



SURVEY GUIDANCE NOTES

About the Survey

The Life on the Verge survey is designed to discover roadsides that are important for wildlife. Conservation work can then be targeted at those verges of greatest wildlife interest or potential. Surveys can be carried out at a standard or an advanced level.

Verges on both sides of a road section should be treated separately. If you wish to survey both verges use a separate survey form for each side.

The survey results will help us to pin-point places of value. The standard survey does not require advanced plant identification skills. It only involves the recording of a relatively small number of selected species, all of which are illustrated and described in the FSC Grassland plants I guide.

To do a standard survey:

- Complete sections 1-7 of the form.
- For either survey if you wish to record other species such as butterflies or birds, please use the 'Additional Species' section 6, or send us an attached sheet.

To do an advanced survey:

- Complete sections 1-8.
- You may wish to use a wildflower identification book.
- If you are familiar with BSBI recording forms, we can accept these.

The Survey

Before you start:

Highways Safety - In order to ensure that all volunteers are as safe as possible while working beside the highway, Devon County Council has produced a free eLearning module on Highways Safety Training, it is essential that all volunteers working on roadside verges carryout this training.

You first need to register your name and email address with hwaymain@devon.gov.uk once they reply to you, login to the eLearning site at www.devon.learningpool.com and search for the course ' Highways Safety Awareness' as 'Self Enrolment'.

We would urge all volunteers to complete this training, rest assured it doesn't take long to complete and it will help to keep you and those around you as safe as possible on our roads.



A Summary of safety guidance

- **DO NOT survey where you are unable to keep a minimum distance of 1.2m (for roads >40mph) or 0.5m (for roads <40mph) from the edge of the carriageway.**
- Where a verge is generally of sufficient width with occasional thinning, cease surveying while navigating narrow sections.
- (One convenient method to confirm this distance is to take a small number of pre-measured garden canes with you to help determine safe working areas before surveying commences.)
- A high visibility vest must be worn whilst carrying out the survey.
- Confirm the start and end points of your survey using the map section of the survey form and a photograph (preferably georeferenced) where necessary.
- If lone working, ensure someone knows where you are and when you are due to return.
- Take a charged mobile phone and basic first aid kit with you.

During the Survey:

- Please be safe at all times. See the advice in the **‘Health and Safety’ section overleaf.**
- Avoid **parking** on the grass verge or near a junction and do not block a gate or field entrance unless you have the landowner’s permission or will remain within sight of the vehicle at all times to avoid causing an obstruction.

If part of the survey section appears to include private land, please always ask the landowner for their permission if you wish to survey on private property.

- You may wish to mark anything of interest on your survey form sketch map.
- Please take **photographs** of your verge if possible. It is worth showing things such as any damage, or views along the roadside to show good stands of wild flowers or dense scrub. These should be posted or emailed with your completed survey form.

Please be safe at all times and survey only if you are comfortable you can do so safely.

After the survey:

Please return the completed survey forms with any annotated maps and photographs to:

[Devon Biodiversity Records Centre](#)

email: **DBRC@dbrc.org.uk**.



Survey Health and Safety

By completing the survey form you are confirming that you have read and understood the health and safety guidelines listed below and have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure your personal safety and the safety of others.

Hazard/risk	Safety Precautions
Lone Working and working in Remote Areas	Take a mobile phone. If you plan to survey alone, let someone know where you are going and report back at the end of the survey.
Parking	When parking, do not obstruct the carriageway or any access points and avoid any sharp bends or junctions.
Carriageway/Verge Hazards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing Traffic • Bends in the road • Hidden dips in the road • Uneven ground • Deep dykes • Steep slopes and banks • Maintenance work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear high visibility clothing (Class 3) at all times whilst on the verge and only survey in daylight and good weather. (A high visibility vest is available on request from the Project Officer who can post this to you.) • Avoid working in large groups on verges of busy roads. It can be distracting for drivers to see lots of people in high visibility clothing • Do not walk in the road to carry out the survey (please contact the Project Coordinator should you wish to survey a narrow verge that does not enable you to maintain the minimum distance from the carriageway) • Whilst surveying keep a minimum distance of 1.2m (for roads >40mph) or 0.5m (for roads <40mph) from the edge of the carriageway. • <u>Please take extra care if you need to cross thin sections of verge to continue the survey.</u> • <u>Where the verge makes it necessary to walk in the carriageway, only do so during times of adequate visibility and low traffic flows where your assessment of risk indicates it is acceptable to do so.</u> • When walking along the carriageway adhere to the Highway Code; typically walking on the right-hand-side to face on-coming traffic, but adapting your road position as necessary to factor in bends and other situations. • Be alert to other road users and their needs. • Be especially careful on busy roads, especially A-roads. • Wear footwear with good ankle support and a good outdoor grip. • Take special care when working adjacent to deep water or steep slopes. • Take special care if you see any maintenance activity and decide whether it is safe for you to continue the survey. • Flying debris from moving machinery and noise can be particularly hazardous. Keep at least 15 m from any vegetation strimming and wait for the operator to see you and stop before getting any nearer. • Avoid working alongside roads that have been recently surfaced (with loose chippings). • Seek specific advice from the Project Coordinator where crossings of major high-speed (>50mph) roads, such as key 'A' roads and dual carriageways is deemed necessary where traffic counts are in excess of 20 cars per minute. When crossing any road, volunteers are called upon to use their judgement and risk assess the situation to ensure the safety of themselves and others.

<p>Animals and Bites/Stings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse riders • Dog walkers • Weil's disease (contaminated water) • Ticks (Lyme's disease) 	<p>Be careful of animals and considerate to their needs. If working near water wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking. Bites/Stings – seek medical advice. Wear long trousers. Use insect repellent. Remove any ticks as soon as possible as recommended by your GP.</p>
<p>Fly Tipping</p>	<p>Do not move or touch waste and beware of any sharp objects such as broken bottles, wire or syringes.</p>
<p>Proximity to railway crossings</p>	<p>Do not enter onto railway property to carry out survey work.</p>
<p>Proximity to active airfield</p>	<p>Do not be distracted by noise.</p>
<p>Weather conditions: Ensure visibility is good. Avoid working in foggy conditions or gusty winds.</p> <p>Sun exposure – poor shade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun burn/heat stroke • Dehydration 	<p>Take plenty of drinking water Wear clothing suited to the weather conditions. Keep covered and wear a sun hat. Use sunblock.</p>
<p>Scratches/cuts/stings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbed wire • Blackthorn/hawthorn/bramble • Burns: • Giant hogweed/wild parsnip/spurge • Hemlock waterdropwort • Allergens: • Pollens <p>Poisonous plants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ragwort 	<p>Carry a small first aid kit in the car. Take medications with you if suffering from any allergens. Avoid touching poisonous plants such as ragwort. Keep tetanus jabs up to date.</p>

Please Note: Please avoid picking and trampling plants. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to pick wild plants listed in Schedule 8 and, without the owner's permission, to uproot any wild plant.

