

10

Access to information



JNCC works to support nature conservation by co-ordinating the collection and collation of biological and geological data and making that information as accessible as possible to users

Large amounts of biodiversity data are recorded each year in the UK, much of it by volunteers. JNCC plays an important role in co-ordinating that resource and ensuring that it is recorded and stored in a usable form. We also work to make data available to support evidence-based policy-making.

During the reporting year, we continued to improve the way information is stored and to make it available to as wide a range of users as possible. JNCC's **Recorder** software has been developed to allow biological records that are collected in the field to be entered and collated in a standard digital form. The latest version, **Recorder 6**, allows users to collect and collate an unlimited number of records and includes a distribution mapping function. In the UK, **Recorder** is used by national societies, such as the British Dragonfly Society and the British Lichen Society, and Local Record Centres (LRCs). LRCs bring together information on flora and fauna in their locality and make it available to users. Volunteers who support the work of LRCs are often also suppliers of information to national recording schemes.

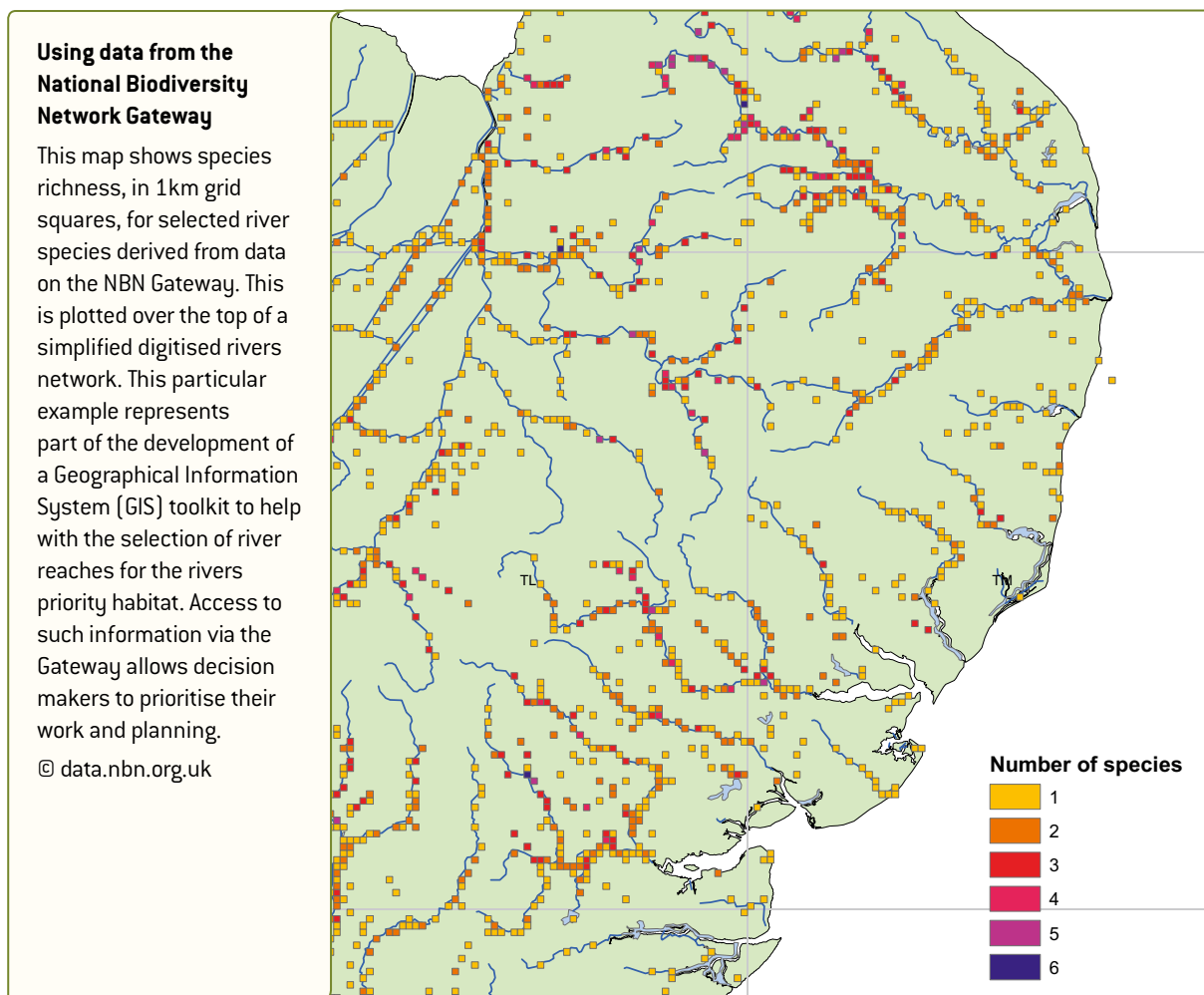
Our main focus for promoting **Recorder** during the reporting year was on the LRC network, and 60 per cent of the network's members are now using the software. The **Recorder 6** user group, recently established by JNCC, will examine options and priorities for the future development of the package.

As well as encouraging the flow of data, JNCC is also concerned with ensuring that data collected in the field have the accuracy necessary to support policy applications. During the reporting year we worked with Defra and Natural England to sketch out a new tool to determine data quality, which will be developed during the coming year with input from the LRCs and recording schemes.

Data collected by *Recorder* users feed into the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), a network of biodiversity databases. JNCC manages the NBN website data.nbn.org.uk, which holds species records in an accessible form. At the end of the reporting year, it held 35 million records and the

site was receiving 180,000 visits each month. Site users include Government agencies, other nature conservation organisations and members of the public. There has also been an increase in use of NBN data and functionality via other websites, which were responsible for 80,000 page views of NBN data each month by the end of the reporting year.

During the year we also continued to support the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network (MEDIN) through the development of its strategy. This initiative aims to ensure that those working in marine nature conservation have access to high-quality information through establishing a single on-line access point for information.





Surveying Binevenagh Special Area of Conservation

Northern Ireland Environment Agency field workers on Binevenagh SAC

Binevenagh is the only site representing the rare habitat 'Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation' in Northern Ireland. The site comprises steeply-rising basalt cliffs with a range of chasmophytic (rock crevice) species. Of particular interest is the remnant arctic-alpine flora, in addition to plants that are more usually

associated with coastal locations. Species include mountain avens *Dryas octopetala*, moss campion *Silene acaulis*, purple saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, thrift *Armeria maritima* and sea campion *Silene uniflora*. Notable bryophytes such as *Tortula princeps* also occur.

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