



WSBRC Data Search Guidance

This document sets out how users can request information via our data search service and what information is currently available.

1. Making a request

Any request for data from any type of enquirer must be made in writing, using our Information Request Form. Access to data will normally be agreed unless one or more of the following situations occurs.

By signing the form you are agreeing to adhere our [conditions of use](#) for all data provided. Non-adherence will be viewed as a breach of contract and is likely to mean that data will not be provided to that individual/organisation in future.

Please fill out the form electronically (ensure you include an electronic signature, not a typed name) or alternatively print, sign and either scan and email the document or post it back to us. Data searches will normally be supplied within 10 working days of **receipt of a fully completed Information Request Form (IRF) or confirmation of our quote (where this applies)**, but for a faster turnaround within 3 working days of confirmation (where resources allow) a surcharge applies.

Searches can be made around a central grid reference or from a GIS polygon and requestors should state the buffer size required. The charge applied for a specific buffer area may be affected by a site based search area.

Restrictions

WSBRC retains the right not to provide access to data at its discretion under (but not limited to) the following situations:

- The data flagged in the search is identified as confidential or sensitive and the data provider has stated that they are unwilling for the data to be released - or released in full - by WSBRC for this type of purpose or enquirer (see our [data access policy](#)).
- The enquirer cannot agree to the conditions of data use below or has not adhered to the conditions on previous occasions and/or is not prepared to pay any charges that may be quoted.
- The enquirer is seeking data that are out of proportion to the case, study or research project concerned. Complete datasets for Wiltshire and Swindon or a significant proportion of it will not normally be released.

2. Standard data searches

Costs for standard data searches with a 1 or 2km buffer are given on the IRF for your convenience under option 1 but for other buffer areas or request types please fill in Option 2. Our standard search is based on a query for both notified sites and protected and notable species; a habitats search or extended bat search can be added to this.

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre

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2.1 Notified Sites

We hold information for sites evaluated for their biological and geological interest, including all those with statutory or non-statutory designations. Our standard search option is for all statutory and non-statutory designated sites.

Non-statutory sites

Within Wiltshire and Swindon there are the following non-statutory sites or other defined areas (see Appendix 1 for more information):

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
Local Geological Sites (LGS) (*previously RIGS*)
Protected Road Verges
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Reserves
Bat SAC Consultation Zones

Statutory sites

Within Wiltshire and Swindon there are sites with the following statutory designations:

National Nature Reserves (NNR)
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

See the [Natural England website](#) or [JNCC website](#) for more information on these sites.

Site Survey Information

Copies of detailed data for sites identified in the standard search, namely full site description including species and habitats present for a Local Wildlife Site, can be provided where this information is available.

2.2 Habitats

WSBRC has mapped habitat and land-use parcels, within Wiltshire and Swindon using a mixture of field survey data and aerial photograph interpretation and from this produced a habitat inventory for the county. The inventory also includes point and polyline data where the identified area is too small an area to map according to a set of prescribed mapping rules. These GIS datasets do not represent full coverage for the whole county but presently cover around 85% in area.

If the habitats option is included on a standard search this will include all available broad and priority habitats.

2.3 Species

Records are available from WSBRC for legally protected, UK and Wiltshire priority and other key species found and recorded within Wiltshire and Swindon. More details of these categories can be found in Appendix 2.

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A standard search covers all of these categories and will include all records where the grid square pertaining to the given grid reference for the record overlap the search area. The majority of records held have six figure grid references, but systematic monitoring, such as for atlas production, is often at tetrad (2km x 2km) level.

3. Non-standard data searches

WSBRC is happy to undertake data searches that differ from the standard search on request, although other or extra charges may apply. Examples are:

- A search restricted to bat records
- A search for non-statutory sites only
- A standard request plus additional non-notable species e.g. non-native species
- Distribution information for a specific species or group

4. Data search report

Sites and habitats are digitally mapped using GIS, mapping to Ordnance Survey MasterMap © and species data are held in a Recorder 6 database. These are interrogated and the resulting information will be provided as part of the report. For sites, in addition to a JPEG map showing site boundaries, attributes such as site name, status, criteria for designation and source information will be provided. For habitats a JPEG map showing mapped habitat parcels within the search area is provided.

Species will also be listed with scientific and common names (where latter exists), status, grid reference and date of record. Grid references and location information supplied will be that given for the record unless restricted access applies. Recorder names and contact details are held but not provided in data search outputs.

An Excel report will be provided at WSBRC's discretion to all users who it considers will treat biodiversity data in accordance with best practice guidelines by, for example, membership of CIEEM or an equivalent professional membership body ([see CIEEM guidance](#)). In all other cases a PDF report will be supplied.

Please note that WSBRC does not in normal circumstances provide datasets as GIS files to non-partners. Where this is agreed, this will be under the terms of a data supply agreement, on provision of evidence of the appropriate OS licence, and an additional cost will apply.

5. Data Quality

We recognise that the data we collate, manage and provide needs to be as accurate as possible. However datasets do not represent complete coverage in terms of species or habitats present within the county. Site quality changes over time and species move in and out of areas – some with greater frequency than others. The data reflects a snapshot of what was present at the time of the survey or

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sighting, and so should be seen as a guide rather than a definitive statement of the condition of an area.

Data held by WSBRC is validated as fully as possible to ensure such factors as geographical and temporal accuracy of each record as well as formatting or inputting errors. Validation is done by manual checking as well as by automated routines within our database system. In addition, WSBRC staff and County Recorders, in particular, undertake verification of records ensuring that notable species or new records for an area are correctly identified. However, errors cannot be completely eliminated.

WSBRC cannot guarantee the full accuracy or completeness of the data. It is therefore not liable for any actions that may be taken as a result of using the information.

6. Contributing Records

Records will be accepted by WSBRC on the understanding that the data will be used by WSBRC and made available to enquirers under our Conditions of Use.

We request that, where possible, biological data relating to Wiltshire & Swindon collected by users of our service is shared with WSBRC at the end of the project. Such information adds to the value of the existing data held by WSBRC and is in the interest of all parties.

Protected species survey licence returns.

It is a condition of certain species survey licences from Natural England, such as Great Crested Newt and Bats that data collected under the terms of the survey class licence must be submitted to the local environmental records centre. For example, Annex A - Recording and reporting requirements, of the survey class licences for Great Crested Newt and Bats states that "Registered Persons (or a person acting on their behalf) must also submit data collected under this licence to the relevant local record centre".

7. Confidentiality and Copyright

WSBRC has a statutory duty to make environmental information it holds available to any person that requests it under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. However, under Regulation 12, data can be withheld if it is considered 'sensitive' by either the supplier or us. This will depend on the nature of the enquiry and the purpose to which the data is being used.

Data suppliers might place restrictions on datasets considered to be sensitive when they are shared with WSBRC, for example, in relation to rare breeding birds, or where restrictions are imposed by landowners who enable access to private land for monitoring projects.

Species records regarded by WSBRC or its data suppliers as confidential or otherwise sensitive are listed within the annex of our **data access policy**. If an enquirer's area of search encompasses such species the enquirer will be informed and may make a request in writing to the data supplier for the details to be released.

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WSBRC receives data from a variety of sources, ranging from volunteer recorders to large organisations. WSBRC retains copyright on its database holdings, and individuals and groups who have provided their records free of charge retain copyright on their data. The data supplied to an enquirer can only be used in the context of the specified project for which the enquiry was made. It may not be published or supplied to third parties without written consent from WSBRC. See our **conditions of use** for our terms and conditions in full.

8. Charges

WSBRC is hosted by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust which is a not-for-profit charity. WSBRC reserves the right to charge users a fee which covers a proportion of the time spent collating and managing data as well as the costs attributable to the time required to administrate and undertake an enquiry. These charges represent our main income stream and are absolutely essential if WSBRC is to have long-term viability. They are reviewed annually in line with our budgeting process.

Refer to [WSBRC charging policy](#) for more details.

9. Payment

Invoicing will generally follow delivery of the data search report and will be generated from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Finance Department. WSBRC reserves the right to ask for up-front payment from organisations where payment terms have been defaulted on previously.



Appendix 1: Non-statutory sites

<p>Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</p>	<p>Most areas of the UK operate Local Sites systems following nationally published guidance (Defra, 2006). In Wiltshire and Swindon these areas are known as Wildlife Sites (WS, or sometimes County Wildlife Sites - CWS) and the system is operated by the Wildlife Sites Project at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>Wildlife Sites are areas of substantive biodiversity conservation importance, recognised at a local level. This importance may relate to the presence of rare or vulnerable habitats within the site, or to the position of the site in the broader ecological context. This is a non-statutory designation (conferring no direct legal protection), which is applied comprehensively to all sites known to meet the agreed criteria.</p> <p>For more information see: Wiltshire & Swindon Wildlife Sites Handbook, 1st February 2013 Wiltshire & Swindon Wildlife Sites Selection Criteria Codes, 1st February 2013</p>
<p>Local Geological Sites (LGS)</p>	<p>These were identified using locally developed criteria. They are the most important places for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The designation of Local Geological Sites is one way of recognising and protecting important Earth science and landscape features for future generations to enjoy. These are selected and monitored by the Wiltshire Geology Group. [previously RIGS]</p>
<p>Protected Road Verges</p>	<p>This long-standing system is managed by Wiltshire Council. Over fifty protected road verges have so far been identified and these are managed for the benefit of wildlife. A monitoring programme, using volunteers supported by WSBRC, is also operative.</p> <p>Procedure for Designating Protected Road Verges Protected Road Verge Selection Criteria, 2006</p>
<p>Bat SAC Consultation Zones</p>	<p>These focus on the internationally designated sites of Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Special Area of Conservation, Chilmark Quarries SAC and Mottisfont SAC defining 'Core Areas' around known 'Core Roosts' linked to these SAC sites. The core areas make up the Bat Consultation Zone. These areas and corresponding guidance have been prepared jointly by Natural England, Wiltshire Council and local experts.</p> <p>Note that these include the Mottisfont Bat SAC consultation zone which extends into Wiltshire. Download the guidance.</p>

Appendix 2: Species Data

WSBRC uses the **Recorder 6** biological recording database to manage its data and this program uses the [National Biodiversity Network Species Dictionary](#) which was compiled and is managed by the Natural History Museum. The majority of the content of the Species Dictionary is provided by experts and aims to provide a standard reference for species names and designation statuses for use within the NBN Gateway and across the UK biodiversity recording community.

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Over the past thirty years, numerous lists of conservation status have been produced - Red Lists, Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Lists, species listed on European Directives, species listed on the Schedules of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, Section 42 of the NERC Act and the Habitats Directive, together with lists of rare and scarce species. These status 'checklists' are all available from within the Species Dictionary which is updated regularly at WSBRC through software updates for Recorder 6. This allows us to be able to use and provide the most up to date nomenclature and status information for any species and is the basis of our notable species outputs.

Species which are notable locally and which were included in the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan, but may have no national significance are also included in any reports. These have 'county' as their status designation.

A list of species with UK conservation status has also been collated nationally by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). Their list (in spreadsheet form) contains over 8000 "taxa" that have been assigned some form of rarity, threat or legal status in Great Britain or the UK, of which nearly 1,000 are found, or have been found, in Wiltshire. For more information and to download this list see the [JNCC website](#).