** along the riverside habitat? *(refer to Project team if 'high')*
Assess the 20 m from top of riverbank or water's edge (see guidance).

High: Gorse dominating throughout the plot (>75% cover).	☐
Moderate: Gorse occurs frequently throughout the plot (25–50% cover).	☐
Low: Scattered presence or no gorse present (<25% cover).	☐

Common management recommendations:
- ☐Continue current management of this high-quality peatland.
- ☐Control the occurrence and spread of invasive species.
- ☐Control the occurrence and spread of encroaching scrub/bracken.
- ☐Consider using supporting actions of slow or impede the flow of drains.
- ☐Consider raising water table to restore peatland; supporting actions available.
- ☐Use stock to graze field more evenly.
- ☐Improve stock management. e.g. fencing/drinking facilities
- ☐Move feeders/troughs regularly, and keep away from drains and rivers.
- ☐No management advice.
- ☐Other (see comments box).

Management recommendation(s):