Watsonian Vice County Boundaries

The Vice County system for Great Britain was devised by an English botanist, Hewett Cottrell Watson, in order to illustrate plant distributions. To mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Watsonian Vice County system in 2002, the NBN Trust commissioned the digitisation of the 112 Vice County Boundaries covering England, Scotland and Wales so that they could be used in modern GIS and recording software.

The Boundaries are available on a CD, which includes a software tool that can be used to generate single Vice County Boundaries, country sets or any combination of individual counties. Because the boundaries are at a scale of 1:10,000, which is much more detailed than previously available, a GIS such as MapInfo is needed to view the boundaries against suitable map backgrounds although the boundaries can also be loaded and viewed in *Recorder*.

The original (beta) version of the boundaries became available in 2002 and the final version (the standard) was produced in 2008, with generous financial assistance from Defra (Department for Food and Rural Affairs) and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The CDs are available free of charge for personal and non-commercial use and can be ordered via the website.

Recording software

Whilst there would be too much information to include here, details of the most popular biological recording software packages can be found on the website.

Training and events

Information on training courses and specific training events aimed at the biological recording community, can be found all in one place on the NBN website. The courses cover a whole host of topics including taxonomy, recording, field studies, data management and also general interest.

There is also information on seminars and conferences taking place across the Network.

Forums

The NBN is underpinned by a partnership of like-minded organisations and individuals and, as such, houses a wealth of knowledge and experience. There is a commitment to sharing this expertise and one of the best ways of doing this has proved to be through the NBN forum. Through this, participants in the NBN are able to exchange information, share ideas and answer queries.

To take part, simply visit the forums section of the website and register.

More information on the tools and resources available through the NBN can be found on the website.

nbn.org.uk

Please contact the NBN Trust Secretariat for general information, help and advice.

0115 959 6435 or
support@nbn.org.uk

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NBN
National Biodiversity Network

Sharing Information about Wildlife

Useful Things

NBN tools and resources to help

This leaflet highlights some of the key resources and tools available to the NBN partnership.

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) is a collaborative project involving many of the UK's wildlife conservation organisations, the government and country agencies, environmental agencies, local record centres (LRCs) and also many voluntary groups, who are all committed to making wildlife information widely available.

The NBN Trust oversees the development of the Network and, as well as establishing standards for the exchange of wildlife information, it has also made a number of resources and tools available to its partners and those with a general interest in biological recording through its website.

NBN Gateway

The main resource provided by the NBN Trust is the NBN Gateway.

The Gateway is an Internet based data sharing tool designed by the NBN Trust specifically for wildlife data. It provides a secure environment that groups and organisations can use to share the digitised data they hold and manage with others. Data hosted on the Gateway can be displayed and accessed through the NBN website and the same data can also be accessed through other websites and desktop applications using web services.

Web services

Web services allow Gateway mapping, reports and data to be integrated into other websites or used by programmes such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS). They are used by different organisations for a variety of purposes. For example, some recording scheme websites now incorporate Gateway maps and a few LRCs have created customised reporting pages for local authority partners. The Gateway data access controls and terms and conditions still apply, so use of web services will not affect the standards already implemented on the website.

Web services offer benefits both to data providers and data users. Data providers are able to take advantage of Gateway mapping and access controls without the need to invest in complex software to display their records. For data users the flexibility of web services means that access to information is no longer limited to the website. Data can be taken directly from the Gateway to desktop applications such as GIS and presented in ways appropriate for their use.

For information on using web services please visit the website.

Species Dictionary

With an estimated 50,000 species of animals, fungi and plants in Britain, recording and tracking changes in biodiversity is a huge task. This is made even more difficult because many species are known by a variety of names, both common and scientific. Regional variations of common names also exist and on occasion different names are mistakenly given to the same organism.

The Species Dictionary is a project of the NBN Trust and is an online service that aims to bring together the various names into a comprehensive database.

The website is managed by the Natural History Museum on behalf of the NBN Trust and is continually updated as science progresses and relationships between species are clarified.

There are thousands of different names of UK species available to users, all of which underpin the distribution maps of the Gateway. The Species Dictionary is also incorporated into *Recorder* software.

There are many ways in which individuals can get involved in the project. These range from acting as expert list editors and providers of checklists, to highlighting errors and proposing species that should be included. E-mail: speciesdictionary@nhm.ac.uk for further information.

Ordnance Survey Map Tiles

To help with recording wildlife the NBN Trust can supply Ordnance Survey map tiles for use within *Recorder* software. The use of the map tiles within *Recorder* enables users to accurately store and manage biological data by visually pin pointing sightings as opposed to entering 8 figure grid references.

The digital map tiles are provided on a set of 5 CDs which contains all 812 map tiles covering England, Scotland and Wales in areas of 20 by 20 km. The 1:50,000 scale map tiles are designed to form a mapping backdrop for capturing and displaying biological data in all versions of *Recorder*.

The CDs are available, for a small fee, and can be ordered via the website.

The licence has been agreed only for use within *Recorder* software and because of this each tile is encrypted in such a way as to disallow their use in any other software, including GIS packages. Encryption keys are available free of charge from the NBN Trust Secretariat, to registered users only, upon request.