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Assessing stock and change in land cover and biodiversity in GB: an introduction to Countryside Survey 2000

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Abstract

Countryside Survey 2000 (CS2000) is the latest in a series of surveys designed to measure and evaluate stock and change of land cover, landscape features, freshwaters, habitats and the vegetation of Great Britain. The ideas behind CS2000 developed during the 1960s and 1970s and culminated in the first survey of vegetation and land cover in 1978. One kilometer sample squares were selected at random using an environmental stratification. Subsequent surveys took place in 1984, 1990 and 1998, revisiting the original sample locations, whilst progressively expanding in scope and sample size; CS2000 included soils, breeding birds, remotely sensed imagery, freshwater biota and hydromorphology. Countryside Survey data may be interpreted using the pressure-state-response model, by selecting indicators of process and quality, and by identifying models of expected responses to different pressures. Thus, results showing losses of hedgerows between 1984 and 1990 stimulated new protection for these features. Ideally, CS2000 data should be used to stimulate experiments to distinguish between different pressures, in order to ensure that policy and management responses are both appropriate and achievable.

The experience from CS2000 may prove helpful for the design and management of other large scale monitoring programmes of ecosystems. In particular, the scope of the survey, and the use to which the data are applied, have evolved through time, and yet continuity was essential for change to be detected efficiently. These objectives were reconciled by collecting the data in a disaggregated form, allowing a high degree of flexibility in both analysis and reporting.

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Countryside Survey 2000

www.cs2000.org.uk

www.cs-web.org.uk

→ CS Data Catalogue  
leibniz, klopfer  
www.wvz.at

