



Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre

Annual Report 2015-16

May 2016

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NATURE PARTNERSHIP

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1. Introduction

The Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) is one delivery workstream within the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP). Other delivery workstreams within the GLNP are: coordinating the Nature Strategy, Geodiversity Strategy and Local Sites system. LERC is a streamlined Local Record Centre with core functions relating to data collation and provision. All the workstreams within the GLNP dovetail together and work closely but they are considered separate. As such wider functions such as Local Sites are not included within LERC functions or included in this report. For more information on the GLNP see www.glnp.org.uk

LERC formally became a Local Record Centre in October 2007, when the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership (LBP - the predecessor organisation to the GLNP) was officially constituted; it operated informally before this time.

2. Aims and objectives

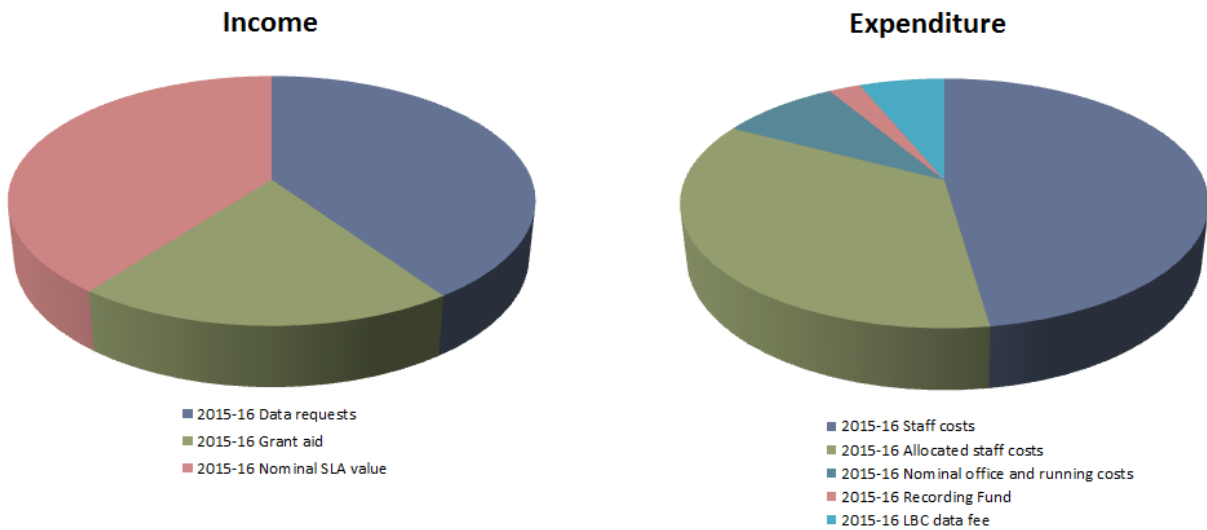
The vision for LERC is to be: *The trusted source of wildlife, habitat and geological information for Greater Lincolnshire*

The rest of this report breaks down this vision into various sections. Some sections of this report are required for ALERC accreditation reporting requirements.

3. Income and expenditure

The GLNP accounts for the 2015-16 financial year are subject to approval by the Partners at the October 2016 Forum. The financial audit is yet to be concluded as it is conducted externally and organised by the GLNP hosting organisation, the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT). The provisional LERC proportioned finances are shown in the pie charts below.





Income is higher when compared to the previous reporting period despite a reduction in grant aid. This is due to an increase in the number of data requests received and a small increase in nominal SLA value.



Expenditure is slightly higher when compared to the previous reporting period due to the Lincolnshire Bird Club (LBC) data fee (reimbursement for inclusion of LBC data in data requests) and an increase in staff costs (including allocated staff costs). These 'in kind' staff costs form a significant proportion of expenditure. These are the time contributions of other Team members as described in 4 below. To discount their contributions would under-represent expenditure but to include them in the direct staff costs would constitute double counting as there are separate funding streams.



4. Staff compliment

Other members of the Team within the GLNP contribute to LERC as part of their role. The contribution of these staff to LERC has been estimated and brings the averaged staff complement to **1.54 annual full time equivalents** according to the following breakdown:

- LERC: 1
- GLNP manager: 0.10
- Local Sites: 0.44

5. Relationships

5.1. Data users

Ecological consultants continue to be the largest user group by number of data search requests, accounting for 90% of the total requests received. Smaller proportions of requests come from members of the public, students, charities and directly from local authorities. No significant issues have been raised in this reporting period. The majority (97%) of data requests were fulfilled within five days of the initial enquiry, with all requests completed within 20 days in line with the Environmental Information Regulations.

At the end of the reporting period Natural England cancelled their Memorandum of Agreements with LERCs and will no longer receive data unless it is specifically requested.

Thirteen datasets were uploaded to, or updated on, the NBN Gateway in this reporting period. Download figures are presented below, with figures and percentage for the previous reporting period also shown.

Purpose	Records downloaded (2014-15)	Records downloaded (2015-16)	Percentage change
Personal interest	2,715,966	3,083,796	+14%
Educational purposes	676,281	2,335,073	+245%
Research and scientific analysis	676,281	757,495	+12%
Media publication	2	0	-100%
Conservation NGO work	175,517	269,340	+53%
Professional land management	35,306	19	-100%
Data provision and interpretation (commercial)	15,215	409	-97%
Data provision and interpretation (non-profit)	7	1,670	+23,757%
Statutory work	263,435	1,286,461	+388%



5.2. Data providers

The majority of data is provided by the county recorders, LWT and LBC. The recording community within Greater Lincolnshire is well represented by the Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union who were fundamental in setting up and supporting LERC.

A data exchange agreement with the People's Trust for Endangered Species was signed during the reporting period, resulting in over 1000 records being added to the database, with more to follow over the coming years.

Details of the current data exchange agreements with data providers are listed in Appendix 1.

5.3. Steering Group

LERC's direction and work is guided and scrutinised by the GLNP Steering Group which meets quarterly. Since the inception of the Partnership (the LBP then the GLNP) the Steering Group has been supportive of LERC and the work that it does.

In this reporting period the Steering Group has heard updates from staff representatives and discussed various issues including the project involving digitisation of historic data, the cancellation of the Natural England MoA and the commencement of the Anglian Water SLA for data provision.

The GLNP currently has 49 Partners, details of which can be found on the website at <http://glnp.org.uk/partnership/the-partners/>. The GLNP Team has good relationships with Partners and seeks to engage them further.

5.4. Hosting organisation

The LWT hosts LERC and the GLNP. The current agreement is that the GLNP will pay 8% of total costs as a fee to LWT for the facilities provided. These facilities include office space and IT equipment, as well as financial and HR services. In the 2015-16 financial year this fee was £8983. The overall relationship with LWT is very positive.

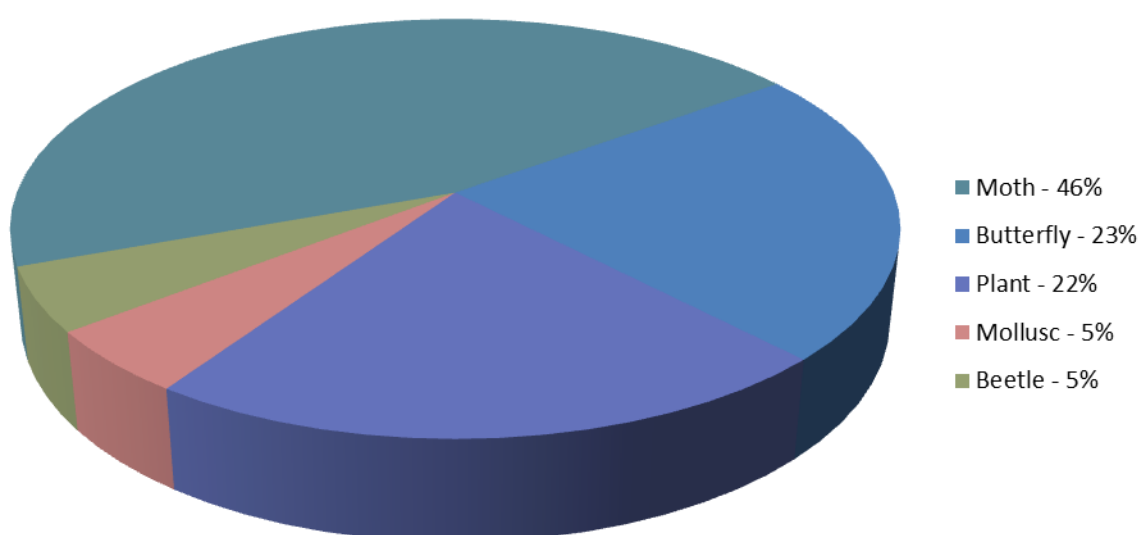


6. Data overview

6.1. Summary of data input

In this period 831,246¹ individual records have been added to the database bringing the total to 3,527,568. This represents an actual increase of 4% and is primarily due to updates from county recorders and the results of the first round of the digitisation project. This project involves the extraction of records from the archive of paper data held by LERC and is being carried out by an external contractor. The initial round of data digitisation produced 20,000 records, with a conservative estimate of 100,000 for the complete archive of paper records.

Data input by taxonomic group (top 5)



6.2. Summary of data quality

Data verification continues and was undertaken for various groups including:

- Plants
- Spiders
- Pseudoscorpions
- Moths
- Bugs

¹ This figure includes re-imported data i.e. data that already existed in the database that was re-imported for technical reasons. As such, this figure does not accurately represent the number of records **received** in the reporting period. The **total figure** quoted however does accurately represent the number of records in the database at the end of the reporting period.

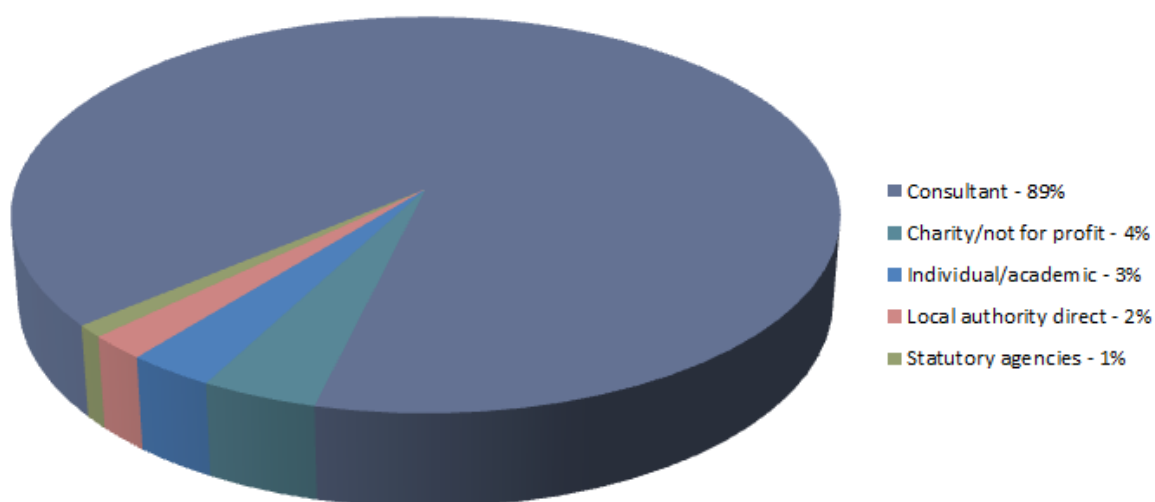


Verified data now makes up 51% of the records in the LERC database. This represents an increase of 3% compared to the previous reporting period. The proportion of verified data will rise to 68% when verification of LBC data has been completed.

6.3. Summary of data use

A total of 341 requests were received this reporting period. The pie chart below gives a breakdown of data users.

Data request by customer type

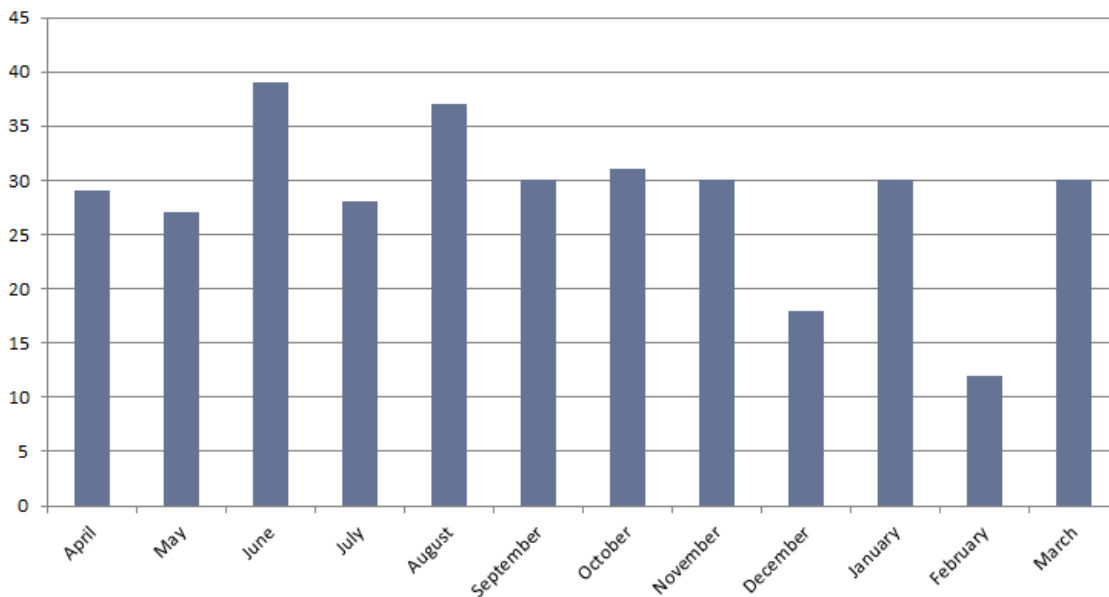


Whilst consultants are the most frequent data users, other users may request much larger amounts of data very infrequently - actual data use as represented by amount of data is difficult to determine.

The graph below shows the frequency of data requests by month. This reporting period saw an 8.5% increase in the number of data requests fulfilled compared to the previous reporting period. It is difficult to assign the variation in number of requests over the last three years to any particular factor – the broad increase in requests since LERC’s inception appears to have slowed, and the number of requests may now be more directly linked to economic factors e.g. house building.



Frequency of data requests



6.4. Avenues for the future

This reporting period saw the preparation of documents for renewal of ALERC accreditation. LERC will be the first Local Record Centre to undergo this process (being the first to achieve accreditation) and has worked closely with ALERC to trial the procedures involved.

The following year continues the data digitisation project which will see the backlog of historic information held by LERC made available electronically. This will add a significant number of records to the database, fulfilling a number of LERC’s objectives.

7. Local Recording Fund

The aim of the Local Recording Fund is to promote and encourage environmental recording in Greater Lincolnshire. It is against this broad aim that applications are assessed.

The fund was created from a formalisation of the already existing support made available with monies made through data requests.

Six applications to the fund were received in the reporting period, with a total of £1595.85 awarded to the recording community.



8. Objectives 2014-2018

The following objectives are intended to fall in with LERC objectives as set out in the GLNP Business Plan 2014-2018. See the Business Plan for more details.

Action	Assessment for 2015-16	Priority for 2016-17 ²
Provision of biological and geological data on request	<i>341 data requests fulfilled in the reporting period.</i>	High
To increase the number of new records in the database by 35,000 a year	<i>831,246 records added to the database in the reporting period.</i>	High
To increase the coverage of records in the database by targeting areas with less than 100 records per 2km ²	<i>As at the end of the reporting period, there are 282 tetrads with less than 25 records, a reduction of 42.</i>	High
To increase the number of verified records in the database by 2.5% year on year (baseline: 1,200,000)	<i>At the end of the reporting period the number of verified records stood at 1,835,508. This represents a 3% increase.</i>	High
Build relationships with recorders and recording groups	<i>An additional data exchange agreement signed. Work begun on producing atlases and checklists for various groups.</i>	High
Review the Local Recording Fund to ensure it is fit for purpose	-	Low
Re-apply for accredited status	<i>Accreditation documents reviewed, prepared and submitted to ALERC.</i>	High
Promote the use of LERC to relevant groups e.g. developers and their agents, consultants	<i>There was an increase of 8.5% in the number of data requests completed compared to the previous reporting period.</i>	High
Proactive species surveys	-	Low
Analysis of records to show trends in distribution or abundance	<i>Work begun on producing atlases and checklists for various groups.</i>	Low

² Based on the 2016 priority



9. Conclusions

This reporting period represents the busiest in terms of data provision for LERC, with a record number of requests being answered.

The increase in data requests in this reporting period suggests that LERC continues to be seen as *The trusted source of wildlife, habitat and geological information for Greater Lincolnshire*.

Further verification of current holdings and digitising of the historic information held will ensure this vision remains for the future. By working with local recorders and recording groups, we can also ensure that the information held by LERC remains up to date and relevant.



Appendix 1: Current data exchange agreements

Organisation/individual	Species group	Year signed
Allan and Annette Binding	Butterflies (County) Araneae (County) Hemiptera (County) Orthoptera Hymenoptera Coleoptera Moths	2006
Bob Merritt	Freshwater invertebrates	2006
Chris de Feu	Slugs	2006
Chris Manning	Mammals (County)	2006
Colin Smith	Moths (County)	2006
Lapwings Consultants Board of Trustees	Various	2006
Neil Pike	Woodlice, Centipedes and Millipedes (County)	2006
Richard Chadd	Freshwater invertebrates (County)	2006
Roger Labbett	Various	2007
Lincolnshire Badger Group	Badgers	2008
Lincolnshire Bat Group	Bats (County)	2010
Alan Phillips	Hymenoptera (County)	2011
Brian Redman	Orthoptera (County)	2011
David Sheppard	Sawflies (County)	2011
British Dragonfly Society	Odonata (County)	2012
British Plant Gall Society	Various	2012
Froglife	Various	2013
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Various	2013
RSPB	Various	2013
Sustrans	Various	2013
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (as lead body for Humberhead Levels NIA)	Various	2013
Lincolnshire Bird Club	Birds (County)	2014
National Trust	Various	2015
People's Trust for Endangered Species	Mammals	2016

County = County dataset (covers Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire)

Most data flow to and from national schemes is via the county recorders. A proportion of the data sent by the county recorders will have been generated by ad hoc records received by LERC and digitisation of records undertaken by LERC.



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May 2016

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