



## **Response by the National Forum for Biological Recording to Defra and the devolved administrations' consultation to inform their review of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

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### **1. Stakeholder details**

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### **2. What are the key activities that JNCC currently undertakes for you?**

The key JNCC activities of relevance to NFBR and its membership are:

- Development, maintenance and support for the technical infrastructure that underpins biodiversity data management in the UK. This includes the National Biodiversity Network Gateway, and the Recorder 6 and Marine Recorder software.
- Integration of the UK with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF).
- Coordination and support for long-term UK-wide species surveillance programmes.
- Supply and interpretation of scientific evidence to support UK environmental policy and decision making.
- Development of biodiversity indicators mapped to global and European biodiversity targets.
- Coordination of UK protected site and protected species designation, their monitoring and reporting at a European level, and the development of monitoring standards.
- Development and integration of Habitat Classification Systems
- Coordination of research to maximise the potential of remote sensing technology for biodiversity monitoring, and ensuring that this is ground-truthed with local information.
- Use of biodiversity data from organisations and volunteer recorders for reporting at the national and international level and informing rapid response to environmental threats, including invasive non-native species.
- Provision of expertise and data to the UK National Ecosystem Assessment.
- Coordinating UK-wide biodiversity data in support of understanding and managing ecosystem services and Natural Capital.

### **3. What does JNCC do well and what could be improved?**

**Does well:** Provides impartial, evidence-based advice on all matters related to the conservation and monitoring of biodiversity in the UK and its overseas territories.

Coordinates the activities of devolved administrations and agencies, ensuring consistent standards with regard to nature conservation, environmental management and the collection and interpretation of scientifically valid evidence.

#### **Improvements:**

- With increased resources, JNCC could focus more on contributing to the development of cost-effective structured surveillance and monitoring methods for a wider range of taxa and habitats. This could make best use of the expertise and dedication of volunteer recorders to deliver more

biodiversity conservation and better natural capital stewardship, as required by the biodiversity strategies and policies of the four UK countries.

- With its broad geographical remit, JNCC could do more to ensure a more integrated approach across the whole of the UK to the collection and interpretation of biodiversity information and its subsequent use in environmental policy and decision-making.
- JNCC should expand its work with partner organisations to define the UK's biodiversity information needs, identify current and potential future gaps in capacity and skills, and ensure that the technical and operational infrastructure that sustains the capture, management and use of biodiversity information is maintained into the future.
- JNCC should have the long-term funding arrangements in place to be able to plan twenty years or more ahead in terms of biodiversity information requirements and monitoring, and so that it can 'speak truth to power'.

#### 4. To what extent does JNCC provide value for money in what it does for you?

Very high    High    Adequate    Poor    Very poor

Very high    High     Adequate    Poor     Very poor

#### Additional comments:

JNCC's support for species monitoring schemes attracts investment of over £850k per annum from NGO partners and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology plus volunteer time contributions valued in excess of £8.6 million per annum.

JNCC plays a key role in developing and testing cost-effective solutions for habitat mapping and monitoring using remote sensing technology, evaluating the ability of these methods to meet conservation objectives at a local as well as national scale. More adequate resourcing of JNCC and the adoption of an ecosystems approach across local and national government would create positive feedback for the environment and economy alike.

#### 5. Looking to the future, should JNCC refocus its resources on new areas of work or are there any areas it should be focusing fewer resources on?

JNCC should continue to focus on maintaining long-term species and habitat surveillance programmes and ensuring that scientific evidence underpins action that delivers real benefits for nature conservation and ecosystem service capacity, for the bodies with which JNCC deals directly, and for the public who benefit as a result. This role is vital and unique to the JNCC.

JNCC should also continue horizon-scanning to identify future threats to biodiversity in the UK and its overseas territories, to maximise the potential of emerging technology and to ensure that evolving priorities of stakeholders are met.

Given the failure of the UK to meet past, present and (it is predicted) future biodiversity targets, there is a need for a review of how the UK does business with the environment as a whole. JNCC could lead a review partnership that includes all relevant stakeholders to produce an integrated strategy to be implemented by all four nations and their government departments.

#### 6. Are there other organisations that could deliver JNCC's existing activities or parts of these? Please specify the organisations and activities.

No other organisations deliver the JNCC's unique overview and services.

JNCC already collaborates with key partners to ensure a joined-up approach to evidence-based nature conservation across the UK and UKOTs. This collaborative partnership approach ensures cost-effective sharing of knowledge and resources. Without JNCC's impartial coordinating role, inefficiency, competition and 'wheel reinvention' would prevail.