



Species Point-Count Form

Use this form to count unique species of plants, insects, birds, or other animals.
www.project-acorn.net/data-entry

Name of School:

Month (mm): Day (dd): Year (yyyy):

Name of Observer:

Site Name:

Local Time: :

Universal Time: :

The following table includes the data ranges for your point-counts. For species that are present in high numbers, it is not necessary to count every individual specimen. An approximate range is acceptable if the observers are in consensus. Note: For this form, count sedges and rushes as grasses.

| Range | Count | Range | Count | Range | Count | Range | Count |
|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|------------|
| A | 1 - 5 | C | 10 - 25 | E | 50 - 75 | G | 100 - 1000 |
| B | 5 - 10 | D | 25 - 50 | F | 75 - 100 | H | > 1000 |

Field Observations

Observation 1:

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed: Data Range:

Observation 2:

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed: Data Range:

Field Observations (Continued)

Observation 3:

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

Observation 4:

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

Observation 5:

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

Conclusions

Ecological dominance is the degree to which a species is more numerous, or produces more biomass, than its competitors within the same *ecological community*. The *dominant species* often defines the community.

Based on your observations, would you say there was a dominant species present? Yes, No

If yes, what was its common name?

Did you count the dominant species? Yes, No If yes, what was its data range?

Hint: The dominant species is often, but not always, a plant.

Notes:

Field Observations (Continued)

Observation :

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

Observation :

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

Observation :

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

Observation :

Plant: Grass, Forb, Woody,

Animal: Insect, Arachnid, Bird, Reptile, Amphibian, Mammal, Other

Common Name:

Species Observed:

Number Observed:

Data Range:

A point-count is a way of gathering biodiversity data at your ACORN site. The technique consists of simply counting as many of a particular species of wildlife as you can point to. Over time, the data provides an indicator of how ecologically healthy your ACORN site is. Greater diversity indicates a more healthy ecosystem. Point counts can be used to count plants and animals alike. You may choose to record every species you see, or only some of the species you see. Be mindful of the species you omit. If an omitted species is present in high numbers, your data may paint an inaccurate picture of the health and balance of your local habitat.

This data is for you and your campus. You may begin tracking any particular species at any given time.

Waystation Point-Counts:

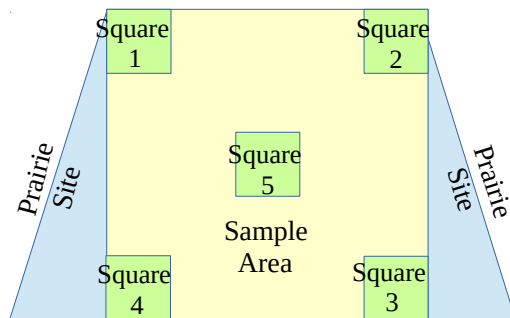
Gardens – For most pollinator gardens it is relatively simple to observe and count the different species present in the garden given their small area. If the garden is large, it may be helpful to devise a method of breaking the garden into representational samples. If you do this, make sure that you use the same method at the same site from year to year. This will keep your data consistent.

Prairies & Range Land – Large areas, such as waystation prairies, are more difficult to observe. For these sites, we recommend that you mark off a square or rectangle within your prairie. Make the rectangle as large as the prairie/property boundaries will allow. This will become your sample area (see illustration below). Use this same area from year to year to keep your results consistent.

Within your sample area, measure off 3-meter by 3-meter squares at every corner, and a single 3 x 3-meter square in the center. Count the species observed within each square each time you do a point count. It may help to limit your time spent counting mobile animals to help prevent double counting as they move about the land. 5 minutes is a good time limit, but you can set your own based on class and site needs.

If corner and center squares overlap, take precautions not to count the same specimens twice. If you use another sampling methodology, make a note of it in your field notes, and be sure to always use the same sampling method, or your data will not be reliable.

Example of a Prairie Sample Site:



Note: If plant diversity declines within your prairie, animal diversity will follow. If you observe a drop off in counts over time, or low initial counts, it may be seasonal conditions, or it may be a symptom of an unhealthy habitat. A good project-based learning activity would be to have your class identify the trend, determine the cause, and implement a solution to restore biodiversity and system health.