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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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Title: An Inventory of Local and Regional Biological Records Centres in the British Isles

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Biological Records Centre  
Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood Experimental Station,  
Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 2LS

Dear

AN INVENTORY OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRES IN THE  
BRITISH ISLES

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The national Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood (BRC), in collaboration with the Biology Curators Group (BCG), is seeking to compile an inventory of local and regional Biological Records Centres in the British Isles. Once the inventory has been compiled it is hoped that progress will be made towards greater co-operation between the National Biological Recording Schemes (co-ordinated by BRC), the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood, the local Biological Records Centres and other interested organisations.

The attached questionnaire has been compiled on behalf of BCG and BRC by Paul Harding and Eric Greenwood. We should be very grateful if the questionnaire could be completed and returned as soon as possible, using the enclosed prepaid envelope. It is hoped that the results of this survey will be published in a summarised form but replies to questions may be treated in confidence if requested.

We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Paul T Harding  
Biological Records Centre

E F Greenwood  
Biology Curators Group

INVENTORY OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRES

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E

Please try to answer every question. If a question is not applicable, write N/A. In the case of YES/NO answers, please delete what is not applicable. If there is insufficient space on the questionnaire for your answer, use a separate sheet and number your answer appropriately. A simplified list of taxonomic groups is appended; this is numbered for use in reply to questions 21-36.

1. NAME OF CENTRE
  
2. FULL POSTAL ADDRESS OF CENTRE
  
3. TELEPHONE NUMBER
  
4. WHAT GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IS COVERED BY THE CENTRE?
  
5. WHEN WAS THE CENTRE SET UP?
  
6. IS THE CENTRE CURRENTLY OPERATIONAL? (i.e. regularly staffed, receiving records and providing users with a service) YES/NO
  
7. IF THE CENTRE IS STILL BEING PLANNED, STATE WHEN IT IS EXPECTED TO BECOME FULLY OPERATIONAL.
  
8. IF THE CENTRE IS NO LONGER OPERATIONAL, WHEN DID IT CEASE TO OPERATE?
  
9. IF THE CENTRE IS EXPECTED TO CEASE OPERATING IN THE NEAR FUTURE, STATE WHEN.
  
10. PRESENT NUMBER OF PERMANENT STAFF: FULL TIME .... / PART TIME ....
  
11. PRESENT NUMBER OF TEMPORARY STAFF: FULL TIME .... / PART TIME ....
  
12. PRESENT NUMBER OF REGULAR VOLUNTARY STAFF: FULL TIME ....  
PART TIME ....

13. IS THE RUNNING OF THE CENTRE ITEMISED IN THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE PERMANENT STAFF? YES/NO TEMPORARY STAFF? YES/NO
14. STATE THE SOURCE OF THE FUNDING OF THE CENTRE AND PERMANENT STAFF
15. STATE THE SOURCE OF THE FUNDING OF THE TEMPORARY STAFF
16. WHEN IS THE PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT OF THE PRESENT TEMPORARY STAFF EXPECTED TO END?
17. ARE REPLACEMENTS/ RENEWALS / EXTENSIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENTS OF TEMPORARY STAFF EXPECTED? YES/NO
18. IF 'YES' TO QUESTION 17, GIVE DETAILS OF SOURCE OF FUNDING.
19. FORMAT OF DATA HELD:
  - 19.1. SPECIES RECORDS - YES/NO. Approx. no. of records .....
  - 19.2. SITE FILES - YES/NO. Approx. no. of records .....
  - 19.3. GRID SQUARE RECORDS/FILES - YES/NO. (Specify units used)
  - 19.4. OTHER (specify below)
20. HANDLING OF DATA - give details where relevant:
  - 20.1. MANUAL ONLY - YES/NO
  - 20.2. MECHANICAL SORTING - YES/NO
  - 20.3. MINI-COMPUTER - YES/NO
  - 20.4. ACCESS TO COMPUTER - YES/NO
  - 20.5. OTHER (specify below)

21. CONTROL OF QUALITY OF DATA

- 21.1. ARE RECORDS ASSESSED FOR RELIABILITY BY RELEVANT EXPERTS? YES/NO
- 21.2. IF 'YES' TO QUESTION 21.1, HOW ARE RECORDS ASSESSED? (specify below)
- 21.3. HOW MANY TAXONOMIC GROUPS ARE SERVED BY A LOCAL EXPERT (e.g. a county recorder?)
- 21.4. ARE VOUCHER SPECIMENS RETAINED IN A LOCAL MUSEUM TO SUPPORT SOME/ALL RECORDS? YES/NO
- 21.5. IF 'YES' TO QUESTION 21.4, SPECIFY THE MUSEUM (below)

22. MAIN SOURCES OF DATA (number 1 to 6 in order of importance)

LOCAL NATURALISTS AND SOCIETIES  
RECORDS CENTRE STAFF  
NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL RECORDING SCHEMES  
BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE (Monks Wood)  
LOCAL MUSEUMS  
PUBLISHED SOURCES  
OTHER (specify below)

23. PAST RECORDS

- 23.1. HAVE RECORDS BEEN ABSTRACTED FROM PUBLISHED SOURCES? YES/NO
- 23.1.1. IF 'YES', BACK TO WHAT DATE? (specify below)
- 23.1.2. IF 'YES', FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (specify below)
- 23.2. HAVE RECORDS BEEN ABSTRACTED FROM LOCAL COLLECTIONS IN MUSEUMS? YES/NO
- 23.2.1. IF 'YES', BACK TO WHAT DATE? (specify below)
- 23.2.2. IF 'YES', FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (specify below)

23. PAST RECORDS (continued)
  - 23.3. HAVE LOCAL NATURALISTS SUPPLIED DETAILS OF PAST RECORDS?  
YES/NO
    - 23.3.1. IF 'YES', BACK TO WHAT DATE? (specify below)
    - 23.3.2. IF 'YES', FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (specify below)
24. INPUT OF DATA
  - 24.1. HOW MANY SPECIES RECORDS WERE RECEIVED IN 1979? .....
  - 24.2. HOW MANY SITE FILES WERE ADDED TO IN 1979? .....
  - 24.3. HOW MANY SITE FILES CONTAIN AT LEAST ONE COMPREHENSIVE LIST FOR ONE TAXONOMIC GROUP? .....
  - 24.4. HOW MANY SITE FILES CONTAIN A FULL ECOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTION? .....
25. HAVE THE ORGANISERS OF THE NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL RECORDING SCHEMES BEEN APPROACHED TO SUPPLY RECORDS? YES/NO
26. IF 'YES' TO 25, FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (If all, state ALL, but do not list. Please list if only some have been approached.)
27. IF 'YES' TO 25, WHICH SUPPLIED DATA? (specify below)
28. IF SOME SUPPLIED DATA, WERE THE DATA IN A FORM WHICH WAS OF USE TO THE CENTRE? YES/NO
29. IF 'NO' TO 28, GIVE BRIEF DETAILS OF PROBLEMS (below)
30. HAS THE NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE (BRC) AT MONKS WOOD BEEN VISITED AND RECORDS ABSTRACTED? YES/NO

31. IF 'YES' TO 30, FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (specify below)

32. IF 'NO' TO 30, WOULD YOU CONSIDER VISITING BRC AT MONKS WOOD TO ABSTRACT RECORDS? YES/NO

33. ARE RECORDS SENT TO BRC ON A REGULAR BASIS? YES/NO

34. IF 'YES' TO 33, FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (specify below)

35. ARE RECORDS SENT TO THE ORGANISERS OF THE NATIONAL BIOLOGICAL RECORDING SCHEMES ON A REGULAR BASIS? YES/NO

36. IF 'YES' TO 35, FOR WHICH TAXONOMIC GROUPS? (specify below)

37. USERS OF THE RECORDS CENTRE

37.1.	LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNERS AND ECOLOGISTS	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.2.	LOCAL WATER AUTHORITY	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.3.	COUNTY NATURALISTS' TRUST	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.4.	NATURE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.5.	NATIONAL TRUST	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.6.	LOCAL NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETIES	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.7.	LOCAL NATURALISTS	Frequent/Regular/Occasional/Never
37.8.	OTHERS (specify below)	

38. ACCESS TO DATA HELD BY THE CENTRE (please tick where applicable)

- OPEN ACCESS TO ALL ENQUIRERS
- SELECTIVE ACCESS TO SOME ENQUIRERS ONLY
- CLOSED TO ALL EXCEPT OFFICIAL USERS
- LANDOWNERS HAVE OPEN ACCESS TO DATA RELATING TO THEIR OWN PROPERTY

39. ARE RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION PRESENTED IN AN INTERPRETED FORM? (please tick where applicable)

- ALWAYS
- SOMETIMES
- NEVER

40. CAN A SITE BE EVALUATED IN RELATION TO OTHER SITES FOR A USER:

- 40.1. IN THE COUNTY - YES/NO
- 40.2. IN THE SURROUNDING REGION - YES/NO

41. TOTAL NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES FOR DATA DEALT WITH IN THE LAST 12-MONTH PERIOD .....

42. IS CONTACT MAINTAINED WITH LOCAL DATA CENTRES FOR OTHER DISCIPLINES? (please tick where applicable)

- LOCAL HISTORY
- ARCHAEOLOGY
- INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
- GEOLOGY
- OTHER (specify below)

43. DOES THE CENTRE PRODUCE A REGULAR/OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR CIRCULATION TO CONTRIBUTORS OF DATA? Yes/NO

44. PLEASE ATTACH A LIST OF REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED BY THE CENTRE (including a list of reports submitted to users)



APPENDIX - SIMPLIFIED LIST OF TAXONOMIC GROUPS

1. Fungi
  2. Lichens
  3. Algae
  4. Bryophytes (Mosses & Liverworts)
  5. Vascular plants
  6. Protozoa
  7. Other lower invertebrates - specify
  8. Annelids (Worms & Leeches)
- ARACHNIDA
9. Spiders
  10. Pseudoscorpions
  11. Opiliones (Harvestmen)
  12. Mites and ticks
- CRUSTACEA
13. Marine
  14. Freshwater
  15. Terrestrial (Woodlice)
  16. Diplopoda (Millipedes)
  17. Chilopoda (Centipedes)
- INSECTS
18. Orthoptera (Grasshoppers & Crickets)
  19. Odonata (Dragonflies)
  20. Hemiptera (True bugs, aphids, leafhoppers)
  21. Neuroptera (Lacewings)
  22. Trichoptera (Caddisflies)
- Lepidoptera
23. Butterflies
  24. Macro-moths
  25. Micro-moths
26. Coleoptera (Beetles)
  27. Hymenoptera (Ants, bees, wasps)
  28. Diptera (Flies)
  29. Other insects (specify)
- MOLLUSCS
30. Marine
  31. Freshwater )
  32. Terrestrial ) Snails & Slugs
  33. Fishes
  34. Amphibia
  35. Reptiles
  36. Birds
  37. Mammals