

Surveying the Backshore Zone



STEP 33: SURVEYING THE BACKSHORE

Where to Record Data

FORM	HEADING
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Zone •Habitat ID •Habitat Type •Location •Area •Slope •Substrate •Species: Common Name/ Latin Name •Coverage Code •Notes

The backshore zone is of interest here because it affects the intertidal zone. Backshore plants can affect the intertidal zone through shading, by stopping erosion, and by holding water. As a result, you need to survey plants in the backshore zone. If you cannot get into the backshore zone because it is private property or a protected area, then make sure you give a good description of what you see from the beach, and record what you see on **Form 2**. If you can gain access, then complete the following instructions and record the results.

Measure back 20 m from the line where the intertidal zone ends and the backshore zone begins. You will only survey the first 20 m of the backshore zone. If necessary, set up a new baseline parallel to your intertidal baseline. This is like **Step 12**. Locate the end points of this backshore baseline in comparison to the intertidal baseline. You can do this by taking a compass bearing.

Example: The zero end of the backshore baseline is 28.5 m distance and 243° bearing from the zero end of the intertidal baseline.

If the backshore is dense salal or forest, it will be difficult to actually string a rope. Do the best you can.

Map the features and different habitat units of the backshore. Walk along the baseline and measure where one habitat ends and another starts. In many cases there will be only one habitat, all of it fairly uniform. If there are several units, map their locations as carefully as you can. See **Step 17**.

Identify the various backshore habitats. See **Step 13**. Most likely there will be only one dominant type of habitat.

Measure the area for each habitat. See **Step 22**.

Measure the slope for each habitat. See **Step 23**.

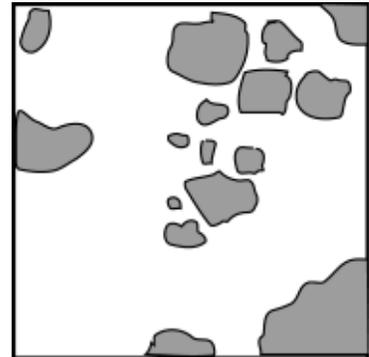
Note the species of plants you see. Also, record the abundance of each species of plant. If you cannot readily identify the terrestrial plant species, then use the following species type categories:

Type	Description
Coniferous trees	
Deciduous trees	> 7m tall
Tall shrubs	1.5 to 7m
Low shrubs	< 1.5m
Grasses (family Gramineae)	
Forbes	flowering plants
Rushes	stalks are round
Sedges	stalks have edges
Mosses and lichens	
Emergent vegetation	plants growing in water e.g., water lilies, water milfoil, duckweed, bulrushes, cattails

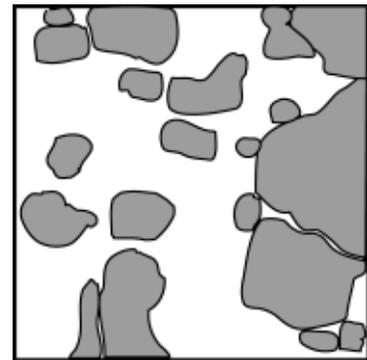
Adapted from:
 Southam, T., and E. A. Curran (eds.). 1996. *The Wetlandkeepers Handbook: a practical guide to wetland care*. B.C. Wildlife Federation, Surrey, B.C. and Environment Canada, Delta, B.C.

Estimate the percent cover of each species of plant attached to, or rooted in, the substrate. When estimating percent cover, assume you are looking down on the habitat from above, so that the widths of trees and the fullness of shrubs are included in your estimate. Only survey live plants.

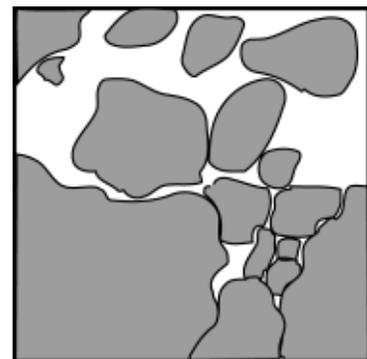
25% cover



50% cover



75% cover





Choose the best category from the list below.

Abundance	Category/Letter Code
less than 25% cover	few (f)
25% to 49% cover	common (c)
50% to 75% cover	abundant (a)
more than 75% cover	dominant (d)



STEP 34: ENSURE ALL DATA FORMS ARE COMPLETED

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have now completed the field portion of your survey! Now, make sure you have completed all your data forms. Go back through each form and make sure you have not left anything blank. Make sure the DFO registration number and the date are on all forms including notes and your rough sketch map. Don't throw any notes away. You may find that completion of all the paperwork is not as exciting and fun as being on the beach; but on the other hand, it may be a relief from sunburn or gale-force winds! But it is important. Without the proper reporting of all you have done, all of your data and time will have been wasted. If you have any trouble recording your data, contact your DFO representative. Please complete the paperwork and submit it as soon as possible, as you may forget some important details if you leave your field sheets incomplete for even a day or two.

Your work is very important to local communities and the health of our coastline. Your help is greatly appreciated and you should be proud of what you have done! You can obtain final copies of the data you and other shorekeeper groups have collected, contact a DFO representative. Finally, if you are particularly interested, you can assist DFO to analyse your data to look for trends. Contact your DFO representative about this.