

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

East Mill, Bridge Foot, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1XH

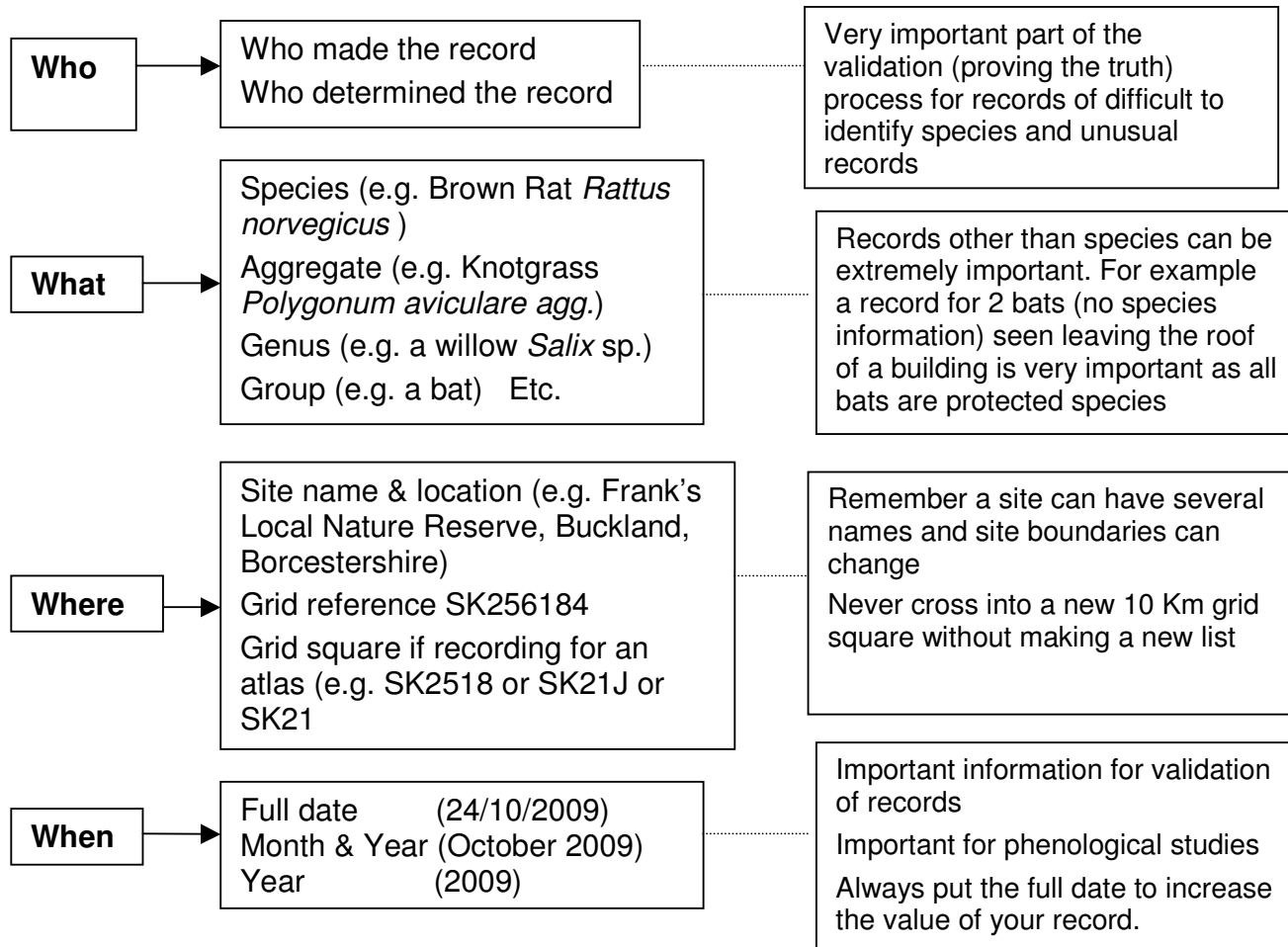
Tel: 01773 881188 Fax: 01773 821826

E-mail: enquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk



Derbyshire LBAP Forum 2009: Wildlife Recording – Where to start

The 4 fundamental components of a biological record



Then go beyond the basic 4Ws and add value and interest to your record

A few words of additional comment can make so much difference to your record:

"A small clump growing by the gate into the reserve close to where garden rubbish had been tipped" tells us that this new record for Pendulous Sedge at the nature reserve has most likely arisen from a garden throw out and therefore isn't really an Ancient Woodland Indicator plant for the wood

"Nest somewhere on main ride in wood – observed foraging on adjacent rough pasture on west side of wood" tells us that this rare woodland bird is nesting in the wood but the adjacent rough pasture is an important part of the breeding habitat

Key points to remember as you make your records.

- **Think about where your records might go** and therefore **what information is needed** within the record for it to be as useful as possible
- **Don't guess.** Identify. Ask yourself what makes it what you have named it.
- **Use** the wide range of **resources** available to you to ensure that your record is accurate:
 - ◆ **Internet** resources such as:
 - ◇ iSpot <http://www.ispot.org.uk/> resource to share your observations and get expert help with identifications
 - ◇ Botanical Society of the British Isles online identification guide <http://www.botanicalkeys.co.uk/flora/>
 - ◇ UK Moths online guide to the Moths of Gt. Britain & Ireland <http://ukmoths.org.uk/>
 - ◆ The network of **vice county recorders** and **expert referees** associated with various recording groups who will help with identifications
 - ◆ **Identification guides**
 - ◆ Identification **training courses**
- Be prepared to **be self-critical**. You will learn by your mistakes (we all make them) and become a better recorder for them.
- **Start with common species.** Recording common species is just as important as recording rarities.
- You do not have to be an expert to find a rare or interesting species but you may need the help of an expert to accurately identify it for the first time. **Know, and acknowledge, what level your identification skills are at.**
- **Try and find a mentor.** Join your local recording group and learn alongside others.
- **Share your records.** Pass your records on so that they can be of a wider value than your own personal interest. Individual records from a variety of sources collectively form important datasets which can inform conservation objectives, provide the raw data for phenological studies help us better understand changes in species distributions etc. and a wealth of other important studies of the natural world.
 - Get to know your local **recording networks** and pass your records to the appropriate county recorder
 - Pass your records to key organisations like the **Wildlife Trust** so that they can be used to inform conservation objectives and site management
- Do not enter land without **landowner permission**.
- Do not put yourself, or others, at risk. **Keep safe.**
- **Never endanger what you have seen through inappropriate collecting.** Will a good photograph or detailed notes suffice? Learn how to take vouchers responsibly. Never collect unless you are willing to prepare and look after the voucher appropriately.
- Familiarise yourself with current wildlife legislation so that you **don't break the law** whilst recording.
- And finally, **enjoy your recording.**

Acknowledgement: Some of the content of this information sheet has been sourced from course material written by A Lockton & S Whild for the Birmingham University MSc Biological Recording: Collection and Management. (N Law).