

Fife Nature – Records Centre

Information Request Service

This document outlines the standard information request service provided by Fife Nature - Records Centre. The document includes reference to our most commonly requested and valuable datasets and outlines our presentation format and logistics of our service. This document can be used prior to submitting an information request or as a reference document to consult when an information request has been obtained from Fife Nature - Records Centre.

Requests should be submitted via electronic form available by visiting the Fife Direct Website (currently in development) or by email. Customers should also submit full contact details in order that Fife Nature - Records Centre may clarify any aspects of the request.

At present there is no charge for our standard information request service.

1. Information to submit with your information request

The following represent information that can aid the speed of our information request services and help us customise the service to suit individual customers. The customer should provide this information if known.

- **What is your Deadline?**

Information request responses will normally be delivered to customer within 20 working days of receiving the request i.e. the date the request arrives at Fife Nature - Records Centre. Under 'Freedom of Information Act' guidance all information is to be provided within 20 working days. Fife Nature - Records Centre reserve the right to extend this deadline for resource intensive information requests and will inform the user of any special restrictions at the time of request. When possible shorter delivery periods will be accommodated, desired delivery deadline should be specified on submission of request.

- **What is the Area of Interest?**

The area searched includes any boundary, line, point, or other geographic reference provided by the customer and the surrounding 150m. This standard 150m buffer allows for 100m grid references. If you require a larger buffer this should be indicated in your initial request. Area for interest can be provided to Fife Nature - Records Centre as a point reference (e.g. national grid reference or easting/northing), line reference (e.g. transport corridor, river etc.) or specific boundary reference (e.g. designated site, grid square). In the absence of any specific geographic reference provided by the customer, a named location can be used given that this is verbally agreed between Fife Nature - Records Centre and the customer. Ideally any area references will be provided digitally by the customer in GIS shapefile format. Image files, fax and mailed hardcopy maps are also acceptable. In the absence of one of the aforementioned formats a note or verbal communication to agree area of interest is also acceptable.

- **What Base Map would you like?**

For any mapping produced, Fife Nature - Records Centre will select a base map (e.g. OS 1:10,000) that best fits any customer supplied map (Unless a specific base map is requested).

Available Base Maps:

OS 'Streetview'

OS 1:10,000

OS 1:50,000

OS 1:250,000

OS Mastermap

- **What Format would you like your information?**

As standard Fife Nature - Records Centre will provide an Adobe PDF electronically accompanied by any relevant Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets. If Adobe PDF is not suitable an alternative format should be specified on submission of request. If customers are running older versions of the following software please specify version required on submission of request.

Available Formats:

Adobe PDF

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Excel

Bitmap Image (Mapping Only)

JPEG (Mapping Only)

Hardcopy

If high-resolution mapping is required, this can be provided in an image format suitable to the customer. If hardcopy mapping is required, Fife Nature - Records Centre can produce either A4 or A3 only. Any specific resolution or print size should be specified on submission of request.

2. Data Available from Fife Nature – Records Centre

A standard Fife Nature - Records Centre information search includes notable species, habitat, and designated site records for the area specified by the customer. **For an example of our standard information request please see the Website.**

Description of our standard information is given below along with an indication of additional data that can be made available on request. Customer should include reference to any particular data they require with submission of information request, in the absence any reference to a particular datasets, our standard data search will be completed and supplied i.e. species, habitats, and designated sites.

- **Standard Species Information**

Fife Nature - Records Centre maintains a network of official wildlife recorders throughout Fife and also receives many records from members of the public and various surveys. Digitised records from these sources are all held on Recorder, a database of wildlife records. As of May 2006 this database contains over 350,000 records.

Our standard information request response will highlight the presence of 'Notable' species as well as providing details of individual notable species recorded within the area of interest.

Species records are provided in tabular format, with the following standard information:

Survey

Date Recorded

Common Name or

Scientific Name

Family (Taxonomy)

Order (Taxonomy)

Grid Reference

Abundance (e.g. 20-100)

Location

Record Type (e.g. Field Observation)

Comments (e.g. Seen searching for food)

LBAP Species (i.e. Local Biodiversity Action Plan available)

Local Status (As determined by local experts)

Local Status Note

Notable Species

Statutory Species

Geographic Accuracy

Additional record detail can be provided on request:

Recorder (i.e. observer or collector)

Determiner (i.e. confirmed specimen)

Habitat (e.g. Swamp)

Sample Type (e.g. Collected)

For the purposes our standard information request response, 'Notable' species are either LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan) species, or those species that appear on the SoCC List (Species of Conservation Concern).

LBAP

UK National BAPs have been produced for a range of species. These national targeted BAPs provide a basis for local BAPs to be constructed, so that local conservation action can be focused. Local Authorities have the responsibility for drafting local BAPs. Fife's LBAP species are species targeted for conservation as a result of local rarity and/or vulnerability to loss and decline, and include species with action plans developed by the Fife Biodiversity Partnership.

SoCC

The SoCC list aims to be a definitive Conservation Status Dictionary. It contains information on both the designated and ecological status of UK species and provides a mechanism to ensure consistency between the many different species lists needed for conservation and legislative purposes.

The **SoCC list** consolidates the following lists:

- **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA)**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain.

- **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004**

Amendments to the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Enforcement provisions were extended and some amendments for protection made by Section 50 and Schedule 6 of the act.

- **IUCN Red List and Review**

International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) The IUCN drafts a 'red list' that evaluates the threat to various species and identifies those that are endangered or vulnerable. This provides guidance on how to address conservation issues for different species.

- **CITES (1975)**

Convention on trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is implemented in the UK under the EC Regulation of Trade in Endangered Species. Under CITES all commercial trade in species and products is banned in the UK

- **Berne Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats 1979** The Berne Convention requires signatories to conserve listed flora and fauna and their natural habitats. Migratory species, which includes all small cetaceans, are listed in Appendix 2 and 3 and must be protected.

- **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (The Bonn Convention) UK (1985)**

Requires signatories to protect migratory species throughout their entire range and therefore provide a basis for international conservation measures to be implemented. Covers birds, terrestrial and marine mammals, reptiles and fish. Migratory species threatened with extinction are provided immediate protection in member nations and species with 'unfavourable' conservation status are considered and often afforded protection under various agreements (e.g. Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe)

- **The EU "Birds Directive" (Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds), 1979**

Designed to protect wild birds, and to provide sufficient diversity of habitats for all species so as to maintain populations at an ecologically sound level. Lists birds requiring special conservation measures, and includes selection of areas most suitable for them to be designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

- **Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora –Habitats Directive (1992)**

The main aim of this EC directive was to promote the maintenance of diversity through the protection of species and habitats. The Habitats Directive has been implemented into UK law via the Conservation of Natural Habitats Regulations 1994 (CNHR's)

Statutory Species

Species listed on the SoCC that are protected under the following legislation are deemed statutory i.e. subject to a punishment or penalty prescribed by statute. Badgers also have the additional protection afforded by the 1992 Badger Act. Other SoCC listed species covered under other legislation not specifically listed below have SoCC non-statutory status.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: Species on Schedules 1, Part 1, Schedule 5 9-1a, 9-1b, 9-2, and 8 of the Act and its subsequent amendments.

EC Birds' Directive: The species on Annex 1 filtered against a list of UK relevant species.

EC Habitats and Species Directive: The species on Annex 1, 2p, 2np and 4 filtered against a list of UK relevant species.

Badger Act (1992): The Protection of Badgers of Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger, or to attempt to do so; and to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Also that it is an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct a badger sett or disturb a badger while in its sett.

For more information concerning the details of above species designations and lists please visit <http://nbn.nhm.ac.uk/nhm> or contact Fife Nature – Records Centre directly.

- **Standard Habitat Information**

Fife Nature – Records Centre maintains a wide variety of habitat information from a wide variety of surveys both internally commissioned and from other organisations working in Natural Heritage e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Wildlife Trust. Digitised records from habitat surveys are held in a GIS system with additional surveys available in hardcopy only. Fife Nature – Records Centre hold surveys for a variety of classifications including Phase-1, National Vegetation Classification (NVC), and MLURI.

Our standard information request response will highlight in tabular form all Phase-1 habitats, with area affected and total area surveyed in Fife. We will only provide details of 'Target Notes' if requested. Mapping will include all habitats that intersect the area of interest.

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A phase 1 habitat survey provides a general classification of parcels of land based principally on vegetation but also taking into account topographic and substrate features. This classification was developed in the 1980s for the purpose of mapping terrestrial and freshwater habitats within SSSIs and nature reserves, and for larger scale strategic surveys. The classification has subsequently been used extensively for major surveys. The classification has been adopted by

the Institute of Environmental Assessors as one of the standard methods for preparation of Environmental Statements under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1988.

Fife Nature – Records Centre holds digital phase-1 coverage for all of Fife’s natural and semi-natural habitats. This data is accompanied by Target Notes (text notes highlighting additional information regarding a survey area).

- **Designated Site Information**

Fife Nature – Records Centre works closely with a variety of organisation responsible for the designation of areas with valuable natural heritage e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Wildlife Trust etc. Fife Nature – Records Centre hold a wealth of information related to both the original designation of sites and their ongoing monitoring. This information includes (where available) full site assessments, surveys, boundaries, and management statements etc.

Designated Sites:

- **Special Area for Conservation (SAC)**

A statutory designation. SACs are areas designated under the EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, commonly known as the Habitats Directive and may include Proposed SACs and Candidate SACS (sites submitted to the EC).

- **Special Protection Area (SPA)**

A statutory designation. SPAs are areas designated under Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (1979), commonly known as the Wild Birds Directive. SPAs are intended to safeguard the habitats of migratory and certain threatened bird species.

- **Ramsar Site**

A statutory designation. Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance the goal of which is the “conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international co-operation as a means to achieving sustainable development through out the world.”

- **Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A statutory designation. SSSIs are designated by SNH as a result of contained plants, animals or habitats, geology or landforms or a combination of these.

- **National Nature Reserve (NNR)**

A statutory designation. NNRs are areas of land, set aside for nature, where the primary management goal is the conservation of habitats and species of national and international significance.

- **Local Nature Reserve**

A statutory designation. Local Nature Reserve (LNRs) are areas of local natural interest, established by local authorities to protect nature and provide public recreation opportunities, these may include proposed LNRs.

- **Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserves (SWT Reserve)**

A non-statutory designation. SWT Reserves are areas managed or owned by Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) to protect plants, animals and other wildlife of local importance.

- **Wildlife Site**

A non-statutory designation. Wildlife Sites are areas designated by Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) to help protect valuable natural heritage areas not covered by statutory designations. Some sites have been identified as having some natural heritage value but may not have been formally assessed and listed i.e. provisional Wildlife Sites.

- **Regional Park**

A non-statutory designation. Regional Parks are extensive countryside areas where existing land uses continue but are managed by agreement with the landowners to allow public access and recreation and to protect local landscapes.

- **Country Park**

A non-statutory designation. Country Parks are designated and managed by the local authority under the Countryside Act 1967 and are primarily intended for public access and recreation.

- **Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site (RIGS)**

A non-statutory designation. Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) protect locally important geological and geomorphological sites not covered by other statutory designations. Designated by Fife RIGS Group.

Our standard information request response will highlight on mapping all designated sites that intersect the area of interest. We will also include as standard a summary of any relevant designated sites. If required any additional information on individual sites should be requested with original request submission. Please note some additional information is only available in hardcopy format.

Additional Site Information may include:

- Full Phase-1 Survey (includes compartment descriptions, target notes, dominant species etc).

- Site Assessment.

- Site Citation.

- Site Species List

- Full National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey.

- Site Management Statement.

- Site Photography

A hardcopy guide to all site designation and individual sites in Fife is available on request. A full list of all designated sites in Fife is also available online.

- **Other Data**

In addition to that data provided as part of our standard information request service, Fife Nature – Records Centre hold a wealth of other environmental data. The following represent a small sample of additional data that can be supplied on request. Please contact Fife Nature – Records Centre if you have any data requirements out with those highlighted in this document.

Optional additional datasets available (sample):

Wildlife Sites Complete Citation and Survey Assessments (hardcopy)

SSSI Complete Citation and Survey Assessments (hardcopy)

Intertidal Habitat Survey (A modified Phase-1 habitat survey was conducted existing habitat types were further sub-divided to give more detail of coastal habitats).

Wetland Bird Survey, WEBS Counts (hardcopy where available)

Endangered Plants Project Survey

National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey

Scottish Semi-natural Woodland Inventory (SNWI)

Ancient Woodland Inventory (ANWI)

3. Data Quality and Service Regulations etc

Confidentiality

The user will be notified of any special conditions or use restrictions applied to provision of confidential data.

Copyright

Fife Nature – Records Centre or the original recorders retain the copyright of records supplied. The data are supplied to the customer for use only in the context of the case on which the enquiry was made and should not be reproduced without prior consent of Fife Nature – Records Centre.

Information supplied by Fife Nature – Records Centre may be provided to third parties provided that any special arrangements made in respect of confidential data and acknowledgement are adhered to. Full acknowledgement must be given to the original recorder if individual records are referenced or reproduced. Fife Nature – Records Centre must be acknowledged if data is referenced or reproduced in any way.

Any specific copyright conditions attached to the data, including Crown Copyright, must be strictly adhered to. The data supplied by Fife Nature – Records Centre should not be amended in any way without prior consent.

Data Sources

Fife Nature – Records Centre compiles information on an ongoing basis from all available professional and voluntary sources. These sources include the general public, various specialist species groups and individual recorders, Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), for which Fife Nature – Records Centre acts as a clearinghouse for the supply of data. The data search is undertaken only on data held and deliverable by Fife Nature – Records Centre at the time the enquiry is made i.e. data that has not been formally checked and logged, and data that may not be readily searchable or deliverable in its current format is not made available to customers. No new field survey is undertaken as part of our information request service.

Data Quality and Interpretation

All users should be aware of the interpretation limitations of the data supplied. Habitat and species recording information is often limited with regard to temporal and spatial coverage and further field survey may be required to determine the presence or absence of notable records. Environmental information for the site may have changed since the available data was gathered.

We try to ensure that our material, data and/or information we supply is accurate, but we make no representation and give no warranty that any material, data and/or information is accurate, up to date or complete. We accept no liability for any loss or damage caused by inaccurate, out of date or incomplete material, data and/or information. Furthermore Data Providers accept no liability for any loss or damage caused by inaccurate, out of date or incomplete material, data and/or information.

The material, data and/or information supplied by Fife Nature – Records Centre are not intended to address any particular requirements; they do not constitute any form of advice or recommendation by Fife Nature- Records Centre and are not intended to be relied upon when making [or refraining from making] any decision.

If you find any inaccurate, out of date or incomplete *material, data and/or information*, or if you suspect that something is an infringement of intellectual property rights, you must let us know immediately.

Data supplied by Fife Nature – Records Centre has been verified (in terms of identification accuracy, geographic accuracy etc) and validated (in transfer from hardcopy to digital format) as far as is possible. Potential errors still exist, however, and users are asked to contact Fife Nature – Records Centre regarding possible errors to obtain more information regarding any significant validation or verification issues with the data supplied.

Charges

In keeping with Fife Council's Policy on the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations, Fife Nature – Records Centre provide all data free of charge unless otherwise stated.

Advice

Fife Nature – Records Centre does not advise enquirers on actions that might or might not be taken as a consequence of the data identified in the search. If enquirers require further advice they are advised to contact other relevant parties.

Thank-you for your interest in the information request services provided by Fife Nature – Records Centre. If you require any further information please contact us. If you wish to submit an Information Request please proceed to the online form or contact us directly.