



GEARING UP FOR ATLAS 2020

1. The Atlas 2020 project
2. Updates and plans
3. Our strengths and weaknesses
4. How to address our weaknesses



ATLAS 2020

Aim: to provide information on the distribution of the plant species of Britain & Ireland, together with evidence of their spread/decline

BSBI is the only group who can deliver this

- through our network of skilled and expert recorders,
- and also because of our long experience in recording, collating, analysing and presenting plant data





ATLAS 2020

We want to record all vascular plants in at least a sample of areas in every hectad in every VC in Britain and Ireland between 2000 and 2019.



Just five field seasons -
- - a big challenge!



ATLAS 2020

Why do we need an Atlas?

- Snapshot of state of play
- Compare with previous to show change
- Showcases work of the amazing BSBI volunteer recorder network (last Atlas used on daily basis by hundreds of people)
- Contribute to other botany/science/conservation initiatives – e.g. Red Lists, identification of important sites, etc.
- I'm sure there are many more reasons!



ATLAS 2020

2. UPDATES AND PLANS

- Atlas planning meetings have taken place w some key BSBI staff and volunteers
- Project Board – set up perhaps by end of year?
Advisory role: project objectives & outputs. 2 Irish reps.
- Development Team - specific areas, eg data analyses (Kevin Walker to lead), communications (Jane Houldsworth), finance (JH), coverage (Paul Smith)...
- Some new staff? Need a leader/champion. Hoped for volunteer (like DAP), doesn't seem likely. Perhaps paid staff and volunteer together



ATLAS 2020

2. UPDATES AND PLANS

To date:

1. New webpage:
http://www.bsbi.org.uk/atlas_2020.html
2. Targeted recording events (more later...)
3. Funding bid - Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.
Promising, but no decision until end of year.
4. Work ongoing behind the scenes on improving the DDb and MapMate.
5. Updates in every issue of BSBI News



ATLAS 2020

2. UPDATES AND PLANS

Outputs:

- Probably won't have a big book as previously
But... may do this for Ireland!
- Overall, likely to be (1) a web-based set of maps, and (2) perhaps a book which presents analysis of trends and key findings, rather than just illustrations of individual species distributions.



ATLAS 2020

STRENGTHS:

- DDb
- Increasing levels of interest
- Active Committee
- Almost complete network of VCRs
- Good support from BSBI 'central'
- At least half recorders on target, and probably more!
- = some spare capacity to help others??
- Irish Officer!

WEAKNESSES:

- DDb!
- Low level of data transfer to BSBI ... we need all VCRs to submit data, and to encourage and lead the way for others.
- Low numbers of active recorders in general in Ireland
- Coverage – large VCs, with sometimes inhospitable terrain
- Some, but not enough, links with learning botanists



ATLAS 2020



Every one of us needs to really over-stretch in our attempts to foster helpers, beginners, new-comers, improvers.

Without concerted effort we cannot hope that newcomers will come to us as fully formed, ready-to-go, expert botanists.

This is a big ask for already time-stretched volunteer recorders... but BSBI will struggle to continue without the next generation



The DDb - registering is easy!

Visit: <http://bsbidb.org.uk/>

The screenshot shows the BSBI Distribution Database website. The page title is "Welcome to the BSBI Distribution Database". The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Access:** The DDb is primarily intended as a research tool for county-recorders, referees and other specialist users. It provides access to records in full detail and data is fully editable by users. Because this is research-level, live data it may not be appropriate for the general public or for consultancies. Filtered, interpreted data can be obtained from your local records centre, the NBN Gateway and from other public sources.
- On-line editing:** The system allows the possibility on-line editing of records and submission of new records. This capability may be made use of in the future, but there are no plans to replace other existing recording systems (e.g. MapMate) with an online system. Please continue to use whatever recording system you prefer - the DDb will accept and fully integrate records from a diverse range of sources and formats.
- Key features:**
 - Detailed records:** The DDb retains and makes accessible all available details for records imported from external databases.
 - Editing and checking:** County-recorders and other users with editing rights can modify records online, or quickly mark records as confirmed or unconfirmed.
 - Data validation:** Although not yet fully implemented the system is intended to semi-automate the detection of erroneous records. Currently, the system detects malformed dates and grid-references during data import and online tools can be used to check grid-references against county boundaries and to compare records against the expected distribution for a taxon (at hectad or tetrad level).
 - Workspaces:** The database allows users to set up separate workspaces where they can freely modify or create records without impacting the public database. This could allow use of the system for 'working-copy' data that is not ready for public release.
 - Reporting tools:** The system allows fairly complex queries to be run, the results of which can be displayed on maps. The range of output formats and visualisations possible will be expanded over the coming year. For more details please click on the Capabilities tab.

Contact details: To report any technical problems or to suggest improvements please email [Tom.Humbroy](mailto:Tom.Humbroy@bsbi.org.uk). Enquiries about data use or requests for access should be directed to [Alex.I.coxson](mailto:Alex.I.coxson@bsbi.org.uk) or [Kevin.Walker](mailto:Kevin.Walker@bsbi.org.uk).

The browser address bar shows <http://bsbidb.org.uk>. The top right corner of the page has a navigation menu with a red circle around the "register" link.



Add your name and email address, and select vice-county recorder as your role

BSBI user registration

bsbi.org.uk/onlineuser.php

Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland

Registration for access to the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb).

To request access to the online database, please complete the registration form. Your request for access will be reviewed by the BSBI.

If you are uncertain whether you qualify for direct access to the database, please contact [Kevin Walker](#) to discuss your requirements.

The BSBI has data sharing agreements with some organisations, if you qualify for access via this route then please use your institutional email address when you register, as this should expedite the registration process.

username:

first name:

surname:

email address:

Most access requests have to be manually approved, please complete the following two fields to help us respond quickly to your request.

BSBI Vice-county recorder, please state county below

Member of organisation with BSBI data sharing agreement, please name organisation below

Previously discussed request, please name your contact at the BSBI

Researcher, please briefly summarise your research interest and, if applicable, your institution and supervisor

Authorised Consultant, please give full contact details below and summarise your reason for requesting DDB access

Other, please give details below

register

Terms and conditions

By registering with this website you agree to the following terms and conditions concerning access to the website and use of data. Data is made available for personal research purposes only. Please address enquiries about commercial, publication or other uses to [Kevin Walker](#). All data should be regarded as confidential.

Personal information and usage logging



ATLAS 2020

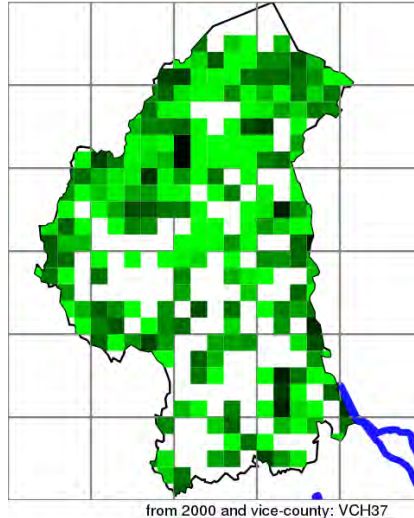
Strengths of the DDb:

- you can see all records for your VC
- you can edit, hide records for your VC
- you can query records – e.g. all records for a particular species, from a particular year, by a particular recorder, etc. etc. (Very powerful!)
- you can use it to help you plan your work – see where least recorded areas are, see which species groups are under-recorded, etc.

IT'S NOT PERFECT! (no database is)... but only VCRs can help to improve it, in tandem with Tom Humphrey and Quentin Groom, who work on it.



Generated from the DDb in just a couple of seconds!



ATLAS 2020

DDb: bsbidb.org.uk/

Can't stress strongly enough:

- we can't carry out a project like Atlas 2020 without central database.

the database will only work if VCRs use it.

RECOMMEND: Register, see what's there, quarantine anything you are suspicious of, deal with any obvious errors, keep tabs on progress

Contact: Quentin Groom - quentin.groom@bsbi.org

Or myself: Maria Long - maria.long@bsbi.org



ATLAS 2020

4. HOW DO WE ADDRESS OUR WEAKNESSES?

- All VCRs need a **plan of action!**

Doesn't need to be long and complicated. A time-plan showing no. of squares and how many to be done each year is the core.

No. hectads per VC:

In Irl: betw 18 and 56, with ave. of 36.

Five field seasons left, so... if you have...

18 hectads => 3.5 hectads to cover each year

56 hectads => 11 hectads to cover each year

36 hectads => 7 hectads to cover each year



ATLAS 2020

Other key elements of a plan of action:

How many hectads?

How many days can you give per year?

How many squares can you survey in a day?

Record at tetrad or monad (or site) level?

How will you select your squares/sites?

How many species do you want to aim for in a hectad?

Outline these main points, and you have a plan of action!



ATLAS 2020

Coverage and scale:

- Submitting hectad resolution records no longer desired (unless they are historical)
- Minimum desired is tetrad, but monad or better is best!
- However, hectads are still useful to help assess progress (in terms of coverage, and in terms of no. spp. recorded), or organise our paper records/maps, etc.
- **Aim for 3 tetrads or ~10 monads well-recorded in each hectad as a minimum.** (More is better though – guidance now mentions aiming for 5 tetrads!)



ATLAS 2020

Coverage and scale:

- How you choose which tetrads/monads/sites to record in is up to you..... You know your VC best.
- Some VCRs like 'good' habitats, some like monads, some like to choose randomly... do what seems best to you!

But here's a suggestion to consider:

1. First record in one tetrad which has a good spread of habitat types
2. Then a tetrad with few existing records
3. Then a known 'hotspot'
4. Then search for additional species records from the hectad



ATLAS 2020

TARGETED RECORDING EVENTS

- **Why?** – gather records for Atlas, support VCRs
- **Who?** – good botanists, usually members or other VCRs, usually local but sometimes travel
- **When?** – as soon as possible!; 2015 field meetings
- **Where?**
 - Perhaps Longford and Cavan
 - Perhaps one of the Cork VCs
 - Perhaps Monaghan/Louth/East Donegal/Mayo...
 - Where else?....



ATLAS 2020

Communication is very important - with the Committee for Ireland, with Irish Officer...

- We have no chance of helping or supporting VCRs if we don't know of issues.

- Don't feel ashamed/overwhelmed - this is a big challenge. Many VCRs will struggle to meet the targets. But there are ways and means to help, and you are not alone in your work or your struggles!

- Please let us know sooner rather than later if you are worried about achieving coverage by 2019... clearly the more time we have the more we can do to try to help



TAKE-HOME MESSAGES:

1. Make a plan of action
2. Use the DDb
3. Make continued efforts to reach out to 'new' people
4. Communicate with Committee, Irish Officer

Some handy web address and contact details

MAIN BSBI WEBPAGE: <http://bsbi.org.uk/>

IRISH BSBI WEBPAGE: <http://www.bsbi.org.uk/ireland.html>

NEW ATLAS PAGE: http://www.bsbi.org.uk/atlas_2020.html

DDb PAGE: <http://bsbidb.org.uk/>

Queries on DDb, data submission, etc. to Quentin Groom:
quentin.groom@bsbi.org

Irish Officer - any queries at all! maria.long@bsbi.org; +353 87 2578763

CFI (Committee for Ireland) Chairperson (from Oct 2014):

John Faulkner - jsf@globalnet.co.uk