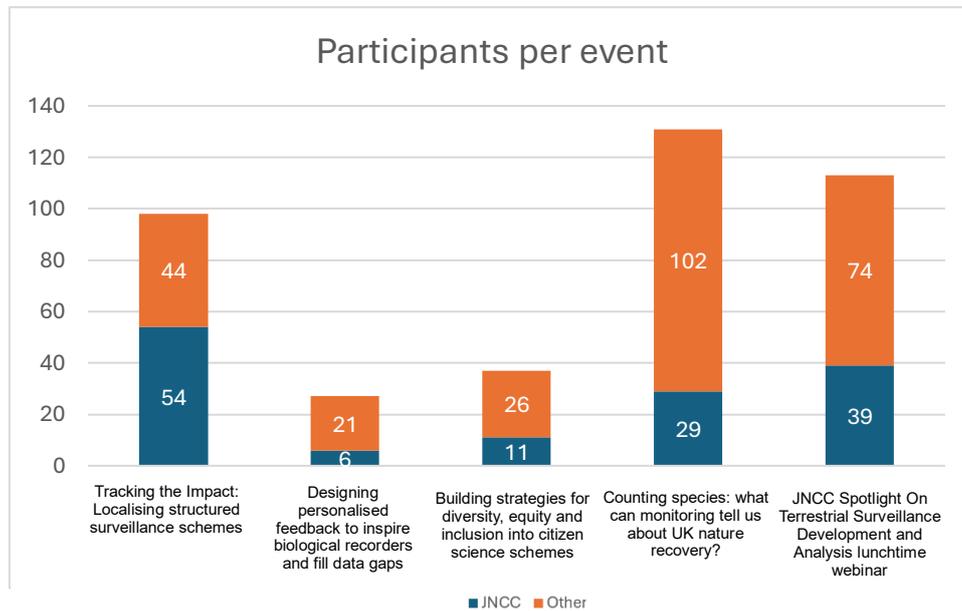


TEPoP Festival 2024 Summary

In autumn 2024, JNCC hosted the eighth annual UK Terrestrial Evidence Partnership of Partnerships (TEPoP) festival. The festival consisted of five online events which were held between 05 November and 05 December, comprised of a mix of presentations and workshops. All events were recorded and can be viewed on YouTube (links in event titles below).

While TEPoP consists of 17 organisations involved in terrestrial monitoring and engaging volunteer recorders, the festival attracted many other organisations interested in biodiversity monitoring and surveillance. Over 270 different individuals participated at one or more of the events, with participants attending each event shown in the figure below.



Participating Organisations:

Animal & Plant Health Agency; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust; Bat Conservation Trust; Biodiversity Information Services; Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland; British Trust for Ornithology; Butterfly Conservation; Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science; Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs; Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; Eryri National Park; Forestry Commission; Freshwater Biological Association; Greenspace Information for Greater London; Imani Academy & Co; JBA consulting; Joint Nature Conservation Committee; National Biodiversity Data Centre; National Biodiversity Network; Natural England; Natural History Museum; Natural Resources Wales; NatureScot; North Wales Environmental Information Services; Nottingham Trent University; Plantlife; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; RSK Biocensus; Rural Payments Agency; Scottish Government; Sefton Council; South Downs National Park; South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre; TClarke; The Ohio State University; Torbay Council; UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology; University of Aberdeen; University of the Highlands and Islands; University of York; West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre.

Session 1: Tracking the Impact: Localising structured surveillance schemes

This session was a collaboration with the JNCC Science Talk series and was used to introduce Tracking the Impact (TTI), a citizen science initiative in the Chilterns.

Nick Marriner, from the Chilterns National Landscape, is the coordinator of TTI and led this talk. TTI is a multi-year project with the aim of surveying 78 1km² semi-randomly chosen plots each year in the Central Chilterns, using three national monitoring scheme protocols: the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS), the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS), and the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). The aim of this is to produce co-located, landscape-scale population trends for a range of species. Nick outlined the process for setting up the project, the areas that were covered, and the partners involved. He also explored the data outputs so far, and a success story around Yellowhammer populations. Alongside this, Enya O'Reilly from JNCC presented on the JNCC exploration of data from the project, looking at what additional analysis of the co-located data allowed us to do. Nick concluded the talk by celebrating the additional year of funding for the project and the ongoing success with the integrated youth engagement project, Chilterns New Shoots.

Session 2: Designing personalised feedback to inspire biological recorders and fill data gaps

This session was co-organised by Solène Marion (JNCC), Simon Rolph (UKCEH), and Michael Pocock (UKCEH). Solène Marion began the presentation by introducing the concept of feedback and highlighting the different types of feedback, as well as the forms of communication involved. She emphasised the importance of feedback in maintaining volunteer motivation, training, and engagement. Simon Rolph then introduced the idea of automated personalised feedback. He summarised some of the findings from a survey of scheme organisers about where they saw opportunities for more feedback, as well as work undertaken to develop feedback for the [DECIDE](#) project.

In the second part of the session, participants were divided into breakout rooms and tasked with designing a piece of personalised feedback through three phases: generating ideas, prioritization, and development. Each breakout room was given a scenario as a starting point to develop personalised feedback that addressed a specific question. The groups then reconvened in the main virtual room to present their ideas. Four distinct concepts were developed, each with a unique perspective. Participants had the opportunity to provide feedback on each other's concepts.

Diana Bowler from UKCEH contributed her expert insights by commenting on the various concepts and feedback overall. Michael Pocock concluded the session with closing remarks, emphasizing the benefits of personalised feedback and reflecting on the recorded contributions.

A separate workshop report will be available from this session in early 2025.

Session 3: Building strategies for diversity, equity and inclusion into citizen science schemes

This workshop focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in our citizen science monitoring schemes, specifically on developing strategies for improving DEI within our schemes and organisations. During the workshop, participants listened to presentations about the impetus for strategy building (Gemma Harper, JNCC); building trust in underrepresented communities (Philip Briggs, Bat Conservation Trust); a recently developed mapping tool for understanding engagement and impact (Kate Merry, Butterfly Conservation); and working with young people and organisational strategizing (Imani Clough-Brown, Imani Academy). Participants also discussed the goals of building DEI strategies, potential easy wins, and the accessibility of current schemes to new citizen scientists.

The workshop was designed to work in tandem with the publication of the [UKTEPoP DEI Strategy](#). This strategy outlines broad DEI objectives for TEPoP Monitoring Schemes: to break down barriers to inclusion, and engage a wider diversity of people in biodiversity monitoring. It also outlines a framework within which schemes can work to build scheme-specific ambitions and strategic actions for DEI.

A separate workshop report will be available from this session in early 2025.

Session 4: Counting species: what can monitoring tell us about UK nature recovery?

This session was designed to celebrate the many ways that long-term biodiversity monitoring schemes are valuable for our understanding of nature, and for people involved in collecting data.

Steve Wilkinson from JNCC gave a presentation introducing the range of monitoring schemes supported by TEPoP and the need for the data they collect. Without the schemes, there is no available environmental signal that we can use to track the state of UK nature and gauge the success of conservation interventions. Steve explored some of the outputs of this data. This included the [UK Biodiversity Indicators](#), an accredited Official Statistics compendium designed to fulfil international reporting requirements, and an assessment of the effectiveness of [protected areas](#). Alongside the scientific impact, the wider benefits of TEPoP collaboration were discussed, including the innovation of new technologies, sharing of strategies to improve inclusivity, and increased engagement of people with nature.

Chris Tuckett from JNCC then chaired a panel of representatives from across the monitoring schemes. This included Juliet Vickery, CEO of the British Trust for Ornithology, representing a range of bird-monitoring schemes; Claire Carvell, Senior Ecologist at UKCEH and principal scientist for the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS); Andy Barker, volunteer and Regional Butterfly Transect Coordinator for the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS); and Julia Hanmer, CEO of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, representing the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS). They answered a range of questions covering the utility, robustness, and impact of the data their schemes collect, volunteer engagement and efforts to increase inclusivity in their schemes, and their aspirations for the future, among other interesting questions from the audience.

Session 5: JNCC Spotlight on Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis lunchtime webinar

This final webinar provided an opportunity to hear about how the Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis (TSDA) partnership is exploring some of the grand challenges facing the biological recording sector. These include adapting to new requirements for evidence, and exploring new data streams, all whilst working with the needs and interests of the volunteers involved in mind. Niki Newton (JNCC) introduced the partnership and its strategic objectives, before James Pearce-Higgins (BTO) outlined work undertaken by TSDA to explore the effectiveness of protected areas. Diana Bowler (UKCEH) then described work undertaken to assess the potential utility of a range of new technologies for monitoring schemes. Finally, Michael Pocock (UKCEH) highlighted the relevance of TSDA past and current projects for the four countries, the importance of partnership working, and how to get more involved in projects of interest. Questions which the TSDA partnership are exploring this year are:

- What are the benefits and disadvantages of co-located species data collection?
- How can we effectively communicate scheme coverage and bias to data users?
- How can scheme data indicate climate change adaptation?
- Can we effectively integrate freshwater species datasets to better understand environmental change?
- Can we evaluate the impacts of conservation interventions using less structured species datasets?
- Where can new technologies best complement existing species recording?
- How can personalised automated feedback be used to enhance the recorder experience?
- How can schemes effectively use automation for record verification?
- How can we best work with citizen scientists to record more information on habitats?
- How can recording more metadata increase the value of unstructured records?
- How can we prompt citizen scientists to record in certain under-recorded places?

If you are interested in getting involved with this work, or hearing more about its outputs, please see the [TSDA webpages](#).

Festival Feedback

Feedback was invited online from event participants following each event. Feedback submitted indicated that participants generally thought that the events were of a high level of interest and that the speakers were very knowledgeable and clear in their presentations and answers. Responses also suggested that most events were thought to be well run and ideal in length.

Some participants suggested that topics discussed in workshops could be chosen by attendees to ensure that conversations were kept relevant, and that the materials and ways of engaging in breakout groups could be made simpler. Participants value the opportunity to engage with representatives from multiple organisations in breakout groups.

If you wish to add any further thoughts on the events, or ideas for future events, please reach out to us at TEPoP@jncc.gov.uk.