

BRERC wildlife

Winter 2011/12



BRERC collate, manage and disseminate wildlife and geology data for the West of England area



BRERC

BRERC, with strong support from our Partners, provides an unrivalled service in the West of England area, utilising the **voluntary efforts of over a thousand recorders and approximately 25 office based volunteers** who provide records and expertise. We are the central repository of biodiversity and geodiversity records for the West of England, covering Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. We hold, and make available, 1.5 million computerised records and several million records in paper formats.

We work with many community groups, agencies and organisations, providing them with our services and enabling them to make accessible their records that we then make available to our Partners and the rest of the world. For example between April and August 2011 we received over 115,000 records for the West of England area, and we validated, verified and entered into our Main Database over 50,000 records.

This has been a challenging year with everyone being impacted by the significant national financial climate. Some of our partners have been forced to make deep cuts and this

has led to a reduction of 35% of core funding, including the withdrawal of North Somerset Council from the Partnership. This shortfall has led to the redundancy of an officer, reducing the paid staff to two and a half full-time equivalents. We have implemented various savings to the way we operate and are confident that BRERC remains a strong and vibrant records centre.

We continue to look at savings and, in particular, new sources of income. Currently we are helping to develop a regional project bid, along with the other Southwest Local Records Centres and Natural England, which, if successful, will mean improved support for volunteer recorders and help fund some of our core work.

We have recently updated our charging policy and have spent some time ensuring that costs are as transparent as possible. We intend to update the BRERC website shortly with further guidance on costs regarding 'out-of-the-ordinary' data search requests.

The BRERC Management Board wish to thank all the volunteers, recorders and staff for their contribution to the continued success of BRERC despite the challenging times.

Our Team

BRERC enables a large network of hundreds of recorders and volunteers across the West of England to participate in making their records available to the world.

To help facilitate this we are assisted by office based volunteers and staff. Data entry is conducted by approximately 25 office volunteers, alongside Abigail Pedlow (Assistant Manager), Daniel Marshall (Assistant Manager) and Tim Corner (Manager). Our volunteer team is highly skilled, almost all are educated to at least degree level, with two doctorates, four masters, and with a wide variety of other experience and qualities that add hugely to the service that BRERC can deliver.

As well as volunteers with identification, surveying and GIS skills, currently we have three volunteers (Kathryn Stagg, Alan Pleasance and Martin Cookson) who each have 20-30 years' experience in commercial IT, and this has enabled much of the development of our on-line services shown in this newsletter. On the Enquiries team we have GIS volunteers Helen Isaacs and Rachael Kemp along with placement student Matt Mapp.

We also have approximately 12 specialists on our call-out list who we can employ whenever funds allow, such as when conducting project work. Call-out staff used this year are Jon Mortin and Kathryn Stagg, who also volunteer their time when not paid.

Data Entry

Records Entered on Database	BNES	BCC	S Glos	N Som
All records 2010/2011	18,779	37,559	31,791	27,006
All records April-Sept 2011	13,549	11,828	10,592	13,803
Legally protected 2010/2011	3,915	13,102	10,637	7,701
Nationally Notable 2010/2011	2,127	5,135	5,467	3,839

As can be seen from the table above the number of records entered in the first half of financial year 2011/12 compare very well with the number entered last financial year. We are continually trying to improve the efficiency of our 'data flow' - which is effectively how, and how quickly, data moves from being received in the office to being on the main database and available to all. We do prioritise data - selecting EPS species (European Protected Species) to be entered first, followed by the most recent data.

	TOTAL records fy 2010/2011	TOTAL records April-Sept 2011
PAPER	39,306	108,590
ELECTRONIC	77,258	7,144
TOTAL	116,664	115,734

In the first half of financial year 2011/12 we have already received into the office almost as much data as was received in the whole of the last financial year.

Local Sites Registers

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), (Wildlife Sites in North Somerset) and RIGS are known as Local Sites. BRERC developed and continue to manage the Local Sites Registers on behalf of our Partners and we also sit on the Local Sites Partnership.

Geology

We have continued to provide data entry and maintenance of the Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) data on behalf of the Avon RIGS Group. In addition to our routine work we have been providing assistance to the Group to enable them to conduct surveys and reviews of RIGS in our area.

BRERC at the Olympics – Meet the Species

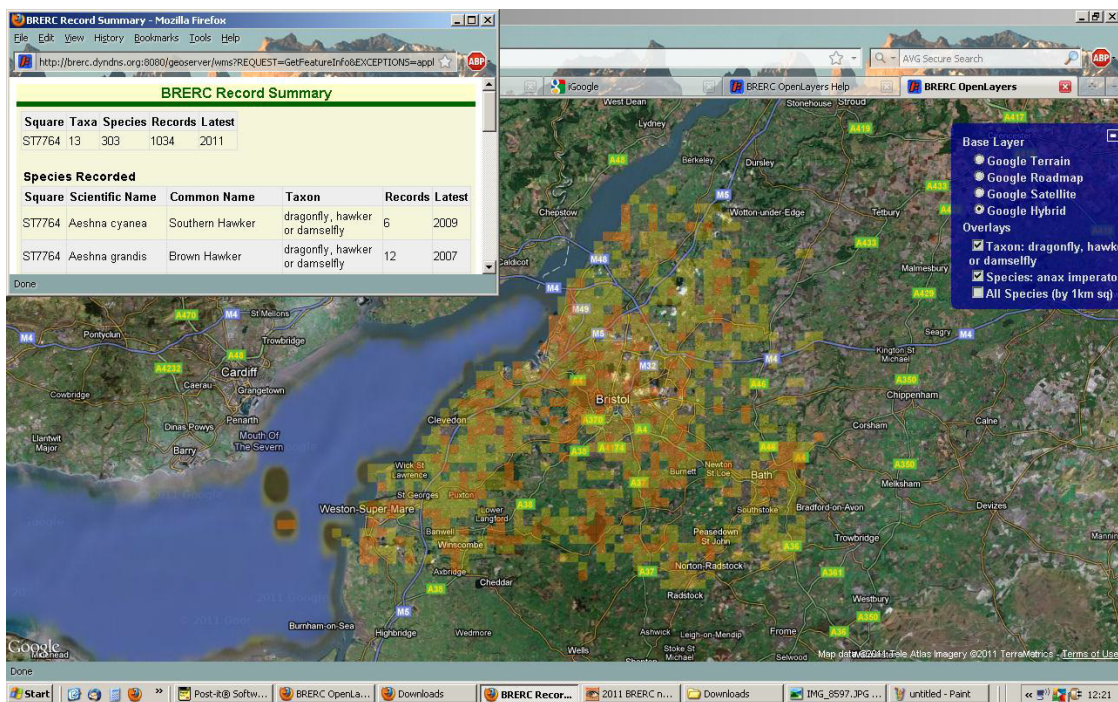
BRERC has assisted in the production of the species list that is being used for a national initiative organised by the Bristol Natural History Consortium (BNHC) called 'Meet the Species'. There are 2012 species that the public are being asked to help record as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Working with BNHC and the American website Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), BRERC helped to produce the list based on species recorded at the various BioBlitz events around the country. You can visit the Meet the Species blog at <http://meetthespecies.org>.



**MEET
THE SPECIES**
the race is on...

Access our data online: <http://brerc.dyndns.org:8080/geoserver/www/gmap06.html>



BRERC has produced a web portal which can be accessed via the BRERC website. This portal enables **anyone** to look at all our updated species records at a 1 kilometre resolution and produce species distribution maps. This is a free web service that we intend will help provide some feedback to recorders and local residents alike.

All BRERC species data continues to be available via the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway website (data.nbn.org.uk) **where it is used in maps and reports on over 50,000 occasions each month**. Additionally, the data is available on the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) as part of the UK's commitment to international conventions (data.gbif.org).

Web-service professional access to BRERC data

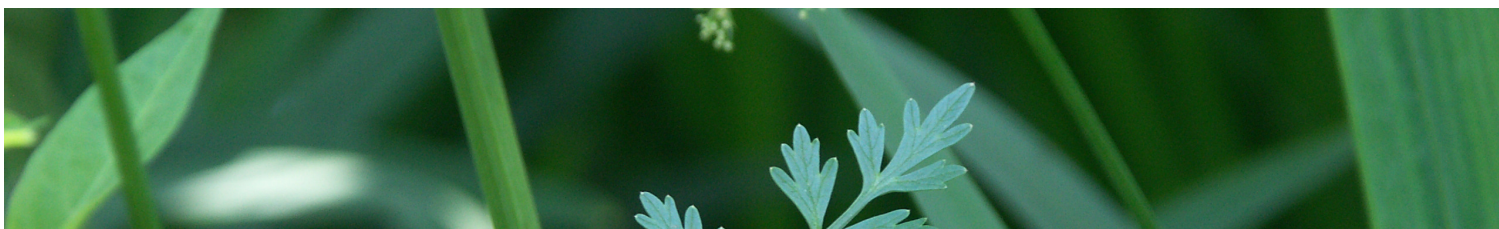
We are developing new and innovative ways to make all the BRERC data, including sites and habitats, available via web services to our Partners and other professional users. This will enable Partners to access data that is continually up-to-date rather than being provided with update discs annually.

At the same time, this work is also enabling an examination and development of new IT systems to hold, maintain and update data; it will help ensure BRERC continues to be forward-looking and a leader in our field.

BRERC Website: www.brerc.org.uk

We have been rebuilding the BRERC website and aim to replace the existing one very soon. The new website (with the same web address) will look completely different, have new features and simplified guidance and links. The records portal, data search facilities, downloadable recording spreadsheets and other important features will remain on the site but will be more easily accessible.

We're also planning to make our metadata, data-logs and library catalogues available to the public via the web.



Silky Wave *Idaea dilutaria*

The Silky Wave moth is a rare species with a UK Action Plan to help direct action to preserve it. One of the few places it is found in the UK is in the Avon Gorge. Bristol Zoo are leading on a project to help monitor them.

The moth is quite small and unassuming but its flight habits make it possible to detect. Essentially, when disturbed it flies up and then back down again nearby (as opposed to just flying away).

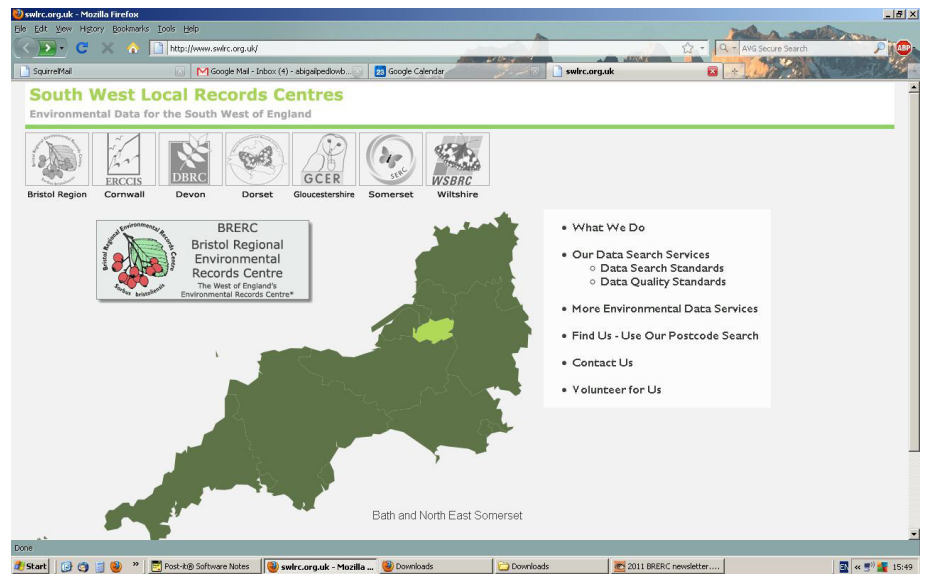
BRERC staff and volunteers helped survey for the moth in the Gorge and to our pleasant surprise we were able to record and photograph them. On closer inspection the moth has beautifully silky wavy wings, hence its name.



South West LRC Portal

BRERC has produced a portal (right) for the South West Local Records Centres, primarily aimed at consultancies and other professional users of LRC services and products. It includes an automated map service to establish which is the relevant LRC for any location in the South West, a list of services and other information along with links to each LRC website.

The work was largely funded through Natural England and DEFRA. As part of the same project BRERC devised and developed an agreed policy for joint working among the SW LRCs which aims to make transparent the associated costs for such work and to improve cross-county working.



Avon Wildlife Trust

Avon Wildlife Trust are a partner of BRERC and we work closely with them.

Living Landscapes: We have checked and processed over 14,000 species records from the AWT Living Landscapes Project and are completing the processing of habitat records.

Reserves data: BRERC has a satellite data entry computer at AWT, which is used by their Reserves Team to enter records relating to their reserves. Once they have entered approximately 7,000 records we take that data, conduct our validation and verification checks and process the data into our systems before returning it to the Trust. We have just received another batch of such records and are completing their processing.

AWT BioBlitz: We have been checking and processing the records gathered by recorders at the AWT BioBlitz event held at Chew Valley Lake.

Join Friends of BRERC

We are setting up a 'Friends of BRERC' group. The aim is that the Friends will be an advocate of BRERC. Activities will include assisting with fundraising (from jumble sales to sponsorship and project bids), producing newsletters, co-ordinating events such as a recorders forum, to champion BRERC and promote our services and role as a Local Records Centre.

A draft separate website and email group have already been set up. If you wish to help in any way please contact us.

BioBlitz

BRERC has assisted with several BioBlitz events and have processed the records from them, produced recording forms and maps and have taken part in recording species. The template of our forms and associated maps have been utilised by various organisations that have been leading BioBlitz events across the country.

At the Bioblitz at Tyntesfield in May, two of our volunteers contributed to the impressive final tally of 804 species by finding *Telechrysis tripunctata* - the first record of this distinctive little moth in our area.

Kate and Claire



Telechrysis tripunctata



Certificate Awards

We are developing a certification award scheme to help identify and acknowledge the skills that volunteers and staff gain, and aim to introduce it over the next few months. This scheme is now gathering interest among other LRCs and the initiative may be adopted regionally.

The plan is that the different skills attained and training courses completed will be rewarded with certificates; these will provide evidence of vocational qualifications.

Field Surveys

This year BRERC has conducted field surveys for Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol City Councils. This work has included botanical and invertebrate surveys as well as training of external volunteers in survey and data entry techniques to assist with field surveys of designated sites.

Pictures and Catalogues

We are systematically cataloguing the numerous digital photographs we hold to enable them to be more easily searched and used. Placement student Eleanor Pople is currently working her way through these.

A few years ago, BRERC were left hundreds of photographic slides taken by Margaret Hayman, a locally famous lecturer and wildlife photographer. The slides include many invertebrates and other species that are typically difficult to find photographs of and BRERC has been trying to find ways to digitally scan them in order to make them available to the public. One of our data entry volunteers Roger Lawrence has recently gifted BRERC two scanners. Alice English has been going through the collection and has begun the time-consuming task of preparing it for scanning. We are still seeking funding support for this work, we believe it will be of benefit to local naturalists both now and in the future.

Until now we have had several different electronic catalogues of our books, articles, guidance documents and so on for use by our staff and volunteers. We have just prepared a new catalogue system that will amalgamate all of the catalogues into one database that will also eventually be accessed via the web, enabling anyone to examine what we have. Martin Cookson is leading this work with assistance from Ingrid Regalado (who has recently returned to Spain).



Dragonflies of the Bristol Region

Following the success of the 'Moths of the Bristol Region', 'Butterflies of the Bristol Region' and the 'Flora of the Bristol Region', work on the '**Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Bristol Region**' is well underway.

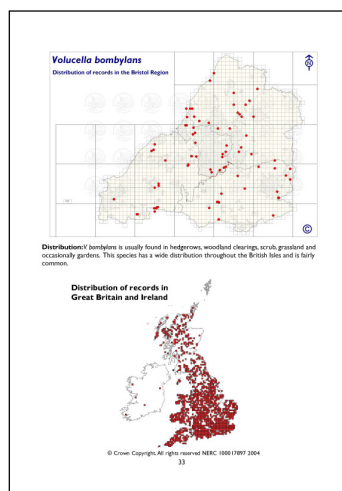
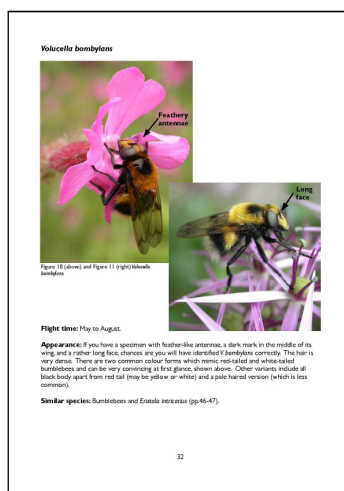
As with the other books; BRERC has been entering and compiling the data collected by over 500 local recorders. Maps and flight charts have been produced, and a team of dedicated volunteer experts have been meeting fortnightly to examine the data and to write the book.

It is not too late to send in records - but we need them ASAP!

The book will be ready to publish in 2012 and efforts are underway to seek sponsorship and grants to help with printing costs. If you would like to assist, please let us know.

We intend to publish the names of recorders whose records have contributed to the book. If you think you are one and **DO NOT WISH** to have your name published please let BRERC know as soon as possible. Similarly, if you are a family member or close friend of a recorder who is unable to inform BRERC, yet you suspect may not wish to have their name published, please let us know.

Introduction to Hoverflies of the Bristol Region



This year we have completed and published the 'Introduction to Hoverflies of the Bristol Region' as a complement to the 'Wildlife of the Bristol Region' series. It has been produced entirely in-house including the printing, and is currently available as a ringbound colour document for £5.

The book includes guidance on how to identify many of the hoverflies likely to be encountered in our area, along with current distribution maps and is aimed at both novice recorders as well as more experienced ones.

The principal authors are volunteers Katie Lee and Rebecca Parslow alongside Jon Mortin, Abigail Pedlow, Daniel Marshall and Tim Corner.

Records provided to BRERC are deemed to be made available for BRERC to use in accordance with its role as a Local Records Centre. As such records may be distributed by BRERC to third parties, in a variety of formats and media, such as through the National Biodiversity Network Gateway and other websites. Personal information is not supplied by BRERC to data enquirers and names are blanked out on copies of records and reports sent to them. Names and addresses may also be used by BRERC when mailing newsletters, recording forms, invitations to meetings and other information or publicity material. More details of BRERC policies can be found on www.brerc.org.uk

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