

UK Awards to celebrate biological recording and information sharing

Introduction

The National Biodiversity Network Trust is a charitable organisation with an ever-growing membership that records the UK's wildlife, collects and cares for the data and makes it universally accessible to the public, for education and research, for conservation management and environmental decision-making.

The Network has 140+ members including most of the UK's national biological recording schemes and societies, many of the UK's largest wildlife charities and non-governmental organisations as well as most Local Environmental Record Centres, government agencies, research institutions, museums, botanic gardens and members of the public. Network members have collected and shared more than 125 million biological records via our national online database.

The Network Vision is that: *“Biological data collected and shared openly by the Network are central to the UK's learning and understanding of its biodiversity and are critical to all decision-making about nature and the environment.”*

The NBN Trust wants to recognise significant achievement and to celebrate success in biological recording. To do this, the NBN Secretariat has established a national awards scheme in partnership with the Biological Records Centre and the National Forum for Biological Recording. These Awards will be given out annually to individuals, groups of people or organisations that are making outstanding contributions* to biological recording and improving our understanding of the natural world.

Five awards are proposed to target two main areas of recording:

- Terrestrial and freshwater awards; and
- Marine and coastal

*The contribution can be anything from a significant number of records made in a year, number of participants at a BioBlitz, number of datasets available for download, plugging of gaps in knowledge in a specific area of the UK, through to technical innovation in recording wildlife or encouraging participation through the development of apps or games etc.,

Gilbert White

Gilbert White was chosen for the terrestrial and freshwater awards. He was a parson naturalist in the 18th Century. He is best known for his collection of letters compiled in a volume called *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789). The book comprised his correspondence with two of the leading naturalists of the time, Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington. In the letters, White discussed his theories about the local flora and fauna.

David Robertson

David Robertson (1806–1896) was chosen for the marine and coastal awards. David was a Scottish naturalist who founded the University Marine Biological Station, Millport. In 1885 he had the 'Ark', an old floating laboratory, drawn up on shore, at Cumbrae. He persuaded members of the professional and business community in Glasgow to fund a permanent marine research station there. Millport opened in 1897, the year after Robertson's death (at age 90) and consisted of a laboratory, museum, and public aquarium. Millport Marine Biological Station closed in 2013, but reopened in 2014 as Millport Field Centre thanks to the Field Studies Council.

Terrestrial and freshwater awards

- ***Gilbert White Youth award***

This award is appointed to a person who is not yet 18 years old on the 31 July of the year the award is made.

- ***Gilbert White Adult award***

This award is appointed to a person over the age of 18 to recognise their contribution.

Marine and coastal awards

- ***David Robertson Youth award***

This award is appointed to a person who is not yet 18 years old on the 31 July of the year the award is made.

- ***David Robertson Adult award***

This award is appointed to a person over the age of 18 to recognise their contribution.

Group award

- This award will be given to a group or organisation which works in a discipline related to either terrestrial and freshwater or marine and coastal. The group or organisation can include members of any age.

Rules of the awards

- The National Biodiversity Network Trust will make the awards annually (usually at the time of the NBN Conference).
- Nominations may be made by anyone (including people and organisations that are not Network members).
- Individuals, groups of people or entire organisations are eligible for the awards.
- The Secretariat of the NBN will appoint an awards committee to decide the winners each year. This will include the Chair of the NBN Board of Trustees, the NBN Patron (Earl of Selborne), a representative of any sponsoring organisation, the CEO of the NBN and representatives of the Biological Records Centre and National Forum for Biological Recording.
- Nominations open on 20th April and close on 31st July 2016.
- Successful nominees will be notified by the end of October and invited to attend the awards ceremony.