

FSC BioLinks Calling Biological Recorders!

This is an open invitation from the Field Studies Council for your participation in a consultation on the development of new resources and training for biological recording.

The consultation is part of our BioLinks Project and the general background to it is described on the next page. We would really value a contribution from your own perspective as a biological recorder or as a representative of an organisation with interests in biological recording.

I have organised a series of workshops across the two proposed project areas (West Midlands and South East England) and we want to hear from as wide a range of biological recorders and biological recording interests as possible. If you would like to attend a workshop, you will be made very welcome.

Workshops will run from 10 am to no later than 4 pm. Dates and locations are as follows:

FSC Preston Monford	Shropshire	6th June 2016	Fully booked
Martineau Gardens	West Midlands	17th June 2016	Fully booked
Martineau Gardens	West Midlands	18 th June 2016	
Natural History Museum	London	15th July 2016	Fully booked
Natural History Museum	London	16th July 2016	Fully booked
FSC Amersham	Buckinghamshire	21 st July 2016	
FSC Juniper Hall	Surrey	26 th July 2016	
Dinton Pastures	Berkshire	2 nd August 2016	
Linnean Society	London	9 th August 2016	

There are 10 places on each workshop. We will provide a buffet lunch and a fixed payment of £50 to volunteers for expenses, though we ask that professionals that are claiming work time for attendance to these consultations do not also claim the £50 expense refund.

At the workshops I will give an overview of the project and the current issues as we see them at the FSC. Then I will lead a structured (but open) discussion about the issues and potential solutions as you see them.

If you would like to attend a workshop, please let me know, by email, the location and date of the workshop on which you want to book a place.

I do hope that you can contribute to the consultation – we want to take account of a wide range of views as we shape the future FSC biodiversity education and resources.

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BioLinks is an exciting new project for FSC which will bring together existing volunteers with skills in biological recording and identification, and new volunteers. The aim is to unite them in a community with a shared vision and sense of purpose by providing training and learning opportunities. This in turn will increase the quality of biodiversity data being submitted to our national biodiversity datasets and develop individuals as more highly skilled biodiversity volunteers.

Funding has been secured from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop the project during 2016 and to work up the final application to HLF for a further 5 years of funding so that:

BioLinks can provide courses and resources to support volunteers:

- Species identification workshops focusing on difficult and underrepresented taxa e.g. beetles and earthworms
- Use of and access to high quality resources to help build confidence and knowledge – microscopes and identification guides
- Create schemes to involve volunteers in long term surveys to help provide structured learning and meaningful projects e.g. creating a shield bug atlas for a county



BioLinks can support existing volunteers and encourage new volunteers:

- Use the citizen science BioBlitz approach to engage with individuals and communities who care about their local area
- Help volunteers to look more widely than their initial interest e.g. butterflies to look at plants which feed the butterflies - increase their knowledge and confidence to record and share more widely, helped by new technologies
- Provide volunteers with mentors to help build knowledge and confidence
- Learn to use local, regional and national reference collections and start to build personal collections for reference



But before we can secure this funding we need your help! We will be running a series of consultations in the **West Midlands** and **South East** regions of England (where the project is planned to take place). To find out more about these one day consultations please contact Keiron Brown (keiron@field-studies-council.org) for more information.

However, if you can't attend a consultation but can spare just 15 minutes of your time you could help us by filling in a short online survey about biological recording and how you think the BioLinks project can help strengthen the biological recording community. The online is open to anyone and can be filled in at:

<http://goo.gl/forms/GBzmlQYT0k>