





- Floodplain Grassland Communities associated with SSSIs
- Monitoring of SSSI site condition



Selection of Grassland For Biological SSSIs



- All lowland grasslands of high botanical nature conservation value are considered "priority habitat" and can be considered for selection as SSSI
- They are broadly defined by NVC type



Communities of High Botanical Nature Conservation Value



- MG4 Alopecurus pratensis Sanguisorba officinalis grassland
- MG8 Cynosurus cristatus Caltha palustris grassland
- (MG5 Cynosurus cristatus Centaurea nigra grassland)
- MG7c Species rich Lolium perenne ley
- MG14 Carex nigra Agrostis stolonifera Senecio aquaticus grassland
- MG15 Alopecurus pratensis Poa trivialis Cardamine pratensis grassland







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Wallace H. and Prosser A. 2017 A review of the National Vegetation Classification for the Calthion group of plant communities in England and Wales. Natural England Joint Publication JP021

Communities of Lower Botanical Nature Conservation Interest



- MG6 Lolium perenne-Cynosurus cristatus grassland
- MG9 Holcus lanatus-Deschampsia cespitosa grassland
- MG10 Holcus lanatus-Juncus effusus rush-pasture
- MG11 Festuca rubra-Agrostis stolonifera-Potentilla anserina grassland
- MG13 Agrostis stolonifera-Alopecurus geniculatus grassland
- MG16 Agrostis stolonifera-Eleocharis palustris inundation grassland



Protection



- How much of this habitat is protected?
 - 69% of known resource of MG4 is SSSI.
 - 84% of known resource of MG8 is SSSI

 1,420ha of Floodplain meadow fall within Special Areas of Conservation











- Why do we assess our SSSIs?
- What are we monitoring?
- How often do we assess a site?







Grassland Attributes:

- Extent: loss, damage and natural change
- grass/herb ratio
- positive indicator species/taxa
- negative indicator species/taxa
- Sward structure: height, litter and bare ground







Condition Categories

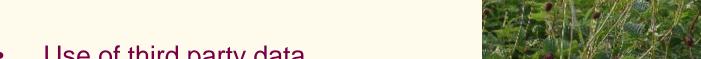
- Favourable
- Unfavourable Recovering
- Unfavourable No Change
- Unfavourable Declining
- Partially Destroyed and Destroyed



Changes to Condition Assessment

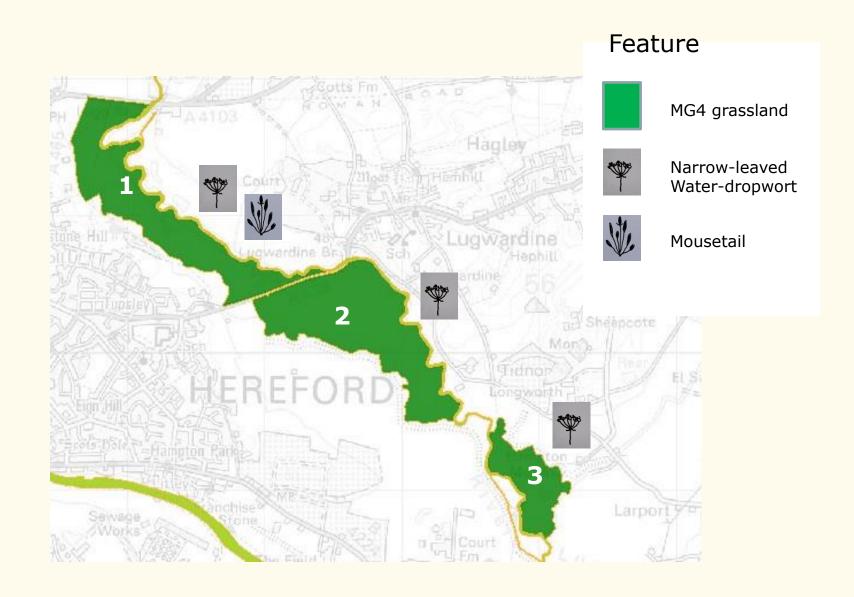


- Whole Feature Assessment approach
- Data collection
- Use of technology
- Use of third party data













Three types of assessment:

- Structured walk with pre-assigned stops
- Rapid assessment
- Random Sampling Approach



Ambition



Environmental Improvement Plan sets out interim targets for our assessment on SSSIs.

 Updating the evidence on site condition and required action to maintain or improve the condition of all 4,128 sites over the next five years

 All SSSIs will have an up-to-date condition assessment by 31 January 2028

