**Biodiversity Survey Form (Template)**

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this form is to set out a simple and standardised survey approach when undertaking high-level ‘bioblitzes’ across the High Peak. This will assist High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) with monitoring changes in biodiversity at its sites, to support the move to reduced ‘cut and collect’ mowing regimes and allow the Council to undertake better management of its sites for nature.

It is designed to be used by both individuals and community groups, as part of bioblitzes or other organised surveys. It is intended for surveys to be repeated over time to build a picture of the biodiversity at a particular site by collecting data on the number and diversity of species.

The form includes optional sections for wildflowers, grasses, trees, fungi, invertebrates, birds and mammals. Include whichever categories you are comfortable with in your survey. The main purpose of these forms is to assess change over time, so try to be consistent between each survey in terms of which sections you complete (unless the season or time of year makes this difficult e.g. in the case of grasses).

**Useful apps and guidance**

In the first instance, we recommend using the app ‘iNaturalist’ to identify species. This has the added benefit of electronic records also being fed into wider databases such as the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre. However, use of the app is not mandatory. Other useful apps for species identification include Google Lens, PlantNet, etc.

Any reference books you have (such as wildflower ID guides) can also be useful tools to take out on surveys and help with recording your findings.

**Preliminary information**

Please fill in preliminary information below about the site you are surveying. Make sure to be consistent with site names/addresses/locations when completing multiple surveys over time.

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| **Name of surveyor** |  |
| **Name of group (if applicable)** |  |
| **Site name** |  |
| **Site address** |  |
| **Site location (**[**what3words**](https://what3words.com/pretty.needed.chill)**)** |  |
| **Site location (comments\*)** |  |
| **Date (DD/MM/YYYY)** |  |
| **Time** |  |
| **Weather conditions (please circle/highlight)** | Sun outline | Partial sun outline | Cloud outline |
| Rain outline | Snow outline |  |
| **Temperature (°C)** |  |
| **Weather – other comments (e.g. strong wind, fog, etc)** |  |
| **Total time spent surveying (hours/minutes)** |  |
| *\*For example, if you are only surveying specific parts of a wider site.* |

**Photographs**

For electronic copies of the form.

Try to limit this section to pictures showing the wider site context and habitat type, or those species you are uncertain about, this avoids having to include pictures of every species you find in this form.

**Any other relevant information**

Include in this box any general information that you think may be relevant to your survey. Examples might include the wider context of the site (urban, rural, etc), adjacent land uses, nearby habitats and watercourses, etc.

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**Completed forms:**

Please return your completed form in electronic format to Habitatsurveys@highpeak.gov.uk and if possible also pass your records on to the Derbyshire Biological Record Centre: <https://dbrc-ors.lerc.online/>

For group surveys and/or hard-copy records, please collate and combine your data and translate into an electronic format before submitting.

Please note that only forms for sites owned by HPBC should be submitted back to HPBC.

However, the form has been designed to be used more widely as a useful resource for monitoring, so data for other sites can be passed on to the Derbyshire Biological Records Centre.

**SURVEY RECORDING SECTIONS**

**Wildflowers (optional)**

Record the types and abundances of wildflowers at the site using the DAFOR scale.

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| **DAFOR** | **% (relative abundance across site)** |
| D – Dominant | > 75% |
| A – Abundant | 51 – 75% |
| F – Frequent | 26 – 50% |
| O – Occasional | 11 – 25% |
| R – Rare | 1 – 10% |

*These are rough percentages, as there is not a set definition for DAFOR. It is more to do with relative abundance compared to other species on the site, so try to be consistent in how you apply it across different species you identify.*

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| **Common Name** | **Scientific Name (if known)** | **Abundance (DAFOR)** | **Other comments (if applicable)** |
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Extra table space is available at the end of the document if required. This can also be used for species that do not necessarily fit into the defined categories (e.g. mosses and bryophytes).

**Grasses, sedges and/or rushes (optional)**

Record the types and abundances of grasses, sedges and/or rushes at the site using the DAFOR scale if you are able to (see wildflower section for information on DAFOR).

Please note that it is typically only possible to identify grasses during April to September in the UK.

The following web links provide useful guides for grass identification, to assist any apps that you might use. Books and field guides for grasses are also readily available.

<https://naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2021/how-to-identify-common-uk-grasses/>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/grasses-sedges-and-rushes>

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| **Common Name** | **Scientific Name (if known)** | **Abundance (DAFOR)** | **Other comments (if applicable)** |
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**Trees and hedgerows (optional)**

Record the types and abundances of trees and hedgerows at the site using the DAFOR scale if you are able to (see wildflower section for information on DAFOR).

Please note that trees are harder to identify during the winter period when leaves have fallen off.

The following web links provide useful guides for tree identification, to assist any apps that you might use. Books and field guides for trees are also readily available.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/how-to-identify-trees/>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/nature/trees-plants/guide-identifying-trees>

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| **Common Name** | **Scientific Name (if known)** | **Abundance (DAFOR)** | **Other comments (if applicable)** |
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**Fungi (optional)**

Record the types and abundances of fungi at the site using the DAFOR scale if you are able to (see wildflower section for information on DAFOR).

Please note that the best time to identify fungi in the UK is generally during autumn (September to November).

The following web links provide useful guides for fungi identification, to assist any apps that you might use. Books and field guides for fungi are also readily available.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2017/08/types-of-mushroom/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/fungi-and-lichens/>

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**Invertebrates (optional)**

Record the types and numbers of invertebrates (bugs, bees, butterflies etc) spotted at the site.

The activity of invertebrates varies throughout the year, with the optimal time for entomological surveys, especially for terrestrial insects and most other invertebrates, typically being between April and September.

The following web links provide useful guides for invertebrate identification, to assist any apps that you might use. Books and field guides for invertebrates are also readily available.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2023/10/common-uk-insect-identification/>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates>

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| **Common Name** | **Scientific Name (if known)** | **Count (number spotted on survey) - *optional*** | **Other comments (if applicable)** |
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**Birds and mammals (optional)**

Record the types and numbers of other birds and mammals spotted at the site.

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**Additional table space (if required)**

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