

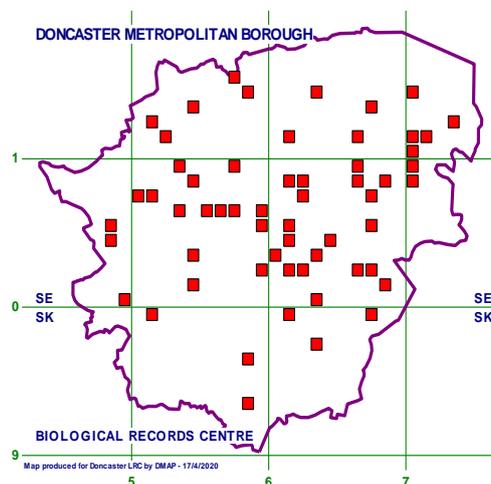


Doncaster
Council

Doncaster Local Records Centre

an **ALERC**  accredited LERC
Association of Local Environmental Records Centres

Annual Report for year 1/4/2019 to 31/3/2020



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 10
7.0	LWS resurvey programme	page 10
8.0	Phase 1 habitat mapping	page 10
9.0	Income	page 11
10.0	Expenditure	page 11
11.0	Cross-boundary data searches	page 11
12.0	DLRC Activities	page 12
13.0	YHEDN	page 12
14.0	ALERC	Page 12
	List of figures	page 12
	List of tables	page 12

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 01/04/2019 to 31/03/2020. 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 118 enquiries for biodiversity information. Quotations 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 £18790 including VAT, that is £1640 more than the year 2018/2019;
- Data input for this financial year included 61,000 species records making a total of 530,000 records held in the database;
- 25 sites were surveyed as a part of 2019 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) resurvey programme. The data input comprised 3500 records, mainly of botany.

Summary of key activities:

- Yorkshire Water – data supplied in response to terms of SLA;
- HS2 – data supplied in response to terms of 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 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 Built and Natural Environment Team. Our LRC Manager is Jane Stimpson who oversees DLRC's activities and controls the budget, in addition to her other duties.

The table below shows other members of the Planning Team, within the Built and Natural Environment Team, who contribute to DLRC as part of their role.

Table 1: Planning Team within the Built and Natural Environment Team directly involved in the work of DLRC

Position	Staff	Main tasks
DLRC Manager	Jane Stimpson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall LRC manager • Budget holder/finance manager
Biological Records Officer	Bob Marsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data requests • Species data – collation and validation/verification • Habitat data – validation • Database management • Day-to-day finance matters
Biodiversity Officer	Melissa Massarella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LWS survey programme organiser
Principal Officer – Local Plans/Environment	Donna Halliday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 14 members. Table 2 includes the full list of members at 31 March 2020. During 2019/20 there have been no Group Membership changes.

Table 2: List of Steering Group members

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

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 530,000 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 document sources, and importing 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 94%, 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 2012

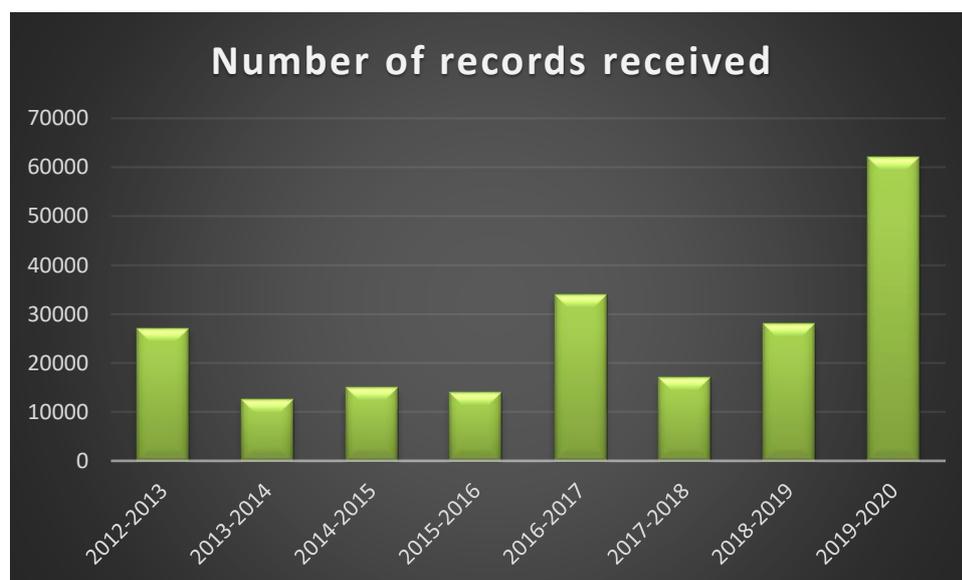
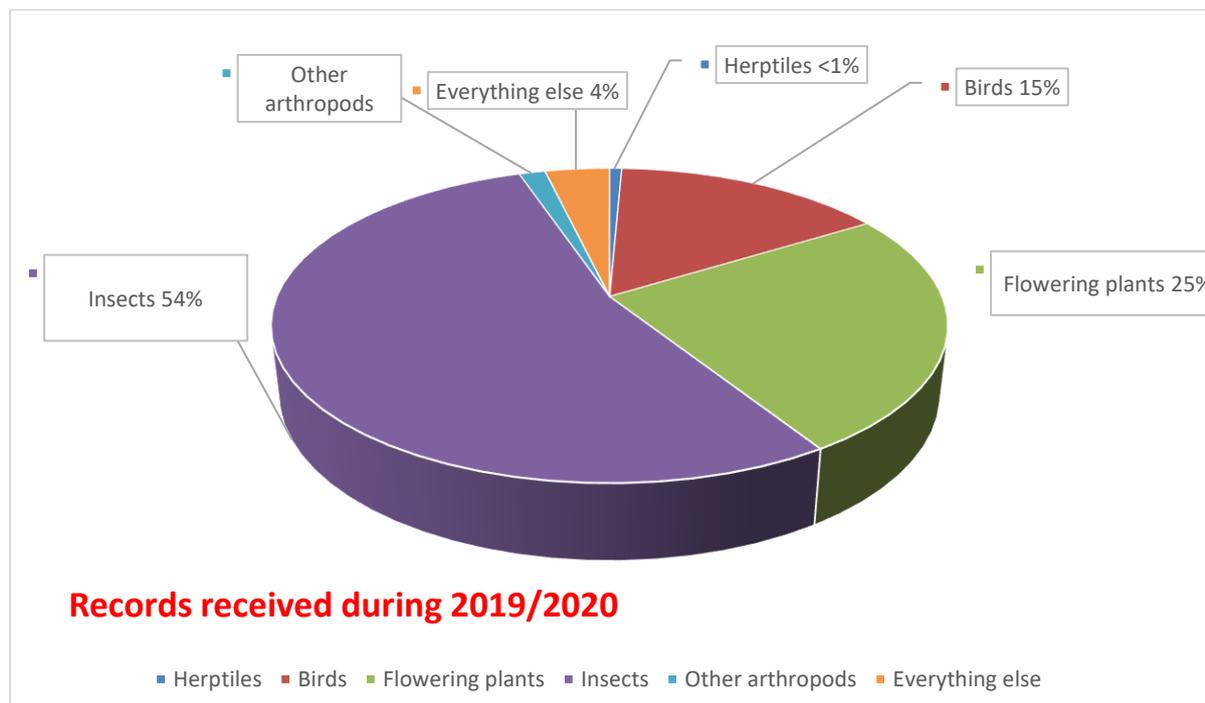


Figure 2: Data input by taxonomic group between 01/04/2019 and 31/3/2020

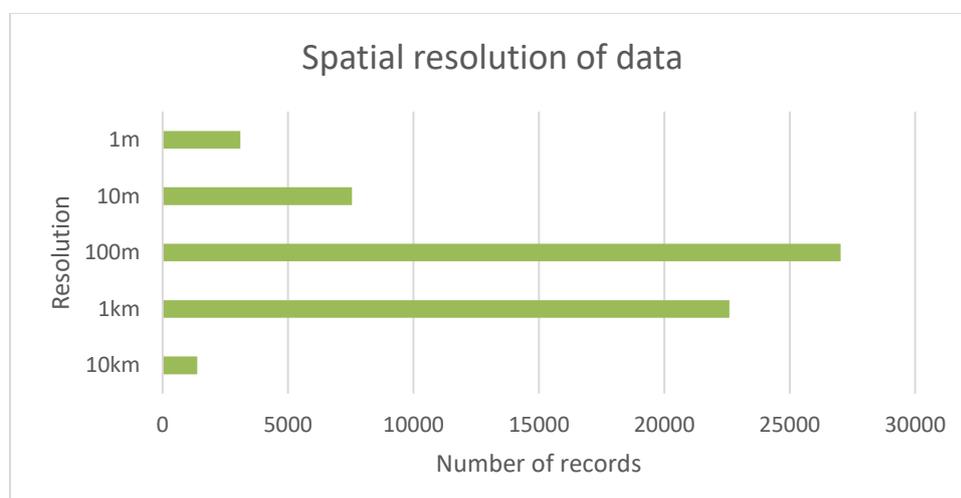


4.2 Record precision

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 1km or 100m 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 data entered in the database between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2020



4.3 Database maintenance

The Recorder 6 software was upgraded to version 6.29 in January 2020. During 2019/20 further dictionary updates were applied to the database which is presently in the latest version 4K. 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 will subscribe to the scheme in due course, in order to obtain the latest upgrades.

5.0 Data providers

Data providers between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2020 were:

AB Ecology
Doncaster Naturalists' Society
Environment Agency
Estrada Ecology Limited
LM Ecology
Middleton Bell Ecology
Natural England
NBN Atlas
NEYEDC
Smeeden Foremen Limited
Sorby Natural History Society
Various members of the public
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 ended 31/3/2020

Organisation/Company
ADAS
AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd
Arbtech Consulting Ltd.,
Arup
Baker Consultants Limited
BJ Collins Protected Species Surveyors Ltd
Brooks Ecological Limited
BSG Ecology
BWB Consulting Ltd
CGC Ecology
Corylus Planning and Environmental Limited
Crow Ecology
Curtis Ecology
Ecology Solutions Limited
EcoNorth Ltd
ECUS Limited
ELM Ecology
EMEC Ecology
Environment Agency
Envirotech
Estrada Ecology Limited
FPCR Environment and Design Ltd.
Hankinson Duckett Associates
Haycock and Jay Associates
HS2 Ltd
Jacobs
JBA Consulting
JCA Ltd
LM Ecology
MAB Ecology
Middlemarch Environmental Ltd
Middleton Bell Ecology
Mott MacDonald
MRB Ecology and Environment
Network Rail
North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre

Oatlands Ecology
Peak Ecology
Penny Anderson associates
Quants Environmental
Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited
Rhodes Ecology Ltd.
RSK ADAS Ltd
Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Smeeden Foreman Limited
Sorby NHS
South Yorkshire Badger Group
Sweco UK Ltd
The Ecology Consultancy
The Environment Partnership
The Landscape Partnership
the SLIM Woodlands CIC
Total Ecology
TSP Projects
Tyler Grange
University of South Wales
Wardell Armstrong
Weddle Landscape Design
Whitcher Wildlife
Wold Ecology
Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions Ltd
WYG Environment
West Yorkshire Ecological Services

The total number of requests received during the period 1/4/2019 to 31/3/2020 was 118. Quotes were provided for 100 of these requests, 94 of these 100 generating income. Three requests fell outside the DMBC admin/recording area and the enquirer was advised to contact the relevant neighbouring LRC. 15 data search reports were provided free of charge to charge-exempt bodies and individuals. Ecological consultancies constituted by far the largest user group of data search requests during the period, the remainder coming from within DMBC, from public bodies, higher education establishments/students and researchers, natural history groups 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 days of the initial enquiry.

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 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 2019, revised datasets being forwarded to Yorkshire Water on a biannual basis.

A further update of data was sent to HS2 during the 2019/20 financial year as part of the Service Level Agreement with that organisation.

7.0 LWS resurvey programme

The 2019/2020 year saw the conclusion of the Local Wildlife Sites resurvey programme. During the past 10 years the surveying of Local Wildlife Sites has constituted an important part of maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of Doncaster's non-statutory sites and the programme has been run annually since 2009. 330 Local Sites have now been surveyed by suitably qualified surveyors.

In the 2019/20 financial year the survey was carried out by MRB Ecology and Environment and comprehensive lists of plants together with habitat maps, target notes and photographic evidence were provided for each site re-surveyed. For some sites, records of other taxonomic groups were also provided as part of this survey. From April to September 2019 25 Local Sites were resurveyed and 3500 records, mainly of botany, were generated. Within Recorder 6 and for data input purposes Local Wildlife Sites were split into sub-sites depending on habitat type using standard Phase 1 nomenclature.

8.0 Phase 1 habitat mapping

Phase 1 Habitat Maps of Local Sites based on DMBC records and previous field surveys have 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 a 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.

9.0 Income

The present charging structure for data enquiries came into force in April 2019 with a small increase in rates on the previous year ending March 2019 and continues to form the basis of the LRC's income. The 2019/20 income of £18790 including VAT has been generated from 92 of 118 requests, and partly from income generated by the data supply arrangement with Yorkshire Water. This is an increase of £1640 from 2018/2019 period. Part of this income was used to offset the cost of the annual LWS resurvey programme.

From 1/4/2019 fees charged by DLRC for data searches were increased by an average 5.2% on the previous year. From 1/4/2020 there will be an increase in data search charges of between 1.5% and 2.1% depending on specification and a schedule of these latest charges will be posted on the LRC website from 1/4/2020.

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.

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

It is anticipated that in the coming year 2020/2021 DLRC will subscribe to the new Recorder 6 licensing arrangements whereby a fee is paid to the Recorder 6 Consortium in order to receive upgrades to the database software and species dictionary.

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

- In 2019 the Local Wildlife Sites resurvey programme was carried out and it targeted 25 Local Sites;
- 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, have now been downloaded and may be used in response to data enquiries.
- The Doncaster Nature Alliance held an event at Doncaster College in March 2020, where local and regional natural history organisations with an interest in Doncaster's biodiversity were able to interact with the public. DLRC was represented at this event.

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 2019/20 were held in Doncaster (DLRC) and Morley (West Yorkshire Ecology Services). The next meeting in 2020 has yet to be fixed owing to the Covid-19 situation.

14.0 ALERC

Currently, DLRC is an accredited LRC within ALERC. Our accreditation is due for its 5-year reassessment in mid-2020. In the year 2020/21 DLRC will be reviewing its documentation and procedures with a view to this reassessment.

List of figures

Figure 1: Number of records entered annually to DLRC database since 2012

Figure 2: Data input by taxonomic group between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2020

Figure 3: The spatial resolution of data entered in the database between 01/04/2019 and 31/3/2020

List of tables

Table 1: Planning Team within the Built and Natural Environment Team directly involved in the work of Doncaster LRC

Table 2: List of Steering Group members

Table 3: List of data users

R Marsh

Biological Records Officer - Doncaster Local Records Centre – 17 April 2020