

# Sending in your bird records

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As 2019 draws to a close, and daylight/birding hours decrease, many birdwatchers see this as the time to pass on their bird sightings to the Local Recorders. Depending on how active you are, this could be a hundred or so, or perhaps several thousand!

One of the Club's greatest contributions to Scottish ornithology is the documentation of bird numbers and the maintenance of the Local Recorders' Network. So, we would encourage everyone to share their records with the Local Recorders by some means.

The Local Recorders' database is an extremely valuable archive of local bird information and has numerous uses. Primarily, the database is the main source of information for producing the local bird report, a detailed record of the area's birdlife - critical for future conservation. It is also used to answer queries relating to individual species or localities, concerning planning applications, conservation issues, or the analysis of population trends.

Local Recorders are interested in receiving many categories of bird sightings within their areas. For example:

- data on breeding birds, such as territory counts, proof of breeding of scarcer species, counts of seabird colonies and indications of breeding success (with your agreement, records of nationally rare breeding birds will be shared with the Rare Breeding Birds Panel)
- regular counts throughout the year from your local patch, e.g. monthly peak wildfowl and wader counts
- early and late summer and winter migrants
- counts of seabird passage (preferably over timed periods and including commoner species)
- all records relating to influxes (e.g. Waxwing, Crossbill, Quail, Little Auk etc)
- all records of uncommon birds and rarities

In addition to the basic data, it is often of great interest to include general comments relating to some of the records (e.g. that this was a record count, the best/poor year for a particular species).

Bear in mind that over the years, the records that have proved most useful are those that allow comparison between years, that document the importance of local bird populations and that can potentially be used to reveal population changes.

## How to submit your records

Each Local Recorder has their preference, so it is best to check with them (in person, in the Local Bird Report or on their website). Many observers now choose to use BirdTrack (of which the SOC is a core-partner along with the BTO and RSPB). It is easy to enter data (either as complete species lists or *ad hoc* records) and you can view and analyse your own bird records online. The local and national results are on the website for everyone to look at and, with your permission, all of your records will automatically be forwarded to the relevant Local Recorder, which greatly increases the efficiency of entering, exchanging and using the records.

Some Local Recorders may prefer you to use a specific Excel spreadsheet etc.

For more information on the Local Recorders' Network please see: [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/local-recorders-network](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/local-recorders-network)

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