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## Data Search Guidance Notes – Commercial Searches

### 1 Search area

Searches can be made around a central grid reference, a boundary marked on an accompanying map or a GIS Polygon. Our standard search buffer is 1km. Other search areas can be requested.

#### Restrictions

Requests for searches encompassing the whole county, districts or other large geographic areas are dealt with on a case by case basis.

### 2 Sites Search

SERC holds information for sites evaluated for their biological and geological interest, including all those with statutory or non-statutory designations. Our standard search option is for all statutory and non-statutory designated sites.

Statutory Sites that are searched for are:-

- Ramsar Sites
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

Non Statutory Sites that are searched for are:

- Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Candidate Local Wildlife Sites (cLWS)
- Local Geological Sites (LGS)

#### Standard information provided

- Locations and boundaries of designated sites – Sites map (pdf)
- Summary details of designated sites (including reasons for designation where available for Non Statutory Sites ) – Site details report (pdf)

### 3 Habitat Search

#### Standard information provided

- Our standard search option for habitats is a map showing the location and boundaries of priority habitats as defined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan



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## 4 Ecological Networks

### Standard information provided

Our standard search option for Ecological Networks is a map showing the location and boundaries of Somerset's strategic ecological networks that have been produced for four broad habitat types in Somerset:

- Broad-leaved woodland
- Priority grasslands (including calcareous, acid and neutral grassland)
- Heathland and acid grassland
- Fen, marsh and swamp

The networks were created using the BEETLE least-cost network model developed by Forest Research with the parameters of the model based on the requirements of Somerset Priority Species for the minimum area needed to maintain a healthy population and typical dispersal distances.

## 5 Species Search

See Appendix 1 for the species designations included as our standard search option. Our standard search option is 1km.

Certain species records are regarded as sensitive and there is restricted access to precise location information for these records. See Appendix 2.

### Standard information provided

- Species records including details of abundance, stage, and statuses – results are provided in Excel format - records can then be filtered as required, for example based on a single status. Bat records, if found will be included in the standard species search.
- Records are provided as:-
  - High resolution records – those with grid reference recorded at 100 m precision or better. Most have 6-figure grid references; a few have 8-figure or 10-figure.
  - Low resolution records – those with grid reference recorded at 1 km or lesser precision. When recording on large sites it's common practice to allocate species lists to 1 km grid squares or tetrads (2 km x 2 km). Some recording schemes, e.g. those for plants and birds, only require recording at this level of precision, atlas projects are one of the main sources for low resolution records. Site or location details may more precisely pin-point where the record was made. This dataset includes some records original recorded at high resolution that have been reduced to low resolution precision in accordance with our confidential species policy.
- Mapped locations of the species records in relation to the search area – Species Map (pdf)



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Additional information (available on request)

- Searches can be made for single species, particular taxonomic groups, or mixed groupings of species.
- Bat species searches are available – standard search area of 4km
- **Bat data** comprises of both roost locations and flight records. Roost data are collected by ecologists [e.g. emergence]. Flight records may consist of either casual observations by anyone or organised transects. Public observations will usually be listed as *Chiroptera* or Bat sp. While transect data will be analysed to species or genus.
- Because of the sensitivity of **bat roosts** precise locations will be blurred to protect both the species and the property owner from unwarranted intrusions. Records with a resolution of 10m will be reduced to 100m and the address will be removed or altered to hide the actual property. This is documented in Appendix 2.

## 6 Search Results

- The results are returned via email.

Additional information (available on request)

- Copies of data in GIS format are available, subject to the signing of a data licence agreement at extra cost – refer to our fee table.
- Site data – boundary data for Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites (LGS) can be provided. Statutory site information cannot be provided in GIS format.
- Species data, Bat data and Habitat data can also be provided in GIS format.
- Ecological Networks data is not currently available in GIS format.
- If GIS data is requested, a pdf map of the results (normally provided as standard output) may not be sent.

## 7 Data sources

Data is compiled by SERC on an ongoing basis from all available professional and voluntary sources. These sources include the various specialist recording groups that operate in the county, linked to SERC and the Somerset Wildlife Trust, for which SERC acts as a clearing house for the supply of data. There is therefore no need for users to contact these groups separately.

The data search is undertaken only on data held and compiled by SERC at the time the enquiry is made.

## 8 Data Quality and Interpretation

All users of biological data should be aware of the interpretation limitations of the data supplied. Habitat and species recording coverage is far from complete in time and space and further field survey may be required to determine the presence of important features. It is only possible to supply records that have been collected and validated. The ecological condition of a site may have changed since the available records were collected – clearly this is especially the case for older

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34 Wellington Road, Taunton TA1 5AW

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records. The available records may often therefore be viewed as a guide to the present condition of a site or area rather than a definitive statement of its value.

Data supplied by SERC has been verified (in terms of identification accuracy) and validated (in terms of geographical accuracy and other accuracy attributes in the data capture process) as far as possible. Errors cannot be totally eliminated, however, and users are asked to check with SERC if possible errors are noted in the data search results.

SERC does not advise enquirers on actions that might or might not be taken as a consequence of the data identified in the search.

## 9 Charges and Payment Terms

The charges SERC makes for processing requests are to cover the time it takes staff to extract, analyse and supply data to the enquirer. This is not a charge for the data. SERC reserves the right to recoup a proportion of the costs of acquiring and managing data from its users, within the scope of maintaining charges at a reasonable level. A proportion of income from this source is used to promote voluntary recording activity in Somerset.

Quotes are provided on an individual basis – please refer to our fee structure. Prices will be reviewed annually, and any change will normally be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April. SERC reserves the right to amend our fee structure at any time.

### **Basis of search area :-**

**Linear searches** will be based on the search area requested so the normal fee structure may not apply.

**Boundary marked on accompanying map.** A quote will be provided dependent upon the search area so our normal fee structure may not apply.

**GIS polygon.** A quote will be provided dependent upon the search area so our normal fee structure may not apply.

SERC will **not** invoice 3<sup>rd</sup> parties for data searches. Invoices will be issued only to the Company requesting the data.

**Terms of Payment: - strictly 30 days from date of invoice**

## 10 Requests

Enquirers must fill out a Data Request Form, which can be returned to: [data.supply@somerc.com](mailto:data.supply@somerc.com)

Alternatively the form can be sent to the following address:

Somerset Environmental Records Centre  
34 Wellington Road  
Taunton TA1 5AW

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Once we have received your request form we will issue a formal quote.

### **11 Turnaround and Results**

Data searches will normally be supplied to enquirers within 10 working days of acceptance of our quote. We do not offer a “fast track” service.

Results are emailed in the format of pdf and excel spreadsheets.

Results can be provided in GIS format on request and will incur an additional charge. We will also send out a data licence agreement which will need to be signed and returned.

### **11 Debtors**

SERC reserves the right to ask for payment with order before Data is supplied where payment terms have been defaulted on previously.



## Appendix 1 - Species Designations included in SERC's standard search.

Key	Status	Assumptions Made
European Protected	Protected under European legislation	Includes:- Berne Convention Appendix 1 & 2 Bonn Convention Appendix 1 & 2 Habitats and Species Directive – Annex 4
European Priority		Includes:- Birds Directive Annex Habitats and Species Directive Annex 2 Priority Species
Red Listed	Species identified by the IUCN as being threatened or having a high risk of extinction.	Lower risk - least concern IUCN species are not considered Red Listed. Includes:- Critically Endangered Endangered Vulnerable Data Deficient Near Threatened
Wildlife and Countryside Act (WACA) 1981	Legally Protected under the WACA 1981.	Includes:- Schedule 1 Part 1, Part2 WCA: Schedule 5 Section 9.1 (killing/injuring) Schedule 5 Section 9.1 (taking) Schedule 5 Section 9.2 Schedule 5 Section 9.4a Schedule 5 Section 9.4b Schedule 8
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41	Legally Protected under the NERC Act 2006	List of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list includes 56 habitats and 943 species draws upon the UK BAP.
Nationally Scarce	Nationally Scarce Species.	Limited to Nationally Scarce only.
Amber Birds	Medium Conservation Concern.	Amber List species.
Red Birds	High Conservation Concern.	Red List species
BAP2007	Present on the Priority Species List for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.	Includes national Biodiversity Action Plan or Priority species.
Local BAP2009	Species of biodiversity importance designated by local ecologists.	Includes species considered of importance by a local panel of ecologists including those from local authorities and with reference to local experts. This is an update of the previous 2007 list
County Notable	County Notable from the SERC Somerset Notable Species Dictionary (Fifth Edition).	Species present on the Somerset County Notable list.



**Appendix 2 - Species records which SERC regards as confidential**

Birds		Agreed resolution	Reason
Acanthis cabaret	Lesser Redpoll	Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 2km. Note: this is applied to all records.	Sensitive Species
Accipiter gentilis	Goshawk		
Alcedo atthis	Kingfisher		
Anas querquedula	Garganey		
Ardea alba	Great White Egret		
Ardea purpurea	Purple Heron		
Asio flammeus	Short-eared Owl		
Asio otus	Long-eared Owl		
Athene noctua	Little Owl		
Bubulcus ibis	Cattle Egret		
Calidris alpina	Dunlin		
Charadrius hiaticula	Ringed Plover		
Ciconia ciconia	White Stork		
Circus aeruginosus	Marsh Harrier		
Circus pygargus	Montagu's Harrier		
Coccothraustes coccothraustes	Hawfinch		
Coturnix coturnix	Quail		
Crex crex	Corncrake		
Dendrocopos minor	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker		
Egretta garzetta	Little Egret		
Emberiza calandra	Corn Bunting		
Emberiza cirrus	Cirl Bunting		
Falco columbarius	Merlin		
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine		
Falco subbuteo	Hobby		
Grus grus	Crane		
Jynx torquilla	Wryneck		
Lagopus lagopus	Willow Ptarmigan		
Lanius collurio	Red-backed Shrike		
Locustella luscinioides	Savi's Warbler		
Lullula arborea	Woodlark		
Mergus merganser	Goosander		
Milvus milvus	Red Kite		
Nycticorax nycticorax	Night-heron		
Oriolus oriolus	Golden Oriole		
Panurus biarmicus	Bearded Tit		

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Pernis apivorus	Honey-buzzard		
Phoenicurus ochruros	Black Redstart		
Podiceps nigricollis	Black-necked Grebe		
Poecile montana	Willow Tit		
Porzana porzana	Spotted Crane		
Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax	Chough		
Recurvirostra avosetta	Avocet		
Regulus ignicapilla	Firecrest		
Riparia riparia	Sand Martin		
Saxicola rubetra	Whinchat		
Scolopax rusticola	Woodcock		
Sterna hirundo	Common Tern		
Sterna sandvicensis	Sandwich Tern		
Sylvia undata	Dartford Warbler		
Tadorna tadorna	Shelduck		
Tetrao tetrix	Black Grouse		
Tringa glareola	Wood Sandpiper		
Tringa totanus	Redshank		
Tyto alba	Barn Owl		
Upupa epops	Hoopoe		

Mammals		Agreed resolution	Reason
Lutra lutra	Otter	Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 1km.	(breeding/lying up sites only)
Meles meles	Badger	Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 1km.	(sett records only)
All bat species		Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 100m	



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Butterflies		Agreed resolution	Reason
Phengaris arion (Maculinea arion)	Large blue	Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 2km.	Sensitive Species

Molluscs		Agreed resolution	Reason
Segmentina nitida	A ramshorn snail	Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 2km.	Very restricted distribution in the UK.
Valvata macrostoma	A valve snail	Maximum geographical precision of supplied records: 2km.	1997 BAP, internationally threatened.