



## How is access to sensitive information managed responsibly if it is freely available?

The NBN Trust, which is the charity set up to oversee the work of the NBN, supports the principle that, wherever possible, environmental information should be freely available to all. This approach generally benefits the environment by increasing awareness, enabling better decision-making and reducing the risk of damage. However, in a small number of cases, public access to information can result in environmental harm. In such cases, availability of information may need to be controlled by the data supplier. The NBN Trust has developed good practice guidelines for managing sensitive information. These help quantify sensitivity and encourage restrictions only where truly necessary. Data providers are encouraged to follow these criteria when considering what level of access to provide to their data.

## 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. Please visit the NBN website for more information on web services.

## Global information

The NBN is the UK node of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). The Gateway is linked to GBIF, which has established a global network of biodiversity information in the public domain. All information available for the public to download through the Gateway is automatically fed to the GBIF portal. Visit [www.gbif.org](http://www.gbif.org) for more information.

## How to provide data

If your organisation is interested in providing data, all the information you need can be found on the NBN website. It's important to note that although the Gateway enables organisations to share their information it does not provide a data management or custodianship service. Data providers continue to manage and maintain the 'top copy' of their own datasets and provide a copy of this to share through the Gateway.

## Further help and information

Whether you want to search for wildlife information on the Gateway or to provide data, all the information you need can be found by visiting the NBN website. The Trust Officers can also be contacted through the site for general help and advice or more specific queries.

**Information on how to use web services, share, manage and use data on the Gateway, as well as general news and information on the NBN can be found at [nbn.org.uk](http://nbn.org.uk)**

The NBN Gateway has been developed by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology with extensive financial support from Defra.



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## Sharing Information about Wildlife



# NBN Gateway

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## For sharing information about wildlife

**M**any groups and organisations in the UK are now committed to sharing their wildlife information for conservation, research and education. Collectively, they make up the National Biodiversity Network. However, because of the sheer number of organisations involved in the Network, it can be difficult for people who want to use the information to find out what may be available and who to contact to obtain a copy. To help with this, the National Biodiversity Network Trust has developed the NBN Gateway. This website brings all of the information together so that it can be searched, viewed and downloaded easily.

### What information will I find on the NBN Gateway?

#### The Gateway will help you to find out:

- What records are available for a particular species in the UK?
- What records are available for a particular geographic region?
- What organisations within the NBN hold further information about species or wildlife sites?

#### Species Records:

The Gateway holds millions of records for species that have been observed in the UK - from plants and insects to birds and mammals. These records can be interrogated using the search engine or by browsing lists from the home page. They can also be filtered by date or the conservation status of the species.

The results are then displayed on maps, which can be customised to show an Ordnance Survey background, different date ranges, or zoomed to particular geographic regions. Records are made available for download as Microsoft Excel workbooks and text files.



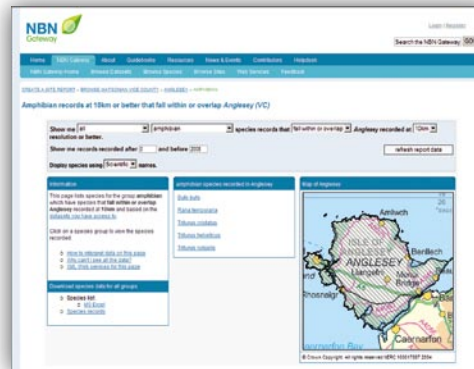
Information on the UK's wildlife is held by a diverse range of organisations, which means that it can take a lot of time and effort to find what you are looking for. Now, however, the NBN Gateway makes finding the relevant information much easier.

#### Taxonomic information:

The Gateway utilises the NBN Species Dictionary and uses this to summarise the taxonomy of any species searched for.

#### Site reports:

The Gateway also stores a range of geographic boundaries that are relevant to wildlife recording and conservation. These include vice-counties, statutory wildlife sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and administrative areas (e.g. Unitary Authority Boundaries). These can be mapped and used in conjunction with the species information to generate site reports - a summary of all the records on the Gateway that have been collected near or within a particular boundary.



#### Links to other websites within the NBN:

The Gateway provides little background information to the data it displays. However, the search engine provides links to websites from the broader NBN community that can be consulted for further information.

#### Habitat Data:

Some habitat information is already available on the Gateway and this area will continue to be developed in order to improve the way habitat data are made available and integrated with other wildlife information.

*"Despite the huge number of records already available, the Gateway is very much a work in progress. So it's important to realise that if there are no records on the Gateway for a particular area, this does not necessarily mean that a particular species does not occur there. It may be that existing records have not yet been shared with the NBN, or that the area has not yet been surveyed for that species. The Gateway's coverage is rapidly improving, however, with new datasets appearing every few weeks. So it's well worth a return visit to see what new information is available. The latest datasets are listed on the website."*

### Where does the information on the NBN Gateway come from?

Most records were originally collected by thousands of volunteer recorders who are often specialists in particular groups of species. People involved in wildlife conservation and research owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their efforts that make the UK one of the best-recorded countries in the world.

The organisations that form the NBN range from national recording schemes and local wildlife groups to local record centres (LRCs) and government agencies. A full list of data providers can be found on the website. These organisations send collections of records to the Gateway as individual datasets, which they administer and update at regular intervals.

### How do I access the information?

Almost all information on the Gateway can be viewed by anyone at a minimum of 10km resolution and most information is increasingly available at higher resolutions. However, if you need better access to particular datasets, such as for research or conservation case work, then we recommend that you register with us. Registration is free and, once registered, you can apply for better access to the datasets that may be important for your work.

Access to all the datasets on the Gateway is individually controlled by the information providers. They specify the resolution at which users can view the data on maps and which record details can be downloaded. Requesting enhanced access to a dataset is simple using the Gateway pages and most requests are handled well within 28 days.

However you intend to use the information on the Gateway, accessing the data may just be the first step. Often expert interpretation will also be needed. This service can be provided by many of the participants in the NBN, such as LRCs, who can add local context and knowledge to the raw data, and specialist societies and schemes who can provide taxonomic and ecological expertise for species and habitats. The range of expertise in the NBN is one of the reasons why the partnership works so well.

While use of the Gateway is free, the information shared is owned by the data providers. Terms and conditions govern their use and data providers must be consulted and credited when their records are used in publications or elsewhere.