



NATIONAL FORUM  
FOR  
BIOLOGICAL RECORDING

*NBN and NFBR*

# Rooted in Data Growing Through Time



Simon Pickles,  
25<sup>th</sup> National Biodiversity network  
Conference



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# *Who are we?*

- A membership organization that represents, at a national level, the interests and work of biological recorders across all taxonomic groups.
- Members include individual biological recorders, Local Record Centres and recording schemes and societies.
- We think of ourselves as an *independent voice* for biological recorders in the UK.





# *What do we do?*

- NFBR works in two distinct spheres. Firstly, through its two governance bodies, the Executive and Council, the NFBR membership is represented at a strategic level in the UK.
- NFBR seeks to keep them membership abreast of national developments in ecological data that might impact on the practice of biological recording
- The second sphere relates directly to the immediate needs of its members.







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# *A Bit of Shared History*

- 1964 BRC is established at Monks Wood on 1 April with F.H. Perring as its head.
- 1968 Dr Perring coined the ‘Biological Records Centre’. The phrase ‘biological record’ came into existence.
- 1986 NFBR formed as the National Federation for Biological Recording
- 1988 Linnean Society Report, “Biological Survey: Need and Network” was produced by Prof. Sam Berry. This project was promoted by the National Federation for Biological Recording (NFBR) and Biology Curators Group under Paul Harding.
- 1990: The Co-ordinating Commission for Biological Recording (CCBR), chaired by Sir John Burnett, started work on research for building a case for a national system.
- 1995: CCBR Report “Biological Recording in the United Kingdom” was published. This included a detailed national scheme for Biological recording and publication coincided with “Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report – Meeting the Rio Challenge”.
- 1996 Initial moves to establish a UK-wide biological recording network. Foundation of NBN partnership.
- 1998 Sir John Burnett became Chairman designate for, what was to become, the NBN Trust.
- NBN Trust registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee on 25 August 2000.



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# *Networks and Platforms*

- The NBN Partnerships predates the first iteration of NBN Gateway by 8 years.
- From time-to-time we have been guilty of focusing on the platforms of data dissemination over the network of data collectors and collators, perhaps focusing more on the users
- Sometimes the local level, where data is still collected and where nature recovery is delivered feel a long way from the NBN.





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## ***NBN & NFBR***



### **Ambition 3:**

Citizen science is valued, supported & expanded as major source of biodiversity data

**The NBN Atlas supports everyone in their biological recording journey**

**Foster knowledge sharing and guidance materials on informatics.  
Highlight impact of contributions**

The NBN Atlas supports all biological recording

- Increased engagement with rapidly growing user groups, identify and meet their needs
- Foster knowledge sharing and capacity building in conservation projects
- Share guidance on biodiversity informatics and how to find and use the best data for research
- Develop partnerships to drive standardisation and data sharing of next-gen data collections

Greater connectivity of data and people to projects



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**Ambition 4:**  
NBN is a well-  
connected and  
highly collaborative  
community with a  
united voice on key  
issues

**The NBN Atlas is a  
leader in best  
practice biological  
data sharing**

**Develop the  
community, leverage  
new technologies  
and look beyond the  
Living Atlas**

The NBN Atlas is  
innovative and  
embedded in nature  
recovery

- Work with technical partners to integrate new technology into workflows (data lakes, indexing etc.)
- Evaluate and adopt AI and machine learning in the way we validate, process and analyse data
- Create open API ecosystem for seamless integration with UK and global conservation technologies
- Secure funding to explore POCs to service the UK Biodiversity data

The NBN Atlas is at the  
forefront of new  
technologies





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# ***CRED?***

- **Communicate** the vital importance of grass roots biological recording in monitoring the state of nature and the efficacy of measures to aimed at nature recovery at both a local and national level.
- Act to enable inclusive **resourcing** of existing biological recording activities and facilitate the growth of the biological recording community across all taxa.
- Work towards clear, efficient and **equitable** ecological data flows in which the roles of all data collators are clear, transparent and mutually recognised and critically, the interests of data creators are respected.
- Establish pathways to enable the **deployment** of new equipment, techniques and technologies to the front-line of biological recording.

