**Contents**

# 1 DATA CAPTURE AND MANAGEMENT

## 1.1 Introduction

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre manages and disseminates environmental data, providing an information service for the whole of the ceremonial county of Cumbria (covering the same area as that of Cumbria County Council).

All taxonomic records used in our reporting are stored in a Recorder 6 (R6) database.

## 1.2 Data format

We will accept biological records in any format, on the proviso that the data received conform to, or ideally exceed, the standards described in 2.2 Use of Metadata. Recorders will be encouraged to use more efficient capture methods where possible but not at the expense of recorder engagement.

## 1.3 Data transcription

Records received will usually be transcribed by CBDC staff into a format that is suitable for import into the R6 database. An Excel template with all necessary fields is used as the basis for this transcription, a distinction is made between fields that are necessary and those that are desirable. The exceptions to this are individual or small sets of records where it is more convenient and efficient to use the R6 species entry tool.

Records will be transcribed verbatim. Data deficiencies will be queried with the original recorder wherever possible.

## 1.4 Data confidence

In order to provide confidence that the information within CBDC's taxonomic database is as reliable as possible, CBDC operates a validation and verification policy.  See 2 Validation and Verification for more information.

## 1.5 Prioritisation

Although the intent is to have records imported into the R6 as soon as possible after they are received greater emphasis is put on records of protected and/or designated species or records from designated sites. The same applies to newer records and those conforming to the standards referred to in 2.2.  CBDC reserves the right to prioritise the importation of records to the R6 database in accordance with any agreements it may have with its partners.

## 1.6 Confidential and sensitive records

Confidential records are usually those records where the recorder (or recording group) does not wish the precise location of the record to be disclosed. These records will be held in the database at full geographic resolution and not shared without the express permission of the data owner (recorder or recording group).

Sensitive species are usually those that are likely to be harmed as a result of the distribution being made public. This data is used for planning and development purposes. However, the name of the species is anonymised to "Sensitive Species". Further details are available on request. Full details are provided to verifiers and recording groups/schemes where appropriate.

**1.7 Archive**

After import all the original documents – digital files, paper copies of records, as well as associated photographs - are archived in order that they can be examined if veracity of a reported record is queried.

**1.8 Distribution and County Status**

The distribution of species in Cumbria, and their County Status are to be based solely on records held by CBDC or its recognised County Recorder network. Records not supplied to CBDC are not included in any Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base (CBEB) used within the County Council or the local authorities and CBDC is unable to support any decisions made using data not held within the CBDC database.


# 2 VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION

**2.1 Introduction**

Because CBDC receives its records from a wide variety of sources, it is essential that CBDC can use these data in the knowledge that the information is correct, both spatially (i.e. where the record was made) and taxonomically (the species is correctly identified).

To this end, the following is a set of guidelines to be used in assessing the validity or veracity of any record supplied to CBDC. Records within the Recorder database are given the following notes:

- Requires confirmation – for records that have been validated but not verified.
- Considered incorrect – for records that have failed the verification process.
- Considered correct – for records that have passed verification.

CBDC reserves the right to omit unverified records from any reports or outputs it may produce.

**2.2 Use of Metadata**

Metadata is a descriptive summary of a 'thing'. In the case of the metadata is likely to describe a set of biological data, but this may not always be the case. The NBN standard is based upon the discovery level metadata model identified by the National Geospatial Data Framework (NGDF). The NBN standard is based upon editorial guidance specifically tailored to define the level of contextual information necessary to describe a wildlife data resource.

CBDC has adopted the NBN metadata standard and based requirements for individual records on the standard, selecting those elements which are equally relevant to both the metadata and the individual records.

CBDC Minimum requirements for new records:

- A recognised species name, preferably including the scientific binomial.
- A name for the locality, if the locality does not have a name, the nearest locality name on a 1:25,000 OS map.
- A grid reference at capture resolution. Recorders are encouraged to submit 6 fig grid refs.
- A precise date, preferably accurate to the day, but for priority species it should at least be accurate to the year. For critical species the season can be an essential part in determining the accuracy of the identification (e.g. flight periods in certain insects).
- A named observer, and determiner if this is different.

**2.3 Validation of Records**

The validation of records ensures that (1) the computerised records held by CBDC accurately portray the original record supplied by the observer and (2) confirms the ancillary information (location, date, etc.) is correct.

Recorder 6 includes a number of validation routines to ensure only genuine dates are entered and that the grid reference is in the correct area. CBDC takes reasonable steps to use Geographic Information Systems to confirm supplied grid references.

**2.4 Verification of Records**

**2.41 First County Records**

All new First County Records (FCRs) supplied to CBDC must conform to the National Biodiversity Network's (NBN) minimum data standard. All FCRs must then be confirmed by a recognised County or UK expert in the taxon and a voucher specimen (where feasible) lodged with Tullie House Museum or an alternative Natural History Collection if deemed more appropriate. Where no voucher specimen exists, or it is not permissible to collect one, photographic evidence may be acceptable at the discretion of the national expert.  CBDC will seek to ensure that all records of rare and endangered species are supplied to CBDC and added to R6.

Historical FCRs are accepted with the details supplied on the grounds that these can no longer be verified by any of the above procedures.

All new locality records should be confirmed by the local county recorder or national expert if no local verifier is available. Again, photographic evidence may be acceptable. Records from a known population may be accepted with proof that the recorder can identify the said taxon, or has supplementary evidence supporting the record.

**2.42 Records of rare and endangered species**

All records of national notable or Red Data Book (RDB) species must conform to the National Biodiversity Network's minimum data standard (see 2.2).  CBDC will seek to ensure that all records of rare and endangered species are supplied to CBDC and added to R6.

**2.43 Special Groups**

The verification of vascular plants and birds are already controlled by stringent guidelines produced by the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) respectively.

Any records requiring verification in these taxa will be passed by CBDC to the relevant local contact for subsequent processing. CBDC will then abide by their decision.

- Vascular Plants – contact BSBI County Recorder, address held by CBDC
- Birds – contact Cumbria Bird Club, address held by CBDC

# 3 DATA SECURITY

**3.1 Legislation**

CBDC is fully compliant with the relevant terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, through its host organisation Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust.

**3.2 Data ownership and copyright**

The CBDC recognises the intellectual property rights of individual recorders and data suppliers who have played a role in collating and databasing records, or in the case where records have been collected for commercial gain with the contractor or client.

Reports and publications produced by CBDC using this data will be the property and copyright of CBDC with acknowledgement being given to the original recorder(s) where possible.

Further information is published on the CBDC website: Data Ownership and Sharing and Record Ownership.

**3.3 Manual backup**

The R6 database and software are backed up locally before any major changes to R6.

R6 provides functionality to restore from a backup which would, in the case of loss of the database, allow a swift resumption of normal workflow.

**3.2 Remote backup**

Backups of CBDC data and software are carried out by David Allen IT Solutions Carlisle (IT provider for Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust) every 24 hours and stored offsite on their servers/cloud.

# 4 ACCESS TO DATA

**4.1 Introduction**

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre (CBDC) has been established as a service for local authorities, consultancies, educational establishments and the general public to supply information about the biology and geology of Cumbria. CBDC is partially funded by its Partners comprising most of the local authorities in Cumbria, however, this does not cover all costs incurred by the centre. As a result it is necessary for CBDC to charge for work it undertakes.

**4.2 Charging for access to data**

Charging by CBDC is kept to a minimum and wherever possible enquiries are free of charge to the following clients:

- Enquiries of a reasonable[1] size from the general public, educational establishments & students and local natural history groups and national recording schemes.
- Enquiries from those supplying data to CBDC may also be eligible for charges to be either waived or discounted.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, all other enquiries are chargeable.

**Charging rates**

Commercial data enquiries.  Fees and Charges are published on the CBDC website Charges and Invoicing.

After the client has supplied exact details of the information required and the area involved preferably in map form, CBDC will produce a quotation (when requested) and the client must agree in writing (email with a signature is acceptable) prior to commencement of the work. If unforeseen circumstances increase the cost of the enquiry the client must be informed immediately and agreement reached before continuing. After completion of the enquiry, an invoice is raised by the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust for the value agreed with the client.

**4.3 Cross boundary enquiries**

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[1] *Enquiries which take a large amount of CBDC resources in time or materials are not deemed reasonable, and a charge may be levied on this type of enquiry.*

CBDC does not currently have any formal agreements with adjacent Local Record Centres.  Any cross boundary enquiry will be discussed and agreed with the relevant Record Centre Manager on a case by case basis.

**4.4 Access to data for partners**

As a not-for-profit project managed by Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust on behalf of the CBDC Partners, CBDC operates in accordance with a Business Plan agreed and regularly monitored by a Steering Group composed of representatives from the partner organisations. Funding to operate CBDC is supplied by the partners which gain benefits from funding the organisation.

CBDC offers a suite of map layers for GIS (Geographical Information System) use in either MapInfo or ArcView formats. These are sent directly to the Partner. These layers ensure the Partner has access to the best available information – these layers are usually updated 2 times per year.

CBDC manages the ecological data it holds to nationally recognised standards and is able to supply information at least to the minimum standards recognised by the Association of Local Ecological Records Centres (ALERC).

The following information is provided in GIS format:

- All non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (locally known as County Wildlife Sites) within the partner's area of operation.
- All other 'graded' ecological sites (Sites of Invertebrate Significance, Important Grass Verges) within the partner's area of operation.
- All non-statutory Local Geological Sites (previously known as Regionally Important Geological/geomorphological Sites) within the partner's area of operation.
- Nature Reserves administered by Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and RSPB within the partner's area of operation.
- All sites with International, European or UK designations.
- All UK and European protected species records precise to at least 2km resolution within the partner's area of operation.
- All UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Cumbria BAP species records precise to at least 1km resolution within the partner's area of operation.
- All rare species records according to published Red-data lists precise to at least 2km resolution within the partner's area of operation.
- Rare and Scare Species Records – Post 1979 observations of species which do not fall within Red Data Book categories but which are none-the-less uncommon in Great Britain and thought to occur in between 31 and 100 10km squares of the National Grid or, for less-well recorded groups between eight and twenty vice-counties.
- Phase 1 habitat cover where available within the partner's area of operation.


Site reports and citations for non-statutory sites throughout Cumbria are available from the CBDC website in PDF format.

CBDC developed the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base (CBEB) for its Partners. The resource is available to Partners and the public on CBDC's website.  This contains a variety of information including:

- CBEB Guide for Planners and Developers
- Species Statements
- Habitat Statements

Further Information about CBDC's data is available from the CBDC website.

In the public website are online distribution atlases for popular taxonomic groups and although these are freely available, their production would not be possible without the partnership funding.

CBDC can run bespoke training events to encourage partner organisations to use CBDC data to its fullest capacity and can help with digitising existing data owned by the partner, to enable its inclusion in the CBDC databases.

CBDC also supplies a standard CBDC Species Recording Spreadsheet (available from the public website) to enable the efficient collation of biological records, again for ultimate inclusion in the CBDC databases.

**Document History:**

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