

Wildlife Sites Wales Project

The Project was completed in March 2013 using funding from the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP). The project was split into two work areas; a description of how each work area was completed is as follows:

1. Digitisation of Snowdonia non-statutory site descriptions

The work referred to the digitisation of record cards for non-statutory sites in Snowdonia National park. Information from 747 record cards were transferred into spreadsheet format. This information which includes a unique site name and reference, plus site description, with various descriptions of the habitats and species present at the time of survey, will be transferred to 'Safleol' the Wales Local Sites System (described in 2 below). In total there were 931 record cards, but as agreed with Snowdonia National Park, Cofnod only captured those cards which contained sites within the National Park and also outside SSSIs. Thus the exercise required cross checking with GIS data to ensure this process was completed consistently. The work was completed within the allocated time frame and a copy of the spreadsheet was sent to WBP. Once on 'Safleol' the data will be shared with WBP and also ecological staff at Snowdonia National Park.

2. Collation of all Wales Wildlife Sites data

This work comprised of two elements:

1. *The collation of GIS boundaries of Welsh Wildlife Sites/SINCs for use in the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS).*

Wildlife Sites/SINCs data was requested from across Wales. A spreadsheet was used to collate which Authorities were happy to share their data and which elements of that data could be collated. For example some Authorities only maintain a GIS dataset, whilst others have a whole range of paper or electronic documents associated with their sites. In total 18 authorities out of a possible 27 shared data with us. Of these only one objected for the GIS data to be added to BARS, this was because this authority is currently reviewing their sites and does not wish the data to be accessed until the review is complete. So in total 17 authorities shared their data for use on BARS. The data were formatted, using standard attributes and supplied to WBP for onward transfer to JNCC in both MapInfo and ESRI file formats. A copy of the spreadsheet detailing the status of each authority's data was also supplied.

2. *Creation of an online local sites system for accessing the Wildlife Sites/SINC GIS and descriptive information.*

Cofnod's Online Wildlife Sites System (COWSS) was adapted and transferred to a dedicated website (<http://safleol.lrcwales.org.uk>). The new system uses the name 'Safleol', which means positional in Welsh and blends the Welsh words Safle, meaning 'Site' and Lleol meaning 'Local'. It is intended that this system can store all 'Local Sites' information including Wildlife Sites, SINCs and Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS). Users will be given access to their specific area of interest, for one or more geographical areas. For example a county ecologist may wish to view just their authority's Wildlife Sites, whereas a Conservation Officer for Natural Resources Wales may wish to view Wildlife Sites and RIGS for various authorities. The system was designed to be a pilot to demonstrate how the often disparate information held between the authorities can be standardised for viewing and editing under

a single database. The system has access to online maps for each of the sites, can store descriptive information and for those sites in North Wales to user can query the Cofnod species database to generate a species list for each site. In order to use the system users must contact Cofnod to gain access rights appropriate for their use. We plan to promote the system in May 2013 and set up users in each of the authorities which supplied data.