



RECORD DETECTIVE

One of the jobs for volunteers and staff at RECORD is entering wildlife observations (records) into our system and taking a look over those that are there already. As we do this, we check to see if they make sense or not, sometimes there's something unusual about them, which involves a bit of detective work to check out.

Why might a record be wrong?

It might be that somewhere along the way the information has been transferred wrongly, for example not being able to read someones handwriting or a computer system error.

What should be in it?

A wildlife record is a record of a species being found at a certain place, on a certain date. This means it needs to have the name of the species (or type), the date, who found it and where. There might also be other details. Find out more about what makes up a record [here](#).

What sorts of things might be wrong?

DUPLICATE: The record appears more than once in the system

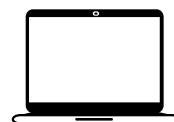
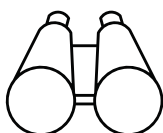
WRONG GRID REFERENCE: The record is for a location where that species is very unlikely to be found

WRONG DATE: If it's in the future it can't be correct! Some species (like migratory bird) aren't here all year, so if they turn up at the wrong time, this is suspicious too

WRONG SPECIES: The record is for a species that's very unlikely to occur here (for example it only lives in other countries). Some species also share a common name, for example a 'Sycamore' can be a tree or a moth. This is why its important to know the species name.

MORE THAN 1 RECORD TOGETHER: If there's something different about the observations, they should appear in separate records. For example... '1 male and 1 female' or '1 adult and 1 juvenile' should be split up into 1 record for the male, 1 for the female etc. Records should also only have a single date, if you saw it on more than 1 date, this should again be more than 1 record

MIXED UP CATEGORIES: the information is correct but put into the wrong place, for example the 'Sex / stage' is put into the 'Abundance' category





RECORD DETECTIVE

What happens if we find something?

Some things are easy to correct, for example moving information into the right categories or splitting records up if they should be more than 1. If we're suspicious about a common species name, we'll check the rest of the record for any clues, for example if its a 'Sycamore' caught in a moth trap, its more likely to be a moth than a tree! If its a duplicate, we'll check very carefully then delete one of them. We can also check back to find the original document the data came from, to make sure its been copied across correctly. One of the reasons its really useful to know who recorded something is so that we can get in touch with you to check information from the observation.

A CHALLENGE FOR YOU...

Learn the skills you'd need to be a RECORD detective by practising with these made up records. For each one, take a close look and try to work out what's wrong with it. Here are some clues to help you....

GRID REFERENCES: the grid reference shows you the location of where it was spotted. Type the grid reference into this website to see if there's anything suspicious about it:

<https://gridreferencefinder.com/>

SPECIES INFO: This website might help you find information on where the species is normally found, you can also use books to help too:

<https://nbnatlas.org/>

CATEGORIES: Don't forget to check back here to find out what should go in each category:

http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/c2.aspx?Mod=Article&ArticleID=MyPatch_Resources



All of these records have been made up so you can practice - as they're imaginary, do not attempt to enter them into any recording website or send them to a records centre!





RECORD DETECTIVE

RECORD 1

Common name: Red Fox
 Species name: *Vulpes vulpes*
 Date: 11/03/19
 Grid Reference: SJ 52091 83917
 Recorded by: Fred Stitchwort
 Sex / Stage: Adult
 Abundance: 1
 Record Type: Camera trap
 Comments: Running around

What's wrong with it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

RECORD 2

Common name: Common Ragwort
 Species name: *Senecio jacobaea*
 Date: 30/6/17
 Grid Reference: SJ 52446 55176
 Recorded by: Violet Smith
 Sex / Stage: Field Record
 Abundance: Frequent
 Record Type: Flowering
 Comments: covered in caterpillars!

What's wrong with it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

RECORD 3

Common name: Blackbird
 Species name: *Turdus merula*
 Date: 9/9/18
 Grid Reference: SJ 52091 83917
 Recorded by: Iona Oakwood
 Sex / Stage: Male and Female
 Abundance: 2
 Record Type: Auditory record
 Comments: Sitting on fence

What's wrong with it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





RECORD DETECTIVE

RECORD 4

Common name Magpie
 Species name: *Pica pica*
 Date: 12/07/15
 Grid Reference: SJ 41563 70369
 Recorded by: Poppy Sprocket
 Sex / Stage: Adult
 Abundance: 3
 Record Type: Trapped in moth trap
 Comments: with Harry Thorax

What's wrong with it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

RECORD 5

Common name: Blackbird
 Species name: *Turdus merula*
 Date: 9/9/18
 Grid Reference: SJ 52091 83917
 Recorded by: Iona Oakwood
 Sex / Stage: Male and Female
 Abundance: 2
 Record Type: Auditory record
 Comments: Sitting on fence

What's wrong with it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

RECORD 6

Common name: Red Admiral
 Species name: *Vanessa atalanta*
 Date: 10/8/21
 Grid Reference: SJ 42305 67365
 Recorded by: Steve Buzzard
 Sex / Stage: Adult
 Abundance: 2
 Record Type: Field record
 Comments: On buddleia

What's wrong with it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





RECORD DETECTIVE

Here are the answers...

RECORD 1

If you look up the grid reference, you'll see that the fox can't have been found running around here - it's in the middle of the water. Most likely the grid reference could have been copied incorrectly, or the fox might have been swimming

RECORD 2

The 'Record Type' and 'Sex / Stage' have been mixed up. For a plant, 'Flowering', 'Fruiting', 'In Leaf' etc. tell you about what stage in its life the plant is in so this belongs in 'Sex / Stage'. 'Field record' tells you about how the observation was made. It's just a generic term for something being there, so it could mean that it was seen (most likely) or heard etc.

RECORD 3

This record should be split into 2 separate records - 1 for the male blackbird and 1 for the female, rather than putting them both together. We'd go into our database and change this, keeping all the other details for the record the same.

RECORD 4

Magpie (*Pica pica*) are a large bird - this means they can't be trapped in a moth trap. There is also a 'Magpie' moth. So its most likely this was supposed to be the moth, but there was some confusion along the way as the record was transferred. In this case we'd probably try to find the original document or contact whoever sent in the record to check.

RECORD 5

Did you notice this is the exact same as record 3? This makes it a duplicate record which would need to be deleted. Of course it still has the same problem as record 3 in that it should be split into male and female too...

RECORD 6

This record is from the future! We can't add records from 2021 so we'd have to go back and check the original document or contact whoever sent in the record to check which date it was actually from.

