

# Glamorgan Recorders' Forum 2006

## Best Western Heronston Hotel, Bridgend

### Saturday 25 March 2006

#### BRIEF REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS:

*The day was opened and those attending were welcomed by the event Chairman, Rob Nottage.*

#### ▪ SEWBRReC Update (David Slade, SEWBRReC)

Presentation included:

- The role of SEWBRReC
- SEWBRReC's funding partners
- SEWBRReC staff
- SEWBRReC products and services
- Other Welsh LRCs

*A full electronic version (on CD) or hard copy of this presentation may be obtained from SEWBRReC on request.*

#### Recording Updates

#### ▪ Mapping Rhos pasture butterfly habitat across Glamorgan (Richard Smith (RS), Butterfly Conservation)

Rhos pasture is a mosaic of different NVC types, and Wales possesses a high percentage.

Rhondda Cynon Taff has a high percentage of the total amount of Rhos in Wales.

Marsh fritillaries (MF) are well scattered throughout Glamorgan.

Large areas of Rhos were surveyed/assessed for their quality and presence of MF. A number of new MF sites have been discovered since 1999.

RS discussed various analyses of suitable habitat compared to total landscape area.

Management agreements have been agreed at a site in Tonyrefail. A pilot study is commencing with new fencing being installed and MF populations being monitored.

Small pearl-bordered fritillary survey is being carried out. Butterfly Conservation has produced an A4 identification sheet/recording form to be disseminated.

#### ▪ A Lepidoptera Atlas for Glamorgan – update on progress (David Slade, SEWBRReC & Glamorgan Moth Recording Group (GMRG))

GMRG would like to produce 2 companion volumes: The Moths of Glamorgan & the Butterflies of Glamorgan. The group is about a quarter through writing the moth species accounts (c.1300 in total), and it will probably be 6 months or so before the first draft is completed.

The volumes will include pictures of key species, distribution maps (where needed), and species accounts. Production is being funded largely by GMRG but they are also seeking additional sponsorship (e.g. CCW etc).

Production of these atlases will hopefully start the trend for other groups to produce an atlas for their particular taxonomic group.

#### ▪ **Fungi in Glamorgan (Mervyn Howells, Glamorgan Fungus Group)**

The group is very small and was originally based in Swansea but has progressively moved eastwards to cover the whole of Glamorgan.

The group mostly work on macrofungi and have about 5 000 records.

MH requested any fungi records to be passed to the group. Any unidentified fungi should be photographed at least 3 times (showing top of fungi, gills, and stalk) and be accompanied by information such as habitat, date, associations, location etc). It is also important to take a spore print for identification purposes – the colour is very important.

Around 30 000 fungi have been recorded in Great Britain.

#### **Local Biodiversity Action Plans in Glamorgan**

##### ▪ **Melanie Sutherland, Caerphilly**

Go Wild is a partnership event with approximately 100 partners involved.

It is shared with Blaenau Gwent (each hosting the event on alternative years)

Highly successful in terms of raising awareness of biodiversity, but also for recruiting more members and raising awareness of the various recording groups and conservation groups.

##### ▪ **Matthew Hamilton, Vale of Glamorgan**

Have the greatest concentration of GCN ponds in South Wales. Through contact with a local recorder (Stephen Lowe), a problem with newts falling and becoming trapped in a drain whilst trying to travel to their foraging grounds from their breeding ponds was identified and eventually solved.

The drain was moved away from the kerb so that newts could pass the drain without falling in!

Other projects working in partnership with recorders were also mentioned – high-brown fritillary and aphid records.

##### ▪ **Laura Palmer, Cardiff**

Hawfinch project (based on the success of the Nightjar project)

Surveyed for potential habitat in the first instance by identifying the presence of hornbeam. Over 40 sites in Cardiff and Caerphilly were surveyed. Results of which were sent to FCW for analysis.

Set up a winter feeding station in Forest Fawr car park (this will end at the end of March), and monitoring of hawfinch numbers is also taking place.

Lots of media publicity. Around 20 hawfinch sightings were phoned in based on a newspaper article. They will be used to target survey action.

##### ▪ **Analysis of SEWBRReC's data holdings in Glamorgan – identifying gaps and how to fill them (David Slade, SEWBRReC)**

Presentation included:

- Data Exchange Agreements
- Services that SEWBRReC can offer Recorders

- Data Management & Exchange
- Data Release Agreement & Sensitive Data
- Analysis of SEWBRcCs' Data Holdings:
  - Distribution of various taxonomic groups e.g. birds, mammals, invertebrates
  - Temporal distribution data
- Key data sets currently held
- Other known data sets
- Closing thoughts

*A full electronic version (on CD) or hard copy of this presentation may be obtained from SEWBRcC on request.*

## **Workshops**

### **a) The future of the Recordors' Forum**

#### **Group 1 (Facilitator: Rebecca Davies, SEWBRcC)**

##### **Topics of future talks**

Would like to see talks on recording techniques, equipment and new recording software. Would also like to see talks on how to get more people involved in the recording community and engaging the public, best practice for running days such as Go Wild at Wales Biodiversity Week.

Talks should be kept fairly general and of interest to the wider group (rather than individuals)

Indoor meeting should be in January and publicised more widely.

##### **Merging the Gwent and Glamorgan Recordors' Forums into one event!**

Thought it was a great idea particularly useful for those LA that straddle the two sides e.g. Cardiff and Caerphilly. Venue may be best placed in North of Cardiff perhaps change between years.

For SEWBRcC – it was recognised that this would reduce time and costs in organising the Forum.

It may also suit groups that span Glamorgan and Gwent e.g. South Wales Arachnid Group.

There are the same issues on both sides – so it would save on duplication of same discussion/effort

It would be a chance to meet other people who are interested in the same taxonomic group but simply work in a different area – exchange of ideas/best practice/support/networking.

##### **Recordors' Day**

Great idea to blitz an area that is under-recorded. Maybe hold a summer field meeting over 24 hours or 2 days so that people could attend at least one day or join at the time that suited their taxonomic group e.g. moths/bats/newts/mammals in the evening/night and other invertebrates/birds/butterflies/reptiles in the day.

Target a brownfield sites or sites that are difficult to get permission for access (Gwent Recordors did a similar day in RAF Caerwent in 2005).

A site in Tonyrefail was suggested as an example to get started.

#### **Group 2 (Facilitator: Jenny Sneddon, SEWBRcC)**

##### **Talk topics and structure**

The group was in favour of having several short talks covering a variety of subjects.

It was suggested that it might be interesting if updates on population dynamics of protected and priority species were presented, e.g. dormice, and that it would be useful to show temporal and spatial distribution maps.

In addition, updates on projects that have been discussed at previous forums to report on progress and the success of these projects, e.g. the moth group atlas, in order to share ideas. Presentations on whole sites and how they are surveyed e.g. the Kenfig reserve was suggested.

### **Merging of Gwent and Glamorgan Forums**

The group was not for the merging of the two forums as they felt that the interest of both vice counties would not be covered in one forum.

However, they were for an exchange in ideas and information between the two vice counties.

### **Training at the Forum**

Felt that training would be better kept as a separate day in order to make sure everybody's interests were tailored for.

### **Comment on website**

Wanted the website to become more interactive and kept up-to-date in order to keep people interested in it e.g. distribution maps, contact for county recorder.

## **b) Encouraging the next generation of Recorders**

### **Group 1 (Facilitator: Rebecca Davies, SEWBRcC)**

Encourage people to start with the commoner/easier groups

Engage them at public events e.g. Go Wild as it is an excellent place for networking and promoting groups etc.

Encourage youngsters to join Watchgroups such as those run by Wildlife Trust and RSPB.

Target university/college students as we need to take them out of the lab and into the field. Maybe organise 'Recorder Taster Days' – maybe linked to the summer Recorder Field day.

Production of a 'Young Recorders' leaflet/newsletter/poster to be distributed to libraries/schools/colleges/universities/ etc. Should contain information on where to send records and how to get involved. Publicising SEWBRcC. Maybe produce it on a Wales wide level to avoid duplication with other LRCs.

Target adult education classes. Develop an interest and encourage participation to national schemes e.g. RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch.

### **Group 2 (Facilitator: Jenny Sneddon, SEWBRcC)**

The use of the website was thought to be a good medium for getting new recorders on board.

It was thought that it was best to target adults with a known interest in natural history rather than children and that it was best to encourage the development of a few experts rather than a larger number of people who may not collect valid data.

Advertise recording days on website to encourage people to take part.

SEWBRcC to oversee the organisation of recording events in the area to prevent unnecessary repetition of events.

Try to widen people's interest in different taxa so when they are out in the field they can record a wider suite of species e.g. Odonata, lepidoptera and birds.

Get people interested in their local area e.g. Go Wild !

## Open Discussion

- Where do I send my records that do not go to a particular group or society? To the VC Recorder or to SEWBReC directly (who will then pass the records on to the appropriate VC Recorder/Recorder).
- Who are the County Recorders/Recorders for a particular taxonomic group? It was suggested that SEWBReC put together a comprehensive list of VC Recorders and /or recorders for each taxonomic group. The list should be made available to all groups and Local Authorities etc.
- All agreed that the venue was fine and the food was great. No objections made to holding the next meeting at the hotel.
- It was decided that despite the dichotomy of thought with regards to the merging of the Recorders' Forum – SEWBReC would continue to organise separate days for the time being. However, minutes of both meetings should be distributed to everybody.
- Suggestions of locations for Recorder Field Days – e.g. Tonyrefail, Tir Gofal Farms. Suggested that SEWBReC were best placed to facilitate the organisation of Recorder Field Days.
- It was suggested that the Forum currently looks like it is only open to professionals and by invite only, rather than all recorders of all taxonomic groups. Need to advertise more widely with posters/leaflets as well as invites.
- Mervyn Howells suggested that to increase the fungi records in the area – we should invite the British Mycological Society to blitz the area as one of the annual forays they organise. The foray usually lasts a week; and they would need accommodation and access to laboratory facilities during this time.
- David Slade suggested having a nominated chairman for future forums. No decision was made about appointing a chairman and the subject is still open for discussion.

**The Chairman thanked the SEWBReC team for organising the Forum, and everybody for attending. Dave Slade offered thanks to Rob Nottage for acting as Chairman (particularly at such short notice).**