

Local Naturalist has made the Shortlist for two 2017 UK Awards for Biological Recording and Information Sharing

John Newnham, 68, from Worthing, West Sussex, has been shortlisted for both the 'Gilbert White Adult Award for terrestrial and freshwater wildlife' category and the 'David Robertson Adult Award for marine and coastal wildlife' category of the 2017 UK Awards for Biological Recording and Information Sharing.

These annual awards started in 2015, and have been developed by the National Biodiversity Network, the National Forum for Biological Recording and the Biological Records Centre. Their intention is to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions made to biological recording by adults and young people, which is helping to improve our understanding of the UK's wildlife.

John Newnham says:

"I have been involved with the British Trust for Ornithology's bird ringing scheme since a teenager and this initially encouraged and taught me to note and record accurately. About the same time, I started survey work and had a particular interest in recording visible migration of birds along the Sussex coast.

"Once I had settled into a medical partnership in the late 1970s I became involved in the organisation of county, and taking part in national, bird surveys. By the mid-1980s I had started keeping my bird records on a micro-computer, an old *Amstrad 6128*, with a particularly emphasis on recording the daily counts of migrating water birds passing the local beaches.

"This then led to me investigating and being involved in the setting up of a county database for bird records in Sussex which went 'live' in 1989. I remain as the database manager for the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) and oversee the amalgamation of observations from many sources into one database, currently holding in excess of three million records.

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“These records are used to produce an annual county bird report and various other publications including county avifaunae. Where allowed these records are shared with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and the records are therefore used to guide those involved in planning and conservation matters.

“Whilst working in a busy medical practice I found watching wildlife, and particular birds, very relaxing and seeing my records with all others translated into an annual report, a paper or map is most satisfying. Even more rewarding is the knowledge that these records may, at some time, assist those making decisions about where future developments should be opposed.”

The **winners** of the 2017 UK Awards for Biological Recording and Information Sharing will be announced at a special ceremony on **Thursday 16 November** during the National Biodiversity Network's annual conference in Cardiff.

This year we are indebted to three organisations for their support:

1. [Opticron](#) for sponsoring the prizes for the Youth Awards and for the Adult Newcomer Award.
2. [Paramo Directional Clothing](#) for sponsoring the prizes for the Gilbert White Adult Award and the David Robertson Adult Award.
3. [Field Studies Council \(FSC\)](#) for sponsoring the prize for the Lynne Farrell Group Award.

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For more information, to arrange an interview, and/or for images of John Newnham, please contact **Purba Choudhury**, NBN Communications Officer, on: **0115-9247133** or via: **p.choudhury@nbn.org.uk**

Notes to Editors:

1. The full, national, shortlist is:

Adult Newcomer Award

- Dave Braddock – from Surrey
- Adrian Cooper – from Suffolk
- Annie Irving – from Vale of Glamorgan
- Liam Olds – from Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Hugh Tooby – from Stirlingshire

David Robertson Adult Award for marine and coastal wildlife

- George Catchpole – from Essex
- Paula Lightfoot – from Tyne & Wear
- John Newnham – from West Sussex
- Jack Sewell – from Devon
- Rob Wells – from Cornwall

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Gilbert White Adult Award for terrestrial and freshwater wildlife

- George Catchpole – from Essex
- Peter Hodge – from East Sussex
- John Newnham – from West Sussex
- Adrian Norris – from West Yorkshire
- Dan Watson – from Stirlingshire

Lynne Farrell Group Award for wildlife recording

- Community Science – from Derbyshire
- Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership – from South Yorkshire
- Inner Forth Landscape Partnership – from Falkirk West
- NESBReC Mammal Atlas – from Aberdeenshire
- Sorby Natural History Society – from South Yorkshire

Youth Awards for wildlife recording

- Jann Billker – from Buckinghamshire
- Tyler Ingleheart – from Somerset
- Mhairi McCann – from Inverclyde
- Evan Potter – from Greater Manchester

2. **David Robertson** (1806–1896) was a Scottish naturalist who founded the [University Marine Biological Station at Millport](#), which opened in 1897. Millport Marine Biological Station closed in 2013, but reopened in 2014 as Millport Field Centre thanks to the Field Studies Council.
3. **Gilbert White** (1720 – 1793) is remembered in these awards because his name is synonymous with biological recording. He was one of the first English naturalists to make careful observations of his surroundings and record these observations in a systematic way. He transformed the way we look at the natural world and is recognised as one of the fathers of ecology.
4. **Lynne Farrell** is a well-respected botanical tour, expedition and field meetings leader. She co-authored the first 'British Red Data Book on Vascular Plants' and has produced and illustrated a pocket book 'Wildflower walks on Mull'. Since 1995 Lynne has been the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's voluntary recorder for Mull, Coll and Tiree and is working on writing a new 'Flora of Mull and the Mid Ebudes'.