

**Appendix J. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wildlife Working Lands**

# IOWA WILDLIFE WORKING LANDS HABITAT EVALUATION

I. This habitat evaluation will be used to decide if the quality criterion for wildlife is being met under either the current or planned future management for various land uses. It is used to document if wildlife component of an RMS plan is being met or to document if an area meets the Upland Wildlife Habitat Management Standard (645).

It is to be completed by NRCS staff or by partner agencies staff as part of developing a farm plan. It is not intended for landowner self-certification for any USDA programs.

II. This evaluation system applies to the following land uses:

A. Cropland

B. Grasslands (Pasture, Permanent or Rotational Hayland, and Idle Grasslands)

C. Woodland (Managed Timber Stands and Wildlife/Unmanaged Woodland)

D. Riverine – Use SVAP to measure impacts to streams on producer's property

III. Deciding if quality criteria is met:

**When wildlife is not a primary concern for planning, then the minimum Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) score is 0.50 to meet the quality criterion for wildlife for any land use(s) on a farm or fields within a tract.**

**Where wildlife is a primary concern for a farm or field(s) within a tract, then the minimum HSI is a 0.75.**

*See appendix for some general discussion of Wildlife needs that this appraisal is designed to address.*

# GRASSLAND HABITAT - Permanent Pastureland

PRODUCER: NA DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FARM #: \_\_\_\_\_ TRACT #: \_\_\_\_\_ Field #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Composition of Stand:

(Choose one that reflects **dominant** condition of fields being evaluated. **NOTE:** Species must be a substantial component of whole field stand, not just a few scattered plants to be counted below.)

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Planned</u>
a. Mixed native grasses and legumes ( > 5 species total)	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Mixed native and introduced grasses with legumes <b>OR</b> mixed introduced grasses and legumes ( > 5 species total for either)	8 <input type="checkbox"/>	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Mixed native grasses w/o legumes ( > 3 species total) <b>OR</b> mixed introduced grasses with legumes ( > 3 species)	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Mixed introduced grasses w/o legumes ( ≥ 3 species)	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Monoculture of one species of native or introduced grasses	1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. None of the above <b>OR</b> Pasture is composed of mostly fescue or canary grass (> 65% of stand)	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>

## 2. Vegetative Height on May 1:

(Choose one that reflects **dominant** condition of fields being evaluated)

a. Predominant stand height is > 12 inches	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Predominant stand height is 8 - 12 inches	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Predominant stand height is 4 – 8 inches	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Predominant stand height is < 4 inches	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>

## 3. Stand Management:

(Choose one that reflects **dominant** condition of fields being evaluated)

a. Rotational grazing, light to moderate use (average forage height > 6" CSG or > 10" WSG during growing season)	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Continuous grazing with light to moderate use (average forage height > 6" CSG or > 10" WSG during growing season)	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Rotational grazing, moderate to heavy use (average forage height 3 – 6" CSG or 6-10" WSG during growing season)	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Rotational grazing, heavy use (average forage height < 3" CSG or < 6" WSG during growing season)	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Continuous grazing with heavy use (average forage height < 3" CSG or < 6" WSG during growing season)	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>

**Choose either 4A or 4B as appropriate. If have both pasture types need to do two sheets**

**4A. Field Size: (*upland pastures only*)**

(Choose one that reflects dominant condition of fields being evaluated)

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Planned</u>
a. More than 80 acres	10 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. 40 to 80 acres	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. 20 to 40 acres	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. 10 to 20 acres	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Less than 10 acres	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

**4B. Field Configuration (*riparian pastures only*):**

(Choose one that reflects dominant condition of fields being evaluated)

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Planned</u>
a. Average width of pasture > 300 feet	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Average width of pasture > 200 - 300 feet	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Average width of pasture > 100 to 200 feet	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Average width of pasture > 50 to 100 feet	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Average width of pasture < 50 feet	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Water:**

(Choose one that reflects dominant condition of fields being evaluated)

a. Livestock are watered without having direct water contact access to any ponds or streams as applicable to site	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Livestock access to ponds or streams is through a single controlled access point to minimize water quality degradation from livestock waste and sediment	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Livestock have free access to water bodies or streams	0 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0 <input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Proximity to Other Cover Types:**

(Choose one that reflects dominant condition of fields being evaluated.  
Distances are from field edges)

- |  |    |                                     |    |                          |
|--|----|-------------------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| a. Non-fall tilled cropland, food plot ( ≥ 1acre) or ungrazed woodland ( > 5acres) adjacent  | 10 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Non-fall tilled cropland, food plot ( ≥ 1acre) or ungrazed woodland ( > 5acres) < 660 feet  | 7  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 7  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Non-fall tilled cropland, food plot ( ≥ 1acre) or ungrazed woodland ( > 5acres) < 1320 feet <b>OR</b> cropland > 50% residue adjacent   | 5  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 5  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Non-fall tilled cropland, food plot ( ≥ 1acre) or ungrazed woodland ( > 5acres) < 2640 feet <b>OR</b> cropland > 50% residue < 660 feet | 2  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 2  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. None of the above   | 0  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | 0  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Existing                      Planned

**Total Points from 1- 6**

29	0
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**HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX:**

Total Possible Points: 60

To derive HSI, divide total points by 60

**Initial HSI** -----> 0.48      0.00

**Bonus Points:**

*Add 0.1 to HSI value if any of the following apply to the evaluated fields (max 0.1):*

- \*Using Integrated Pest Management
- \*Following a Prescribed Grazing Plan that meets 528 Standard

**Final HSI:** -----> 0.48     

*If wildlife is secondary concern, then the Minimum Wildlife HSI for Pastureland HSI ≥ 0.5*

**Meets Planning Criterion?**

No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>