



Doncaster
Council

Doncaster Local Records Centre

Annual Report for year 1/4/2017 to 31/3/2018

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1.0 Summary

This Annual Report focuses on the main issues and activities with which the Doncaster Local Records Centre (DLRC) has been involved during the period 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2018. The Annual Report may be found on the DLRC webpage.

Summary of key points:

- The Doncaster Local Records Centre responded to 100 enquiries for biodiversity information. Quotations were supplied within 5 working days of receipt of enquiry;
- The majority of enquiries came from commercial organisations. The remaining requests were submitted by DMBC, public bodies, members of public and education establishments;
- DLRC generated an income of £19275 including VAT, that is £7670 more/ than the year 2016/17;
- Data input for this financial year included 16916 species records making a total of 443254 records held in the database;
- 31 sites were surveyed as a part of 2017 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) resurvey programme. The data input comprised 4795 records, mainly of botany.

Summary of key activities:

- Preparation for the Local Wildlife Sites resurvey programme for 2018 in conjunction with the Biodiversity Officer;
- HS2 – data supplied to HS2 organisation in response to terms of SLA;
- Yorkshire Water – data supplied in response to terms of SLA;
- Data input to database in response to records received;
- Data supply to partners as records become available;
- Data supply to clients in response to data search enquiries.

2.0 Staffing Complement

Doncaster Local Records Centre (DLRC) forms part of a wider network of Local Records Centres in the UK. The Centre's main role is to collect, manage and share information about wildlife and habitats within the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough administrative area to the benefit of biodiversity. The verified and validated biological records held in our database are provided as part of a service on a not-for-profit basis to a range of recipients including decision-makers, environmental consultants, researchers, educational establishments and members of the public.

DLRC operates on a 3 days-per-week basis and currently has one permanent staff member. R Marsh (Biological Records Officer) maintains the database, deals with data enquiries and the daily business of DLRC, and assists with biological recording aspects of the work carried out by members of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's Natural Environment team.

The table below shows other members of the Planning Team, within the Built and Natural Environment Team, who contribute to DLRC as part of their role.

Table 1: Planning Team within the Built and Natural Environment Team directly involved in the work of DLRC

Position	Staff	Main tasks
DLRC Manager	Jane Stimpson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall LRC manager • Budget holder/finance manager
Biological Records Officer	Bob Marsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data requests • Species data – collation and validation/verification • Habitat data – validation • Database management • Day-to-day finance matters
Biodiversity Officer	Melissa Massarella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LWS survey programme organiser
Principal Officer – Local Plans/Environment	Donna Halliday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase I habitat mapping • Advice to DLRC on GIS matters

3.0 Steering Group Membership

DLRC direction and work are guided and scrutinised by the Steering Group which meets annually and comprises 14 members. Table 2 includes the full list of members at 31 March 2018.

Table 2: List of Steering Group members

Name	Position/Representing
Carolyn Dalton	Doncaster Museum
Colin Howes	Independent member
Derek Whiteley	Sorby Natural History Society
Helen Kirk	Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum
Helen McCluskie	Principal Planning Officer
Jane Stimpson	DMBC Planning Officer/LRC Manager/budget holder
Ken Dorning	Sheffield Area Geology Trust/Sorby Natural History Society
Louise Hill	Doncaster Naturalists' Society
Bob Marsh	DMBC Biological Records Officer
Melissa Massarella	DMBC Biodiversity Officer
Phillip Whelpdale	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Pip Seccombe	Doncaster Naturalists Society
Simon Pickles	Yorkshire and Humber Environmental Data Network
Tim Kohler	Natural England

4.0 Data handling

DLRC holds three main types of information i.e. species records, habitat information and designated site information. The oldest records date back well over 200 years.

4.1 Records received

As can be seen from the chart below, the number of records imported into our database has fluctuated widely over the last 11 years (Figure 1), depending on the volume of records received from contributors and the time available to the Biological Records Officer for computerising historical data from card index and document sources.

The data cover a wide range of taxa, with birds, flowering plants and insects accounting for 95% of the records (Figure 2). The other taxonomic groups represented are bony fish, harvestmen, mosses, lichens, millipedes, stoneworts, crustaceans, spiders, acarines, horsetails, mollusks, conifers, reptiles, amphibians, ferns and fungi.

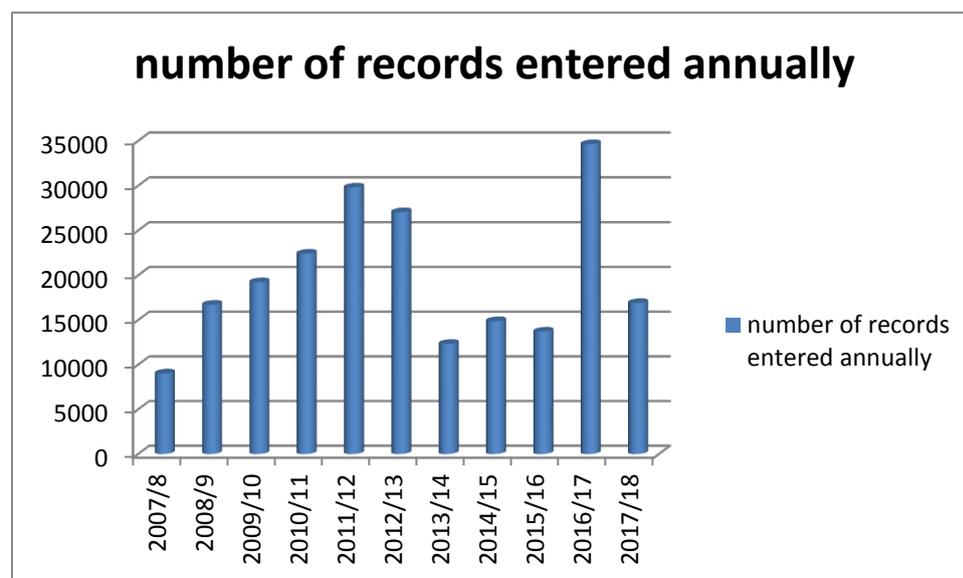


Figure 1: Number of records entered annually to DLRC database since 2007

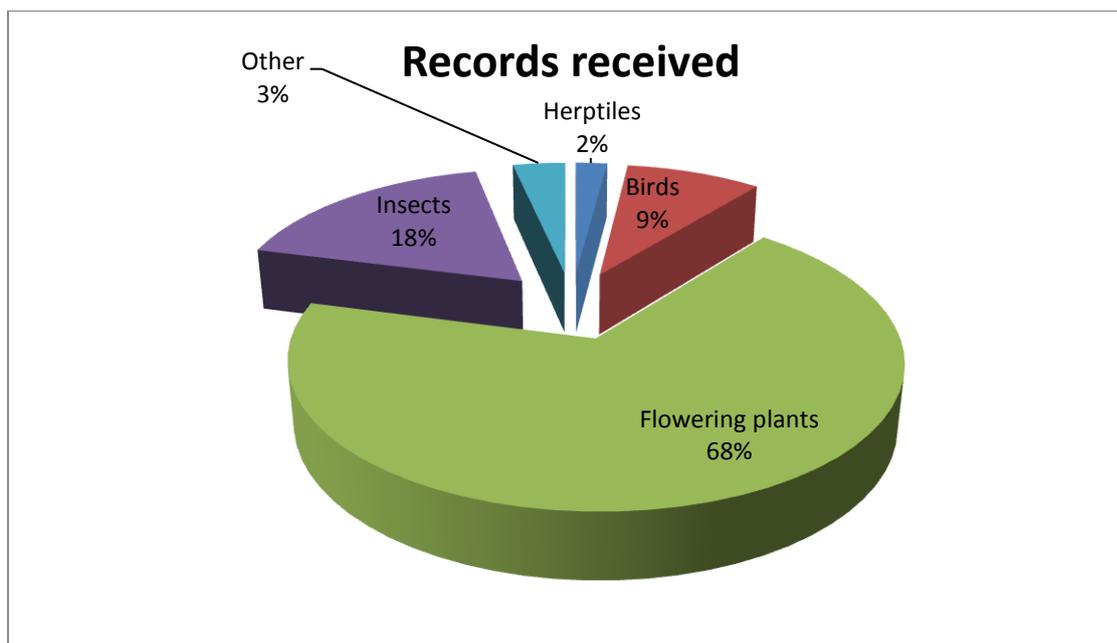


Figure 2: Data input by taxonomic group between 01/04/2017 and 31/03/2018

4.2 Record precision

Figure 3 below shows a summary of the precision of records entered in the database in the year 2017/2018. The majority of records are at either 1km or 100m precision, with the highest figure for 100m records.

We have observed that over time biological data have been recorded with greater spatial precision. DLRC aims to increase the proportion of records with a spatial accuracy of 100m or greater to make the data more accurate and useful for users.

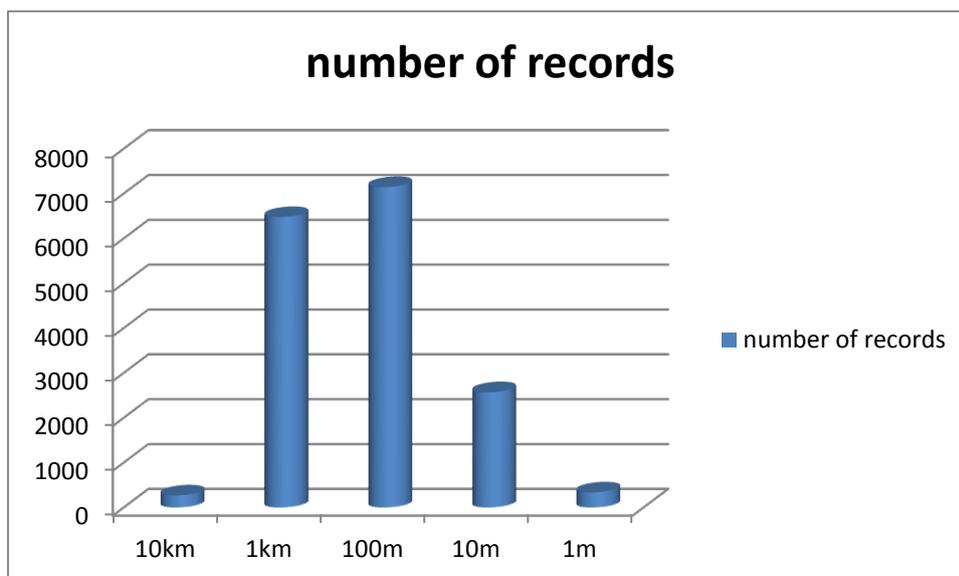


Figure 3: The spatial resolution of data entered in the database between 01/04/2017 and 31/03/2018

4.3 Database maintenance

The Recorder 6 software was upgraded to version 6.28.0 in January 2018. Further dictionary updates have been applied to the database presently in version 0000003Y. All details of past and latest software and dictionary upgrades/updates may be found on the Recorder 6 website at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/recorder>. DLRC continues to receive support from the R6 support Consortium and NBN Forum users.

It will be appreciated that the work we do at DLRC depends completely on the Recorder 6 database. Recently it was announced by JNCC, the prime movers behind the Recorder 6 project, that funding for future development would be withdrawn from 2018. This development concerns software and database structure modifications. It is not yet clear how the withdrawal of funding will affect dictionary and species designation updates.

The R6 Consortium (the small team of R6 experts) have secured sufficient funding to maintain the system and ensure users have access to support when they need it, at least to the end of March 2019.

Recently the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) conducted a national Recorder 6 Consultation among R6 users. The results of the survey have now been collated by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and are available for study on their website. Sussex Biological Records Centre is now focussing on establishing a working group to look at how maintaining R6 can be continued over the short/medium term and to begin work on scoping a successor.

5.0 Data providers

The majority (70%) of records provided were the result of the LWS 2017 survey. The remainder (30%) were provided by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Doncaster Naturalists' Society and Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. We received no biological records or reports from consultants with the exception of MRB Ecology and Estrada Ecology.

Data providers between 01/04/2017 and 31/03/2018

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Doncaster Naturalists' Society
Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
MRB Ecology
Estrada Ecology

6.0 Data users

The following companies, consultancies and organisations requested our services during the period (see Table 3):

Table 3. List of data users.

Organisation/Company
AB Ecology
Access Ecology
ADAS
AECOM
Applied Ecological Services Ltd
Arbtech Consulting Ltd
Argus Ecology
ARUP
Atkins Global
Avian Ecology Ltd.
Baker Consultants Ltd
BL Ecology Ltd
Bowland Ecology
Brindle and Green Limited
Brooks Ecological
Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
BWB Consulting
Cardiff University
Crow Ecology
Delta Simons Environmental Consultants
DMBC
Ecology & Forestry Ltd.
Ecus Ltd
Environment Agency
Enviroscope Consulting Ltd
Estrada Ecology
FPCR Environment and Design Ltd
GL Industrial Services UK Ltd (trading as DNV GL)
Halcrow Group Limited
HS2 Ltd
Jacobs UK Ltd
JBA Consulting
JCA Ltd
Just Mammals Consultancy LLP
Middleton Ecological Consultancy
Milner Ecology Ltd

Mott MacDonald
NLG Ecology Ltd
Quants Environmental
RammSanderson Ecology
RPS
RSK
Scarborough Nixon Associates Ltd
Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield Wildlife Trust
SLR Consulting
TEP-The Environment Partnership
Thomson Ecology Ltd.
Total Ecology
Wardell Armstrong
Waterman Infrastructure and Environment
Weddle Landscape Design
Whitcher Wildlife Ltd
Wold Ecology Ltd
WYG
Yorkshire Water via YHEDT
Yorkshire Naturalists Union

The total number of requests received during the period 1/4/2017 to 31/3/2018 was 100. Quotes were provided for 90 requests, 81 of these generating income. A single request fell outside the DMBC admin/recording area and the enquirer was advised to contact the relevant neighbouring LRC. Ecological consultancies constituted the largest user group by number of data search requests (87%) during the period. 50 different consultancies requested between 1 and 11 individual data searches. The remaining requests came from within DMBC, from public bodies, higher education establishments/students and researchers. There were no requests from members of the public.

The average time for providing a quotation for data provision was within 5 days of the initial enquiry.

Doncaster Naturalists' Society continues to operate a log of information requests from members of the public. These come in via the Museum enquiry desk and resulting biological records are forwarded to the LRC.

6.1 Data transfer agreements/Service Level Agreements

We continue to operate our data exchange agreements with our partner organisations Doncaster Naturalists' Society, Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

We have Service Level Agreements with HS2 and Yorkshire Water. Data have been sent to HS2 as part of the ongoing national planning organisation for the proposed high-speed rail network. Data transfer to Yorkshire Water is being coordinated by Yorkshire & Humber Ecological Data Trust (YHEDT)

7.0 LWS resurvey programme

The Local Wildlife Site resurvey programme constitutes an important part of maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of Doncaster's non-statutory sites. It is run annually. 258 Local Sites have now been surveyed by suitably qualified surveyors since the programme began in 2009, and 40 will be surveyed in the spring and summer of 2018.

In 2017 the survey was carried out by MRB Ecology and Environment and comprehensive lists of plants together with habitat maps, target notes and photographic evidence were provided for each site re-surveyed. For some sites, records of other taxonomic groups were also provided as part of this survey. From April to September 31 Local Sites (28 LWS and 3 Candidate LWS) were resurveyed covering a total area of over 300ha. This constitutes nearly 9% of all sites located in Doncaster Council boundary. Within Recorder 6, Local Wildlife Sites were split into sub-sites depending on habitat type using standard Phase 1 nomenclature.

8.0 Phase 1 habitat mapping

Phase 1 Habitat Maps of Local Sites based on DMBC records are prepared and then annotated by the surveyors as a part of the LWS resurvey programme. Color-coded paper maps thus prepared in the field are then digitised by DMBC staff in ArcGIS. Habitats within LWSs are thus clearly mapped and areas quantified.

The aim of preparing Phase 1 Habitat Maps is to provide a record of the vegetation and wildlife habitat over a specific area. They provide an objective basis for a determination about a change of the boundary or designation status. Maps also give a clearly defined baseline for monitoring change and support the conservation of threatened habitats and species.

9.0 Income

The present charging structure for data enquiries has been in place since April 2017 and continues to form the basis of the LRC's income. The income of £19275 including VAT has been generated from 81 of 100 requests. This is an increase of £7670 from 2016/2017 period. Part of this income is used to offset the cost of the annual LWS resurvey programme. The healthy increase in income that we have seen this year is due to the restructuring of our Schedule of Charges, to the acquisition of business via Service Level Agreements with HS2 and Yorkshire Water and a higher number of requests, a trend that may not be continued next year.

During this reporting period, biodiversity data have been provided to YHEDT which coordinates data provision to Yorkshire Water on behalf of the Yorkshire LRCs.

10.0 Expenditure

ALERC subscription is £450 – to put this figure into context this is equivalent to the income generated by two average data search requests. For this we receive recognition that we are an effective and efficient organisation within the LRC community and that we operate to standard guidelines, we have access to a knowledge base and Forum which enable us when necessary to seek advice on the operation of our LRC and to obtain information and advice on new legislation and software practices as these become available, and we have access to contacts with other LRCs.

There were no other items of direct expenditure during this reporting period.

11.0 Future activities

- In 2018 Local Wildlife Sites resurvey programme will be carried out and it will target about 40 Local Sites;
- We shall continue to build on relationships with recorders and recording groups;
- Data search charges are expected to remain unchanged during 2018/2019;
- LERC cross-boundary data searches. Yorkshire LRCs are currently engaged in setting up a procedure and documentation to enable any of our group of LRCs to conduct cross-boundary data searches. This will offer clients an enhanced service comprising a quicker and cheaper data search where the target area crosses the boundary of a neighbouring LRC. This would benefit the client in that a single search could be commissioned rather than two or more, offering better-perceived value for money.

12.0 YHEDN

YHEDN (Yorkshire and Humberside Ecological Data Network) is a network encompassing all the regional LRCs – regular (currently biannual) meetings of the Yorkshire LRCs are being hosted by this network wherein current topics affecting the LRCs of Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, West Yorkshire Ecology and NEYEDC are discussed. Recent meetings have been held in Doncaster and Sheffield.

13.0 General Data Protection Regulations

May 2018 sees the introduction of this major updated legislation covering the protection of data, particularly personal data. While we collect and store names of recorders and determiners as an integral part of a biological record, we do not hold addresses or other

contact details in our Recorder 6 database, and in any case we do not disseminate, in normal circumstances, names of persons in the results of a biological records data search.

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List of tables

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R Marsh

Biological Records Officer - Doncaster Local Records Centre

20 April 2018