

**BRISC****BIOLOGICAL RECORDING IN SCOTLAND****Issue No 57 April 2005**

ISSN 0966-1964

Recorder News

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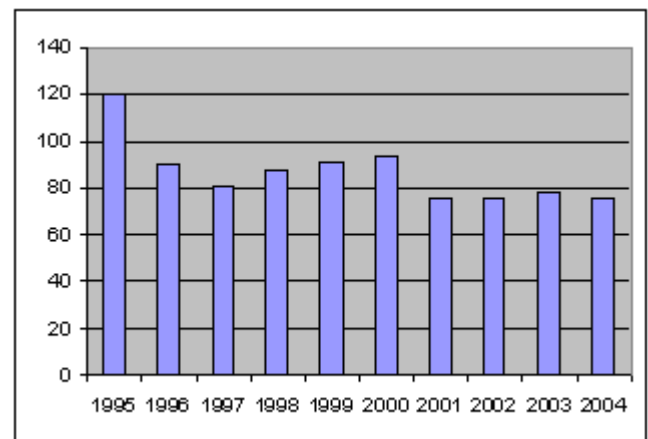
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- **Recorders' day at Loch Katrine**
- **EIR joint event with IEEM**

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Our method is nevertheless very simple. About 20 observers are in the group, and at the start of the season each of us are issued with a map to fill in, and asked to record each male singing between 1 May and 15 July. April counts are too soon because the winter flocks do not fully disperse until the end of the month. Counts after the middle of July are confused by established pairs sometimes breaking up and moving around. At the end of the season I collate all the returns and use my own judgement about possible duplications. Of course it is liable to errors, but we are now confident that we record a very high percentage of the birds (over 90%), and our results tally well with those of the RSPB who since 2002 have been monitoring selected farms where they are intervening to encourage farmers to provide food and nesting cover.

Fig 1 Numbers of singing (male) corn buntings in Fife



Ten years of Corn Bunting counts in Fife

Chris Smout

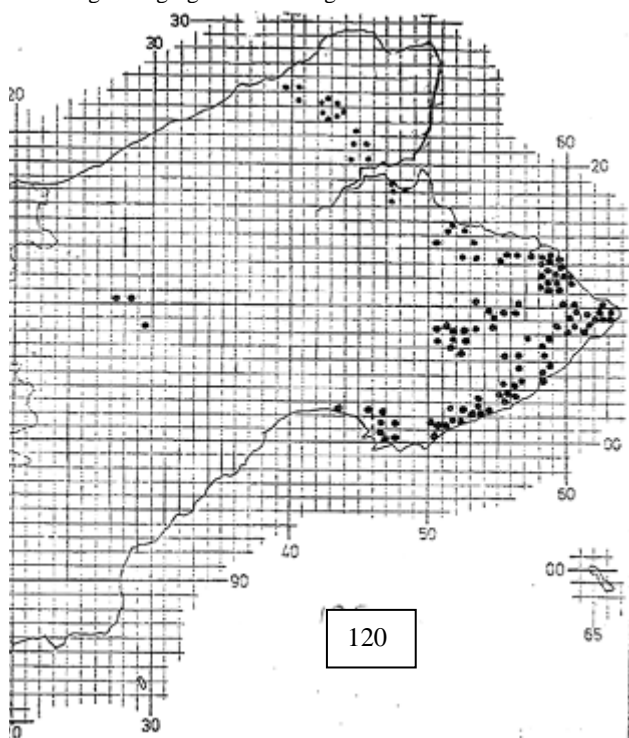
Corn Buntings have been declining in Fife for decades, just as in other arable areas of the UK, though much less so than in Lothian where they are now extinct as a breeding species. Ten years ago a group of us began to monitor the population systematically, following trials for a few years before that which had not been capturing the true population: the breakthrough in monitoring came following a visit from Adam Watson, who impressed on us how essential it was to count within two hours of sunrise or sunset, because so many birds fall silent in the period between.

The trend since 1995 has of course been downwards, though the most severe drop was between 1995 and 1996. The drop has not, however, been a steady one: there was some recovery between 1997 and 2000, and figures have been fairly stable for the last four years. Examined by district, most serious declines have been of inland colonies. Even inland, however, Corn buntings occasionally show an ability for small numbers to hang on for years. In 1995, there were

three pairs recorded near Dunshalt: they are still present, though they have moved a little to the west from their former position: and one or two have been at Star for at least four years.

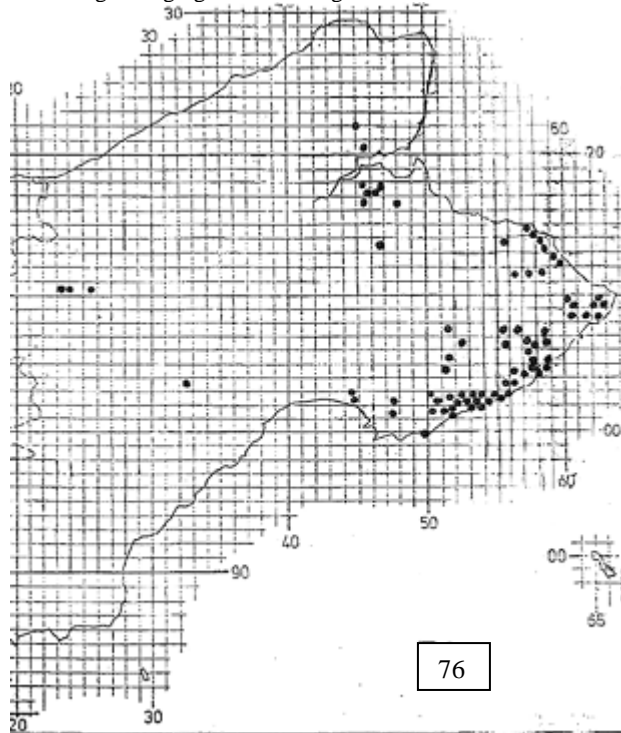
Since 2002, when the RSPB began to intervene in the farms between Anstruther and Elie on the south coast, there has actually been a slight increase in this area,

Fig 2 Singing Corn Buntings 1995 – 120 birds recorded



unfortunately balanced by declines elsewhere even in coastal districts, such as around Kingsbarns. It is too early to say how far the schemes will ultimately be successful in stopping the overall decline, but it is nice to be recording in 2004 singing Corn Buntings from farms where they had not been seen for several years.

Fig 3 Singing Corn Buntings 2004 – 76 birds recorded



THE GLOWING REPORT – 2004

Jonathan Willet

Introduction.

First of all I would like to say thank you very much to all those who look part in the survey. Commiserations to those who went out to look but did not find anything. Sightings were uncovered from as far back as a few correspondents' childhoods and also to an 1890 record in an old book.

According to one correspondent "Arran is covered in them" but someone who lives there, who contacted me, was not aware of any records on the island. I mention this to highlight the appalling state of affairs that is the management of biological records nationally (I do realise there are local exceptions, if you are lucky enough to have a Local Record Centre or are looking for information on birds or butterflies). If we dig about there are records to be found in people's heads, in old files or in notebooks, but there is no way to collate and disseminate this information locally. This is of course my personal view. [mine too! – ed.]

The number of sightings that have been sent to me is pretty good considering that not many people have been involved with the survey: well done to you all! This effort means that

there are several confirmed locations, so if you are desperate to see some glow worms, then you know where to go.

If you would like to contact the individual who submitted a sighting then contact me, and I will put you in touch with them (provided they have said they are happy with this arrangement).

Species Sightings.

1890. From the *Chronicles of Cowal, Argyll* by Angus McLean, ISBN 1-85821-874-8. On page 94 he quotes Martin's *Guide to Dunoon* (c1890) which renders a description of Loch Loskin (the small body of water immediately north of Dunoon): "...the Glow worm is in great abundance. When brought home and put in a dark room they completely illuminated it with their little elfin lamps like so many stars in the darkness." NS 170785 (approx). – information supplied by *Ben Mitchell*.

? "A local resident told us some while ago that she remembers seeing some, we think around Ormidale - west side of Loch Ruel - many years ago." - *Jane and John Moran*

? “Craignish Peninsula, nr Ardfern, Argyll. I know of an area where glow worms are said to be, although I have not had the pleasure of seeing them myself. I would be keen to go out for a look, and if it helps your research, then that is all the better!” *Cristina McAvoy*.

1940/50s. “Sightings all along water board road at Garabhan (by Drymen)”, from *retired forestry worker*.

1950/60s. Drumlean Farm by Aberfoyle. The daughter of the then farmer there told me (JW) about seeing many glow worms in the wet fields by the road when she was a child.

1970/80s – four sightings:

- Whitefield Loch, Dumfries and Galloway. NX235553. 1972 – 1973. Craigenveoch Castle. one female - *D&G Record Centre*.
- “Probably 25 years ago, between 10-20, in a wood on a steep slope above the River Almond. If of any use I could probably give you a location grid ref. to within 500m, but would not be able to be more accurate regarding the year, as I was but a loon at the time.” Sheet 37/107 710 [NT ?? ed.]. - *Norrie Russell*.
- Inchtavannach (Loch Lomond). “I used to camp there (with permission!) one week every summer in the late 70s early 80s. The glow worms were in the bracken near to south-west shore most times. There were a small number of differently located flashes - approx. 20-30.” - *Callum McNeil-Ritchie*.
- Two ladies from Balquidder told me (JW) of sightings on the back road from Balquidder to Strathyre.

1990s – five sightings:

- Sighting of one from the back of Bellshill (at the edge of a housing estate looking onto fields) close to the M8! No grid reference. - *Via JW*
- Carbeth Estate (near Strathblane). A few seen on the walk back from the pub. Correspondent rechecked when sober to ensure he was not imagining it. - *Via JW*.
- Lorne, Argyll. “I think past (10 years ago?) records from Fearnoch Forest (general area = NM 960 315) might not have made it to the Records Centre.” - *Andy Chadwick*.
- 1989 – 1991. Glenhapple Moor. NX362705. Penningham Forest. *D&G Record Centre*.
- 1989 – 1991. Kirkcudbrightshire. NX409667. Banks of the River Cree. *D&G Record Centre*.

1996 – one sighting. Brighthouse Bay NX6345 23/4. On small bridge. Larvae. - *D&G Record Centre*.

1998 – one sighting. “Glentarken Wood, Loch Earn at NN672248. It was seen on a walk along a disused railway line, 24/5/98.” - *Richard Buckland*.

2002 – sightings in three areas:

- One at Balquidder station. (I am afraid I have lost the correspondent’s details but I did pass them to the National Recorder, JW).
- “Single glow worm glowing away in bracken near Gylan Castle at the south end of Kerrera (NM802265) on 12 July 2002. No others visible nearby.” - *Robert Craig*
- Queen Elizabeth Forest Park by Aberfoyle. 4/7. 12.20am. NN511001. Seven glow worms sighted in total. Six seen within 20m of each other and a single seen 50m west of

these six. Two seen on long grass (c. 20cm up the stalks) in a marshy area to the north, 5m west of a slightly dilapidated stock fence, leading to an open grass and bracken area. This area was beyond the end of the track and past the dumped, rotting picnic tables. Two in at the edge of a large stand of bracken at the bottom of a slope, to the north of the track just at the point where all the picnic tables were dumped. This is about 10m west of the stock fence towards the track. One on the ground and one on a dead bramble stem c10cm off the ground. One seen on a bit of picnic table covered by moss on the ground on the track about 10m further west than the above. Likewise another was seen lying on an open area of Starry Moss (*Politricum commune*). One seen about 50m further west to the north of the track on moss at the base of a sapling. I checked the surrounding areas within 10m of the glow worms and saw no others; they did stand out so I do not think I would have missed any one that was glowing. Two of the glow worms ‘went out’ once I had handled one and shun a light on the other.

Queen Elizabeth Forest Park by Aberfoyle. 5/7/02 at NN511001. I was out on Friday night to the same site and saw two glow worms this time. The chap who was with me was the one who had seen them in 1995 or 1996. He commented that they had moved down towards the end of the track by as much as 200m since he was there. The area where they are found is the most open section on the track.

Queen Elizabeth Forest Park by Aberfoyle. 6/7/02 at NN511001. Two female glow worms, seen at 12.10am on at the end of the forestry track. Both were in long grass/rushes in damp areas about 15cm up the stems.

Queen Elizabeth Forest Park by Aberfoyle. Two seen on 10/7/02. further along the track. Jonathan Willet.

2003 – four sightings:

- 26/569775 Loch Ardinning. One female, 2003. 37/005026 Mount Stuart. “Several over the years”. *Alan Hall Garden*.
- “We found a glow worm on Inchmarnock (near Bute), which we reported and in the acknowledgement we received were told that there was an old record of Glow worm from, amongst other areas on the West coast, the Loch Sween area not far from Achnamara. I spent one night searching but no luck.” - *Tommy Daniels*.
- 21/6/03. Black Lochs SSSI by Oban. “Larva spotted when a BDS group was having lunch whilst on a Field Excursion.” - *John Knowler*.
- 5/7/03. Queen Elizabeth Forest Park by Aberfoyle. NN511001. 2 female glow worms seen at 12.10am on at the end of the forestry track. Both were in long grass/rushes in damp areas about 15cm up the stems.

2004 nine sightings:

- “Glow worms seen in 2004 at a car park viewpoint just outside Largs. The person who saw them said Arran was ‘covered in them’ ”. - *Gill Smart*.
- Kissock Forest NX906679. 14/6. Along side of track at foot of Lotus Hill. One female. - *D&G Record Centre*.
- Whiteside Plantation NX555560 24/6. Skireburn, track by side of gas compound. One female. - *D&G Record Centre*.

- “Beside the footpath between Ardtarraig and Glen Striven, along the eastern shore of Loch Striven. NS063800 to NS062807 four female glow worms spaced out along a path through moss, bracken, heather and birch habitat. The sightings were between 1:30 and 2:30 am 2 July 2004.” *Ben Mitchell*.
- 21/7/04. “We have a small colony of glow worms here at Galahaugh Fish Farm, just north of Galashiels. I have not seen them but my manager saw them last night at about 11pm. They are spread along an old embankment on the old Waverley Railway line so they are in scrub blackthorn and grasses with some birch and alder trees. You will find the site at NT473387.” - *James Pringle*.
- “The reason I write is that last Wednesday (21/7) I found a glow worm on the Canal Bank between Lochgilphead and Cairnbann in Mid Argyll. Grid Ref – NR850895. I found it around 12am. It was within rankish vegetation at the side of the towpath. To make sure I was not seeing things I picked it up and hence saw it in relatively good detail - My first sighting!” - *Colin MacFarlane* (This is close to another record from the 1960s).
- Lochgilphead, on ground between main road and Crinan Canal embankment (NR855874).
- 21/7/04. Queen Elizabeth Forest Park, Aberfoyle. Single female Glow worm seen. NN511001. - *Jonathan Willet*.
- Ederline House (Loch Awe side) NM966094. “This colony has been known for a long time. Also NM978125, lights seen on the shore just south of the church.” - *Pat Batty*.

Crichton Glen (Midlothian). This site was checked in 2004 but was very overgrown and no glow worms were seen.

Fireflies?

From Billy Black – “I was fishing approx one mile south of Dalavich on the south side of Loch Awe. It was early summer (think it was June) 2002, it had rained the previous day and it was very humid. The grass was still damp and due to the humidity, there was almost a mist/fog although it was quite clear. I first noticed the lights around dusk. There were not many of them, but when it was pitch black there were lots of them. I was fascinated when I first saw them, but did not realise the significance of what I had seen until I received the e-mail from Robin Scagell. I thought they were native to UK and until then was unfortunate not ever to have seen any, and did not really get over excited. We were having a few beers around the fire and to be honest forgot all about them until I was discussing it with a friend who said that he had never seen any.” *Billy Black*.

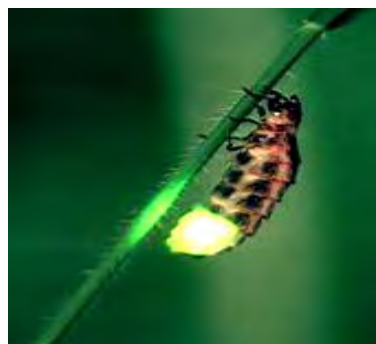
Robin Scagell of the UK glow worm survey website wrote:

“It is just feasible that in a very dark location one might see a glow from a male glow worm. I have seen one glow briefly when I had one captive in a very dark room, and curiously they are said to be able to glow from their knee joints! But I doubt that they would be bright enough, continuous enough and numerous enough to be as visible as stated. Having said that, swarming of male glow worms was reported from the Isle of Cumbrae in 1912 -- not a million miles away geographically - though I have not heard of it on any other occasion. Under normal UK conditions where there is plenty of sky light from light pollution, it is less likely that you would see a glow.

“If glow worms are to be seen locally then glowing males might be a possibility, though we know very little about their flight patterns. I believe they are reluctant flyers, and as they have no mouthparts as adults and cannot feed they are unlikely to engage in any more flying than absolutely necessary, though from reports of them getting to house lights I think they could fly several hundred yards if they wanted to. But they are not likely to engage in the same flight patterns as true fireflies, which do behave as described.”

Though fireflies exist as close to the UK as Belgium, it is out of the question that they could exist in a small pocket of rather hostile conditions in Scotland.

So this does appear to be a mystery, swarming male glow worms or fireflies? I asked my contact there to ask around about this and no-one had seen this phenomenon.



Conclusion.

Considering the scale of this survey and the time spent organising it, the returns have been excellent. The sightings seem to have been more about where people were than where the glow worms are. I am convinced that there are many more colonies to be found. It does seem that Argyll is a hotspot for glow worms, especially around Loch Awe with its mysterious luminescent, flying insects. Dumfries and Galloway is another area with no doubt many more sites to be discovered. In 2004 two sites were on old railway lines. These criss-cross the country and are good places to start a search.

Purely in terms of recording glow worms there are two major issues, first of all very few people are out past midnight and very few of them are walking anywhere (in a straight line). So only those with an interest are likely to be out and about. Therefore we should look to inform those recorders (bat, bird and moth people) who are out at that time to keep an eye out, maximise this existing recorder effort.

For the general public there is an opportunity for night-time walks to be organised. If it is possible to combine a walk in the woods or old railway line to look for roding woodcock, churring nightjar or other night time sounds and then finish off with some glow worms, then that would be a pretty good experience for all concerned (as long as you remembered your midge net). This would entertain the public and may encourage a bit more recording but most importantly it would give people a relationship with an insect that is not a butterfly, moth or dragonfly. When I first saw a glow worm,

on Hambeldon Hill in Dorset, it was the night after a guided walk had been run to look at the glow worms there. There must have been 20+ people wandering round the hill marvelling at the 100+ glow worms dotted about the slope. More folk came along that night than when the guided walk was on: word of mouth about this amazing sight did the trick.

The survey will be running again this year and I hope that you all will be able to get out and check out some historic sites so we can get a clearer idea of distribution and what is happening to the population as a whole.

Happy searching!

Jonathan Willet. March 2005.

BUMBLEBEE SCOTTISH DISTRIBUTION UPDATE AND MAPS

Anne-Marie Smout

BRISC's bumblebee survey has now been running for about four years, and it is high time to produce some distribution maps showing what records have been collected and where.

A number of people have sent in records to their Local Records Centre or to me over the years, some recording sightings in their own garden, while some have gone further afield and recorded bumblebees on outings and holidays. Many of these records are very detailed, giving numbers, sex of insect, date of first sightings and the flowers they were feeding on. All this information is very much appreciated.

Earlier in March I circulated all LRCs with a request for all their most recent records on a spreadsheet, giving the minimum information: Name of species, date and grid reference. Initially I had intended to show the distribution only since 1990, but in the end I changed this to include all records.

The map here shows all the 10km squares where at least one species has been recorded. It should be noted that a local bumblebee atlas for Highland is shortly to be published as the first local atlas of its kind in Scotland, and all records from that database have therefore been left out deliberately, except on the 'effort' map here, where it is clear that a huge amount of recording has been taking place (circles in dark red for those who can see it in colour). This is largely the effort of a few people, in particular Murdo Macdonald, who has been the leading force. Readers will have to wait to see the distribution of Highland bumblebees till that atlas is published, so watch this space.

It is clear from my maps that most recording efforts outside Highland are centered on Shetland, Orkney, the Uists, and the SE of mainland Scotland. There are huge gaps with no records at all! Hopefully these maps will encourage more people to look out for bumblebees whenever they are out and about and, essentially, to submit their records. If you have any records languishing in a notebook or in a drawer, please do submit them, either to me or to your nearest LRC. Bumblebee survey packs are still available from me at £2.50 (inc p+p), or (£1.50) for the (south of Scotland) garden

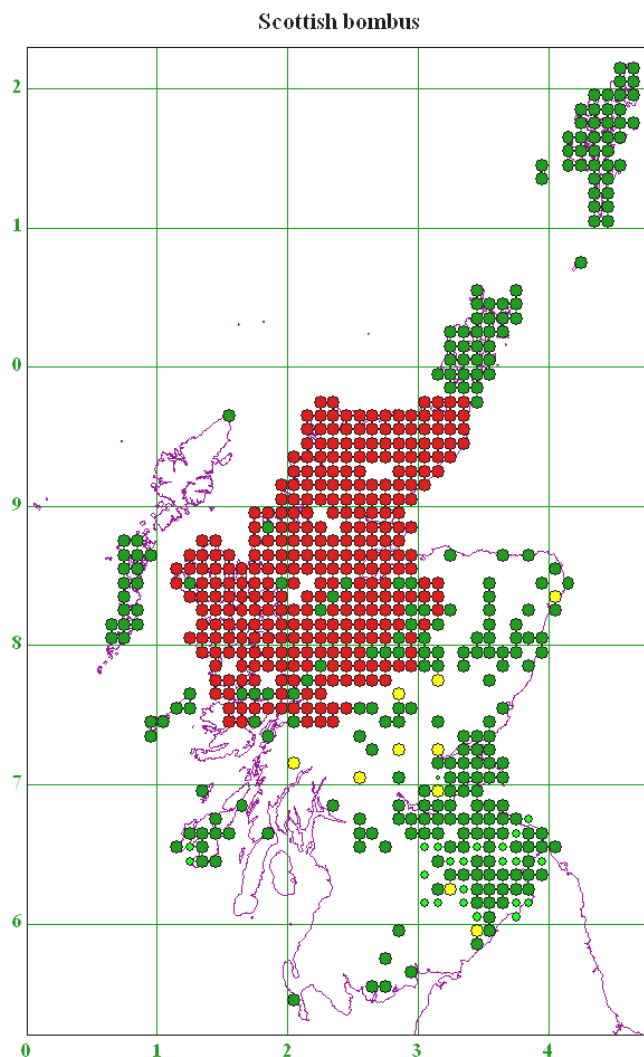
survey pack. Do also check out the review of a new bumblebee book elsewhere in this newsletter.

All my maps have been produced with DMAP – a powerful, inexpensive and easy to use software, developed by Alan Morton – for details of how to obtain it see his website at www.dmap.org.uk

The symbols used for the maps are as follows:

1. Big dark (green) circles showing records 2000-2004
2. Big dark (red) circles showing records collected for the Highland Bumblebee atlas (but only on the 'effort' map)
3. Big pale (yellow) circles showing records 1990-1999
4. Smaller dark (green) marks showing records pre 1990

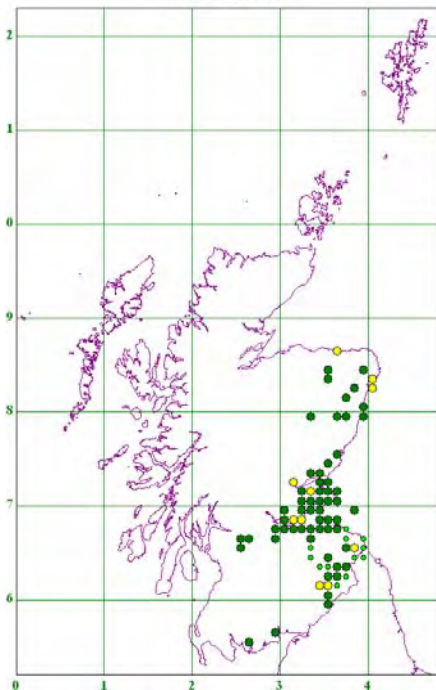
(Readers who receive *Recorder News* electronically will be able to see the colours more clearly, and larger versions of all the maps will also be posted on our website).



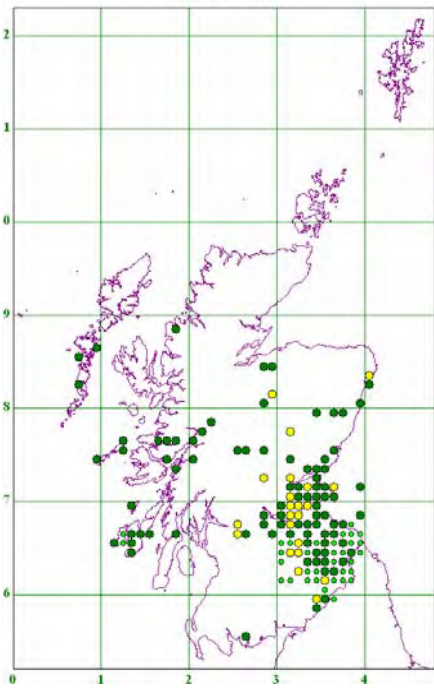
The 16 maps on the next pages are arranged in the order in which they are illustrated in Prýs Jones and Sarah Corbet's *Bumblebees*, ISBN 0-85546 257-4. There are no reliable records of *Bombus ruderarius*, so here is a challenge!

Anne-Marie Smout

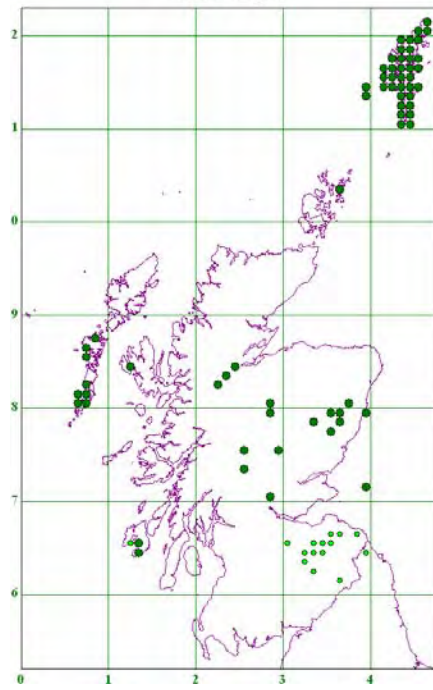
Bombus terrestris



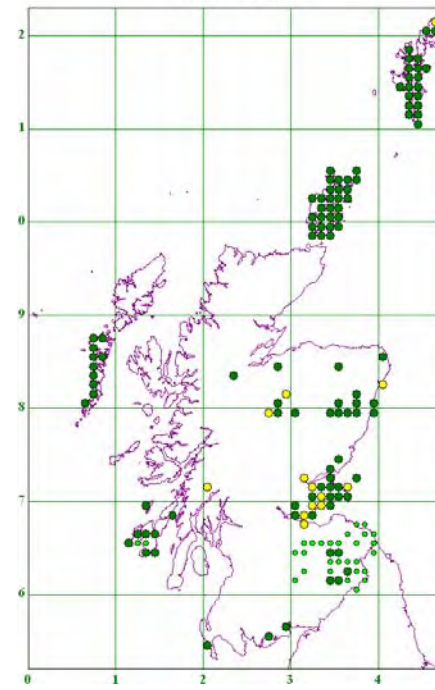
Bombus lucorum



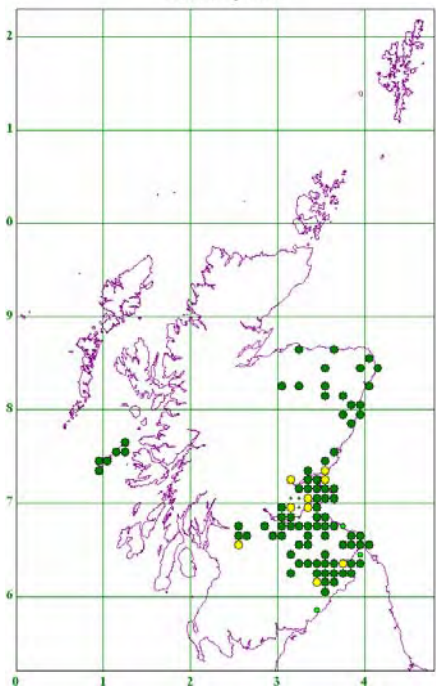
Bombus magnus



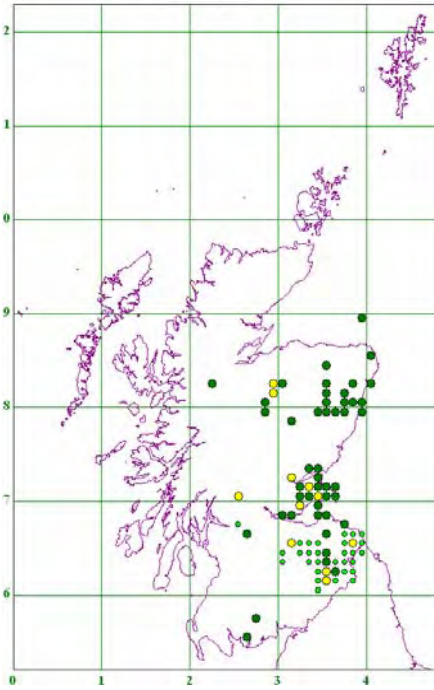
Bombus hortorum



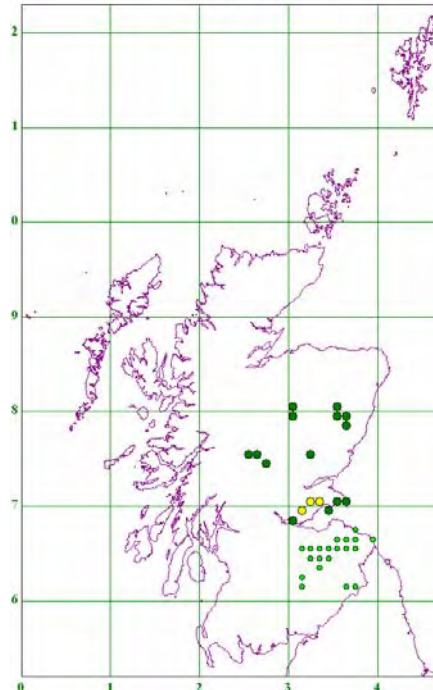
Bombus lapidarius



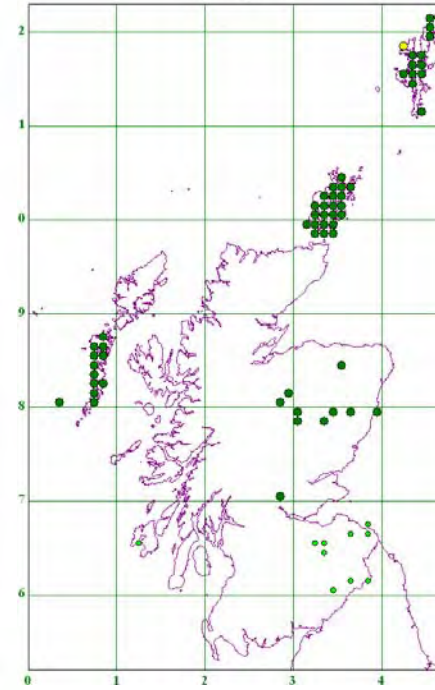
Bombus pratorum



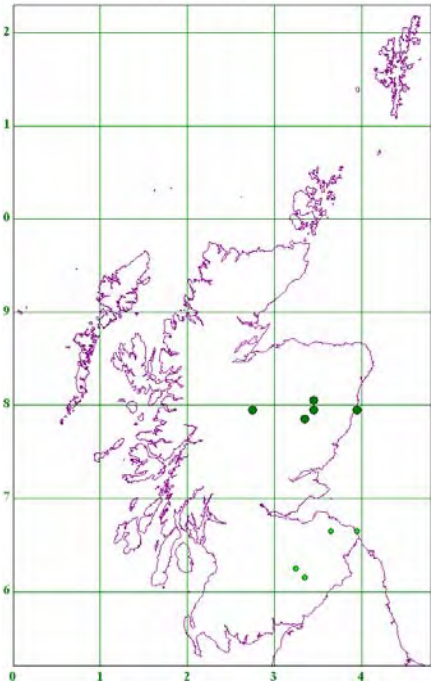
bombus monticola



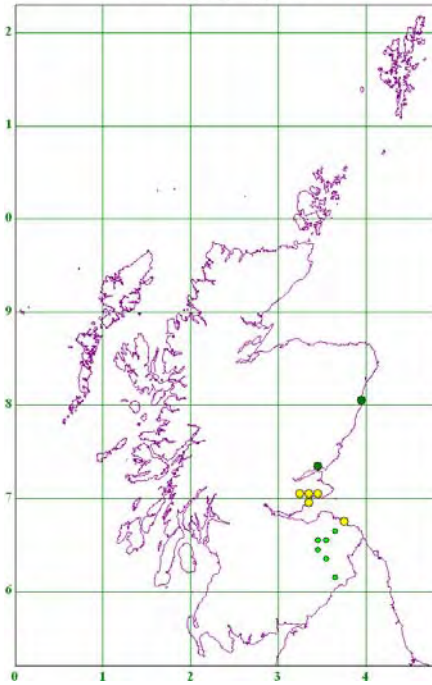
Bombus jonellus



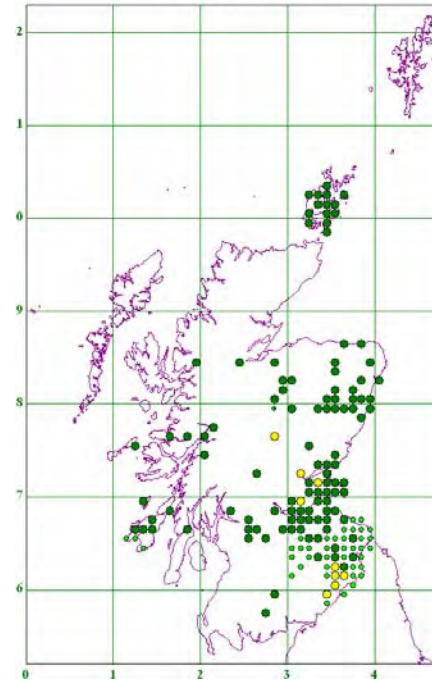
Bombus soroeensis



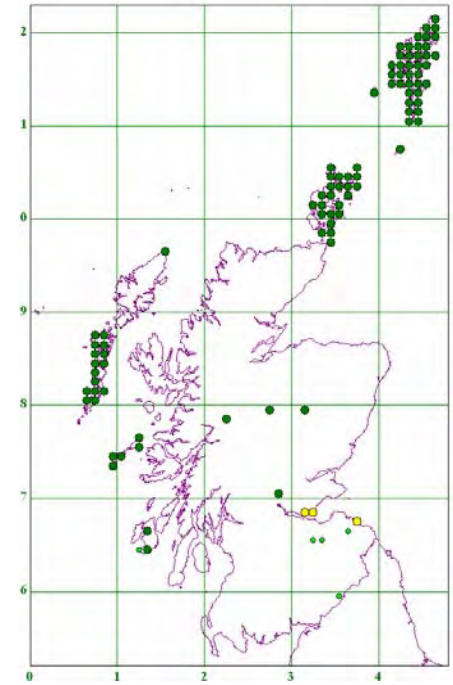
Bombus (psithyrus) sylvestris



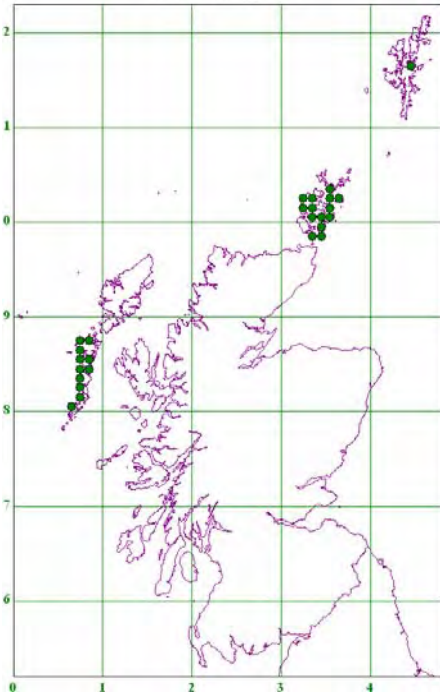
Bombus pascuorum



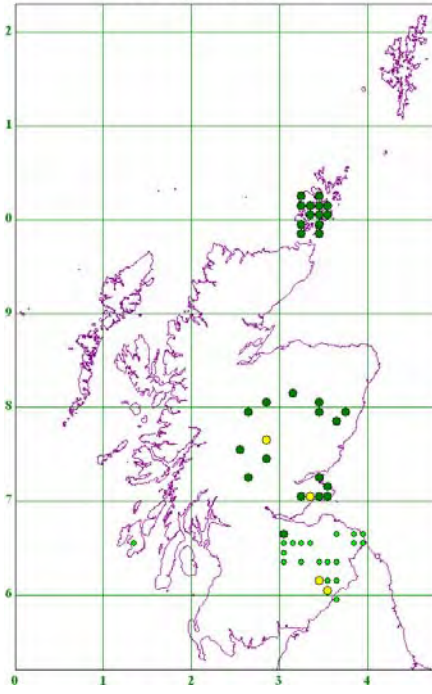
Bombus muscorum



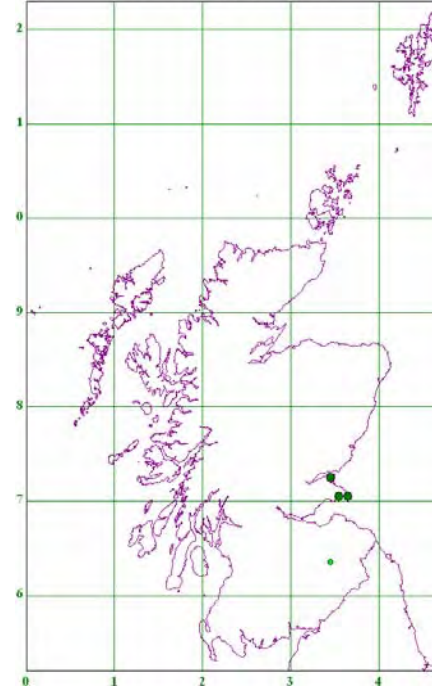
Bombus distinguendus



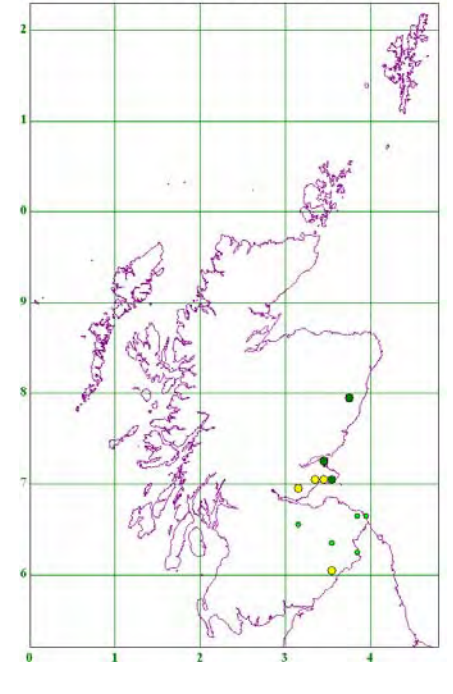
Bombus (psithyrus) bohemicus



bombus (psithyrus) barbatellus



Bombus (psithyrus) campestris





Readers will remember an alert was published in the October 2004 *Recorder News* (No54) regarding the recently arrived 'killer' harlequin ladybird. The insect appears to be spreading rapidly northwards across the UK as can be seen from the map here, copied from the new harlequin ladybird survey website at www.harlequin-survey.org/

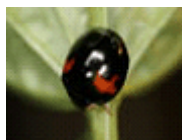
The harlequin ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* is native to Asia, and is incredibly invasive. It was introduced to North America in 1988 (no doubt as a pest control), where it is now the most widespread ladybird on the continent. It has already invaded much of NW Europe and arrived in Britain last summer (2004).

The harlequin ladybird survey has been organised to monitor the spread of this new highly invasive and potentially very destructive species. It feeds on aphids but also on eggs and larvae of moths and butterflies, and has a liking for most smaller insects, including other ladybirds, as well as pollen, nectar, and any other sugary fluids.

Its habitat range is very diverse, but is most commonly found on deciduous trees such as lime, sycamore and maple. However it also inhabits lower growing plants such as nettles, and can be found in reedbeds, coniferous woodland and crops.

The website has a basic description of the insect with photographs (some of which are pasted here).

- It is round and large (5-8mm),
- the Elytra (wing case) ground colour is highly variable: pale yellow-orange, orange-red, red or black (not unlike our two spot ladybird – but bigger)
- Elytra pattern is 0-21 orange-red or black spots, or a grid pattern (again highly variable)
- The commonest form in the UK is orange with 15-21 black spots and black with 2 or 4 orange or red spots
- Pronotum pattern is white or creamy with up to 5 spots or fused lateral spots forming 2 curved lines, M-shaped mark or solid trapezoid
- The elytra has a wide keel at base
- and the legs are almost ways brown.



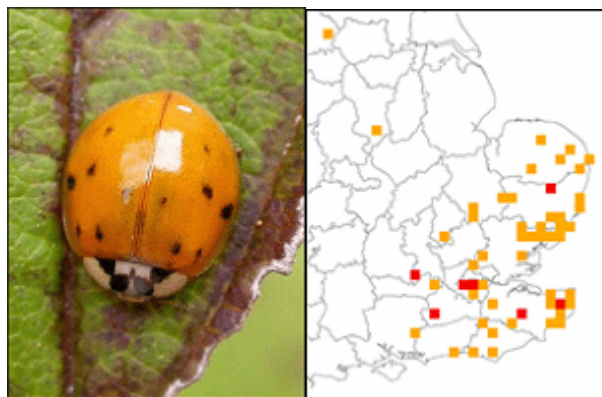
Some colour variants of *H. axyridis*

To send in records, use the on-line recording form

Alternatively you can send records on paper to
The Harlequin Ladybird Project Officer
Biological Records Centre
CEH Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton
Cambridgeshire, PE28 2LS

The records must have name and address of recorder, what was found (stage of life cycle), grid reference and location name, date.

The survey is organised by Dr Michael Majerus, Dept of Genetics, Cambridge, Dr Helen Roy, Dept of Life Sciences, APU, Cambridge and Mr Peter Brown (Project officer) at BRC, address as above.



Harlequin ladybird
Harmonia axyridis

Distribution of the harlequin ladybird so far.

The project is sponsored by Defra, the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and was initiated by the NBN Trust as part of its new work programme with Defra. The NBN Trust is also helping to fund a similar recording project in Northern Ireland

THE SHARK TRUST

New handy leaflets on the identification of Skates and Rays as well as the egg cases of Skates and Rays are available from the Shark Trust. In addition to these, the Trust has produced some waterproof A5 sized summaries of the two guides, which will be great for field use.

The aim is to raise awareness of the variety of sharks, skates and rays found in British waters. To find out more go to their website at www.sharktrust.org

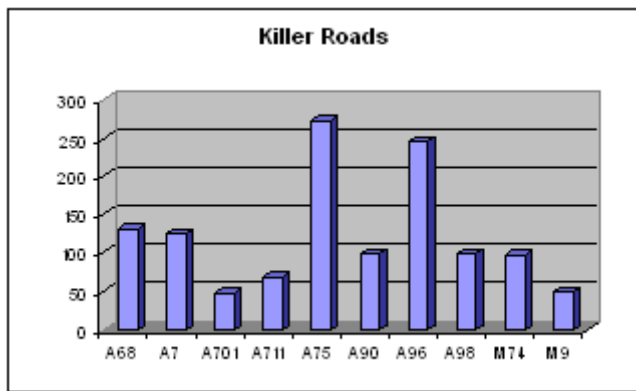
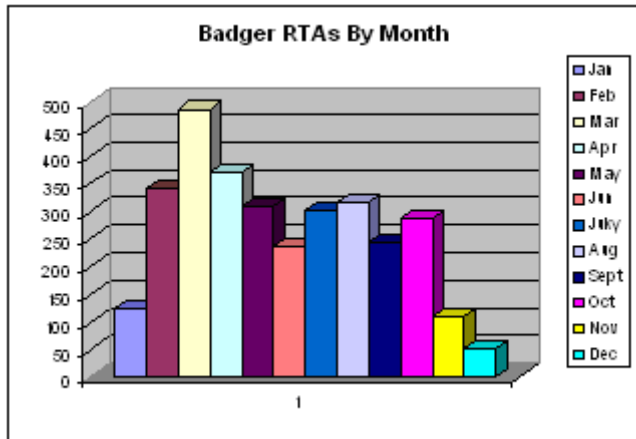
To obtain the guides please contact

The Shark Trust
National Marine Aquarium
Rope Walk, Coxside, Plymouth, PL4 0LF
Tel/fax 01752 672008
Email enquiries@sharktrust.org

Badger Death on Roads

Not surprisingly the records of badgers described as DOR in the attributes of the Recorder software (at least it was in Recorder3.3) are on the increase. This sad trend reflects the massive and continued increase in transport. Scottish Badgers keeps records of the number of deaths reported to them and the first table here shows the deadly trend. Scottish Badgers now hold 3244 records on their database of

road kills, 625 of which were added in 2004. Still only one third of all estimated badger DORs are reported, and Scottish Badgers are therefore asking everyone to report to them any the badger road casualty they come across, giving date and grid reference. This also helps to identify black spots for badger deaths and hopefully in the long run to lobby for ways of avoiding this sad state of affairs. Of course, this is just one of the threats that badgers face. Spring (February, March and April) are the worst months for road kills. The second graph shows the worst killer roads.



For more information and to report a badger road death please contact

Ian Hutchison,
 Development and Education Officer
 13 Eddie Avenue
 Brechin, DD9 6YD
 Tel 01356 624851
 Email ian@scottishbadgers.org.uk

Notes from the Chair

Readers who received the printed version of the last issue of *BRISC Recorder News* will have noticed that one of the pages were out of order, thus my 'Notes from the Chair' (p.7.) appeared in amongst the Book Reviews as p.11. Apologies from the printer, who mixed up the pages, and from me, because I only noticed the mistake once the letters were already in the post. The electronic version is, of course, unaffected, and can be viewed at any time by all

members on the members only pages on our website (username: recorder; password: brisc)

It is still not too late to book for our **Annual Conference and AGM on Saturday 9 April**. Bookings have been a little slow, so please do book now if at all. A change in the programme is that Richard Parks from SEPA has called off, but luckily we have secured an excellent replacement with Lucy Paton, a fisheries inspector, based at Aberdeen.

As you will be aware, this is my last AGM as chair of BRISC, and Mark Simmons as Treasurer, so we need to elect new honorary officers, and a really good turnout would very much be appreciated.

There are other big changes in the offing for BRISC. The 3-year grant for Alan Cameron, our Development Officer, is coming to an end in June this year, and it is uncertain how BRISC will operate after that date. Unless we manage to get some funding prior to that date, we shall not be able to maintain our office with BTCV in Stirling. Our biggest hope is to obtain funding for the Wildlife Counts project, and we should know within the next few weeks if our grant applications to HLF and SNH have been successful. It should, however, be stressed that the Wildlife Counts project is quite a different kettle of fish from that of the Development Officer's, and the project officer appointed would have little, if any, time to provide secretarial support or indeed for any general office work for BRISC. Work on finding funding for a Chief Offer is also ongoing.

Alan Cameron has been totally committed and worked extremely hard over the last three years to promote BRISC, advocate a national network of LRCs, and highlight the critical need for agreed standards in recording. It is no reflection on Alan's efforts that some aspects of this work have been more successful than others. One positive outcome of the 3-year project is a joint statement between BRISC and SNH which is to be presented at the AGM.

A workshop on the new Environmental Information Regulations was organised by BRISC on 19 January in Falkirk and attended by about 30 interested parties. This workshop was in response to various concerns voiced, especially south of the Border, by recording groups, LRCs and national schemes and societies, about the impact of the regulations on them. Alan had prepared some helpful background notes, and Amelia Morgan gave us SNH interpretation, which was particularly welcome because SNH is working with Scottish Executive and the Information Commissioner to interpret the practical implications of the EIR in Scotland. After a wide-ranging discussion it was agreed that BRISC should draft a general guidance for the recording community to be included with this issue of *Recorder News*.

Alan Cameron generously agreed to shoulder this tricky task and the resulting guidance is published here below. It must be stressed that **BRISC's guidance has absolutely no legal status**. Although Alan has consulted widely, the guidance below is just BRISC's best interpretation. The legal implications will not be known till the issues are tested in court.

Anne-Marie Smout

THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS FOR SCOTLAND

Alan Cameron

What are the Environmental Information Regulations?

The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR) came into force in Scotland on 1 January 2005 and are intended to increase public participation in decision making through improving access to environmental information. They will do this through placing new responsibilities on 'Scottish Public Authorities' to make environmental information available on request. BRISC is keen to ensure that in practice the EIR have their intended effect of increasing access to data.

How will the Regulations be enforced?

The Scottish Information Commissioner will interpret and enforce the EIR and is working alongside the Scottish Executive to provide Guidance and a Code of Practice to assist Scottish Public Authorities in their new responsibilities. The Executive issued the first edition of Guidance in December 2004, which sets out in general terms how the EIR are to be implemented. However the Guidance will be updated and supplemented to include more detail and examples of good practice.

A BRISC workshop on the Regulations

BRISC was pleased to welcome representatives from SNH and SEPA, alongside LRCs, consultants, and recorder representatives to a workshop on the Regulations back in January. The workshop heard that SNH is engaged in a series of inter-agency meetings with bodies including SEPA, English Nature, JNCC, the Environment Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales, and the Environment and Heritage Service of Northern Ireland. These meetings of public bodies holding data on species and habitats are helping to identify common issues that may require some clarification through supplementary Guidance.

The main issues for recorders that may require some further clarification, or supplementary Guidance, appear to be:

1. Who is covered by the EIR?
2. Could the EIR impact on the rights of data owners to control the terms of access to their data?

Who is covered by the Regulations?

The EIR apply to a wider group of bodies than those covered by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. In Scotland these bodies are known collectively as 'Scottish Public Authorities' and include 'any (other) person/body with public functions or under the control of a public authority and having public responsibilities in relation to the environment'.

Discussions on how to decide who is covered by the EIR are underway between various UK government agencies, including SNH. At the moment it is fair to say that LRCs that operate as units within local authorities are certainly 'Public Authorities'. However independent LRCs, voluntary organisations and private individuals are probably not Public Authorities, although data collected under a contract with a Public Authority are likely to be covered by the Regulations. Organisations in receipt of grants from the public purse may

be considered to be Public Authorities, but this remains to be clarified.

Could the Regulations interfere with the rights of data owners to control the terms of access to their data?

In most cases the answer to this question is 'No'.

When an individual or private body (such as a recording group) collects data for its own purposes then the EIR does not place them under any obligation to supply these data to anybody.

When individuals or private bodies **voluntarily** supply data to a Public Authority, then the terms under which these data are supplied should be agreed in advance and included in a *Data Sharing Agreement*. If an individual or private body does not want a Public Authority to pass their data to others then this should be made clear, along with an explanation of why this is the case. The *Data Sharing Agreement* should also set out what the individual or private body will do if a Public Authority contravenes the agreement (e.g. not supply any further data).

When individuals or private bodies collect data **under contract** to a Public Authority, then the situation will be different and the issue of access to data should be included in the contract. Public Authorities, contractors and recording bodies should think about this for all future work. In most cases, if work is carried out under contract to a Public Authority then the Public Authority will be the owner of the data collected and these data will be covered by the EIR; some work funded partly by public money could also be affected.

Hopefully this is not going to be a major issue, as most recorders and recording groups will want any data (unless they are particularly sensitive) to be made widely available. The clear message to everyone is to make sure that the terms are clear whenever data are received or supplied.

Data Sharing Agreements

All bodies, including LRCs and recording groups, that provide biological data to others must have the data owners' authority to process and pass their records on. These permissions should be contained in written *Data Sharing Agreements*, which are essential to building and maintaining trust between all parties, particularly between individual voluntary recorders and data holders, whether they are Public Authorities or not.

Data Sharing Agreements should confirm that:

3. The owner retains the right to control the use of their data, including the right to remove their data
4. The data owner gives permission to the holder to store, process, use and release their data
5. The holder may release data in different forms (e.g. raw data, summaries, collations, analyses)
6. The holder will document and adhere to published policies and procedures on releasing data to third parties, and on controlling their use thereafter
7. The data holder will stop using data, if requested to by the owner

Data Sharing Agreements may also cover:

8. Procedures for ensuring the accuracy of data, for carrying out further verifications, or re-determinations
9. Time-tables for adding new data to ongoing datasets
10. Responsibilities for maintaining and providing metadata
11. Procedures for supplying owners' contact details to third parties (the name of the data owner is an integral part of the data themselves)
12. Procedures for identifying 'sensitive' records

An easy way to ensure a simple agreement with data providers, e.g. for a local survey, is to include on the survey form a sentence such as 'I agree that the data I have submitted will be used for conservation purposes' with a space for the recorder's signature.

The EIR and 'sensitive' records

One of the greatest threats to wildlife today is lack of information. Having access to good, comprehensive information improves the quality of decisions taken by individuals and organisations, and in many cases contributes directly to their protection. In most cases the benefits of making information widely available far outweigh any risks arising from the misuse of data.

However, the release of some data may on occasion increase the likelihood of damage to species and habitats. The EIR take this into account through providing for an 'Exception for Sensitive Data', which applies to information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the protection of the environment to which the information relates.

SNH is in discussion with other UK Agencies on how this Exception should be interpreted and will be making representation to the Executive and the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner on this. The Agencies have reached agreement that decisions to categorise data as sensitive should be done on a case-by-case basis, using a consistent set of criteria, perhaps supported by lists of species and habitats that will always be considered sensitive, irrespective of where they are. This approach is basically the same as that currently employed by many LRCs and recording groups; it is therefore unlikely that the EIR will require any changes to current best practice.

It is hoped that supplementary guidance will be issued on how the Exception for Sensitive Data should be used. This will follow further discussions involving SNH, the Scottish Executive, the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, and others.

Charging

At present the EIR indicate that charges are to be 'reasonable'. However, it remains unclear what this will mean in practice. A number of public bodies are adopting the same charging regime as prescribed under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Further clarification is required regarding charging by LRCs.

Conclusion

The Environmental Information Regulations share the objectives of the recording community, BRISC and the NBN to promote recording and to share and use biological data. The widespread availability of high quality data is a prerequisite for protecting species and habitats from poor decisions. The EIR make provision for restricting access to sensitive data and the procedures for assessing sensitivity are likely to be based on current best practice.

Trust and transparency are fundamental aspects of good practice in data management. These are best implemented through written agreements supported by published policies and procedures. BRISC is enthusiastic about the potential for the Environmental Information Regulations to support best practice in data management.

LRC NEWS

Recent Developments at NESBReC

Nick Littlewood

It has been a time of change at the North East Scotland Biological Records Centre. The last few years have seen a continuous period of centre development following its set-up in 2000. We are now moving into an operational phase and NESBReC is becoming ever more self-sufficient by entering into a greater number of partnership agreements with data users such as local councils and other public and charitable bodies. There have been changes also in the staffing arrangements with the recent appointments of Nick Littlewood as Biological Recorder/Manager and Iain Lawrie as IT Specialist.

Nick is an experienced biological recorder with particular interests in birds and moths. He will take the lead on the day-to-day operation of NESBReC and will be the primary point of contact for anyone requesting or contributing data. Hailing originally from Cumbria, Nick has a background in nature reserve wardening, and has worked in such wonderful and remote sites as the Farne Islands and Skomer Island and more latterly at Walney Island in south Cumbria. He has then spent the last three and a half years with the Macaulay Institute and the University of Aberdeen studying the affects of moorland restoration management on wider aspects of moorland biodiversity.

Iain brings with him experience of having worked both in conservation and computing throughout the past fifteen years and he has considerable experience in both biological recording and various IT disciplines. He works at NESBReC three days a week and is also involved in research at the University of Aberdeen for two days. Iain is in charge of maintaining the Local Area Network and all other aspects of computing within the record centre including development of software for GIS using ArcView 9.

Continuity at NESBReC is provided by Isobel Davidson who co-ordinates the Promoting and Protecting Biodiversity in NE Scotland project. Isobel works two days per week on the project, which aims to survey much of lowland Aberdeenshire over a three year period using the Integrated

Habitat System. She has worked in various aspects of wildlife conservation for nearly 20 years, from running a wildlife group to comparing the lifestyles of two species of pollen eating bat in Northern Queensland and advising Aberdeenshire farmers on environmental improvements on their farms. Isobel also organises the NESBReC annual training programme, which covers a range of topics in both one day and longer courses.

Priorities for the new team over the coming months will include finalising service agreements with data users to ensure as much appropriate use is made of the data held as possible, upgrading our records storage and retrieval facilities and ensuring a successful forthcoming season of training courses. The habitat surveying season will be upon us soon with four seasonal staff members working alongside four trainee volunteers for five months. All established staff will also be involved in this project and we look forward to taking any available opportunity to get out into the field as summer approaches.

If you have carried out any recording in the North East, either as a resident or as a visitor to the region, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please get in touch by phoning 01224 273633, emailing to nesbrec@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or writing to us at NESBReC, Room E106, Hilton Campus, University of Aberdeen, Hilton Place, Aberdeen, AB24 4FA.

(Note that our address will change this summer. The new address will be on our website, www.nesbrec.org.uk as well as on BRISC website in due course).

LRC QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Alan Cameron

Does BRISC represent Scottish Records Centres?

As part of planning for the future, BRISC sent out a short questionnaire to 18 centres to determine their views on how BRISC can best represent them, and support and promote the network. Ten centres responded, including most (but not all) of the centres operating as recognised LRCs (i.e. collating data from various sources, employing staff, and providing an information service for users).

The main findings

The responses to six questions are represented in the graphs below. There is strong support for having a single organisation to represent records centres at the Scottish and UK levels, as well as agreement that this work is important. No respondent indicated that they did not recognise BRISC's efforts to fulfil this role over recent years, and most agreed that BRISC does a reasonable job in canvassing their views. Only one records centre felt that BRISC should apply its efforts to filling gaps in the network instead of representing existing records centres, although there were mixed views on how BRISC should actually promote and support records centres locally.

The questionnaire invited responses to three further questions, providing an opportunity to submit more detailed comments. BRISC's current ways of consulting and canvassing the views of records centres are seen as effective.

It is disappointing that three staffed and functioning LRCs did not respond to the questionnaire, and the significance of this is more difficult to evaluate.

Over the past year or so BRISC has organised a number of meetings specifically aimed at bringing LRC staff together. These have had a high level of success, and there is support for BRISC to build on these efforts and to play a role in bringing LRC staff together under the auspices of a national LRC network group in much the same way as LBAP officers convene twice yearly. However, it is important to note that LRCs do not yet benefit from any coherent input from national bodies and organisations, other than BRISC. Until such times, when a powerful national body will take a lead in developing LRCs and promoting standards, it seems unlikely that local partners will see the full benefit of networking, irrespective of BRISC's efforts: benefits can clearly be gained from sharing experiences, knowledge, views and lessons, but it is up to records centres and their users to place value on these benefits, with BRISC acting as a facilitator.

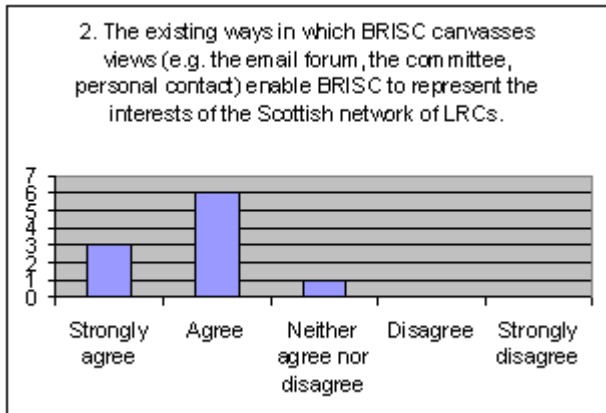
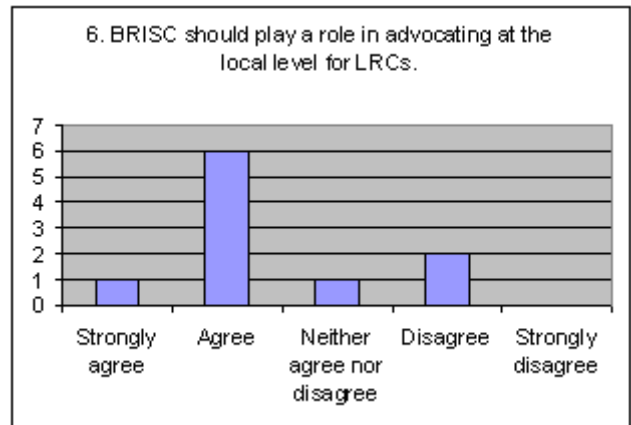
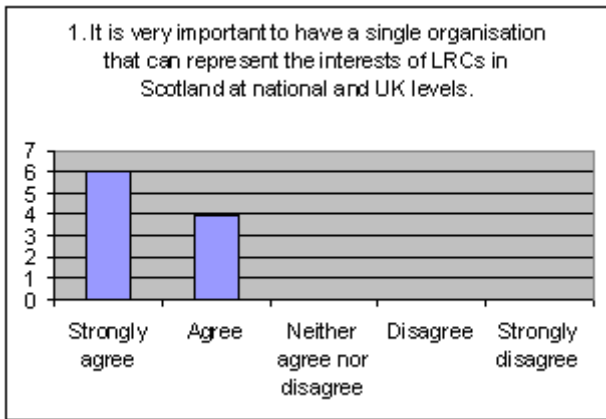
Records centres were asked about BRISC engagement with local partners, such as local authorities. Only two respondents thought that BRISC should not play any role at all in advocating for LRCs at the local level, but the majority of comments warned against being seen to interfere or attempt the impossible. Primarily BRISC is seen to have a national role, although work with organisations such as COSLA should help to deliver resources and commitment at the local level. There was a strong demand for providing examples of best practice, templates for contracts and agreements, and promotional material to help records centres in their development.

The questionnaire was not designed to determine precise views on the current geographical gaps in the network. However there is general support for BRISC to continue its efforts to fill these gaps, both through local interventions and through seeking national commitments. One LRC pointed out that this national commitment is essential, as gaps in the network threaten all LRCs, and that efforts made by BRISC in the absence of any national commitment may simply be a waste of time and money.

Conclusion

BRISC is certainly seen by Scottish records centres as the critical body to represent their interests, to provide mechanisms for sharing information, to lobby at the national level, and to advocate for completion of the network.

The consultation gives a clear mandate for BRISC to continue to work with LRCs as part of the business plan for the next three years. However, it is a fact that, despite BRISC's best efforts, no tangible progress has been made on developing a national strategy for LRCs over the past three years. A complete and coherent network of LRCs in Scotland is still seen by BRISC as the optimum system for supporting voluntary biological recording and ensuring that species and habitats are considered in decision making at all levels. The Committee will now need to decide how best to allocate BRISC's limited resources.



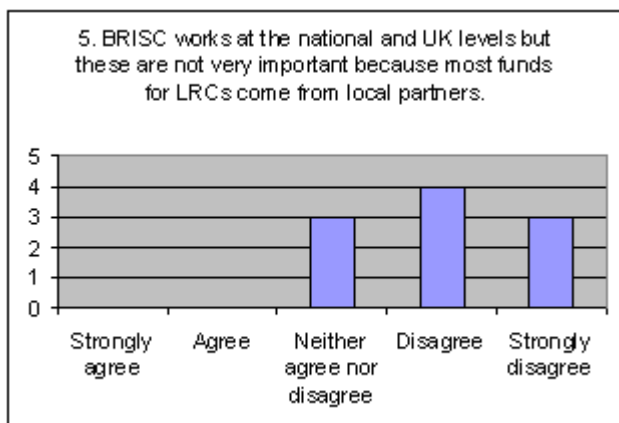
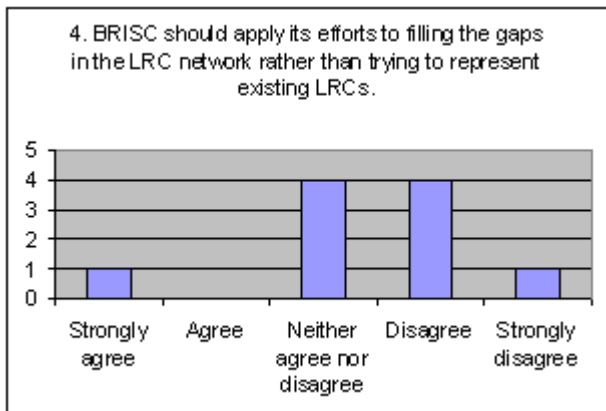
BOOK REVIEWS

Holdgate, M. (2003). *Penguins and Mandarins. The Memoir Club, County Durham*, ISBN: 1 84104 079 7; hbk. £19.95.

There may be many readers of *BRISC Recorder News* who, one way or another, have met or heard of Martin Holdgate and been bowled over by the brilliance of his mind and wealth of experience, as his career leapt from one dizzy branch to another in the high canopy of the British and world-wide environmental tree. In 1999 Earthscan published *The Green Web*, Holdgate's account of his period as Director-General of IUCN; now we have his autobiography describing his exceptional rise from university posts and ecological surveys in the Antarctic to rubbing shoulders with politicians on the world stage. It is an important addition to the literature on the history of wildlife and environmental conservation in the second half of the 20th century, well written, with a helpful list of further reading and a good index. My only general criticism relates to the forty black-and-white photographs. There is something wrong in British publishing today when important books contain photographs of such poor contrast as to make some images almost unreadable.

Also, I have to acknowledge that there may be rather few readers sufficiently interested in this kind of history to devote time to all the organisations and subjects in which Holdgate has been involved, notwithstanding his fascinating observations about politicians and senior civil servants (the Mandarins of the title) and their role in progressing or halting environmental benefits. For an outsider the plot sometimes gets lost in a forest of acronyms. Rather my recommendation to beg, borrow or buy this memoir is because of the wonderful descriptions of places and clearly explained researches, from the limestones of the Pennines to islands in the southern oceans: Tristan da Cunha, Gough Island, Chilóe in southern Chile (following in the footsteps of Darwin), the Falkland Islands and many others, some of them during his service as Chief Biologist of the British Antarctic Survey. The traveling never seems to stop. In later years he visited many parts of Africa, Pakistan, Kashmir, Saudi Arabia, China and North and South America; always getting mud on his shoes. Holdgate's determination to be an active participant at whatever his

Responses to Question 3: "How could BRISC's ability to consult and reflect LRCs' views be improved?" cannot be fitted into a graph



level of involvement and his remarkable stamina - physical and intellectual - is evident on every page.

Particularly admirable, is the author's gift for summarising problems (social, political, ecological) and his candid observations on whether tried solutions actually work. Alas nowhere does he reveal whether he is a compulsive diarist, nor how he is able to recall happenings and people decades ago. A detail about Lady Bullough's burial on Rum reveals that he is not infallible; no matter, he has an ear for telling a story well. Here is an extract: "For about twenty minutes the aircraft [a helicopter] hummed slowly past the ice-covered flanks and serrated crest of Nanga Parbat, over eight thousand metres high and eighth highest mountain in the world, brooding like a frozen dinosaur above the green valleys of Kashmir." And here is just one example of many telling quotes, after describing rates of tropical forest loss: "We simply do not know what potential wealth is being logged and burnt into extinction in the forests of the world." The concept is familiar enough; it is Holdgate's facility with words that makes the difference. This is a scientist who has contributed much to global wellbeing; his knighthood is richly deserved.

Thomas Huxley

Edwards, M. & Jenner, M. (2005) *Field Guide to the Bumblebees of Great Britain and Ireland*. British Wildlife and Ocelli Ltd.

ISBN 0-9549713-0-2; soft bk £9.99

Bumblebees are flavour of the moment in popular entomology, and not before time given the huge importance of these insects in the natural community and the recent decline in many British species. This field guide scores immediately with its attractive production and handy size, and even a quick flick through the pages to reveal the excellent plates by Ted Benton (I wish I knew how he does it!) should ensure that it will run off the shelves.

The book aims widely, at the full range from amateur naturalists to scientists. This could be a risky ambition to meet, but the authors have succeeded wonderfully. The very simple key based on colour patterns is appropriate for the beginner just getting to know the group, but for the more experienced entomologist there are plates of the male genitalia which are important in identification. As is appropriate where there is a strong conservation relevance, the ecology of each species is summarised and advice provided on suitable land management. It is gratifying to see emphasis on the marked specific differences in ecology which make media talk of conservation of 'THE bumblebee' so irritating.

Nothing in this world, of course, is perfect, and it is unfortunate that so many minor errors and inconsistencies have escaped the eyes of the proof-readers. The first of rather too many misspelled taxonomic names occurs on the copyright page (the fly is a Conopid, not Conipid) and, unaccountably, *runderarius* frequently appears as *rudararius*. Treatment of the English names of plants and birds is inconsistent, and even *Apis* is variously given as 'honeybee' or 'honey bee'. Several references quoted in the text do not

appear in full anywhere, so it will be an effort to track down the original papers from (in some cases) just a surname and date.

Despite this, the book should be essential for anyone interested in an up-to-date, wide-ranging and hugely informative account of the biology, ecology and conservation of bumblebees. The current distribution of bumblebees in Scotland is poorly known except in a few areas where particular surveys have been carried out (Shetland, Orkney and Highland in particular have more than a fair share of dark green in the maps!). It is revealing to note how many species are apparently absent from SW Scotland from Argyll to Galloway (*lucorum*, *terrestris*, *jonellus* and *bohemicus* jump out especially - surely they are there). One of the most valuable results of having this book would be for naturalists in these poorly-covered regions to take up recording of bumblebees as a new hobby and add enormously to our knowledge of their current range.

Murdo Macdonald

Forth-coming BRISC EVENTS:

9 April 05 – Annual Conference and AGM. Theme for the day "Recording and Monitoring the Marine and Coastal Environment". Booking form includes programme of speakers and excursions and is available from Anne-Marie Smout, amsmout@aol.com or tel 01333 310330. Also for downloading at BRISC's website at www.brisc.org.uk

Two BRISC Recording Days are planned for 2005:

- **The first is to LOCH KATRINE on 21/5 or 12/6 – essential confirm with Jonathan which date.**
- **The second will be announced in the next issue of Recorder News, but will be to an equally exciting and under-recorded place.**

For the Loch Katrine recording day, we invite you to meet up at the Forestry Commission Aberfoyle Office, and we plan for the day to have a social element as well. The area to be surveyed is the Glengyle pasture woodlands, proposed by FCS as an area for which any biodiversity data would be extremely useful, because management plans are currently being developed, which will concentrate on biodiversity and social objectives.

An update on the Loch Katrine situation will start us off. Then the idea is to go by minibus to the head of Glengyle, and start off recording close to the pasture woodlands. People should bring their own lunch, but a definite time for a rendez-vous will be arranged before we disperse. There will be a route plan and an exchange of mobile numbers. FCS are kindly hosting the event, and there is an opportunity for FCS staff to join us and share knowledge with recorders

If you think you would like to join this recording day, please contact Jonathan Willet at WilletJ@northlan.gov.uk or tel 01236 780636.



ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS University of Stirling: 4U5 Cottrell Building

**TUESDAY 10 MAY 2005
6.30PM-8.30PM**

IEEM, in conjunction with Biological Recording in Scotland (BRISC), is holding a short seminar to discuss the opportunities and challenges arising from the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the Freedom of Information Act. The seminar is aimed at those who work with environmental data. There will be a number of short presentations given by representatives from Lothian Wildlife Information Centre, BRISC, SNH and SEPA (to be confirmed).

Topics will include the definition of the 'public bodies' who hold data, and are thus covered by EIR, other organisations who may under some circumstances be covered by EIR, their responsibilities to release data, and the opportunities others may have to gain access to environmental information from them. It will also cover the issue of charging for data and information, and the release of sensitive or confidential data.

The evening will begin with presentations followed by a question and answer session leading to informal discussion. This seminar seeks to be highly informative and useful to professional ecologists, biological recorders and record centre staff, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students and researchers.

All those interested are very welcome

Contact: Crona O'Shea,
SBES, University of Stirling
Ph: (01786) 466550 (W) or (01786)
469248 (H) E-mail: co2@stir.ac.uk

Other courses / field trips / workshops of interest to biological recorders

British Dragonfly Society Field Trips – non-members welcome.

8 May - Squirrel event in the Carron Valley called "Secret Squirrels?" when we will be looking at the habitats where we find both red and grey squirrels and just how we can spot them or their signs. The event will be at the Forestry Commission Car Park at Carron Valley and will run from 1-4pm on the 8th of May. There will be guided walks, a quiz and craft activities. Plus the opportunity to get involved in the Central Scotland Squirrel Group's Squirrel survey. Contact Jonathan Willet on 01236 780636 for more details.

18-19 June - Trossachs weekend. On Saturday we shall be exploring two lochs between the Lake of Menteith and Callander looking to confirm the existence of the Beautiful Demoiselle at these sites. Neither of these lochs have any confirmed records. In the evening there is the opportunity to go looking for Nightjars and Glow worms nearby, if people are interested. Meet at the Port of Menteith Car Park 10.00 and look for the National Park Minibus.

On Sunday we shall be exploring the forest ponds and bogs of the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park: we shall be looking for the Northern Emerald and there is the possibility of 8 other species seen in flight or as larvae. Meet at the Forestry Commission Office, 1 mile east of Aberfoyle, at 10.00.

Equipment such as collanders, small tubs and plastic spoons are useful plus a midge net/ repellent and a do bring a packed lunch.

This weekend has been jointly organised with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Ranger Service and the Forestry Commission.

Contact Jonathan Willet on 01236 780636 (office hours) for more information.

25-26 June - Kintail weekend

On Saturday we shall be exploring Loch Achnahinich, a SSSI loch designated for its dragonflies. We will be looking for specimens of its 10 species including the Northern Emerald whilst also looking for evidence of the Azure Hawker. In the evening there will be a talk on the Dragonflies of Scotland starting at 7.30pm in the village hall, in conjunction with the South West Ross Field Club.

Sunday will involve a walk on the estate, surveying bog and open water habitats. The data collected will be fed into the current dragonfly survey of the area. Meet at 10.00 at the car park in Balmacara Square on both days. Equipment as the Trossachs weekend.

This weekend has been jointly organised with the National Trust for Scotland at Balmacara Estate.

Contact Babs Souter 01599 566325 (office hours) or bsoutar@nts.org.uk for more information.

9 July 05 – National Moth Night – and day 2005. This has become a national event and anyone who is slightly into moths should try to take part. Check out the website at www.nationalmothnight.info/ - A leaflet has also been included with this mailing

1-3 July 05 – International Moth nights (+/- one day is also acceptable) – for more information and how to take part check out <http://www.european-moth-nights.ch.vu> where the text is published in different languages including English, while maps and list of species from last year's event can be seen at <http://www.geox.hu/lepke/maps.asp>

EVERYONE CAMPAIGN REMINDER

Once again, do make the effort to support Scottish Environment LINK's everyone campaign to push the environment higher up the political agenda. It is very simple: in the running up to this year's Westminster election write to ALL your prospective parliamentary candidates about your concern for the environment. To find out who they are with postal addresses, visit the campaign website at www.everyonecan.org which even provides a template letter that can be edited to reflect your own views and situation.



BATS & The Millennium Link (BaTML)
www.batml.org.uk

14 July 05 Insects & their Bat Predators Training Workshop, Woodcockdale, Union Canal (Near Linlithgow, West Lothian) Residential Fee - £95 per person / Non-Residential Fee - £70 per person

This one-day workshop is aimed at individuals/organisations who wish to understand to a good level how to survey insect populations and how some of these techniques may also be useful in a wider context (i.e. bat research). The workshop will be equally appealing to people interested in either insect or bat studies.

1-3 August 05 Field Surveying & Habitat Assessment for Bats Training Course. Woodcockdale, Union Canal (Near Linlithgow, West Lothian). Residential Fee - £195 per person / Non-Residential Fee - £145 per person.

This three-day course is aimed at individuals/organisations who wish to understand to a good level about bats and how they interact with their habitat. During the three days we will cover a variety of survey techniques as we work through different habitat modules.

For more details or to reserve a place on either of the above events please contact Neil Middleton by email on middleneil@msn.com

BATS & The Millennium Link is supported by the following organisations :-SNH, British Waterways, Falkirk Environment Trust, The Royal Bank of Scotland, BTCV, The Bat Conservation Trust, Central Scotland Bat Group, Clyde Bat Group, Lothians Bat Group.

FUMARIA WORKSHOPS

- **30 July 10.00 Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.** Workshop on six species of Fumaria found in Scotland followed by a field trip in the afternoon.
- **31 July 10.00 at Vane Farm, Perth and Kinross.** Workshop on six Scottish species of Fumaria followed by a field trip to an arable area in the afternoon.

For more details and to book a place phone Heather McHaffie 0131 248 2876 or email: h.mchaffie@rbge.org.uk

Flora Locale – Local seeds for local needs initiative

Go native: planting for biodiversity - events in Scotland:

19 May – Angus [prog. ref 14] Facilitator Scotia Seeds
This event will be a general introduction to use of wild flowers, including some common problems encountered by plant users and suppliers. This will include how to specify seeds and plants for your own project, the importance of source-identified stock, the merit of seeds, plants and plugs, species to choose and questions to ask your supplier. A tour to the nursery will further increase your understanding of the nature of native flora industry.

21 Sept – Perth [prog. ref 11] Facilitator Tree Council
Collecting and propagating seed from native trees and shrubs. Learn how to inspire your local community to collect seeds on 'Seed-gathering Sunday' (9 Oct 05). Brush up on your tree ID and learn how and when to collect, stratify, sow and grow common tree and shrub species. Free copies of *The good seed guide* will be available to all participants.

£50 per event. For full programme and booking contact Flore Locale, Denford Manor, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 0UN Tel 01488 680458 email info@floralocale.org

Initiative supported by HLF, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, English Nature, EU Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, Defra.

BRISC office – at least till end of May – is still

Alan Cameron, BRISC Development Officer
c/o BTCV,
Balallan House,
24 Allan Park
Stirling FK8 2QG
Tel 01786 474061 mobile 07764 655695
Email brisk@btcv.org.uk

MEMBERS ONLY AREA on BRISC's website can be accessed from selecting the Membership page, then selecting 'Members Only Area'.

The usernames and password till the next issue of *BRISC Recorder News* remains

Username	recorder
Password	brisc

However, do check this space for every new issue of Recorder News for any changes to this.

Deadline for next newsletter is 17 June 2005

All material – preferably in electronic format to Anne-Marie Smout, editor
amsmout@aol.com or by post to
Chesterhill, Shore Road, Anstruther
KY10 3DZ – tel 01333 310330