

Biennial Review

2019 - 2021

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre (CBDC) is a not-for-profit organisation that brings together and manages information on Cumbria’s natural history. It does this by:

- **working with the biological and geological recording communities, including local and national experts, to collect the data and ensure that it is robust.**
- **making information available to a range of people including the public, researchers, ecologists and decision makers.**
- **providing a range of data and information services to statutory bodies and local and national conservation organisations.**
- **delivering training and organising public events that raise awareness of Cumbria’s wonderful natural history.**

PHOTO CREDITS:

Front cover: © Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre with painting of the hare taken from the Wordsworth House and Garden Museum Wildlife Exhibition: original art work by Jackie Morris.

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ABOUT US

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre collates, analyses and shares information on Cumbria’s natural history, wildlife sites and habitats for education, research and to help people make sound decisions when planning to develop and manage land sustainably.

CBDC is an independent initiative hosted by Tullie House Museum (Charity no: 1143235). Tullie House has held natural history records since 1902 when the Natural History Records Bureau was formed. The current governance structure for the CBDC was established in 2011. This was in response to organisations needing biodiversity data to meet their obligations under the National Park and Access to Countryside Act, Earth Summit 1992 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act of 2006.

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre is member of the Association of Local Environment Record Centres (ALERC) and the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BIENNIAL REPORT 2019-2021

This report covers the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2021. It is therefore notable for covering the COVID-19 pandemic. CBDC was impacted by the lockdowns, changes in working practices and also variations in recording practices. It is likely that the consequences of this period will have a long-term impact on CBDC operation. This should be considered when reading this and subsequent CBDC reports.

BIODIVERSITY RECORDING

CBDC supports and promotes biological recording across the county via a number of different mechanisms. Key to this is working with the volunteer recorders and recording groups who dedicate their time to observing and recording the wildlife in Cumbria.

RECORDS

In 2019, CBDC received and processed almost 110,000 records collected by 600 individual recorders during 2018. A further 38,000 records were collected in 2019 and 30,000 in 2020.

Once received, each record was checked for accuracy and made ready to upload onto the CBDC database by the Recording Officer with the support of dedicated CBDC office volunteers. Further verification of the data was carried out by 20 county or national experts, who themselves are volunteers. By far the biggest dataset, 63,000 records, came from Cumbria Botany Group, with one botanist submitting 22,000 records - the largest annual total for a single recorder ever sent to Tullie House. In addition, a further 38,000 records from previous years were received. This included monitoring data from Butterfly Conservation and information about seaweeds, molluscs and other under recorded coastal species from Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee. Furthermore, the CBDC volunteers digitised 1,300 record cards, part of the FSC Brathay Collection.

The growth in the use of online apps to record wildlife was notable during this period, with iRecord gathering around 25,000 new records per year in 2018 and almost 30,000 by 2020. It is expected that this method of recording will grow in future years as apps become more effective, easy to use and make recording more accessible to new recorders.

RECORDING DAYS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS



Orin's BioBlitz
Footprint, Windermere
Sunday 14 July 9am - 5pm
 Join Orin and a team of enthusiastic experts on a day to discover what lives in the habitats around Footprint.
 Our challenge...To record every living species on site!
 Moths, trees, birds, mammals, plants, insects, lichens, pond & stream life...Surveys, Arts & Crafts, Food, Microscopes, Displays
 Come all day or drop in - suitable for all ages - no need to book

Free Event!

Also...Saturday 13th July Bat evening
 9.30pm Booking essential for bat evening only

P Come by train or bus and walk, or by car...Event parking at Elleray School LA23 1AP. 10 mins walk along a footpath (follow the BioBlitz signs)

Cumbrian recorders also help CBDC at public events by leading bug hunts and guided walks. In July 2019, CBDC supported 12-year-old Orin to organise his own Bioblitz at the National Trust's Footprint. The event was attended by 162 family members who helped discover over 200 different plants and animals. Volunteers also helped families and children get hands-on experience looking for and identifying the wildlife in and around the site at the Keswick Mountain Festival. Finds included a spectacular rare cranefly. A short film of the 2019 event can be found on the CBDC website.

CBDC also organised volunteer visits to unrecorded sites, with four such recording days in 2019. These attracted a wide range of specialists, allowing them to network and share their knowledge. Together they contributed 270 hours of recording on the day plus the time spent at home identifying specimens.

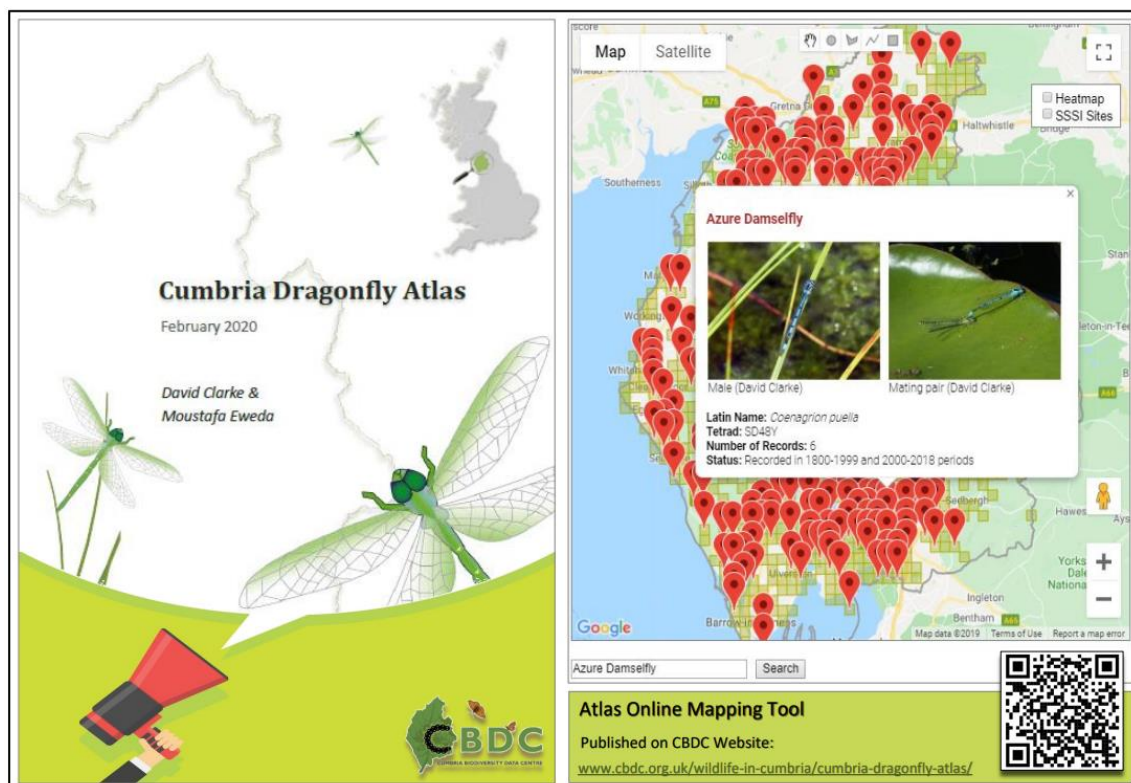
*Image: This cranefly, *Ctenophora pectinicornis*, was found by CBDC volunteer Daisy at the Keswick Mountain Festival Bug Hunt on 18th May 2019. *Ctenophora pectinicornis* is a species of true crane fly, as well as an indicator of ancient woodland. This species is considered nationally rare, with only 20 records held by CBDC since 1959.*



From March 2020, recording days were suspended but recorders kept active recording their local areas for the rest of the year, as reflected by the number of records submitted to CBDC.

RECORDERS' CONFERENCE

CBDC supports the recording community by organising the Annual Cumbria Recorders' Conference. The 2020 event, taking place before COVID-19 struck, gave people the opportunity to find out about national recording issues, local wildlife projects and species updates through presentations and displays. The conference was used to launch the Cumbria Dragonfly Atlas, a collaboration between the British Dragonfly Society and CBDC. The Atlas is an invaluable online resource for anyone interested in wishing to study or find out more about Cumbria's dragonflies and can be found on the CBDC website.



The image shows the cover of the 'Cumbria Dragonfly Atlas' on the left and a screenshot of the 'Atlas Online Mapping Tool' on the right. The cover features a map of Cumbria, illustrations of dragonflies, and the authors' names: David Clarke & Moustafa Eweda, February 2020. The mapping tool shows a map of Cumbria with numerous red location pins. A pop-up window for 'Azure Damselfly' provides details: Male (David Clarke), Mating pair (David Clarke), Latin Name: *Coenagrion puella*, Tetrad: SD48Y, Number of Records: 6, and Status: Recorded in 1800-1999 and 2000-2018 periods. The tool also includes a search bar, a QR code, and the website URL: www.cbdc.org.uk/wildlife-in-cumbria/cumbria-dragonfly-atlas/.

In 2021, the annual conference moved online for the very first time and featured county highlights and updates from county verifiers as well as taxa-specific talks and sessions looking at relevant projects across Cumbria including an update from the Local Nature Recovery Network. The online format enabled many who might not otherwise have been able to attend an event at Tullie House to join the session.

SUPPORTING RECORDING GROUPS

CBDC continued to support local recording groups, societies and clubs. This takes different forms, from supporting development of publications to active participation in the councils/committees for these groups or involvement in the annual Recorders' Conference.

GEODIVERSITY RECORDING

CBDC is proud to support Cumbria GeoConservation by providing a web portal to their fantastic resources. Their regular surveys ensure that geodiversity data are made available to all who need them while also helping to promote the diverse array of geology that is evident across Cumbria.

BIODIVERSITY ANALYSIS & INFORMATION

As well as collating and managing biodiversity records, CBDC interrogates the database to provide data required for planning and development, for nature recovery and conservation, and for research – both academic and individual. CBDC receives a large number of enquiries from a range of different organisations and individuals, and works with many different partners to provide data services in the form of mapping and analysis.

CBDC DATABASE

CBDC records are entered into the Recorder 6 database. As previously noted, approximately 178,000 records were added between 2018 and 2020 with a large number deriving from botanical records.

CBDC has a number of service level agreements with local and planning authorities to provide data to inform planning and development as well as other activities requiring biodiversity data. The agreements last one year and provide two 6-monthly data updates in the form of the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base.

DATA SEARCHES AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Data searches come in two forms:

- commercial searches to support planning applications or to inform development activity; or,
- non-commercial requests for information from local recorders, researchers and other record centres.

Commercial data searches contribute to the continued operation of CBDC and enable us to ensure that non-commercial requests are provided free of charge.

In 2019, almost 270 data search requests were received. Of these, 95% were commercial searches with the remainder coming from education/research, conservation partners, recording groups or the public.

For 2020, over 320 data search requests were made, with 88% being commercial searches. An increase in requests from recording groups was also seen, up to 8% of requests compared to 1% in 2019.

Commercial data searches were received from almost 100 different consultancies with a high level of repeat customers, particularly small ecological companies.

DATA ANALYSIS PROJECTS

CBDC was involved in significant Cumbrian projects in 2019-2021 including, but not restricted to, the following:

Get Cumbria Buzzing: a community-orientated project that aimed to boost pollinating insect populations by creating a large network of wildflower havens throughout the county. During the project, CBDC collaborated with local communities, local authorities, Highways England, and various partners across Northwest Cumbria to create a pollinator species list and then map the species across the project area using a web-based interactive map.

Cumbria Local Nature Recover Strategy (LNRS) – Pilot Mapping: from October 2020 to May 2021, Cumbria was one of five areas in England to test the LNRS concept. The LNRS is a collaborative process to identify priority areas for nature recovery and measures for delivery. Cumbria County Council were commissioned by Defra to lead a partnership (the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (CLNP)) through the process of developing a LNRS. A draft LNRS was submitted to Defra in May 2021. This provisional output will be revisited in future years when LNRS production will become a statutory obligation. CBDC worked as part of the CLNP to develop a Cumbria Habitat Basemap and a Cumbria Habitat Network map.

Fellfoot Forward: Fellfoot Forward is a landscape partnership scheme led by the North Pennines AONB Partnership and funded principally by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Starting in June 2020, the project will run till 2024 although much of the CBDC activity will take place in 2021-2023. CBDC will work with the project to deliver identification and recording days with residents and community groups in the project area to develop skills and better understand biodiversity in the area.

VOLUNTEERS

CBDC is very dependent on the contributions made by volunteers. Volunteer recorders contribute the vast majority of the records received by CBDC each year while volunteer verifiers check the quality of the records received: this alone amounts to thousands of voluntary hours each year. CBDC would like to thank everyone who takes the time to observe and record wildlife across

Cumbria – you are the most important contributors to CBDC activity and without you, our understanding of Cumbrian biodiversity would be minimal. CBDC also worked with partners to develop training sessions for new recorders to identify and record pollinators across the project area.

In 2019, 14 regular volunteers contributed 985 hours to a variety of office-based activities from administrative support to record data entry and GIS support. Volunteer recorders also contributed to four recording events. Unfortunately, COVID-19 greatly affected the voluntary work CBDC could support and meant that voluntary hours plummeted in 2020. Nevertheless, recorders and verifiers kept working and contributing to the submission of data to the CBDC database.

PUBLICATIONS

The [Cumbria Dragonfly Atlas](#) was updated and published in February 2020, replacing the earlier 2005 edition. The [Solway Nature Network Species Report](#) was also published in 2020 and describes the project which took place between April 2018 and July 2019 with over 1,000 records received covering 585 species. The project sought to provide training to volunteer recorders, many of whom went on to join other recording projects or attend CBDC recording days. Wildlife reports, presented at the Recorders’ Conference, have also been published on the [CBDC website](#).

PROMOTING CBDC AND RECORDING

The team continue to promote the work of CBDC through the website, e-newsletters (sent to a mailing list on Mailchimp) and social media (particularly Facebook). Staff and volunteers attend various events across the county, and actively seek contributions from recorders such as images and video.

FINANCES

CBDC has both charitable and trading income which are combined in the summary table below. CBDC financial accounts are published as part of the Annual Report for Tullie House Museum which is available from the Charity Commission website.

£	FYE 31/03/2020	FYE 31/03/2021
INCOME	99,662	103,355
EXPENDITURE	110,522	55,828
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(10,860)	47,527
RESERVES (CASH + CAPITAL)	80,291	127,818

STEERING GROUP

The work of CBDC is overseen by a steering group made up of local stakeholders. Primarily, these are representatives of the local planning authorities, with the Cumbria Naturalists Union representing the biological recording community, and Tullie House Museum. Their advice and steer enable CBDC to inform many projects across the county.

Steering Group:

David Clarke	Cumbria Naturalists Union (Chair)
Judy Clavey	Lake District National Park Authority/Independent Ecologist
Chris Hoban	Development Plans Officers Group (Copeland BC)
Chris Hardman	Development Management Officers Group (Carlisle CC)
Simon Jackson	Tullie House Museum, Curator (until mid-2020)
Wednesday Batchelor	Tullie House Museum, Curator (from February 2021)
Graham Jackson-Pitt	Cumbria Wildlife Trust (Senior Living Landscape Officer)
Andrew Mackay	Tullie House Museum, Director
Ian Slater	Natural England, Lead Advisor Field Unit Ecologist (until mid-2019)
Peter Strike	Tullie House Museum Trustee

STAFFING

CBDC has three full time staff, in addition to being supported by volunteers who help with data inputting, office administration, events and recording days. The recording officer role was furloughed during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Deb Muscat	Manager
Dr El-Moustafa Eweda	Data Officer
Stuart Colgate	Recording Officer

PARTNERS AND CLIENTS

We would like to thank our project partners listed below as well as all clients who have used our data search service and project collaborators such as Cumbria Wildlife Trust and the Farmer Network.

