

HBAT

Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool



With financial support from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) as part of the Canada Nature Fund program, the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGGA) is leading a project to adapt and customize online habitat and biodiversity tools for use in provinces across the agricultural regions of Canada. The project began in 2020 and is its sixth, and final, year.

About the HBAT

Originally developed in Alberta, the Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool (HBAT) is a source of biodiversity conservation information and supporting resources for those interested in habitat stewardship on the land they own or manage. It is specifically designed as an extension and awareness tool and is based on the potential for species to occur in an area.

It is meant to help land managers gain an understanding of important habitats and biodiversity on their land and the stewardship opportunities they could implement to sustain them. Growers and extension specialists can use the tool to identify and prioritize tailored stewardship opportunities that can help maintain or improve wild species habitat and sustainability of the agricultural operation.

The tool is tailored to the farm context with respect to geographical location, the types of habitats that are present on the land and the land use. It avoids releasing sensitive information about actual species-at-risk observations. If producers are interested in more details, the tool provides contact information for provincial experts from collaborating conservation organizations and government agencies.

Users have the ability to integrate the HBAT output with other tools, knowledge and technology in an adaptive management framework associated with biodiversity, conservation and sustainable agriculture, such as the environmental farm plan (EFP). It also provides them with the ability to validate management practices that may already be in place that are favourable to the biodiversity and the environment.



Tool Features

The HBAT has a number of valuable features.

- ➔ It is customizable to a user's interests, values and farm objectives: users can filter the information based on the groups of species they are interested in or the land uses they are looking at, or they can sort it based on the anticipated impact on species or those opportunities that may be easier to implement.
- ➔ It provides a prioritized farm-specific list of stewardship opportunities that can benefit multiple species and more general options that benefit the broader ecosystem.
- ➔ It generates a PDF report that users can print as well as save and retrieve at a later time.

The HBAT Report!

The report provides:

- ➔ a summary of the habitat selection made and the customization applied by the user, the information needed to understand the report and the tool's output with stewardship opportunities in a concise format
- ➔ a detailed version in the appendix
- ➔ additional information about the potential species present
- ➔ additional resources to help users understand the stewardship opportunities
- ➔ contacts for implementation, support and potential funding

Stewardship Opportunities:

Filter by Habitat or Land Use

= All Habitats & Land Uses

- Cropland (non-hay)
- Farmstead
- Grassland (Native)
- Grassland (Tame: non-hay)
- Hayland
- Riparian Areas
- Roads or Trails
- Rocky Areas
- Trees or Tall Shrubs
- Water and Wetlands

Filter by Species Group

= All Species Groups

- Amphibians
- Birds
- Fishes
- Insects
- Mammals
- Reptiles
- Plants
- Mollusks
- Unique ecosystems

Accessing The Tool

The province-specific tools are delivered as an online module. They are available through a secure online platform on the CFGA website. Agricultural producers or an appointed extension specialist can register for free in their province and access the tool with their username and password to ensure privacy.



The tool is currently set up so only the registered user or an appointed extension specialist can see sensitive information such as land location and habitat details entered. This ensures that farmer's private data is secured.

More Info

The project is in its sixth, and final, year. Once complete, the standardized tools will be available in nine provinces, providing increased consistency of messaging across Canada. Tools are now available for Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. The CFGA will launch tools for British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Québec in the winter of 2025.

