



Perhaps you've not heard too much about Atlas 2020 so far. (Though Country Officers have been banging on about it for a while.) However all that is about to change – starting now!!

The talk is in two parts:

1. A Brief introduction to Atlas 2020
2. Practical suggestions for help with fieldwork and data entry for Atlas 2020

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Atlas 2020: The Challenge!

- ▶ The BSBI Recording Strategy:
Record all vascular plants in at least a sample of tetrads (or better) in every hectad in every VC throughout Britain & Ireland between 2000–19
- ▶ With just 6 field seasons between now and 2020 – A Big Challenge!
- ▶ With the overall aim of providing updated data, distribution maps and assessing changes in species' distributions between 2000 and 2019!

If you'd like more info on any of the slide bullets – read the correspondingly numbered notes:

1. Its not entirely true that we haven't said anything about Atlas 2020. After all it was THE main target of the BSBI Recording Strategy which we published in 2010.
2. Its going to be a Big Challenge – especially in upland and remote areas and where there are few botanists on the ground – like Ireland (and Scotland). But I hope BSBI Recorders and members will rise to it and enjoy it. 6 seasons left doesn't sound long but many recorders have already made significant progress (see later).
3. We held our first Atlas 2020 Planning Meeting recently and much of what I report here comes from that.

Atlas 2020: Co-ordination

- ▶ Coordination & support mainly by existing staff
We are seeking funds to make Irish Officer f/t
- ▶ An overall champion for the project is needed –
(we have advertised for a project co-ordinator)
- ▶ And a paid p/t post to work with that volunteer

1. Irish & Scotland covered by their respective officers (but even so delivering full hectad coverage will be a huge challenge). Maria and Peter Stroh undertaking a part time support role in Ireland & England respectively.
2. We need people to champion, enthuse and co-ordinate across Britain & Ireland – much as David Pearman & Trevor Dines did for Atlas 2000.
3. And we are investigating potential funding for a part-time post to work with the volunteer to ensure the success of the partnership between BSBI staff and volunteers.

Atlas 2020: Outputs

- ▶ Maps will be published online or possibly on CD
- ▶ A separate publication for Ireland?
- ▶ Main output will be a book on key findings
- ▶ Other major outputs include updated Red Lists and change analyses

1. Unlikely to get funding for publication of maps in UK. In any case we think the need for a UK printed atlas is much less of a priority this time around, and we should invest our resources in interpreting the records rather than seeing them as an end in themselves. Online pub allows data to be displayed more dynamically, for example, at different scales, within different date-classes, with the 'oldest-records on top' or by displaying status categories in different ways. CDs – like the last atlas – but which could be purchased and downloaded onto PCs.
2. An Irish publication could emphasise interpretation and analysis of change rather than just distribution maps (as arguably Ireland has had the most change in the last 20 years)?
3. Perhaps a 'State of British & Irish Plants in 2020' outlining the main changes since the first and second atlases with a discussion of the driving forces.

Atlas 2020: Taxonomic scope

- ▶ All vascular plants and charophytes species
- ▶ Including all alien species (like Atlas 2000)
- ▶ Records for hybrids, critical/difficult taxa will be accepted & positively encouraged
- ▶ But at least for criticals will not be compulsory

Atlas 2020 and other projects

- ▶ The Irish Species Project 2014/5 will be launched on Sunday. A great opportunity to record in the monads or tetrads it takes you to
- ▶ We agreed to postpone repeat of the Local Change / Monitoring Scheme until 2000+
- ▶ The aspiration is still for all vice-counties to produce a draft County Rare Plant Register

How will Atlas 2020 relate to other projects?

1. The Irish Species Project aims to refind old records of populations of 8 species that are thought to be declining in Ireland.
2. MS /LC was due to be repeated in 2019. It was agreed at recent planning meeting to postpone so recorders are not distracted in the final year of the project.
3. There is great advantage in producing even a rough draft based on existing records, and knowing *which species* are (or might be) RPR species, as updated records for them can be collected whilst Atlas recording. This especially true where Recorders may be new in post and might not yet fully appreciate which species are locally rare and scarce.

Atlas 2020: Promotion

- ▶ Given the size of the challenge, promotion will be important to encourage all BSBI Recorders & members (and non-members?) to participate

So we will....

- ▶ publish regular news and updates on Atlas 2020 in BSBI news
- ▶ have an Atlas 2020 slot at every major indoor meeting – this is the very first!
- ▶ and set up a special Atlas 2020 page on the BSBI website!

1. It might have seemed a little strange that our main project of the decade has barely been mentioned up to now. I guess we were concentrating on other things (like the Threatened Plant Project). However with just 6 seasons left – it crucially important we step up the publicity, promotion and encouragement.
2. The first article will appear in the forthcoming BSBI News. Particular guidance and issues relevant to Ireland could be published in the Irish VCR Newsletter that Maria produces; or more general material in the Irish Botanical News.
3. I'd be pleased if Atlas2020 might be added as a standing item to all Country Committees agendas and annual meetings.
4. A special Atlas 2020 webpage will contain new guidance e.g. Strategy for achieving complete hectad coverage. As well as Reviewed & Updated material e.g. Atlas 2020 Instructions, Data Entry Guidelines, Guidance on Pressing & Collecting specimens.

Atlas 2020: Where is Ireland at?

From analysis of the DDb:

- ▶ 10% of hectads in Ireland are well recorded
 - i.e. have post 2000 tetrad+ records for $\frac{2}{3}$ or more of all taxa ever recorded in them
- ▶ 9% of hectads are moderately well recorded
 - i.e. have post 2000 tetrad+ records between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of all taxa ever recorded in them
- ▶ 800 hectads in Ireland need more recording
- ▶ However this understates progress as many records have yet to reach the DDb

1&2. In total 200 hectads or 20% are well or moderately well recorded. A good start. However many of these are in particular vice-counties – where the recorders have been beavering away quietly.

3. In total there are about 1000 hectads in Ireland (more or less).

4. Some records are still on paper awaiting computerisation. Some are in MapMate awaiting (successful) synching to the hub, whilst others are in different databases and need to be forwarded to the DDb for direct import. It would be helpful if Recorders would forward their records and check that they have been satisfactorily received at the DDb.

Atlas 2020: Local Plans of Action

Every Vice-county needs a local plan of action –if you haven't already got one!

- ▶ How many hectads do you have to survey?
- ▶ How many survey days can you undertake pa?
- ▶ Given each square takes ± 1 day, how many squares will you aim to survey in each hectad?
- ▶ Which recording unit will you use: tetrads or monads?
- ▶ How you are going to select those squares?

1,2 &3. There is a calculation to do based on number of hectads, number of days survey effort available (yours and any local or visiting members) to work out how many squares in each hectad might be feasible. Three would be a good minimum. Five would be great. But needs to be realistic, enjoyable and not stress out Recorders. We want happy Recorders!

3. Ideally lowland squares will be visited twice in a season – early & mid, mid & late, or early & late – to get good coverage. Less important for upland, montane and remote squares.

4. I guess most folk will have decided this already. But if not see the Sampling guidance on the BSBI website for guidance and discussion on this.

5. Arguably your selection of squares should encompass the range of habitats represented in the entire hectad. But there are other ways to select and some ideas are set out in the forthcoming BSBI news.

Atlas 2020: Help with fieldwork

Members can help recorders by attending Atlas 2020 recording field meetings



.. and possibly even help organise and run them.

In the run-up to *Atlas 2020*, we ask field meeting secretaries and VC recorders to organise the field meeting programmes to help with Atlas 2020 recording and in particular to focus on recording under-worked areas. And we ask members to support Recorders by booking on them and participating.

Atlas 2020: Help with fieldwork

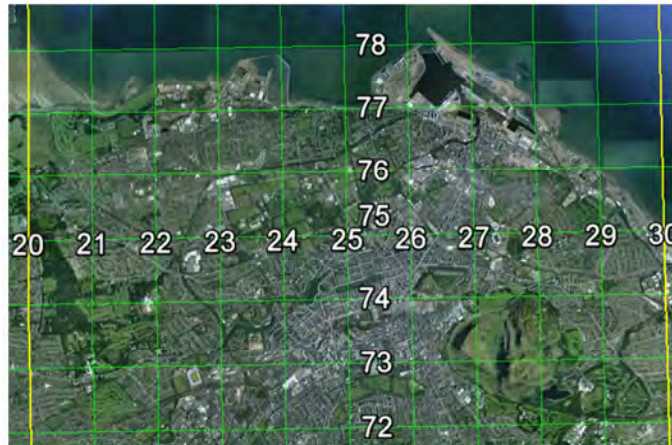
Members can help Recorders with Atlas 2020 by offering to survey squares whilst on holiday...



Members might like to contact the Irish Officer (or VC Recorder) and they will be delighted to suggest where you could go on your holidays to help with under-recorded hectads/areas.

Atlas 2020: Help with fieldwork

Members can help Recorders with Atlas 2020 by adopting a local square to survey themselves.



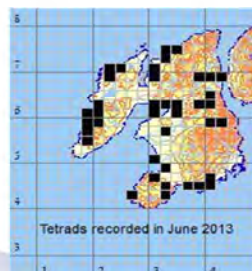
Recorders might like to advertise for help in specific (perhaps remote, or upland or perhaps just any!) hectads.

And members might like to volunteer to survey these hectads or perhaps the one in which they live.

The important thing with any of these ideas is that they must be arranged with the VC Recorder (to avoid duplication) and undertaken using the Recorder's local recording protocol and preferred recording card, etc.

Atlas 2020: Recording Weeks

- ▶ The Recorder of Islay needed help with his VC
- ▶ A large self-catering farmhouse was booked in June last summer and cook employed.
- ▶ 12 BSBI members went out in groups of 3s & 4s
- ▶ We collected 6,200 records across Islay
- ▶ Good coverage was achieved in 36/180 tetrads.
- ▶ Much learning &
- ▶ Great fun



Every year we organise a residential recording week in Scotland. Last year....

6. We take specimens back to look at in the evenings. Much learning amongst the recorders and the members (mostly enthusiastic beginners or intermediates). And it was great for recorders (who are by definition a disparate bunch) to spend quality time together!

An idea that the Cfl might consider to help with Atlas 2020 coverage in Ireland?

Atlas 2020: Flying Squad

We will organise a 'flying squad' to target particularly challenging areas



Of course you could say that much of Ireland (like Scotland) is particularly challenging! And many recorders have asked for help with extensive, remote & mountainous terrain. Problem is exacerbated by the lack of botanists (locally) who can cope with such terrain.

So the flying squad idea is another which Cfl might like to consider. (Again obviously in liaison with Recorders.)

Members should get in touch if they would like to be part of this squad.

Atlas 2020: Financial support

- ▶ A small budget is available to assist with travel costs for recording, some contributed by BSBI & some from the Wild Flower Society
- ▶ A Scottish recorder got funds from their local Natural History Society to employ a contractor to help in remote areas of his VC
- ▶ We are bidding for funds from the Cairngorms National Park to promote Atlas 2020 recording in their vast area.
- ▶ We will also ask the agencies.



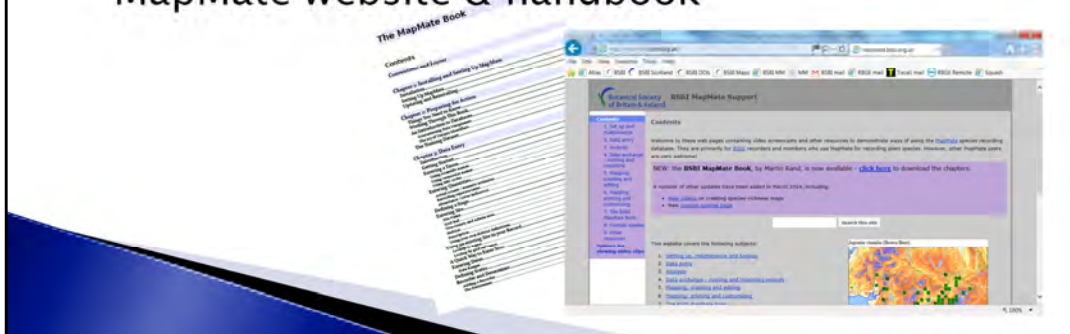
A recurring question is that of financial help. Here are some ideas:

1. Recorder WFS will look kindly on proposals which can involve their members. If you would like to bid for assistance, please contact Paul Smith (pa.smith@mypostoffice.co.uk). Your application does not need to be very long, but should explain why this will be efficient use of these limited funds. For example, you might be going to some remote places, more than one person will go on each trip, or the recording will complement other projects.
2. OK Maria tells me you don't have NHSs in Ireland but there must be other groups that might (physically or financially) support Atlas 2020 recording – like Field Clubs, Local Record Centres, Heritage and Biodiversity Officers.
3. Obviously you can't apply to the Cairngorm NP in Ireland, but it gives you an idea of the possibilities. You could ask any nature conservation landowners or individual landowners who are keen to support nature conservation. Other conservation managers might support Atlas 2020 recording on their land. We got a week's free s/c accommodation for a week for 12 recorders on an estate in wealthy, private ownership, in exchange for undertaking a vascular plant survey of the land.

Atlas 2020: Help with Data Entry

Another recurring request is for help with data entry:

- ▶ We will organise more MapMate workshops
- ▶ We will arrange more one to one MM support
- ▶ We will continue to develop and update the MapMate website & handbook



Atlas 2020: Help with Data Entry

Here are some other ideas from Scotland:

- ▶ Two recorders have found volunteers to enter their records into MapMate.
- ▶ Another even pays a contractor a small fee!
- ▶ We've appointed younger joint recorders in a couple cases to help senior recorders
- ▶ Local Record Centres have helped elsewhere



1. If any ordinary members would like to help recorders with data entry – please get in touch with Maria who will be able to pair you up with a recorder in need of help.



The BSBI would be nothing without its highly motivated and committed VC Recorders and members.

I'd like to take opportunity to **thank you** all for your contribution to the society and look forward to a successful and enjoyable Atlas 2020 in Ireland!