Hedgerow Assistant

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1. Introduction

Hedgerow Assistant is designed to enable Windows users to assess whether a hedgerow is protected under the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations. These regulations are complex, and it is often difficult to identify the specific information that must be collected in order to complete an accurate assessment.

At the heart of *Hedgerow Assistant* is an 'expert system' program that guides you through a sequential question & answer session. The questions are derived directly from the legislation, but are presented in a clear and concise form. Moreover, they are asked in the order which minimises the amount of survey work you need to do, making it easy to determine whether a hedgerow qualifies for protection under the Act. Useful background information is also provided, to explain the questions posed in greater detail.

Hedgerow Assistant also holds the full text of both the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. These can both be consulted and searched as required. A hedgerow assessment may also require knowledge of the species present in or near the hedgerow, particularly endangered or protected species. To help you determine which species to search for, the program also contains full lists of those organisms listed under the various Schedules of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and also Red List species. These lists, which can be exported or printed, are an invaluable reference source.

To assist you in the field, *Hedgerow Assistant* can be used to generate field data recording forms, to ensure that all the relevant data is collected during a field inspection.
When you have completed an assessment, the "What do I do next?" screen provides a guide to the legislation, to help you determine the correct course of action.

Hedgerow Assistant has been designed to be simple and intuitive to use without specialist computer knowledge, and wherever possible, standard Windows features are used.

Hedgerows Regulations 1997 Guide

When *Hedgerow Assistant* arrives at a decision on whether your hedgerow is 'important' or not, some text and a "What do I do next?" button will appear. Click on this button to view the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 Guide. The Guide is also accessible via the Help menu. It provides one-click access to the 16 individual regulations, which together, comprise the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. The legislation often employs complex sentence structure or incorporates sub clauses, making it difficult to interpret. The Guide simplifies convoluted language and provides the sub clauses or additional information via a green clickable link. Click on any green text to reveal more information.

Note that the Guide is provided for assistance only, and if there is any doubt as to the meaning or interpretation of any Regulation, the official text, as supplied via the Text of Legislation button on the main menu screen, must be used as the primary information source.

Below we give a brief introduction as to how to use *Hedgerow Assistant*. Once the program has been installed, most users will find it convenient to use the context sensitive help.

2. Installation

System requirements:

1. A 486 or Pentium PC.
2. 1 MB disk space
3. SVGA screen
4. Windows 95 or later operating system.
5. 256 colour screen or better.

To install:

1. Place the **Hedgerow Assistant** floppy disc in the drive.
2. From the Start button choose Run.
3. Click on the browse button, select the floppy drive and select setup.exe
4. Click OK and follow the instructions given by the install program.

When installation is complete there will be a folder (directory) on your hard disk which holds the **Hedgerow Assistant** program, the data files and the **Hedgerow Assistant** icon which appears on your Start menu.

Uninstalling:

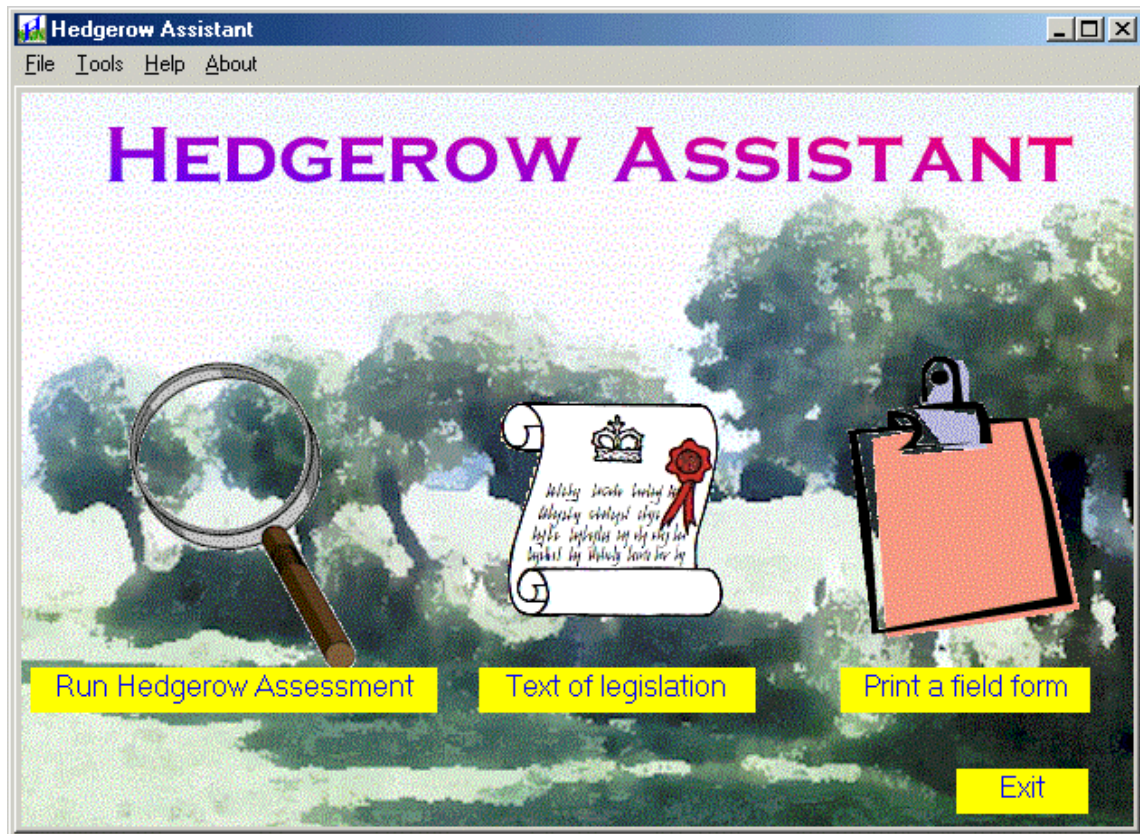When you install **Hedgerow Assistant** an uninstall program is placed in the same folder as the main program. This will remove **Hedgerow Assistant** and all its associated files from your hard disk. The uninstall program can be accessed from the Start menu.

3. Instructions for use

Start **Hedgerow Assistant** in the normal Windows fashion either by clicking on the program icon or from the start button. If you prefer you can simply run the executable file.

Along the top bar of the opening window are four pull-down menus. These work in a similar manner to menus found in other common Windows programs.

·   **File**: Used to either retrieve your answers to a previous assessment or save the results of the current session. Choose exit to close down the program.

·   **Tools**: From this menu **Hedgerow Assistant** will calculate the sampling plan required for a particular length of hedge.

·   **Help**: For access to the help system. Context specific help for a particular window is obtained by clicking the right mouse button while the window is active.

·   **About:** Information about the program version and PISCES Conservation Ltd.

The opening screen of the Hedgerow Assistant Program

This screen offers three buttons: click on the magnifying glass to start an assessment, click on the legal scroll to view the text of relevant legislation or click on the clipboard to view and print species lists and a field form.

The structure of stored data

List files are stored as CSV format files. **Hedgerow Assistant** files are stored with the extension hdg.
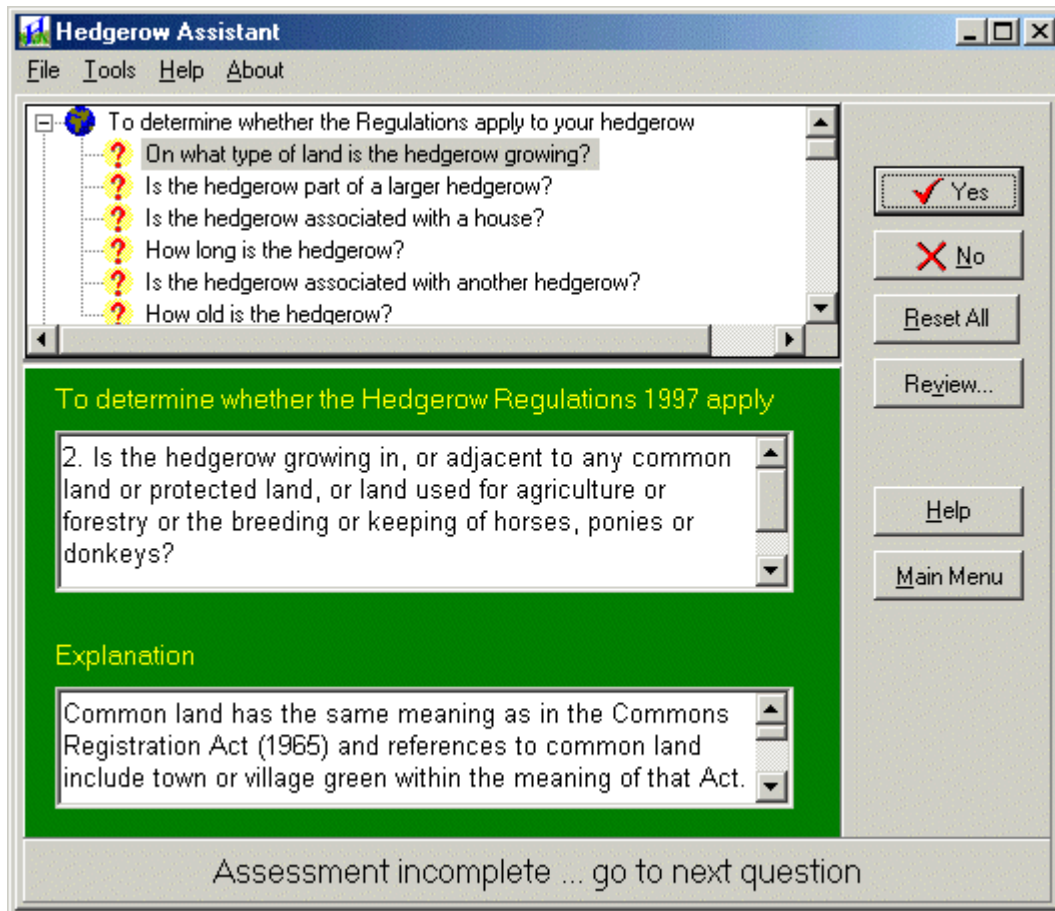
Opening an existing data set

To open an existing file select File | Open and choose a file. The program is supplied with two example files, Example1.hdg and New_Forest.hdg, which will be installed in the same folder as the executable program.

Saving your answers for the present session

The current sequence of answers is saved by selecting File | Save or File | Save as. If you are saving a file previously opened then it will be saved automatically. If you are saving a file which has not yet been named the program will open a dialog form in which details about the hedge under assessment can be entered.

Running a hedgerow assessment

Click on the magnifying glass on the Main page to start an assessment. You will be presented with some introductory text from which the main assessment procedure is initiated by clicking on the *Continue* button.

The assessment screen of Hedgerow Assistant

The assessment window comprises two sections. It is the green, lower, panel which displays the questions you must answer. The full text of the current question is shown in the upper text box within this coloured panel. Below this box, there is another text box which gives more detailed information to help you answer the questions. Most of the questions require a simple yes/no answer that you provide by clicking on the Yes and No buttons to the right of the coloured panel. When an assessment is initiated click on *Move on* to start your assessment.

At any time during a question / answer session the *Review* button opens a window which shows the full sequence of questions and your responses made during an assessment. This window can remain open while an assessment is being undertaken. To move through the questions and your answers use the scroll bar.

The *Reset all* button restarts the assessment process and returns all the questions to un-answered.

At the top of the assessment screen there is a box which displays the questions that you will be asked. Using the scroll bar, you can move down the list of questions to see where you are in the assessment procedure. The questions are arranged in groups. To view the questions in each group click on the small plus symbol. Initially, a question mark is shown alongside each question, indicating that it has not been answered. Once a question has been answered this will change to a tick or cross depending on your answer. The assessment process takes you through the questions in a planned, prioritised sequence. If you click on the tick or cross of a question that has already been answered, the program will return you to this question in the sequence and reset all subsequent questions to unanswered. A message box will appear to ensure this is what you want.

The *Print* button will print out the questions and your answers.

At the bottom of the form there is a panel which shows the status of your assessment. When the program reaches a conclusion the panel will change colour and a pop-up window will appear. If the hedgerow in question is not covered by the Hedgerow act then this panel will state 'This is NOT an important hedgerow. Your hedgerow falls outside these regulations'. If the regulations apply to your hedgerow this panel will state that ' THIS IS AN IMPORTANT HEDGEROW. Your hedgerow falls within the regulations'. The number of questions that will need to be answered to reach either of these conclusions varies considerably, but can be small.

At any time during the question answering sequence you can examine the text of the regulations. Click on the Main Menu button to return to the Main page then click on the scroll button to enter the view legislation screen. When you return to the assessment form you can carry on answering questions where you left off.

Some of the questions will require you to determine if certain protected species are found in the vicinity of the hedge. When these questions are being answered you can click on the list button to view the relevant species list. The species present can be selected from the list by clicking on the blank cell adjacent to the selected species in the first column. A tick will appear with the word selected. To de-select a species just click on it again. Any list can be sorted alphabetically in either direction by clicking in the cell at the head of the column.

Depending on the answers you have given to previous questions you may be asked to enter the length of the hedge in the box provided. Next to this box is a button labelled *Where to sample*. When you have entered the hedgerow length click on this button to see a diagram of where the legislation requires sampling to be undertaken.

Viewing the text of the legislation

Click on the legal scroll button on the Main page to view the complete texts of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. When the view legislation form opens the large text box is initially blank. Use the buttons at the bottom of the form to select the document you wish to view. Once the text is loaded you can scroll through the document in the normal manner. To search the document for a word or phrase, use the find button.
To return to the opening page click on the button labelled Main Menu.

Printing a field form and lists of protected species

Hedgerow Assistant will print a field form that you can take into the field when undertaking an assessment. Using this form you will ensure that you will collect the essential information required.

To print a field form click on the clipboard button on the Main page. This will open a form that offers a large number of buttons. At the top is the button that will open the printer dialog to print a field form. The other buttons allow you to print the various Red List or Scheduled species that you will be searching for in your hedgerow. When printing on of the species lists a dialog is opened that allows you to format the output. Note that the Diptera and Coleoptera lists are very long.

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FIELD RECORDING FORM

Site Name   _____ County   _____

Grid reference   _____

Surveyors name   _____ Date   _____

Section 1 Notes on the locality and structure of the hedgerow

1.1	Does the hedge form part of the boundary of a dwelling?	_____
1.2	Does the hedge intersect with another hedge?	_____
1.3	Is the hedge supported for > 1/2 its length by a wall or bank?	_____
1.4	Does the hedge have a ditch for > 1/2 its length?	_____
1.5	Is there a parallel hedge within 15 m?	_____
1.6	Does the hedge connect with a pond?	_____
1.7	Does the hedge connect with a broadleaf woodland?	_____
1.8	Is the hedge adjacent to a footpath or bridleway?	_____
1.9	Is the hedge adjacent to common or protected land?	_____
1.10	Does the hedge have gaps?	_____
1.11	How long is the hedge?	_____m
1.12	What proportion of the length are the gaps?	_____%

Section 2 Notes on Archaeological features

2.1   Are there any archaeological features present?

_____

2.3   List any building or churches associated with the hedgerow which may predate 1600 AD

_____

2.2   List any other archaeological features or structures associated with the hedgerow

_____

2.3   Is there any evidence that the hedgerow predates the enclosure acts?

_____

Section 3 Biological Survey Results

You must survey a section of the hedgerow as follows:

The length of the hedgerow determines which stretches should be surveyed. If the hedgerow is 30m or under, survey the entire hedgerow; if hedgerow exceeds 30m but does not exceed 100m, survey the central 30m stretch; if hedgerow exceeds 100m but does not exceed 200m, survey the central 30m stretch of each half; if hedgerow exceeds 200m in length, survey the central 30m stretch of each third.
Use the special calculator in the program.

3.1   How many standard trees (at 1.3 m they have a trunk diameter > 0.2 m) does the sampled hedge hold?

_____

3.2   Ring which of the following woody species are present.

Alder,   Apple, crab,   Ash,   Aspen,   Beech,   Birch, downy,   Birch, silver
Black poplar,   Blackthorn,   Box,   Broom,   Buckthorn,   Buckthorn, alder
Butcher's broom   Cherry, bird,   Cherry, wild,   Cotoneaster, wild,   Currant, downy
Currant, mountain,   Dogwood,   Elder,   Elm,   Gooseberry,   Gorse,   Gorse, dwarf
Gorse, western,   Guelder rose,   Hawthorn,   Hawthorn, midland,   Hazel,   Holly
Hornbeam,   Juniper, common,   Lime, large-leaved,   Lime, small-leaved
Maple, field,   Mezereon,   Oak, pedunculate,   Oak, sessile,   Osier
Pear, Plymouth,   Pear, wild,   Poplar, grey,   Poplar, white,   Privet, wild,   Rose
Rowan,   Sea-buckthorn,   Service-tree, wild,   Spindle,   Spurge-laurel,   Walnut,
Wayfaring-tree,   Whitebeam,   Willow,   Yew

3.3   Which of the following woodland species can be found within 1 m in any direction from
        the outermost edges of the hedgerow?

Barren strawberry,   Bluebell,   Broad buckler fern,   Broad-leaved helleborine
Bugle,   Common cow-wheat,   Common dog violet,   Common polypody,   Dog's mercury
Early dog violet, Early purple orchid,   Enchanter's nightshade,   Giant fescue
Goldilocks buttercup,   Great bell flower,   Greater wood rush,   Hairy brome
Hairy woodrush,   Hard fern,   Hard shield fern,   Hart's tongue
Heath bedstraw,   Herb paris,   Herb-robert,   Lady fern,   Lords-and-ladies
Male fern,   Moschatel,   Narrow buckler-fern,   Nettle-leaved bell-flower,   Oxlip
Pignut,   Primrose,   Ramsons,   Sanicle, Scaly male-fern,   Small cow-wheat
Soft shield fern,   Sweet violet,   Toothwort,   Tormentil,   Wild strawberry
Wood anemone,   Wood avens/Herb bennet,   Wood false-brome
Wood horsetail, Wood meadow-grass,   Wood melick,   Wood millet,   Wood sage
Wood sedge,   Wood sorrel,   Wood speedwell,   Wood spurge,   Woodruff
Yellow archangel,   Yellow pimpernel

Rare and endangered species

3.3   Does the hedge contain any bird listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act
1981 or categorised as a declining breeding species in the Red Data Birds in Britain?

_____

3.4   Does the hedge hold any animal listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act
        1981?

_____

3.5   Has the hedge been known to hold any species from Schedule 1 or 5 over the last 5
        years?

_____

3.6   Does the hedge hold any plant listed in Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act
        1981?

_____

3.7   Has the hedge been known to hold any species from Schedule 8 over the last 10 years?

_____