

## Guidance for the Management of Hedgerows

### Part 1. Species-rich and structurally diverse hedgerows

#### National Context

- Hedgerows are a priority habitat

#### General objectives

- Retain and enhance the species and structural characteristics of such habitats.
- Maintain and develop links to other areas important for wildlife, for example, other hedges, woodland, scrub and flowering grasslands, especially in the context of an ecological network.

#### Important features to maintain and develop

- The presence of mature trees and especially those with dead limbs.
- A variety of tree and shrub species and height and width of shrubs. A lack of management may also have created gaps, possibly with low shrubby growth such as rose or bramble, or a grassland/herb layer typical of the woodland edge. Such hedges form excellent habitats especially where they have spread laterally.
- Alternatively, the shrub layer may be allowed to grow to around 3-4 metres before cutting back. Less frequent cutting (for example, once every three years) can still keep the hedge dense and will allow it to flower and fruit.
- Grassy/flowery margins with woodland/woodland edge-type ground flora.
- Streams, ditches and banks add diversity creating wet/dry habitats.
- Links to other habitats.

#### Priority species' groups for which habitat is important

Birds	Mammals	Butterflies
Dunnock	Brown Hare	Wall Brown
Grey Partridge	Bat species	
Kestrel		
Linnet		
Song thrush		
Spotted flycatcher		
Starling		
Swallow		
Tree Sparrow		
Willow tit		
Yellow Hammer		

#### Other species' groups for which habitat is important

- Includes a range of other birds and bats, moths, butterflies and a wide range of other invertebrates, including those dependent upon dead wood.

## Maintaining and improving the habitat

The following activities will be of benefit:

- Plant shrubs if it is desirable to fill gaps (for stock proofing) or to increase the species diversity of the hedge.
- If there are no younger trees to replace mature trees present, implement a replacement, planting programme using native tree species. If tree species are present allow some of them to grow by not cutting them.
- Increase the width of rough grassy/flowery margins where possible (these may have been lost due to grazing pressure or herbicide use).
- Where there is a lack of holes and crevices in mature trees provide bat boxes and bird boxes, particularly open ones.
- Plant a few crab apple trees in gaps or on adjacent areas.
- Cutting of hedges helps to keep them dense although where hedges have become open at the base, for stock proofing it will be desirable to lay them. Expert advice should be sought before laying hedges.

## Species to plant

Trees	Shrubs / small trees
Ash	Blackthorn
Alder (wet areas)	Dog/Field rose
Crab apple	Dogwood
Field maple	Hawthorn
Pendunculate oak	Hazel
Wild cherry	Holly
Willows (wet areas)	

- **Wildflowers**

Woodland/woodland edge/meadow species depending upon shaded or open aspect or north/south facing. For information on the correct species to plant look for the Natural History Museum's Postcode Plant Database at [www.nhm.ac.uk](http://www.nhm.ac.uk) or write to The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD, UK.

## Extending the habitat

- The value of these areas can be increased by forming links with areas of woodland, scrub, other hedgerows, or by creating new habitats adjacent to the site. This is especially so where the ecological network will be enhanced.
- Useful complementary habitats include flowering grassland (especially with ponds and south facing aspect).
- Species rich grassland should not be planted with trees or shrubs although it may be beneficial to plant adjacent areas. Please seek expert guidance on this issue.
- Where such hedgerows link with woodland, they may be especially valuable to woodland invertebrates. Adjacent, poorly structured or over managed hedges can be significantly and easily be improved (see Part 2. Guidelines for Species Poor Hedges).

## Part 2. Guidance for the Management of Intensively cut/Species-poor Hedgerows

### General objectives

- Increase the structural and species diversity of such habitats to achieve the above.
- Maintain and develop links to areas important for wildlife, for example, other hedges, woodland, scrub and flowering grasslands.

### Important features to maintain and develop

- The presence of mature trees and especially those with dead limbs, although these are becoming increasingly scarce in intensively managed hedges.
- A shrub layer which has been allowed to flower and fruit before cutting back. Less frequent cutting (for example once every three years) will still maintain a dense hedge.
- Grassy/flowery margins with woodland/woodland edge-type ground flora.
- Streams, ditches and banks add diversity creating wet/dry habitats.
- Links to other habitats.

### Species' groups for which habitat is important

- See above. Note that Hedges cut annually and which are topped and side cut are of little value to wildlife. They offer much scope for improvement.

### Maintaining and improving the habitat

The following activities will be of benefit.

- Introduce a management regime which allows the hedge to flower and berry (by cutting back once every three years or less).
- When trimming hedges, avoid cutting back at least some trees (especially native species) to enable them to grow to maturity. This will increase the structural diversity of the hedge.
- Fill gaps in the hedge with shrubs to increase species diversity and for stock proofing. It may be desirable to lay some hedges. If so seek advice.
- If semi-mature trees are present provide bat boxes and bird boxes for hole-nesting species.
- If there are no tree species present in the hedge implement a planting programme using native tree species (including an occasional crab apple).
- Recreate or increase the width of rough grassy/flowery margins where possible. These may have been lost due to grazing pressure or herbicide use.

### Species to plant

- See Part 1: Species-rich and structurally diverse hedgerows

### Wildflowers

- See Part 1: Species-rich and structurally diverse hedgerows

### Extending the habitat

- See Part 1: Species-rich and structurally diverse hedgerows