

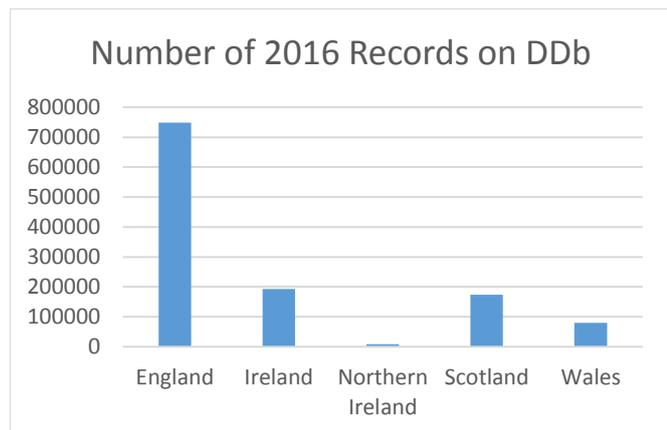
BSBI eNews – February 2017

From Jim McIntosh, Senior Country Officer, [jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org](mailto:jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org)

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### Taking stock of Atlas 2020

Now you would think that with **1.2 million** Atlas records added to the BSBI DataBase (DDb) for 2016 that that must be the lot. Amazingly no! There are still no records on the DDb for 17 vice-counties – and only a handful from another 17. Only once we get all the records can we really take stock of where the gaps are to be filled in the final three years – and where help is needed. So if you have yet to complete data entry, it would be great you'd make



a real push to get the backlog digitised and sent through to the BSBI Database as soon as possible. If you need help with the digitisation – then please get in touch with your Country Officer.

### Validating your Atlas 2020 Records

We validated *Atlas 2000* records centrally in consultation with County Recorders. This was an enormous undertaking that we couldn't possibly repeat with Atlas 2020 due to the extraordinary number of records now arriving at the BSBI DDb. We would therefore like all County Recorders to validate records for their own vice-counties, after all no one is better placed with local expertise and access to record cards, notebooks, local references, etc.

This may seem a daunting task, but there are a number of ways of making it easier. We are not asking that every single record of *Bellis perennis* and *Ranunculus acris* is checked - you'll be relieved to hear! But rather, that only notable species and records are checked. Helpfully these are listed on the Data Validation tab of the [My County](#) page of the BSBI DDb. Login first then click the preceding link. First take a look at the list under "Grid-reference – vice-county boundary matching", then scroll a little further down to see "Records to target for validation for Atlas 2020".

We have produced two simple guidance documents to get you started – one on [Validating Records in the DDb](#) and another on [Editing Records in the DDb](#). [Andy Amphlett](#) is very kindly offering help or advice with validation to anyone who requires it. Just drop him an email. Finally, remember that any errors in MapMate records must be corrected in MapMate *wherever possible* and the corrections synched through to the DDb.

## Planning the final three field seasons for Atlas 2020

Before the next field season gets underway we would urge you to take stock and plan how you will achieve full Atlas 2020 coverage across the vice-county. A typical plan involves listing the hectads in the VC and deciding how many squares (monads or tetrads) you are aiming for in each, with an adjustment for partial hectads. Then you need to assess how many squares have already been well recorded and work out how many remain *to be* recorded.

Originally, we specified a minimum sample survey of five selected tetrads (three in Ireland) per full hectad or *pro rata*. But we'd much prefer it if people recorded in monads – and it is fantastic that so many are doing so. To achieve the equivalent re-recording rate statistically you need to survey 16 selected monads (9 in Ireland). Which is a lot and you need to be realistic about much can be done in the time available to you and your regular contributors. Remember - it is supposed to be fun!

If your numbers don't add up, you should ask others to help. You could, for example, ask local members who are not already contributing, or advertise for help in the April issue of *BSBI News* (deadline 1<sup>st</sup> March) or on your county webpage, or organise recording field meetings - or ask your Country Officer for other ideas.

## Assessing Atlas 2020 Coverage in your county I

The above analysis has already been done for you, assuming you use tetrads, on the DDb [My County Atlas 2020 Survey coverage](#) tab. You should set your own criteria, as the default settings<sup>1</sup> will not suit every vice-county. Even if you don't use tetrads, this table is still useful as it gives a refund percentage for the hectad. By default, this is the percentage of (the number of taxa recorded 2000+ / the number of taxa recorded pre-2000). You can tick a box which will change it to work out the percentage of (the number of taxa recorded 2000+ / the number of all taxa that have been recorded ever) if preferred. The map above, entitled "Taxa not refound since 2000 (at hectad scale)" represents the same analysis.

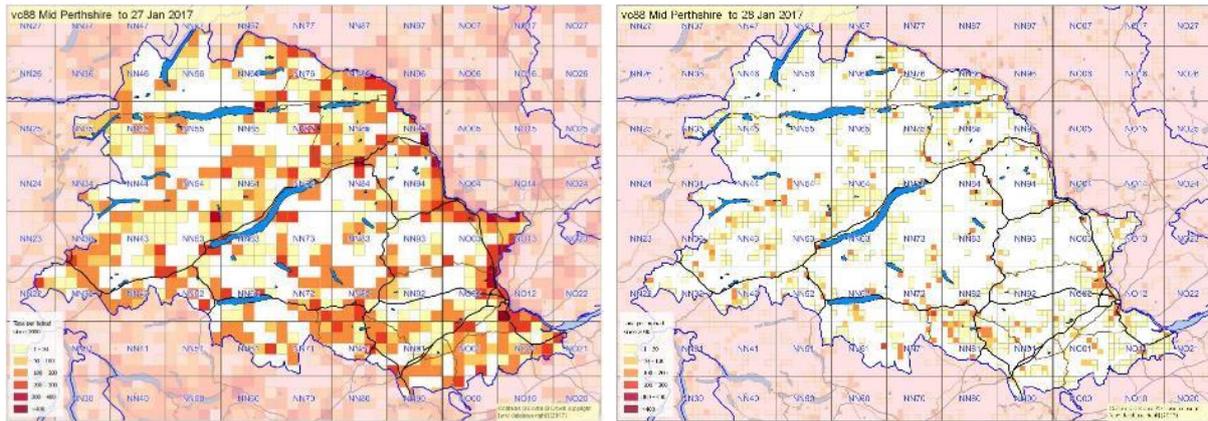
Be aware that if hectads were very well recorded pre-2000 it might be hard to match that, or if they were previously under-recorded they might now show up as being well recorded in comparison.

## Assessing Atlas 2020 Coverage in your county II

A simple way to assess Atlas 2020 coverage is to look at maps. The accompanying email (sent to those who receive *eNews* via email rather than downloading from the Publications page) includes links to two sets of Atlas 2020 coverage maps that [Andy Amphlett](#) has very helpfully prepared. One set shows the number of taxa recorded in each monad and the other shows the number of taxa recorded in each tetrad – for each county. You can download the maps for your county straight into your DropBox (if you have it) or as simple jpeg images. Click on the thumbnail image of your county, then once it is full screen, click the "Download" button, at the top right.

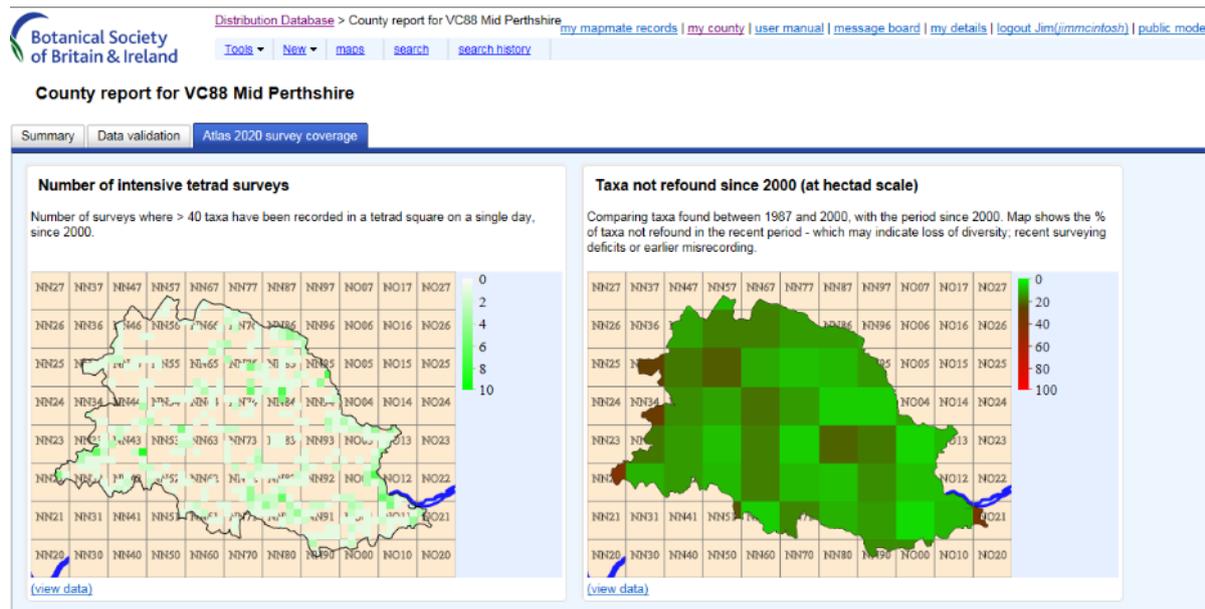
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<sup>1</sup> Default settings are five tetrads per hectad and for a *Well recorded tetrad*: Any tetrad where 100 or more species have been recorded ever AND 75% or more of them have been recorded post 2000.



### Assessing Atlas 2020 Coverage in your county III

The left-hand map on the DDb's [My County Atlas 2020 Survey coverage](#) tab shows the *Number of intensive tetrad surveys*. Generally, the more intensive surveys per hectad the better and any full hectads with few tetrad surveys probably need a closer look.



The right-hand map entitled *Taxa not refund since 2000*, gives a good overall indication of progress in each hectad. Generally, the lighter green the hectads are, the better. The same caveat mentioned [above](#) also applies here.

### Assessing Atlas 2020 Coverage in your county IV

A fascinating way to assess your Atlas 2020 coverage is to click [this link](#), (logging to the [DDb](#) first) change the "county/region" to your Vice-county and click *display results*. The query lists the number of hectads each taxon has been recorded in for 1987 - 1999 and post 2000. It is fascinating comparing

numbers of hectad records in these two date classes for each taxon. Differing taxonomy explains some apparent changes, but others might reflect an increase in recording effort or a lack of recording.

It is interesting to click the column header “1987-1999” once and you will see taxa that have only been recorded post 2000

at the top of the list (mostly neophytes and newly found natives). And if you click the column header “2000-” once, you will see taxa that were recorded 1987-1999 but not subsequently listed at the top.

The screenshot shows the 'Distribution Database' interface. The search criteria are: grid reference N002, exclude taxa with fewer than 0 records, earliest year 1987, recent record boundary year 2000, and county VC88 Mid Perthshire. The taxon list is displayed in three columns, showing species names and their record counts for specific years. For example, *Pinus jeffreyi* (2011) 0 1 and *Pinus sylvestris* (2016) 10 14 are listed at the top.

### Checking Atlas 2020 coverage in a hectad

This is a very simple check which anyone can do (even without a login): Just type the hectad grid reference in the [Grid Reference Lookup](#) tool.

Then click the [View Taxon list for hectad...](#) link.

Tick *sort recent records separately* and click *show taxon list*. Et voilà! All the taxa that haven't been re-

recorded since 2000 are in faint at the top of the list. And all the taxa that have been recorded post 1999 are in bold further down. The date is that of the most recent record, the first number is the number of records in the 1987-1999 date class and the second is the number of post 1999 records. Some of the taxa in faint may be common whilst others rare. All would be interesting refinds! You can then drill down to see the actual records of these taxa and plan fieldwork to re-record.

The screenshot shows the 'Map of N002' interface. It includes a search bar for the grid reference N002 and a 'look-up grid reference' button. Below the search bar, there is a map of the area around Perth, Scotland, with various locations and features labeled. The map is titled 'Map of N002' and shows the geographical context of the hectad.

### Atlas 2020 - Guidance for County Recorders

With three years to go, this is a good time to review the Atlas 2020 guidance, for useful snippets that perhaps you've previously overlooked. The guidance is all on the [Atlas 2020](#) page of the BSBI website. The most important is the [Atlas 2020 Guidance for Vice-county Recorders](#) and [Where and what do we](#)

[record?](#) Many of you will remember the series of green Atlas 2000 guidance booklets which were distributed during the Atlas 2000 project. These guidance booklets have been comprehensively updated and revised and are now available online. I recommend that all Atlas 2020 recorders read [Notes on identification works and difficult and under-recorded taxa](#) carefully.

### **Vice-County Annual Reports**

Thank you to everyone who has completed their 2016 VC Annual Report. I've enjoyed reading the Scottish reports as they have come in. They are a fascinating and impressive summary of botanical activity which will be of great interest to fellow recorders, referees, members and staff.

It is a great opportunity for County Recorders to report on progress with Atlas 2020, publications such as [Rare Plant Registers](#), checklists and Floras and tell us about any initiatives, such as local groups, leading field meetings, giving talks, working with other organisations and give brief details of exciting new finds.

We will aim to publish as many reports as we can - either online or in newsletters. So, if you haven't compiled yours yet, please do it now by completing and returning the form to your Country Officer!

### **BSBI Conferences and Workshops**

There are a number of Workshops and Conferences planned in March in Wales, Scotland and Ireland:

- There will be two Workshops on the DDB in Wales in 2017: one in the north at Coed-y-Brenin on 4<sup>th</sup> March, and the other in the south in Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Office in Brecon on 15<sup>th</sup> March. There are still a few more places available – please get in touch with [Polly Spencer-Vellacott](#), the BSBI Welsh Officer, for more details and to book.
- We plan to hold a residential Recording Workshop over the weekend 10-12<sup>th</sup> March at FSC Kindrogan, near Blairgowrie. Major themes will include Atlas 2020, validation and gap-filling. Apologies if you have asked me about this and I haven't got back to you - I will send Scottish Recorders and members a link to a booking webpage shortly.
- The BSBI Irish Conference will held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. Details soon, but the Conference is likely to include updates on all our projects, a talk on Irish orchids and mini-workshops on a range of plant ID topics! Watch the [Irish webpage!](#)

### **BSBI Photo Competition - update**

Last month I reported that all the images from the [2016 BSBI Photographic Competition](#) are available to view on the [BSBI's new Flickr photograph collection](#). Well this month I can report that the 2015 BSBI Photographic competition images have also been added. There are four new albums - one for each of the 2015 competition categories of *spring*, *summer*, *autumn* and *winter* in addition to the two 2016 categories – *Rare* and *Common*. Click on the album you'd like to look at. You can see them in a timed slide show, or as big or small photograph tiles, depending which of the three options you select at the top right. However, if you click on the first image that appears with either tiled option, you can

step through the images one at a time and see subtitles, including the species, location and photographer's name. The images look particularly good via the Flickr app.

The collections include some great photographs of less common species. If you would like record details of any of the images in your vice-county, please get in touch with the photographer directly.

### **New Year Plant Hunt**

We hope that you enjoyed the New Year Plant Hunt! More people took part this year than ever before, but fewer wild or naturalised plants were recorded in bloom compared to [last year](#):

- A total of 7,123 records of plants in bloom across Britain and Ireland.
- 492 different species were recorded, compared to 611 last year and 366 in 2015.
- More than 400 lists compiled by individuals, families and botanical recording groups.

BSBI's Head of Science [Dr Kevin Walker](#) has prepared this [analysis](#) of New Year Plant Hunt 2017 results. It's a great way to raise the profile of the BSBI and we have issued a [press release](#). [More...](#)

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

### **BSBI News & Views**

On the [BSBI News & Views](#) pages in January: nine posts about the above [New Year Plant Hunt](#), including accounts [by BSBI President John Faulkner](#), who found a plant which had him "stumped at first", and by [botanist Laura Jennings](#) who is also involved in Kew's Millenium Seed Bank project. In this month's [guest post by a BSBI Training Grant recipient](#), Pete Flood tells us how he became a "lifelong appreciator of all things trigonous and utricle-bearing" after attending Chris Metherell's four-day sedge ID course! Finally, we are delighted to report that one of our County Recorders has been awarded an MBE – more [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

### **BSBI eNews**

The current and recent back issues of BSBI *eNews* are available on the [Publications](#) page of the BSBI website. An email with a link to BSBI *eNews* is circulated to BSBI Recorders, Referees, staff and committee members. Please feel free to forward it to anyone (including non-members) who you think might be interested.

I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest and relevance to fellow readers. BSBI *eNews* is generally published on the 1st of each month so contributions should ideally reach me by the 21st of the preceding month. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles appearing in BSBI *eNews*.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer