



NFBR

NATIONAL FORUM
FOR BIOLOGICAL
RECORDING



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Contents

View from the Chair	3
Investigating data quality with dataXplore	5
Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA): Assessing the state of England’s Natural Capital	7
CRED-ible?	14
Introducing Poll-A-Gen: measuring insect genomes over time	16
Falling through the Cracks: iNaturalist Invertebrate Records in the UK	18
Rare montane species records discovered in a mountain of old photographic slides	23
The Biodiversity Heritage Library	26
Data Flow of UK Fungal Records	28
The Fungi Verification Consultation Project	30
Convert your loved ones to the joys of biological recording this January!	32
Updates from UKCEH Biological Records Centre	34
NBN Trust update for NFBR – September 2025	37
Wildlife disease & contaminant monitoring & surveillance network (WildComms) update	42
Update from Non-native Species Inspectorate	43
NFBR 40th Celebration: Data for Nature	44

Cover picture:
Female Ivy Bee Colletes hederae nesting (Lucy Hulmes)



View from the Chair

Dear members,

As some of you may know, Sarah Whild passed the chair of NFBR on to me at the last AGM. She signed up as an interim chair for a year and has continued to hold the position for seven years, something for which the rest of the Trustees are extremely grateful. I promised to take on the role when we had completed work on our Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) if nobody more suitable stepped forward. Delays to the LNRS process kept me safe for at least an additional 18 months, but as they say, “you can run, but you can’t hide”.

I first became aware of NFBR over 20 years ago, when I took on the role of Director of the almost newly formed North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC). I had intended to hold the post for 3 years. After all, how hard can it be to collate biological records and make them available for decision making? Such naivety! Shortly after that, Bill Butcher invited me to my first NFBR conference at UMIST in Manchester. It introduced me to a hugely energetic community of brilliant and talented people and to my surprise, I got co-opted onto the NFBR council. I vividly remember Charlie Copp, with shinning eyes and evangelical zeal, explaining to me his vision for a National Biodiversity Network (NBN). It was all distributed networks, on-line databases, web services and “data wrappers”. It took me another 5 or 6 years to fully understand. By that time, NBN had come into being, though using a very different model.

Over the years I have been fortunate to see the NFBR play a major part in the formation and development of the NBN and of [ALERG](#). I’ve seen it move from federation to forum and in doing so adopt charitable status. Over recent years NFBR has been less overtly active, but it has helped to represent the interests of the biological recording community in a range of national initiatives and consultations, both through [LINK](#) and independently. Supported by the council, the Trustees of NFBR have tried to keep the biological recording community abreast of developments in the wider ecological monitoring community and of the ways in which biological records have impacted on conservation and land management through the newsletter and conferences. Though I feel a significant dose of imposter syndrome in taking the Chair of NFBR and perhaps “*we are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are*” I still think an independent voice for biological recording is worth having.

Since the publication of the Environment Act in 2021 there has been a resurgence of interest in ecological surveillance and monitoring at a national level on the



part of Defra, the ecological statutory bodies and national conservation and land management interests and on a local level because of LNRS. An accord on “Building An Evidence Base for Nature Recovery”, has been presented to the Chief Scientists Group, projects are being undertaken to establish what types of data will be needed to support nature recovery at every scale from local to national and work is well advanced on the development of a Citizen Science monitoring framework with a vision to provide much of the necessary monitoring data by this route. It is not clear how these plans may impact on existing dataflow pathways or on the validation and verification processes that support them. The work currently being undertaken recognises the importance of the amateur experts within the biological recording community in aspects of field recording and taxonomy, and the historical role that biological records have played in conservation policy and practice. There is a need, however, for the biological recording community to decide if and how it wishes to engage in these new developments and whether the various elements of the community prefer to engage individually, or to use the Forum to work collaboratively. NFBR would welcome views from its members and the wider biological recording community.

Over the coming months, the NFBR Trustees, supported by Council, will be working to establish the Forum’s priorities for the next three years. We would be very interested in feedback from the membership about what these priorities may be.

It is an honour for me to take my turn Chairing the NFBR and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the 2026 celebratory conference.

Simon Pickles



Investigating data quality with dataXplore

Francesca Mancini, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

dataXplore is a user-friendly web-based app to investigate the quality of species occurrence data. It is built as an interface to the R package *occAssess* (Boyd *et al.* 2021), but it does not require any programming skills to use it.

Species occurrence data are often biased and they may not accurately reflect real species distributions and their changes through time. It is therefore important to scrutinise these data for common forms of biases before they are used to derive any metrics of species distribution or trends. **dataXplore** produces a set of metrics and visualisations to screen a user supplied dataset for common forms of biases:

- bias in time: do the number of records change through time?
- taxonomic bias: does the number of species recorded change through time? Are common species under-recorded?
- spatial bias: is the distribution of the data representative of the area of interest? Is the data distributed randomly in space or is it clustered? How does spatial coverage change through time? How many sites are visited consistently across years?
- environmental bias: are the data representative of the environmental space?

Although **dataXplore** provides a tool to investigate the quality of species occurrence data, it does not provide formal recommendations as to whether the data is of sufficient quality for any specific use. This is because the usability of species occurrence data depends not only on their biases but also on the question being asked and the method used to answer it. It is possible to derive useful inferences from biased data where biases can be modelled or reduced.

dataXplore was developed by Dylan Carbone and Francesca Mancini at UKCEH through the **NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellowship: Bringing the Data Revolution to Nature Recovery**. We thank all the project partners and particularly Stuart Fraser, Tom Hartley, Adam Fraser and Euan Mckenzie for providing invaluable feedback during the development of the app. If you have any feedback on **dataXplore** please contact **Francesca Mancini** or open an issue on **GitHub**.

- Reference: Boyd, R.J., Powney, G.D., Carvell, C., & Pescott, O.L. 2021. *occAssess*: An R package for assessing potential biases in species occurrence data. *Ecology and Evolution*, 11(22): 16177–16187.



SPATIAL COVERAGE

SPATIAL BIAS

Time periods as

☐ Years☒ Year ranges

Time periods

1

Year range 1

1

to

10

Maximum Spatial Uncertainty (Only used for overlap and number of periods plots)

10000

Spatial resolution

10000

Country

(Alternative to Country selection) Provide a shapefile of your survey region and file extensions. All files have to be uploaded, not just the .shp file. Note this supersedes the selection of Country.

BROWSE...

4 files

Spatial coverage

This function can be used to assess the extent to which the same portion of the geographic domain has been sampled over time (spatio-temporal bias). This is likely to be crucial for robust estimates of changes in species distribution over time. The function provides this information in one of three ways, which can be selected by the user in the "Output" drop down menu. See the specific tooltip for details on each of the methods.



Screenshot of the dataXplore web-based app.



Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA): Assessing the state of England's Natural Capital

Mike Prince, Natural England

The **Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA)** programme provides nationwide evidence on the location, extent and condition of our ecosystems. This will transform environmental decision making in England, making it easier to assess the benefits which these assets provide and how well they can continue to support us.

NCEA is Defra's largest research and development programme, involving Natural England, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the Environment Agency, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), as well as many other partner organisations.

Natural capital refers to aspects of the environment that benefit people, such as healthy soils that support food production, and reedbeds that filter nutrients from farm run-off. According to the Office for National Statistics, the total asset value of natural capital in England was an estimated **£1.4 trillion in 2020** – clearly it is in our collective interest to understand the condition of these assets. As well as collecting baseline evidence through NCEA, Natural England has published **Natural Capital Indicators** and the subsequent **State of Natural Capital report**, which assesses the risks to key sectors from ecosystem damage, based on available evidence.

NCEA is developing a long-term environmental monitoring capability for England. Evidence comes from field surveys, Earth observation (e.g. satellite data), and innovative technologies like eDNA, as well as existing data from partners across the biological recording sector. NCEA data and maps will be made freely available online under an Open Government Licence.



Bog pool, Lake District © Natural England



NCEA projects

The projects described further below are all led by Natural England. As well as these, projects led by other NCEA partners include:

- Upgrading England's water monitoring network – [Environment Agency](#)
- Updating available information about trees and woodlands – [Forest Research](#)
- Studying mycorrhizal networks in different soil types – [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#)

England Ecosystem Survey (EES)

The [England Ecosystem Survey \(EES\)](#) is Natural England's largest field survey to date. It will provide data at national and regional scales on soils, vegetation, and landscapes, how they relate to each other, and how they're changing. From protected sites and farmland to urban edge habitats, 2,000 1 km squares (monads) will be surveyed on a five-year cycle. Ecological surveys, taking up to one week in each monad, record information on plants, habitats, hedgerows, streams and rivers, trees outside of woodlands, ponds, landscape, and soils. Measurements range from chemical properties of soil to the numbers and species of earthworms found, and DNA is extracted to identify microorganisms, e.g. fungi and bacteria, and understand the communities present in this ecosystem.



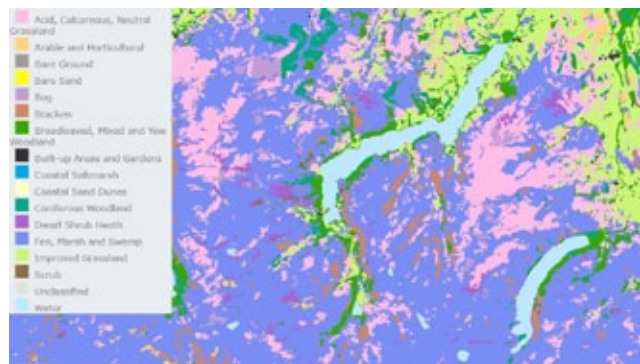
EES Surveying © Natural England

The survey will support delivery of the 25-Year Environment Plan. For example, data collected from soil sampling will inform the new Soil Health Metric and reporting against the Healthy Soils commitment. It will also underpin future State of Natural Capital reports and help evaluate national land management programmes such as the Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes.



Living England

Living England shows the extent and distribution of 18 broad habitat types across England, created using satellite imagery, field data records, and other geospatial data, in a machine learning framework. It underpins many other maps and landscape-scale assessments. It's available on **Magic**, and updated every two years to show change over time.

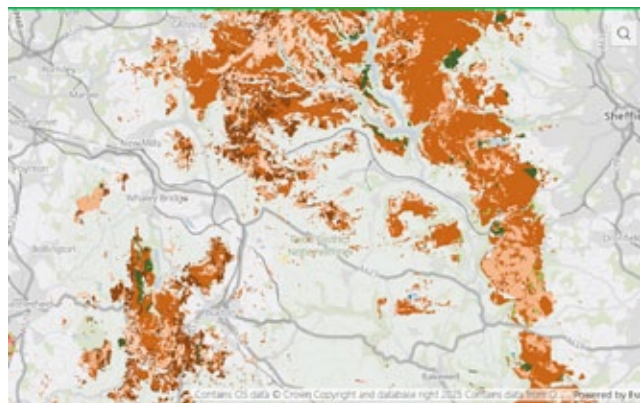


Living England: Ullswater, Cumbria © Natural England

England Peat Map

The **England Peat Map** contains the most detailed national mapping to date for peat depth, peatland vegetation, upland drainage channels, and upland bare peat, which are all important in determining peatland condition.

The maps will help us understand the benefits England's peatlands provide and how these are changing. They have many potential uses, including in carbon calculations and greenhouse gas emissions, targeting peatland conservation and reporting on the Environmental Improvement Plan.



EPM: Peak District vegetation © Natural England



EPM soil sample: Winmarleigh Moss © Natural England



Priority Habitat Inventory

The **Priority Habitat Inventory** maps 25 priority habitats across England.



PHI: Bodmin Moor © Natural England

Green Infrastructure

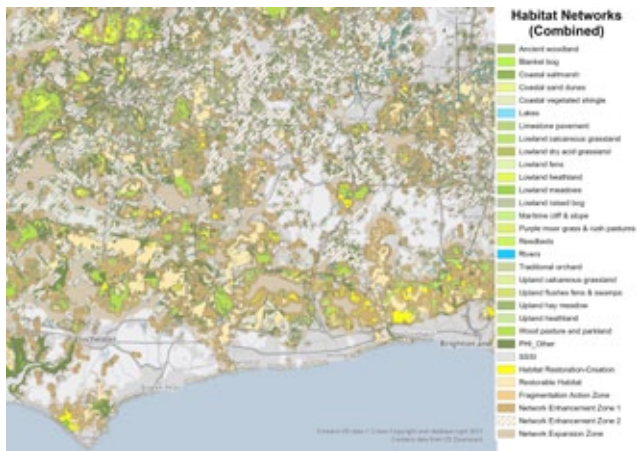
The **Green Infrastructure** map shows the location and quality of England's green and blue infrastructure, like parks, rivers, and access areas, as well as social datasets like varying access to greenspace across the country.



Green Infrastructure: London © Natural England

Habitat Network Maps

The **Habitat Network** maps make suggestions for where to target action to connect priority habitats. They are used to help plan local nature recovery.

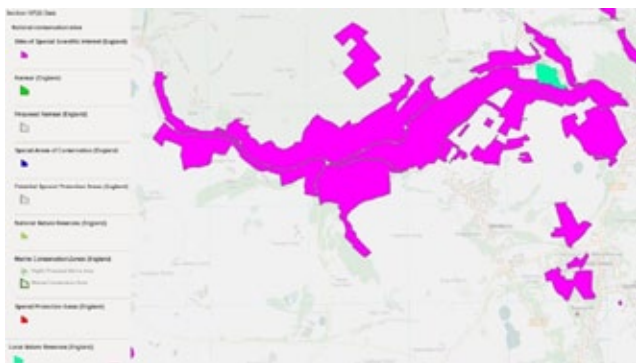


Habitat Network Map: West Sussex © Natural England



Local Nature Recovery Strategy data viewer

The **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)** data viewer collates national scale open data required by responsible authorities to assist them in creating their strategies for local nature recovery.

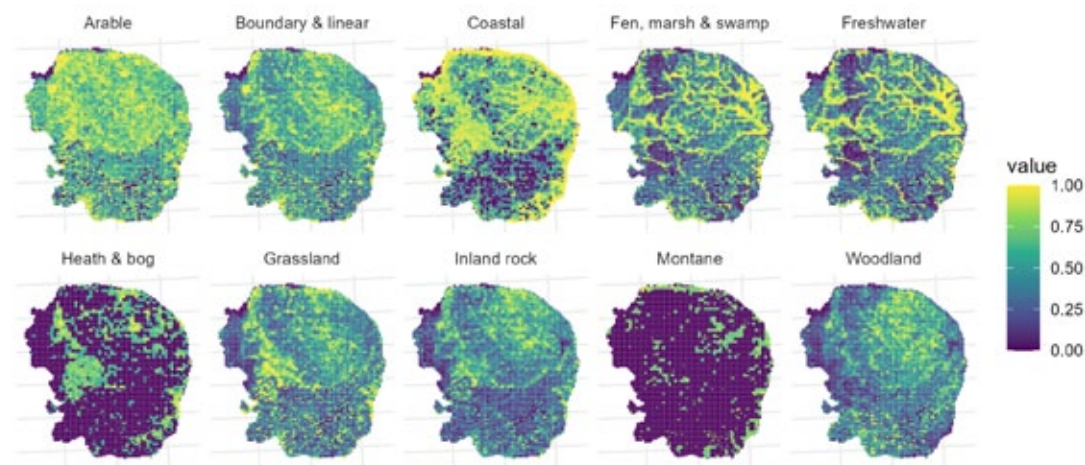


LNRS data viewer: Matlock © Natural England

Botanical Heatmaps and the Botanical Value Map

Developed with the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI), the **Botanical Heatmaps and Summarised Botanical Value Map** identify areas of high habitat quality, by combining occurrence records of species strongly associated with habitats of high wildlife value, including species that are nationally rare, scarce or threatened (RST) and those that are habitat specialists (Priority Habitat Positive Indicators, PHPI).

The Botanical Heatmaps support the England Tree Strategy, as well as responsible tree planting for everyone, informing “Right Tree, Right Place”.



Botanical Heatmaps: National Botanical Value – Norfolk & Suffolk © Natural England

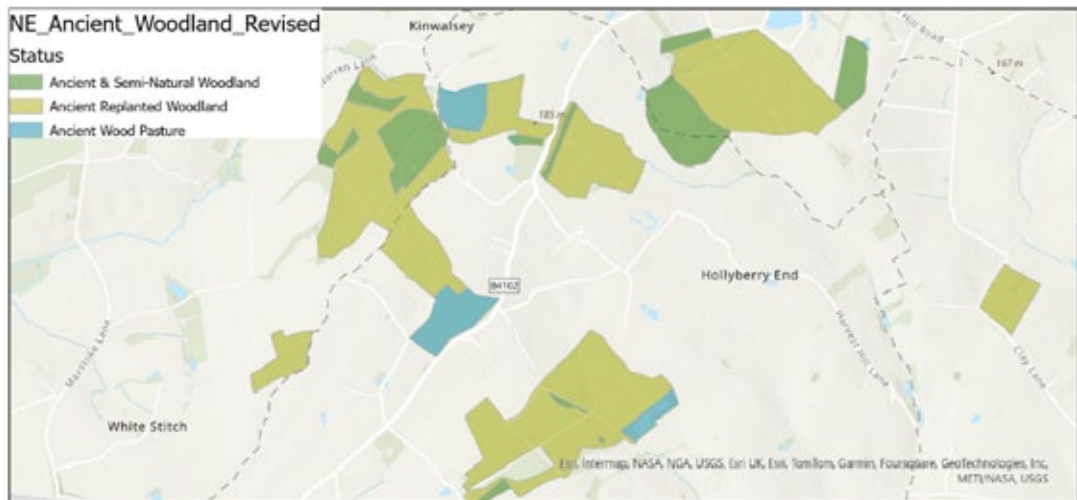


Lepidoptera Alert Maps

Through a partnership with Butterfly Conservation, Lepidoptera mapping products are being produced to inform decisions around tree planting schemes, landscape management, and conservation programmes. Products include a heatmap based on the presence of rare, scarce, and locally restricted species, and land-use alert layers highlighting the presence of indicator species for key land-use categories, such as semi-natural grasslands, heaths, ancient woodland, and peatlands.

Ancient Woodland Inventory

The **Ancient Woodland Inventory** has been updated with NCEA support. It now includes small areas of woodland, and ancient wood pasture and parklands.



AWI: Warwickshire © Natural England

Citizen Science and Biological Recording

Citizen science is vital to our understanding of the state of nature, and volunteer data underpins many NCEA products, as well as national reporting for things like the Environmental Improvement Plan. But with multiple organisations involved in biological recording, and many separate systems and data flows, the resulting data is often difficult to access. Improving the environmental data landscape for everyone – not just NCEA and Natural England – involves working with numerous partners at all stages of the species data pathway.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Trust

NCEA considers the NBN Atlas to be a vital tool to provide evidence related to species distribution over time, and the most effective way to share this with any end user. The partnership supports the NBN Trust to improve data accessibility via



the NBN Atlas, including **developing new functionality** to encourage increased data sharing and usage. Key outputs from this work include:

- **Access controls** – providing restricted access to high-resolution data
- **DNA data** – community-developed standards to support biological records resulting from DNA analysis

Biological Records Centre (BRC)

The NCEA partnership recognises iRecord as the leading platform for UK biological recording and record verification. The collaboration with BRC has sought to improve both systems and data flows, in liaison with national recording schemes and societies, and the verifier community. This work includes:

- Integrating AI image classification to aid identification and recording
- Launching **Record Cleaner** as a public service to improve record quality
- Enhancing data flows, e.g. from iNaturalist, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC), Spider Recording Scheme (SRS), and for unverified records

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT)

An ongoing partnership project with RSWT aims to improve the accessibility and availability of Local Wildlife Site (LWS) data in England, and understand how LWS can contribute towards 30x30 nature targets. LWS cover 5% of England and are currently poorly documented.

Citizen Science Partnerships

As well as improving the core biological recording infrastructure with NBN and BRC, NCEA is supporting collaboration across the Citizen Science sector, providing tools and resources, improving accessibility of existing data, and empowering more people to study more aspects of the environment. These partnership projects include:

- **GenePools** with the Natural History Museum (eDNA in urban ponds)
- The **Urban Pond Count** and **Priority Pond assessments** with the Freshwater Habitats Trust
- The **Priority Rivers and Lakes** project with the Freshwater Biological Association
- **Habitat identification** from satellite imagery with DigVentures

These partnerships explore how citizen scientists can collect and analyse data for under-reported habitats, often using new methods and employing survey design which allows outcomes to be integrated with other survey data. The results will make it easier for citizen scientists' work to contribute meaningfully to a broader picture of environmental condition.



CRED-ible?

Simon Pickles, Chair of NFBR

I am a sucker for innovation and new technology. I'm drawn to it like a moth to a Mark 2 AI moth trap. On numerous occasions I have positioned North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) at the bleeding edge of technology trying to take up an innovation before the technology was mature, only to find myself with the Local Environmental Records Centre equivalent of Betamax, when everyone else had adopted eco-VHS. I'm from Huddersfield, but I'm no Luddite, and I have a cupboard full of redundant kit to prove it.

In recent years, however, it feels like the ubiquity of modelling initiatives and the promise offered by new technologies like earth observation, acoustic monitoring and eDNA have eclipsed traditional field and taxonomic practices in the eyes of funders and policy makers. Increasingly elaborate approaches are being taken to do more with less. To develop amazing modelling techniques, but to train the models on inadequate datasets. To collect increasing quantities of data automatically, but to lose some of the local context of that data. In the past, the art of modelling has been enabled by the practice of recording, and most of the occupancy models that have been developed over the last 5 years have been based on data provided by National Schemes and Societies, but it is unclear whether this will be the case going forward. Should the traditional biological recording community keep pace with these technological changes and satisfy the demand for data and if so how. In addition, should the biological recording community seek to proactively promote traditional field skills to Defra and its arm's length bodies?

Some time ago, I suggested that NFBR develop a campaign for real ecological data, or CRED. It might more accurately be called a campaign for traditional ecological data but having been saddled with the impossible acronym NEYEDC for over 20 years I was not keen to adopt CTED. The suggestion was "tongue in cheek", but to my surprise gained some traction with my colleagues.

So, what might be the focus of CRED? Perhaps the following:

- **Communicate** the vital importance of grass roots biological recording and taxonomic skills in monitoring the state of nature and the efficacy of measures aimed at nature recovery at both a local and national level.
- Act to enable inclusive **resourcing** of existing biological recording activities and facilitate the growth of the biological recording community across **all taxa**.



- Work towards clear, efficient and **equitable** ecological data flows, with rigorous validation and verification, in which the roles of all data collators are clear, transparent and mutually recognised and critically, the interests of primary data creators are respected.
- Establish pathways to enable the **deployment** of new equipment, techniques and technologies to the front-line of amateur biological recording where appropriate.

In many ways, these points reflect the charitable aims of NFBR, but is it necessary to voice them more vociferously? How unified is the biological recording community in its support of these points? Do we need to actively campaign? I would be grateful if members could feed back on whether we need CRED and if so, exactly what should it encompass?



Introducing Poll-A-Gen: measuring insect genomes over time

Inez Januszczak, Natural History Museum

The importance of pollinating species, in particular insects, is well documented. In the UK, there are over 1,500 species that rely on plants for nectar and pollen, including bumblebees, honeybees, solitary bees and hoverflies. Less known is the role of flies, beetles and moths in the pollinating cycle. Pollinating insects are keystone species in almost all terrestrial ecosystems and are crucial for both food production and ecosystem health. According to the UK Wildlife Trust, 85-95% of the UK's insect-pollinated crops rely on wild pollinators. Crops are often pollinated by many different insect species. One study by the University of Reading found more than 25 different bee and hoverfly species on apple blossom, showing that insect pollination had tripled the production of fruit and boosted its size and quality.

However, despite their high economical and biological value, it is no secret that UK pollinator numbers are declining. A study by the Natural History Museum in 2022 revealed that 60% of the UK's flying insect population has declined, with invertebrates affected by rising temperatures, fragmented habitats and excessive pesticide use in agriculture. Whilst measuring abundance is one way of tracking these changes, little is known about the evolution of certain pollinator species and how they have adapted (or if they have adapted) to these dynamic fluctuations in the UK environment.

In response, an exciting new



Common wasp Vespula vulgaris pollinating a whiteprimula flower © Maria Wan, Shutterstock



Episyrphus balteatus photograph © JorgeOrtiz_1976, Shutterstock



project has just launched at the Natural History Museum in London. Funded by NERC (Natural Environment Research Council), the Poll-A-Gen project is aiming to delve into the reasons behind this decline, but from a genetic standpoint. Utilising museum specimens collected at three different time periods (30s, 50s, 70s), and modern specimens collected across the UK, Poll-A-Gen will examine changes in diversity across species which are in decline or expanding. Using specimens in this way, as well as using previously published genomic data, is one way to measure the impact of a change in population size, structure and even selection pressure across the insect population.

PollAGen species list		
	Common name	Scientific name
Bees		
	Buff-tailed bumblebee	<i>Bombus terrestris</i>
	Garden bumblebee	<i>Bombus hortorum</i>
	Common carder bee	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>
	Red-tailed bumblebee	<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>
	Brown-banded carder bee	<i>Bombus humilis</i>
	Ruderal bumblebee	<i>Bombus ruderatus</i>
	Red mason bee	<i>Osmia bicornis</i>
	Yellow legged mining bee	<i>Andrena flavipes</i>
Wasps		
	Common wasp	<i>Vespa vulgaris</i>
	Tree wasp	<i>Dolichovespula sylvestris</i>
Hoverflies		
	Marmalade hoverfly	<i>Episyrphus balteatus</i>
	Thick-legged hoverfly	<i>Syrphoctonus pipiens</i>
	Batman hoverfly	<i>Myathropa florea</i>
	Gossamer hoverfly	<i>Baccha elongata</i>
	Dark-saddled Leucozona	<i>Leucozona laternaria</i>

Poll-A-Gen are subsequently looking for entomologists, recorders or hobbyists who would like to be involved in this exciting research and are able to collect specimens from across the UK. There are 15 pollinator species on the list; eight bees, two wasps and five hoverflies (summarised in the table provided), all with a relatively good UK distribution and easy to identify in the field. The project will provide all equipment as well as guidance around sample preservation for genetic research – the only requirement is each species cannot be collected more than twice at each site, so there is a high enough geographical distribution of specimens.

If you would like to get involved, or have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact Poll-A-Gen Project Coordinator Inez Januszczak at pollagen@nhm.ac.uk.



Falling through the Cracks: iNaturalist Invertebrate Records in the UK

Joss Carr (Queen Mary University of London) discusses the topic of his MSc Research Project

iNaturalist is a subject that divides opinion in the UK biological recording community. Some think it's the best thing since sliced bread, others wish they could snap their fingers and make it vanish from existence. Irrespective of how one feels, it is clear that iNaturalist is here to stay. As a community we must learn how to embrace iNaturalist, redress its current shortcomings, and maximise the utility of the millions of biological records being generated.

For those not in the know, iNaturalist is an online citizen science biodiversity recording platform. Originally developed in California off the back of a 2008 Master's project at the Berkeley School of Information, the platform has grown into a thriving international community of nature enthusiasts uploading, sharing and identifying their species finds around the world. iNaturalist's popularity skyrocketed in the UK after 2020, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic during which many people started paying closer attention to the wildlife in their local area.

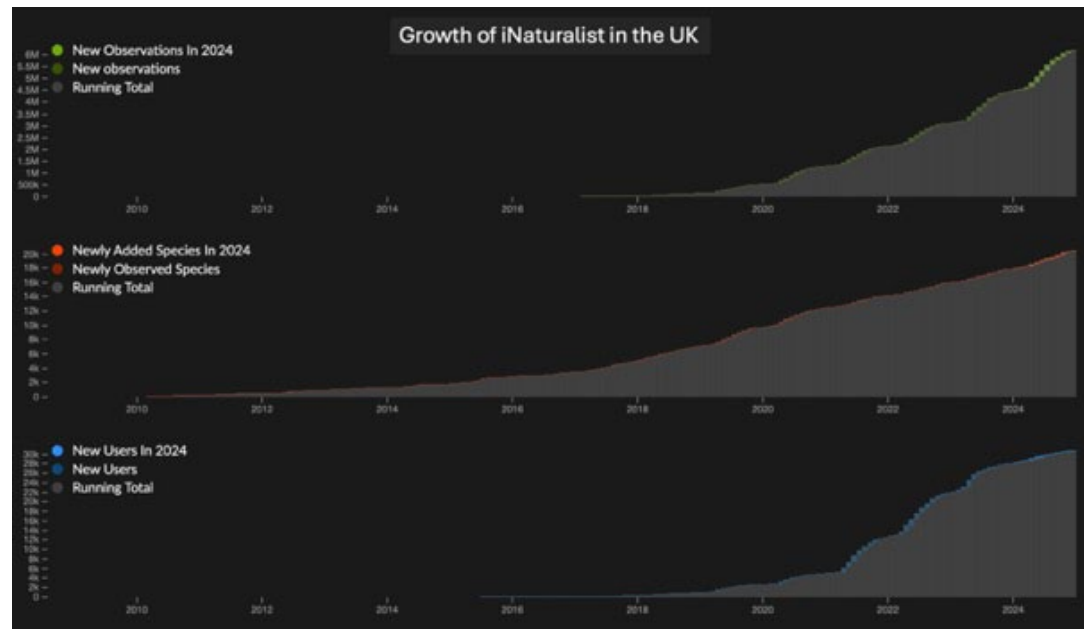


Figure 1: The growth of iNaturalist in the UK. Taken from: <https://uk.inaturalist.org/stats/2024>



The premise of iNaturalist is simple. First, a user takes a photo of a wild living organism. Then, the user uploads that photo to iNaturalist alongside the associated location and date metadata and suggests an identification. Once uploaded, other users can view that observation and add additional identifications if they feel confident doing so. Provided at least two unique users add a species-level (or finer) identification, and at least 2/3 of these identifications agree, the observation becomes 'Research Grade'. Research Grade observations are exported onwards to contribute to the key datasets used for biodiversity science and conservation.

Since 2020, iNaturalist has been connected to the wider digital infrastructure for biological recording in the UK via a link with iRecord. iNaturalist records are imported to iRecord provided they meet four criteria: (1) the record must be within the UK, (2) the record must be of a species on the UK Species Inventory, (3) the record must have a CC-0, CC-BY or CC-BY-NC license, and (4) the record must be Research Grade on iNaturalist. By exporting iNaturalist records to iRecord it is hoped they will be reviewed by verifiers using the platform in much the same way that records from other sources are. But is this actually happening?

This was the question that originally sparked my research project. I had been an avid user of iNaturalist for a few years but had never considered what my records were doing once they reached Research Grade. When I did dig into iRecord, I was able to find my records (or at least, those that met the above four criteria), but I was surprised to see that only around **10% had been accepted**. I was immediately curious – what was going on? Many of these records were over a year old, the vast majority had already been reviewed by taxonomic specialists on iNaturalist, and the associated metadata (e.g. recorder name, location, date) was provided in acceptable formats. Why weren't they being reviewed?

As it turns out, this was (fortunately) not just a problem affecting me, but a much wider issue. For many taxonomic groups (vertebrates, invertebrates, plants and fungi alike), a far lower percentage of iRecord records from iNaturalist have been reviewed (let alone accepted) by verifiers relative to those that come from other sources. The graph below shows some specific data on this for invertebrates. It's clear that for many verifiers, engaging with iNaturalist is not seen as a worthwhile use of time. **Why?**

I took to the NFBR Facebook page and posed my question – why are so many iNaturalist records not being reviewed? The clear answer that emerged concerned data quality. Verifiers were of the opinion, presumably based on their experience with iNaturalist records they had engaged with, that iNaturalist data was predominantly **poor quality**. Unpacking this further, I identified nine key



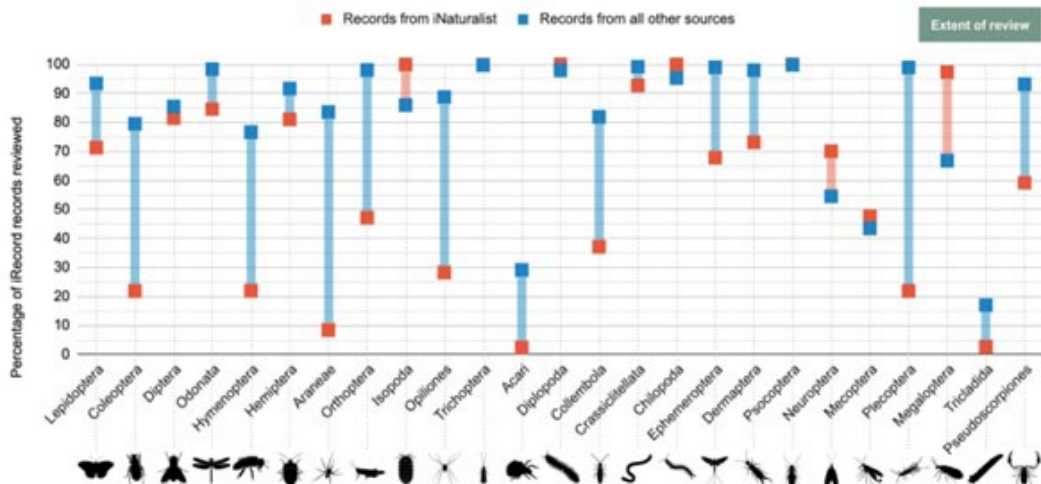


Figure 2: Extent of review of records for the top 25 most recorded groups of UK non-marine invertebrates on iRecord, comparing the percentage of records reviewed from two sources: records from iNaturalist (red) and records from all other sources (blue), with the height of each bar representing the discrepancy in extent of review between sources. Records were considered reviewed if they had any status besides pending. The 25 taxonomic groups are ordered from the most total records on iRecord (left) to the least (right).

Data quality concerns with iNaturalist records		
1	Identification accuracy	Is the species name correct?
2	Spatial precision	Is the location data (latitude/longitude) correct?
3	Recorder names	Is the recorder's name provided in an acceptable format (i.e. forename + surname) such that it is recognisable?
4	Record licenses	Does the record licence permit unrestricted use by all conservation organisations in the UK (CC-0, CC-BY, CC-BY-NC, or no license)?
5	Photo licenses	Does the photo licence permit unrestricted use by all conservation organisations in the UK (CC-0, CC-BY, CC-BY-NC, or no license)?
6	Life stage annotations	Has the life stage of the organism (e.g. larva, nymph, adult) been provided with the record?
7	Sex annotations	Has the sex of the organism been provided with the record?
8	Species coverage	Does the dataset as a whole represent an acceptable range of species within a given taxonomic group?
9	Location names	Does the record include an acceptable location name (not too vague, e.g., a county or country) that can be cross-checked with the primary location data to ensure accuracy?

Table 1: Nine key data quality concerns with iNaturalist-sourced records identified through stakeholder consultation on the [NFB Facebook Group](#).



dimensions in which iNaturalist records were perceived to be often found lacking (or otherwise dubious): identification accuracy, spatial precision, recorder names, life stage annotations, sex annotations, record licenses, photo licenses, species coverage and location names.

For my research project, I compiled and circulated a questionnaire to all iRecord verifiers of non-marine invertebrates to quantify perceptions of the data quality of iNaturalist-sourced records. In addition, I analysed the iRecord data directly and calculated the extent of various data quality issues for the key taxonomic groups of UK non-marine invertebrates. Throughout the analysis I compared the data quality of iNaturalist records and the data quality of records from all other sources.

Regarding perceptions of iNaturalist-sourced records, the key result was that opinions are varied. Even amongst groups of verifiers tackling records for the same taxonomic group, there were always those who felt largely positively about iNaturalist-sourced records and those that felt strongly negatively. What elements of a record are necessary for it to constitute high quality (or even ‘acceptable’ quality) data is clearly not universally agreed upon. Alongside this variation in perception, however, certain data quality elements did emerge as higher concern overall (see below). Recorder names, spatial precision and the provision of life stage and sex information were particularly important, for example.

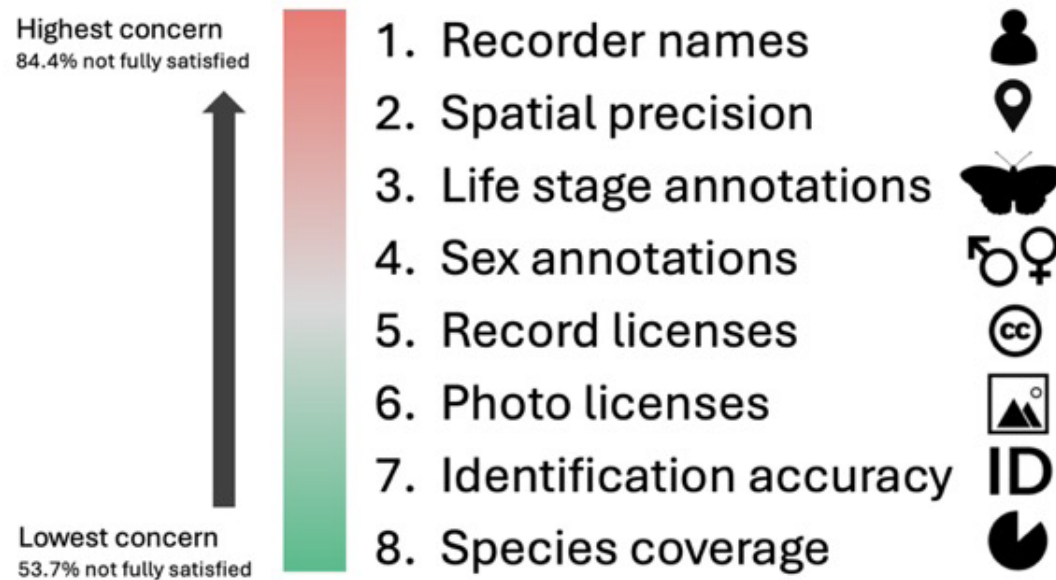


Figure 3: Data quality concerns ranked from highest to lowest concern overall for verifiers.

Regarding the ‘true’ extent of data quality issues, as reflected in the iRecord data itself, my results corroborate many of the concerns held by verifiers. For recorder names, spatial precision, life stage and sex information, licenses and species coverage, iNaturalist-sourced records score considerably worse than records from other sources. For other dimensions – spatial precision and location names – iNaturalist-sourced records again score worse, though the difference is comparatively minor.

My analysis also suggested that iNaturalist-sourced records are only redetermined within iRecord by the verifier on average 0.67% of the time. Whether this redetermination rate reflects the true accuracy of identifications is debatable. Due to differences in how verifiers handle misidentified records, identification accuracy is challenging to measure. More in-depth analysis is needed in this area.

My research makes clear (a) that there are widespread concerns with the data quality of iNaturalist records and (b) that many of these concerns are reflected as systemic issues in the data itself. My suspicion is that the root cause of these problems is simply a lack of awareness. iNaturalist has thrived thanks to its minimal onboarding process; many users have accumulated thousands of observations without so much as a thought about what happens to their data after it reaches Research Grade. I personally fell into this camp a year ago. Whilst there have been efforts to publicise guidance for iNaturalist users to improve their data quality, widespread improvements in data quality have yet to manifest. Further outreach is clearly needed. There are also conversations due amongst verifiers and data aggregators regarding reassessing the requirements for a high quality record in the age of photo-based recording, establishing standards, and recruiting additional verifiers in light of the mounting number of incoming records.

To learn more about this research project you can watch a recording of a webinar I delivered on the subject as part of the Biological Recording Company’s entoLIVE series: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QfjH-e8hw>



Rare montane species records discovered in a mountain of old photographic slides

Richard Gallon, Cofnod

Occasionally Cofnod comes across useful and interesting species records in unexpected circumstances. The British Arachnological Society (BAS) recently acquired a large photographic slide archive, from the late John & Frances Murphy, esteemed former members of the society.

The BAS arranged to have all these slides digitised professionally and it was found to contain approximately 15 thousand images. Although all the images were digitised, the all-important descriptions were still written on the slide mounts. Richard Gallon took delivery of the original slides and photographed all the slides on a lightbox to ensure we could relate what was written on each slide with the professionally scanned images.

Although the Murphys were primarily arachnologists, they had a broad interest in natural history and were widely travelled. As Richard worked through the collection, he came across images of two of North Wales's rarest and most iconic species.

The Snowdon Lily (*Gagea serotina*) images caught Richard's attention first, and these slides were labelled "Snowdon 6/69". Remarkably it was found that one of the Murphys' photos related to the exact same clump of Lilies that Richard had photographed himself on the 28th May 2023! The Murphys' image was also taken from the same angle making for an interesting comparison showing how this clump had fared over 54 years. The clump appears to have expanded down the rockface but dwindled in the centre of the group. To the right of the image, it was clear that some additional soil accumulation had occurred on the rock ledge too.



It was now possible to get an accurate grid reference for the Murphys' Lily record from Richard's 2023 GPS record. However, could we do better on the date?

As luck would have it the Murphys had also photographed a Snowdon Rainbow Leaf Beetle (*Chrysolina cerealis*), with the slides labelled "19.6.69 & 6/69". Date





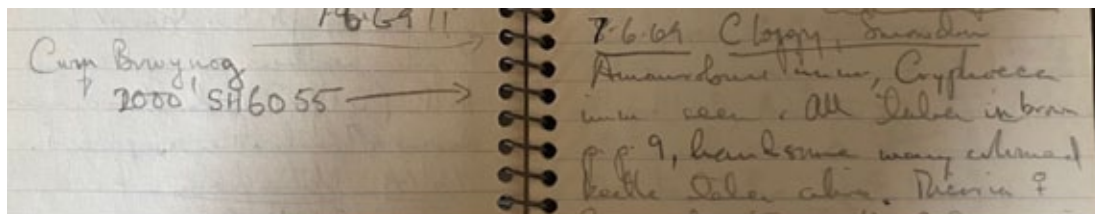
The same clump of Snowdon Lilies in 1969 and 54 years later.

resolved, surely? Well, not quite, Richard realised he also had the Murphys' spider field notebooks, but discovered that on the 19th June 1969 they were at Studland in Dorset!

Fortunately, their notebook entry for the 7th June 1969 clearly indicated that they visited Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) on that day and wrote "handsome many coloured beetle taken alive". Clearly this was the Rainbow Leaf Beetle they had collected on the 7th June 1969 and subsequently photographed in captivity on the 19th June 1969. This detective work providing an exact date for their Snowdon Lily record in the process!

It's strange to think that a digitisation project instigated by the British Arachnological Society has uncovered 'new' old records of two rare montane





species that in Britain are restricted to North Wales. We appreciate the irony that Snowdon Lily used to be called Mountain Spiderwort, perhaps highlighting this arachnological link!!

This article is reproduced from the article first published by COFNOD's newsletter "On the Record" in August 2025. You can find this and previous newsletters from Cofnod here:: <https://dashboard.mailerlite.com/preview/345904/sites/87880478699292067/aCCx5d>



Rainbow Leaf Beetle



The Biodiversity Heritage Library

Clare Blencowe, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) is the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Working with a global consortium of contributors, BHL makes tens of millions of pages of biodiversity knowledge freely accessible, via this website:

<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>

It will be well known to many readers of Field Mycology for providing unparalleled and easy access to multitudes of books, descriptions and illustrations which remain relevant today in interpreting taxonomic descriptions of fungi (Fig. 1). The BHL is also a rich resource for anyone interested in the history of mycology (Fig. 2) and aficionados of natural history illustration (Fig. 3).

For many years, BHL has been hosted by the Smithsonian Institution, but now finds itself at a crossroads, following an announcement that these hosting arrangements will end on 1 January 2026. The BHL Consortium issued a Call for Support from interested institutions and stakeholders, to establish new hosting arrangements and ensure continuity, resilience and growth for this essential global biodiversity infrastructure.

Since releasing their Call for Support, BHL reports that “the global response has been inspiring and heartwarming”. Conversations are now underway exploring alternative technical hosting, funding and staffing models. You can



Figure 1



Figure 2.



read the latest updates on the BHL Blog:

<https://blog.biodiversitylibrary.org/>

Please note, the Call for Support closed on 31st August 2025.

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Figure 3



Data Flow of UK Fungal Records

Sam Amy, Martha Henson (Tech Works for Us), Martin Harvey (UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology)

A recent report on the data flow of UK fungal records for Natural England explores the state of fungus recording in the UK, focusing on data collection, verification, and sharing processes.

Importance of fungi conservation: Fungi are essential components of ecosystems, and the UK supports globally threatened species and internationally important assemblages of fungi. However, their conservation is hindered by incomplete, inaccessible, and inconsistently verified data.

Data complexity and challenges: The recording landscape includes multiple national recording schemes, local groups and online platforms. Issues such as data duplication, inconsistent verification, and restricted data sharing hinder conservation efforts such as Red List assessments and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Key data sources are summarised:

- British Mycological Society (BMS) maintains the Fungal Records Database of Britain and Ireland (FRDBI), a major repository.
- Fungus Conservation Trust (FCT) manages CATE2, a significant but less accessible database.
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) provide broader access to biodiversity data.
- Online platforms (including iRecord, iNaturalist, and Observation.org) facilitate data collection but raise concerns over taxonomy, identification and verification.
- At county or other local level, Local Fungus Recording Groups play an important role in recording and checking records, while Local Environmental Records Centres also play a role in supporting recording and curating data for their regions.

Verification issues: Ensuring accuracy in fungus identification is challenging due to taxonomic complexities. Different platforms use varied verification standards, creating inconsistencies in data quality.



Data sharing barriers: Some repositories restrict access, limiting the use of data for conservation planning, including Red List assessments.

Stakeholder perspectives: A survey of fungus recorders and database managers revealed concerns about data fragmentation, complex submission processes, and the balance between data accessibility and conservation needs.

Recommendations: The following steps could address the barriers that have been identified:

- Aligning fungi data with FAIR data principles
- Improving and standardising verification
- Enhancing data accessibility
- Improving data interoperability and integration
- Promoting data use in conservation planning and research
- Support for fungus recording at national and local level

Addressing these challenges can improve the use of fungi data for conservation planning, habitat management, and policy decision-making, ensuring fungi receive the attention necessary for their long-term protection.



Shaggy Parasol *Chlorophyllum rhacodes* (Sam Amy).

Reference

Amy, S. Henson, M. and Harvey, M. 2025. Data Flow of UK Fungal Records. Natural England Commissioned Report 650. Natural England. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6376073955377152>



The Fungi Verification Consultation Project

Keiron Brown (Biological Recording Company)

The Biological Recording Company is working with the British Mycological Society (BMS) to assess how fungi records submitted to [The Fungal Records Database of Britain and Ireland \(FRDBI\)](#) are verified and shared going forward. We'll be consulting widely with fungi recorders via an open-to-all online survey, followed by a consultation workshop with BMS members. From this, we plan to publish our findings in a consultation report and a draft verification protocol for verifying FRDBI records.

Fungi Recorder Online Survey

The first stage of the project is the **Fungi Recorder Online Survey**, now open to recorders nationwide. This short survey invites participants to share their experiences with fungi recording — from the platforms they use to their thoughts on data quality and verification. We want to understand what motivates recorders, the challenges they face, and their views on how verification should work. Your input will help build a clear picture of current practices across the UK and directly inform the development of the *Draft BMS Verification Protocol*. [Take the survey here.](#)

The survey should take roughly **5 to 10 minutes** to complete — just long enough to share your insights without being a burden. You'll be asked questions like:

- Which platform(s) you use to submit or manage fungi records
- How often you submit records
- What verification steps or checks you think are appropriate (e.g. is expert review needed?)
- Which organisations do you think should be able to access your records
- Your views on the use of tools such as automated rules and AI

These questions are designed to be straightforward yet thought-provoking, helping us build a clear picture of current practices and preferences in the fungi recording community. [Take the survey here.](#)

BMS Consultation Workshop

The conversation continues in person at the **BMS Consultation Workshop**, which will take place at **Kew Gardens on Saturday 29th November 2025** as part of the BMS Annual Meeting. This half-day workshop will bring recorders and verifiers together to explore key topics such as data flow, validation versus



verification, verification statuses, and communication between recorders. The session will combine presentations with interactive group activities, encouraging open discussion and collaborative thinking. The insights gathered will form the foundation for refining and testing ideas within the draft verification protocol.

Fungi Recording and Verification Consultation Report

Once the survey and workshop are complete, we will produce the **Fungi Recording and Verification Consultation Report**. This report will summarise the feedback, findings, and recommendations collected throughout the project. It will highlight key themes raised by participants and provide a transparent overview of how their input has informed the development of the *Draft BMS Verification Protocol*. Everyone who contributes to the consultation will receive access to the published report — ensuring that the process remains open, inclusive, and collaborative.

Draft BMS Verification Protocol

The final output of the project will be the **Draft BMS Verification Protocol** — a concise, two-page document outlining proposed standards and processes for the verification of fungi records in the UK. It will include a summary of next steps and a visual data flow diagram showing how fungi biological records are managed within the BMS framework. The protocol will serve as a working draft for further discussion and refinement, moving the community closer to a shared and consistent approach to fungi verification.



Selection of fungi specimens

If you record fungi and are happy to share your thoughts, please take the Fungi Recorder Online Survey here: <https://forms.gle/Py9SxR1W1U1ZH26Q8>

Please submit your responses by 30th November



Convert your loved ones to the joys of biological recording this January!

Louise Marsh, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

Do your family and friends ‘get it’ when you say that you’re a biological recorder? Have you ever struggled to convey to them the sheer joy of recording a species you haven’t seen before, or spotting an old favourite in a new location, and then sharing that find with your networks?

Here’s a sneaky way to convert your loved ones into fellow recorders on the very first day of the year, and the person we have to thank for the opportunity to implement this cunning plan is none other than Sarah Whild, well-known to the NFBR community.

But first, the plan itself. On January 1st, why not suggest to your friends and family that they wrap up warmly and join you on a short walk around your neighbourhood. Offer bribes of cake and hot chocolate on return, and any other enticements necessary to get them out of the house for a while. Lull them into a false sense of security by not carrying any field ID keys with you, but do slip your phone into your pocket and slide it out again as soon as you spot a wild or naturalised plant in bloom. As you point your phone at said plant, taking a photo and uploading your record using the BSBI Recording App, which you oh so sneakily downloaded to your phone while your loved ones were lacing up their boots (it only takes a minute), you might ask them how many wild plants they think might be in bloom across Britain and Ireland in midwinter. If they say 647 then definitely reward them with cake, because that’s how many species were recorded during last year’s New Year Plant Hunt.

As you and your family and friends continue on your walk, keep them entertained with the story of how the first New Year Plant Hunt was carried out by just two people, Tim Rich and Sarah Whild, in 2011. They posted their finds on social media and launched a fun midwinter activity which now attracts thousands of participants each year.

By now you’ve all probably spotted a few more plants on your walk. Daisy and dandelion are two of the most common species recorded in bloom at New Year, and most people can ID them at a glance, so upload them using the App and congratulate your loved ones on making their first biological records. For trickier-to-ID plants, point them to the handy spotter sheets on the BSBI website, or – a helpful feature only on offer when using the App during New Year Plant Hunt – you can upload a photo of a plant you’re unsure of and the Hunt Support Team will try to identify it for you.



This should keep you all engaged in biological recording for a while but, especially if the weather is bitter, people will flag at some point and ask, why exactly are we doing this?

This is where you can tell them that they haven't just been connecting with nature and blowing the cobwebs away. That they've actually been contributing to vital climate research. That it's crucially important to understand more about how plant flowering times are changing, and what the knock-on effects might be for all our other wildlife - the birds, butterflies and pollinators - who rely on our wild plants. That the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is very grateful to citizen scientists like them, who are helping us build up a clearer picture of how nature is responding to a changing world.

And then - before you take them home for that hot drink and piece of cake - you could tell them that the 2026 New Year Plant Hunt runs until 4th January, so would they like to do another Hunt tomorrow, along a different route? Now that they are part of the biological recording community, there is so much for them to explore and enjoy in the year ahead.

Huge thanks to Sarah and Tim for inventing the [New Year Plant Hunt](#) which generates such valuable data and also offers such a great 'gateway' to biological recording!



Black Horehound *Ballota nigra* (Sarah Whild).



Snowdrop *Galanthus elwesii* (Sarah Whild).



Updates from UKCEH Biological Records Centre

Martin Harvey (UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology)

Targeting revisits

This project provides information on where species recording can be targeted in order to increase the amount of data that can be used to assess trends in distribution across the UK, for a range of insect groups. Earlier this year we were able to add dragonflies and damselflies to the list of species groups available. By the time you read this it will be getting late in the year for seeing some of the species included, but that means there is plenty of time to plan for next year!

The new dragonflies targeting map can be seen here, along with the continuing ones for craneflies, grasshoppers and bush-crickets, ground beetles, ladybirds and soldierflies:

<https://www.brc.ac.uk/article/targeting-revisits-maps-help-get-most-out-insect-recording>

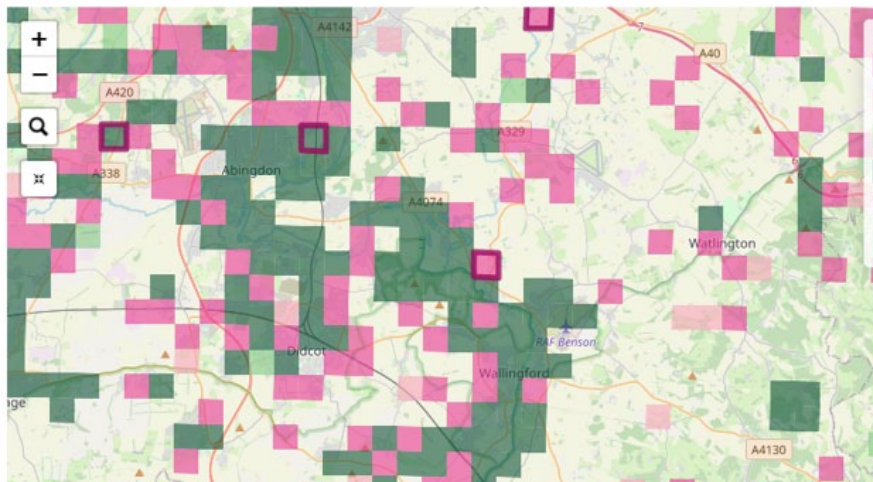


Targeting Revisits Map shows the 1 km squares with records of Dragonfly & Damselfly species (Order Odonata) from the Scheme run by the British Dragonfly Society.

Please note the map may take a while to load.

Due to data limitations mapping of data will be paused if the map region is too large.

The search button can be used to quickly move the map to specific locations



Targeting revisits dragonfly example.



Record Cleaner online

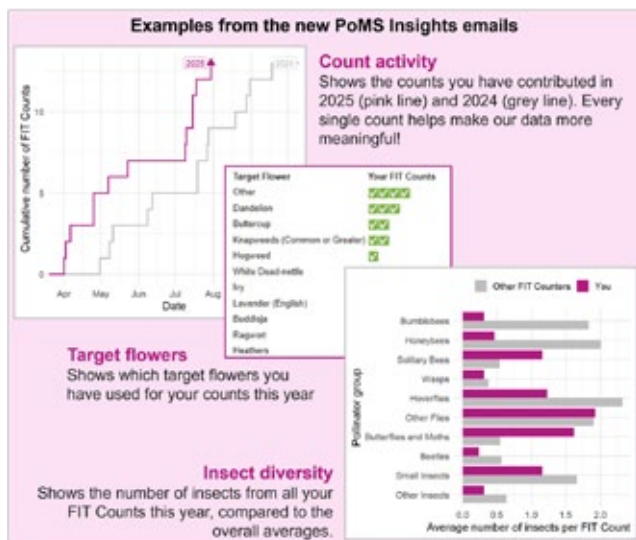
As reported in previous NFBR Newsletters the online version of Record Cleaner is available for use. You can access it from the “Resources” menu on the BRC website, or go direct to https://www.brc.ac.uk/record_cleaner

Record Cleaner checks records against a set of ‘rules’ that define when and where a species is likely to be seen. During the winter months we will be developing some new editing tools to make it easier for these rules to be updated, and we will be working with the national recording schemes to enable updates to be applied.

PoMS Insights

FIT Counts (Flower-Insect Timed Counts) are one of the surveys run by the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS). If you contributed one or more FIT Counts during 2024–2025 you may have received one of the new “PoMS Insights” emails. These are automated emails that provide feedback on how your results compare to the rest of the FIT Counts that are sent in, as a thank you to participants and an encouragement to continue adding new counts!

The PoMS Insights messages have been developed following research into the role of personalised feedback for biodiversity monitoring (supported by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) via the Biological Recording, Verification and Interpretation project), and the development of tools needed to generate and distribute the messages (supported by Defra’s Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme and JNCC’s Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis project).



PoMS Insights examples

FIT Counts can be done anywhere, including gardens and parks, in warm, dry weather during daylight hours from 1 April to 30 September – see the FIT Count web page for full details.



Dataflow to NBN Atlas

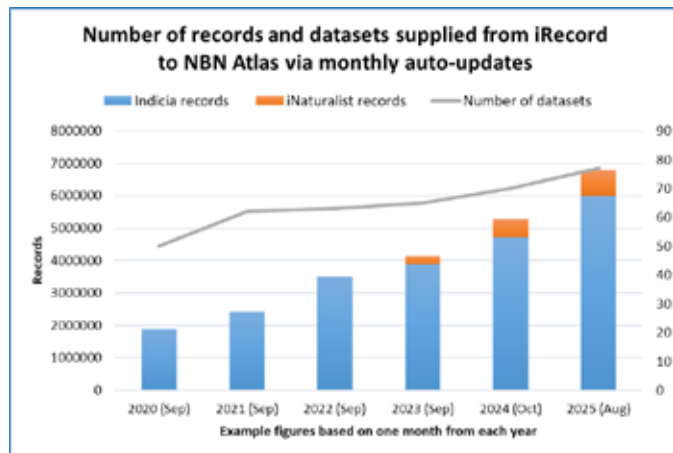
Records from the Indicia system are regularly shared to NBN Atlas, on behalf of the national recording schemes and other recording projects who make use of the Indicia data warehouse. This includes records added to iRecord, to other Indicia systems, and those records from iNaturalist that are imported into iRecord for verification.

For many schemes and projects we are able to provide records to the NBN Atlas via an automated monthly upload, and these are listed here:

<https://irecord.org.uk/help/nbn-sharing>

The latest upload in August 2025 consisted of almost 7 million species records, across 77 datasets, of which 380,000 records were new since the previous month. The latest new dataset to be shared is for bee and hoverfly species data from the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme. Further millions of Indicia records arrive with NBN Atlas independently of the automatic process, sent by those schemes that prefer to download the data from Indicia and include in their own uploads to the Atlas. There are still some gaps in the dataflow, where records in Indicia are not yet going to the Atlas, and we continue to work with recording schemes and other stakeholders to fill in the gaps.

Many thanks to the increasing number of recording scheme verifiers who help check the records and keep the data flowing. We now have over 1,000 registered verifiers on iRecord, with 200 new verification roles having been established during 2025 (so far!).



NBN dataflow summary.

The above work has been supported by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), a not-for-profit research institute which receives support from Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) National Capability funding, with additional resources from Defra via the Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment programme.



NBN Trust update for NFBR – September 2025

Mandy Henshall, Communications and Engagement Manager, National Biodiversity Network Trust

New NBN Trust CEO

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Gareth Thomas as the new Chief Executive Officer of the National Biodiversity Network Trust, starting in October 2025.

Gareth joins the NBN Trust from the Natural History Museum (NHM), where he led the Research Innovation function and the private-sector engagement of the [Biodiversity Intactness Index](#) (BII), transforming it into a flagship NHM programme with international reach, policy influence, and new funding streams.

Through this pivotal role, Gareth has shaped frameworks for the [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) (TNFD), the [International Advisory Panel on Biodiversity Credits](#) (IAPB), and advised on corporate reporting standards.

Under Gareth's leadership, the NBN Trust will continue to strengthen its role as a trusted source of biodiversity data and ensure the UK's biodiversity evidence base supports both national priorities and global commitments. It will also look to expand its network of partners. In particular, this will mean working more closely with the private sector to help demonstrate the interdependencies between business, finance and the natural environment and to show how it can play a key role in enabling nature's recovery, which has never been more important.

Gareth looks forward to using his breadth of experience to drive impact, partnerships, and forge innovation with the NBN Trust and, as part of this, is really keen to hear from current NBN Trust members, NBN Atlas data partners and the many stakeholders in the NBN partnership to understand the key priorities of the Network.

Gareth's first formal NBN Trust engagement will be the [NBN Conference](#) on 20 November in Bristol, where he will share his vision for the future. We'd love it if you could join us as we move into the next, exciting phase of the NBN Trust.

NBN Conference 2025

We're excited to announce the programme for this year's NBN Conference which is taking place on Thursday, 20 November at the SS Great Britain in Bristol.

This year's theme, "25 years of making data work for nature," is part of the NBN Trust's 25th anniversary celebrations. The programme features four inspiring sessions exploring:



- 25 years of collaboration (including keynote address by John Tweddle, Natural History Museum)
- The present landscape
- The future of biodiversity data
- The Sir John Burnett Memorial Lecture by Katie-jo Luxton, RSPB's Executive Director, Global Conservation
- We'll also be announcing the winners and those highly commended in the NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording.

We have speakers from across the NBN and beyond, including the BBC, Biological Records Centre, Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, CEDaR, Defra, GBIF, NFBR, Natural England, Natural History Museum, NBN Trust, RSPB, The Rockpool Project, UKCEH, and University of Exeter (RENEW Biodiversity Programme).

We'd love you to join us to help celebrate our 25th year, as well as the critical role our Network has to play in protecting and restoring biodiversity.

You can find more information and how to book on the [NBN Trust website](#).

NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording 2025

We're delighted that 28 individuals and organisations have been shortlisted as [finalists](#) in this year's NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording! The winners and those highly commended will be announced at the NBN Conference in November.

Celebrating 25 Years of the NBN Trust

25 August 2025 marked a major milestone for the National Biodiversity Network Trust as we celebrated our 25th anniversary! That's 25 years of making data work for nature, supporting the UK's nature conservation community through collaboration, innovation, and a shared passion for biodiversity.

Much has changed over those years and you can read more about that on the [NBN Trust website](#). But some things don't change and that's the people. The heart of the Network is still the recorders: the volunteers, the citizen scientists, and the organisations who collect, share and verify data. Without them, there wouldn't be an NBN Atlas, an NBN Trust or a National Biodiversity Network.

So, as we celebrate 25 years, we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who's part of the NBN community. Whether you're a member of the NBN Trust, a partner in the NBN, a data partner to the NBN Atlas, or someone who's just starting out recording wildlife – you're helping us make data work for nature – thank you!



NBN Trust new staff

The NBN Trust has undergone a number of changes to its team this year, in addition to the recruitment of a new CEO.

The main driver has been the need to increase capacity in its finance and operations functions to ensure its financial sustainability and organisational resilience.

We'll have a special "Meet the team" feature in November's [Network News](#) where we'll bring you more information on the full team, but in the meantime, here are the details of the Finance and Operations Team members.

[Marise Astall-Palin](#) – Finance Officer

[Gemma Asbury](#) – Information and Resources Officer

[Heather Bagley](#) – Governance and Executive Support Officer

[Catherine Bourke](#) – HR, EDI and Wellbeing Officer

[Jayne Taylor](#) – Head of Finance and Operations

NBN Trust Job Vacancies

We advertise any NBN Trust job vacancies on the Trust's [website](#). Even if there are no current vacancies, we also encourage people to get in touch with their CVs so we can keep the information on file - hr@nbn.org.uk

We also advertise jobs from our member organisations, so if you are a member of the NBN Trust and have a job vacancy you'd like us to promote, please get in touch - support@nbn.org.uk

Changes to Recorder 6 Licence Renewal

As recently announced, from 1 September 2025, the administration of the Recorder 6 licence will be managed by the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC), rather than the NBN Trust. This is following agreement by the NBN Trust Board of Trustees and the Recorder 6 Consortium and Steering Group.

For further information, and to renew your licence (there is no change to the fee again this year), please visit the [Recorder 6 Licensing page on the ALERC website](#).

The page also includes contact details if you have any queries or require additional information.

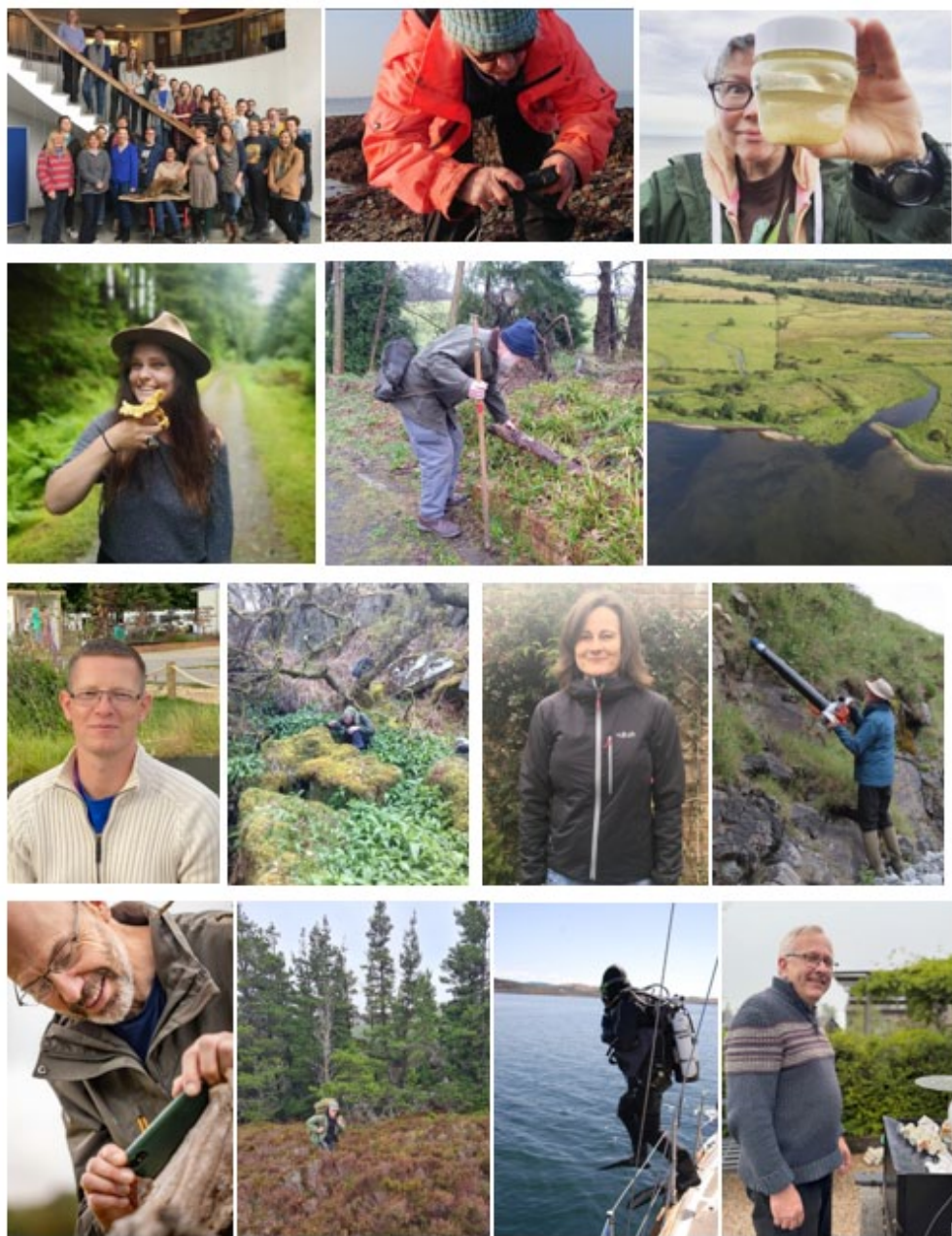


NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording 2025 – Shortlisted Nominees



From top to bottom, left to right: Cumbrian Invertebrate Group, Joint Derbyshire Moth Verification and Recording Team, David Clarke, National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme, Joss Carr, Lynda Mudde-Small, Nicky Court, Philip Smith, Katie Dyke, Dylan Peters, Theo Vickers, Karen Latchford, Ashleigh Whiffin, Henry Colnet

NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording 2025 – Shortlisted Nominees (2)



From top to bottom, left to right: Cornwall Mammal Group, Jenny Mallinson, Elizabeth Beston, Janine Maree Finlay, Chris Du Feu, Holy Loch Nature Reserve, Mark Patterson, Ben Mitchell, Mandy Rudd, Stephen Moran, Ben Greig, Joe Carroll, Owen Paisley, Rob Pickett



Wildlife disease & contaminant monitoring & surveillance network (WildComms) update

WildComms, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

WILDCOMS is a collaborative network formed between various UK surveillance schemes that monitor disease and contaminants in vertebrate wildlife. Established through a Knowledge Exchange grant from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), it aims to:

- provide a focal point for disease and contaminant monitoring in wild vertebrates
- provide an integrated overview of the health status of UK wild vertebrates
- facilitate collaboration between WILDCOMS network partners
- facilitate identification of disease and contaminants of emerging concern

GB Wildlife Disease Surveillance Partnership

The GB Wildlife Disease Surveillance Partnership is made up of the following organisations: Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Institute of Zoology (IoZ), National Wildlife Management Centre of APHA (formerly part of FERA), The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), Natural England (NE) and Forestry England (FE).

The GB Wildlife Disease Surveillance Partnership quarterly publishes reports. The latest reports are accessible on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Partial re-opening of the scheme to bird carcass submissions

After a long pause in wild bird collection due to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), the PBMS has partially re-opened and can now receive bird submissions from wildlife professionals. The PBMS is a long-term monitoring scheme designed to measure various chemical contaminants in wildlife supported by public submission of predatory birds. Carcass collection was suspended in March 2023 in line with Government guidance to protect the public. We are currently able to work with wildlife professionals to collect birds and therefore, if you or your organisation have procedures in place to safely handle birds then we would like to hear from you. Our email is pbms@ceh.ac.uk.

The news items above have been taken from the latest WILDCOMS [newsletters](#) - please do check the [WildComms web page](#) for more information, or to join the mailing list for newsletters email [WILDCOMS](#)



Update from Non-native Species Inspectorate

Rob Wakefield, Non-native Species Inspectorate

Purple pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) is a fascinating carnivorous plant, but like many plant species known to be invasive in Great Britain, it is currently legal to trade. It can wreak havoc in some of the rarest and most sensitive habitats – bogs and mires.

There are currently around 20 sites where the species is thought to have been introduced into the wild. These are mostly in southern England, but a handful of populations exist in Cumbria and Scotland.

Because the plant is largely confined to bog habitat, there is a real opportunity to eradicate the plant from the wild. This is the intention of the Non-native Species Secretariat, working alongside Non-native Species Inspectorate (NNSI) colleagues, Natural England, NatureScot, and other organisations and landowners.

Achieving eradication is not a simple matter of removing or spraying the plants. Seeds are thought to survive for at least 5 years in the soil. Each site is therefore checked annually until 5 years have passed without any plants remaining or setting seed. In the first few years, most of the hard work is done – removing or spraying the plants. In the following years site visits mostly involve checking for seedlings and ensuring plants have not colonised new areas.

Occasionally, plants can be particularly persistent, and this was found to be the case where the NNSI were working in summer 2025, in Scotland. A colony of pitcher plants thought to have been killed off, were checked and found still thriving. After a thorough search of suitable habitat in challenging conditions (not least having been cut off from the nearest facilities by a road collision which had closed the highway!) a total of 14 plants were found and removed by a team of 6 inspectors.

For more information on Purple pitcher plant, visit the alert page. Sightings should be reported to iRecord: <https://irecord.org.uk/enter-non-native-records>.

Contact the NNSI: NNSI@apha.gov.uk for more information.

Text originally published in GBNNSS newsletter - please see here for more information on the GBNNSS <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/>



NFBR 40th Celebration: Data for Nature

Help us celebrate *40 years of the National Forum for Biological Recording!*

The NFBR's conference on the subject of Data for Nature will consider what kind of data we most need in order to rescue the UK's natural environment, and how we can ensure this is properly funded and accessible in order to achieve lasting nature recovery.

Speakers will represent a range of perspectives and we welcome anyone with an interest in biological records and nature recovery to attend and join the conversation.

Date: Thursday 7th and Friday 8th May 2026

Booking details to follow [here](#)

We still have some speaker slots available, so do get in touch if you would like to speak or have a suggestion for a speaker, on editor@nfbr.org.uk.



The poster is divided into two main sections. The left section has a white background with a green circular logo of the United Kingdom at the top left. Below the logo, the text 'NATIONAL FORUM FOR BIOLOGICAL RECORDING' is written in green. The main title 'NFBR 40th Celebration: Data for Nature' is in large green font. Below the title, the text 'What kind of data do we need to rescue the UK's natural environment, and who should pay for it?' is written in green. The right section features a landscape background with various nature icons (a lizard, a bird, a flower, a bat, a butterfly, a grasshopper, and a beetle) each with a green pin containing a pound symbol (£). In the bottom right corner, there is a black silhouette of a network of people. A white box at the bottom center contains the text: 'Thursday 7- Friday 8th May 2026', 'Signing Tree conference centre, Birmingham', and 'Booking details coming soon!'.

**NATIONAL FORUM
FOR
BIOLOGICAL RECORDING**

**NFBR 40th
Celebration:
Data for Nature**

What kind of data do we
need to rescue the UK's
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Booking details coming soon!





NATIONAL FORUM FOR BIOLOGICAL RECORDING

The National Forum for Biological Recording is the premier UK organisation for practitioners engaged with biological recording across the UK. Membership includes individual naturalists, national organisations and recording societies, local records centres and their staff. This gives it a unique perspective and an important role.

Whether you are an experienced naturalist or taking your first steps in biological recording, we want to hear from you.

To offer an article for a newsletter, please contact our Newsletter Editor:

Sam Amy on editor@nfbr.org.uk

To join the NFBR, please contact our Membership Officer and Treasurer:

Clare Langrick on membership@nfbr.org.uk

For all other enquiries about NFBR please contact our Chair:

on chairman@nfbr.org.uk

Join the discussion on [Facebook](#) and [Blue sky](#).

