

## Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre Annual Report 2012-13



The year April 2012 to March 2013 was one of further establishment of the Records Centre, following the employment of the CBDC Manager in December 2010, the formation of the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust in May 2011 and the formal launch of CBDC in October 2011. Major developments in the year included the decision to go ahead with the recruitment of a third core member of staff in line with the original business plan; promotion of the services of CBDC to local authorities and other organisations; increasing the organisation's profile with the recording community and public including CBDC's first BioBlitz; and the Centre began to take on project work.

### **CBDC Staff**

CBDC Manager

CBDC Biological Data Officer

CBDC Biological Recording Officer

Teresa Frost (TF)

El-Moustafa Eweda (ME)

Gary Hedges (GH)

## Headline Data Figures 1/4/12 – 31/3/13

Number of records entered/added to Recorder 6 **54,123**

Of which approximately:

38% came from local schemes, county recorders, societies, bioblitzes etc. (including 22% from Red Squirrels Northern England)

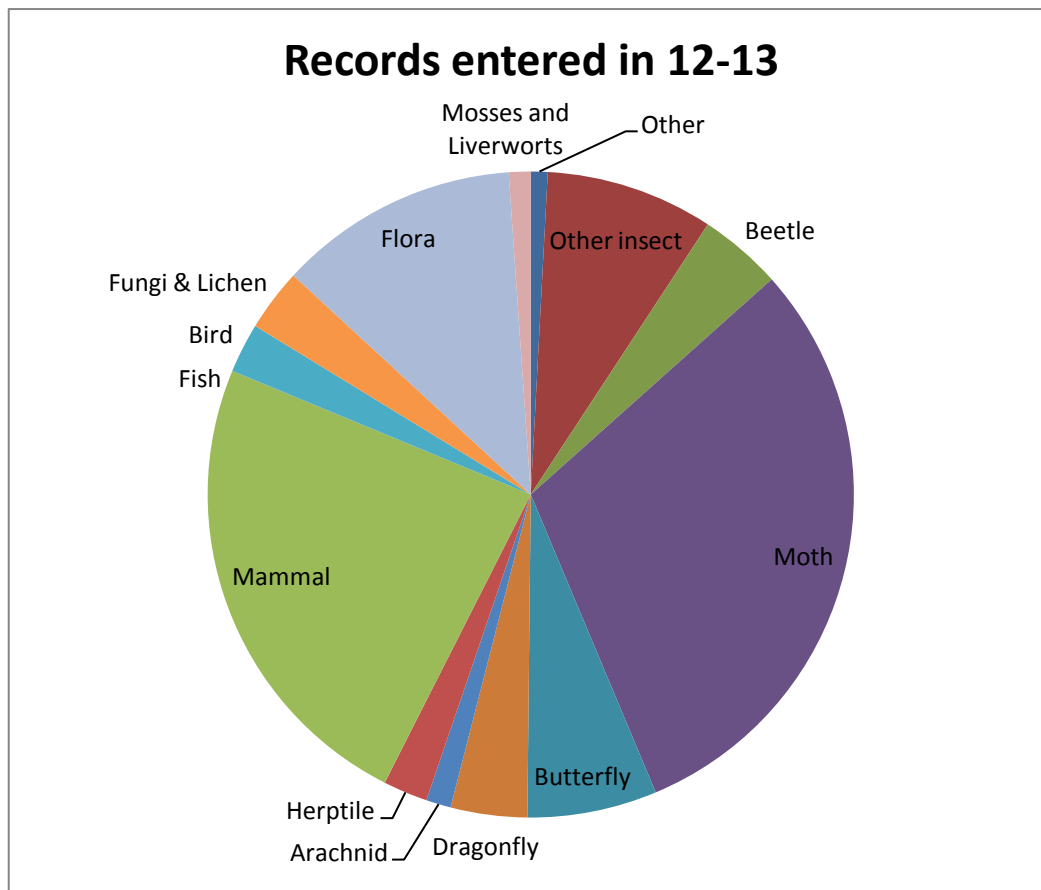
54% came from individual recorders

3% came from consultants/recorders doing paid consultancy work

4% came from national schemes and organisations

0% came from public sector organisations (local authorities/Natural England/Environment Agency)

Approximately 1,100 individuals contributed records to the database.



No new data was uploaded to the NBN Gateway during 2012-13. The number of records publically accessible via the NBN Gateway stood at 394,251. This represents about 57% of the database which stood at **690,888** records on 13/2/13.

The total number of data enquiries for the year was **296** (245 commercial; 42 free of charge; 9 for organisations with extant agreements).

From November 2012, CBDC volunteer hours began to be counted separately from Tullie House Natural Sciences volunteers. From November to March office volunteers computerising records contributed **55** hours. (This does not include volunteer time spent biological recording or volunteer expert time spent verifying records.)

### Agreements/Contributions

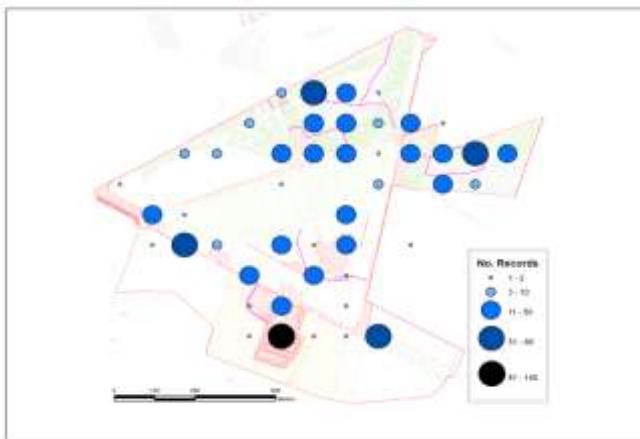
Partner contributions were made by Allerdale Borough Council, South Lakeland District Council, Copeland Borough Council and Carlisle City Council. Natural England and Environment Agency, North Pennines AONB (Wildwatch HLF) also had extant agreements. Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area entered into a new 2 year agreement in the last few days of the financial year. Two Steering Group members, Cumbria County Council and Lake District National Park Authority which had supported the development of CBDC over many years were unable to make contributions in 2012/13; both authorities began looking at alternative funding possibilities internally.

### Projects and Grants

Grant funding was sought for CBDC staff to undertake three projects during the year. The first was *Natterjack Toad historic distribution in Cumbria*, a literature search and report for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, funded by Heritage Lottery. The second was *Cumbria Connections*, a habitat connectivity analysis for the Ullswater/Bassenthwaite catchment on behalf of Cumbria Local Nature Partnership, funded by Natural England. The third was a gap analysis of CBDC data holdings compared with that available on the NBN Gateway.

A successful application was also made to Natural England for a grant of £846 to purchase three microscopes for use by local recorders.

### Significant Achievements



#### *First CBDC Bioblitz – Watchtree 16/17 June 2012*

A BioBlitz brings together recorders and the public with the challenge of recording as many species as possible at a site in 24 hours. The aim is twofold: to bring recorders together in the field and generate a snapshot of records for a site, and to get more people interested in recording. CBDC partnered with Tullie House, Watchtree Nature Reserve and Carlisle Natural History Society for our first ever 24 hour

House, Watchtree Nature Reserve and Carlisle Natural History Society for our first ever 24 hour

Bioblitz event 16<sup>th</sup> June –17<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Together Cumbrian recorders found over 600 species, almost 500 of which were new records for the reserve on the CBDC database. (365 other species previously recorded at the site were not re-recorded during the day). CBDC staff and recorders entered records into the CBDC Rodis online recording facility on the day so we had live updates of how many species had been recorded, although it took some concerted data entry in the days following the Bioblitz to enter almost 1500 records from 25 recorders to get the final species tally. Attendance from the public was good despite the very poor weather.

#### *Second Wildlife Recorders conference 20 October 2012*

After the success of the first conference at which CBDC was launched, it was decided that CBDC should organise this as an annual event. Attendance was slightly down on the previous year, at about 60.

Talks included Karen Slater from Natural England on how Natural England monitors species and habitats on SSSIs, Robin Sellers of Cumbria Bird Club on the growth of urban gull colonies and Stephen Hewitt on the hoverflies of Cumbria. "Ecosystem services" is a current hot topic and the historical context by Darrell Smith's of the University of Cumbria on how Man has measured and valued nature since the 16<sup>th</sup> century was mentioned as a highlight by many. Martin Harvey of the Open University spoke about the iSpot website and the many free recording resources available online, and there were also talks on Rodis, the national dragonfly atlas and monitoring squirrels.

#### *CBDC Biological Recording Officer 29 November 2012*

Following agreement by the CBDC Steering Group and Management Team that the financial position of the Centre was good enough to go ahead with recruiting the third core post identified in the CBDC business plan, the post was advertised in September 2012 and attracted 65 applicants. Gary Hedges started at the end of 2012 and is responsible for overseeing species data coming into CBDC from both individual recorders and organisations and groups, and encouraging and supporting more recording in Cumbria.

### **Summary of other meetings and activities**

In May 2012 TF and ME moved from an office shared with other Tullie House staff to a dedicated CBDC office with space for the new recording officer and just above the Natural Sciences office where books and non-digitised records are kept.

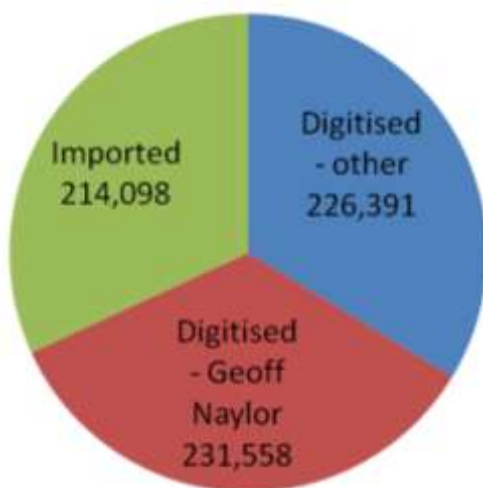
CBDC continued to share experience and best practice with the Local Records Centre (LRC) community, with visits to Tullie House by staff from other North west LRCs (Apr) and the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) National Coordinator (Jul). The team attended the ALERC conference in Birmingham at which TF led an afternoon workshop on

the use of social media by LRCs (Nov). TF also attended an LRC accreditation workshop with other northern LRCs in York (Nov); the National Biodiversity Network conference (Nov); ALERC Board meetings; and the Assessing Regional Habitat Change conference in Kent (Mar).

Meetings regarding organisational needs and CBDC services and future agreements were had with Carlisle City Council (Sep); Eden District Council (Oct); Lake District National Park Authority (Aug); Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area (Jun with Lancashire LRC); Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (Jul with North & East Yorkshire LRC); and United Utilities on behalf of all the NW LRCs (Oct; Dec; Feb). Other regular meetings attended included the Wildwatch North Pennines Advisory Panel and the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership shadow board.

In June CBDC was on the agenda of Cumbria County Council, with the Transport and Environment portfolio holder Timothy Knowles introducing the 25 Councillors to CBDC and how it provided cost-effective means for the Authority to act responsibly and meet its legal obligations. TF and Judy Palmer, County Council Ecologist, manned a display and demonstrated the CBDC data held on the County's GIS system to Councillors outside the Chamber. In November TF and Stephen Hewitt, Collections Development Manager at Tullie House gave a presentation to the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust Board on CBDC's remit, set-up and activities and how it relates to the wider work of the museum.

CBDC continued increasing its biological recording education work, showing and explaining our work to Andrew Lawton, a trainee Biological curator at the Manchester Museum (Nov); a group of 40 undergraduates on the biodiversity module from the University of Cumbria (Mar); and hosting a seminar on biological recording for postgraduates (Mar). TF and Stephen Hewitt gave a talk on historical and contemporary biological recording in Cumbria to Keswick Natural History Society (Nov).



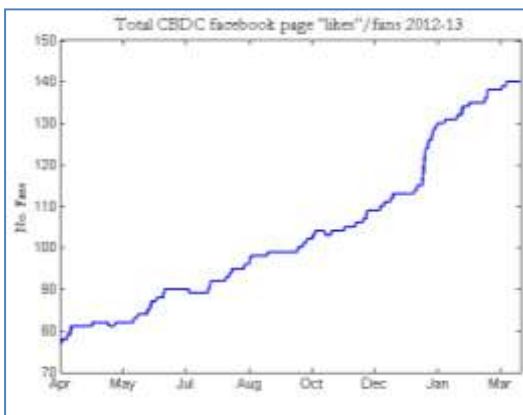
Geoff Naylor, Recorder for Carlisle Natural History Society, passed away in August 2012. In addition to his contribution of thousands of his own records, covering a wider range of taxa than any other single recorder, he had volunteered at Tullie House on the county database for over 20 years typing in records. Geoff was single-handedly responsible for inputting a third of the database including 70,000 records for the *Breeding Birds of Cumbria* atlas.

The loss of Geoff's expertise checking records before they were added to the database meant that CBDC had to review record validation and verification, which became the responsibility of the new recording officer post in December 2012. TF liaised with the Butterfly Conservation local branch to find a replacement verifier for butterfly records, which was yet another role Geoff had filled for the county.

## Summary of social media/media engagement



CBDC broke the story of a potential first for the western palearctic region (if accepted by the relevant authority), when a White-tailed tropic bird carcass was found at Mawbray Bank in January 2013 and given to the Tullie House collection. The story appeared on several birding websites but as the photo first appeared on the CBDC facebook page (<http://fb.me/CumbriaBDC>) it was interesting to watch it “go viral” as it was shared by keen birders around Britain (see table below). This also helped raise CBDC’s profile on facebook and gave a jump in the number of people who “like” us and see our page content. To capitalise on this in late January, the new Recording Officer started posting a “sighting of the week” with a photo and some notes on the species ecology and distribution which proved very popular. By March 2012 CBDC had a total of 140 Likes on Facebook and 350 followers on Twitter.



CBDC was featured in the local press once during the year, in a story related to the national decline in moth populations published on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2013.

Date	Daily People Talking About This	Daily Page stories	Lifetime Total likes	Daily Page engaged users	Daily Total reach	Daily Viral reach	Daily Viral impressions	Daily Logged-in page views
12/01/2013	0	0	115	0	0	0	0	0
13/01/2013	6	6	115	15	105	84	267	2
14/01/2013	174	266	119	597	2145	2095	6226	33
15/01/2013	64	80	123	227	1694	1675	4384	26
16/01/2013	20	29	124	77	549	531	820	12
17/01/2013	10	10	124	39	209	206	494	2
18/01/2013	2	2	126	6	105	102	194	5
19/01/2013	2	4	126	3	61	61	148	0
20/01/2013	0	0	126	15	52	49	84	0
21/01/2013	5	6	128	13	79	77	210	3

Facebook “insights” into number of users engaging with CBDC around the White-tailed tropic bird story