

# Independent report assesses species data in England

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth and biodiversity data plays an important part in managing its conservation, informing us of the state of our natural resources, how we plan our land use and how we maintain habitats that are resilient and support our environmental goals.

Species data is a core part of biodiversity data, covering all types of marine, freshwater and land species. The [independent report published today](#) details the current species data model in England, and provides some recommendations for improved data collection, access and use.

The report identifies the immense value society gets from species data, and ways to improve its management. Reflecting the variety of UK wildlife, and the wide range of uses of species data, the report was authored by a multi-disciplinary team, led by eftec (Economics for the Environment) and eCountability, with support from a consortium of species data experts. This report drew heavily on the [Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum \(SBIF\) Review that was published in 2018](#).

Ellen Wilson, the lead author of the SBIF Review, said:

We are very pleased that the SBIF Review Recommendations have been of value to inform consideration of the challenges and opportunities in England; we look forward to the publication of the report and to joining forces wherever we can.

The findings will help inform the Geospatial Commission's work on how to improve data that supports decisions about land use, and work on environmental policy development being led by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Thalia Baldwin, Director at the Geospatial Commission said:

I welcome this independent report about the current state of species data in England, building on the good work that has already happened in Scotland to map its biological recording infrastructure. The Geospatial Commission is committed to identifying how improved access to better location data can support decisions about land use and help achieve the UK's environmental outcomes, and understanding the relevant components of the full data landscape is a key first step.

Report co-author, Jo Treweek of eCountability, said:

The majority of species data in England is collected by volunteers, providing an immensely valuable resource that is fundamental to how we manage the natural environment. We welcome the priority given to development of high-quality species data at a time when they are so desperately needed to underpin policy and conservation action.

Ian Dickie, Director at eftec, who led work on the report said:

Without species data, we would have less knowledge of how the quality of our environment was changing, and be less well equipped to invest in improving the environment and to respond to the pressures of climate change.

David Askew, Natural England science and evidence director, said:

As the government's advisor for the natural environment in England, we welcome the work on this report which has highlighted the wealth of biodiversity data collected by volunteers and the importance of ensuring it is available so we can be informed by it.

The focus now needs to be on the common tools and functions that help communities detect and record species. We look forward to working with our investment partners and the wider recording community to make the storage and use of species data even more innovative.

We have also published a [blog](#) to accompany the [report](#).