



COUNTY RECORDERS POLICY

1. Introduction

Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) is the Local Environmental record Centre (LERC) for Wiltshire and Swindon and promotes and supports the gathering of biological data for the County. WSBRC is the custodian of this information, manages it and makes it available to all who need to use it. WSBRC is hosted by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. WSBRC operates as a non-profit organisation and is an independent organisation within Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

The terms 'County Recorder' (CR) and 'Vice-County Recorder' (VCR) are generally accepted as anyone who co-ordinates and/or collects records of a particular group of species within a defined 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 of CRs 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 acknowledged by their peers as expert volunteers working to professional standards. WSBRC has no role in appointing County Recorders but can lend assistance and advice if requested. They are among the most important data providers in the County and the many organisations depend heavily on their work and expertise. WSBRC acknowledges CRs expertise and the many hours of effort they contribute and is extremely grateful for all they do. This policy helps to define the role of the CR and how WSBRC can support their valuable work.

Where there is an active local recording group or society CR activities may well be carried out by more than one person within the group and more than one member of the group may act as CR.

This Policy document is not intended to be overly prescriptive but is an informal agreement which provides clarity and consistency about the role of a County Recorder and sets out core activities and expectations.

2. The Role and Core activities of a County Recorder

- Collating county records, validating and verifying records, sharing records annually with 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 the work of WSBRC and its aims
- Encourage recording activity in under-recorded locations/grid-squares or of under-recorded species:
 - Through articles in local group newsletters or websites and/or on WSBRC's website
 - Directly by email or (where no email address available) by letter or phone
 - By personal contact at events and field meetings
 - In response to queries about "how they could help"

3. Additional activities

Other activities that CRs might like to consider undertaking :

- Undertake online verification of records (e.g. iRecord, Living Record and other similar systems)
- Arrange field meetings, give talks and attend events to raise the profile of recording, conservation in general and the role of WSBRC
- Undertake or support training on species identification and survey methodologies
- Provide estimates of the amount of time spent in the CR role to inform and support WSBRC funding requests (as match funding, public engagement and volunteer hours)
- 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 social media forums – requesting the “what”, “where”, “when”, “who” and “how many” for all records
- Provide advice to staff of partner organisations when requested

4. Contact and Communication

The CR will usually be the main point of contact with WSBRC and should agree to the publication of their contact details such as name, address, telephone number or e-mail address in WSBRC publications and on our website. We may also share CR contact details with our partner organisations and with enquirers seeking information or advice on CRs, or species identification, or help with recording and events.

5. Ways WSBRC can help and support County Recorders

We are open and willing to provide as much help as possible to CRs in their vital and valued work. Below are some of the ways we can readily provide support but please do not be afraid to ask or request other help:

- Annual data updates
- Small Grants
- Materials for publicity, guidance on submitting records etc.
- Recording and GIS system training, workshops and support
- IT support, training, purchasing advice
- Data Management and Storage support and advice
- Data Sharing Agreements and advice on licensing terms and conditions
- Hosting an annual County Recorders’ event to promote sharing knowledge and experience within the CRs network
- Health & Safety advice (e.g. Risk assessments for field visits, events etc.)
- Insurance cover available when individuals sign-up as a WWT volunteer
- Recognition of the various skills that people bring to the role
- Regular communication
- Equipment loan (e.g. projectors, event gazebo, screens, tablets, GPS etc.)

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

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

6. Issue Resolution

We recognise and value the input and effort required for the CR role. We are open at all times to provide help and support. However, we understand it is a fact of life that personal circumstances change, other responsibilities impact upon an individual's available time or health limits/prevents some activities. There may be rare occasions where core CR responsibilities are not being met for whatever reasons or that sufficient records are not shared in a timely and regular manner with WSBRC and others. In such circumstances, we will seek firstly and foremost to understand the circumstances and provide support to the CR so that the situation may be resolved. When such assistance is not enough, WSBRC may liaise with the relevant local group and seek additional support and resources to enable the CR to meet core responsibilities and activities.

7. Agreement:

Signatures:

County Recorder/Recording Group Representative:

Recording Group Name (if relevant):

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Position:

WSBRC Representative:

Signature:

Date: 25/05/2023



Name:

Position:

Jon Isherwood

WSBRC Manager