

**BIRDTRACK WORKING GROUP ON EXCHANGE OF BIRD RECORDS
AND ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR BIRD RECORDERS
AND BIRD CLUBS**

4th Meeting: Saturday 25 November 2006, 0930hrs
at The Nunnery, Thetford

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members are asked to inform Susan Waghorn if they cannot attend the meeting, so that numbers for lunch can be assessed accurately.

2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (BTWG:JUN06:MIN)

Circulated previously.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Items arising from the previous minutes that will not be covered under the main agenda items below are listed here.

- (a) Agenda item 2. Sites can now be sorted by visit frequency or alphabetically within dropdown menus.
- (b) Agenda item 2. Sites can now be switched between main and casual.
- (c) Agenda item 5b. Pdf species lists have now been implemented.
- (d) Agenda item 5d. A warning when users fail to agree to forwarding to county recorders remains to be implemented when further developments to the BTO login application are undertaken. A one-off pop-up within BirdTrack asking users who have not done so to change their 'forward to county recorder' response to yes is being considered.
- (e) Agenda item 5e. A new button for managing sites has been added within the View my sites button.
- (f) Agenda item 6. Breeding status has been added but a major project to add other supplementary fields is still required.
- (g) Agenda item 7. The proposal to develop an upload facility for historical records from Excel was referred to the Steering Group. The discussed this at their meeting on 6 June and concluded that further consideration needed to be given to the proposal before it was taken forward.
- (h) Agenda item 9. Use of 'Sub-species unknown'. The proposed action needs to be clarified.

4 PLANS FOR NEXT ATLAS AND LINKS TO BIRDTRACK

Work on the plans and software specification for the next Atlas is ongoing. The main methods to be used have now been agreed but full details of the software are still being developed. This item will be an initial opportunity for a discussion of the relationships between the Atlas and BirdTrack web applications, and of any implications for Bird Recorders and Bird Clubs. Simon Gillings (Atlas Development) will attend for this item.

5 REVIEW OF LATEST RELEASE OF BIRDTRACK

A major upgrade to BirdTrack was released at the beginning of November. A copy of the email outlining the main new features is included as a paper (BTWG:NOV06:1). Please check out these new facilities before the meeting if you have not already done so. Members of the working group are asked to comment on these developments.

6 REPORTS FOR BIRD RECORDERS AND CLUB

Initial discussion of the types of reports that it would be useful to provide for bird recorders and clubs as part of the BirdTrack application. Brainstorming discussion, which staff will use as a starting point for planning future developments.

7 EASE OF USE OF DOWNLOAD FACILITIES FOR RECORDERS

Some 61 out of 72 bird registered bird club recorders have now downloaded data from BirdTrack. We have had a lot of positive feedback but some recorders clearly find the large amounts of data difficult to manage, particularly if they have limited knowledge of Excel. We need to determine:

- (a) What further help or advice can we provide to make it as easy as possible for recorders to use these records?
- (b) Whether any changes to the current format are needed.
- (c) Whether it would be useful to offer a more selective download facility. This should be linked to the ideas developed under item 5.

8 ISSUES CONCERNED WITH RECORDING LOCATIONS IN BIRDTRACK (BTWG:NOV06:2)

The working group are asked to discuss the issues about location recording detailed in the attached paper and to suggest how they might be addressed.

9 PROVISION OF BIRD LISTS FOR SITES

BirdTrack now includes a facility that allows users to list records for particular 10km squares (Menu Latest Results, Bird lists for 10 km squares). However, most bird watchers have a greater focus on sites and we plan to develop a facility that allows most records to be publicly viewable at a site or species level. This approach has been very successful in some other countries (e.g. Sweden) and would help to build a stronger community amongst BirdTrack users. The group are asked to advise on how we might develop this facility, including issues concerned with sensitive species (see BTWG:NOV06:3) and the validation of records.

10 GETTING RECORDERS TO SUPPORT BIRDTRACK

We have had very good support from County Bird Recorders with registration (72 out of around 110 possible club regions, including the first Irish counties) and with the downloading of records (61 out of 72). So far we have site lists for 22 of the 72

regions but we only have validation data for 17 of these. We would welcome support and advice from the working group on improving these levels of completion.

11 GETTING RECORDERS AND CLUBS TO HELP WITH PROMOTING BIRDTRACK

The success of BirdTrack depends on collecting large numbers of records and we are keen to increase both the number of active users and the number of lists submitted. A number of clubs are already being very supportive by encouraging their recorders to submit records through BirdTrack. The working group are asked to advise on how we can work with recorders and clubs to promote bird recording and BirdTrack more effectively.

12 WORK PLAN FOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

The group are asked to review the current list of proposed developments and to advise on priorities.

13 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Plan dates of future meetings. Please bring your diary.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members are asked to inform Stephen Baillie of any other business, in advance of the meeting if possible.

Stephen Baillie

Lunch will be provided.

Members of BTO staff are always happy to discuss their work with Committee members. Those who wish to see a member of staff on the Friday before this meeting should telephone in advance to ensure that the person in question will be available.

BirdTrack is organized by the BTO on behalf of BTO, RSPB and BirdWatch Ireland

List of papers

1. Email outlining additions to BirdTrack released in November 2006.
2. Recording locations within BirdTrack.
3. Document detailing proposed treatment of rare breeding birds in BirdTrack and the Atlas.