



Local Records Centres

Working together for biodiversity in London and South East England

Contents

Front cover images clockwise from left:
Nesting ring necked parakeets at Brockwell Park © Susy Hogarth; View of Mudchute Park © Edwin Van Ek ; The green roof of the Komodo dragon house at London Zoo © Dusty Gedge; Heathland restoration at Croham Hurst © Andrew Williams; A water vole about to be released into a new home at Erith Marshes © Mike Waite; Roosting long eared bats at Cranford Countryside Park and Open Space © Mike Waite; Nunhead railway cutting © Ian Yarham; Birdwatchers at viewing screen Southern Marsh at Erith Marshes © Karen Sutton.

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What is a Local Records Centre?



Shargacucullia lychnitis
(Striped Lychnis Moth)
larvae. © J Carey ▲
Female great crested newt
© Helen Miller, TVERC ▼
Children taking part in a
KMBRC wildlife recording
school visit. © KMBRC ►



A Local Records Centre is:

“a not-for-profit service run in partnership for the public benefit, which collects, collates, manages and disseminates information of known quality relating to the wildlife, wildlife sites and habitats for a defined geographical area.”

National Biodiversity Network Position
Statement on Local Records Centres 2004

Or to put it another way:

A one-stop-shop for ecological information and a valued resource for the local community.

Introducing your Local Records Centres

There are eight Local Records Centres in London and South East England.

Although they are hosted and run in slightly different ways, they have one common purpose:

the collection, management and interpretation of wildlife data to support the conservation, understanding and enjoyment of local biodiversity.

By working closely with local data providers and the National Biodiversity Network, Local Records Centres provide a 'one-stop-shop' for information on sites, habitats and species in the region. The services they provide are essential for underpinning policies and decision making in both the public and private sector, and to ensure compliance with national and international legislation.

Because of their capacity to engage and support local volunteers with expertise in ecological survey, species identification and data management, Local Records Centres deliver valuable services in a highly cost-effective way while helping to achieve Big Society objectives.



© Association of Local Environmental Records Centres

London and South East England Local Records Centre profiles



Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL)

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC is the capital's environmental records centre – it collates, manages and makes available detailed information on London's wildlife, parks, nature reserves, gardens and other open spaces through a range of services tailored to end-users' requirements.

GiGL seeks to influence the generation of new data in London through its partnership, including over 40 funding partners and many of London's voluntary recording groups. It provides advice on data collection standards, runs gap analysis to target survey effort, and interrogates existing data to identify sites of interest to the surveyor/s. In order to speed up the creation to availability process, GiGL also assists partners with data entry from paper, creates bespoke online forms and tailored spreadsheets to meet requirements. GiGL collates and manages the resulting data to national standards on bespoke local systems, forming an important link

between national initiatives and the largely regional and local remits of its target end users.

GiGL partners and customers work in a broad range of areas that require access to the evidence base that it manages, so it has tailored services that meet end users' needs without needing to be data experts themselves. The services GiGL provides influence development control decisions through informing the collective input of environmental consultants, local residents and local authorities; land management for conservation and recreation purposes by many of our partners; and emerging agendas such as biodiversity offsetting, ecosystem services and green infrastructure.

Dean Bradley House, 52, Horseferry Road, SW1P 2AF
www.gigl.org.uk
enquiries@gigl.org.uk
020 7803 4278



Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre (BMERC)

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre (BMERC) has been hosted by Buckinghamshire County Council since the 1970s. It emerged from pre existing strong links between the local Wildlife Trust and the County Museum's long history of curation of natural history specimens and related documentation. The Museums physical collections continue to be maintained and developed, and are widely used as a research, educational and archival resource. The Records Centre itself recently moved to County Hall in Aylesbury to sit in the Countryside and Heritage Team, but maintains its strong links to the Museum.

BMERC provides a service to collate, manage and disseminate data about wildlife, habitats and geology making them easily accessible for a wide range of users. Most of the data are now held electronically, either as Geographic Information System maps and files, or as part of a huge database of wildlife information which holds over 1.8 million individual records.

BMERC is a partnership between Buckinghamshire County Council, Milton Keynes, Wycombe, South Bucks, Chiltern and Aylesbury Vale District Councils and Natural England. We also have a variety of Service Level Agreements with the external partners and environmental bodies.

The work that BMERC carries out is dependant on a small army of local wildlife and geology experts and enthusiasts who provide the majority of the data we manage, for free, and with whom we continue to work closely to encourage knowledge and understanding of the natural environment, and protection of our much loved countryside.

**Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre
Place Service, 9th Floor, County Hall.
Walton Steet, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UY**

<http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.co.uk/partnership/BucksMKERC/bmerc.page>

erc@buckscc.gov.uk
01296 382431



Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre was established as a partnership-led biological records centre in 2002, having operated as a de facto records centre since the 1970s from within the County Museums Service and then the County Planning Department. HBIC now sits within Hampshire County Council as part of the 'Specialist Environmental Services' which include the Historic Environment & Ecology Teams. HBIC's funding partners include all the Local Planning Authorities, the National Parks, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. HBIC's purpose is to "collect, collate, manage and disseminate information of known quality on Hampshire's biodiversity to those who require it, to increase knowledge and understanding, and to enable informed decisions to be made about factors affecting the environment'. In addition to supplying our funding partners with comprehensive data covering protected and notable species, priority habitats and designated sites we also service around 700

data requests per year from developers, land owners and managers, local parishes and community groups, wildlife groups, students and the general public. We manage a field survey programme which has been running continuously in Hampshire for 34 years and we receive data from all the key voluntary species recording groups, ensuring our data is as complete, current and of good quality as is possible. Our ultimate aim to ensure a proper balance is made between sustainable economic growth and the conservation of the natural environment.

**Elizabeth II Court West,
The Castle, Winchester,
Hampshire SO23 8UD**

www.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/hbic
enquiries.hbic@hants.gov.uk

01962 832322



Isle of Wight Records Centre (IoWRC)

IWLRC is a partnership-led biological records centre hosted by IW Council. Launched in April 2010, IWLRC has been established with the principal aim of collecting, collating, managing and disseminating information on the Island's wildlife making it available to all those who need it, on a not-for-profit basis in a cost-effective way. Its work is overseen by the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Steering Group, which has representation from a wide range of organisations with an interest in the Island's biodiversity. The aims of IWLRC

- To provide a focus for the collection and management of biological data relating to the Isle of Wight.
- To make data available to all those who require it, including local authorities, government agencies, voluntary bodies, consultants, landowners, educational establishments and the public, subject to agreed policies on access and charging.
- To service the information needs of the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Isle of Wight.

- To provide support for local recorders and recording groups.
- To conform to nationally agreed standards and contribute to the National Biodiversity Network.

**Isle of Wight Council Seaclose Offices,
Fairlee Rd, Newport,
Isle of Wight, PO30 2QS**

<http://www.wildonwight.co.uk/lrc/index.php>

lrc@iow.gov.uk

01983 821000 ex 8541



Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC)

Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre is a not-for-profit charity that collects, collates and disseminates wildlife species and habitat data for the County of Kent. Our key goal in collecting the data is to ensure that wildlife flora and fauna and their associated habitats are conserved and protected to help maintain the natural beauty and diversity of our County, for the enjoyment and benefit of all. The information we hold is used for a wide range of applications. We provide a chargeable service for commercial purposes, for example to help assess the potential ecological impact of planning applications. This income allows us to provide a service free of charge for conservation, education and other projects. These include the provision of data to help formulate conservation management plans for nature reserves and other green spaces through to schools asking for advice on creating nature gardens and private individuals or groups undertaking personal or community projects. Our work would not be

possible without the help of the many people who voluntarily submit their wildlife sightings to us every year and we currently hold more than 5.2 million wildlife records dating from the 1600's right up to the present day. We are a small organisation with four employees, all of whom are very dedicated and spend a great deal of time visiting local groups to give talks, going in to schools to run educational activity sessions and attending events to promote our work.

**Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre,
Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road,
Faversham, Kent, ME13 8XZ**

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01795 532385



Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre (SBIC)

Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre (SBIC) acts as a focus for biological recording and the dissemination of information relating to the biodiversity of Surrey. SBIC seeks to hold as comprehensive a record of the sites, species and habitats of Surrey as possible and by making this information accessible, support better informed decision making across a broad range of sectors from local and national government to individuals. To achieve these aims, SBIC works in partnership on a day to day basis with the many individuals and organisations that produce and use biodiversity data through their work or leisure activities.

SBIC is managed as a not for profit project and the small team of three full-time staff is hosted by Surrey Wildlife Trust. SBIC works across the current administrative county of Surrey, however, due to the ongoing focus on vice-counties by many recording schemes, SBIC also holds data from outside these boundaries to facilitate simple working practice for relevant recording groups/recorders. In doing so it also ensures that these data sets are also available to relevant neighbouring LRCs through the work of the London & South East Local Record Centre's Forum.

SBIC has evolved out of a shared vision for an objective and independent focus for biodiversity data in the County which takes into account the current and future needs of both users and recorders. SBIC seeks to increase and encourage recording throughout the County supporting the next generation of biological recorders.

SBIC maintains the database of Surrey's non-statutory wildlife Sites (SNCIs) and is a member of the Surrey Nature Partnership.

**Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre, C/O Surrey Wildlife Trust,
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www.surreybic.org.uk
sbic@surreywt.org.uk

01483 795448



Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC)

The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) is a repository, custodian, manager and analyst of high-quality biodiversity, natural history and environmental information. We cover the two counties of East and West Sussex, and the city of Brighton & Hove, in South East England. We are a small but dedicated team of environmental data management experts, naturalists and IT specialists.

SxBRC is managed as a partnership project and has been established for 20 years, building on earlier projects such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust's Environmental Survey Directory. From its inception the record centre has always been supported by a range of partners and the biological recorders of Sussex.

By strengthening relationships with naturalists and ecologists in Sussex, and other data holding organisations, the record centre has been growing year on year. The importance and value of this data-set is currently

reflected by the continuing increase in the number of data requests and number of staff. We run a data request service, available to both commercial and non-commercial users. We hold data from a variety of sources, from large organisations to local recorders; we pride ourselves in the support and relationships with our county recorders and recording groups. We are increasingly focusing on web-based services.

**Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre,
Woods Mill, Henfield,
West Sussex, BN5 9SD**

sxbrc.org.uk

sxbrc@sussexwt.org.uk

01273 497521 or 01273 497553



Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre collects, collates and makes available information to help people make sound decisions about our natural environment in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

TVERC is a partnership between all of the local authorities in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Natural England and the Environment Agency. We also work closely with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and both the Oxfordshire and Berkshire Local Nature Partnerships. TVERC is an accredited member of the Association of Local Environmental Record Centres (ALERC).

We are a team of eight people, equivalent to 6.5 full-time staff and are hosted by Oxfordshire County Council based in an office in Eynsham. Our steering group consists of representatives from Berkshire and Oxfordshire local authorities, the Environment Agency, Natural England, BBOWT, local recorders and local ecological consultants.

TVERC aims to hold all available information about the plants, animals, wildlife habitats and important wildlife and geological sites in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Our database includes about 1.3 million species records plus information on Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites and NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. We have also identified the main biodiversity hotspots in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, where conservation efforts can be most effective. These are called Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in Berkshire and Conservation Target Areas in Oxfordshire.

**Signal Court, Old Station Way,
Eynsham, Oxfordshire,
OX3 0NN**

<http://www.tverc.org>
tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk

01865 815 451

More than a database!

Between them, the eight Local Records Centres in London and South East England hold almost 21.5 million digitised species records, of which 17% are of legally protected and notable species. Their Geographic Information Systems (GIS) hold information on 11,500 designated sites and 1.4 million hectares of S41 habitats of principal importance.

Up-to-date information is vital to inform decision making and ensure compliance with environmental legislation; 65% of the species records in London and South East England Local Records Centres' databases were gathered within the last 10 years and over 2 million new records are added each year.

Historical information on the distribution of species and habitats is equally valuable, and is needed to monitor and mitigate the effects of climate change and to identify opportunities for habitat creation.

A Local Records Centre is much more than the database of records it manages. Experienced staff provide ecological interpretation of the data, taking account of local policies and priorities. By working with local and national experts, Local Records Centres validate and verify data to known standards, enabling them to be used with confidence.

Where does the data come from?

Local record centres collect and collate data from a variety of sources, including:

- The general public
- Skilled volunteer / amateur recorders
- Professionals working for wildlife charities (Wildlife Trusts and RSPB)
- Professionals working for government agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency & local authorities)
- Ecological consultants
- Record Centre staff

At least 75% of the ecological data is collected by volunteers and without their hard work and dedication, there would not be the resource to inform decision making about the natural environment. You can find out more about the recording groups and societies who share their data by visiting the relevant local record centre websites.



▲ A Schedule 8 plant species, Cut-leaved germander recently found on a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, recorded by HBIC and verified by BSBI. © HBIC



▲ Piptoporus quercinus © BMERC

The need for ecological information

Information about the distribution of legally protected, rare or threatened species and habitats is needed by organisations in the public and private sector whose actions affect the environment. Without up-to-date reliable information, decision makers and policy makers can find themselves exposed to adverse risk, legally, environmentally and economically.

Local Records Centres provide cost-effective information services which help organisations to comply with their statutory duties, thereby reducing risk and liability.

The data services provided by Local Records Centres to Local Authorities and public bodies are needed for:

- Forward planning and development control
- Land management
- Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
- Green infrastructure planning
- Local Wildlife and Geodiversity Sites monitoring and reporting
- Control of invasive species
- Waste management
- Hedgerow Removal Notices
- Highway maintenance
- Public access to environmental data
- Monitoring Local Plans
- Monitoring and planning for climate change
- Managing flood risk
- Biodiversity offsetting



▲ Great Crested Newt © Steve Smith

“I use data from TVERC on a daily basis for checking what species, site and habitats have been recorded close to proposed development sites. This allows me to ensure that developers have correctly identified the value of the sites and surroundings and that the appropriate surveys and assessments are carried out. Without this information I would be unable to provide advice to the planning committee on how to ensure Oxon CC met its duties under the NERC Act, complied with wildlife legislation and that planning decisions complied with the NPPF.”

Tamsin Atley, Ecologist Planner, Oxfordshire County Council

Local Records Centres' services should be sought to ensure compliance with:

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- UK [Environmental Information Regulations](#) 2004 (EIR) and Freedom of Information Act
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- INSPIRE Regulations 2009 and the UK Location Strategy
- Local Government Transparency Programme
- National Planning Policy Framework
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

“On behalf of the Chief Constable I would like to thank you for the assistance and co-operation extended to Kent Police during the period of the Greenpeace climate camp protest on the Hoo peninsula. Together we overcame a number of unique challenges to the community, partner agencies and local stakeholders. This success was due in no small part to the positive involvement of KMBRC.”

Kent Police

Arable weeds and bee banks © J Carey ►
Ancient Tree Forum considering wood pasture management. © J Carey ►►



Services provided by Local Records Centres

Example services (click on the picture for an example of each data service)

Photo credits: Pearl-bordered Fritillary © Helen Miller,
TVERC; Volunteers at a KMBRC organised Recorder
training event © KMBRC

Enhanced services provided by some Local Records Centres

In addition to the services listed on the previous page, some Local Records Centres also provide the following enhanced services:

- Public Wildlife Enquiry Service
- Management of Local Wildlife Sites dataset
- Local Wildlife Site surveys and monitoring
- Local Geological Sites surveys and monitoring
- Habitat opportunity mapping
- Green infrastructure mapping
- Species and habitat surveys
- Habitat suitability mapping and species modelling
- Data interpretation to enhance public understanding
- Monitoring and reporting on biodiversity indicators
- Monitoring and reporting on local biodiversity strategy outcomes

Please contact your Local Records Centre for further details of the enhanced services they provide.



▲ Species & habitats surveys - HBIC Field ecologist - SINC survey programme © HBIC



◀ Dormouse nest box checking in Denge Woods, Kent. © Tony Witts

Case studies

Enhancing your environment

Surrey Wildlife Atlas series

Support for the County's recording community lies at the heart of Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre's (SBIC) work and one of the ways that we've been able to do this is through the Surrey...



The status of chalk grassland of the South Downs National Park

Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre is leading an ambitious project with the South Downs National Park Authority and Natural England to...



Monitoring & Protecting Water Voles in the North Kent Marshes

In 2012 KMBRC were invited to partner Kent Wildlife Trust in a project to monitor and protect Water Vole populations in the North Kent Marshes...



New woodland corridor planting in Isle of Wight

The IWLRC has been a key partner in the Forestry Commission led partnership project to promote new woodland planting with an emphasis on linking up existing...



Wildlife Surveys, management advice & training

TVERC provides wildlife surveys, management advice and training to local groups so that they can manage their sites to enhance biodiversity. The TVERC Biodiversity...



Chilterns Juniper Project – a two for one offer!

Juniper is a UK BAP priority species and is the defining component of a EU protected habitat in Annex I of the Habitats Directive. It is targeted by at least six lowland...



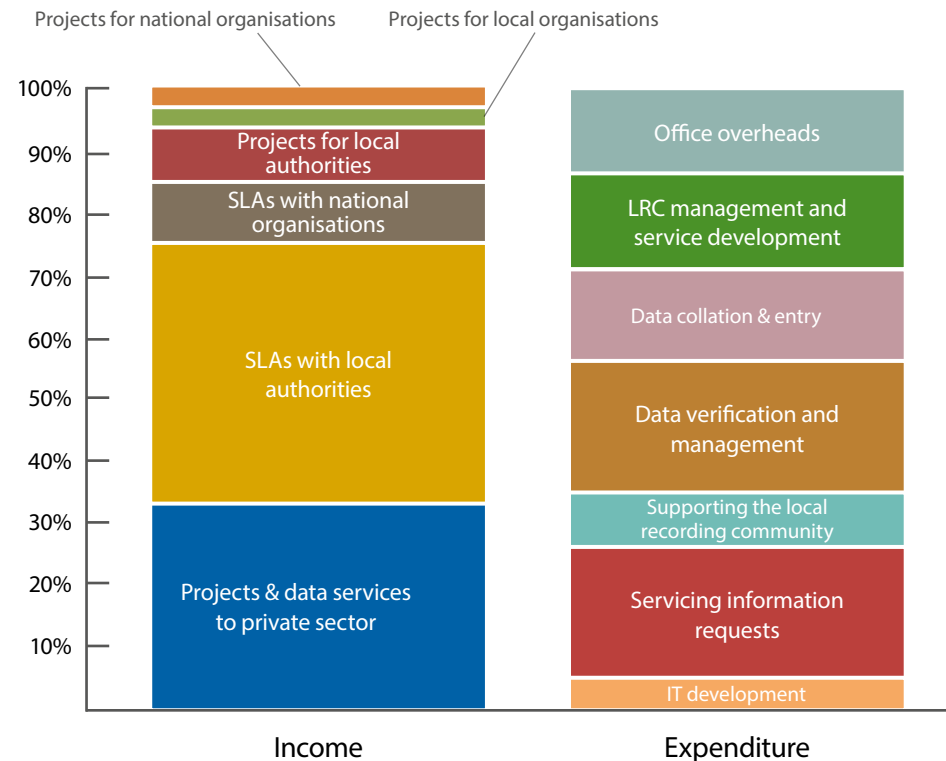
The value and cost of Local Records Centres

Much of the data managed by Local Records Centres is gathered by highly dedicated expert volunteer recorders. Without Local Records Centres, this valuable data resource would not be made available to local and national users promptly and in a suitable format.

Local Records Centres are run on a not-for-profit basis. They rely on income from data provision services to fund their operating costs, which consist primarily of staff salaries.

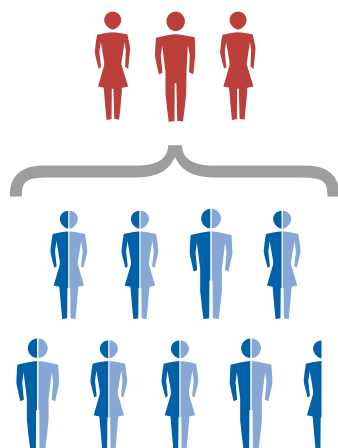
Because they help provide the evidence base for national conservation and monitoring initiatives, Local Records Centres receive some income from service level agreements (SLAs) with UK government agencies. Data searches for private sector organisations and funding from charitable trusts for education and outreach projects provide an additional but variable source of income.

However, these sources only cover a fraction of Local Records Centres' operational costs. It is therefore crucial that local users contribute to maintaining the services provided by Local Records Centres. The most efficient and sustainable way of doing this is through a SLA.



▲ The balance between income and expenditure of a Local Records Centre, based on the average operating costs of the eight London and South East LRCs

Local Records Centres are the most cost-effective way for Local Authorities and public bodies to access the data they need and to mobilise their own data in order to comply with environmental legislation and policies. This cost-effective mechanism for mobilising high quality volunteer data can only be maintained if it is supported by all the users who rely on it. The record centres in London and the South East typically have over 30 volunteers per year between them, adding over 20,600 hours of work, valued at over £278,000.



3 full-time staff

**Support 8.5 part-time
office based volunteers**

**Adding 30 hours of work
per week valued at
£20,250 per year**

▲ Illustration of the value added by volunteers to Local Records Centres, based on a typical week at Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre © Richard Yardley

Volunteers also work on all manner of LRC tasks, including website development, design of promotional materials, development of mobile phone applications, events planning and organisation, database development, newsletter design and production, design of species ID sheets, office administration and of course data entry!



▲ Training volunteers to carry out surveys
© SxBRC

◀ Volunteer recorders on a Kent Field Club
site visit. © KMBRC

Economic and social benefits of investing in Local Records Centres

Local Records Centres provide vital support to public authorities and other organisations in the public or private sector which carry out public administration functions or deliver services related to the environment. However, a far wider range of people and organisations benefit from the services provided by their local records centre.

Investment in Local Records Centres by local data users is necessary to ensure the continued availability of high quality environmental information to underpin decision making and limit risk, but there are additional benefits for the local economy.

- Reliable information on the distribution of priority species and habitats in London and South East England helps attract funding to the region to support conservation initiatives.
- Investment in Local Records Centres puts environmental information in the public realm in ways that provide real benefits to communities, businesses and the local environment.
- Local Records Centres' ability to engage volunteers adds value to any investment and improves the skills base and employability of local people.

“ I volunteered at HBIC 2 days a week for 3 months as an Assistant Data Officer, this involved carrying out data management and GIS mapping tasks of important wildlife sites and species information. I really enjoyed my time at HBIC and learnt how to use ArcGIS, Recorder 6 and Mapmate and gained a greater understanding of the role of LRCs. I had previously volunteered with several conservation charities but volunteering with an LRC gave me vital experience in data management and GIS that would have been difficult to gain elsewhere. The skills I learnt ultimately helped me to gain paid full time employment with TVERC.”

Rachael Potter, Data Assistant, Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

“I take on projects that otherwise would get left behind for lack of resources and hope that mapping the old hedgerow records helps people to understand their changing environment.”

Martin Shann, TVERC Volunteer



Sharing data with your Local Records Centre

There is a clear need to make information as widely available as possible:

“across the country there is still too little sharing of best practice and we are wasting time and money trying to find the information we need.”

Baroness Andrews,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Communities and Local Government,
November 2008.

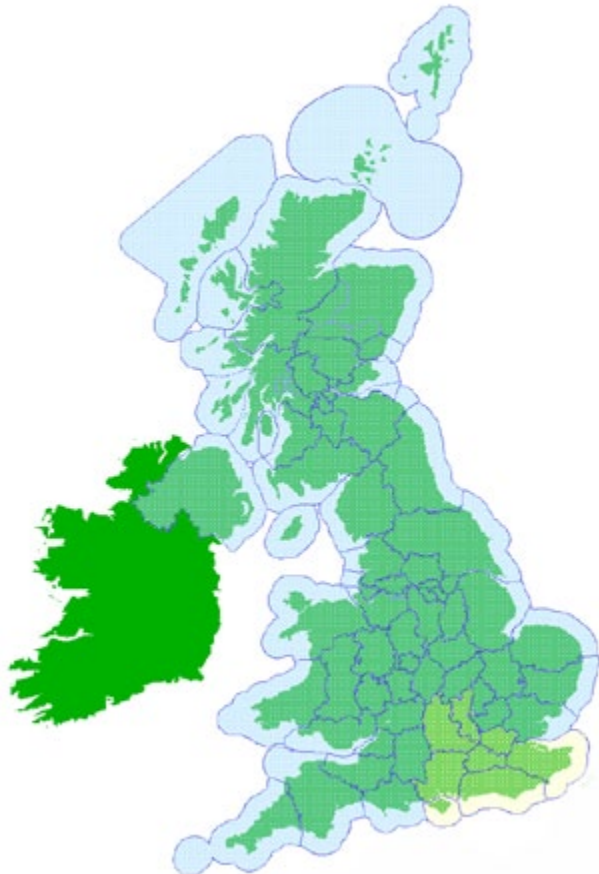
The UK Location Strategy seeks to facilitate access to and re-use of all public sector location information including data on biodiversity. Local Authorities, public bodies and their contractors regularly generate biodiversity data through their land management and planning functions. Local Records Centres can help public sector organisations to share these data in accordance with the UK Location Strategy by providing standardised, secure data storage and access facilities at a local level and, through the NBN Gateway, at a national level.

Monitoring change within our natural environment is an important part of our responsibility. Data provided by Local Authorities and public bodies will be combined with datasets from a wide range of sources to provide a complete and coherent picture of the local environment – so you always get more out than you put in! By using LRCs to store and manage their biodiversity data, Local Authorities and public bodies benefit from a greater degree of transparency.

Local Records Centres take data security very seriously; they all have systems in place to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act and can adapt data sharing and confidentiality agreements tailored to specific needs. LRCs are experienced in the collation and management of data on ecologically sensitive and threatened species, and follow strict procedures to ensure that data sharing does not result in environmental harm.

Biodiversity information can be sent in to LRCs in a variety of ways to suit your needs. Contact your Local Record Centre for information on how they can help you manage and share your data.

Local expertise in a national network



The [National Biodiversity Network](#) (NBN) is a partnership of organisations who collect and use biodiversity data and are committed to making this information widely available for conservation, research and education purposes. Local Records Centres play a vital role in this national partnership by supporting and guiding local biological recording effort, managing and quality controlling species and habitat records and ensuring that biodiversity data are used to inform local decision making.

The [NBN Gateway](#) is a tool developed by the NBN for communicating and sharing biodiversity data via the internet. Local Records Centres make local data available to everyone via the NBN Gateway, enabling public bodies to process requests for information under the Environmental Information Regulations and to achieve the objectives of the UK Location Strategy and Local Government Transparency Programme.

The NBN Gateway is not a substitute for the data services provided by Local Records Centres. Local Records Centres represent **the local delivery of the NBN vision**, using NBN web services to make data from a wide range of providers available for local use at the touch of a button. The Local Records Centres in the London and South East are developing tools to standardise and enhance data provision, working within the NBN to increase access to and use of biodiversity data.

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre (BMERC), Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC), Isle of Wight Records Centre (IoWRC), Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC), Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre (SBIC), Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) and Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) are part of a UK-wide network of Local Records Centres. Seven of the eight are members of ALERC, the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres. ALERC represents the interests of Local Records Centres throughout the UK, sharing innovations and best practice and promoting standards in environmental data management and service provision.

In addition, national geodiversity databases are being developed by Natural England and GeoConservation UK, in association with local record centres.



◀ Iberis amara © BMERC
▼ Downy Emerald © BMERC



Legislation and Policy relevant to the services provided by Local Records Centres

Requirement	Description/Information Required
EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	Species listed here are subject to strict regulations. Member states are required to introduce a range of measures including the protection of species and habitats, to produce a report every six years on the implementation of the Directive. Comprises 189 habitats and 788 species to be protected by means of a network of Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas (Natura 2000 Sites). An appropriate assessment is required for any large-scale development which is likely to affect these sites, which should comprise a review of biological data.
EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)	
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010	
EU Environmental Assessment Directive (85/33/EEC as amended 97/11/EC)	Environmental impact assessments are required for most types of large-scale development prior to planning approval, which should include biological data. Most LRCs derive an income from time given to informing EIAs
EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)	Strategic environmental assessments are required to protect the environment and promote sustainable economic development. They predict, evaluate and mitigate the environmental impacts of strategic decision making. Biological data should be used to inform a robust baseline assessment

Requirement	Description/Information Required
EC Public Access to Environmental Information Directive (2003/4/EC) 2003	Freedom of access to information on the environment and biodiversity data
UK Environmental Information Regulations, 2004	'Public authorities are required to make all reasonable efforts to organise the environmental information which is relevant to their function and which is held by or for them, with a view to its active and systematic dissemination to the public, by means of ICT'
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity..... Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat' (Section 40) Contribute towards 'publishing a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (Section 41)
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	Gives legal protection to the most important conservation sites in the country, designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and to a number of the UK's threatened species. Biological data required at a local level to inform designation of these sites.

Requirement	Description/Information Required
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Duty of statutory public bodies to take reasonable steps to further conserve and enhance SSSIs. Includes monitoring and new allocations. To positively manage SSSIs so that they are in favourable condition.
National Planning Policy Framework	<p>Published in March 2012 setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Chapter 11 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', paragraph 117:</p> <p>To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation; Promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan; Aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests.
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 06/2005	Published in August 2005, by the ODPM and Defra, this circular provided an administrative guide to accompany Planning Policy Statement 9. Although PPS9 has now been superseded by the NPPF, Circular 06/05 has not been revoked and its guidance currently remains in place. This document highlights application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation in England, including obligations relating to International and National Sites, conservation of priority habitats and species outside designated sites and in UK and local Biodiversity Action Plans. The Defra guidance on Local Sites is also mentioned, as well as the implications relating to Protected species under international and national law. Its practical implementation will rely, sometimes heavily, on information held within LRCs.

Requirement	Description/Information Required
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004	Local Development Frameworks require a robust evidence base. Targets are linked to the Regional Spatial Strategy.
Hedgerow Regulations 1997	These regulations came into force in 1997 and aim to protect important hedgerows by controlling their removal through a system of notification to local planning authorities. In determining the relevant hedgerows, part two of schedule 1 (criteria) specifically refers to information that could be held by a local records centre.
INSPIRE Regulations 2009	The INSPIRE Directive aims to make it easier to access and combine environmental spatial datasets held by public authorities, to support environmental policy and practice at a national and international level. This Directive became UK law under the INSPIRE Regulations 2009, setting standards for public authorities on metadata creation and the provision of publicly accessible data services.
Community Strategies, Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government White Paper 15, 2006	The 2006 White Paper sets out further reforms to reshape community strategies as sustainable community strategies in line with the recommendations of the Egan Review. It recognises that greater links exist between community and environmental health. Identifies need for robust data/evidence base.
Audit Commissions Quality of Life Indicators	30 a) The percentage area of land designated as SSSIs in the local authority area in favourable condition; and b) the area of land designated as a local nature reserve per 1000 population
The Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (No.2) Regulations 2006	These regulations protect uncultivated land and semi-natural areas from being damaged by agricultural work, and guard against possible negative environmental effects from the restructuring of rural land. Often LRCs hold information on land which can inform and enable appropriate decisions to be made.

Requirement	Description/Information Required
Green Infrastructure Agenda	The 2006 Northern Way report proposed a framework for City Regions to integrate Green Infrastructure into their forward strategic planning. Natural England is seeking to identifying strategic corridors relating to both Green Infrastructure and biodiversity
UK Location Strategy	UK Location is a pan-government initiative to improve the sharing and re-use of public sector geographic information, maximising its value to UK citizens and communities, government, commerce and industry. UK Location is the basis for delivering the UK's obligations under the INSPIRE Regulations 2009.
Local Government Transparency Programme	An objective of the Local Government Transparency programme is to: develop a sector-led approach to data transparency which puts local authority data into the public realm in ways that provide real benefits to citizens, business, councils and the wider data community.
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services	This strategy comes after the publication of the Natural Environment white paper, in 2011, by Prof Sir John Lawton. It describes how important conservation charities are in achieving the Government's biodiversity aims, and commits support to biodiversity recording in the voluntary sector.
Environmental Stewardship and Farm Environmental Plans	Environmental Stewardship is the term given to schemes for farmers and other land managers, subsidised by public money, that enhance the natural environment. There are several levels of these schemes and LRC data can be useful in preparing applications for all of them. For Higher Level Stewardship, a Farm Environment Plan is required. This is a detailed assessment of the wildlife value of a farm and could be enhanced by incorporating LRC data.

“There was an almost universal call to establish a meaningful dataset gathered locally but collated in one place, providing a baseline to measure and monitor against. Local Record Centres, which harness local volunteers and expertise, were frequently cited as best practice in data collection.”

Summary of responses to the Natural Environment White Paper Discussion Document, December 2010

▼ Brown hare © David Green



▼ Hedgerow © Alison Write



Services provided by Local Records Centres

List of all recorded priority and notable species in a defined area

UK Protected Species

Some species of wildlife are protected by UK and sometimes European legislation because of their rarity, or because of historical persecution. These species are called 'protected species'. Species with conservation designations, but no legal protection are called 'notable species'.

Legislation protecting species includes the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Protection of Badgers Act 1992; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The latter regulations enact the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in the UK.

Some protected species may not be legally disturbed unless you are in possession of an appropriate licence. If you are in any doubt as to whether or not a licence is required, you should contact Natural England.

The following tables detail the protected and notable species that were recorded in the defined search area:

Legally Protected & Notable/Rare Species Records

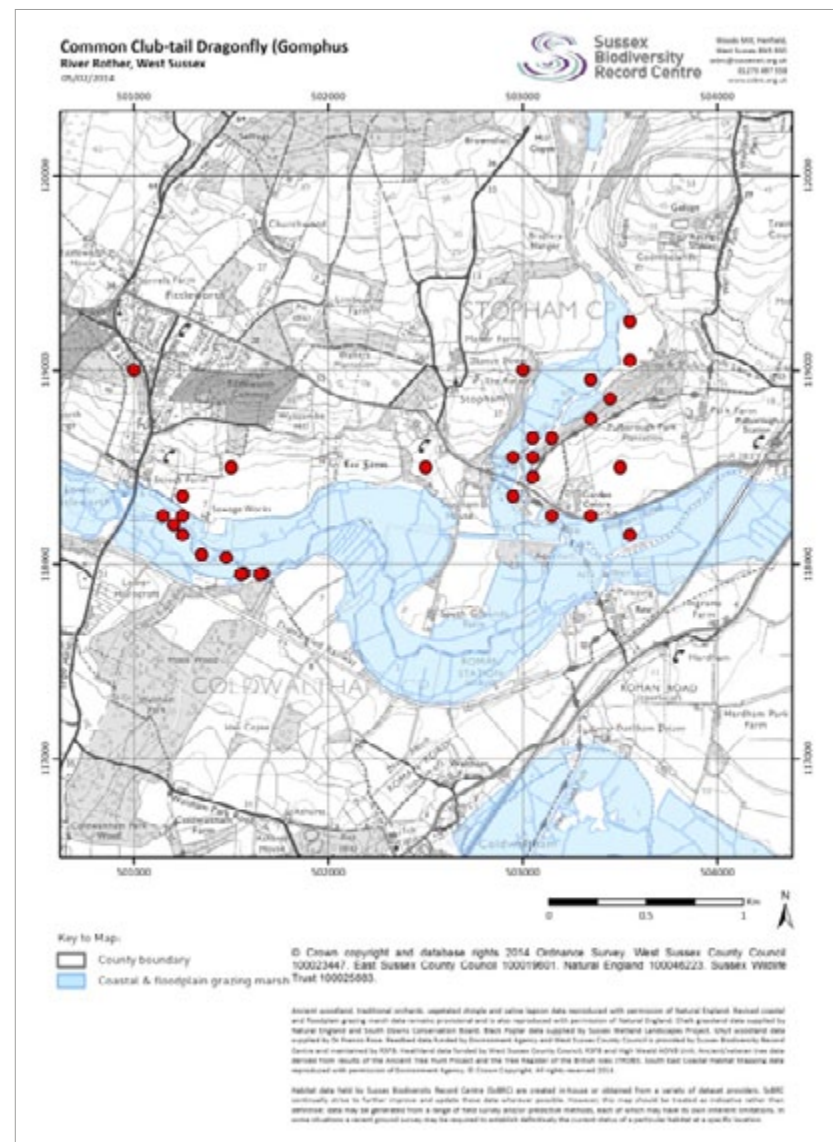
Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance/ Stage/ Record Type	Date	Grid Ref	Location	Data Origin	UK Legislation	European Legislation	UK Red List	NERC Act 2006	Notable Invertebrates	2009 BOCC Status	Easting	Northing	Taxon Code
Round-fruited Rush	Juncus compressus		6/16/1987	SP235043	The Bog, Filkins	BBOWT			post2001:NT				423500	204300	2400008550
Round-fruited Rush	Juncus compressus		21-Sep-96	SP235043		TVERC			post2001:NT				423500	204300	2400008550
Round-fruited Rush	Juncus compressus		6/22/2004	SP235043	The Bog, Filkins	OLWS			post2001:NT				423500	204300	2400008550
Bluebell	Hyacinthoides non-scripta		5/15/2001	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC	W&C Act 1981, Schedule 8, Section 13 Part 2						424200	206100	2400010280
Hound's-tongue	Cynoglossum officinale		5/15/2001	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC			post2001:NT				424200	206100	2400043770
Hound's-tongue	Cynoglossum officinale		6/12/2002	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC			post2001:NT				424200	206100	2400043770
Sainfoin	Onobrychis viciifolia		6/4/1998	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC			post2001:NT				424200	206100	2400060390
true bug (Hemiptera)	Placochilus seladonicus		7/26/1996	SP24150580	Filkins By Pass	OBRC			Pre94:Insu				424150	205800	7200006080
true bug (Hemiptera)	Placochilus seladonicus		7/26/1996	SP24150580	Filkins By Pass	OBRC			Pre94:Insu				424150	205800	7200006080
Flax Flea Beetle	Longitarsus parvulus		7/26/1996	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC					Nationally Notable A		424200	206100	7814601890
Small Heath	Coenonympha pamphilus	Adults	7/1/2004	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC				Section 41 Sp.			424200	206100	8300002906
Shaded Broad-bar	Scotopteryx chenopodiata		7/19/1995	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC				Section 41 Sp.			424200	206100	8400003109
Latticed Heath	Chiasmia clathrata	Adults	6/12/2002	SP24170590	Filkins By Pass	OBRC				Section 41 Sp.			424170	205900	8400003392
Cinnabar	Tyria jacobaeae	Immature Male	7/26/1996	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC				Section 41 Sp.			424200	206100	8400003748
Cinnabar	Tyria jacobaeae	1 Adult	6/4/1998	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC				Section 41 Sp.			424200	206100	8400003748
European Golden Plover	Pluvialis apricaria	12	21-Apr-00	SP2304	Filkins	OOS						Amber List	423000	204000	10600002950
European Golden Plover	Pluvialis apricaria	13	6-Apr-99	SP2305	Filkins	OOS						Amber List	423000	205000	10600002950

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance/ Stage/ Record Type	Date	Grid Ref	Location	Data Origin	UK Legislation	European Legislation	UK Red List	NERC Act 2006	Notable Invertebrates	2009 BOCC Status	Easting	Northing	Taxon Code
Northern Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	rare	6/16/1987	SP235043	The Bog, Filkins	BBOWT				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	423500	204300	10600003000
Stock Pigeon	Columba oenas		5/23/2000	SP235043	The Bog, Filkins	OLWS						Amber List	423500	204300	10600004640
European Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur	1	22-May-00	SP2204	Filkins	OOS				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	422000	204000	10600004680
European Turtle Dove	Streptopelia turtur	Breeding	5/23/2000	SP235043	The Bog, Filkins	OLWS				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	423500	204300	10600004680
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	1	4-Jan-03	SP2204	Confidential	OOS	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422000	204000	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	1	22-Feb-03	SP2204	Confidential	OOS	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422000	204000	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	3 Juveniles	7/27/2004	SP229056	Field Barn Farm, N. of Filkins	LN	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422900	205600	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	1 Juvenile	6/21/2005	SP229056	Fiplgins farm	LN	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422900	205600	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	ringing/ tagging record	14-Jul-09	SP2292105511	Field Farm, Filkins	LN	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422921	205511	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	1 Pair at nest	6-Jul-10	SP2292105511	Field Farm, Filkins	LN	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422921	205511	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	2 eggs, nest record	6/4/2007	SP22940546	Field Farm, Filkins	LN	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422940	205460	10600004880
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	3 Juveniles at nest	19-Jul-11	SP2295005464	Filkins Farm, Filkins	LN	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Amber List	422950	205464	10600004880
Sky Lark	Alauda arvensis	6	22-Feb-98	SP2205	Filkins	OOS				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	422000	205000	10600005700
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	1	3-Oct-99	SP2304	Filkins	OOS						Amber List	423000	204000	10600005830

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance/ Stage/ Record Type	Date	Grid Ref	Location	Data Origin	UK Legislation	European Legislation	UK Red List	NERC Act 2006	Notable Invertebrates	2009 BOCC Status	Easting	Northing	Taxon Code
Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	c.150	17-Nov-02	SP222036	Broughton Poggs	OOS	Schedule 1 (W&C Act 1981)					Red List	422200	203600	10600006820
Common Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	150	20-Feb-99	SP2304	Filkins	OOS				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	423000	204000	10600008440
Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	8	15-Feb-98	SP2203	Langford: Langford Downs Farm	OOS				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	422000	203000	10600009190
Yellowhammer	Emberiza citrinella	1 Male	7-Aug-00	SP2303	Broughton Poggs	OOS				Section 41 Sp.		Red List	423000	203000	10600009190
European Water Vole	Arvicola amphibius		4/4/1992	SP242034	Langford Brook	BBOWT	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981, amended)			Section 41 Sp.			424200	203400	10800000000
European Water Vole	Arvicola amphibius	burrow, nesthole	4/4/1992	SP242034	Langford	LN	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981, amended)			Section 41 Sp.			424200	203400	10800000000
Natterer's Bat	Myotis nattereri	14, Roost	5/29/1987	SP235038	Broughton Poggs Church	OBG	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	H & S Dir (An 4,5)					423500	203800	10800000460
Natterer's Bat	Myotis nattereri		5/29/1987	SP23550380	Broughton Poggs Church	OBG	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	H & S Dir (An 4,5)					423550	203800	10800000460
European Otter	Lutra lutra	dead on road	31-Dec-02	SP227032	Langford Brook A361	EA	Schedule 5 - all parts (W&C Act 1981)	H & S Dir (An 2)		Section 41 Sp.			422700	203200	10800000730
Eurasian Badger	Meles meles	dead on road	5/30/2002	SP229034	Filkins bypass	OBRC	Badger Act 1992						422900	203400	10800000770
Eurasian Badger	Meles meles		5/15/2001	SP242061	Filkins By Pass	OBRC	Badger Act 1992						424200	206100	10800000770

Records distribution map of any recorded species in a defined area

Local record centres can provide maps showing where species have been recorded. The map opposite shows where Common Club-Tailed Dragonfly has been recorded in Sussex.



Map of important habitats in a defined area

Local record centres can provide maps showing the habitat in a defined area. This can include habitats classified under JNCC Phase 1, the Integrated Habitats System and NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance.

What are 'Habitats of Principal Importance (previously UK BAP priority habitat)?

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). BAP habitats have recently been renamed 'Habitats of Principal Importance' and are protected from harmful development by S41 of the NERC Act and the National Planning Policy Framework.

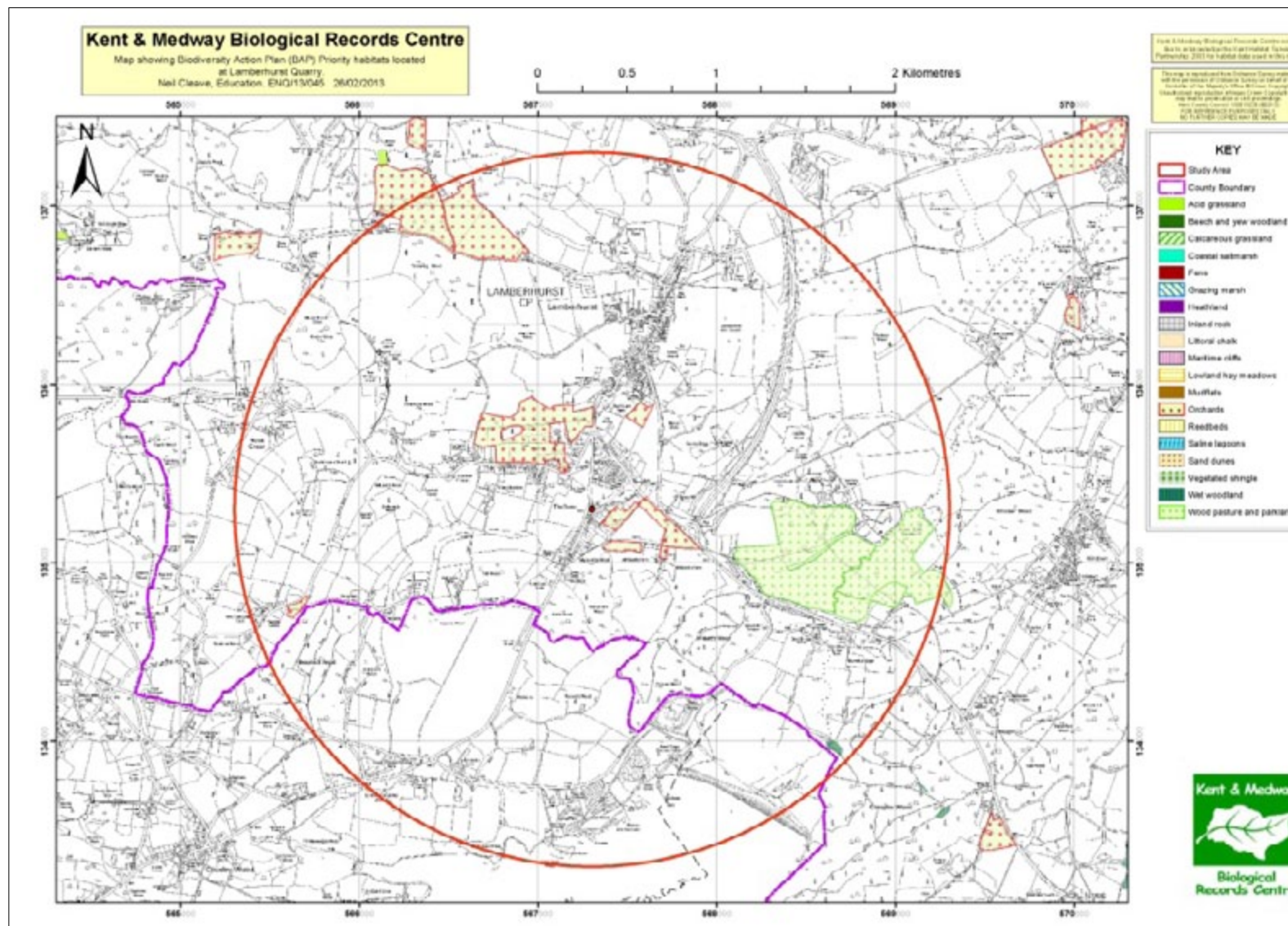
What is Phase 1 habitat?

The JNCC Phase 1 habitat classification and associated field survey technique provides a relatively rapid, but crude, system to record semi-natural vegetation and other wildlife habitats. The system has been widely used and continues to act as the standard 'phase 1' technique for habitat survey across the UK.

What is IHS?

Integrated Habitats System (IHS) integrates existing classifications in use in the UK with particular emphasis on BAP Broad Habitat Types, BAP Priority Habitat Types, Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive and Phase 1. Standard habitat definitions from these classifications are combined into a hierarchy starting at the level of Broad Habitat Types, through vegetation communities to habitat-specific features, such as management practices.

The map on the next page shows habitats around Lamberhurst Kent.

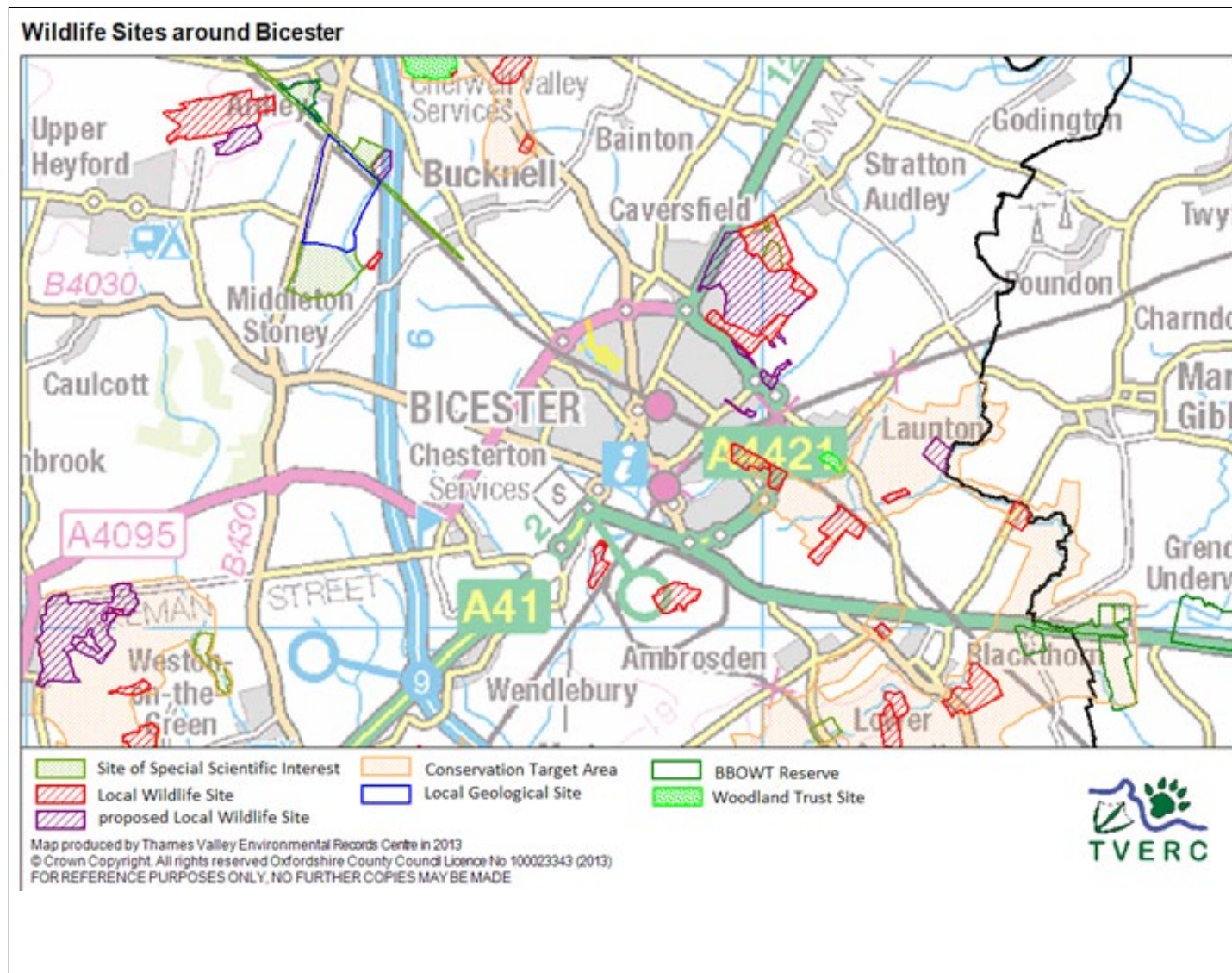


GIS data search of statutory and non-statutory sites in a defined area.

Local record centres hold data on the boundaries of sites in their area which are important for wildlife.

These sites can include:

- Special Protected Areas
- RAMSER Sites
- Special Areas of Conservation
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Local Geological Sites
- National Nature Reserves
- Local Nature Reserves
- Nature reserves owned and managed by conservation charities e.g. the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Woodland Trust.



Local Site descriptions and citations

Local record centres hold information on why local sites are important and a host of other information

Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation

Site Reference: M072

Site Name: Hampstead Heath

Summary: One of London's best loved open spaces, the Heath's remarkable range of habitats so close to central London includes one of the capital's few bogs, as well as wide expanses of grassland and ancient woodland.

Grid ref: TQ 273 866

Area (ha): 317.63

Borough(s):

Barnet, Camden

Habitat(s):

Acid grassland, Ancient woodland, Bog, Pond/lake

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: City of London, English Heritage

Site Description:

Just over six kilometres from central London, this extensive site is well known for its unique mix of semi-natural and formal habitats. Ancient woodlands contain an exceptional number of old and over-mature trees, providing dead wood habitat for a range of specialist invertebrates, including the nationally rare jewel beetle *Agrilus pannonicus*. Another important habitat is the small wet flush (or bog) containing several species of bog-mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) and water horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), all very rare in London. Acid grassland occurs on the upper slopes, supporting heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), pill sedge (*Carex pilulifera*), pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and other characteristic plants. In several places heathland restoration is being attempted, using heathers (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica* spp.). Relict heathland invertebrates include the tube-web spider (*Atypus affinis*) at its only known London site. The many ponds and watercourses on the site are of further botanical, entomological and ornithological interest. Other rare plants include creeping willow (*Salix repens*), lemon-scented fern (*Oreopteris limbosperma*) and hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*). One of north London's most popular open spaces, the Heath has been skillfully managed to integrate wildlife and recreation over the last decade. Owned by the City of London with the exception of the Kenwood Estate, which is owned by English Heritage; part Site of Special Scientific Interest. Hampstead Heath won a Green Flag Award again for 2006/7.

Site first notified: 19/09/1988 **Boundary last changed:** 01/01/1993

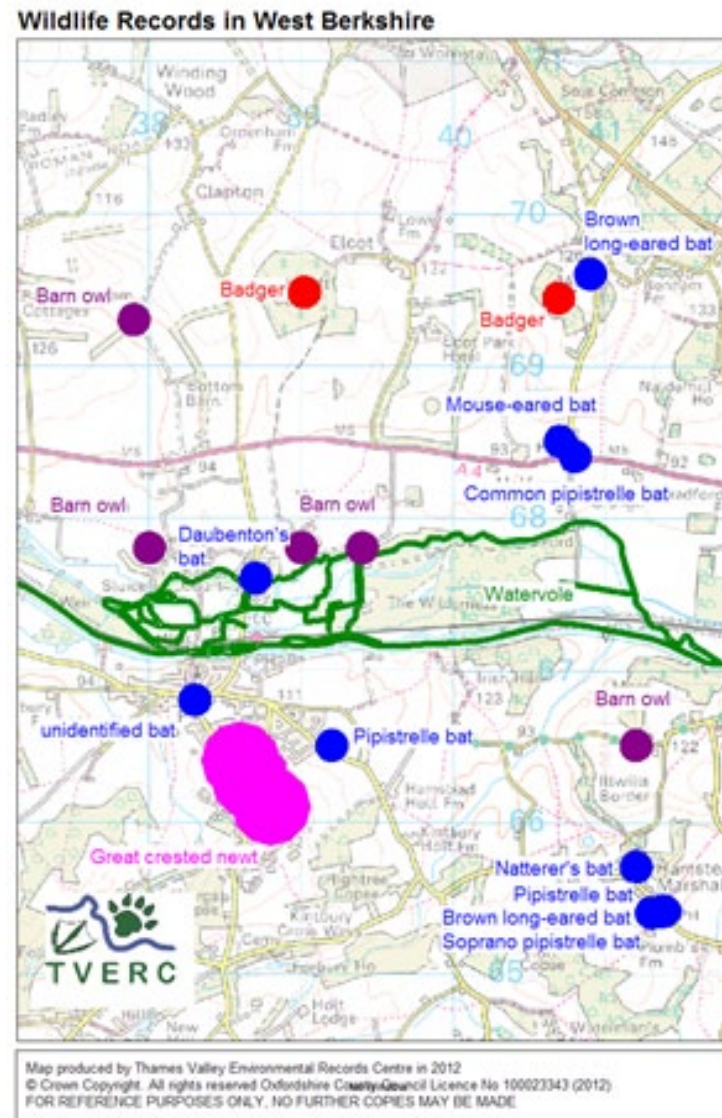
Citation last edited: 14/08/2006 **Mayor Agreed:** 25/11/2002

Defunct: N

Last Updated: 14/03/2007

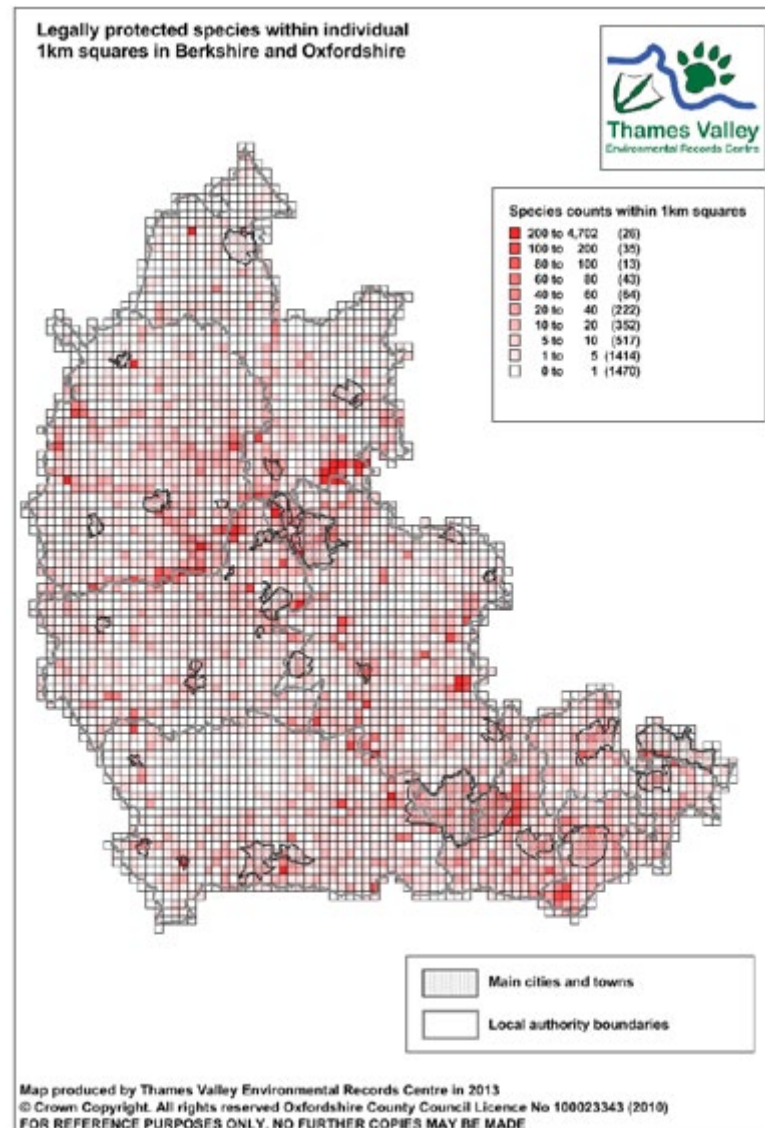
Regularly updated alert layers of important species and habitats within an administrative boundary

Local record centres can provide 'alert layers' to help decide whether to consult an ecologist on a planning application or to check constraints before carrying out or recommending maintenance work. These layers contain the species which are most protected by legislation, and buffer known locations of these species depending on the surrounding habitat. For example, a watervole record would be buffered up and downstream.



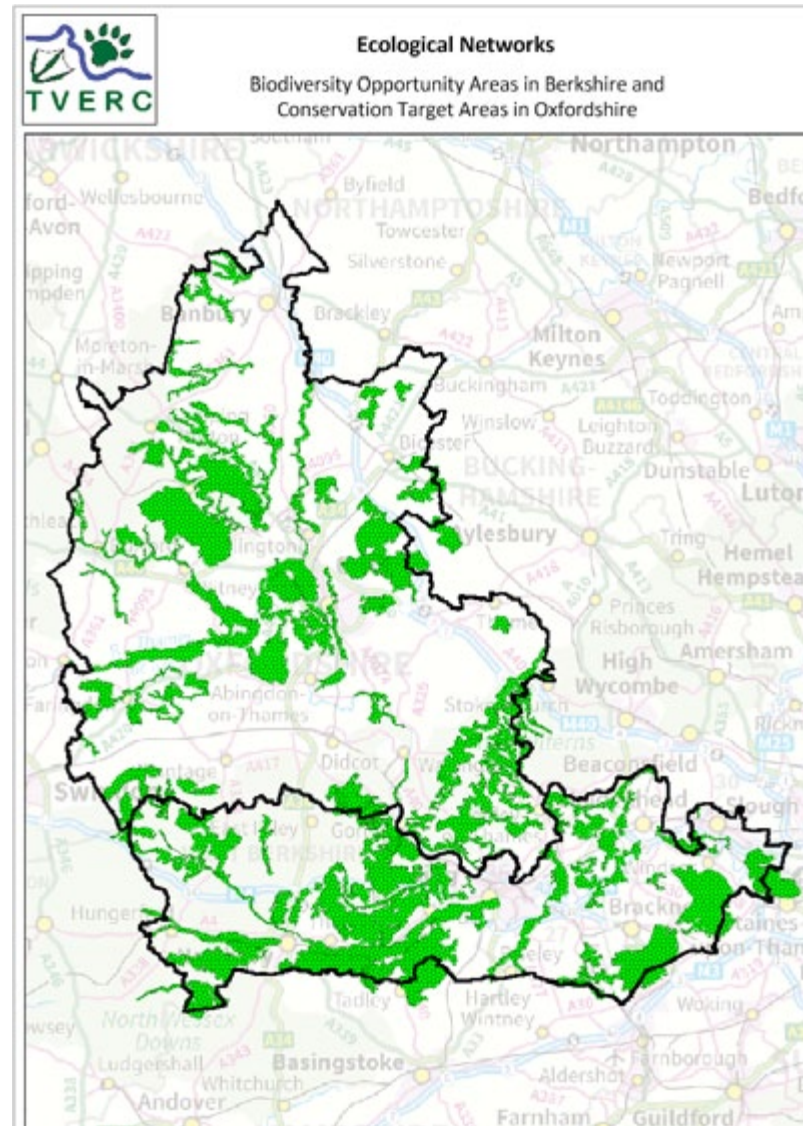
Records distribution maps

Local record centres can provide maps showing the number of records in their area. This map shows the number of species recorded within each 1km square across Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The red areas denote those squares where the highest number of species have been recorded. It should be noted that a lack of records should not be taken as confirmation of the absence of a species in the area. All it means is that no-one has recorded that species yet (or no-one has shared their data with the local record centre).



Ecological network maps

Ecological networks identify where the main biodiversity hotspots are, and therefore where conservation efforts can be most effective. Their aim is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of important habitats. Traditionally, nature conservation has focused on protecting important sites. This approach cannot sustain biodiversity in the long-term because important sites are fragmented and isolated from one another. We also need to take into account physical factors such as water and nutrient cycling which link sites to the wider landscape and affect the habitat found. Ecological networks meet the aims of Biodiversity 2020, by linking, buffering and extending existing wildlife sites and important habitats.



Training to promote high quality species and habitat recording

Record centres in London and the South East run training events to promote high quality species recording, and can offer opportunities for voluntary work placements to help you gain experience and knowledge. Check out their websites for details.



Training & guidance ©KMBRC