

# How to use your Star Rating Meter

Start with 'bank vegetation' and turn the top circle around to find the description in the cut out section that matches most closely with the bank vegetation at your river site. Copy the score onto your report card. Continue looking at each factor including: verge vegetation, in stream cover, bank erosion and stability, pools and bends by turning the circle so

that the nearest matching description for each of these factors appears in the cut out section.

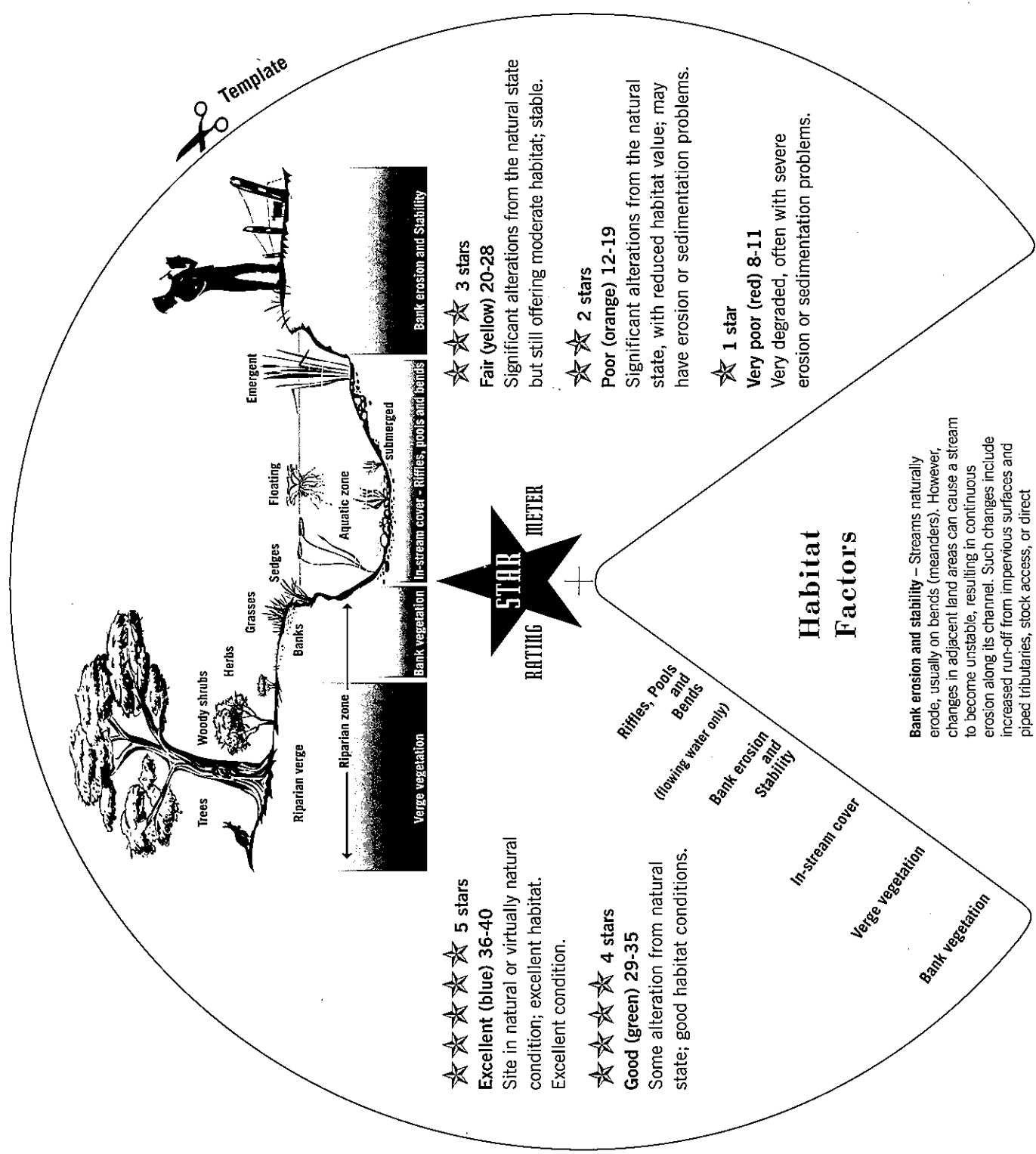
Copy the scores for each factor onto your report card.

After assessing all five factors add up the scores to find the overall star rating for this site.

Record the number of stars on your environment report card.

## Interpreting your results

Assess your total stream's habitat rating score using the information on your Star Rating Meter.



★★★★★ 5 stars  
**Excellent (blue) 36-40**  
 Site in natural or virtually natural condition; excellent habitat. Excellent condition.

★★★★ 4 stars  
**Good (green) 29-35**  
 Some alteration from natural state; good habitat conditions.

★★★ 3 stars  
**Fair (yellow) 20-28**  
 Significant alterations from the natural state but still offering moderate habitat; stable.

★★ 2 stars  
**Poor (orange) 12-19**  
 Significant alterations from the natural state, with reduced habitat value; may have erosion or sedimentation problems.

★ 1 star  
**Very poor (red) 8-11**  
 Very degraded, often with severe erosion or sedimentation problems.

## Habitat Factors

Riffles, Pools and Bends  
 (flowing water only)

Bank erosion and Stability

In-stream cover

Verge vegetation

Bank vegetation

**Bank erosion and stability** – Streams naturally erode, usually on bends (meanders). However, changes in adjacent land areas can cause a stream to become unstable, resulting in continuous erosion along its channel. Such changes include increased run-off from impervious surfaces and piped tributaries, stock access, or direct interference such as straightening or channelling the stream.

**Instream cover** – Fish and other aquatic organisms require snags, logs and rocks where they can shelter from predators and the current and can provide markers that help them navigate. Aquatic plants are also very important for providing oxygen. **Verge vegetation** – vegetation growing on the section of land up to 30 meters from the water's edge. **Bank vegetation** – trees, shrubs, grasses, ground covers that grow on the bank.

**Riffles** – a shallow area in a stream where water rushes quickly. These shallow areas are created by rocks that produce small rapids. Riffles help to aerate the water and provide habitat for macroinvertebrates.

**Pools** – upstream of a riffle the water is often quiet and may form a pool. Pools are important in providing deeper areas for fish

**Snags** – branches, logs and debris that provide aquatic organisms shelter from predators and the current and places to reproduce.



Author and Project Manager: Catherine Buxton, Boxton Connections  
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