



RIVER HABITAT SURVEY

River Habitat Survey certification and application

The River Habitat Survey (RHS) is a standard methodology for recording hydromorphological features of importance to wildlife. The EU-Water Framework Directive (WFD) compliant methodology is designed to provide surveyors and organisations with a way of consistently recording habitat and geomorphological features such as riffles, pools, erosion, deposition, woody debris, fine sediment, as well as pressures (engineering, land use) and management. Altogether, there are more than 200 features recorded in a single 500m survey.



The RHS can be carried out by non-experts in about one hour along a 500m reach. A free database is available for inputting data and calculating indices. The RHS has been applied since 1994 in the UK and abroad. It has been adopted as a standard methodology for the WFD in Spain, Portugal, Poland and other European countries. It has been applied towards the WFD, monitoring, river restoration, site and catchment assessment, diffuse pollution risk assessment etc.



The River Restoration Centre (RRC) offers a 4-day Certification course in RHS where surveyors will be introduced to the basics of hydromorphology through a combination of fieldwork and presentations. The certification will be delivered following a written and field test that will be valid for 3 years, at which point, surveyors will be asked to attend a short refresher course. The Certification uses the same material and adopts the same standards as the Environment Agency (EA) accreditation scheme. Please note that the EA does not endorse external organisations or scheme and, therefore, the RHS

Certification is not valid for carrying out surveys for the EA.

The training course will feature presentations and discussions on recent and past applications towards hydromorphological and WFD assessments, river restoration planning and monitoring, habitat assessment and any other subject of interest to participants. The RHS software for data input and analysis will be demonstrated using existing applications and case studies.

There is no pre-requisite or prior knowledge or competency required for attending the certification course. Participants are asked to read and learn definitions in the RHS manual before attending the course. The course will involve a lot of fieldwork that will be performed in pairs to practice aspects of the survey. Participants will be taken to a wide range of river types so that they can familiarise themselves with a diversity of river morphology and features.

The image shows two screenshots from the River Habitat Survey software. The left screenshot is the 'FIELD SURVEY DETAILS' form, which includes fields for 'Project Name', 'Site Name', 'Date', 'Surveyor Name', and 'Site Location'. The right screenshot is the 'RHS Data Input Form', which includes a 'Calculate HQA' button and a 'Perform Contrast Analysis' button. Below these is a bar chart titled 'Example assessment of a site with an HQA=65'. The chart shows the HQA for different river types: 'River' (10), 'Stream' (15), 'Brook' (20), 'Creek' (25), 'Ditch' (10), 'Canal' (5), and 'Lough' (5). The total HQA is 65.

For more information on the RHS, go to www.riverhabitatsurvey.org

