



NATIONAL FORUM  
FOR  
BIOLOGICAL RECORDING



Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University



# Skill Development for Biological Recording

10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018, The Gateway, Shrewsbury

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## Conference aims:

- To consider which skills recorders need
  - To review results of gap analyses and plans to address issues
  - To generate ideas to help new recorders learn
  - To share best practice in transferring skills
  - To discuss how NFBR can better support skill development
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## Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May

09:30 Registration and refreshments

10:30 Sue Townsend, Field Studies Council  
*Welcome and Introduction*

10:40 Steph West and John Tweddle, Natural History Museum London  
*Keynote address: Skills needed to identify and record*

### Session 1: Perceptions on the skills gaps Chair: Sarah Whild, Manchester Metropolitan University

11.10 David Roy, Biological Records Centre  
*Perceptions on the skills gaps*

11:30 Debs Muscat, Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre  
*The state of nature recording in Cumbria*

11:40 Miranda Lowe, Natural History Museum London  
*The use of collections in biological recording*

11:50 Kieron Brown, FSC/BioLinks  
*Needs analysis from an identification and recording project*

12:00 Carlos Abraham, CIEEM  
*A view on the skills gap from an ecological consultancy*

12:10 Discussion Groups  
List and prioritise the skills needed by the sector  
Table groups to report back after lunch

**12.30 Lunch**  
Posters, displays and demonstrations

13:30 Brief reports from table groups

**Session 2: Data and communication skills**

Chair: Paula Lightfoot, NFBR

- 13.50 Rich Burkmar, Field Studies Council  
*Interesting ways to present data*
- 14.05 Simon Smart, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology  
*Rummaging in nature's bran tub: the joy of recording and analysing the fortunes of common plants in the British countryside*
- 14.20 Martin Harvey, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology  
*Social media for modern mentoring*
- 14.30 Nick Moran, BTO  
*Structured and unstructured recording*
- 14.50 Tea Break**

**Session 3: How recorders have gathered their skills**

Chair: Paula Lightfoot, NFBR

- 15.20 Ian Wallace, Caddisfly Recording Scheme  
*Possible past and present futures*
- 15:35 Paula Lightfoot, Seasearch  
*Plenty more recorders in the sea? Developing skills in marine recording*
- 15.50 Mags Cousins, Natural England Field Unit  
*A Government Agency approach to skill development*
- 16.05 Nick Law, FPCR Environment and Design Ltd  
*A view on skills development from an environmental consultancy*
- 16.20 Alan Cann, NatureSpot  
*How online support can improve identification skills*
- 16.35 Close  
*Travel to accommodation at Preston Montford*
- 18.30 Conference dinner**

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**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

- 09:30 Registration and refreshments
- 10:00 Sarah Whild, Manchester Metropolitan University  
***Welcome back and introduction***
- 10:05 Paul Ashton, Edge Hill University  
***Keynote address: A University perspective – how to prepare students for employment***

**Session 4: Training schemes and success stories**

Chair: Sue Townsend, Field Studies Council

- 10.30 Josh Styles, North West Rare Plant Initiative  
*A personal journey on the development of skills in plant identification*
- 10.40 Ryan Clark, Northamptonshire Biological Records Centre  
*The WILDside Project: Reinvigorating Biological Recording in Northamptonshire*
- Juliette Butler, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust  
*Training support from a Wildlife Trust*

- 11.10 April Windle, PlantLife/British Lichen Society  
*From trainee to trainer – developing the skills base for lichen identification and recording*
- 11.20 Question time
- 11.30 Coffee break**
- 11.50 Sue Loughran, TCV Natural Talent Apprentice  
*Personal experience of schemes that have developed my skills*
- 12.00 Sarah Whild, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland  
*Field Identification Skills Certificates*
- 12.10 Sue Townsend, Field Studies Council  
*Training courses for all*
- 12.30 Harriet Carty, Caring for God's Acre  
*How this HFL-funded project will train volunteers*
- 12.45 Lunch**  
Posters, displays and demonstrations
- NFBR Annual General Meeting 13.30 to 14.00**

**Session 5: Sharing best practice – how can NFBR help?**

Chair: Graham Walley, NFBR

- 14.00 Chris Cheffings, JNCC  
*A Government perspective on the importance of biological recording for the next 25 years*
- 14.15 Workshop A – Chair: Sue Townsend and Sarah Whild  
*How do we fill the skills gap in identification and recording? Do we need a recording skills audit and if so how do we carry this out?*
- 15.00 Workshop B – Chair: Paul Ashton, Edge Hill University  
*Do we need a common biological recording skills policy or protocol to be supported by the main groups in the sector including higher education?*
- 15.30 Tea break**
- 15.50 Plenary question – Chair: Chris Cheffings, JNCC  
*How do we promote the need for developing, extending and maintaining skills to local and national government?*
- 16.15 Closing thoughts by Graham Walley, NFBR
- 16.30 Travel to Preston Montford for those staying for the field day

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**Saturday 12th May**

**FIELD VISIT TO BROWN MOSS IN THE NORTH SHROPSHIRE MERES AND MOSSES  
(RAMSAR/NNR/SSSI)**