



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# **Biodiversity Management Practices Self-Assessment Tool: Linear Habitats**



# Teagasc

## Biodiversity Management Practices

### Self- Assessment Tool: Linear Habitats

Tick if Yes

#### Hedge Management

1. Is the height of all your internal hedges at least 1.5m above ground level (or above hedge bank if present)?
2. Is there a flowering thorn tree\* in every hedge?

#### Layout of Farming Platform

3. Is your average field size\*\* less than 5 ha?

#### Field Margin Management

4. Do you always retain at least 1.5m uncultivated margins when cultivating?
5. Do you avoid spraying within your field margins (except for spot spraying noxious weeds)?

#### Watercourse Management

6. Are all watercourse banks on your farm fenced?
7. Is there a fenced margin over 1.5m on all watercourses?
8. Do you prevent livestock drinking access to all watercourses?

What is your score? (TOTAL number of Ticks)

**Target Score = 8**

#### \*Flowering thorn tree

- ▶ Escaped hedges (untopped / treelines) naturally contain flowering thorn trees
- ▶ Topped hedges may contain individual flowering thorn saplings or trees **IF** retained

#### \*\*Average field size:

- ▶ Owned land ..... ha/No of fields (surrounded by permanent biodiverse boundaries) ..... = ..... ha
- ▶ Biodiverse boundaries include hedges, watercourses, vegetated margins, etc – Not wire fences

\*\*\* **Noxious weeds:** Ragwort, dock, thistle, wild oat, male wild hop and common barberry



# Why?

# Hedges

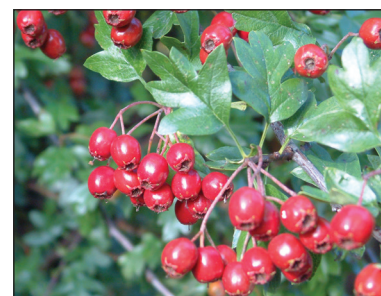
## 1 Hedge Height

Hedges over 1.5 m in height provides suitable nest sites for birds with cover above and below their nests



## 2 Thorn Trees in Hedges

Thorn trees provide flowers for bees and fruit for birds and small mammals. New thorn saplings provide song-posts and thorn trees for the future



# Layout of Farming Platform

## 3 Average Field Size

Farmed landscapes with an average field size of less than 5 ha provide networks for nature and corridors of movement for birds, bats, bees and butterflies to move through the countryside





# Why? Field Margins

## 4 Uncultivated Field Margins

- ▶ Allow native wildflowers and grasses to grow providing habitat for biodiversity



## 5 Unsprayed Field Margins

- ▶ Allow native wildflowers and grasses to grow providing habitat for biodiversity



# Watercourses

## 6 Fenced Watercourse Banks

- ▶ Prevent bank erosion and siltation, maintaining the bank habitat



## 7 Watercourse Margins

- ▶ Provide further protection for watercourses and allows space for native wildflowers and grasses to grow, providing habitat for biodiversity



## 8 Absence of Drinking Access

- ▶ Prevents siltation of watercourses, and protects the habitat for instream biodiversity

