



UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions

Hedgerows

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Hedgerows

The definition of this priority habitat has been amended from the pre-existing Habitat Action Plan for ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows (<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110303150113/http://www.ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=7>).

A hedgerow is defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide, and where any gaps between the trees or shrub species are less than 20m wide (Bickmore, 2002). Any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow is considered to be part of the hedgerow habitat, as is the herbaceous vegetation within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow. All hedgerows consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species are covered by this priority habitat, where each UK country can define the list of woody species native to their respective country. Climbers such as honeysuckle and bramble are recognised as integral to many hedgerows, however they require other woody plants to be present to form a distinct woody boundary feature, as such they are not included in the definition of woody species. The definition is limited to boundary lines of trees or shrubs, and excludes banks or walls without woody shrubs on top of them.

Based on an analysis of Countryside Survey data, using the threshold of at least 80% cover of any UK native woody species, it is estimated that 84% of countryside hedgerows in GB would be included.

References

Bickmore, C.J. (2002) *Hedgerow survey handbook: a standard procedure for local surveys in the UK*. London, DEFRA.