

HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENT FOR MARSH FRITILLARY

Habitat condition monitoring for the Marsh Fritillary involves fixed point habitat recording on a structured walk across a site, from which an assessment can be made. A separate survey and assessment should be completed for each sub-site.

METHOD

- Establish a W shape (zigzag) route that will cross thoroughly and evenly the whole site/sub-site.
- Decide stopping distances along this route where recordings of habitat condition will be made e.g. every 10 or 20 paces. Aim to have at least 20 stopping points for a small site (<1 ha) more than 40 stopping points for a medium-sized site (1-5 ha) and more than 50 stopping points for a large site (>5 ha).
- Follow your route and at each stopping point measure (in cm) the vegetation height at the point you stop (measure to the top of the leaves i.e. ignore the flowers of grasses and plants). Then, using an imaginary box with sides of 1 m in front of you, record the presence of Devil's-bit Scabious in one of these abundance categories (A = 1-2 plants, B = 3-9 plants, C = 10+ plants, D = No plants). Using the same area, record (mark with an 'X') the presence or absence of these three habitat attributes: structured vegetation, low (<25 cm tall) invading scrub with a cover of >10% and stock grazing signs (e.g. tracks, poach marks, dung).

MARSH FRITILLARY HABITAT CONDITION SURVEY FORM






SITE NAME (or SUB-SITE if part of larger site)		SURVEY DATE	
OS GRID REF:		RECORDER(S)	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SITE (to include habitat type, aspect, exposure, etc.)			
NOTES ON MANAGEMENT (e.g. enclosed, recently grazed or cut, animals present, evidence of peat cutting, burning, etc.)			
OTHER COMMENTS (any observation that might be relevant to the conservation of the Marsh Fritillary at the site)			

STRUCTURED WALK RECORDS

Key for recording attributes:

1. Vegetation Height:	A = <12 cm	B = 12-25 cm	C = 25-50 cm	D = >50 cm
2. Devil's bit scabious:	A = 1-2 plants/m ²	B = 3-9 plants/m ²	C = 10+ plants/m ²	D = None
3. Structured vegetation:	Mark with an 'X' if there is presence of any steps in vegetation or ground that provide localised protection from elements at ground level. See figure below for guidance.			
4. Low invading scrub:	Tick if low invading scrub (e.g. birch, gorse, bog myrtle) <25 cm tall and >10% cover present. The word 'invading' is important here. Do not include scrub that is an integral part of the habitat (e.g. Juniper in Juniper heath systems).			
5. Evidence of stock grazing:	Tick if localised evidence present (e.g. poaching, dung, etc.)			

Example of Structured Vegetation:

				
No		Yes		
Varied vegetation height, bank or slope change, small tussocks or poaching etc.				

Stop number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
1. Vegetation Height																					
2. Devil's-bit Scabious abundance																					
<i>Mark with an 'X' if attributes below are present at each stop</i>																					
3. Structured vegetation																					
4. Low invading scrub																					
5. Evidence of stock grazing																					

Stop number	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
1. Vegetation Height																					
2. Devil's-bit Scabious abundance																					
<i>Mark with an 'X' if attributes below are present at each stop</i>																					
3. Structured vegetation																					
4. Low invading scrub																					
5. Evidence of stock grazing																					

Stop number	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	
1. Vegetation Height																					
2. Devil's-bit Scabious abundance																					
<i>Mark with an 'X' if attributes below are present at each stop</i>																					
3. Structured vegetation																					
4. Low invading scrub																					
5. Evidence of stock grazing																					