Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project (SHARPP)

Frequently Asked Questions

The default start date in the SHARPP query is 1970, but I have many interesting older records in my VC that it would be good to include in the analysis.

Yes, adjust the date in the query to suit local circumstances. Many older rare plant populations are likely to be extant in more remote VCs. The limiting factor will be the availability of accurate grid references. Since the British Grid was only adopted in the 1950s, it will almost certainly **not** be worth going any further back than 1950. Remember that all pre-2000 detailed grid refs are likely to be less accurate than modern grid refs made using GPS.

What does a "?" indicate in the DDb "Record" column?

That there is a duplicate record marked as doubtful or rejected, e.g., *Saxifraga nivalis* records in NN85 in the VC88 example.

What does the "*" symbol after the DDb taxon mean?

That the record is a hectad singleton. In all cases if you hover over these and similar symbols, the DDb will remind you what they mean.

What does "Ø" mean after a DDb grid reference?

This symbol denotes a centroid grid reference. If you hover over the symbol, it will give an estimate of the diameter. It is important to download all records and check that none are marked "centroid" in the notes field. Not all centroid records have the "Ø" symbol.

I have several records for the same taxon in the hectad – which should I target?

Possibly the most recent with a detailed grid reference that is likely to be accurate. Ease of access is another important factor, whilst air photos may help you identify the most suitable current sites. But it is worth considering all the records for the taxon in the hectad carefully. The same record may have been allocated to more than one monad or to differing 6 figure grid references. (Some verification and validation may be required first.)

Should I target taxa that have more up to date records just over the VC boundary in a hectad that straddles it?

Well, you can, and it is always good to up to date records for all rarities in your VC, but such records might be a lower priority to search for. To see these additional records, enter your county name in the bottom, 'Join with', section of the SHARPP DDb search and look for changes in the numbers of records per hectad or inclusion of additional hectads in the results list.

Can I target record rare plant populations that haven't been recorded for over 20 years, even if other populations of the same species have been seen more recently in the hectad?

Yes, you can use the same method, with a modified query, to refind and re-record other populations of the same target species in the hectad. Indeed, it would make sense to try to refind these, if convenient, during visits made for the target (lost at hectad level) species.

Can I target record rare plant populations that have been recorded more recently than 2000 to help update my Rare Plant Register?

Yes, you can use the same method, with a modified query, to refind and re-record more recently recorded rare plant populations as well. But that misses the unique feature of SHARPP, which aims to target rare plant populations that *haven't been seen* in over 20 years in particular hectads. However, the bottom line in all cases, is that we'd like recorders and members to make detailed records of rare species.

Could you enlarge on the request to record subspecies?

For some species, it is only a particular subspecies that has the national designation either due to scarcity or being of conservation concern, an example being *Puccinellia distans* for which supbs. *borealis* is listed whereas the more widespread subsp. *distans* is not. You may find your keys don't go to subspecies level; in which case you will need to compare descriptions. You should restrict recording to the named subspecies, but if you find the other subspecies, please note its presence as a comment.

If there is more than one record of the same target species in a hectad, do I search for them all?

This is entirely up to you. As a minimum I'd search for the species until it is successfully refound and recorded. At least then there will be an up to-date hectad dot. But you may well like to search for more than this - e.g., if you are working towards a Rare Plant Register (RPR). Obviously if there dozens of records of the same species you probably don't want to search for every last record, but you could look for one in, say, each tetrad or monad to make it more manageable.

If I find the target species in a hectad before reaching the location identified by the query, what should I do?

Again, this is entirely up to you. If you complete a SHARPP form for that location, then there will be an up to-date hectad dot. So, you could stop there, but wouldn't it be interesting to try and refind it at the original target location as well and complete a second form?

If I find the target species in a hectad after searching the location identified by the query, what should I do?

Certainly, make a record of your find, but otherwise it's entirely up to you. If time permits an additional SHARPP form would do no harm, and will provide interesting ecological detail.

Updated June 2022, David Elston & Jim McIntosh