

**Welcome** to Issue 1 of **SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C Update** – an occasional newsletter to keep you informed of ongoing activities at SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C, the new local biodiversity records centre for South East Wales.

For those of you who have not come across SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C before, we are a not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to make appropriate local biodiversity information available to those who need it, to help ensure that decisions which may affect biodiversity in the area are made in the light of best available knowledge. SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C provides a mechanism for collating, sharing and utilising the wealth of biological data and knowledge which exists in the South East Wales area (Glamorgan and Gwent).

Following an intensive period of activity over the past eighteen months, SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C is now nearing the end of its *establishment phase*. It will 'go live' and enter its *running phase* on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2005.

This newsletter aims to update you on SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C's activities during its establishment phase and to give a taste of the types of products and services that will be available in the near future.

## New Office Location and Corporate Identity

SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C is delighted to announce that, having spent its first 16 months in the offices of the former Caerphilly Mountain Countryside Service at Tongwynlais, we took up residence in our new offices in Central Cardiff in early May. Please make a note of our new contact details (see bottom right) and feel free to call in if you are passing!

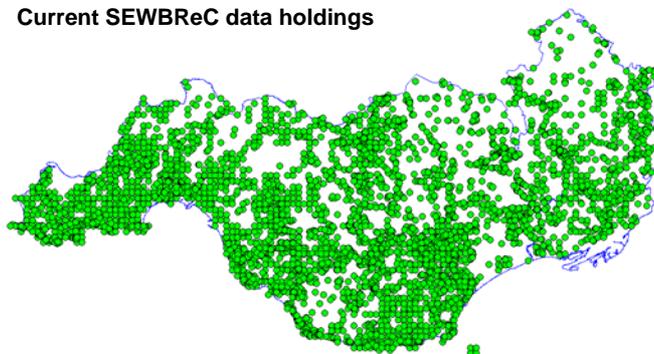
We are also using this *Update* to launch our new corporate identity – the fruits of the design talents of AP design matters of Cardiff, with photographic elements generously supplied by the eminent natural history photographer Laurie Campbell

## Summary of Establishment Phase Activities

*During the establishment phase our activities have been focused on the following work areas:*

- Securing funding for the establishment and subsequent running of SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C (see overleaf)
- Establishing IT systems (including biological databases and geographic information systems) to manage our data holdings
- Securing access to key biodiversity datasets held by a range of organisations and individuals, plus negotiation of data exchange agreements
- Data entry and import to populate our databases
- Developing a range of products and services which will be available to users after the start of the running phase
- Developing and providing a range of services to support the local biological recording community
- Co-ordination with other Local Records Centres (LRCs) across Wales and the UK, including assistance with completion of the Wales LRC network

Current SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C data holdings



## Meet the SEWBRc Team

### Adam Rowe (Manager)



*Adam has worked in local records centres (LRCs) for over ten years. Having started his career at Somerset Environmental Records Centre, Adam spent five years working on the 'Hampshire Biological Record' before becoming Manager in 2000 of Wales's first LRC, the Biodiversity Information*

*Service for Powys and Brecon Beacons National Park. Adam joined SEWBRc in Summer 2004.*

### David Slade (IT and Records Officer)



*David is SEWBRc's longest serving staff member having occupied the post of SEWBRc Development Officer (responsible for producing the SEWBRc Development Plan) between late 2002 and spring 2004 when he became SEWBRc's IT and Records Officer. David joined*

*SEWBRc from a post as Assistant Curator of Entomology at the National Museums and Galleries of Wales.*

### Rebecca Davies (Data and Enquiries Office)



*In early 2005 Becky Davies became SEWBRc's newest recruit. Having qualified with an MSc in Environmental Biology from Swansea University, Becky spent two years as Biodiversity Officer for Newport City Council before travelling in Central and South America for six months.*

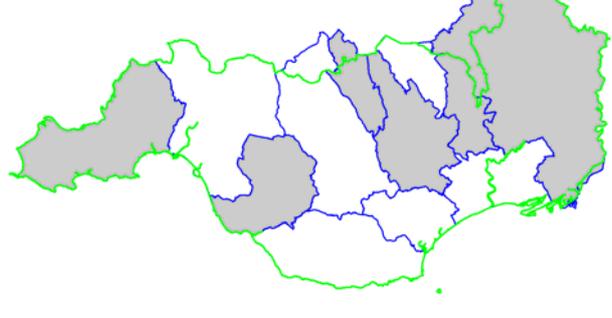
## Funding SEWBRc's establishment

The establishment of SEWBRc to date has been supported by a range of public bodies and local authorities.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of our funding partners:

- Countryside Council for Wales
- Forestry Commission Wales
- Welsh Development Agency
- Environment Agency Wales
- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- City and County of Swansea Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council

Geographic coverage of SEWBRc's Unitary Authority funding partners



*Further establishment funding is still urgently required to secure the level of service which SEWBRc wishes to provide to its data suppliers and service users. Please feel free to use your influence to help us secure funding from the full set of local authorities in South East Wales!*

## The services we will be providing

SEWBRc is currently developing a range of products and services to meet the needs of our funding partners, other commercial users and our local voluntary recorders.

Services to users will include:

- **Tailored searches of our local biodiversity databases** to highlight the presence of records of **legally protected, priority and other species** which may be affected by any proposed activities, as well as to alert users to the presence of **important habitats** or sites which have been designated or identified for their wildlife importance. Such searches may be undertaken in response to: a **weekly planning list** supplied by a local authority, a consultation on **forestry activities**, an application to join an **agri-environment scheme** or a request for information from a commercial user, such as an **ecological consultant**.

Services to local voluntary recorders will include:

- Assistance with **data computerisation**, provision of **biological recording software** (plus training and technical support), assistance with **publication production**, free **access to all relevant records** held on SEWBRc databases and organisation of annual *Recorders' Forum* events in Gwent and Glamorgan.



**SEWBRc**

SOUTH EAST WALES BIODIVERSITY RECORDS CENTRE  
CANOLFAN COFNODI FIOAMRYWIAETH DE DWYRAIN CYMRU

For further information on the work of SEWBRc, for advice and support on biological recording in South East Wales, or if you wish to use the services we will be offering, please get in touch – see *contact details overleaf*