ACRES THREATS & PRESSURES TIP SHEET

The threats and pressures sections are very similar across all the scorecards.

There will be some differences depending on the objective or target species.

Some differences to note:

- The **peatland scorecard** contains an assessment of turbary, see the peatland tip sheet for further details.
- The tolerance for bare soil on the **chough scorecard** is higher than the other grasslands due to species specific requirements.
- Artificial drainage within the plot is an additional consideration for the **coastal scorecard**.
- Machinery operations and mowing/ grazing activities at certain times of the year is only present on the **breeding wader and corncrake scorecards**.
- Be sure that you are assessing the correct threat and pressure for the correct scorecard.

LEVEL OF DAMAGE to habitat, vegetation or archaeology

- Damaging activities are those which do, or have potential to, impact negatively on habitats, vegetation or archaeology.
- Consider both the extent and severity of the damage across the entire field including boundary features.
- Where there is more than one damaging activity the score must be ascribed to the most damaging activity.
- Record all damaging activities on the scorecard.

High: Damage across a large area *(>20% of field)* or of a serious nature if confined *(i.e. Serious damage to archaeology, dumping of invasive species/hazardous chemicals or inappropriate herbicide use).*

Moderate: Damage across a moderately sized area *(6-20% of field)* or of a moderate nature if confined *(i.e. dumping or in appropriate herbicide use).*

Low: Damage across a small area or minor in nature if confined, posing a minor threat to habitats, vegetation or archaeology.

None: No damage or damaging activities identified within the field.

EXTENT OF BARE SOIL & EROSION

- Bare soil and erosion can lead to loss of habitats, the release of carbon and a decline in soil nutrients and biodiversity.
- Bare soil is usually most concentrated on access routes, stock paths and near supplementary feeding sites.
- The cumulative cover *(proportional to the field)* is used to score the extent/severity of the issue.

High: Extensive areas of bare soil *(>10% of grazing area)* and/or bare soil extending out significantly *(>30m)* from feed sites, and/or where poaching is evident and/or significant rutting caused by vehicles/machinery.

Moderate: Moderate areas of bare soil *(5-10% of grazing area)*, mostly along regularly used routes. Areas with minor soil loss occurring at a few points. Minor rutting and soil disturbance caused by vehicle access. Bare soil may extend a short distance beyond the main feed site or water points *(<30m)*.

Low: Bare soil is restricted to regular stock paths, 'pinch' points & congregation areas *(<5% of field area).* Isolated small areas of unvegetated bare soil/poaching may be present.

RISK TO NATURAL WATERBODIES

Use the source - pathway - receptor model to identify the level of risk to waterbodies within/adjacent/downstream of the field due to flow/sediment/nutrients/pollutants.

1. Identify the SOURCE of a potential threat

2. Identify the PATHWAY in which the threat may reach the receptor

3. Identify the RECEPTOR which may be impacted

SOURCE
Sediment loss from soil / **Nutrient loss** from fertiliser or soil / **Pesticides** or **other pollutants** / **Water quantity** due to drainage (flow)

PATHWAY
Drains / Overland flow / Spring

RECEPTOR
River / Stream / Lake

The level of risk is determined by looking at:

THE SCALE OF THE THREAT
(major source or minor source)
+
THE TYPE OF PATHWAY
(direct or indirect)

High: Major source + direct pathway + sensitive receptor

Moderate: Minor source + direct pathway + sensitive receptor ***OR***
Major source + impeded pathway + sensitive receptor

Low: Minor source + impeded pathway + sensitive receptor.

None: No functional pathway.

ACRES Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme

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COVER OF NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

- Non-native species can result in local and regional losses of native plants and animals.
- Invasive species will be **problematic if widespread across a site.** This indicates an existing serious problem.
- Dense clusters of mature plants over a small area could also be considered serious for species which are likely to produce an abundance of seed and spread rapidly.

High: Abundant across a large area of the field (>20%) or a confined but serious infestation.

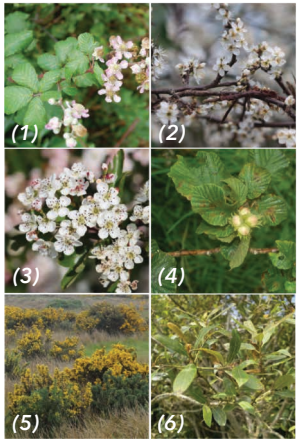
Moderate: Occur frequently across a moderate sized area (6-20%) or a confined infestation of a moderate nature.

Low: Occur across a small area (<5%) or infestation of a minor nature if confined.

None: No non-native invasive species present.

EXTENT OF SPREADING IMMATURE SCRUB

- Areas of **established and mature scrub/trees are not to be included** in this assessment except for the Peatland scorecard. For peatlands only assess the extent of established Gorse scrub for this section.
- The spread of immature scrub into otherwise open habitats is an issue that threatens the integrity of these habitats, especially grasslands.
- The main spreading scrub species include bramble *(1)*, blackthorn *(2)*, whitethorn *(3)*, hazel *(4)*, gorse *(5)* & willow *(6)*.
- The cumulative cover *(proportional to the field)* is used to score the extent/severity of the issue.



High: >25% of field has immature scrub cover. Some well-established saplings present. Field shows little evidence of management, recent grazing etc.

Moderate: 11-25% of field has scrub cover. Scrub in patches or individual stands, often with briars or brambles coming in.

Low: <10% of field has scrub cover. Small patches of immature scrub or individual seedlings. Grass clearly visible underneath/throughout any patches of immature scrub.

COVER OF BRACKEN

- Bracken is a large fern which can spread quickly.
- The density of fronds can vary greatly between areas.
- Where fronds are very dense it can result in a closed canopy which can lead to the loss of valuable habitats.
- Assess the cumulative cover and the density of patches when assessing bracken.
- Current and older aerial photographs can be useful for estimating the cover of bracken and monitoring its spread.

High: Dense stands of bracken covering >25% of the field & forming a closed canopy.

Moderate: Bracken forming dense stands on parts of the field (<25%), mostly forming a closed canopy.

Low: Bracken absent or some scattered fronds. No closed canopy. Can include some small isolated patches or larger patches on steep slopes.

1. Rhododendron,
2. Japanese Knotweed
3. Montbretia
4. Gunnera
5. Himalayan balsam
6. Cotoneaster
7. Giant Hogweed
8. Himalayan honeysuckle
9. Cherry laurel
10. Red valerian
11. Beach rose
12. New Zealand flax
13. Sea buckthorn
14. Self-sown conifer