



## 2019 Annual Reports from Irish VCs

This is a collation of the Annual Reports submitted by Irish Vice-counties for 2019 by April 2020. It is fascinating to read how different VCs tackled the final year of Atlas 2020 and about the highlights of their year. However, it is the great variety of other botanical activities carried out by Recorders and members that is most impressive. A huge thanks to all involved!

### South Kerry (H1)

Rory Hodd

A total of 2,378 records were collected in H1 during 2019. These records were mainly from continuing recording of under-recorded hectads by Paul Green, as well as Rough Crew outings on the Beara and Iveragh Peninsulas. Unfortunately, we were unable to cover the target areas in these outings due to bad weather, but we still contributed valuable records. As a result of the records arising from these activities and from across the VC, all hectads, bar a small number of offshore islands, that were impossible to reach, achieved the minimum level of acceptable coverage, although more work would be desirable in many of these hectads. A number of new county records were made, the most significant of these being the discovery of the fern *Stenogrammitis jamesonii* new to Europe (publication still in preparation). Also, of note was Paul Green's find of *Geranium columbinum* (Long-staked Crane's-bill) on the Dingle Peninsula.

### North Kerry (H2)

Rory Hodd

During 2019, 2759 records were uploaded to the DDb from H2. Many of these records were contributed by Paul Green as a result of targeted recording of under-recorded hectads. Records also came from a Rough Crew outing and from surveys of bogs in North Kerry, which contributed numerous new hectad records. All hectads in North Kerry achieved the minimum level of coverage targeted for Atlas 2020, even though coverage within most hectads is patchy. Three non-native species and two hybrids were recorded new to the vice county during 2019.

### West Cork (H3)

Clare Heardman

2019 was a busy year working to fill the remaining gaps in West Cork and achieve adequate coverage in all hectads across the VC. A total of 16,334 records for 2019 were added through a combination of individual recording (by myself and others), several local group outings, a 2-day Rough Crew trip to the mountains of the Beara Peninsula, dedicated aquatic plant recording and the import of databases, notably from NBDC & NPWS. There were too many interesting records to mention, but personal highlights included *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian) on Hare Island, the first time it had been seen in Co Cork since 1950; *Micranthes (Saxifraga) stellaris* (Starry saxifrage) found with the Rough Crew on Hungry Hill, the first time it had been seen in Co Cork in 125 years; many new hectads for stoneworts, including *Nitella confervacea* (Least Stonewort), a new VC record by Cilian Roden; and seeing *Eriophorum gracile* (Slender Cottongrass) at its only Co Cork site.

### East Cork (H5)

Edwina Cole & Finbarr Wallace

There are 14,289 records in the database for 2019. Sixty-four of these came through the New Year Plant Hunt while 384 came from NBDC vascular plant atlas data set. The remaining 13,841 records

were made by, or submitted to, VCRs directly and uploaded to the DDb by them. Re: Atlas 2020, at end of 2019, of the 34 hectads in the vice county, 27 had a refind rate of 60% or over. Of these, 22 had a refind rate of 70% or over. As far as possible, records made by, or submitted to, VCRs directly were validated as soon as possible after upload to the database. Of the 255 tetrads recorded in, 70 had over 100 records. The joint VCRs co-hosted a botanical woodland walk in Glenbower Woods in May 2019 as part of the Creative Killeagh Festival. A BSBI event was hosted in Youghal in July 2019 to address an area overlooked since the previous atlas. Fifteen people attended on the day and we visited 9 monads recording 233 species in total. A significant find during this event was *Rumex pulcher* (Fiddle Dock) which had only one pre-1969 record in the VC. In August 2019, nine members of the local Cork group visited Cronohill in the north of the VC. Here we surveyed four monads recording 156 species. This pushed the species recorded for hectad R90 over 200 which was the aim of the day. *Sedum praealtum* (Greater Mexican-stonecrop), a NCR for H5 was found in Rostellan in March 2019.

### County Waterford (H6)

Paul Richard Green

Andrew Malcolm contacted me to ask about a marsh-orchid that Ann Trimble had found in the Knockmealdown Mountains, at Knockaugarriff (S0554705557). By chance, I was heading over to Lismore the following day, 23 May. The marsh-orchid Andrew showed me, was *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* (Early Marsh-orchid), a new species for the hectad. An even better find, at the same site, was *Lycopodiella inundata* (Marsh Clubmoss), as there were hundreds, the largest population I have ever seen of this clubmoss. This is a new native species for the county, the nearest extant sites in Ireland being Co. Galway. Earlier that day, I had called into Stradbally Wood (X3597) where I found *Reynoutria (Fallopia) sachalinensis* (Giant Knotweed), the first county record away from Waterford City. In an arable crop at Durrow (X33369855), *Alopecurus myosuroides* (Black-grass) was a very abundant weed, 2nd county record. *Senecio minimus* (Toothed Fireweed) was found on the side of Waterford Greenway at Greenan (S44840781), NCR. While walking around Dunmore, I found *Eryngium planum* (Blue Eryngo), self-sown into a pavement crack, NCR. On 12th Sept. I met up with Andrew Malcolm and Megan Morris to look at some Sorbus that Andrew had found at Poulfadda. The first tree we looked at, was *S. hibernica* (Irish Whitebeam) on a ditch on the margin of a wood (S05590250); the second tree was *S. aria* (Common Whitebeam) self-sown on a ditch on the side of a track (S06170364), and the third was *Sorbus x liljeforsii* (Liljefors' Whitebeam) found in a wood (S05940343), NCR.

### South Tipperary (H7)

Rosaleen Fitzgerald

By May 2019 the objectives of finding at least 200 species in each hectad and refinding at least 60% of all species recorded historically post-2000 had been reached. I concentrated on bringing the hectad totals to at least 300 per hectad which had been reached in the last Atlas. This objective was achieved by year end. In August I spent a few pleasant days with Chris Preston when he came to record plants for the Aquatic project. We visited North and South Tipperary. I was delighted to see several plants new to me in North Tipperary, *Stratiotes aloides* (Water-soldier), *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae* (Frogbit), *Cicuta virosa* (Cowbane), several species of Potamogeton including *P. friesii* (Flat-stalked Pondweed), *P. gramineus* (Various-leaved Pondweed), *P. obtusifolius* (Blunt-leaved Pondweed), *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) and *Rumex maritimus* (Golden Dock). *R. maritimus* was also recorded for Sth Tipperary and I was able to confirm that having seen it in North Tipperary. On the second day we headed for Sth Tipperary. Here we concentrated on chasing up a couple of records I had made the previous year for *Stuckenia x suecica* (*Potamogeton x suecica*) (*S. filiformis x pectinatus*) in the river Suir at Newcastle and Golden. Over two days we followed the river Suir at several points, i.e. Ardfinnan, Newcastle, Cahir, Golden, Camus Bridge, Twoford Bridge and Knock Lofty and *Stuckenia x suecica* was confirmed by Chris Preston for each site. Besides *S. x suecica*, *Potamogeton x nitens* (*P.*

*gramineus x perfoliatus*) was recorded at several of these sites. At Rockwell College *Groenlandia densa* (Opposite-leaved Pondweed), *Potamogeton berchtoldii* (Small Pondweed), *Potamogeton natans* (Broad-leaved Pondweed) and *Stuckenia pectinata* (*Potamogeton pectinatus*) (Fennel Pondweed) were among the plants recorded. This trip was the highlight of my recording year in South Tipperary. Since the end of the fieldwork I have been doing all the computer work!!!

#### **County Limerick (H8)**

Sylvia Reynolds

As in recent years, fieldwork in Limerick was carried out with Julian Reynolds on some 21 days, while three friends (Mike Quirke, Tom Harrington and Paul Murphy) recorded on a further 23 days. The aims were mainly to fill gaps across the county and to update pre-2000 records for Atlas 2020. Good finds included *Alisma lanceolatum* (Narrow-leaved Water-plantain), *Salicornia dolichostachya* (Long-spiked Glasswort), *S. ramosissima* (Purple Glasswort) and *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush), as well as *Cardamine corymbosa* (New Zealand Bitter-cress) by Paula O'Meara and *Lepidium latifolium* (Dittander), *Euphorbia exigua* (Dwarf Spurge) and *Cannabis sativa* (Hemp) by our friends. Pre-2000 records updated included *Erophila glabrescens* (Glabrous Whitlowgrass) and *Carex canescens* (White Sedge), and a new site was found for *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort). In addition, Julian and I helped out again in Wicklow (H20) with recording for Atlas 2020. Validating Limerick records in the DDb was started in late 2019. Real problems encountered included having to assess records in external datasets and the many unreliable 'citizen science' records which had been sent from the National Biodiversity Data Centre to the BSBI for the DDb. Now that systematic recording has finished, there should be time to compile an annotated list of good botanical sites in Limerick and to work on a County Rare Plant Register.

#### **County Clare (H9)**

Stephen Ward

The objective in 2019 was to bring the percentage of species refound in each hectad to at least 60% of those recorded pre 2000. Of the 52 hectads in VC H9; this was achieved for 51 (98%), the exception being R79. 4,096 records were added to the database. For their assistance in the field or for kindly contributing records, I wish to thank: Phoebe O'Brien, Donncha O'Cathain, Ristead Crimmins, Louise Duignan, Joan Fallows, Fran Giaquinto, Sunniva Hanley, Mary Kelly, Daniel Kelly, Maria Long, Elaine O'Malley, Jennifer Pearson, Cilian Roden, Thomas McShane, Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington and Tanya Slattery. I wish to thank my co VC Recorder Sharon Parr for all her support, without which this level of recording would not have been achieved.

#### **County Kilkenny (H11)**

Roger Goodwillie

The final field season saw the inputting of almost 15,000 records, twice the figure of any previous year. The VC has 20 hectads (50% or more) and the average species total for these now appears to be 510. There are still 61 tetrads without a record at all, giving something to do in the field seasons to come. Digitising and validation have proceeded well but there are 900 target records to finish. Monocots and ferns have given me the most interesting finds this year. Pride of place must be *Carex appropinquata* (Fibrous Tussock-sedge) growing in a wooded fen near Freshford and far from the rest of its range except for an old record in Carlow. Then there was also *C. lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge) and *Koeleria macrantha* (Silver Hair-grass) as new county records and my first sightings of *Cystopteris fragilis* (Brittle Bladder-fern), *Polystichum aculeatum* (Hard Shield-fern) and *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented fern), none of which have been recorded since 1930. Old fruiting spikes of *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) added interest in two places in the dark days of November while *Plantago media* (Hoary Plantain) and *Berberis vulgaris* (Barberry) were memorable - representing older introductions.

I also had the first – but probably not the last – establishment of *Anemanthele lessoniana* (*Stipa arundinacea*) (Pheasant's-tail).

### **County Wexford (H12)**

*Paula O'Meara*

2019 proved to be a surprisingly productive year, with over 65,000 records collected. All remaining monads that had no Atlas 2020 records were visited; these were mostly partial monads on the peripheries of the county. Previously poorly recorded whole monads were revisited and brought over 100 species. The average species count for each of the 2,564 Wexford monads has now been brought up to 167. There were 34 NCRs found for the year, including 7 new dandelions collected by Alexis FitzGerald while visiting the county last year. Paul Green updated some spectacular natives for the county including *Matthiola sinuata* (Sea Stock) re-found at Morriscastle on the east coast in April, which had been extinct in Ireland since 1925. *Cytisus scoparius* subsp. *maritimus* (Prostrate Broom) was re-found on the south coast on Baginbun Head, last found here by H.C. Hart in 1882 and the first county record since the 1960s. At nearby Hook Head, *Lathyrus japonicus* (Sea Pea) was updated for the county from 1994 and was a second county record.

### **County Carlow (H13)**

*Lisa Dowling*

Using the post 2000 species lists on the BSBI website as a guide, the under-recorded hectads to the northeast and east of the county were targeted including S98 (Hacketstown) and S86 (Ballon). Paula O'Meara, Colin Gallagher and Paul Green also made significant contributions to Carlow recording in the final field season, focusing their efforts towards the south and east of the county, chiefly hectads, S74, S85 and S86. The BSBI database tallies 2,656 records for the County for 2019 including records transferred from National Biodiversity Data Centre database. Carlow was fortunate to have had two days' expertise allocated from the BSBI Aquatic Plant Project 2019 which included a well-attended field-based identification training workshop towards the end of August led by Nick Stewart along the River Barrow and at a local sand and gravel pit. A further day of recording aquatic habitats took place in the east of the County, along the River Slaney and an adjoining sand and gravel pit, with both days yielding an invaluable 177 aquatic plant records including a NCR *Chara virgata* (Delicate Stonewort). All 2019 records have been transferred to the BSBI database. Just under 50% of validation has been completed so far.

### **SE Galway (H15)**

*Micheline Sheehy Skeffington*

Since 2014, I had very many non-botanical commitments, often out of Galway. So 2019 was the first year I could devote fully to Atlas recording. Thanks to Committee for Ireland work and DDb, I targeted all remaining hectads that, firstly, had less than 60% of the pre-2000 records. Working seasonally from woodlands to grasslands and fens to bogs, I recorded in as diverse a set of monads as possible for each hectad, focusing on less-accessible sites in the VC. The recording count (10,000) was double that for 2018 (5,000) and four times those for the preceding years! All hectads are now >60%; ¼ are >90% of targets on DDb. I am validating/correcting rare/erroneous species, but cannot verify all records not known to me, often in large data-sets which also had many errors. This last year's intensive recording was fun as an ecologist finding new sites and it gave me insights on the rarer species in the region. My aim is to now focus on these target species and habitats to compile a data-base. I led two-day recording field excursions each year from ca 2010 which proved very useful and enjoyable. Key finds in 2019 included *Eriophorum gracile* (Slender Cottongrass) in the Slieve Aughty range, the second H15 record. New county records include: *Cuscuta epithymum* (Dodder) at Funshin More in Burren grassland, *Fumaria purpurea* (Purple Ramping-fumitory) in Kilchreest church car-park, *Veronica peregrina* (American Speedwell) twice and *Galinsoga quadriradiata* (Shaggy Soldier) in a Loughrea

flower-bed - the second record in Connaught! Four records of *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) and one of *V. polita* (Grey Field-speedwell) doubled the existing post-2000 tally.

#### **West Galway (H16)**

*John Conaghan*

Much of the surveying carried out in H16 during 2019 was concentrated in under-recorded hectads in the south and west of the vice-county. The ultimate aim of this recording was to achieve at least 300 species per hectad, which is more difficult than it sounds in hectads which are dominated by large expanses of blanket bog. The main recording event during 2019 was the four-day BSBI field-trip which was based in the town of Clifden. The meeting was well attended with a total of 39 people participating over the four days. The final tally of records collected over the 4 days was in the region of 5,500. During the meeting a large range of habitats were visited including blanket bog, heath, lakes, mountain cliff and sand dune/machair. Records were made for a range of rarer species including *Sesleria caerulea* (Blue Moor-grass), *Rhynchospora fusca* (Brown-beaked Sedge), *Eriophorum gracile* (Slender Cotton-grass), *Aristavena setacea* (*Deschampsia setacea*) (Bog hair-grass), *Mentha requienii* (Corsican mint), *Thalictrum alpinum* (Alpine meadow-rue), *Epilobium pedunculare* (Rockery willowherb) and *Juncus planifolius* (Broad-leaved rush). On the final day of the meeting, a group led by Robert Northridge discovered new populations of *Equisetum x trachyodon* (Mackay's horsetail) and *Trocdaris verticillata* (*Carum verticillatum*) (Whorled caraway) near Recess in the centre of the vice-county. These species are very rare in the vice-county, having previously been recorded from only a couple of sites.

#### **NE Galway (H17)**

*Chris Peppiatt*

- 1,910 records were made of 473 taxa from 20 hectads in 2019 – all of which are in MapMate.
- Records by Chris Peppiatt, Alexis Fitzgerald, Ciaran Bruton, John Conaghan, Peggy Sharkey, Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington, Cilian Roden and Eamonn Delaney.
- New species recorded: *Origanum vulgare* (Wild Marjoram), *Senecio squalidus* (Oxford Ragwort), *Erigeron floribundus* (*Conyza floribunda*) (Bilbao's Fleabane), *Cyclamen hederifolium* (Sowbread) and *Diplotaxis muralis* (Annual Wall-rocket).
- New sites for *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid), *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort), *Sparganium natans* (Least Bur-reed), *Anisantha sterilis* (Barren Brome) and *Galium sternerii* (Limestone Bedstraw).

#### **Offaly (H18)**

*Fiona Devery*

Due to the lower number of records from the hectads in the east of H18, this part of the county was prioritised for extra work in 2019. During the 2019 recording season in Offaly, 3202 records, covering 574 species, were collected and entered into the DDb. Sixteen hectads are now above 80% re-find level. Digitisation is complete and validation is well underway although some problems with validation arose with the addition of records from other databases. I help the local (Birr) Tidy Towns group with pollinator plants and general awareness raising and also other Tidy Town groups in Offaly through our Heritage Officer. I lead field trips with the Offaly Naturalist's Field Club which I find helpful in making contact with other interested people. Some of the more interesting records were:

- *Cochlearia Danica* (Danish Scurvygrass), a NCR on roadside verge in Birr,
- *Pyrola rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Wintergreen), third site,
- *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush),
- *Potamogeton obtusifolius* (Blunt-leaved Pondweed), a NCR,
- *Helosciadum* (*Apium*) *inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort) and
- *Potamogeton coloratus* (Fen Pondweed).

### **County Kildare (H19)**

*Declan Doogue*

All squares covered, including marginals mainly to 350 taxa or more per hectad.

### **East Mayo (H26)**

*Eamonn Delaney*

In 2019, I sought to target the remaining hectads within the vice county that needed recording. I interrogated the DDb and generated lists for each hectad, identifying commonly occurring species that were not recorded since the previous Atlas publication. This included the likes of ruderal species and commonly-occurring vernal species. To this end, I started recording in late March targeting areas of ruderal ground and broadleaved woodland habitats to record these species. Recording continued throughout the summer and autumn again targeting habitats and species that had not been recorded since the publication of the previous Atlas. All records collated and received in 2018 & 2019 were checked and digitised / entered into MapMate and synched to the DDb before December 31st 2019. Validation is ongoing, but I aim to have the majority of key validation features (hectad firsts, county singletons, errors and duplicates) finalised before mid-April 2020. I arranged to hold a two-day field recording event (May 18th and 19th 2019) near the north of the vice-county, targeting hectads and areas that I haven't had the chance to visit or record in the previous three years since I started recording in the County. I was assisted by John Faulkner and Dr John Conaghan during both days. The meetings were attended by a small number of local ecologists and wildlife enthusiasts.

### **County Leitrim (H29)**

*Eamon Gaughan*

Recording for Leitrim took place during all twelve months of the year with over 25,000 records collected. Tetrads with few, or no, up to date records were targeted. A target set at the beginning of last year was to have all hectads with a minimum of 75% refind rate and three tetrads in each well recorded (i.e. over 100 taxa) since 1999. This target has been largely achieved and, including new taxa, the average refind rate is well over 80%. New VC records were mainly non indigenous species; e.g. *Claytonia perfoliata* (Spring Beauty), *Gaultheria mucronata* (Prickly Heath), *Stachys x ambigua* (Hybrid Woundwort), *Polypogon viridis* (Water Bent), *Jasione montana* (Sheep's-bit), *Matricaria chamomilla* (Scented Mayweed), *Solidago gigantea* (Early Goldenrod). Perhaps more significant were species recorded for the first time since 1999. These include *Carex canescens* (White Sedge), *Moehringia trinervia* (Three-nerved Sandwort), *Drabella (Draba) muralis* (Wall Whitlowgrass), *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup), *Galeopsis bifida* (Bifid Hemp-nettle), *Potamogeton praelongus* (Long-stalked Pondweed), *Bromus racemosus* (Smooth Brome), *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear), *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed). My co-recorder Aoife Delany set up a Leitrim local group which recorded mainly in South Leitrim between April and September. The participants ranged in ability from near beginners to experienced recorders. The outings were educational and sociable and added many useful records to the database. We plan to continue with the outings starting on 5th April 2020. New participants are always welcome.

### **County Louth (H31)**

*Kate Harrington & Cliona Byrne*

Botanising in Louth in 2019 was primarily focused on re finding commoner species in a few stubborn hectads to bring them up to 70%, while also re-finding some of the more obscure records, for Atlas 2020. John Faulkner continued to gather records, while also mentoring and supporting Cliona and Kate as VCRs-in-training. Early in the year John prepared a 'Most Wanted' list of some interesting records, a few of which we hoped to find in time for Atlas 2020. Early in May, after some painstaking searching, a small population of *Diphysastrum alpinum* (Alpine Clubmoss) was refound on Clermont Cairn. Cliona made a further trip to this area in July re-finding *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) and *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort). A small but enthusiastic group joined the BSBI excursion on a sunny day

in June to a botanically-diverse calcareous fen near Monasterboice followed by a visit to a bog outside Ardee, both rare habitats in the county. On another county outing, Rory Hodd led the rough crew up Slieve Foye in July and saw some exciting species; *Cryptogramma crispa* (Parsley Fern), *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented Fern), *Rhodiola (Sedum) rosea* (Roseroot) and plenty of *Phegopteris connectilis* (Beech Fern). With 8 days left in 2019, John realised that there was one hectad remaining below the 70% re-recording threshold. With a short-list of candidate records from John, Cliona and Shane rose to the challenge and finished the year on a high by finding the required records and some to spare.

**Fermanagh (H33) and Cavan (H30)**

*Robert Northridge*

I did most of my recording in counties other than Fermanagh and Cavan. The highlight was Nick Stewart's few days in the county on the Aquatic Plant Project.

**East Donegal (H34)**

*Oisín and Mairéad Duffy*

The year 2019 for us in East Donegal (H34) really boiled down to two things, data entry and data validation. Throughout all previous years since becoming BSBI Vice-County Recorders we have held field-outings in East Donegal. However, due to the quantities of data from previous years and from neighbouring recorders, it seemed more pertinent to spend this time focusing solely on this deskwork. Over 10,000 records were added to the DDb for H34 in 2019, which, along with all the previous years' data, had to be validated. All hectads in East Donegal (H34) were up to the standard of 60% re-find rate of all post-2000 records. This is largely due to the combined efforts of our neighbouring Vice-County Recorders and ourselves. We would like to use this opportunity to extend our thanks to them for all the data they have provided over the last few years, which made our job a lot easier, especially when we were living a mere 5 hours away!

**West Donegal (H35)**

*Ralph Sheppard*

Records on My MapMate for H35 have gone up by 12,222 (27%) since last year, to 44,908, boosted by an unknown number of records from DDb. Efforts in 2019 were targeted at interesting species, old records to be repeated etc. All records (as far as I know) are in the DDb. Validation is still incomplete, but should be done by the deadline. I did two days of Wetland training with Nick Stewart, which was excellent. I put some of what I learnt into practice, but could have done more. Nick did great work in surveying many important sites. No official BSBI field meetings took place in H35, but as in most recent years, I led joint outings with An Taisce: -

1) Sheskinmore Nature Reserve (G69) on 22 June, with 33 people attending.

2) Carrickfinn (B72) on 13 July, with over 50 people.

Problems: as before, a lack of other botanists. With Oisín and Mairéad having moved south from H34, I am alone in the county. There are a few people who visit as day-trippers or holiday-makers, but getting them together is next to impossible. I've given tasks to those who seem up for a challenge, but there has been little to show for it. The notable exception is Robert and Hanna Northridge, who have kept me busy with a steady flow of records. If the outcome above seems to be satisfactory, I felt in practice that I did less than I should have in 2019.

**Tyrone (H36)**

*Ian McNeill*

At the end of the 2019 recording season, I am pleased to report that the coverage of Co Tyrone was in a satisfactory state. The average 'score' per hectad for the decade 2011-2020 was just over 70%. This score expresses the total species recorded 2011-2020 as a percentage of the historical total. All

records up to 31 December 2019 have been digitised and transferred to DDb. Validation is well under way. The 'my county' suggestions have proved highly useful, especially with regard to disparity between grid ref and VC. Also 'first county records' threw up some Tyrone first county records that were actually strays from other counties. I led a field outing to the Tyrone shores of Lough Neagh on 3 August – useful, but we mostly failed to find the target species that I had hoped to re-find. Probably the continuing story of decline in habitat quality of the Lough shore. On 9 September we were back at Lough Neagh, under the tutelage of Nick Stewart, concentrating on aquatics. On 10 September, again with Nick Stewart, we visited several small lakes in S Tyrone. Nick agreed that there was overall a feeling of disappointment with the botanical interest of the two days. Yet the best new plant of 2019 was found on 9 September, at Washing Bay, at the SW corner of Lough Neagh. But it wasn't an aquatic! One of our number, Suzanne Belshaw, spotted a rare clover that turned out to be *Trifolium resupinatum* (Reversed Clover) – a first for Tyrone, and very rare in Ireland. Probably introduced as a contaminant in grass-seed.

### County Armagh (H37)

John Faulkner

Most of my recording in 2019 was in Irish VCs other than Armagh, especially VCH31 (Louth), so just 1,800 records for VCH37 were added to the DDb. Of the effort within the VC, much was geared towards updating records for aquatics as part of the Irish Aquatic Plants Project. Anything else was more or less incidental.

### County Down (H38)

Graham Day

During 2019 an emphasis was placed on recording in hectads that had the lowest number of records. Use was made of species lists to identify taxa that really should be there, but hadn't yet been recorded. In late April the first of several visits was made to Banbridge. *Polystichum aculeatum* (Hard Shield-fern) was a good find by the river, as was a large colony of *Fumaria purpurea* (Purple Ramping-fumitory) at an amenity site. In early May, part of the Connswater, Knock and Loop rivers in Belfast was walked. The location has had extensive planting and significant efforts have been made to improve biodiversity. *Equisetum x litorale* (Shore Horsetail), *Glyceria maxima* (Reed Sweet-grass), *Carex pseudocyperus* (Cyperus Sedge), *C. riparia* (Greater Pond-sedge) and *C. acutiformis* (Lesser Pond-sedge) were found in marshy areas. But unfortunately, *Lagarosiphon major* (Curly Waterweed) was completely dominating a large pond. In early June a visit to the Comber Greenway at Knock to confirm *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling) also produced *Thlaspi alliaceum* (Garlic Penny-cress) and *Vulpia fasciculata* (Dune Fescue). In August Jacqueline Gray sent photos of *Adonis annua* (Pheasant's-eye) from Knockbracken, a probable stray from a seed-mix, and a probable first for Ireland. In mid-August recording was on the Banns Road to Lough Shannagh in the Mourne. *Sparganium angustifolium* (Floating Bur-reed) was seen in a bog pool and *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented Fern) at the edge of the lough, but perhaps the most pleasing find was a small colony of *Neottia cordata* (Lesser Twayblade) on the slopes near the lough.

NCR = New County Record

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#### In this document:

**26 VC reports, by 24 VCRs, and taken from a total of 29 responses to the questionnaire.**

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