

## UK TEPoP 2023: Filling Gaps in Existing Recording and Data

Workshop: Improving scheme coverage

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### If your organisation had £2M over 4 years, what would you do to increase scheme coverage?

- **Increase staff capacity**: have longer term contracts and higher wages to increase recruitment and retention of skilled staff; more capacity will allow more project ideas to go ahead, facilitate upskilling, recruitment and retention of staff.
- Support data verification, quality assurance and more sophisticated approaches to analysis and more regular reporting.
- **Invest in volunteers** to increase capacity, training and support: improve training tools and resources for targeted species (including protected species), under-surveyed locations and to reach different volunteer demographics; increase support networks, mentorship and regional coordinators for volunteers; reimburse volunteer expenses; have more training incentives for volunteers; support the progression of volunteers to more experienced roles.
- **Increase education, engagement and outreach**: engage more directly with volunteers in targeted locations and different and new demographics; increase communication to volunteers on the value and use of their data; work with landowners to improve access and change negative perceptions of biodiversity monitoring; have more public engagement campaigns to raise the profile of under-surveyed taxon groups and feed into the funnel of a discover-value-act journey.
- **Improve data flow and management**: identify and support the key organisations that support biodiversity recording dataflow and improve the understanding of barriers; implement strategy to get more data to users; increase capacity of national schemes to assess their barriers and issues with data flow; improve relationships with data owners; train users on how to use iNatUK so that they can help the data managers; tech development to allow recorders to explore their own records and existing records easily; create fewer recording options to reduce multiplicity of data journeys.
- Have an increased focus on long term planning, including to change government policy.
- **Create more sharing hubs**: for example, a best practise sharing hub and data training management hub.
- **Invest in new technology**: assess how technology can help with data collection, lowering barriers of entry and increasing coverage (e.g. automated ID/sample collection (for DNA analysis), automated monitoring stations etc.).
- **Pay professions to fill gaps and increase sample size**: paid professionals may create more consistent coverage; is there a risk of resentment from volunteers if they see some professionals being paid to carry out equivalent survey methods?
- Increase spatial coverage of rarer species through new recording schemes.
- Follow up on recently completed or existing surveillance programs – if we've identified barriers and solutions, start acting on these solutions.
- Assist with landowner access (especially in Northern Ireland).

**If TEPoP had unlimited money over a 10-year period, what could the sector do to increase scheme coverage across the UK?**

- **Increase pay and length of contracts for staff**: to help maintain scheme security; this will help to recruit more skilled professionals.
- **Improve data management and verification**: build more efficient infrastructure; work to better support verifiers; offer proper financial support.
- **Develop and pay professionals** to increase survey numbers and fill gaps in priority areas/habitats/taxa.
- **Increase capacity and training of volunteers**: increase funding for training, cover expenses and provide more equipment; improve training to increase coverage of rarer and harder to identify species; increase number of trained volunteers to cover larger areas; create a support network for volunteers with increased support, provision of equipment, mentors and regional coordinators.
- Address barriers in government and regulations, including of monitoring protected species.
- Invest in using alternative approaches, especially technological ones e.g. acoustic and eDNA to “argue” human led data.
- **Increase education and engagement**: create more training schemes/apprenticeships and qualifications at all ages to develop the skills needed (e.g. natural history GCSE); improve public engagement and inclusivity around recording – getting more people involved could improve coverage; repair the disconnect with nature so that people value it and will volunteer or donate to cover surveys; reach multicultural communities; increase in-person connection with hyper local groups by giving talks (e.g. women’s institute “friends of” park group).
- Map organisations and their projects to avoid duplication and to aid focus on areas that are not covered.
- Increase strategic thinking.
- Think about a more coordinated set of workpackages across the sector with each one linked to a relevant barrier.