

Grassland Key

Please refer to the Habitat Guides for more information and definitions of the terms used within the key.

Indicator species help to separate grasslands from one another and other habitats.

See **Moorland Key**

Heather *Calluna/Erica* sp. present throughout

Mostly species rich (>5 species in 2x2m quadrat)

Jointed rushes or Purple Moor-grass present throughout **and/or** too wet to walk without wellies

Too wet to walk without wellies and/or **lacking** 2 or more PMG **core indicators**

2 or more CG **core indicators** present

On floodplain

Can the land be favourably managed as per potential grassland type i.e. PMG, CG, AG, LM or breeding wader. **If the land is within a N2K and/or ASSI it should be managed as a potential grassland habitat.**

Allocate appropriate grassland type

Non- priority habitat

CFPG: Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh

Low lying and/or regularly flooded, species poor grasslands, modified fens and fringing swamps that occur adjacent to lakes inland and rivers (for coastal examples see Coastal Key). This habitat is important to breeding and wintering waders, and winter wildfowl. Note that associated LM, PMG and Fen can all occur in floodplain situations but only species poor communities are included within this habitat type.

LM: Lowland meadow

Most LM species are found in other grassland habitats, and therefore LM is best identified by eliminating other possibilities first. However, a couple of uncommon species are faithful to LM. These are:

Platanthera chloranthera
Ophioglossum vulgatum

As these are uncommon you should not expect to locate them, but if present they will help to confirm LM. Other species that can occur in other habitats but are especially prominent in LM include *Centaurea nigra*, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, *Leontodon* sp., *Lotus corniculatus*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Rhinanthus minor* and *Trifolium pratense*.

Fen or swamp

Usually wetter than PMG, although may be dry underfoot when in poor condition or after prolonged dry weather. If Sharp Flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus* is abundant to dominant throughout may be the NVC M23a PMG variant (see PMG habitat guide).

Fens encompass a wide range of plant communities, but in those likely to be confused with PMG the following species help to confirm as fen: *Carex curta*, *Carex diandra*, *Carex disticha*, *Carex rostrata*, *Equisetum fluviatile*, *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Pedicularis palustris*, *Potamogeton* spp. and *Potentilla palustris*.



PMG: Purple moor grass and rush pasture

PMG includes two wet grassland types that feature Sharp Flowered Rush *J. acutiflorus* (or sometimes *J. articulatus* for M23a) throughout. Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* can be especially prominent in PMG. Core indicators are applicable to NVC M24 type PMG only.
Cirsium dissectum,
Dactylorhiza maculata,
Erica sp., *Nardus stricta*,
Pedicularis sylvatica and
Platanthera bifolia



CG: Calcareous grassland

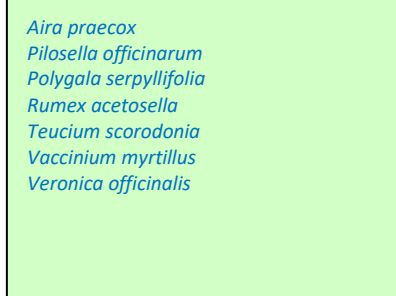
CG occurs on shallow soils over calcareous bedrock.
Anthyllis vulneraria (inland sites only),
Campanula rotundifolia,
Koeleria macrantha,
Linum catharticum,
Pilosella officinarum,
Polygala vulgaris,
Sesleria albicans and
Thymus polytrichus



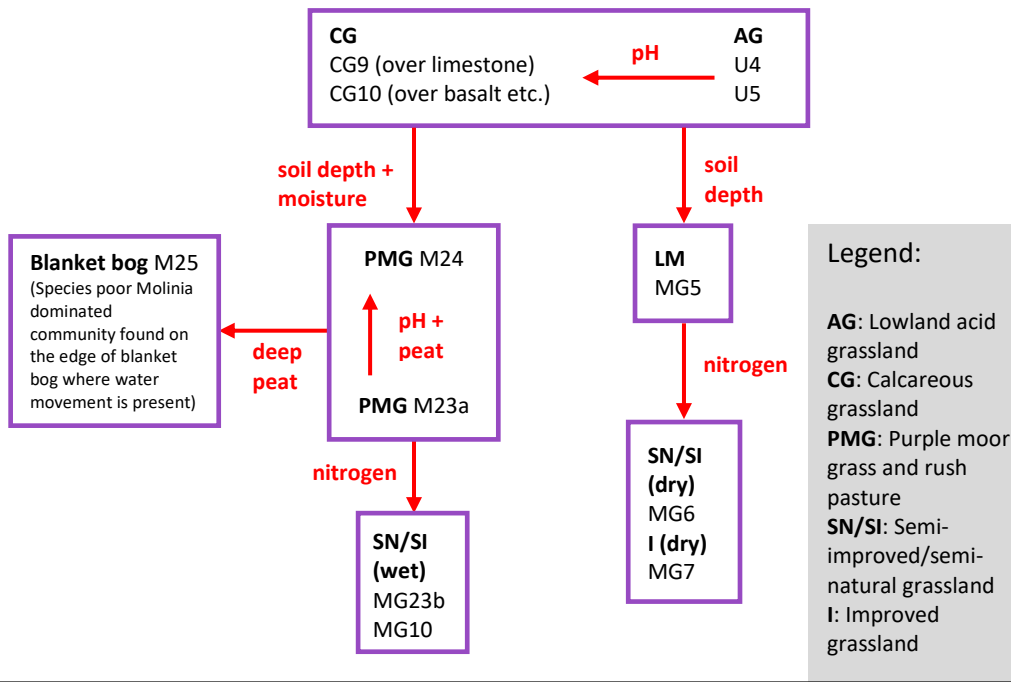
AG: Lowland dry acid grassland

AG normally occurs patchily around rocky outcrops (often in association with heathland); if present is likely to be a minor component of the field unit.

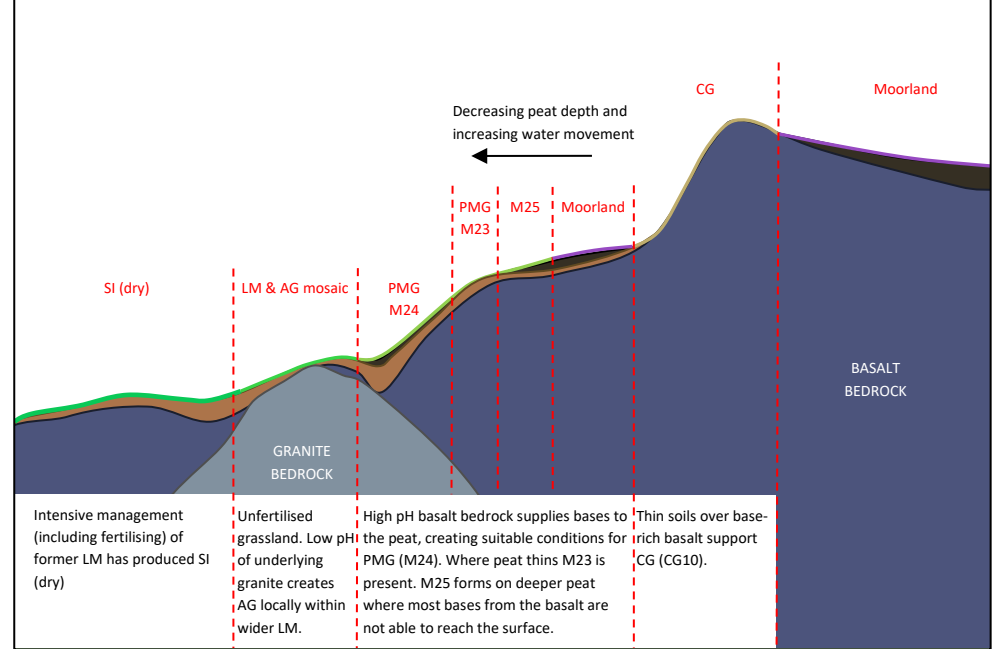
Aira praecox
Pilosella officinarum
Polygala serpyllifolia
Rumex acetosella
Teucrium scorodonia
Vaccinium myrtillus
Veronica officinalis



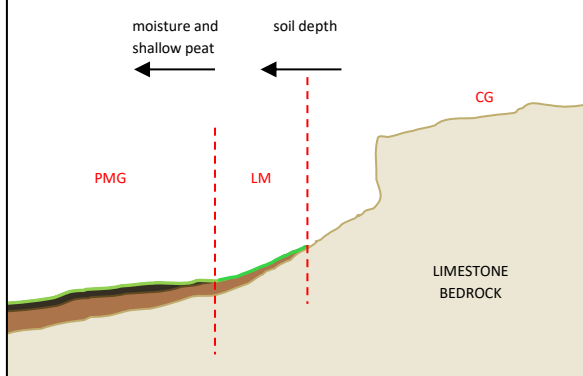
Factors influencing grassland variability



Example grassland community zonation from a lowland to upland landscape



Example grassland communities in a limestone landscape



Example grassland communities in a drumlin landscape

