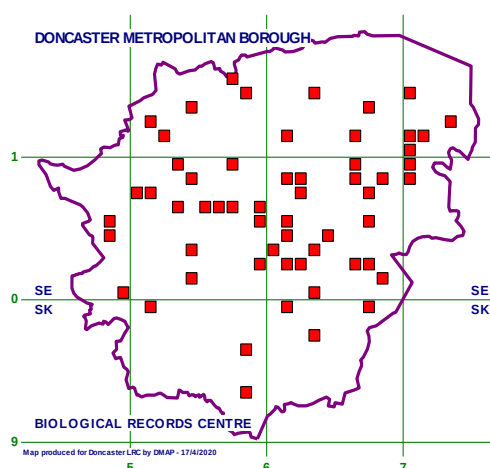




Doncaster Local Records Centre



Annual Report for the year 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021



Contents

1.0	Summary	page 3
2.0	Staffing Complement	page 3
3.0	Steering Group Membership	page 4
4.0	Data handling	page 5
4.1	Records received	page 5
4.2	Records precision	page 6
4.3	Database maintenance	page 7
5.0	Data providers	page 7
6.0	Data users	page 8
6.1	Data transfer agreements/Service Level Agreements	page 9
7.0	LWS resurvey programme	page 10
8.0	Phase 1 habitat mapping	page 10
9.0	Income	page 10
10.0	Expenditure	page 11
11.0	Cross-boundary data searches	page 11
12.0	DLRC Activities	page 11
13.0	YEDN	page 12
14.0	ALERC	page 12
	List of figures	page 12
	List of tables	page 12

Editorial.

It was with sadness that we had to announce the loss of our Manager Jane Stimpson during the year. Jane passed away in November 2020 after a short illness. Jane was always very supportive and interested in the activities of the LRC and as a friend and colleague will be greatly missed. Jonathan Clarke, DMBC's Planning Policy and Environment Manager, has taken over the post of LRC manager and will be responsible for budget and overall policy matters.

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 01/04/2020 to 31/03/2021. This Annual Report will be included in the DLRC webpages. Previous Annual Reports are also available to view in the same location.

Summary of key points:

- The Doncaster Local Records Centre responded to 128 enquiries for biodiversity information during the financial year. Quotations where applicable 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 £24500 including VAT during the financial year, that is £5200 more than the year 2019/2020;
- Data input for this financial year included 11000 species records.

Summary of key activities:

- Yorkshire Water – data supplied in response to terms of Service Level Agreement (SLA);
- Environment Agency - data supplied in response to terms of Service Level Agreement (SLA);
- HS2 – data supplied in response to terms of renewed SLA;
- Data supply to partners as records become available;
- Data supply to clients in response to data search enquiries.
- Data input to database in response to records received.

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 (currently Wednesday to Friday) 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 Planning Policy and Environment Team. Our DLRC Manager is Jonathan Clarke who oversees DLRC's activities and controls the budget, in addition to his other duties.

The table below shows other members of the Planning Team who contribute to DLRC as part of their role:

Table 1: Planning Team members directly involved in the work of DLRC

Position	Staff	Main tasks
DLRC Manager	Jonathan Clarke	• Overall LRC manager • Budget holder/finance manager
Biological Records Officer	Bob Marsh	• Data requests • Species data – collation and validation/verification • Habitat data – validation • Database management • Day-to-day finance matters
Biodiversity Officer	Melissa Massarella	• Advice on biodiversity matters
Principal Officer – Local Plans/Environment	Donna Halliday	• 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 12 members. Table 2 includes the full list of members at 31 March 2021. During 2020/21 there have been two Group Membership changes, that of LRC Manager, and Pip Seccombe, one of the Doncaster Naturalists' Society representatives, has expressed a wish to withdraw from the group owing to personal commitments.

Table 2: List of Steering Group members

Name	Position/Representing
Jonathan Clarke	DMBC Planning Officer/LRC Manager/budget holder
Laura Trinogga	DMBC Doncaster Museum
Colin Howes	Independent Member
Derek Whiteley	Sorby Natural History Society
Helen Kirk	Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum
Helen McCluskie	DMBC Principal Planning Officer
Louise Hill	Doncaster Naturalists' Society
Bob Marsh	DMBC Biological Records Officer
Melissa Massarella	DMBC Biodiversity Officer
Phillip Whelpdale	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Mark Wills	Yorkshire Environmental Data Network

Tim Kohler	Natural England
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4.0 Data handling

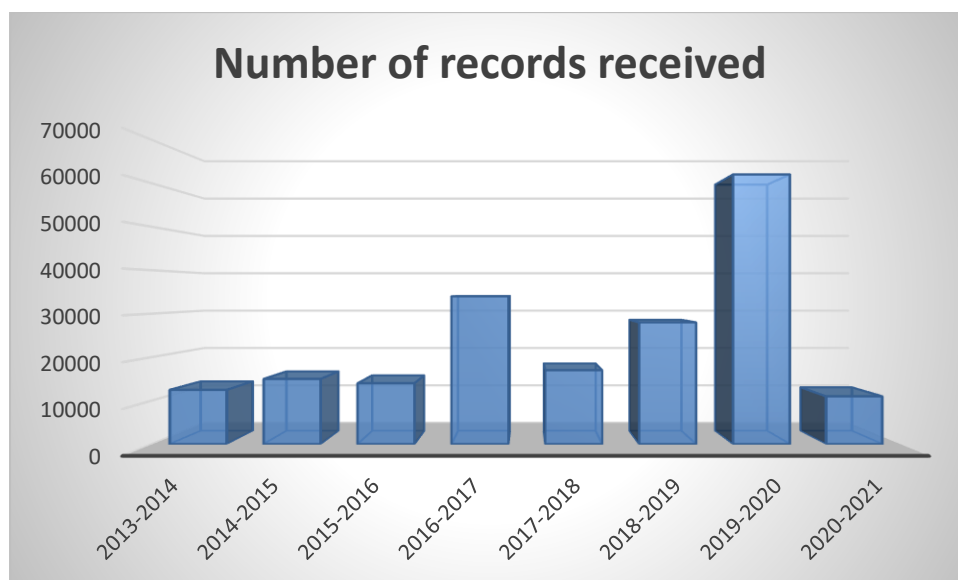
DLRC holds three main types of information - species records, habitat information and designated site information. The oldest records date back well over 200 years. The Recorder 6 database now holds 540,000 species records from over 11,000 locations across the Borough.

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 8 years (see Figure 1). This depends 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 relevant documents, and importing recent local records from various sources.

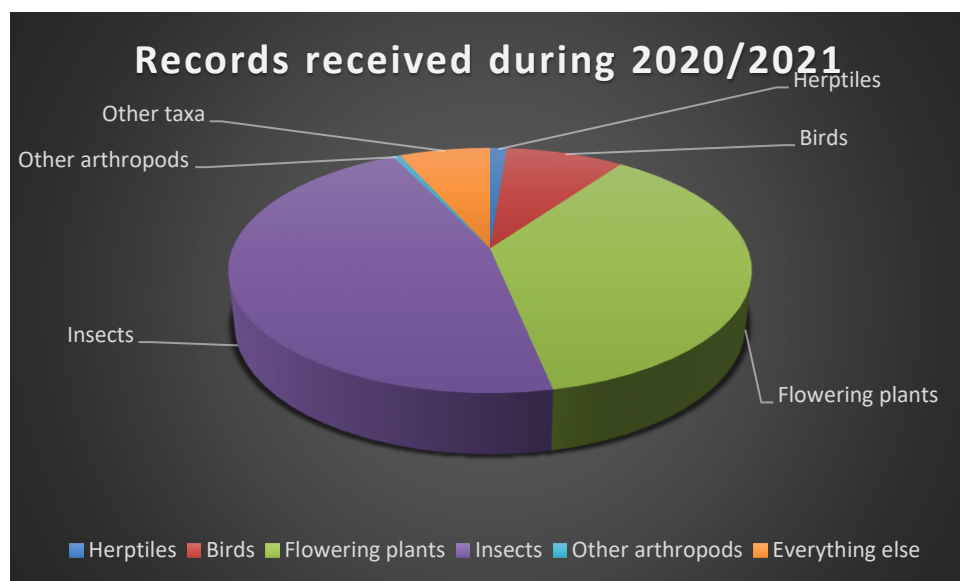
The data cover a wide range of taxa, with birds, flowering plants and insects accounting for the great majority, about 90%, of the records (see Figure 2). Other taxonomic groups represented are bony fish, harvestmen, mosses, lichens, millipedes, stoneworts, crustaceans, spiders, acarines, horsetails, mollusks, reptiles, amphibians, ferns and fungi..

Figure 1: Number of records entered annually to DLRC database since 2013



The Covid situation which has been with us during the period covered by this report has had a marked impact on the number of biological records received. The number of records sent to DLRC has been much lower than last year because of the restricted access to sites and restrictions on personal movement, resulting in a much lower activity of fieldwork.

Figure 2: Data input by taxonomic group between 01/04/2020 and 31/3/2021

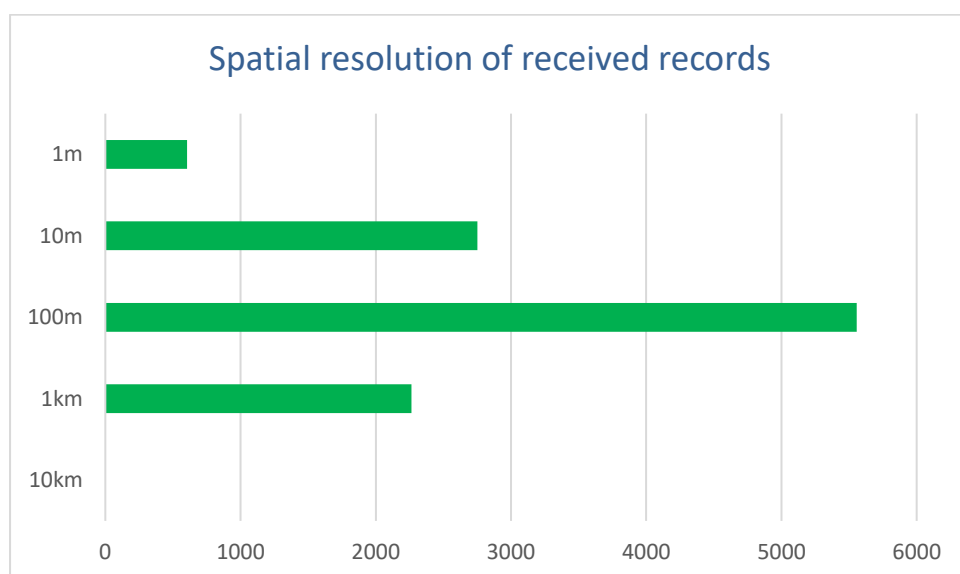


4.2 Record precision

Figure 3 below shows a summary of the precision of records received and entered in the database in the year 2019/2020. The majority of records are at either 10m, 100m or 1km precision, with the highest figure for 100m (six-figure) records, an improving trend compared with the receipts of previous years.

DLRC aims to increase the proportion of records with a spatial accuracy of 100m or greater by encouraging recorders to include such resolutions in their data.

Figure 3: The spatial resolution of records received between 01/04/2020 and 31/03/2021



4.3 Database maintenance

The Recorder 6 software was upgraded to version 6.30 in December 2020. During 2020/21 further dictionary updates were applied to the database which is presently in the latest version 4X. All details of past and latest software and dictionary upgrades/updates may be found on the Recorder 6 website at <http://recorder6.info/>

It will be appreciated that the work we do at DLRC depends completely on the Recorder 6 database. In 2017 it was announced by JNCC, the prime mover behind the development of the Recorder project, that funding for future development would be withdrawn from 2018. From October 2019 the Recorder 6 working group initiated a scheme whereby Recorder 6 users could subscribe to obtain a licence to receive the updates to the software and dictionaries, a service that had been free to users and funded by JNCC until March 2018, and which was provided in the interim by the R6 Consortium. The Consortium will continue to undertake the development work to keep R6 up to date, but will also recruit further expertise to expand the pool of developers and to develop further the software to ensure it is 'future-proof'. Based on the 'Willingness to pay' question in the recent Recorder 6 users consultation organised by Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC) the licence fee has been set at £25 per year for individuals, and £250 for organisations. This figure should be considered in the light of the fact that support to users of Recorder in its several forms has always been at nil cost to those users (apart from the initial £30 software charge). Full details of the Recorder 6 future support arrangements may be found at <https://nbn.org.uk/news/recorder-6-maintenance-and-development-plan/> As from October 2019 this licensing arrangement was initiated, and DLRC now subscribes to the scheme in order to obtain the latest upgrades (also see notes under Section 10).

5.0 Data providers

Data providers between 01/04/2020 and 31/03/2021 were:

Doncaster Naturalists' Society (as a body and various members)
 Ecus Limited
 Estrada Ecology
 International Otter Survival Trust
 iRecord database
 Lindholme Old Moor Management Group
 Middleton Bell Ecology
 NEYEDC (as part of cross-boundary data exchange)
 Sorby Natural History Society
 Various members of the public
 West Yorkshire Ecology Services (as part of cross-boundary data exchange)
 Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
 Yorkshire Water
 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

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 during year 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021

Organisation/Company
Adas Ltd.,
AECOM
Applied Ecological Services Ltd.
Arbtech Consulting Ltd
Arcus Consultancy Services Ltd.
Arup
Avian Ecology Ltd
Brindle & Green Ltd.
Brooks Ecological
BSG Ecology
BWB Consulting
Contract Ecology Limited
Curtis Ecology
Delta Simons
DMBC internal
Ecus Ltd
ELM Ecology
Environment Agency
Estrada Ecology
FPCR Environment and Design Limited
Futures Ecology
HS2 Limited
JBA Consulting
JCA Limited
JJH Consulting Limited
Land Use Consultants,
Linda Barnett
LM Ecology
Middlemarch Environmental Ltd
Middleton Bell Ecology
MRB Ecology and Environment
Natural England
Naturally Wild Consultants Limited
Network Rail
NEYEDC on behalf of Yorkshire Water
OS Ecology

Quants Environmental Ltd
RammSanderson
RDF Ecology Limited
Ridgeway Ecology Limited
SLR Consulting
Smeeden Foreman Limited
Sustrans
Tailored Ecology Limited
The Ecology Practice
Thomson Ecology
Weddle Landscape Design
Whitcher Wildlife Limited
Wold Ecology Ltd
Wright Environment Limited
West Yorkshire Ecology Services
WYG
Yorkshire Ecology Surveys
Yorkshire Water

The total number of requests received during the period 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021 was 128. Quotes were provided for 112 of these requests, 105 of these generating income. Five requests fell outside the DMBC admin/recording area and the enquirer was advised to contact the relevant neighbouring LRC. 10 data search reports were provided free of charge to charge-exempt bodies and individuals, or where very few records were involved. Ecological consultancies constituted by far the largest user group of data search requests during the period, the remainder coming from within DMBC, national organisations and from other LRCs. There were no requests from members of the public.

The average time for providing a quotation for data provision was within 5 working days of the initial enquiry. The current Covid-related emergency does not seem to have had a detrimental effect on the number of data enquiries received by DLRC.

Doncaster Naturalists' Society continues to operate a log of information requests from members of the public. Any such requests come in via the Museum enquiry desk and any 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, along with other Local Records Centres in Yorkshire, have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Yorkshire Water to supply biological records, and this is coordinated by North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre. Data were sent to Yorkshire Water in April and October

2020, revised datasets being forwarded to Yorkshire Water on a biannual basis. A similar arrangement has been set up with the Environment Agency.

A Service Level Agreement was renewed with HS2 Limited for the three-year period 1/4/2020-31/3/2022. A data update was sent to HS2 during the 2020/21 financial year as part of the SLA with that organisation.

7.0 LWS resurvey programme

The 2019/2020 year saw the conclusion of the current Local Wildlife Sites resurvey programme. It has not yet been decided when or if a similar programme of LWS monitoring will be resumed in the near future.

8.0 Phase 1 habitat mapping

Phase 1 Habitat Maps of Local Sites based on DMBC records and previous field surveys have been prepared and then annotated by the surveyors as a part of the LWS resurvey programme. Colour-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.

The updating of Phase 1 habitat mapping and detail within LWS citations continues by the Planning Team as new information is received.

9.0 Income

The present charging structure for data enquiries came into force in April 2020 with a small increase in rates (between 1.5% and 2.1%) on the previous year ending March 2020 and continues to form the basis of the LRC's income. There are no planned increases in LRC services rates for the coming year 2021/2022. The 2020/21 income of £24500 including VAT has been generated from 105 requests, and partly from income generated by SLAs. This is an increase of £5700 from 2019/20 period.

A schedule of the latest charges are posted on the LRC website.

During this reporting period, biodiversity data have been provided to North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) which coordinates data provision to Yorkshire Water on behalf of the Yorkshire LRCs. This has generated income according to the terms of the Service Level Agreement.

10.0 Expenditure

Our annual subscription to ALERC remains at £450 – to put this figure into context this is the equivalent to the income generated by two average data search requests. For this membership we receive recognition that we are an effective and efficient organisation within the LRC community and that we operate to standard guidelines. We also 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.

During the year 2020/2021 DLRC has subscribed to the new Recorder 6 licensing arrangement whereby a fee is paid to the Recorder 6 Consortium via the NBN Trust in order to receive upgrades to the database software and species dictionary. Before 2020 both Recorder 6 support and its development were underwritten by JNCC and were effectively free to users of the database. JNCC now no longer provides finance for these services which are now undertaken by the Recorder 6 Consortium, and the services are funded by users who wish to receive the upgrades. The licence fee applying to us is currently £250.

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

11.0 Cross-boundary data searches

Yorkshire LRCs are currently engaged in setting up procedures 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 should benefit the client in that a single search may be commissioned rather than two or more, offering better-perceived value for money. DLRC now has working arrangements with North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre and with the West Yorkshire Ecology Services, and Data Exchange and OS End User Licence agreements have been formalised with both organisations. DLRC is currently engaged in formulating a similar agreement with Rotherham LRC.

12.0 DLRC Activities during the period

- DLRC continued to build on relationships with recorders and recording groups;
- NBN Atlas, the UK's largest biodiversity database, was found to hold many records for our recording area not held on our database. These records, where NBN licensing permits their use by DLRC, are downloaded on a regular basis and may be used in response to data enquiries. The source is acknowledged where data are used in output reports in response to enquiries;
- DLRC investigated iRecord as a potential source of records for our area. An iRecord account has been set up and we have permission to download records from this source and use the records for standard LRC purposes, whilst agreeing to acknowledge the source of the data when these are used in reports in response to data enquiries;
- DLRC is currently investigating access to biological data contained in ecological consultants' reports in respect of planning applications – this will involve permission being granted by data holders to DLRC, so that we may extract data and use appropriately.

13.0 YEDN

YEDN (Yorkshire Ecological Data Network, previously known as Yorkshire and Humber Ecological Data Network) is a network encompassing all the regional LRCs – regular (currently biannual) meetings of the Yorkshire LRCs are hosted by this network and current topics affecting the LRCs of Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, West Yorkshire Ecology and NEYEDC are discussed. Meetings during 2020/21 were held remotely with virtual meetings. Meeting arrangements in 2021 have yet to be determined owing to the Covid-19 situation.

14.0 ALERC

Currently, DLRC is an accredited LRC within ALERC. Our accreditation was due for its 5-year reassessment in mid-2020. During 2020 DLRC reviewed its documentation and procedures with a view to this reassessment, and our application for reassessment was successful and has been approved by the ALERC directorate. We are now accredited until mid-2025.

List of figures

Figure 1: Number of records entered annually to DLRC database since 2013

Figure 2: Data input by taxonomic group between 01/04/2020 and 31/03/2021

Figure 3: The spatial resolution of data entered in the database between 01/04/2020 and 31/3/2021

List of tables

Table 1: Planning Team members directly involved in the work of DLRC

Table 2: List of Steering Group members

Table 3: List of data users during year 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021

R Marsh

Biological Records Officer - Doncaster Local Records Centre – 17 May 2021