DORSET LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY HABITAT ASSEMBLAGES

Habitat assemblage:	Species of hedges and hedgebanks
Broad Habitat type:	Farm, town and village
S41 and Priority Habitat type:	Species-rich hedgerows
Composite species assemblages:	Breeding birds of hedgerows Mammals of hedgerows and farmland Invertebrates of species-rich hedgerows and hedgebanks Plants of species-rich hedgerows and hedgebanks Plants of old droves, green lanes and Holloways

Habitat assemblage description:	Hedgerows are important landscape, cultural and ecological features of the countryside. Dorset being a largely rural county has numerous hedgerows except on the heaths and locally on the coast where they are replaced by stone walls. Hedgerows vary in density with the Vales of the north of the west of the county being particularly important hedged landscape. These areas are 'ancient countryside' with the pattern of small irregular fields dating from the Mediaeval period. The chalk was generally enclosed later (late 18th to mid-19th Centuries) and the hedges are longer, straighter and were planted principally with hawthorn. Double-hedged droves, lanes and holloways are also covered by this guidance. From an ecological perspective hedgerows can be extremely diverse supporting species of grasslands, scrub and woodland, plus occasionally wetlands where ditches are present; many have banks and trees which add to this diversity. As well as supporting many species they can act as corridors allowing some animals and birds to move across the landscape, bats being a good example.

Other related	Species of arable farmland and field margins Species of species-rich scrub and scrub edge

Pressures and Threats	
PA04	**Removal of small landscape features for agricultural land parcel consolidation (hedges, stone walls, rushes, open ditches, springs, solitary trees, etc.)**
	The intensification of agriculture has led to larger fields by the removal of hedges and also the loss of hedgerow trees, ditches and ponds that may be found adjacent to the hedge.
PA05	**Abandonment of management/use of grasslands and other agricultural and agro-forestry systems (e.g. cessation of grazing, mowing or traditional farming)**

	The move from mixed or livestock farming to intensive arable has led to the degradation of hedgerows through neglect, sometimes resulting in the eventual loss of the hedge. Repeated hard mechanical flailing prevents most shrubs and climbers from flowering and therefore from producing berries or nuts, reducing their value for many species. If this management is continued the shrubs begin to die back underneath to produce a line of 'lollipops' and the hedgerow becomes less valuable as a viable habitat or ecological corridor.
PA07	**Intensive grazing or overgrazing by livestock**
	Very few hedgerows now can be said to stock proof unless they are fenced. If those that are not fenced are continuously subject to high levels of grazing it reduces to flower resource for invertebrates and eventually changes the hedge into a line of shrubs or trees with gaps in between. Grazing animals use tall hedges for shade and shelter, high numbers of animals can lead to poaching and localised enrichment this tends to be more pronounced when the hedge is fenced where lines of stinging nettle are often present.
PA08	**Extensive grazing or undergrazing by livestock**
	Where hedgerows are fenced on both side by wire netting there is very limited scope for grazing. This can lead homogenous vegetation with more robust and competitive plants that smother smaller herbs. Where fences are strands of barbed wire the animals can graze the hedgerow margins to some degree.
PA13	**Application of natural or synthetic fertilisers on agricultural land**
	Regular application of artificial fertilizers and slurry to land adjacent to hedges can lead to enrichment of the vegetation favouring robust species such as false oat-grass, cow parsley, hogweed and nettles at the expense of the more varied and herb-rich hedgebank flora which requires more nutrient-poor conditions. This has resulted in a more homogeneous hedgebank and road verge flora over much of our intensively farmed landscape to the detriment of invertebrates.
PA14	**Use of pesticides in agriculture**
	The use of pesticides on land adjoining hedgerows will have a negative impact on both plants and invertebrates but is especially detrimental to the latter many of which forage more widely than just along the field margin. The resulting decline in the biomass of invertebrates has had an impact on the breeding birds as their prey has been reduced. The implementation of agri-environment schemes promoting the establishment of flower-rich field margins and reducing or eliminating pesticide use along the field margins has had a positive effect on the invertebrate fauna and farmland birds.
PF01	**Conversion from other land uses to built-up areas**
	Where old hedgerows are incorporated in new developments they are difficult to manage and over time tend to become a line of mature shrubs or trees with little structural diversity and a shaded ground flora. Fly-tipping introducing non-native plants is often an issue as is disturbance to breeding birds and small mammals.
PI02	**Other invasive alien species**

	Sycamore is the most widespread non-native tree in Dorset hedgerows and can cause a dense shade which can eliminate smaller shrubs and create gaps in the hedgerow. Close to habitation garden species such as Spanish bluebell and variegated yellow archangel are increasing and have to potential to impact native species. On road verges there are several non-native plants that are having a detrimental effect on the verge and hedgebank flora with winter heliotrope now the most widespread and being spread by flailing.
PI03	**Problematic native species**
	Invasive native species such as bracken, bramble and ivy have increased generally through lack of traditional management and hedgerows being fenced on both sides restricted grazing. Both bramble and ivy are important for invertebrates, but if they become too dominant they out-compete smaller and less competitive species. stinging nettle and cleavers are generally only a problem where there is excessive enrichment (See PA07 and PA13).
PI04	**Plant and animal diseases, pathogens and pests**
	Ash is a widespread hedgerow trees in Dorset either as mature trees or old or ancient coppice stools. Ash-dieback will have an impact as the trees die and create gaps. Very few trees are being planted into hedges in the countryside in Dorset.

Micro-habitat assemblage: Breeding birds of hedgerows

Group	Species	Common Name	IUCN GB	IUCN Eng	IUCN other	Criteria	Threats / Pressures							
Birds	*Curruca communis*	Whitethroat	AMBER	n/a	n/a	**2**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Birds	*Emberiza citrinella*	Yellowhammer	RED	n/a	n/a	**1**	PA14	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Birds	*Prunella modularis*	Dunnock	AMBER	n/a	n/a	**2**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Birds	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	Common Bullfinch	AMBER	n/a	n/a	**2**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Micro-habitat assemblage: Mammals of hedgerows

Group	Species	Common Name	IUCN GB	IUCN Eng	IUCN other	Criteria	Threats / Pressures							
Mammals	*Muscardinus avellanarius*	Hazel Dormouse	VU	VU	LC	**1**	PA04	PA05	PB04	PB05	.	.	.	.
Mammals	*Erinaceus europaeus*	West European Hedgehog	VU	VU	LC	**1**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Micro-habitat assemblage: Invertebrates of species-rich hedgerows and hedgebanks

Group	Species	Common Name	IUCN GB	IUCN Eng	IUCN other	Criteria	Threats / Pressures							
Butterflies	*Satyrium w-album*	White-letter Hairstreak	VU	n/a	n/a	**1**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Butterflies	*Thecla betulae*	Brown Hairstreak	VU	n/a	n/a	**1**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Moths	*Eriogaster lanestris*	Small Eggar		n/a	n/a	**5**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Moths	*Gastropacha quercifolia*	Lappet	EN	n/a	n/a	**1**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Moths	*Pareulype berberata*	Barberry Carpet	EN	n/a	n/a	**1**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Moths	*Phaulernis dentella*	Dusky Ridge-back; Scale-tooth Lance-wing		n/a	n/a	**4**	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Micro-habitat assemblage: Plants of species-rich hedgerows and hedgebanks

Group	Species	Common Name	IUCN GB	IUCN Eng	IUCN other	Criteria	Threats / Pressures							
Plants	*Fallopia dumetorum*	Copse-bindweed	VU	VU	n/a	**1**	PA05	PK04	.	.	.	.	.	.
Plants	*Pulmonaria longifolia*	Narrow-leaved Lungwort	LC	LC	n/a	**3**	PB04	PI03	PK04	.	.	.	.	.