



An Introduction To Biological Recording:

How To Record:

A biological record requires, as a minimum, four basic pieces of information to make it useful and useable. These four items are: What / Where / When / and Who. These relating to: the Species seen, Where the species was seen (location name and grid reference), the Date the observation was made, and Who was the recorder/observer.

What:

The name of the plant or animal which you saw (e.g. Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*). We can accept just the common name (Primrose) but if you know the correct scientific name (e.g. *Primula vulgaris*) then this helps to ensure that we do not make mistakes and accidentally key in the wrong data due to incorrect assumptions being made.

Where:

Where you saw the plant or animal. The name of the nearest location name shown on an Ordnance Survey map and, if possible, a grid-reference (preferably to 6-figure accuracy (e.g. SJ123456)). If you cannot assign a grid reference then please do talk to us and we should be able to help you work one out. For road casualties (e.g. dead foxes, rabbits, badgers, etc.) telling us which road the corpse was seen on helps us to check the accuracy of the grid-reference.

When:

The date you saw the animal or plant. The preferred format of date is: dd/mm/yyyy (day/month/year) – that is the actual day you saw the animal or plant. Some recorders aggregate their data and provide records from a date range (e.g. 12/04/2004-24/09/2004). This is acceptable but where possible we would always encourage recorders to provide the exact dates for each sighting. Less accurate dates can be accepted but only if no other information is available (e.g. May 2003, 2002, 2001-2002, Summer 2000).

Who:

The name of the recorder/observer of the animal or plant along with contact details (e.g. address, tel.no., fax no., e-mail). If someone else helped with the identification of the subject or later confirmed your record please do let us know and include their name and contact details also.

Extra detail about, sexes, numbers, habits, stage (e.g. adult, larva, fruiting, flowering), etc. which you can collect all help to flesh out and add to the value of the record making it more useful BUT the above 4 items are the minimum to make a record and are the basic elements of information needed. The **rECOrd** Casual Recording Form (RF09) or the **rECOrd** standard Excel spreadsheet will help to guide you as to which main items of information are needed to make a record – if you need/would like copies of either then please do ask.

Accuracy of Identification:

1. Record species which you feel confident in identifying. As you build up your expertise by using various books and keys (e.g. Collins Field Guides, Royal Entomological Society Keys, etc.), by joining societies and picking up first-hand assistance and training, or by attending study courses on specific taxon groups (e.g. Field Studies Council courses) then you can

2. widen the number of species and groups being recorded. If you have a particular interest then **rECOrd** should be able to put you in touch with a local enthusiast or assist in finding a course for you to attend.
3. **rECOrd** may be able to assist in identification of any species you find by asking a local expert to identify specimens or to visit the site/location to look at the species in question.
4. Should you not wish to get involved in recording yourself but know of a site which you feel is of wildlife interest then please do tell **rECOrd** about it so that we can arrange for one or more local experts to visit it and to record the animals and plants which inhabit the site.

What To Record:

rECOrd is interested in receiving all records of wildlife and their habitats, terrestrial, freshwater and marine, from the Cheshire region (Cheshire, Halton, Warrington, Wirral and the old vice-county (VC-58) 'pan-handle' around Trafford, Tameside, Stockport, and parts of High Peak (equivalent to the old pre-1974 Cheshire boundary)) to add to the growing database. Records of common species are just as valuable as those of rare species and records from your back-garden will be received as gratefully as those from SSSIs.

However, a priority is to gather information on national and local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats. Below is a short list of some of the locally important BAP species and habitats for which we would be especially keen to receive records:

Species:

Great Crested Newt	Natterjack Toad	Barn Owl	Black-necked Grebe
Spotted Flycatcher	Allis Shad	Twaite Shad	Belted Beauty Moth
Club-tailed Dragonfly	Dingy Skipper	Mud Snail	Ringlet Butterfly
Sandhill Rustic Moth	Small Eggar Moth	Otter	Grey Seal
Bats (all)	Polecat	Brown Hare	Cetaceans (all)
Water Vole	Harvest Mouse	Bluebell	Isle of Man Cabbage
Rock Sea Lavender	Adder	Slow-worm	

Habitats:

ASB Woodland	Coastal Saltmarsh	Gardens	Coastal Sand Dune
Heathland	Lime-beds	Meres	Mudflats
Orchards	Peatlands	Ponds	Reedbeds
Unimproved Grassland	Roadside Verges		

rECOrd also supports and collects data for particular local and national surveys, including:

- Cheshire Bumblebee Survey
- Cheshire Mammal Survey
- Cheshire Amphibian Survey
- Cheshire Moth Survey

For more information about these surveys, or about any of the above, or indeed for further help in your recording then please do contact:

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