



Health and Safety Risk Assessment

NE Scotland Bryophyte Group 2023-4 local meetings.

It is the policy of the BBS to do all that is reasonably possible to ensure the safety of members and guests attending meetings and of third parties who might be affected by BBS activities. This Health and Safety document outlines the main risks that might be encountered during field meetings and actions that should be taken to reduce and avoid these risks. Whilst every care has been taken to identify all potential significant risks, this is a guidance document only and you should be aware that you may encounter unexpected risks that are not outlined below. Please ensure that you have read the BBS Safety Code (attached at the end of this document) and are aware of the actions you should take to be responsible for your own safety. It is the duty of all participants to practice extreme care and common sense and not to take risks. Please read the following risk assessment and safe working practices carefully. If any points are unclear then seek clarification from the meeting leader.

Contact details in emergency:

Lyn Jones (email: joneshamlyn@gmail.com, mobile: 07749 880650)

Site specific risks:

River Isla at Reekie Linn (April 4th, 2024).

This visit includes exploration of a steep river gorge with a rapidly flowing river and nearby woodland which means that the main risks involve slips and falls. Good tough footwear for clambering over wet rocks and muddy banks will be essential and extreme care will be needed at all times to avoid falls or losing one's footing near the river. Attendees will need to have suitable warm and waterproof clothing and footwear.



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Hazard	Control measures	Risk without control measure		Risk with control measure	
		Severity of hazard	Likelihood of hazard occurring	Severity of hazard	Likelihood of hazard occurring
Contracting Covid-19 infection from other people while on field meeting.	Do not attend the meeting if you feel unwell. Follow current social distancing measures in place for your area (from the government website). Use alcohol-based hand-gel/antiseptic wipes regularly and especially before meals and consider wearing a face covering. Do not huddle around bryophytes or touch/share other participant's samples or field equipment.	High	Medium	High	Low
Injury or death due to collision with vehicles when crossing roads or walking on pavements/verges	Avoid looking at bryophytes on verge edges; take care when crossing roads. Verbal warnings to be given.	High	Low	High	Low
Accident or injury from trips, slips and falls due to holes, hidden obstacles, wet ground, unstable buildings etc.	Use walking aid if needed. Warnings of site specific risks to be given.	High	Medium	High	Low
Minor injuries through contact with vegetation or man-made objects	Carry First Aid kit to attend to minor injuries.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Bites, stings and cuts from insects, etc.	Use insect repellent if required.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Lyme Disease	Check and remove any ticks on clothes or body after meeting. If symptoms occur indicative of Lyme Disease seek medical advice (see below). Verbal warning to be given to any participant not familiar with Lyme Disease.	High	Low	High	Low



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		Severity of hazard	Likelihood of hazard occurring	Severity of hazard	Likelihood of hazard occurring
Leptospirosis (Weil's disease), Cryptosporidium and other diseases caused by indirect contact with rats, cattle, etc.	Wash hands before eating, particularly if handling mosses growing on riverbanks and pond margins. Use antiseptic gel.	High	Low	Medium	Low
Discomfort or infection through direct or indirect contact with dog faeces.	Be careful when searching for bryophytes around car parks and next to well used footpaths. Wash hands and/or use antiseptic gel after handling bryophytes.	High	Low		
Abuse or assault from members of the public	Be polite to members of the public and take the opportunity to explain the work of BBS members.	High	Low	High	Low
Injury (and death) from attack by wild, feral or domestic animals, including livestock	Do not approach potentially dangerous animals. Take advice from landowner on whether any livestock need to be avoided.	High	Low	Medium	Low
Losing direction (may exacerbate other hazards)	Stay within sight and earshot of other members of the group at all times. Let leader know if you intend to be out of sight or will depart early. If you find yourself lost stay where you are, attempt to contact the leader by mobile phone and wait to be found (or return to meeting point if you are sure of the route back).	Medium	Medium	Low	Low



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		Severity of hazard	Likelihood of hazard occurring	Severity of hazard	Likelihood of hazard occurring
Hypothermia due to immersion in cold water or drowning	Be careful when inspecting pond margins and stream banks, especially in wet weather when ground conditions are slippery. Maintain balance and a firm footing at all times. Do not attempt to inspect steep banks of ponds or streams where there is deep water and a risk of falling in. Do not inspect streamsides out of sight or earshot of other members of the group.	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Illness or discomfort due to exposure to wind, rain or other adverse weather conditions	Be prepared for all types of weather when travelling to meetings. Wear appropriate clothing during meetings.	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Conditions related to extreme weather conditions (sunburn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, injury or death from wind-blown trees and limbs, etc.)	Check weather forecast prior to meeting. Check email / phones for messages as meetings may be cancelled or postponed in cases of extreme weather.	Medium	Medium	Medium to high	Low
Fatigue	Know your own limitations. Do not attend meetings that you know will be too long / arduous for you. Be prepared to leave the meeting early if necessary, ensuring that you know the way back and let the leader know when you leave.	Medium	Medium	Low	Low



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Safe working practices

Recommended equipment:

- First aid kit
- Antiseptic wipes or gel
- Mobile phone (fully charged)
- Waterproof clothing
- Warm clothing
- Drinking water
- Suitable footwear with correct level of support for terrain
- Survival bag (when working in exposed upland areas)

Pre-site checks:

- Check with the leader, local meetings secretary and/or Health and Safety officer before visiting site as to any specific hazards at the site.
- Ensure that you are aware of any parking restrictions at the site you are visiting.
- Ensure that your mobile phone is in working order and that a signal can be received at the site.
- Ensure you have suitable physical fitness for the site .
- Tetanus vaccination should be up to date.
- Ensure you are familiar with prevention measures and symptoms of Leptospirosis (Weil's disease), Lyme disease and Cryptosporidium.
- Check weather forecasts, especially when visiting exposed sites.
- Make sure the group you are working with are aware of any health issues/ allergies that you may suffer from.

Working in or near water:

- Do not enter fast flowing or deep water. If you are unsure of water conditions, do not enter the waterbody.
- Do not work alone when in and around water.
- Carry compass and map and/or GPS device and know how to use them.
- Choose a route to avoid crossing waterbodies where possible.
- Assess whether access points to water are safe to use. Check bank condition and slope and any additional hazards.
- Assess bank conditions and determine whether safety line required or if not safe to access water.
- Check water depth (e.g. using depth gauge, pole or plumb line).
- Check water flow and determine whether safe to enter water.
- Check substrate in waterbody and determine whether safe to enter water and whether safety line required.
- Ensure Personal Floatation Device is used where there is a risk of falling into water.
- Take care on slippery rocks at the waterbody edge or submerged within the waterbody (may not be visible from surface).
- Take care when using electrical appliances (such as mobile phones) when working within water. Ideally use a waterproof casing for any electrical devices.
- Do not get cold whilst working in water – take breaks to warm up or swap with a colleague.
- Always face upstream in rivers.
- Take care to avoid submerged structures and debris.

Personal hygiene

- Wash hands, especially before eating or drinking, using antiseptic wipes or hand gel.



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- Consider wearing gloves if working in areas where there may be a high risk of contracting diseases such as Leptospirosis or Cryptosporidium e.g. area with rat urine or stagnant water.
- Cover any open cuts or grazes with a waterproof dressing or gloves.
- Check body carefully for ticks the night following fieldwork. Remove ticks immediately using a tick removing tool or tweezers. Ensure that all of the tick is removed.

Post-site visit:

- If symptoms of Leptospirosis (e.g. temperature of or above 38C, severe joint pain - particularly in calf muscles, headache and chills) develop then seek medical advice.
- If symptoms of Lyme disease (e.g. rash around tick bite site, fatigue, chills, fever, headache, aching muscles and joints, stiff neck, swollen glands) develop then seek medical advice.
- If symptoms of Cryptosporidium (e.g. gastrointestinal illness, diarrhoea) develop then seek medical advice.

This is an indication of symptoms only; symptoms may take as long as 30 days to develop and vary between patients. Participants must be familiar with the possible symptoms of these diseases and know when to seek medical advice.