

## **Policy on County Recorders**

### **Background**

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) promotes the gathering of environmental data for the County, is the custodian of this information, analyses it and makes it available in suitable form to all who need to use it. WSBRC is hosted by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), which is a charity. WWT and WSBRC are well respected, and so we must act at all times in the best interests of both and of nature conservation. This may at times require patience and a high level of diplomacy.

The terms 'County Recorder' (CR) and 'Vice-County Recorder' (VCR) are not in general clearly defined, but usually imply anyone who collects, and/or co-ordinates the collection, of records of a particular group of species within a vice-county, county or region. Normally there is only one Recorder per taxon per Vice-County, County or Region as the case may be. In Wiltshire the majority cover the full County, i.e. VCs 7 and 8 and within WSBRC and throughout this document the term CR is used to cover both CRs and VCRs.

CRs are expert volunteers working to professional standards. They are among the most important data providers, and the WSBRC depends heavily on their work and expertise. This policy sets out to define the role of the CR and how WSBRC can best support the CR network.

### **NOTE**

Where there is an active local recording group or society activities may well be carried out by more than one person within the group. In some cases, one or more members of the group may act as CR. In any of these cases either the CR or a Chair (or other equivalent representative) of the group may sign up to this policy. The main point of contact will be agreed accordingly.

### **A CR policy is important because it provides:**

- An informal agreement, so everyone knows where they stand
- Consistency
- Clarity
- Communication
- Expectations
- Support
- Recruitment and induction principles

### **Core activities of a CR**

*(or Recording Group as applicable)*

- Collating county records, validating & verifying records, sending records annually to WSBRC
- Provide identification support to other recorders
- Directing recorder effort, for example:
  - Distribute/draw attention to the current county map showing under-recorded squares
  - Distribute/draw attention to presence / absence maps for individual species
  - Ask for more volunteers to adopt under-recorded squares or special sites
- Keeping all recorders in the county up-to-date with recording progress
- Producing an annual update report

- Acting as a central point of contact in the county for conservation and key site advice
- Promote WSBRC and its aims

Regular recorders may be alerted to under-recorded squares in a number of ways:-

- By articles in local group newsletters or websites and/or on WSBRCs website
- Directly by email or (where no email address available) by letter or phone
- By personal contact at events and field meetings where distribution maps may be displayed
- In response to queries about “how they could help”

## Additional activities

*Optional extras that would be greatly benefit WSBRC and recording in the county*

- Undertake online verification of records (specifically on Living Record but other systems may be applicable)
- Arrange field meetings, give talks and attend events to raise the profile of recording, conservation and the role of WSBRC
- Undertake or support training on species identification and survey methodologies
- Provide annual volunteer timesheets to support vital WSBRC funding requests
- Data analysis and presentation as detailed feedback to recorders
- Liaise and cooperate with other recording groups in the county and surrounding areas, where appropriate
- Post requests for records on county email forums – requesting the “what”, “where”, “when”, “Who” and “how many” for all records
- Provide advice to local authority staff as necessary or when requested to do so

## WSBRC Support for CRs

Examples of what WSBRC can provide:

- Annual data updates
- Materials for publicity, guidance on submitting records etc.
- Recording system training and support
- An annual County Recorders’ meeting - sharing knowledge and experience within the CR network
- Health & Safety advice (e.g. Risk assessments for field visits, events etc.)
- Insurance cover (only available through sign-up as a WWT volunteer)
- Recognition of the various skills that people bring to the role
- Regular communication

Additional support that may be available (depending on resources):

- Distribution maps or equivalent for county atlas production etc.
- Recording system software
- Equipment loan or purchase
- Training in species identification and ecology

County Recorders agree to the publication of their name, along with their address, telephone number and e-mail address in WSBRC publications, specifically the leaflet ‘Keeping Track of Wiltshire’s Wildlife’. Exceptionally this contact information may be published as simply ‘Name c/o the WSBRC’.

It is expected that in order to receive the above support from WSBRC, that the CR will ideally sign up as a WWT volunteer.

If the core activities of a CR are not carried out and WSBRC fails to receive sufficient records for the County to serve its needs as a data provider and advisor on nature conservation, WSBRC may seek to agree the replacement of the CR with another appropriate individual.

## Signatures:

County Recorder/Recording Group Representative:

*Recording Group Name (if relevant):*

*Signature:*

*Date:*

*Name:*

*Position:*

WSBRC Representative:

*Signature:*

*Date:*

*Name:*

*Position:*

**Purgle Linham**

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