

**N1 Information Provision**

In 1620 a wildcat, *Felis silvestris*, was spotted near Eccles in the Scottish Borders. This sighting of a rare and iconic species is the earliest biological record for Scotland within the UK electronic database, known as the 'National Biodiversity Network' (NBN). Since then, biological recording of Scotland's species has increased exponentially with millions of records accumulated by many local and national recording schemes and societies, and public bodies such as SNH. By the end of 2007, nearly 5million of these plant and animal records were held electronically.



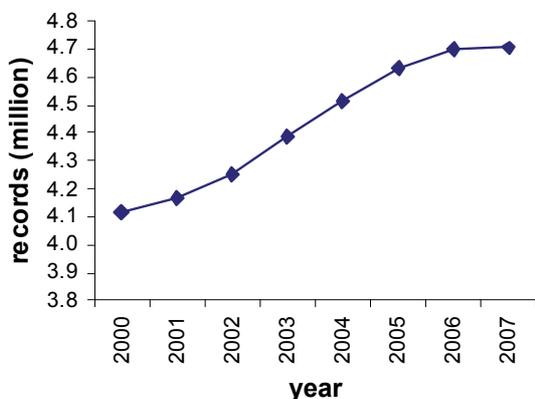
**Evidence**

The NBN was established to champion wildlife data collection by mainly volunteer recorders. It provides support to recorders by setting data collection and management standards. The NBN Gateway is the recognised, definitive source of data on species in the United Kingdom for public and professional use, enabling new and historic records to be accessed and viewed as distribution maps, and also downloaded as raw data. The NBN currently lists over 80 [data providers](#) across the UK, with interests ranging from spiders to seaweeds.

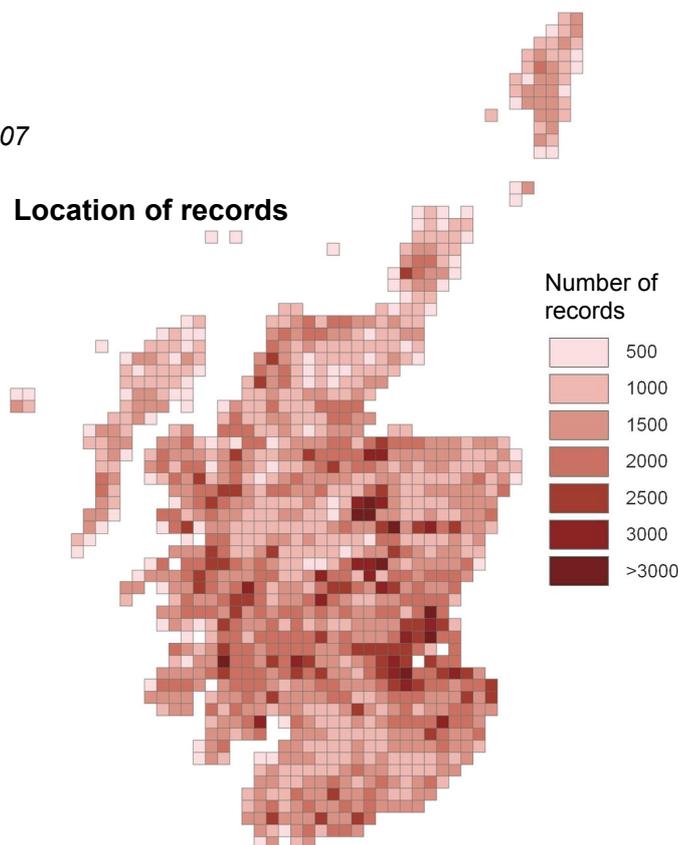
**The biological records of Scotland**

Data on the National Biodiversity Network at the end of 2007

**Number of records**



**Location of records**



**Assessment**

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- The location of biological records shows confirmed wildlife sightings. Apparent absences elsewhere may be because people have looked but not found them, or not looked for them. Species that are difficult to identify (with few specialist recorders) or very common species, which are overlooked, are prone to under-recording.
- 4 million records pre-date 2000 and 0.7 million records have been added since the year 2000.

<b>TREND</b>	<b>Increased</b>
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<b>DATA CONFIDENCE</b>	<b>High</b>
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## Commentary

A long history of recording, mainly by volunteer enthusiasts, has built up an exceptional knowledge base of wildlife in Britain. In 1995 the Coordinating Commission for Biological Recording concluded that an estimated 60 million-or-so species records were held in a variety of forms by 2000-or-more organisations. However, as a collection they were largely unknown, inaccessible and unusable. The NBN now provides web-based access to a sizeable part of this. By the end of 2007, nearly 28 million records from 300 datasets across the UK were available through the NBN gateway.

In December 2007, the NBN held 4.7 million records for Scotland: flowering plants (55%); birds (17%); lichens (8%); butterflies (6%); fungi (4%); terrestrial mammals (3%); moths (2%); spiders (2%); fish (1%); amphibians; and marine mammals.

Date	# records	% records
1600s	13	<1
1700s	1,405	<1
1800s	5,1126	1
1900s	3,980,863	85
2000s	670,767	14
Total	4,704,174	100

Scottish Natural Heritage, for example, has supported the establishment and development of the NBN, and has invested in the digitisation of paper-based records in Scotland. It provides public access to the NBN through the public information portal, SNHi ([www.snh.org.uk/snhi](http://www.snh.org.uk/snhi)).

## Source data and updates

Wildlife records are added to the NBN (<http://www.searchnbn.net>) on a continuous basis. The data shown in this account are correct up to the end of 2007.

## UK indicator

No equivalent.

## References

National Biodiversity Network (<http://www.searchnbn.net>).

Biological Recording in Scotland (<http://www.brisce.org.uk/index.php>).

Burnett, J., Copp, C. and Harding, P. 1995. *Biological recording in the UK: present practice and future development*. Vol 1, Full Report; Vol 2, Appendices; Summary Report Coordinating Commission for Biological Recording, Ruislip, England.

