

Doncaster Local Records Centre (DLRC)

Policy Document – February 2015

DATA VALIDATION/VERIFICATION POLICY & PROCEDURE

Terminology

Below are definitions of the terminology used in this document:

Term	Definition
DLRC	Doncaster Local Records Centre The Local Records Centre for the Doncaster Borough, which collates, manages and disseminates environmental data on behalf of professional local organisations, and amateur naturalists.
RDB	Red Data Book An international list, published as the Red Data Book, which classifies species into different categories of perceived risk in the wild.
Validation	The process of determining the soundness of a record in respect of valid date, grid reference, location and taxon name.
Verification	The process of confirming that the determination of the species in the record is correct in the light of current taxonomic knowledge, taking into account habitat and other determinable factors attached to the record.

Data Validation Policy

Contemporary or current data

Records are received from many sources. The great majority of these sources are from trusted natural historians, local naturalists from reputable natural history societies, county recorders or professional ecologists where the persons concerned are widely recognised as being competent in their fields. As a Local Records Centre we rely on the expertise of specialist workers. Records received by DLRC may be questioned and expert advice sought when deemed necessary, especially in the case of RDB, Nationally Notable, protected or otherwise important species subject to legislation.

Historical data

DLRC inputs and manages historical data, in the interests of holding a comprehensive dataset. This is important not only as an archive but to assess changes in conditions of local sites and to assess trends in species loss/gain over time. Reliance on the validity of historical records rests generally on the reputation of the journal entry or literature reference from which the data are drawn, or from the reputation of the individual recorder/determiner concerned.

Data Validation/Verification Procedure

1. The quality of taxonomic identifications is critical to the operation of DLRC and therefore record validation and verification are required to ensure data are of the highest quality before submitting to a user.

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2. It is essential that data are evaluated and validated before entry to the database and generally this is done by the Biological Records Officer of DLRC in conjunction with the suppliers of the data.
3. Our validation of species records utilises the dedicated validation feature of the Recorder 6 database within which DLRC's data are stored. This feature is a checking process which ensures that the grid reference is a valid OSGB reference and that the date is current, valid and not one in the future, and that the taxon exists in the database.
4. Verification is carried out within the database using the expertise of either the relevant DLRC data officer or a specialist in consultation. In Recorder 6 every Species Observation (a record) may be flagged Correct/Incorrect/Requires Confirmation/Unconfirmed in response to the result of the verification process.
5. No Local Records Centre can have sufficient in-house expertise to deal with verification of all the taxa it covers, so contact may be made with specialist individuals when the Biological Records Officer considers it necessary.
6. DLRC gratefully accepts records from whomever chooses to offer them. Any such records are only entered onto the database if it is considered by the relevant DLRC officers that the source of the records (and by implication the determiner) is a bona-fide one.

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