

Natural Capital on Scottish Farms – Real Assets, Real Benefits Matrix

Natural capital asset	Food & fibre production	Timber / biomass	Carbon sequestration & climate regulation	Water supply	Flood regulation & water storage	Water quality regulation	Soil fertility & nutrient cycling	Pollination	Pest control	Habitat & biodiversity	Cultural / recreation
Soils	✓ Crop and forage production		✓ Soil carbon storage	✓ Water storage for crops	✓ Water infiltration reduces flooding	✓ Nutrient filtering	✓ Nutrient cycling			✓ Soil biodiversity	
Arable land / cropland	✓ Crops for food, feed, fibre	✓ Biomass crops	✓ Soil carbon (management dependent)		✓ Infiltration (depending on soil health)	✓ Buffer strips reduce runoff	✓ Nutrient cycling via rotations	✓ Pollinator crops	✓ Natural predator habitat in rotations	✓ Farmland biodiversity	
Improved grassland	✓ Livestock feed		✓ Soil carbon (management dependent)		✓ Infiltration (depending on soil health)	✓ Nutrient retention	✓ Nutrient cycling	✓ Flower-rich swards support pollinators	✓ Natural pest predators	✓ Grassland biodiversity	✓ Landscape character
Semi-natural grassland	✓ Low-intensity grazing		✓ Soil carbon (management dependent)		✓ Infiltration (depending on soil health)	✓ Water filtration	✓ Soil structure	✓ Pollinator habitat	✓ Natural pest predators	✓ High biodiversity	✓ Recreation / landscape
Hedgerows & shelterbelts	✓ Fruit, wood, biomass	✓ Timber / wood fuel	✓ Carbon storage		✓ Slow runoff	✓ Intercept pollutants	✓ Reduce erosion	✓ Key pollinator habitat	✓ Natural pest predators	✓ Wildlife corridors	✓ Landscape character
Field margins / flower strips		Biomass (occasionally)	✓ Soil carbon		✓ Reduce runoff	✓ Trap nutrients & sediment	✓ Reduce erosion	✓ Pollinator habitat	✓ Natural pest predators	✓ High biodiversity	✓ Landscape character

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Woodland / farm forestry	✓ Game, mushrooms, fruit	✓ Timber & fuel	✓ Major carbon sequestration		✓ Flood mitigation, slowing flow	✓ Water filtration	✓ Improve soil organic matter, reduce erosion	✓ Pollinator habitat	✓ Beneficial predator habitat	✓ Wildlife habitat	✓ Recreation / tourism / education
Wetlands / ponds / riparian buffers	✓ Fish / wild foods		✓ Carbon storage	✓ Water storage	✓ Flood regulation	✓ Water purification	✓ Sediment capture	✓ Pollinator habitat	✓ Pest control (amphibians etc.)	✓ High biodiversity	✓ Recreation / tourism / education
Burns / ditches / rivers	✓ Fish			✓ Water supply	✓ Flood regulation (where de-channelised)					✓ Aquatic biodiversity	✓ Recreation / tourism / education
Peatland (where present)	✓ Limited grazing		✓ Very large carbon storage	✓ Water storage	✓ Major flood regulation	✓ Water filtration	✓ Nutrient regulation			✓ Specialist habitats	✓ Landscape / tourism
Farm buildings & traditional structures									✓ Habitat for beneficial predators (owls, bats)	✓ Nesting sites	✓ Cultural heritage, tourism