

NBN Conference 2019 Knowledge exchange session
Exploring the capabilities of the NBN Atlas spatial portal

One of the NBN Conference 2019 Knowledge exchange sessions was about the NBN Atlas spatial portal. Its aim was to explore some of the analytical tools that enable species records to be explored and analysed in conjunction with different spatial layers, and to discuss their usefulness to the participants.

Two sessions were held at which we demonstrated five tools that are available on the NBN Atlas spatial portal:

- Area Report;
- In Out Report (Compare Areas);
- Calculate AOO and EOO;
- Points comparison (Compare Points) and
- Points to Grid (species richness mapping).

We also demonstrated some navigation pointers for the spatial portal interface.

Attendees were encouraged to discuss the tools as the demonstration progressed and to provide initial thoughts on the usefulness of the tools to their work. For each tool, attendees also had the opportunity to provide written comment; these written comments could be left with us after the session. Each attendee also received a summary sheet describing the full suite of tools available in the Atlas of Living Australia, for reference.

In total we reached 49 people from across a broad spectrum of the biodiversity data community. Only about 10% of attendees had used or explored the spatial portal, but as most people were current users of desktop GIS and therefore familiar with biodiversity data handling, the discussion was very useful and insightful.

Based on the discussion at this session it is clear that the spatial portal is currently less well-used than the other portals of the NBN Atlas, and that the reasons for this are quite varied. These reasons range from the tools on offer not being easy to navigate or use, to the tools not being relevant for users' work in their current form. Our information gathering about existing and potential use of the spatial portal, its tools and general functionality is therefore ongoing. Discussions about our future approach to the spatial portal are being informed by all findings and comments that we have received to date (including from these sessions). We will share the next steps for the spatial portal as soon as we can.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the Conference 2019 sessions for their contributions to our ongoing discussion about the NBN Atlas spatial portal.