

Workshop – Keeping the data flowing

Facilitator – Mike Pratt – Northumberland Wildlife Trust

How can we encourage the public to report their sightings?

- Acknowledgement that many organisations are not completely in control of their own data.
- Citizen science – quite often public sightings can't be verified and so are of no use.
- Some taxa better represented than others eg birds and butterflies are well recorded, mammals less so.
- Water voles are a hard species for the public to identify.
- We should all be directing sightings to Local Environmental Records Centre as they can verify and share data widely.
- Often data collected by public is biased to where people go (eg walking routes). Is there any way to inject a level of design to make the data more useful?
- Any form needs to be simple and avoid free form answers with multiple choice. Some level of effort recording too (eg 5 min walk or 2 hour walk). Spatial structure – X records in grid square per unit time.
- Standardisation between different organisations is an issue – locally, regionally and nationally.
- [RSNE](#) example of long term spatial monitoring of red and grey squirrels. Local groups happy to share data with project because they know they will get something back (eg maps etc). Taken a lot of effort to get to this point!
- How long should we keep asking public for data that we can't use properly? Giving info back is crucially important.

Who should manage this and how should it be funded?

- Could every water vole project make a contribution to National Water Vole Database? Build it into future water vole projects to ensure sustainability?
- Politics and egos within organisations (eg all wildlife trusts, or all national parks) need to be put aside so that we are using networks more effectively and recording data in the same way.
- Agricultural sector is as important as environmental and consultants.
- How do we better access money from developers? Natural capital and offsetting approaches – collaborations can lead to big funds but gap between vision and reality. We need longer term investments. Need to educate developers on how their money will help.

How can we make it accessible – conservationists/developers/public?

- Needs to be at landscape scale – Nature Recovery Networks – not single species.
- Constant change/shifting focus can make it difficult to work with important landowners because they aren't in currently favoured area.
- Involving farmers in collection and analysis in fundamental and helps them understand processes and outcomes. Farmers want a balanced environment – can we get a data element in this? Don't ignore this community.

How can we get data from professionals?

- Currently issues with landowner permission for consultants to submit data meaning confidential species go under recorded. If we could get hold of all this data, massive added value.

- PTES dormouse example – were able to collect data from NE licences which otherwise was going into a black hole. Added many additional records.
- Route through planning – N York Moors ask for bat licence info and records.
- How can we make consultancy data non-sensitive? Should be requirement of NE licence. It is part of dormouse licence – but hard to enforce. Records should be sent to LERC.
- Need zero records too – positive/negative/not surveyed.

