



# Biological Recording and Information Generic Biodiversity Action Plan

- **Better informed policy & decision making**
- **Avoidance of unnecessary damage to biodiversity**
- **Effective targeting of scarce resources to best use**
- **Compliance with statutory reporting requirements**
- **Monitoring of programme effectiveness**
- **Monitoring of short & mid term habitat & species trends**
- **Important component of education & awareness raising**

Up to date accessible records are an essential starting point for nature conservation and the implementation of the biodiversity action plan process. Without knowledge about the location and quantity of different habitats and species, both in the past and present, declines cannot be detected and conservation management cannot be focused to achieve **effective targeting of scarce resources to best use**.

In addition, **monitoring** is vital in order to determine whether conservation management is working, demonstrating whether it is maximising biodiversity or reversing any previous population declines, thus **avoiding unnecessary damage to biodiversity** and allowing discrete **monitoring of programme effectiveness**.

It is essential not only to give users access to the data that already exist but also to improve the quantity, quality and relevance of biodiversity data. Information needs to be up-to-date and trustworthy, as complete as possible, accurate and rapidly accessible. Where required it must be interpreted and evaluated so that users can judge what significance should be attached to it.

This provides us with a focus point for the collation and management of data relating to the wildlife of Worcestershire. The pooling of data from a number of sources provides a greater overall resource for the County of high quality, well presented, and clearly understandable data relating to, for example, species occurrences and distributions for a given area.

Biological recording in Worcestershire has a long tradition; today the county has an eminent group of expert naturalists who have collected over a million species records between them. This information, when combined with data derived from nature conservation organisations such as those within the Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership who own or manage land, can be used as an important component of **education and public awareness raising** of Worcestershire's biological diversity. The benefits of easy access to high quality biodiversity data are many. Some organisations may be able to save a significant amount of staff time that is currently used in attempts to locate and collate existing data. Staff time can be re-deployed on actually putting the data to use. In the planning process access to relevant data at an early stage can frequently avoid unnecessary later problems and conflicts and can even save planning authorities the expense and trouble of a public inquiry.

Biodiversity resources are more likely to be conserved if quality data are available for all decisions made on land use and management. Increasing resources are now being devoted to positive management of sites and habitats, whether they are managed directly by partner organisations in areas such as Nature Reserves or Country Parks, or in the wider countryside through incentive schemes such as the English Woodland Grant Schemes or Environmental Stewardship. In this way biodiversity information can provide the basis of targeting efforts to where they can be most effective.

Finally, the need to ***comply with statutory reporting requirements***, together with ***monitoring and reporting*** on the success or failure of policy borne from legislation, is assuming an important role in both public and non-government organisations. A selection of EU and UK legislation and UK and Regional Policy that requires consideration to be given to best available biodiversity information are listed within **G3 Policy, Grants and Legislation**.