

REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN RECORDING

Why and how to record herpetofauna

Why record reptiles and amphibians?

Recording is fundamental to the conservation of herpetofauna, as well as other animal and plant groups. Conservationists, planners and other interested groups need to know *where* a species occurs, and also where it is *likely* to occur, so that it can benefit through site protection, habitat management and monitoring. Additionally, information on the status of the species - i.e. whether it is stable, decreasing or declining in the area - needs to be gathered. Currently there are many gaps in our knowledge of distributions of British amphibians and (particularly) reptiles, although certain areas where there is a strong recording effort are well covered.

The main ways in which recording assists with conservation are:

- **Securing site protection** - If a site supports particularly high numbers of individuals of a species, or an assemblage of several species, it may be possible to have it designated as a county/district wildlife site (often called a site of nature conservation interest - SNCI, or site of biological interest - SBI, and notified by the wildlife trust). Local authorities can assign notable areas as Local Nature Reserves and information on resident reptile and amphibian populations may help with notification. Sites sustaining exceptionally good populations or communities may warrant notification as SSSIs (Site of Special Scientific Interest).
- **Site defence** - If a housing development or other change in land use is proposed on a site where reptiles or amphibians are believed to be present, then action can be taken to defend the site or recommend appropriate mitigation

measures. It is essential for this reason that all records are stored where they are available to the relevant organisations the statutory nature conservation organisations (English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage), local planning authorities, Wildlife Trusts and other conservation groups etc.

- **Guiding survey work** - Collating current and historical records can help to target future survey work and other conservation initiatives.
- **Identifying trends** - Reliable recording can be useful in identifying national trends in status, habitat associations, site threats etc as well as helping to compile national distribution maps.
- **Regional atlases** - Compiling maps showing the distribution of herpetofauna on a regional scale can help local conservation bodies, herpetofauna groups and planners with management plans, general enquiries and site-based issues.

What is a record?

Essentially, a record in its simplest form comprises four types of information: the species sighted, where and when it was encountered, and by whom. There are several details which are worth including for the species concerned, such as numbers seen, whether larvae, hatchlings or juveniles were observed (to indicate breeding success), and which methods were used (e.g. bottle traps, torch count). Additional details which are often useful, though not essential, to collect include the following. (1) A concise habitat description with details of the setting, dominant vegetation types and topography. (2)

The protective status of the site (National Nature Reserve, SSSI etc). (3) Information on the ownership of and access to the site; this can help greatly if a return visit or advice on management is required. (4) Any obvious threats to the site, such as encroaching development, unsympathetic management, human interference or pollution; worth noting in case remedial action can be taken.

Where to send your records and what happens to them

There have been various recording schemes in recent years, and individual recorders have sent their records to a number of places. Frequently, records are sent to the local biological environmental records centre; these are often part of the county museum service. In many cases there will also be a County Recorder for reptiles and amphibians who will work closely with the local records centre. Local Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs) will often have a recording officer who will collect and collate records and integrate them with existing local recording networks.

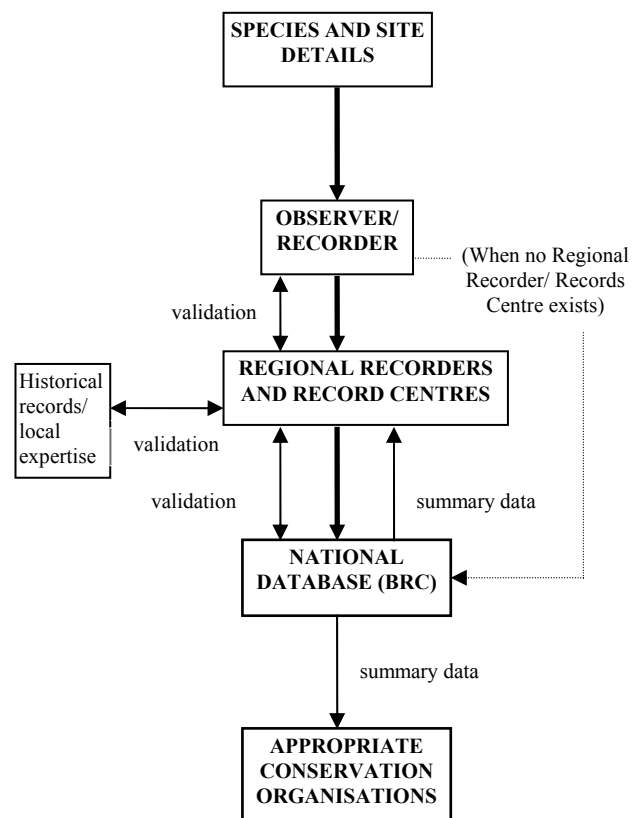
It is important that records are also held on a national database for the reasons outlined above, and the Biological Records Centre (BRC) at Monks Wood serves this function.

Currently, the national recording scheme is organised by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) along with BRC. They produce standard record cards, on which individual recorders report their sightings. These cards should then be sent to your Regional Recorder, i.e. whoever collates records in your county or district (e.g. the records centre, County Recorder or local group), who will then send a copy on to BRC. If there is no one in your area who collates records then cards should be obtained from and sent directly to BRC. Regional Recorders are listed on the opposite page; it is intended that further recorders will be added in future. The crucial point is that all records should only have to be entered once, but

will then be held at both the national and regional level so that the maximum conservation benefit is realised. BRC will provide feedback to Regional Recorders on information received for their area in the form of summary data and dot maps.

The current scheme incorporates a system for validation, which is essential if reliable and accurate distribution maps are to be generated. Records are checked by Regional Recorders who have the necessary local knowledge to evaluate locality and species information.

A summary of the way the system works is shown in the diagram below.



Note: the rarer herpetofauna (smooth snake, sand lizard and natterjack toad) are recorded using separate systems run by JNCC, The Herpetological Conservation Trust and the British Herpetological Society Conservation Committee.

Contacts

For *record cards* and *general enquiries*:

Henry Arnold, Biological Records Centre, Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2LS. Tel. 01487 773381.

Regional Recordors:

England

East Anglia

Essex David Scott, Court Hill, Church Lane, Little Leighs, Chelmsford CM3 1PG, 01245 361475, (m) 07970 220743.

Norfolk John Goldsmith/John Buckley, c/o Norfolk Biological Records Centre, Union House, Gressenhall, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4DR, 01362 861187.

Suffolk Rosie Norton, 3 Wood View, Sibton, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2NH, 01728 660369.

East Midlands

Bedfordshire Helen Muir-Howie, 19 Molivers Lane, Bromham, Bedford MK43 8JT, 01234 306524.

Cambridgeshire Terry Moore (newts), 23 Longfields, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 3DN, 01353 664745, email: moorehse@moorehse.demon.co.uk

Hertfordshire Jenny Jones, Hertfordshire BRC, c/o Environment, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DN. Tel: 01992 555220, biorec.info@hertscc.gov.uk

Leicestershire Andrew Heaton, Leicestershire Amphibian and Reptile Network, 19 Rydal Gardens, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1FJ, 01530 467904, aheaton@ntlworld.com

Northamptonshire Brian Laney, 5 South Close, Long Buckby, Northamptonshire NN6 7PX, brian@laney1.fsnet.co.uk

Nottinghamshire Sheila Wright, Nottingham Natural History Museum, Wollaton Hall, Nottingham NG8 2AE.

North East

Cleveland Jeremy Garside, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Bellamy Pavilion, Kirkleatham Old Hall, Kirkleatham, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 5NW, 01642759900.

Durham and Northumberland John Durkin, 25 May Avenue, Winlaton Mill, Blaydon, NE21 6SF, 0191 4145221, durkinjl@aol.com

North and East Yorkshire James Mortimer, North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre, 5 College Street, York YO1 7JF, 01904 557235, info@neyedc.co.uk

North West

Cumbria Tony and Heather Marshall, Cumbria Amphibian and Reptile Group, Hillcrest, Lyth, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 8DJ, 015395 68304, heatherandtony@care4free.net

Merseyside Cheshire & Wirral ARG, c/o Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Grebe House, Reaseheath, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DG. Tel: 01270 610180 or Dept. of Zoology Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN.

Leeds Mandy Spry, The Nature Conservation Section, Leeds Leisure Services, The Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds, LS1 3AD. Tel 0113 237 5326, Mandy.Spry@leeds.gov.uk

Wakefield Richard Sunter (amphibians), c/o Wakefield Naturalists Society, 21 Canal Lane, Lost House Gate, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, 01924 306567.

Doncaster Colin Howes, Keeper of Environmental Records, Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Chequer Road, Doncaster, DN1 2AE.

South Lancashire David Orchard, 106 Thicketford Road, Tonge Moor, Bolton BL2 2LU; 01204 529312, ARGSL@btinternet.com

South

Berkshire Matthew Smith, 24 Alnott Avenue, Winnersh, Berkshire, RG41 5AU MatSmith@compuserve.com

Buckinghamshire Emily Martin, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre, Tring Road, Halton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 5PJ, 01296 696012.

Hampshire c/o Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Woodside House, Woodside Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 4ET, 02380 613636 contact: Rachel Green, RachelG@hwt.org.uk

Isle of Wight Richard Grogan, Kervil Cottage, Hollow Lane, Chillerton, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 3ET.

Oxfordshire John Campbell, Dept. of Leisure & Arts, Oxford Museums Store, Whitney Road, Standlake, Oxford OX8 7QG, 01865 300972.

Wiltshire Beverley Heath, 9 West Manton, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4HN. Tel: 01672 513691. For information on records contact: Wiltshire & Swindon BRC, 19 High Street, Devizes, SN10 1AT, 01380 725670, bjw.heath@dial.pipex.com

South East

Greater London Clive Herbert (LEHART), 67a Ridgeway Avenue, East Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8TL, 0208 4406314, lehart@btinternet.com

Kent Dr. Lee Brady, Kent Herpetofauna Recorder, 13 Woodside Cottages, Dunkirk, Faversham, Kent. 01227 751408, email: herpreccorder@btinternet.com.

Surrey Richard Anstis, Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group, 16 Burrows Close, Bookham, Surrey, KT23 3HB, rickanstis@aol.com

Sussex Glynnan Barham, 01243 790761 (w).

South West

Avon Tim Corner, Avon Reptile and Amphibian Group, c/o Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre, Ashton Court Visitors Centre, Ashton Court Estate, Long Ashton, Bristol BS41 9JN, 0117 9532140, brerc@btconnect.com, www.brerc.org.uk

Cornwall Mark Nicholson, Cornwall Reptile and Amphibian Group, c/o Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Five Acres, Allet, Truro TR4 9DJ, 01872 273939.

Devon Devon Amphibian and Reptile Group, c/o Devon Wildlife Trust, Shirehampton House, 35-37 St. David's Hill, Exeter, Devon EX4 4DA, 01392 279244. Contact: Simon Wood.

Dorset Dorset Environmental Records Centre, Colliton Annex, Glyde Path Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ, 01305 225081.

Somerset Somerset Environmental Records Centre, Tonedon Mill, Wellington, Somerset TA21 0AW 01823 664450, email: info@somerc.com or visit: www.somerc.com

West Midlands

Cheshire Julian Whitehurst, Cheshire and Wirral Amphibian and Reptile Group, c/o Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Grebe House, Reaseheath, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DA, 01270 610180, j.whitehurst@btinternet.com

Derbyshire Chris Monk, Hilburn, Chapel Lane, Middleton, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4NF, 01629 580000.

Gloucestershire Colin Twissell, Arfonia, The Green, Churchdown, Gloucestershire GL3 2LE, 01452 714413.

Herefordshire Nigel Hand, 45 Albert Road, Ledbury, Hereford HR8 2DN, 01531 636033.

Worcestershire Will Watson (amphibians), Rose Cottage, Docklow Manor, Leominster, Hereford HR6 0RX, 01568 760500.

Shropshire Viv Geen, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, 193 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AH, 01743 284289, vivgeen@shropshirewt.cix.co.uk

Staffordshire Craig Slawson, Staffordshire Ecological Record, Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Staffordshire ST 17 0WT, 01889 880127, info@staffs-ecology.org.uk

Warwickshire Jan Clemons, Warks. Amphibian & Reptile Team, 34 Montalt Road, Cheylesmore, Coventry CV3 5LU, 01203 302912 (Warkwickshire Wildlife Trust).

West Midlands Sara Carvalho, Ecorecord, 28 Harbourn Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3AA, 0121 4541808 (answerphone), 0121 454 6556 (fax), enquiries@ecorecord.freeserve.co.uk, ecorecord@bbcwildlife.org.uk

Wales

Dyfed-Powys

Pembrokeshire Annie Poole, 1 Rushmoor, Martletwy, Narberth, Pembrokeshire, Dyfed SA67 8BB. Tel: 01834 891667.

Powys Fred Slater, Llysdinam Field Centre, Newbridge-on-Wye, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6NB. Tel: 01597 860308.

North Wales

Clwyd Matthew Ellis, North-East Wales Amphibian and Reptile Network, c/o CCW, Victoria House, Grosvenor Street, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 1EJ, 01352 706600.

Gwynedd Chris Wynne, North Wales WT, 376 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 1YE, 01248 351541.

South Wales

Mid Glamorgan Nigel Ajax-Lewis, c/o Glamorgan Wildlife Trust, Nature Centre, Fountain Road, Tondu, Mid Glamorgan CF32 0EH, 01656 724100.

South Glamorgan As Mid Glamorgan.

West Glamorgan As Mid Glamorgan.

Scotland

North-East

Orkney Isles Chris Booth, 'Rhonas', 34 High Street, Kirkwall, Orkney. Tel: 01856 872883.

Aberdeen area Bob Laing, 87 Johnston Gardens East, Peterculter, Aberdeenshire AB14 0LA. Tel: 01224 732642.

North-West

Highland Jon Watt, Assistant Curator (Natural Sciences), Inverness Museum Biological Records Centre, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EB. Tel: 01463 237114, fax: 01463 225293, email jonathan.watt@highland.gov.uk

Isle of Skye Grace Yoxon, Skye Environmental Centre Ltd, Harrapool, Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AQ. Tel: 01471 822487.

South-East

Falkirk (West Lothian [Linlithgow], Mid Perthshire) Falkirk Museums, Callander House, Callander Park, Falkirk FK1 1YR. Tel: 01324 503770. Contact: Jack Sanderson.

Lothians (East Lothian [Haddington], Midlothian [Edinburgh], West Lothian [Linlithgow]) Lothian Wildlife Information Centre, 130 Leith Walk, Edinburgh, EH4 8NS. Tel: 0131 554 6360.

Dundee (Angus, East Perthshire, Fifeshire [with Kinross]). Richard Brinklow, Dundee Art Gallery & Museum, Albert Square, Dundee DD1 1DA. Tel: 01382 432063/432084, email richard.brinklow@dundeeccity.gov.uk

Central (including North & South Lanarkshire) Jenny Storey (North Lanarkshire recorder): Environmental Records Centre, Conservation & Greening Section, North Lanarkshire Leisure, Palacerigg House, Cumbernauld G67 3HU. Tel: 01236 780636.

Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire, Stirlingshire, Dunbartonshire Lesley Brown Wildlife Records Officer CARSE c/o Smith Museum, Dunbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ. Tel: 01786 471917, www.carse.org.uk, email: carse@carse.freeserve.co.uk

Fife Ross Spalding, Fife Nature Fife House North Street, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 5LT. Tel: 01592 413793.

South-West

Ayrshire (includes Kilmarnock) Ayrshire Biological Recording Centre, c/o The Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, Kirk Cramond, Cramond Glebe Road, Edinburgh, EH4 6NS. Tel: 0131 312 7765

Clyde Faunal Area (Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, South Argyll, Clyde Islands, Loch Lomond) Clyde Area Biological Records Centre, c/o Dr J A Gibson, Scottish Natural History Library, Foremount House, Kilbarchan, Renfrewshire PA10 2EZ. Tel: 01505 702419. (10 branches covering the Clyde Faunal Area).

Glasgow Andy Wilson, Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group, 41 Greenlaw Avenue, Paisley PA1 3RE, 0141 8893459, CARG@supanet.com

Isle of Arran Arran Biological Records Centre, Brodick Country Park, National Trust for Scotland, Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran KA27 8HY. Tel: 01770 302462. Contact: Duncan Stevenson.

Isle of Islay, Jura & Colonsay Islay Wildlife Information Centre, Main Street, Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay, PA48 7TX. Tel: 01496 850288. Contact: Linda McLellan

Renfrewshire Renfrewshire Biological Information Centre, Paisley Museum & Art Gallery, High Street, Paisley PA1 2BA. Tel: 0141 8893151, email: museum.els@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Northern Ireland

Dermot Hughes, Ulster Wildlife Trust, 3 New Line, Crossgar, Co. Down BT30 9EP. Tel: 028 44830282.

Damian MacFarran, CEDAR, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast. Tel 028 90383000.

Ireland

Ferdia Marnell, National Parks and Wildlife Section, Dúchas, The Heritage Service, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, Ireland. Tel: 00 353 1 6472300, email: fmarnell@ealga.ie

Marine Turtles

England/Wales Rod Penrose, Marine Environmental Monitoring, 01348 875000, www.strandings.com

Scotland Dr. Martin Gaywood, Scottish Natural Heritage, 0131 4474784.

Northern Ireland Lynne Rendle, Ulster, Museum and Botanical, Gardens, 02890 383144.

Republic of Ireland John Davenport, 00353 (0)21 4904140 (w), 00353 (0)21 4897392 (h).

This advice sheet was produced by the Froglife Common Species Unit, with support from English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, and the Countryside Council for Wales. Produced in association with The Herpetological Conservation Trust and Worldwide Fund for Nature UK. For further information on the conservation of the commoner reptiles and amphibians contact Froglife at White Lodge, London Road, Peterborough PE7 0LG, phone: 01733 558844 or email: froglife@froglife.org



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