

National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey Fact Sheet



The NVC system provides a comprehensive classification of the natural and semi-natural habitats. Habitat classifications are based on the presence and abundance of vegetation present. NVC is now regarded within the UK as the core standard for surveying habitats in detail, and provides for the following:

- a basis to monitor change within habitats, and therefore ensure that habitats are managed effectively to conserve or improve upon their wildlife value.
- a tool for measuring and classifying habitats, including those that the UK government has agreed to conserve in order to meet UK Biodiversity Action Plan objectives.

An NVC survey may be commissioned following the identification of potential habitats of interest (e.g. following on from a Phase 1 survey). NVC breaks down the habitats identified by Phase 1 into more detailed constituent parts. The results include the production of maps and inventories of plant communities present, which can then be used as baseline data for future monitoring and/or to furnish habitat management plans. This allows interpretation of NVC results into measurable targets to achieve conservation aims. Although NVC habitat descriptions differ from Phase 1 and UKBAP habitat classifications, they can be cross referred.

Methodology	Relevant Legislation
Survey Timing	<p>Attention should be given to dealing with the modification or development of an area in which protected plant species are present or the habitat type itself is deemed of UKBAP status.</p> <p>Protection of Wild Plants All wild plant species receive a level of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA). Some more rare or vulnerable species (listed on Schedule 8 of WCA) are given added protection.</p> <p>A small number of wild plants occurring within the UK are classified as European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994.</p> <p>Habitat Protection In the UK, the governmental response to the Convention on Biological Diversity is the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, which depicts the biological resources of the UK and the detailed plans to protect them. These plans are presented in the form of 1,150 Species Action Plans (SAPs), 654 Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and 190 Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).</p>
Usually May to August	
Survey Method	
Quadrats are used to collect data on the abundance and frequency of each plant species. This information is then analysed using NVC community/sub-community descriptions. Each NVC habitat type is then uniquely defined by a particular combination of frequency and abundance values.	
Useful Reference Material	
National Vegetation Classification Users Hand Book (John S Rodwell, JNCC 2006) www.jncc.gov.uk	