

Evaluation Report

Enthusiating and enabling the next generation of wildlife recorders across Northamptonshire





Photo: Josh Hellon

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WILDside evaluation report – Enthusing
and enabling the next generation of wildlife
recorders across Northamptonshire.

The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records
Centre (NBRC) is a non-profit company
hosted by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire,
Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (BCN).

Executive summary

Biological recording is the process of recording the wildlife around us. Biological records are the way in which we document which species are found and where. They are one of the essential building blocks of evidence-based conservation. Recording wildlife allows anyone to significantly contribute to wildlife conservation, through helping to monitor the health of species and habitats in Britain.

March 2017 saw the launch of Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre's (NBRC) WILDside project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The aim of this inspirational project was to encourage new wildlife recorders and promote the sharing of expertise across the county.

The WILDside Recording Community Facebook group has grown to nearly 200 members. This group is a great way for people interested in biological recording to contact one another and share sightings and their enthusiasm for the natural world.

The project delivered 21 talks at the Northamptonshire Natural History Society (NNHS), each one reflecting a different taxonomic group or aspect of biological recording. These have been very popular and engaged with the community.

Seasonal surveys have resulted in around 250 records and started new people recording wildlife; some of these people now record other species. During the course of this project, records have been received from over 150 new recorders.

Events have been well attended and the project delivered 40 workshops, seven BioBlitzes and surveyed over 40 wildlife sites. WILDside also hosted the first ever Northamptonshire Biological Recorders Conference.

There are now much better resources to support recorders, with the production of the WILDside recording handbook, and a guide to submitting records through the NBRC website. There is also now a library of books and ID guides, which can be used and borrowed by enthusiasts.

Since the start of the project, WILDside has generated over 12,000 records of over 2500 species. These have focused on key wildlife sites and have filled in gaps on the map, for which we had no records.

WILDside has helped to reinvigorate biological recording in Northamptonshire, and has created a lasting legacy of more records and better-supported recorders in the county. The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre and Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (BCN) will continue to promote and support the many initiatives in the future.



“It has been a great pleasure to learn about the great variety of wildlife we have in Northamptonshire and work alongside knowledgeable, dedicated naturalists to help monitor it. Northamptonshire has a long history of biological recording and I am proud that this project has helped reinvigorate that. Biological records underpin wildlife conservation. It has been wonderful to use these records to highlight the species that Northamptonshire has to offer. I will always be inspired by the work that biological recorders do to conserve wildlife; this project is testament to their passion and enthusiasm.”

Ryan Clark (WILDside Project Coordinator)

Project Timeline

AUTUMN 2016

- Funding received from National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Project Board members recruited

SPRING 2017

- Project Coordinator recruited
- First talk held at the Northamptonshire Natural History Society
- Facebook community established

AUTUMN 2019/END OF PROJECT

- First Recorders Conference in Northamptonshire
- Three Counties Recording Handbook launched
- Over 30 local wildlife site surveys
- Over 10000 records
- Over 2000 taxa recorded
- Improved partnerships & strengthened network for recording in Northamptonshire

SPRING 2019

- Presentation & displays shared at NFBR, NBN, & Wildlife Trust Ecology Conferences
- First Wildlife Trust training workshop purely on biological recording held & repeated for Wildlife Trust reserves teams

AUTUMN 2017

- Over 250 attendees to events
- Over 75 mailing list sign-ups
- First online seasonal survey

SPRING 2018

- WILDside recording library area set up with resources for public use
- A large number of wildlife ID training workshops planned through the year

AUTUMN 2018

- 3 Bioblitzes held in Horton Wood, Priors Hall & Hunsbury Hill County Park generating a total of over 2000 records
- Gaps in the maps shared
- 100th volunteer day logged leading walks/talks & attending recording events

Why WILDside?

Northamptonshire has a strong tradition of biological recording. Most recording is carried out by amateur naturalists who value their local living history and accurately document biological information. This data underpins good decision-making for nature. However, in recent years, interest in biological recording had declined in the county, leading to current information gaps, pressure on existing expertise and an uncertain future for natural heritage recording. Development is moving faster here than across the rest of England, therefore current ecological information is key if we are to meet the national goals of sustainable development, biodiversity targets and net-gain for nature. To achieve this, supporting and championing biological recorders is vital.

How the WILDside project was developed

In March 2017 the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre gained £70,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a two-year WILDside project (subsequently extended for an additional year) to engage, train and tool new audiences and revitalise natural heritage recording long-term in Northamptonshire. The Wildlife Trust, led by the Monitoring and Research Manager, oversaw financial and project management throughout the project. The WILDside Project Coordinator joined to lead the project in March 2017 until December 2019, line managed and supported by the team at the records centre. The project built partnerships to strengthen the recorder network, led by the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre, the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire, the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, independent County Recorders, the Canal and Rivers Trust, and the University of Northampton.

What we set out to achieve

At the start of WILDside, other than birders and lepidopterists, there were fewer than 50 active volunteer wildlife recorders in Northamptonshire known to the records centre. Of these active recorders, several species groups were under-represented. Despite excellent work by a few active expert individuals, the county was lacking in wider voluntary support, particularly from younger demographics. This has led to a lack of data in taxonomic and geographic coverage. This also poses a long-term risk to the continuity of knowledge and skills for recording these species groups,

which reduces the evidence available to guide sustainable development. Partnerships with local authorities and other local bodies were patchy, and use of the data for wider research and to direct recording activity underdeveloped. Left unaddressed this would pose a significant risk to natural heritage.

From an initial project survey it was clear that a more joined up approach was needed to kick start a regeneration of interest and deliver the quality data needed for decision making. WILDside aimed to address the numbers of recorders supplying records to the centre, the support, equipment and training of engaged recorders to broaden taxonomic coverage.

The intended outcomes of the project were:

1. An increased number of quality data sets for key species in Northamptonshire
2. An increased number of active recorders providing data to the records centre

The project activities were divided into objectives that are discussed in the following chapters.



There are a dwindling number of active county recorders within Northants and the number of taxonomic groups being covered.



Response to preliminary survey in 2014



The tawny mining bee (*Andrena fulva*). Bees were one of the groups that were vastly under-recorded in the county.
Photo: Ryan Clark

Monitoring and evaluation of WILDside for project impact

Throughout the lifetime of the project, we tracked progress against our aims; this was supported through feedback, surveys and stakeholder input. This allowed us to build on successes and rethink approaches where needed.

The Project Board met eight times over the lifetime of the project, receiving quarterly written updates on the progress of the project. Key indicators of success against the project aims were updated regularly to inform project decision making, this quantitative information was supported by qualitative feedback.

To reduce bias in the evaluation of the project we worked with Icarus Collective who independently evaluated the project against our intended outcomes. They did this through reviewing our data, additionally designing, gathering and analysing survey data from WILDside participants and by leading a project stakeholder focus group.

Data collected, maintained and monitored to inform project delivery:

- **Volunteer Support** – number of hours and type of activity.
- **Event tracking** – number of ‘engaged’ attendees, number of generated records, type of engagement, and feedback on the event.
- **Training, talks and workshops** – sign-up/attendee numbers, content/method, and feedback evaluation.
- **Books & Equipment** – log of items, feedback on ‘wished for items’ and use of the equipment.
- **Data submission** – number of records submitted to the NBRC, geographic and taxonomic spread of records, how generated (where appropriate) including feedback on ‘recording motivation’, number of ‘new recorders’ and ‘regular recorders’, feedback on ‘quality of submission’ from NBRC/County Recorders
- **Project communications** – number of email contacts, Facebook members, type of communications, wider publicity & conferences.

Objective 1:

Promoting Biological Recording

Promote biological recording as a rewarding, useful pursuit that can influence conservation and development

Have people understood recording as a rewarding and useful pursuit?

Surveys and feedback showed that people considered this the most effective outcome of the project. In an externally assessed survey of 17 WILDside participants, they reported the project has been effective in achieving this aim. 62.5% considered it 'very effective' with 37.5% 'effective'. The project was successful in promoting recording as a rewarding and useful pursuit to both new and existing recorders. Nine out of 17 people responded that WILDside, in particular, had helped them view recording as a rewarding and useful pursuit, with a further six saying they were already aware of the value of recording and had been active recorders for many years. In a further survey, a high level (41% of 40 respondents) of WILDside volunteers felt their recording contribution is valued 'high and very highly' with 33% responding 'somewhat high'.

Biological recording was promoted through a range of activities that evolved during the project in response to feedback:

- Initially the challenge was to get people to come along to a talk or workshop that just focuses on recording. It takes good advertising, perseverance and time to build a growing network. Biological recording was therefore delivered alongside species identification in workshops and all WILDside talks, workshops and presentations. These not only taught how to record but why to record.
- As the project grew the focus changed from 'mass' to 'quality' public engagement, focussing on supporting recording and promoting good recording practice.
- Targeted engagement work was designed to meet the needs of recorders from novice to enthusiasts.
- The Project Coordinator, Ryan Clark, is a young and active recorder who has supplied thousands of records and is now a County Recorder himself. This was noted in survey responses to have been inspirational - helping people who may never have considered biological recording to start doing it. Ryan acted as a role model for the joy of recording.
- The Facebook group motivated recording through discussions, creating a community with an interest in recording. 76.5% of respondents to our externally assessed survey found this group valuable.
- Working with the Northants Natural History Society has helped to promote wildlife recording to an existing interest group.
- The project has built relationships with local recording groups who have historically not submitted their records to the record centre. By meeting with these groups and discussing the particular issues, we can address their concerns.
- The project has successfully worked with external organisations such as pocket parks, 'Friends of' and churchyard groups. WILDside engaged and involved volunteers in recording with data and talks provided to help understand wildlife site management.
- The approach and results have been shared as part of presentations made to the NFBR, NBN, Wildlife Trust and the new recorders conference.



Photo: Josh Hellon

Feedback from volunteers during the project

Social media has proved to be the perfect environment for people to create a local community for recording, sharing records and accessing help and support.

I was previously unaware of the importance of record keeping and what large gaps there were. Thought it was something that only the County Recorders could do.

I have always been interested in "citizen science" and have provided dragonfly, bird and butterfly records for years. The project has encouraged us to learn more about other species and we have recorded and reported many more species than we would have. We are using the NBRC system to record as many species as we can that we see in our wildlife friendly garden. We believe that our records will improve the understanding of species and help to conserve them.

I think the WILDside Project has already been incredibly encouraging so I'm not sure how it could improve.

From my point of view the project has been really valuable in spreading the word about the value of recording flies.

I help with management of a pocket park (volunteer) so can put my recording to good use in my local community, as well as understanding the wider relevance in the county.

I think it's done a brilliant job, hard to fault it.

WHY WE RECORD WILDLIFE

LOVE OF
WILDLIFE.
LOVE OF THE
OUTDOORS.

TO INFORM
RESEARCH AND
CONSERVATION.

LEARNING,
SHARING AND
BUILDING
KNOWLEDGE.



Graham Warnes, one of our established aquatic invertebrate recorders. Telling the stories of recorders has been an important part of the project.

Photo: Sue Caverhill

A CONCERN FOR BIODIVERSITY AND HOW WE MONITOR IT • BEAUTY & INTEREST OF THE SPECIES I FIND • BEING OUTSIDE, EXERCISE WITH AN OBJECTIVE, INTELLECTUAL • BORN WITH AN INTEREST IN RECORDING UNUSUAL SPECIES • CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE THAT CAN BE USED LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY FOR CONSERVATION • ENJOYABLE, USEFUL, ADDS TO THE BIG PICTURE • FINDING NEW AND EXCITING SPECIES FOR NORTHANTS • I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT RECORDS ARE FOR DECISION MAKING • GENERAL INTEREST & INCREASE THE COMMON GOOD • GENERAL INTEREST IN WILDLIFE • INTERESTED IN NATURAL HISTORY • FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS HAVING HAD A CAREER IN IT • I DESIGN TEXTILES INSPIRED BY NATURE, SO HAVE ALWAYS OBSERVED IT • I LOVE BEING OUTSIDE IN GREAT COUNTRYSIDE WITH AN OBJECTIVE THAT MAKES A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION • I CAN REVIEW CHANGES YEAR BY YEAR • I ENJOY LOOKING FOR AND IDENTIFYING SPECIES • I ENJOY WATCHING ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR (BIRDS) • I ENJOY BEING OUTSIDE, LOOKING AT WILDLIFE & RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF RECORDS • I LIKE TO KNOW THE SPECIES I COME ACROSS AND RECORDING THE FINDINGS MAKES SOME USE OF WHAT I SEE • I'M AN OUTDOORSY PERSON AND MY BIRD KNOWLEDGE IS HIGH • IMPORTANT TO RECORD TO GET TO KNOW WHAT IS AROUND WHAT HABITATS ESPECIALLY IN UNDER RECORDED AREAS LIKE THE SOUTH WEST OF THE COUNTY • INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY • INTEREST AND CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE • INTEREST IN THE SPREAD AND DIVERSITY OF SPECIES IN MY LOCAL AREA • INTEREST IN TAXONOMIC GROUP (ALGAE) • INTEREST IN THE WORLD AROUND US AND ECOSYSTEMS • INTERESTED IN WILDLIFE MY ENTIRE LIFE • IT IS GOOD TO KNOW WHAT CAN BE FOUND FOR AN AREA • IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TO WILDLIFE • AS AN INDICATOR OF IMPORTANT FACTORS SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT • KNOWING THE IMPORTANCE OF HOW MY RECORDS WILL BE USED • I USE THEM TO TRACK HOW SPECIES ARE FARING YEAR ON YEAR • LIFE LONG PASSION FOR ENTOMOLOGY • LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS, THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO DATA THAT WILL BE USED IN CONSERVATION & THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW THINGS • LOVE OF WILD THINGS AND PLACES AND A DESIRE TO CONSERVE THEM • I LIKE SHARING THAT ENTHUSIASM WITH OTHERS • CONSERVATION • MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRYWIDE INFORMATION & THE BIGGER PICTURE • PERSONAL INTEREST • INFORMATION FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY & CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTY AND COUNTRYWIDE KNOWLEDGE • RECORDS ARE USEFUL FOR IDENTIFYING VALUABLE HABITATS AND SITES, AND HOPEFULLY LEAD TO THEIR CONSERVATION • WILDLIFE & CLIMATE CHANGE • TO HELP US GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT • THE LOVE OF BEING OUTSIDE • LOVE OF WILDLIFE

Feedback from WILDside recorders

Deliver a celebration event as a conference for volunteer recorders.

On 29th September 2019, the WILDside Northamptonshire Biological Recorders Conference brought together a reinvigorated recorder community. This free event celebrated the work of biological recorders in the county and created a central meeting for the first time in county history. The event allowed attendees to share and discuss local species finds, get inspired and involved with active recording groups and get a feel of how their voluntary recording feeds into both local decision making and national biological monitoring.

The event was promoted widely in newsletters, blogs and on social media. BBC Radio Northampton invited Ryan for a midday slot, sharing details of the project.

The event attracted over 50 people, from expert to novice. Each attendee was supplied with a conference kit, including the newly produced record centre promotional materials and the WILDside recording handbook.

Talks were delivered by the record centre, including a summary of WILDside by the project coordinator (Ryan Clark). Local County Recorders for Diptera, Vascular Plants, Bryophytes and Water Beetles and Water Bugs in Northamptonshire delivered talks, and several Country Recorders and representatives from the Northamptonshire Natural History society attended the event. External speakers from the national Biological Records Centre and Back from the Brink project gave wider context to citizen science and biological monitoring.



John Showers delivering a presentation on recording flies in Northamptonshire.

Photo: Nathalie Hueber



Left: Kevin Rowley delivering a talk on his personal recording journey and the role of a county recorder.

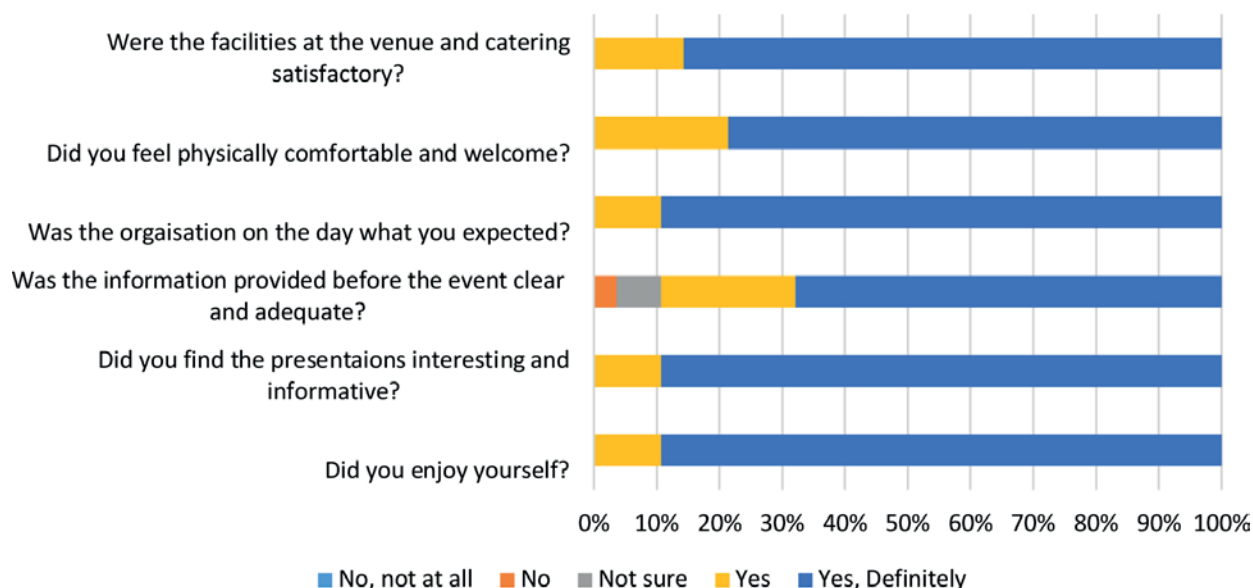
Right: Jamie Wildman delivering a presentation on the reintroduction of the Chequered Skipper to Northamptonshire.

Photos: Nathalie Hueber

During the event, we asked for project and conference feedback via survey and video interviews. The interviews are viewable on the NBRC website. The survey had 28 respondents, all of whom responded they did enjoy the conference in terms of both presentations and facilities.

90% of attendees were satisfied with the information they received in advance. Emails after the event communicated a strong regard for the project and a desire for both conference and other recorder engagement activities to continue.

Northamptonshire Recorders Conference 2019 Feedback



Feedback received from the first ever Northamptonshire Recorders Conference

“ This is just a quick e-mail to thank you for inviting me to yesterday's Conference, and to say how much I enjoyed the day. I thought the speakers were superb, and really informative. It was a very clever move on your part to ensure that all the speakers were so relevant to this county, thus making the day so inclusive. As you know – historically I've not submitted that many records, but this will certainly change after yesterday. I have been inspired to do more work in my home county now, and will be looking at some of those blank squares to see what we can visit and find. ”

“ Thank you for a superb, and inspirational, day. I very much hope you are able to repeat this event next year (and those following!), and look forward to having much more contact with you going forward. ”

“ A time machine to continue everything WILDside has given; training, talks, mentors, conferences, help making good records & support in the next step of verification. ”

Feedback from the conference

During the conference, we asked for suggestions about what biological recording equipment would be useful. In fact, most respondents requested continued support, groups, conferences and site access rather than more kit. There was a particular interest in joining/creating natural history groups, help with events, seasonal surveys, workshops on recording, and more activities in the south of the county. Access to the WILDside library was raised as potential barrier to use.

Objective 2:

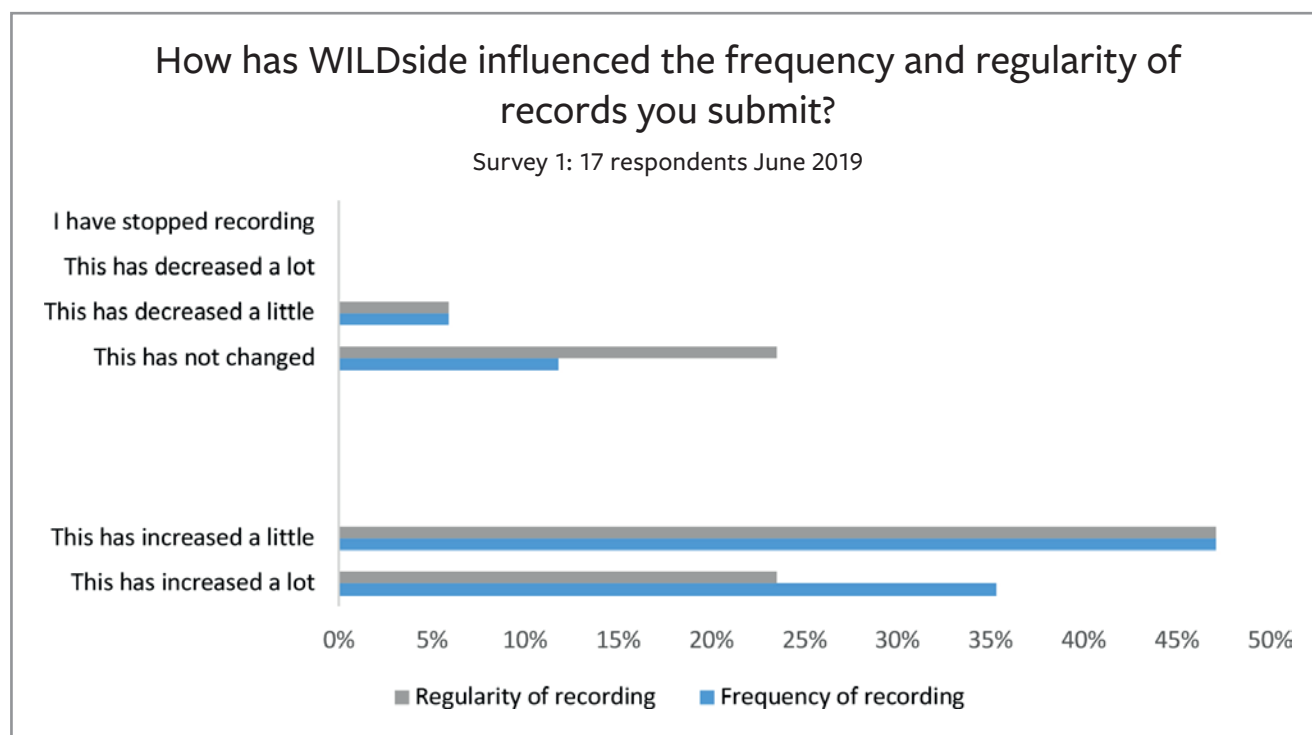
Recruiting new recorders

Increase the number of active, regular recorders in Northants

Number of active recorders and regular recorders

The number of active biological recorders in Northamptonshire has significantly increased as result of this project. Over 150 people have submitted their first biological record during the course of this project, and the annual number of these novel biological recorders is much higher than prior to the project. Through highlighting the importance of recording all species, and through guides to submitting records through our website, we now have over 15 people who routinely submit records every month through our website.

From our survey (survey 2: Oct 2019) 75% of respondents said they record at least monthly/seasonally, 55% of these said they record weekly. Around a third of respondents to our external survey (survey 1: June 2019) said they became a recorder due to WILDside and over 75% of respondents felt WILDside had increased the regularity of their recording.

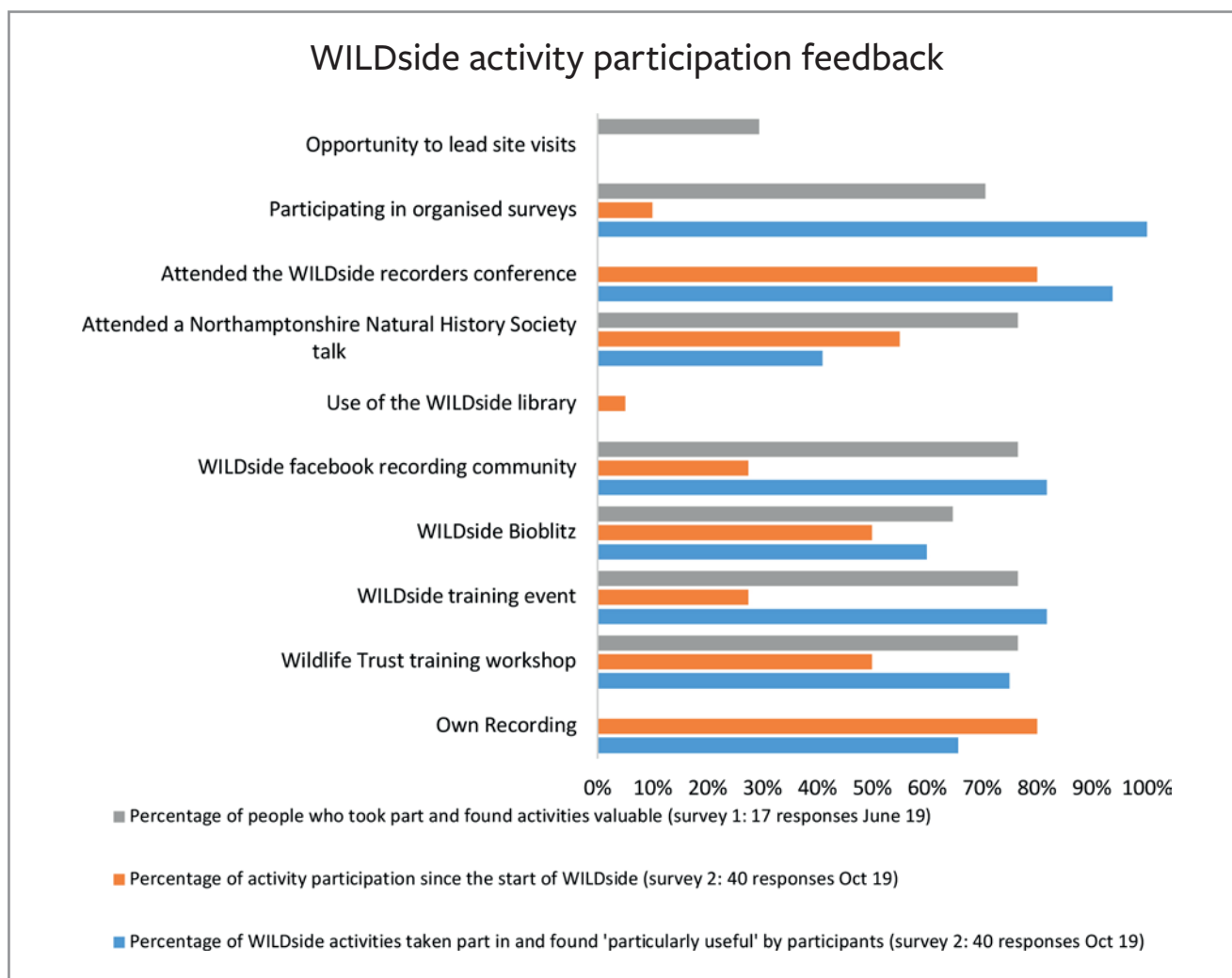


Survey results indicate that WILDside positively influenced the frequency and regularity of recording.

How was this achieved and what lessons were learnt?

During the project, we used a wide range of methods to engage and support a range of ages and abilities. The recorder journey started with accessible talks, online surveys and events to engage new audiences. This was then built on with practical skills development, workshops, and a

supportive recording community. This led to more group recording opportunities, alongside the experts, to increase the personal confidence and motivation to record actively and regularly.



The feedback we received highlighting which activities participants felt was more valuable

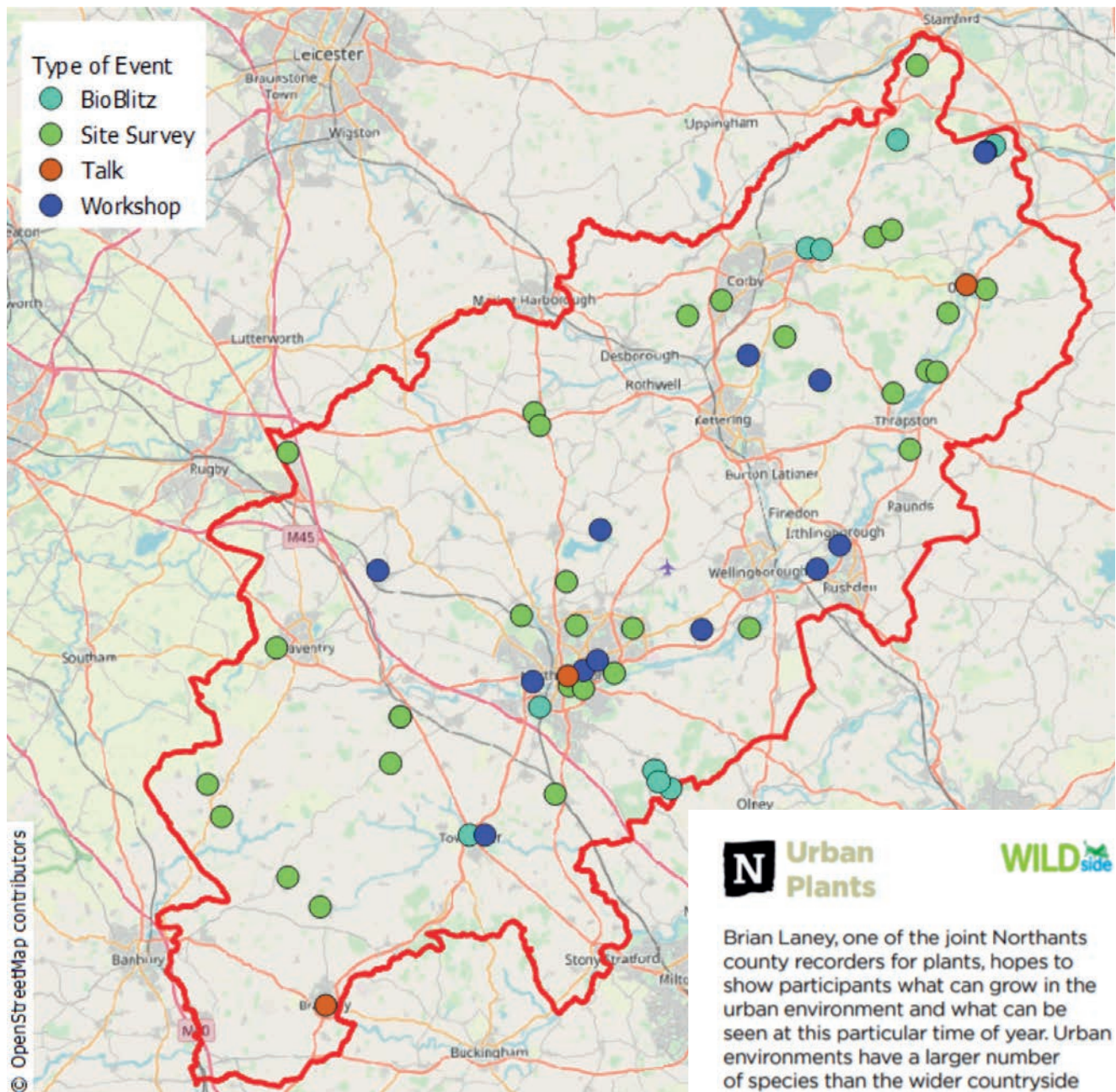
Three factors in particular have contributed to achieving this objective:
events, online surveys and the Facebook group.

WILDside events

Events included, community days bringing wildlife recording and promoting the record centre to new audiences, talks delivered with the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, and planned surveying days (site visits, BioBlitzes, mentoring, LWS surveying). Over 1800 opportunities to engage with the project were filled in this way. Our conference brought all of this together and celebrated the local recording effort and community. We made sure that our events were as widely geographically spread as possible in order to engage with as many people as we could. A number of the events follow the Nene Valley, as this is an especially important area in the county with numerous Local Wildlife Sites.

All events held for WILDside project

Type of Event	Total Number of Events	Total Number of Participants
BioBlitz	17	570
Guided Walk	3	13
Identification Help Session	11	29
Site Survey	28	82
Talk	34	804
Workshop	36	286
Grand Total	131	1824



The location of all WILDside events in Northamptonshire

We ran nearly 40 species identification workshops, both in the field and in the lab. Several workshops were delivered with a focus on species gaps, including collaboratively organised workshops with the Wildlife Trust as part of the Training Workshop Programme. Alongside this, we ran workshops, which specifically taught recording skills. These worked well as they highlighted why recording is important and then how to go about it. This will be supported long term with the production of our three county recording handbook.

N

**Urban
Plants**

WILDside

Brian Laney, one of the joint Northants county recorders for plants, hopes to show participants what can grow in the urban environment and what can be seen at this particular time of year. Urban environments have a larger number of species than the wider countryside due to naturalised species and garden escapes being found as well as native species of plants. They can literally turn up anywhere from kerb edges and mown lawns to cracks in paving and waste ground. Brian will point out a number of the more common species that can be encountered in this environment, but it's possible anything could turn up on the day.

Date(s): Sunday 8 September 2019
Timings: 10am – 4pm
Venue: Lings local nature reserve
Trainer(s): Brian Laney
 and Nathalie Hueber

An example of one of our WILDside badged workshops

Creation of the online recording guide / online surveys.

Records submitted as part of the ‘Look out for...’ surveys were often the first biological records that people submitted and provided an easy way to get started as they were guided through the process and then supported in recording more through access to our Facebook Group. Over a third of these recorders then went on to submit records for other species through our website or submitted multiple records for our other ‘Look Out For’ target species.

Our seasonal surveys were the gateway to recording. 64.7% of participants surveyed found this type of survey activity valuable. The online surveys focussed on easily recognisable species and guided participants through the process of generating high quality biological records. This generated over 200 records, which filled in gaps in the map for these species and raised awareness of species that may be overlooked.

Additional to the species gaps we also shared maps showing where recording effort was needed, where no or low species records are held, 1km squares where any record submitted and accepted will make a difference. Providing feedback to recorders of species and geographical gaps was particularly powerful in generating records where they are needed most. These online recording surveys were supported by a guide to online recording that is available on the NBRC website. This aided the quality of records received, and is part of a lasting legacy of the project.



Photo: Ryan Clark

LOOK OUT FOR MISTLETOE

Join in with our first WILDside project "Look out for" survey.

With autumn drawing in and Christmas approaching, we felt that this traditionally festive plant deserves recording.

As you can see from the map, we currently have very few records of Mistletoe within the county in our database and haven't had any records submitted to the website yet.

It would be wonderful if we could re-do the map after this survey to show what a difference an increase in recording effort can make to our knowledge of where this species can be found across the county.


Autumn and winter are the best times of year to spot this parasitic plant. When leaves of deciduous trees have fallen and it's easier to spot, usually high up in the tree. When ripe, the white sticky berries are very distinctive.

Mistletoe has male and female flowers on different plants so the presence of berries would confirm that it's a female plant. You can let us know if berries are present in the comments section of the recording form below.

The most common hosts for mistletoe are; apple, lime, hawthorn and hybrid black poplars.


However, oak trees are considered to be a rare host for mistletoe in Britain. A study carried out by John Box from 1996 to 1998 established that there were only 11 confirmed records in Britain at that time, none of which were in Northamptonshire. Please feel free to download and read this [published paper](#). John Box would now like to update those records. Could you be the first to report Mistletoe growing on oak in Northamptonshire?

Please help add some dots to this sparse map by submitting your Mistletoe records to our website:
<http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk/Wildside/LookOutForMistletoe>



WISHING YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FROM



Our first online survey for mistletoe

Facebook community

As the recording community gained in momentum, recorders also valued continued support and a sense of community, which alongside 'in the field' experience, was provided online by the Facebook Group. The Facebook group was established at the beginning of the project and has now developed into a community of nearly 200 recorders. Members are active, regularly posting photos of species they have seen. The community are self-supporting, providing help with recording methods and species identification, and posting updates on events, talks, sightings and recording opportunities. This group will form a key legacy of the project as a continued online recorder group

moderated by the record centre. Alongside this, we kept recorders updated through an email list.

Less accessed during the project was the library, as built up through feedback from recorders during the project and housed in the shared Wildlife Trust and Record Centre Northamptonshire office space. Publicity and accessibility were raised as two potential causes of the lack of uptake to date. As a legacy of the project, the record centre will look at mechanisms of sharing with community groups with a volunteer to manage this.

“ enjoyed the all the activities and found them useful ”

“ WILDside activities gave me opportunities to meet people with same interest, find new areas to explore, and connecting to mentors and trainers & finding out about new projects ”

“ great to be involved in ”

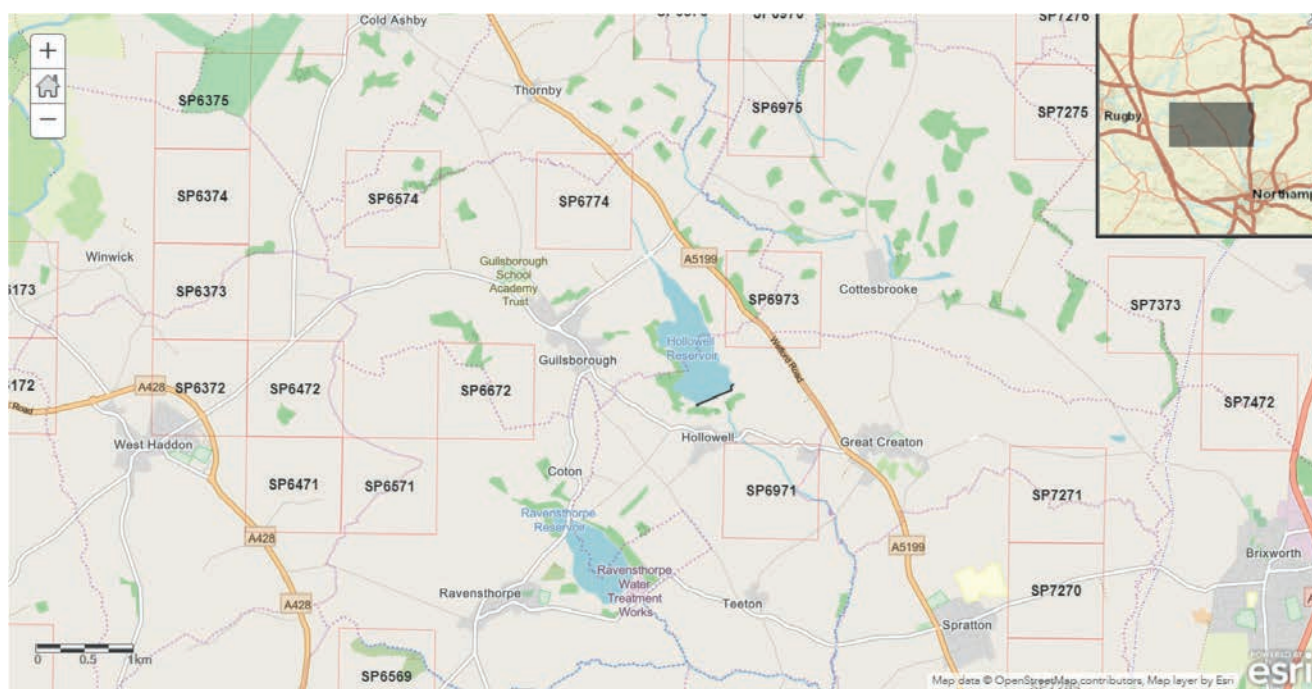
Feedback from WILDside volunteers

Provide resources to support volunteer recording activity.

- The three counties recorders handbook has become one of the most important outcomes of the project. This 24-page handbook takes readers through the process of generating biological records, highlights their importance and the importance of biological records centres. We handed out the handbook at the recorders conference and received excellent feedback. We will continue to share this guide through events, talks and training workshops.
- Another resource, which has encouraged recording, has been mapping our gaps on the map. Recorders can then see the squares for which we have no biological records, and this really seems to motivate them to go out and do more recording in order to change the colours of these squares. We plan to release a new update to this online map in 2020 to show which gaps have now been filled.
- We have produced a guide to assist recorders through the process of submitting records via our website.
- Our library of resources has increased as a result of the project, we purchased 220 identification guides which are loaned out for recorders to use or can be used at our office.
- Lack of equipment can hold recorders back so we also have a collection of equipment for all sorts of biological recording activities which again is loanable.
- The purchase of these resources was informed by what recorders felt would be most useful.



The front page of our wildlife recording handbook, which has been an excellent tool for biological recorders.



Map showing recorders where there are squares in which we have no records, to encourage them to record in these areas.

Some of the equipment purchased during the WILDside project for public use

Item	Outcome
Weatherwriters	Recorders will be able to record in the rain
Aerial and sweep nets	Can be used at our BioBlitz events to engage with the public, and can be borrowed by recorders
Portable compound microscope, stereo microscope and camera	Opening up a new world of identification of plants, invertebrates and fungi. The camera allows us to demonstrate identification techniques using microscopes
Grapple	We will be able to get recorders to record aquatic plants now
Hand lenses	Opening up a new world of identification of plants, invertebrates and fungi.
Insect curation equipment - glass beads, alcohol, tweezers, pins, card, plastazote, pinning blocks	Recorders can practice curating invertebrate collections, an essential skill for the identification of many groups
Olympus TG Tough 5	Recorders can get detailed photos of their findings, can be borrowed during BioBlitz events
Server	A secure place for our ever growing collection of records, maintaining this resource for the future
Suction sampler and net	We can now record groups of invertebrates that are harder to find without a suction sampler
Volunteer computer and laptop	We are able to support more volunteer recorders/ digitisers now with their essential work of identification and submission of records

Recruit 100 new volunteers

The WILDside Project has recruited volunteers for the records centre in several ways. The largest source of volunteers is our recorders, and we have recruited over 100 new volunteer recorders through the project. A number of these submit records through our website, but we have also promoted other existing ways to submit records. Our Facebook group has also been a source of volunteers, who support one another with identification and recording. There has been over 160 posts in this group on a variety of topics and this community forms a key legacy of the project. Finally, through increased awareness of recording, there has been indirect effects of the project on engaging new volunteers to digitise records and take up the roles of county recorders.

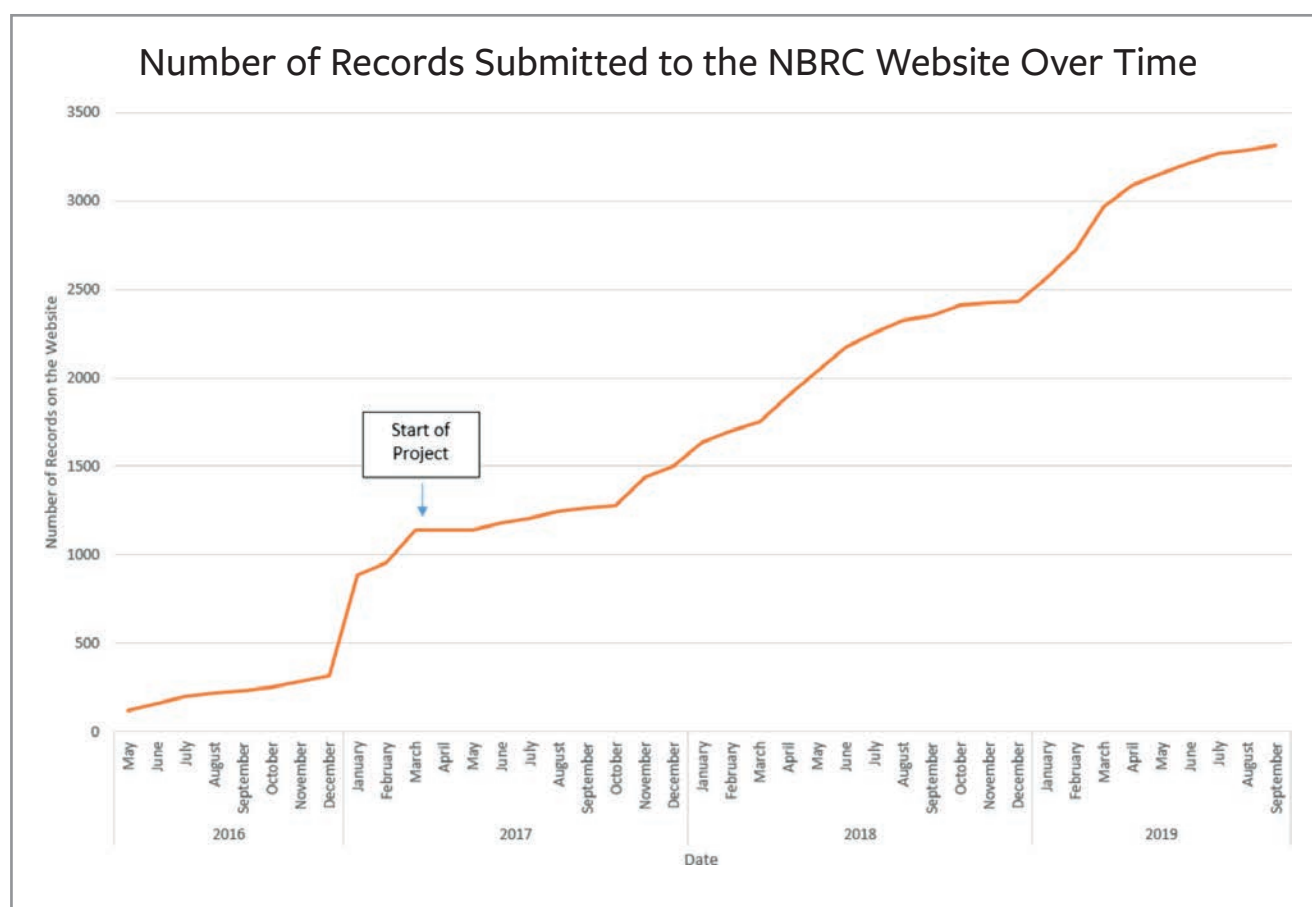
Increase the frequency of reporting

Recording frequency was increased due to the 'inspiring' nature of the WILDside Project; recorders were motivated by seeing the work of other recorders and feeling that their contribution makes a difference. The project also aided recorders in breaking through barriers, such as access to sites through organising survey events with landowners. Training in record making to take existing ID skills to the next level has been especially important. Through mentoring, confidence building and collaboration, the recording community is beginning to take the lead in training and coordinating recording effort.

“ Almost daily records being added to the system. We report sightings on our travels and walks and on specific surveys e.g. dragonfly or butterfly surveys we now include other species ”

“ I was already a recorder. The project may have increased access to some sites and expanded the range of taxa I record ”

Feedback on recording more



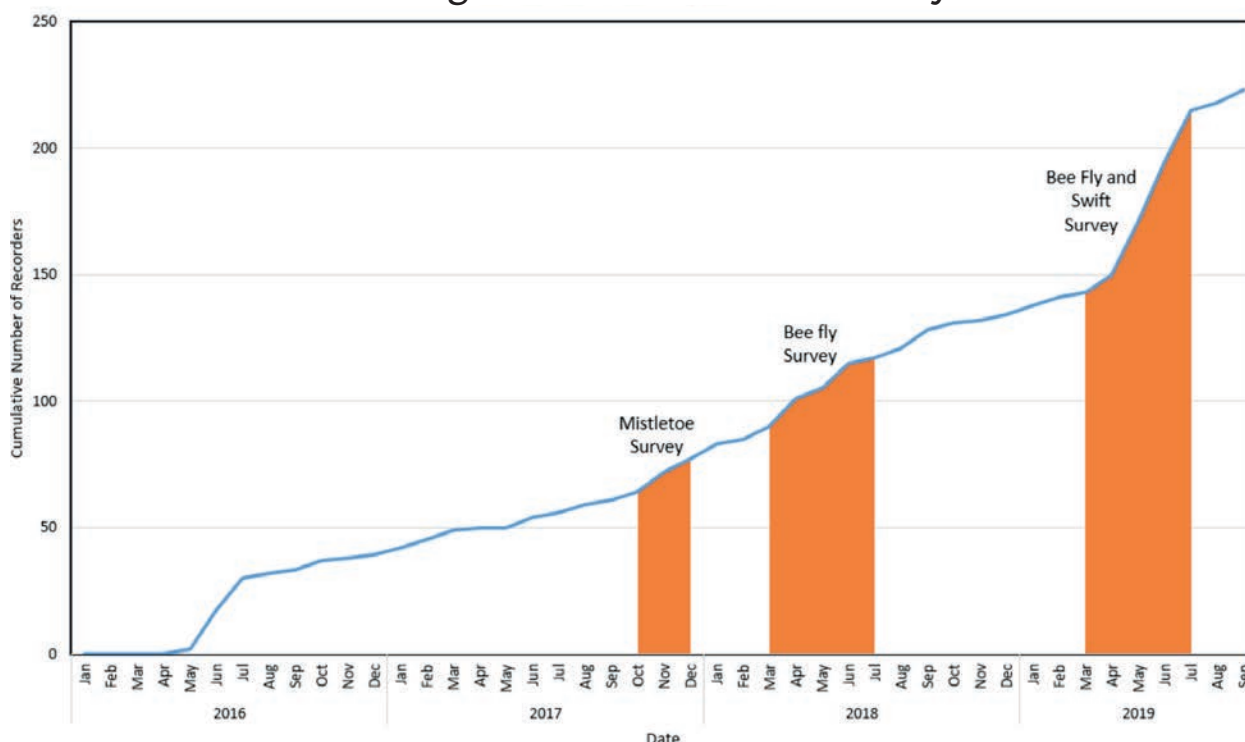
The number of records submitted to the NBRC website over time

As previously mentioned, we promoted several ways in which to submit records. One of these was the submission of records through our website. The results show that after the start of the project, the amount of records submitted to the website increased significantly. The number of recorders also increased significantly. The number of recorders increased especially during the periods that the 'Look out for...' surveys were active. This highlights the importance of these surveys for encouraging new recorders to submit records.



Photo: Josh Hellon

Cumulative Number of Recorders Submitting Records Through The NBRC Website Showing Some 'Look Out For' Survey Periods

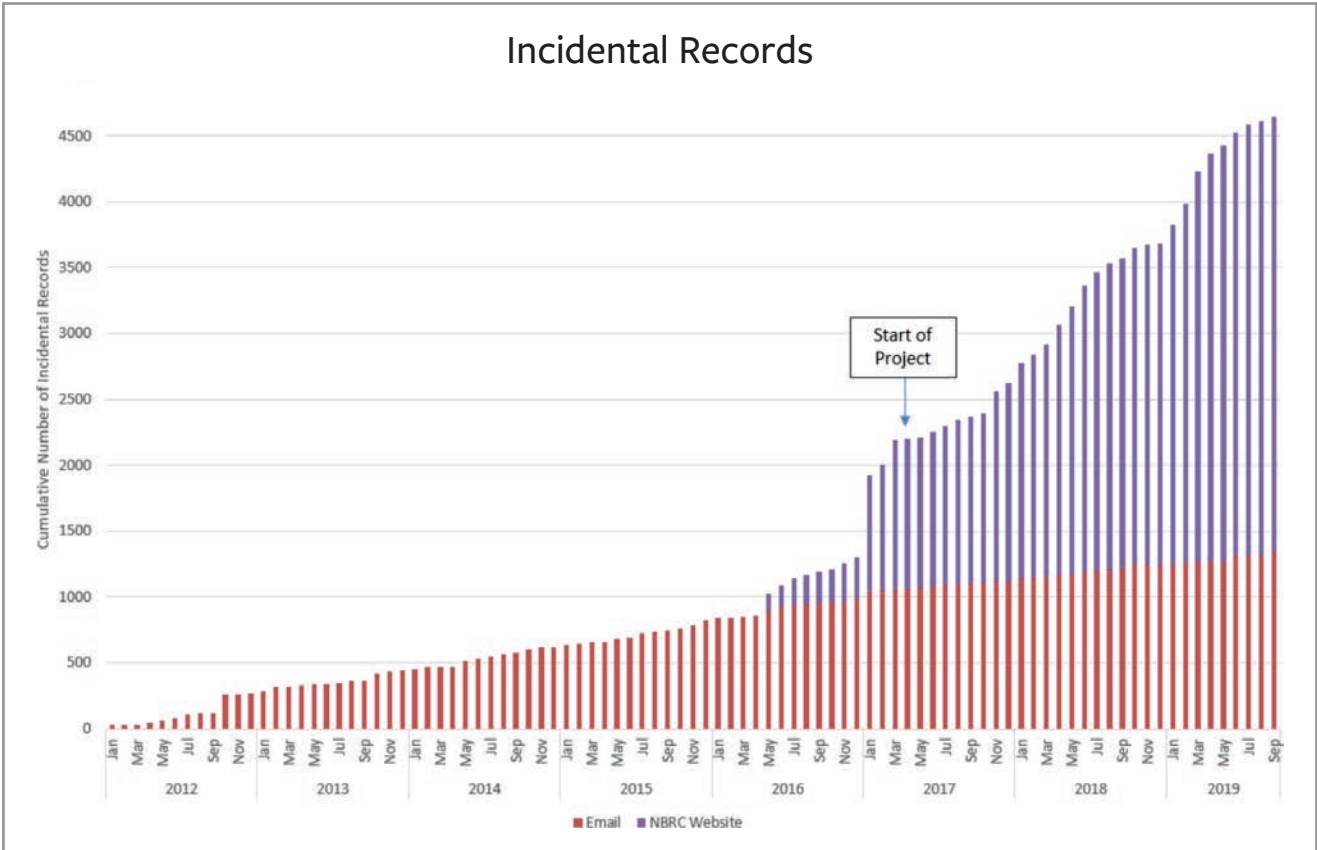


The cumulative number of recorders submitting records through the NBRC website

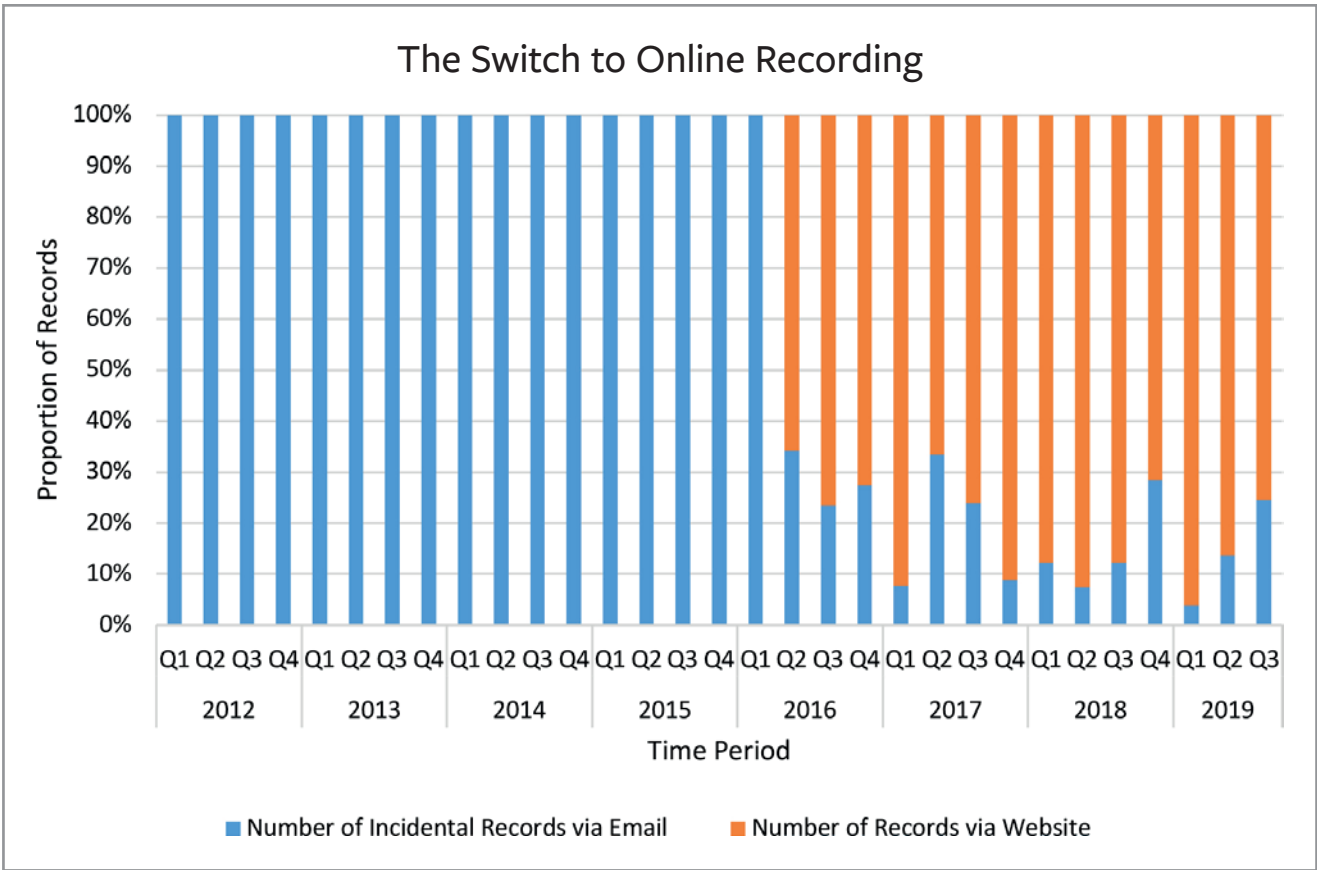


Photo: Nathalie Hueber

One other way that the records centre receives records is via email and directly from reserves staff, these are classed as incidental records, alongside the website records. Our figures show how the number of incidental records has significantly increased as a result of the project. Results also show that there has been more of a switch to online records compared to those received by email. Online records require much less processing than records via email and have the advantage of allowing the recorders to keep track of their own sightings.



The cumulative number of incidental records received by the records centre



The proportion of records received via email compared with the website

Objective 3:

Building skills

Help those who are willing to broaden their recording and identification skills, particularly through working in partnership with local enthusiasts and experts to help apply and reinforce skills and knowledge gained through both formal and informal training sessions.

What recording and identification skills have been newly developed and what have been reinforced?

For some, WILDside was the reason for a recorder's first record, for others it broadened expertise and confidence. At the heart of all activities was the message, that anyone can record and that every record has value. The project taught the fundamentals of how to make a record, why each part of a record is needed and the various methods in which records are made submitted and used. This was achieved through informal learning opportunities and through formal training developed to meet recording, identification and skill gaps.

Key learning addressed in these activities were:

- Skills in **creating a record** have been developed through workshops and practice in the field.
- A **broad taxonomic coverage of identification skills** have been reinforced and developed in the same way, with multiple opportunities to practice. This has helped recorders to learn new species and broaden their recording coverage across the seasons and across taxonomic groups.
- Use of new tools including a QGIS course for our county recorders to develop **their record mapping skills**. The feedback from this has been excellent and some of the recorders now use this programme for producing distribution maps, which are shared with the recording community.
- A training the trainer course helped recorders develop their **skills in teaching others**. A survey mentor-pairing day with newly engaged and county experts developed skills sharing.

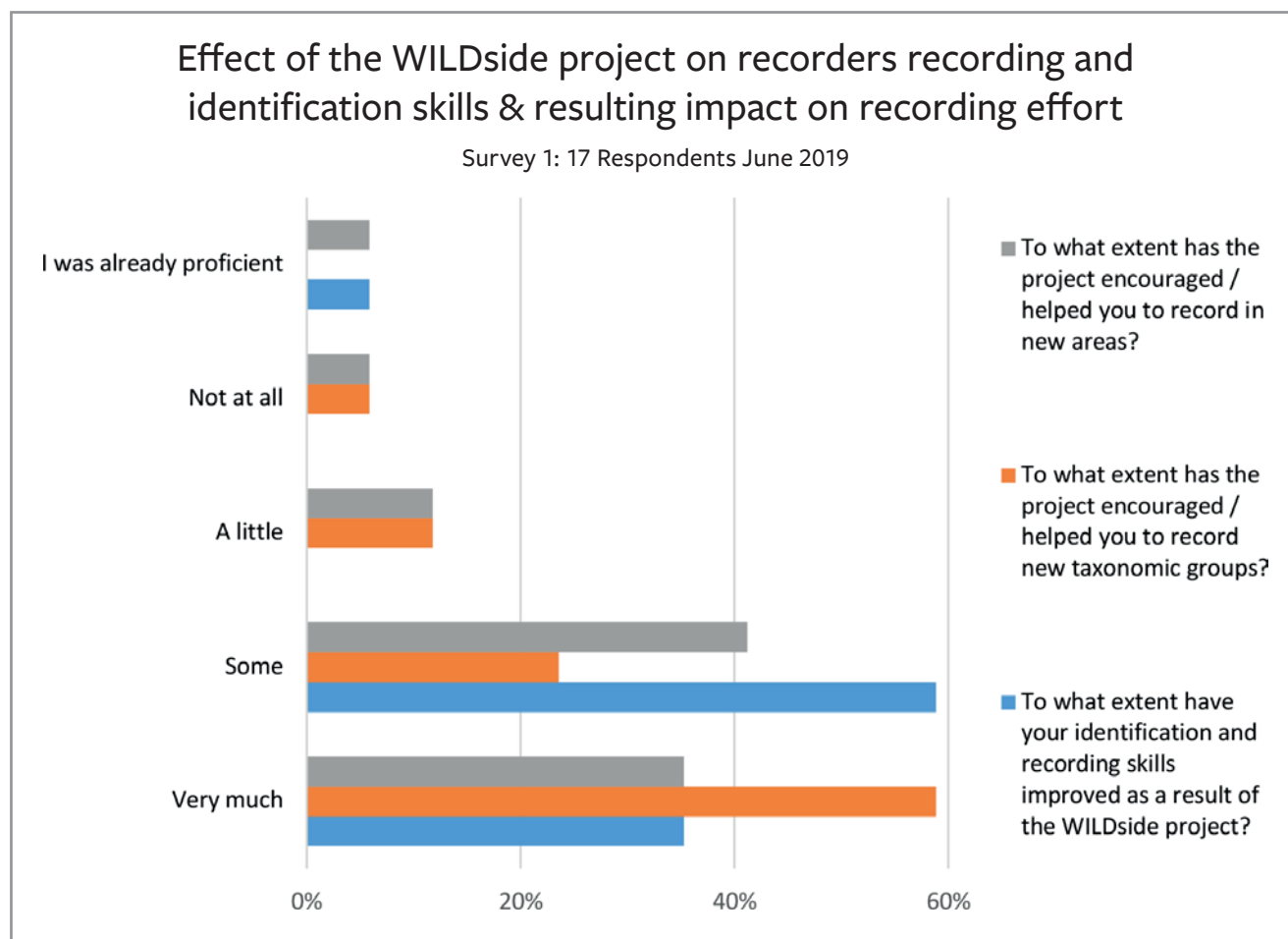
A challenge of the project was meeting the needs of such a range of experience. One way in which this was overcome was through experienced recorders being encouraged to lead recording events. This partnership with local enthusiasts and experts to help apply and reinforce skills and knowledge gained through formal and informal WILDside training sessions and ID skills, was particularly effective in broadening identification skills among recorders (Survey 1: 37.5% say very effective and 62.5% effective: 17 respondents June 2019)

“ just starting to submit beetle records ”

“ looking at specific groups I previously have had very little experience of. Has given me the confidence to try and take things further ”

“ Several WILDside training workshops have aided detailed recording and ID skills including in under-recorded groups, recorders have been supported in ID by peers in the Facebook community, there has also been increased participation of recording groups and experts in supporting future recorders ”

Feedback on building skills



Feedback received on the effect of the project on recording skills and recording effort



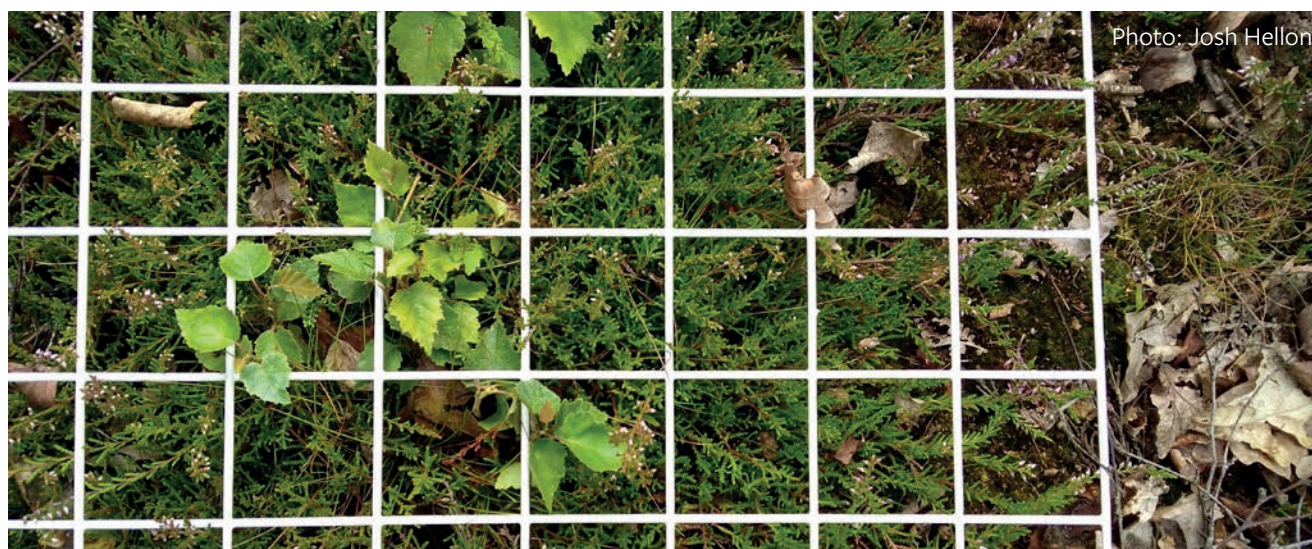


Photo: Josh Hellon

Fill gaps in existing training provision

The gaps in existing training provision fell into three main themes: training for beginners, broadening and building species identification to meet known taxonomic gaps, and supporting the move from knowledgeable, experienced recorder to supporting the recording community with recording expertise.

In order to fill the gaps in existing training provision we looked at which courses the Wildlife Trust was running each year. We assessed what courses could be offered and fed into this process using established networks of trainers and experts to deliver courses to support these:

- Courses to support new recorders
- Courses to broaden identification skills
- Courses to build mentorship 'Train the trainer'

“ I have met lots of people who have been very encouraging ”

“ It has been excellent to see a lot of other people that have been going through the same journey, that has been really rewarding for me. ”

Feedback on leading surveys

Increase the skills and confidence of existing volunteers

Recorders need to feel valued in order to increase their confidence. This was a key component of the project, showing recorders what their records are used for and providing free events to thank them for all their hard work.

All of the recorders who responded to the survey say that the support and guidance received from the project has been helpful - 64.7% said it was 'very helpful'; 29.3% said 'helpful' (survey 1: respondents 17 June 2019). This help was provided in a number of different ways, including:

- Personal 1:1 help and guidance from the Project Coordinator
- Shared involvement with other recorders
- Help with identification
- Extending identification knowledge

95% of respondents have improved their identification and recording skill because of the project. Of these, 35.3% have improved 'very much'. In particular, over half of respondents say the project has significantly aided their broadening of identification skill leading to increased range of taxonomic reporting by these recorders.

Support them to lead 15 site surveys

Recorders, with the support from the WILDside Project Coordinator, led 17 surveys which were often combined with an element of teaching. This was a new experience for some recorders, but more familiar to others. This helped increase their confidence and help them to feel valued, while developing their skills.

Objective 4:

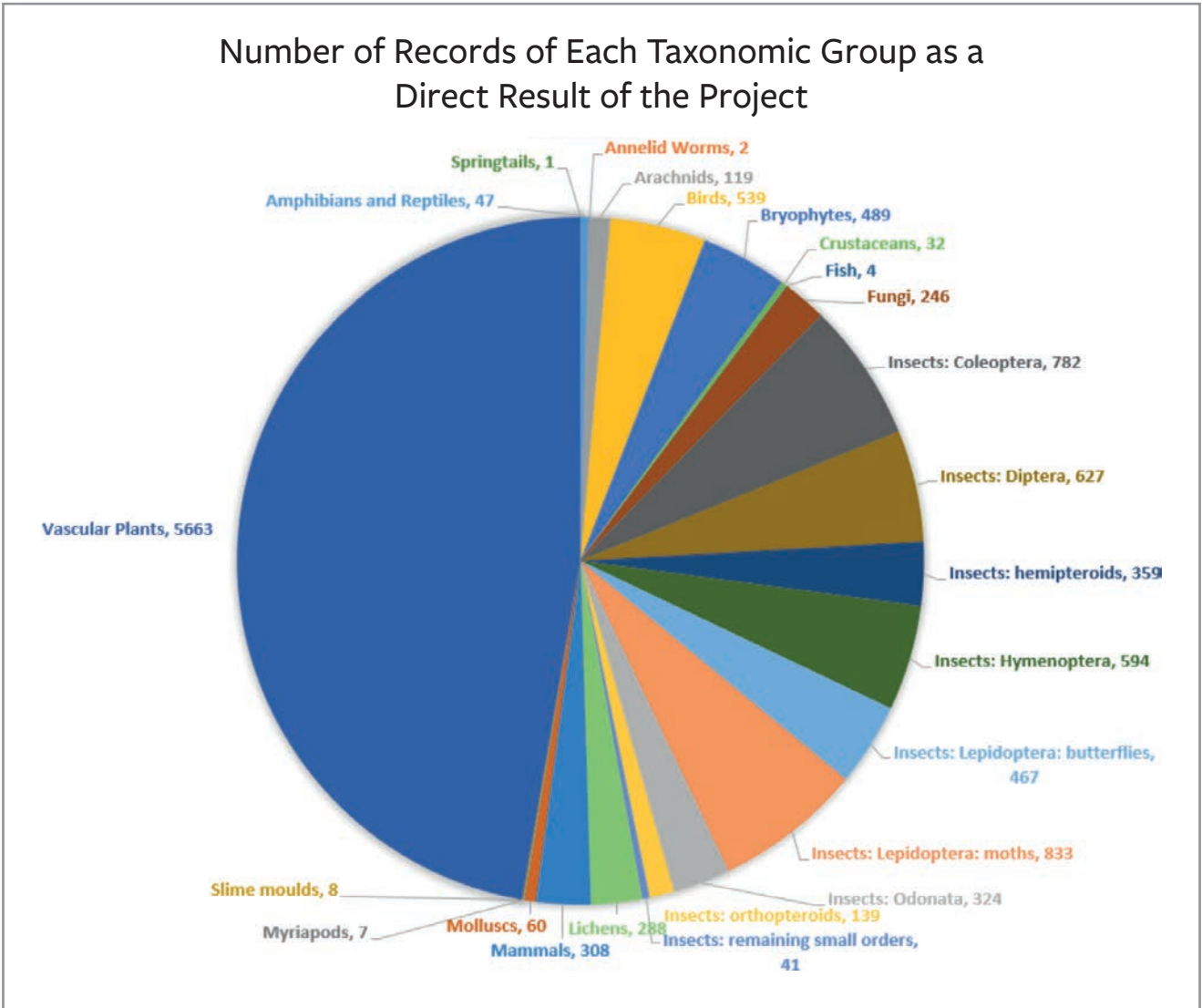
Generating new records

Generate significant numbers of new records, focussed on priority locations and habitats and particular species groups, helping to address future information

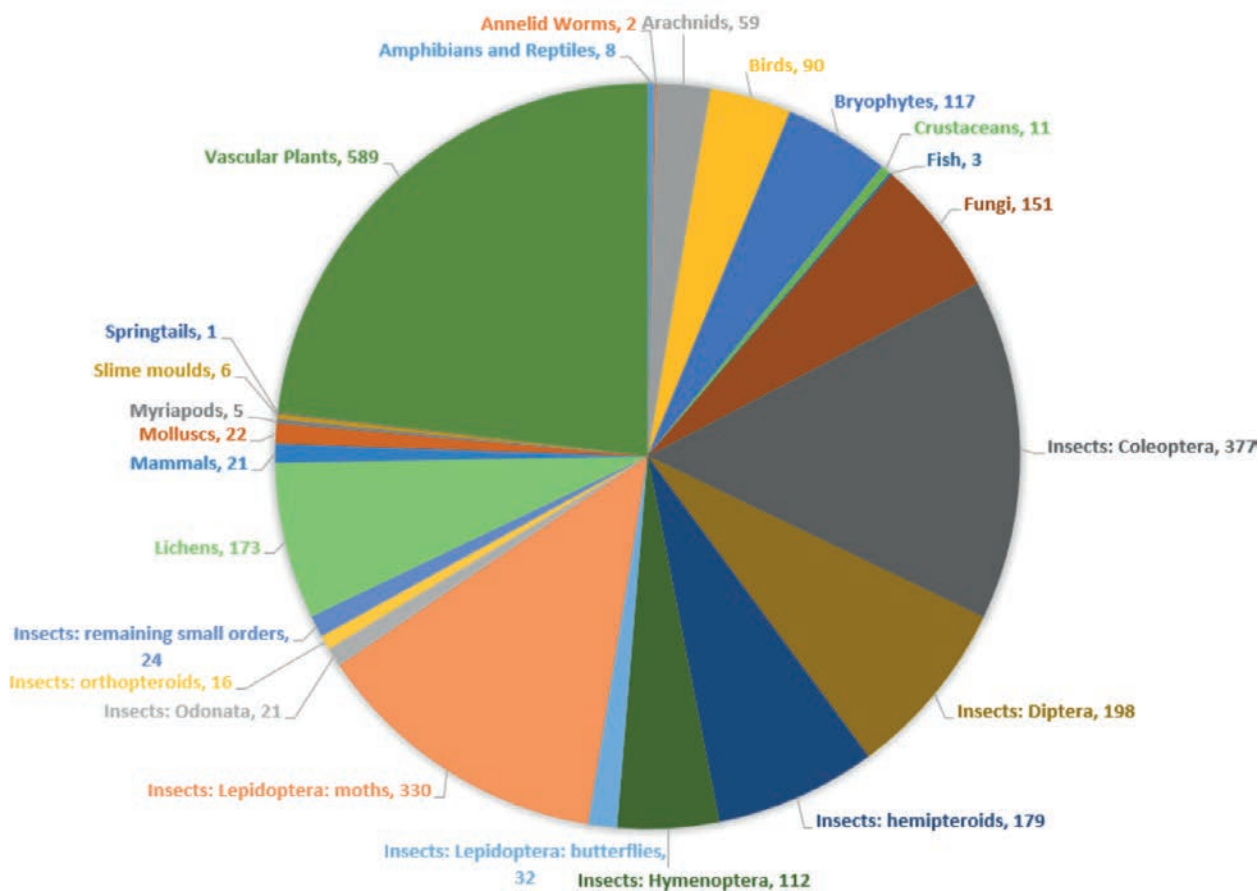
Number of Records

WILDside generated over 12,000 records of around 2500 species. This is likely to be a vast underestimate due to several factors. One of these factors is that there are multiple methods of submitting biological records, and therefore it is difficult to identify all the records that are a direct result of the project. The pie charts here show the

number of records for each taxonomic group, which can be directly attributed to the project, highlighting the number of species in each group, recorded. Another benefit of the project is that the data generated is also current, as we lack current data for many taxonomic groups and sites.



Number of Species Recorded in Each Taxonomic Group as a Direct Result of the Project



Carry out surveys for 10 public Wildlife Sites and 40 private local wildlife sites

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are areas designated because of their richness of wildlife. Northamptonshire has approximately 734 Local Wildlife Sites, which form a network of natural sites across the county. These sites are often designated for their vascular plants as these are relatively easy to survey, and tell you a lot about the habitats present. This does not tell the whole story, and records for other species groups are often lacking. This is partly because the majority of sites are privately owned, so access needs to be arranged for recorders to go there.

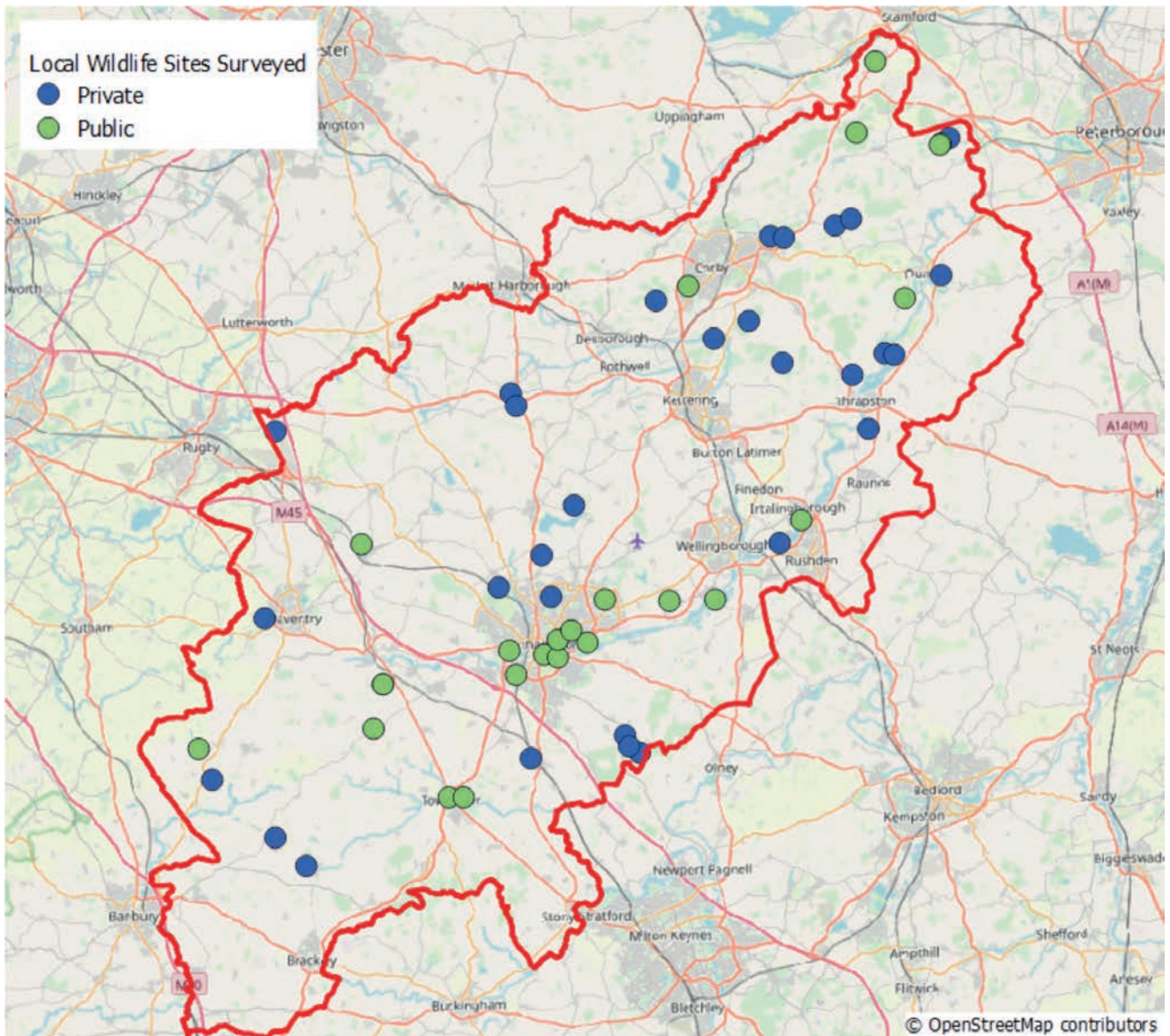


Photo: Josh Hellon

“ One of the main benefits has been getting access to sites which I would have had difficulty getting into and finding really interesting things there ”

Feedback on wildlife site visits

Alongside these sites, there is a network of publicly accessible LWS, which are good places for recorders to develop their skills. Due to this unique and fragile nature of the LWS, these were a focus of our project, and we managed to survey 39 Local Wildlife Sites, generating thousands of records. We ensured that the sites we surveyed were spread across the county to ensure a wide range of people could attend.



A map of the Local Wildlife Sites surveyed

Deliver two public engagement surveys for 500+ people

Alongside engaging with recorders, it is also important to engage with the general public, as biological records give us a way to highlight why Northamptonshire is important for its sites and the species they support. One example of this is the new development of Priors Hall Park. This is one of the UK's largest home building projects – creating 5,094 new homes. The setting for these homes is two Local Wildlife Sites, which are incredibly important. We have been working with their Clerk of Works to generate records and share the ecological importance of the site. We ran a well-attended BioBlitz with 18 recorders who worked with us to generate over 1,000 records of over 500 species for the

site. We timed the BioBlitz so that we could invite the local residents to see recording in action and the species we were finding. Following the BioBlitz, we also delivered a talk to the residents association highlighting to them the special species and habitats on their doorstep. This has meant that people now value the site more and are even volunteering to help maintain the important features of the sites.

Five seasonal surveys for 200+ people

The seasonal surveys were a huge success, providing a way for people to get involved with biological recording, and give existing recorders a new challenge. For some species groups this proved to be an effective way to generate many records; there were only 76 records of mistletoe in the county, and our survey added an additional 66 records. The surveys also generated more up to date information than we had before.

The main focus for the surveys was engagement, and the surveys introduced new people to recording and a significant proportion of these recorders went on to submit further records. One thing that we did not expect from these seasonal surveys was that we would discover a new species to Northamptonshire! The dotted bee-fly (*Bombylius discolor*) had not previously been recorded in

the county, but as our recorders were out spotting dark-edged bee flies, they discovered the other species. This shows how important these types of survey are for engaging people with recording wildlife.

“ I got obsessed with bee-flies. ”

‘Look out for bee flies’ survey participant

Records generated from online seasonal surveys

Survey	Survey Period	After Survey (Online)	
		Number of Records	Number of Recorders
Mistletoe	Oct 2017 – August 2018	66	15
Dark edged bee fly year 1	Mar 2018 – July 2018	27	20
Rabbit	Sep 2018 – Sep 2019	59	15
Dark edged bee fly year 2	Mar 2019 – July 2019	35	11
Swift	May 2019 – Sep 2019	30	24
Water Mammals	August 2018 - Ongoing	21	10



Photo: Ryan Clark

Photo: Josh Hellon



Eight events in collaboration with external agencies

Collaboration really was key to ensure that we achieved as much impact as possible from the project and ensure that there is a long lasting legacy. We worked with a wide range of groups including the Wildlife Trust, local council, recording groups, pocket parks, churches and the Northamptonshire Natural History Society.

Ryan, the WILDside Project Coordinator, working with a local pocket park to teach families about pond dipping and recording their findings. Photo: Alick Newman



Increase the quality of reporting

The quality of reporting has been increased through training workshops and talks, which instruct attendees on how to submit high quality biological records. The quality of records that has come to the records centre has increased with a higher proportion of records having all the required components to make a useful biological record. This means it takes less time to process these records. The project has also helped to promote online biological recording, which has increased the quality of records we receive, alongside the quantity. County Recorders who verify the records have not

noticed this change in quality of records yet. This highlights that changing the quality of records received may take more time than the length of a single project. From this feedback, the record centre will update their spreadsheet submission form, for larger datasets, with consultation of county recorders to give species level advice on the supporting information to submit as part of a record, this is hoped to enhance the quality of records for verification purpose.

Media Profile

200
members of
Facebook Group

600
Twitter followers

New
promotional
materials
for NBRC
– including
leaflet,
banner and
business
cards

10
blog posts
for Wildlife Trust

- Article for the National Forum for Biological Recording
- Numerous articles in NBRC newsletter
- 3 articles in the Northamptonshire Natural History Society journal

- Article in 'Local Wildlife' magazine
- Article in Northampton Pulse magazine

- Talk at the National Forum for Biological Recording Conference 2018

- Talk and display at the Wildlife Trust BCN monitoring and research conference 2019

- Display at the NBN Conference for 2 years running

**Interview on BBC
Radio Northampton**



Ryan talking at the National Forum for Biological Recording conference

Objective 5:

Building partnerships

Develop and strengthen communications and lasting partnerships with interested bodies and individuals

WILDside has been particularly effective at reconnecting people with the record centre and strengthening existing relationships. Much of this has been achieved through clear communication and providing interesting feedback on surveys and the project.

- Talks at Northamptonshire Natural History Society have reconnected the society with the record centre and the Wildlife Trust. The project coordinator and expert volunteers have delivered over 30 individual talks during the project.
- Development of Lichen group in Northamptonshire. Emerged through WILDside training sessions and site visits with local expert. This will be a lasting success of the project, and will continue to strengthen links between experts, trainers, volunteers, NBRC and the Trust.
- 17 BioBlitzes at pocket parks and working with friends of groups attracted over 500 people. These have created new relationships with conservation groups that will be continued in the future.
- Facebook community (approx. 200 members) provides a direct link between recorders and with the record centre staff. Membership has grown steadily. Social media removes the usual barriers to communication, and empowers people to ask questions.
- Built a new contact list of over 90 people to share updates – will continue through NBRC newsletter, and others will want to join e-updates from the Wildlife Trust.
- The relationship with County Recorders has improved greatly during the project. They have contributed a large amount of time to the project as expert volunteers and are now putting themselves forward to deliver talks in partnership with the record centre.
- The project coordinator has provided a single point of contact to facilitate partnerships. The role has also been outward facing – actively pursuing partnerships with interested groups and giving talks to encourage others to come forward
- Data sharing has been improved by the project. Links were re-established with the local badger group as part of the project that may lead to a long-term collaborative relationship with the record centre.
- Open communication has positively changed public perception of the record centre and the wildlife trust. Some people perceived that it was difficult to communicate with either organisation, but have found it easy with the project coordinator in place. They have also appreciated the speed of feedback from surveys and constant information on species coming from the project.
- Talks at conferences have raised the profile of recording and of the record centre, outside of Northamptonshire. WILDside delivered talks and information stands at various conferences for the National Forum for Biological Recording (NFBR), National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and Wildlife Trust BCN. WILDside also organised and hosted the first recorders conference in Northamptonshire
- Strengthened links with the Wildlife Trust BCN reserves, communications, wider countryside and monitoring & research teams. The project has demonstrated the value of working with species experts to support the work of the Trust. WILDside has assisted with numerous site surveys and resulted in news stories that generate public interest in our work.
- Training workshops have been run in close partnership with the Wildlife Trust Training Workshop Programme, ensuring that the additional workshops support and extend the programme rather than compete. Seven workshops were run in this way, attracting 60 participants.

Objective 6:

Project legacy

Provide a sound framework for any ‘next steps’, follow up schemes

What is the project legacy?

The project leaves behind a strong legacy of recorders, who are more skilled and motivated in identifying and recording wildlife. They will be more equipped to record through access to equipment held at the records centre. They have the guidance and resources they need to record. There is increased awareness of the records centre and strengthened partnerships making sure that the records centre is at the heart of evidence based decision-making in the county.

Through the project, over 12,000 records have been received by the record centre, which are up to date and will help to inform conservation in the county. Due to WILDside, the records centre is better set up to receive increased numbers of records through a new server and electronic equipment for volunteers to digitise historical records.

Use the data and the project evaluation to inform site appraisal and management

One of the main uses of biological records is to inform site appraisal and management, particularly in the case of Local Wildlife Sites. Local Wildlife Sites were one of areas in which we focused recorders, and this generated a large amount of data on these important sites. This has then been fed into our database and back to landowners with management recommendations for the site. One example of this is our extensive survey of an old quarry close to Peterborough. This is a private site that had changed owners. The new owner wanted to know what species were present on the site in order for them to help manage the site as beneficially as possible for a wide variety of species. Around a dozen recorders helped to record the wildlife on this site, each with a specialism in a particular species group, therefore giving us current and reliable information to inform site appraisal and management.



Photo: Friends of West Hunsbury Parks

Use the data and the project evaluation to inform recording structures

WILDside has reinvigorated recording activity in the county and 100% of respondents to our external survey stated that they would continue to record after the project ends.

- An active single point of contact aids facilitation of partnerships and ensures responsiveness. The Project Coordinator, being a prolific recorder in his own time and during the project, taking on the role of Hymenoptera County Recorder was inspiring to others and delivers ongoing support for recording of a previously under-recorded group.
- The project worked collaboratively and proactively to address historic concerns and build relationships with external organisations such as pocket parks, ‘Friends of’ and churchyard groups involving volunteers in recording and providing useful survey data shared for ecological site management.
- A review of all regular data sharing partnerships in the light of a growing recorder network has enabled the Record Centre to update partnerships. This has led to new taxonomic coverage for verification of data received.

- Active experienced recorders have gained in confidence to take greater leadership to support the wider recording community. Many of these experts have agreed for their details to be made publically accessible on the NBRC website and to continue to support recorders as they have in the project through the Facebook community, continued delivery of Northamptonshire Natural History Society talks, training workshops, shadowing opportunities in recording events and sharing their local recording through Conference.
- Feedback from the record centre is a key lesson of the WILDside project, showing where data gaps exist and the effect of recording effort over time was highly motivational.
- Improving the quality of records received is a national challenge, and one that will take time to show in the received data. However, the recording focussed handbook, recording workshops and online guides are now all available replicable tools to address this issue.

Use the data and the project evaluation to inform approaches

WILDside was a project that evolved, testing and evaluating approaches and responding with informed adaptations during the project lifetime. Through this, and summative project evaluation survey, the following approaches stood out as successful mechanisms to deliver the strong recording community and resulting quality data flow for informed environmental conservation long term:

- Embedding biological recording alongside existing and newly planned species ID workshops and talks was particularly successful. It was important to teach how to record but also **why** to record, to grow the shared enthusiasm for the 'joy of recording'.



- Strengthening links with the Northamptonshire Natural History Society has provided a closer partnership in which to collaborate on events and projects long term
- It was found to be helpful to have a pathway for recorders to follow, from surveys, which draw them in and then tell them the next steps, which they can take to improve. Engagement activity was designed to meet the needs of recorders from novice to enthusiasts and via multiple methods (live examples, online, training workshops, practical survey, species interest groups, presentations, and mentoring).
- A major change from the original plan was the move away from transporting interested people to sites by minibus or other means. It became clear that volunteers were happy to arrange their own transport to sites. This was actually a positive outcome as it has created a more sustainable legacy, with people more likely to continue visiting sites in the future.
- The creation of accessible surveys that direct recording activity to where it is needed has aided the generation of records to fill gaps, motivated existing recorders and built the skills and interest in recording. Reporting progress of these results via maps on social media has provided an excellent template for motivation in future surveys. The 'gaps on the maps'
- Feedback to recorders highlighting where their records have gone and what they are used for is really motivational for them
- WILDside created a model for delivering BioBlitz events for external organisations. We have the expertise and equipment available to successfully run these events and generate a large body of data through them. As this activity has been successfully financed by a 'friends of' group during the project, this has the potential to be a self-sufficient activity run by the record centre.
- The Recorders Conference was very successful praised in particular for its range of speakers, which was a combination of local volunteers, county recorders and national experts. The Record Centre envisages repeating the conference every two years as a celebration of local recording and is actively looking at options to fund the event. In the next year, the approach taken will influence how the Trust run their Monitoring & Research Conference in the future.
- The WILDside Facebook group has shown a very high level of engagement, and a real community has built over the course of the project. It has been very encouraging to see a community develop who are happy to ask and answer questions from others. This group will continue, moderated by the Record Centre. This should also provide a positive model for other self-supporting online groups.



Photo: Rosemary Abram

- Although the library purchases were responsive to recorder feedback, uptake of loans and use of the resources was low during the project. Many were not fully aware of the extent of the resource available by the end of the project. This tool will be better promoted by all partners and a loan scheme developed with recording and community groups as possible way of enabling wider access.

Use the data and the project evaluation to inform Wildlife Trust's governance

Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre is one of three Local Environmental Record Centres hosted by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. Part of the vision of WILDside was to improve joint working between Northamptonshire Record Centre and its host. WILDside has exceeded expectations in this area, with clear benefits of joint working seen across various teams of the host organisation including; Monitoring & Research, Communications, Wider Countryside, and Reserves, and shared good practice for Local Environmental Record Centres. There are also many lessons that have been learnt from the project that will influence the way the Trust works in the future.

- The project evolved from the original plan, most notably increasing the project officer's role by twelve months. This enabled far more engagement, and allowed us to build a loyal following of 'WILDsiders'. It would not have been possible to build the partnerships mentioned without this additional time. For future projects, due to the success of WILDside, the Trust would consider having a project coordinator in a similar role for at least three years.
- The WILDside "lookout for..." online surveys have been particularly successful – with good public engagement. It has helped to make clear which species surveys are

likely to be successful, and to identify these charismatic species. The reporting of these results via maps on social media has provided an excellent template for future surveys. The swift survey resulted in >100 records with real practical conservation potential, identifying nest sites for this species. This model will be used for future online citizen science projects at the records centre and Wildlife Trust BCN.

- WILDside was very successful in coordinating site visits to local wildlife sites with Wildlife Trust staff, site owners, local experts and other volunteers. Having this level of expertise on a site has allowed surveys that are far more detailed and the discovery of scarce species. This additional data helps to protect these sites for the future and informs management. In the future, it would be an aim to continue engaging, supporting and building the skills of expert volunteers to take part in and lead wildlife site surveys.
- WILDside highlighted the need for a better flow of data between the record centres and the Wildlife Trust BCN. The Trust have huge amounts of data that is of value to the record centres. They can process this and provide it back to operational teams in standard formats. Talks given to Trust staff by the WILDside project coordinator highlighted the close relationship between the record centres and the wider Trust. This outcome has already inspired a new project proposal to closer link the record centre data with Wildlife Trust operations.
- Development of the WILDside recording handbook has produced a resource that the Trust will use for many years. There has previously been no guide that bridges the gap between training in identification and survey skills, well established within the Trust, and the next step of 'how to prepare a biological record for a local record centre'. This guide will be provided as part of the existing Wildlife Training Workshops ran by the trust as well as an online accessible resource.
- Promotion of the WILDside project through regular blogs drew attention through Wildlife Trust channels of the benefits of recording. The collaboration of the Trust in conference organisation, promoted the Records Centre to a new skilled local audience to continue to support and engage. Feedback from this event will also influence how the Trust run their Monitoring & Research Conference in the future. The range of speakers was particularly well received, with a combination of local volunteers, county recorders and national experts.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Impact

Objectives	Activities Completed	Long Term Impact
Provide resources to support volunteer recording activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased resources including over 220 books, microscopes x 2, suction sampler, etc. • These are able to be borrowed by recorders • Using existing Wildlife Trust resources such as ID guides etc., some of which haven't been used for a long time • WILDside library area now set up • Guide to biological recording produced • Guide to using the website produced and online • Gaps on the map maps produced and available online • Three counties recording handbook designed and printed, available online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better resources and support available for recorders • The centre is well equipped for survey of a range of taxa in BioBlitz events in the future
Fill gaps in existing training provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 40 workshops • Workshops look at how to record, as well as identification • Covered groups or skills that have not been covered before or are lacking in Northants. • Four WILDside Wildlife Trust Badged Workshops in 2018. Three in 2019 • Worked with the Wildlife Trust's Training Workshop officer in order to make sure that biological recording is integrated into the programme and encouraged across the three counties • Training at more of a personal level in order to give more time to volunteers and give them training with what they want, e.g. how to use the website • Attended 2020 Wildlife Trust Training Workshops planning meeting to look at how to continue partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More highly trained recorders • Integration of biological recording into training programme
Carry out surveys for 10 public Wildlife Sites and 40 private Local Wildlife Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 sites surveyed including 39 Local Wildlife Sites (26 private, 13 public) • Focus was on fewer sites but more effort on recording some sites more thoroughly • These surveys have mainly focused on species other than non-vascular plants, as vascular plants are picked up in the Local Wildlife Site surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased data for these important sites

Objectives	Activities Completed	Long Term Impact
Deliver 2 public engagement surveys for 500+ people and 5 seasonal surveys for 200+ people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous public engagement surveys reached large number of people 5 seasonal surveys generated large numbers of records and provided a gateway to recording New promotional materials for NBRC developed In order to integrate NBRC with other organisations, we have run a large number of events in collaboration with external agencies, we have worked with; the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, Local Recording Groups, Pocket Parks, The Wildlife Trusts, Friends of West Hunsbury Parks and Friends of Fineshade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider awareness of the importance of biological recording Better awareness of the records centre and our work
Recruit 100 new volunteers, and increase the frequency and quality of reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook recruitment up to 185, real positive of the project as group more or less runs itself and people help one another Monthly email list at 91 (many lost to GDPR) Well over 50 people have come to workshops Over 200 people now submitting incidental records, more than 150 new people since the start of the project Over 10000 records generated through the project of over 2000 species Training has increased record quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong group of recorders to encourage and support one another More records which will inform conservation and development in the county Better quality records
Increase the skills and confidence of existing volunteers and support them to lead 15 site surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progression from photography to recording Rewarding to work 1:1 with people and see how they progress New lichen group Reinvigorated plant Group Training The Trainer Workshop Many recorders leading site surveys now, volunteers led 17 site surveys during the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased skill and confidence of recorders to be more self-sustaining
Deliver a celebration event as a conference for volunteer recorders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful recorders conference and thank you event held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A legacy of recorders which feel valued and can see the importance of their recording efforts
Use the data and the project evaluation to inform site appraisal and management, volunteer recording structures, partnership approaches and the Wildlife Trust's governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have learnt a lot about what support recorders need and how to better support recording Records have informed site management Partnerships have strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger partnerships with others, joined-up thinking Improved knowledge of how to best support recorders



I manage the Wildlife Trust BCN Monitoring and Research team, organising ecological surveys across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. We work with volunteers and staff to collect a wealth of information on species and habitats.

One of our core values is that, 'Conservation depends on local knowledge and good science'. WILDside has proved to be a project that perfectly encapsulates this idea, bringing together local people to help increase knowledge of wildlife sites around Northamptonshire.

WILDside has shown the multiple benefits of working with local experts to build lasting partnerships and help develop the knowledge of others. I have seen several volunteers develop a passing interest in wildlife into something far more advanced over the past few years.

Personally, I have been amazed by the number and variety of events that the Project Coordinator was able to deliver over the course of the project. His enthusiasm for wildlife recording and ability to enthuse others has been my lasting memory of the project.

This project has taught us many more effective ways to engage with people to record wildlife and will have a long-lasting impact on the work of the Trust.

Through this kind of work with local volunteers, staff and researchers, we can ensure that we understand the status of local wildlife and habitats. With this knowledge we can work together to protect them. ”

Josh Hellon (Monitoring & Research Manager – Wildlife Trust BCN)



Partners



**Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Northamptonshire**

With Thanks To

Special thanks go to all of the recorders who have engaged with the project, without you this project would not have been possible. The county recorders, records centre steering group and project steering group have been vital in guiding the project so our thanks goes to them also. Finally, our thanks go to the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire who host the records centre.

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