Thames Valley
Environmental Records Centre

Annual Report 2020/2021

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

Enabling data-driven decisions to better enhance and protect our natural environment.

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This year we have said goodbye to a number of long-term staff including Camilla Burrow and Dan Carpenter and we have welcomed our new Director, Steve Wilkes. Steve brings with him a wealth of skills developed in the private sector which I hope will lead to new ways of working and new opportunities for TVERC moving forward.

Despite all the challenges of staff changes and the covid-19 pandemic the team has once again processed a huge number of data search requests up 14% on last year. What is impressive is that despite this increase in data searches the work actually took significantly less time than in previous years due to improvements to the way the requests are processed and new automated data search techniques. This more efficient system now leaves staff free to concentrate on other important work.

TVERC continues to invest in data and in the recording communities who provide so many important records. One way that it does this is through the Recorders Grant Scheme, the grant scheme was set up to re-invest some of the income received from TVERC activities back into the recording community. Three excellent examples of schemes supported by TVERC over the last year can be found in appendix 2.

Dominic Lamb MCIEEM
Specialist Team Leader, Planning
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

May 2021
Steve Wilkes, TVERC Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020-21 has been a challenging year both because of staff changes and the difficulties of working with Covid - 19 restrictions. It has still been very busy with many achievements. Everything we do is helping to achieve our goal that "We live in a better environment in Berks and Oxon as a result of decisions made using our data and information."

This is my first year as the TVERC Director and since joining at the end of October I have enjoyed my first 6 months working with the team. Although few in numbers they cover a wide array of disciplines ensuring TVERC can deliver the best service we can. It has been very pleasing to see their dedication, focus and team spirit, and particularly how they have worked closely together as a team. I have been impressed by the sheer variety of work, people and organisations we are involved with to support the collection and management of environmental data for our counties and the diverse range of ways we are helping this valuable resource be used to inform good decisions. I would really like to thank everyone at TVERC, both staff and volunteers, and all the individuals, groups and organisations in Oxfordshire and Berkshire who despite the difficulties, have helped us achieve so much over this last year.

Here is a brief update on the progress we made towards achieving our goals. There is more detail later in this report.

1. **Be independent** – In previous years, good progress was made with preparing for the set-up of TVERC as a Community Interest Company. During 19/20 because of the Covid-19 situation OxonCC realised that they could not decide on this matter for the foreseeable future due to HR and Legal being engaged with redeployment of staff and decision-making capacity being reduced. OxonCC and TVERC's Steering Group would like the situation to be reviewed during 2021/22.

2. **Maintain and expand a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information** - We now hold well over 3.4 million records of flora and fauna in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, 733,972 of which are protected and notable. In 2020-21 we received 544 data sets which builds on the increase we saw last year. In previous years 300-400 is more typical, helping us to add 476,256 species records to the database.

3. **Maintain and engage with a broad customer base** - In 2020/21 we secured over £46k from customers other than local authorities, ecological consultants and the Environment Agency. We hope to keep building on this in future years.

4. **Develop and offer creative solutions to interpret natural environment data** – We created a "validation alert layer" based on protected species, invasive species and sites that a local authority can use to make quick assessments on the likely need for ecological surveys for planning applications.

5. **Collaborate or lead on research and innovation to drive our development** – We hosted 6 university micro-internships from Reading, Oxford and Oxford Brookes Universities.

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6. **Be a respected partner in providing evidence base for policies** – We carried out 45 Local Wildlife Surveys and used the updated LWS Selection Criteria. We also surveyed a pond within a woodland for Englefield Estate giving identifying important ecology, establishing if it was likely to support protected species and provide guidance for future management measures.

   For several local authorities we provided analysis on the number of Local Wildlife Sites in positive management and reported on several environmental indicators to help them monitor biodiversity within their area. Additionally, we supported West Oxfordshire District Council's planning and provision of Biodiversity Net Gain using our expertise with DEFRA's updated metric. Building on the projects in Oxfordshire we completed work on an initial draft Nature Recovery Network for Berkshire for the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership.

   It has been a busy year for data searches. We received 844 requests in 2020-2021 which was a further increase on the previous year of 800. The total income for data searches and licences was £165k in 2020-2021. The automation of the system we launched at the start of the year was very timely and generally worked well to help us manage the increasing workload.

7. **Remain at the centre of a network of recorders.** TVERC provides the secretariat for the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and the Oxfordshire Environment Board. TVERC also sits on the Oxfordshire Environment Board, the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group, the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and the Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.

8. **Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.** We provided funding, via Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment to three projects, totalling more than £2,000. Despite the challenges we ran two very successful and well attended Recorders Conferences, for the first time totally virtually. We also hope we inspired undergraduate students by sharing our insights about working in ecology by giving a lecture at Reading University.

9. **Employ valued and respected staff who retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge**. During 2020-21 we have had several staff who have really helped TVERC over the years, move on to work elsewhere. I am confident their accomplishments and experiences here will be incredibly helpful to them in their new roles. This has given the chance for existing team members to try out additional responsibilities and also to bring in some new members to the team, me included. Covid-19 and being home based for the year gave us the chance to recruit and train 5 new volunteers to help us from home with data management and other tasks. It is impressive how well they have adapted to this and contributed 45 days of their time to help us with data management and other tasks.

Steve Wilkes
TVERC Director

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WHO ARE TVERC?

MISSION STATEMENT

TVERC is the only organization in Berkshire and Oxfordshire providing a comprehensive ecological information hub through which critical knowledge can be shared to support scientific research and responsible decision-making.

TVERC is at the centre of a network of recorders and data-users in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and is the regional delivery node of the National Biodiversity Network.

TVERC is a not-for-profit organisation run by a partnership. All those contributing to TVERC help manage our environmental resources sustainably for current and future use.

Data ↓	We collect wildlife information from a wide variety of sources in a coordinated way; enabling information-sharing between recorders and decision-makers.
Information ↓	We are a specialist team with the skills, knowledge and dedication to make complex data understandable and available to all who need it.
Knowledge	This constantly improving, high quality resource is accessible by everyone, so they have the knowledge they need to carry out scientific research and make responsible decisions.

WHAT IS A LERC?

Local Environmental Record Centres are "*Not-for-profit organisations that collect, collate and manage information on the natural environment for a defined geographic area. LERCs support and collaborate with a network of experts to ensure information is robust, and make information products and services accessible to a range of audiences including decision-makers, the public, and researchers*"

Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC)

VISION

TVERC is an independent source of high quality comprehensive environmental information. Our broad customer base means we are financially sustainable and can provide strong evidence for environmental issues into the next generation.

TVERC is a leader in its field known for its creative solutions in interpreting the natural environment for a broad range of organisations and individuals who understand and value the work we do. Research and innovation as a result of collaboration drive our development so that we are a respected partner in providing an evidence base for policy.

TVERC is at the centre of a network of recorders and users providing valued support as part of a partnership and engages with a future generation of recorders.

Our team maintains strong connections with volunteers, recorders and partners. Together, we have the skills, expertise and knowledge to promote the recognition and value of local data in decision-making at all levels.

Our environment is better as a result of decisions made using our data and information.

GOALS

Working towards and ultimately achieving the following goals will ensure we achieve our future vision for TVERC.

1. Be independent
2. Maintain and continue to expand a database of high quality comprehensive environmental information
3. Maintain and engage with a broad customer base
4. Develop and offer creative solutions to interpret natural environment data.
5. Collaborate or lead on research and innovation to drive our development
6. Be a respected partner in providing evidence base for policies.
7. Remain at the centre of a network of recorders
8. Provide valued support to, and engagement with, current and future recorders and partners.
9. Employ valued and respected staff who retain and develop their skills, expertise and knowledge.
10. We live in a better environment in Berks and Oxon as a result of decisions made using our data and information.

1. BE INDEPENDENT

Just before the end of 2019/20, CV-19 arrived in the UK. In light of that, OxonCC have decided that they are unable to make a decision on TVERC separating and forming a new Community Interest Company for the foreseeable future due to HR and Legal being engaged with redeployment of staff and decision-making capacity being reduced. We will review the case for separation again during 2021/22, so work on this was halted until the review is completed.

2. HOLD A DATABASE OF HIGH QUALITY COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

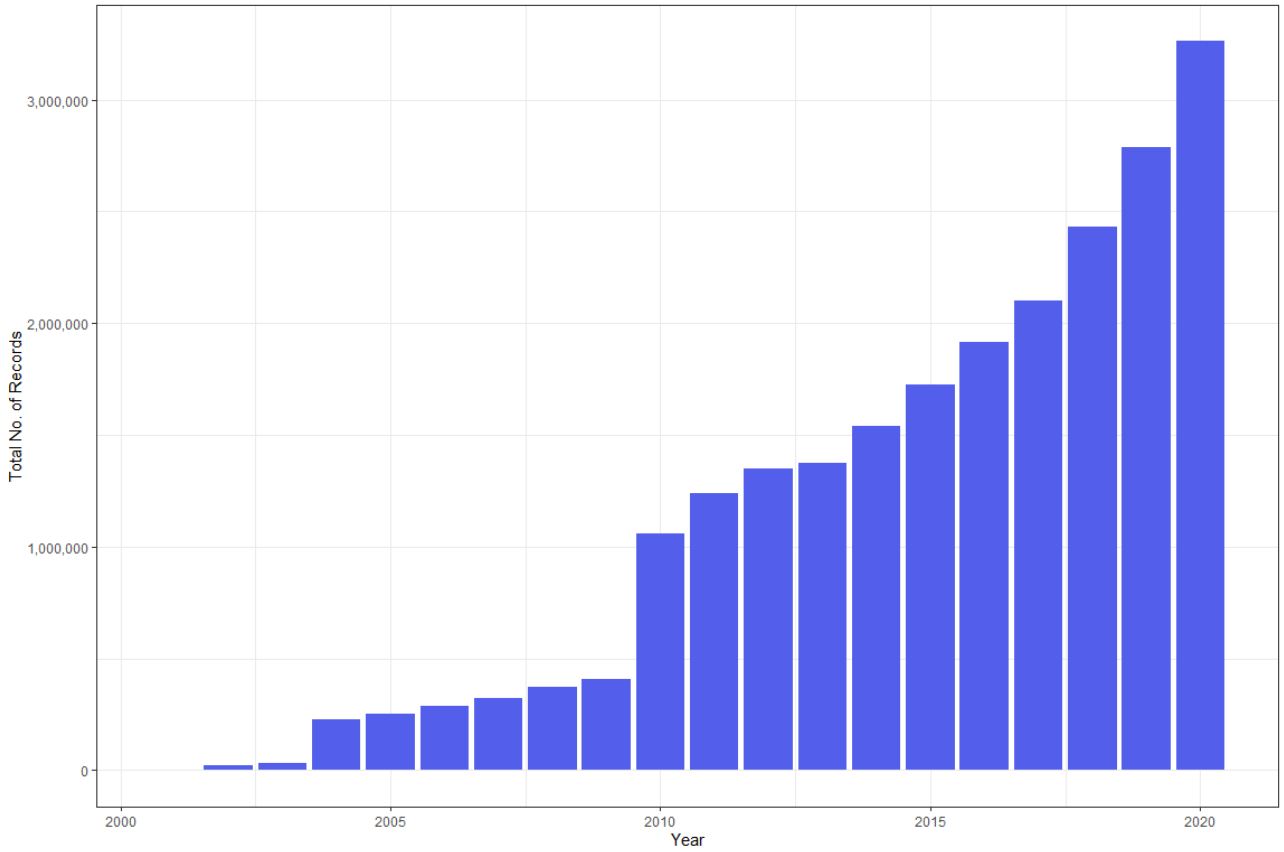
We now hold approximately 3.4 million records of flora and fauna in Berkshire and Oxfordshire plus information about Local Wildlife and Geological Sites, NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principal Importance (previously called UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats) and Ecological Networks (Conservation Target Areas and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas).

We collect data from the general public, skilled volunteer/amateur recorders, professionals working for wildlife charities (BBOWT and RSPB), professionals working for government agencies (Natural England, the Environment Agency & local authorities) and ecological consultants. The cost to TVERC to collect, check and process data is about 25p per record, which means we prioritise datasets which are recent and include protected & notable species for data management.

In 2020-21 we added 355,123 species records to the database in the financial year, 71,037 of which were protected and notable species. We have a total of 738,248 protected and notable species in our database, which is about 22% of our data.

SPECIES RECORDS

NUMBER OF RECORDS



YEAR	RECORDS ADDED	TOTAL NO. OF RECORDS	YEAR	RECORDS ADDED	TOTAL NO. OF RECORDS
2020	476,256	**3,261,784**	2010	652,052	**106,0359**
2019	352,465	**2,785,528**	2009	36,601	**408,307**
2018	333,322	**2,433,063**	2008	46,893	**371,706**
2017	183,695	**2,099,741**	2007	37,065	**324,813**
2016	192,047	**1,916,046**	2006	35,222	**287,748**
2015	184,941	**1,723,999**	2005	24,913	**252,526**
2014	162,195	**1,539,058**	2004	193,545	**227,613**
2013	24,904	**1,376,863**	2003	11,116	**34,068**
2012	110,811	**1,351,959**	2002	18,945	**22,952**
2011	180,789	**1,241,148**	2001	4,007	**4,007**

DATASETS

TVERC received 544 data sets in the financial year 2020-2021. This a further increase on the previous financial year in which 517 data sets were received. This probably reflects the increasing awareness of TVERC among both recording community and public. Another contributing factor is the increased number of consultancy reports being obtained by TVERC, 359 in the 2020-2021 financial year, an increase of 50 on the previous year. We believe that this reflects a growing awareness of the importance of the data held in these reports in addition to hard work on behalf of TVERC volunteers who check planning portals. We have had success this year by working with angling groups to add a large number of fish records which is a taxon group where we really lacked records.

DONOR CATEGORY	NUMBER OF DATASETS	NO. RECORDS ADDED TO DATABASE**
CGO	8	3,464
Consultants	359	7,875
Individual known Wildlife Recorder	81	142,904
Local Government Surveys (carried out by)	3	1,030
Local Wildlife Groups	29	18,644
Members of the Public	24	71
National Wildlife Groups/Recording Schemes	10	201,748
Utility Companies	2	3
Wildlife Charities	6	1,913
Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)	7	21,061
TVERC (not LWS Surveys)	5	149
Other	7	158
Online Websites	1	17,916

** Some recently received records may not yet have been added to the database

In addition to the above, the local and district wildlife surveys in Berkshire and Oxfordshire that are carried out by TVERC staff and volunteers contributed a further **8556** records.

DATA AGREEMENTS

Each year, TVERC negotiate with the wide range of recorders and recording groups in Berkshire and Oxfordshire to ensure we can access new data.

New data agreements: • Action for the River Kennet (ARK) • Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory • Canal and Rivers Trust • West Oxfordshire Farmland Bird Project • Butterfly Conservation	**Renewed/amended data agreements:** • Bat Conservation Trust
Groups which supplied TVERC with data: • Action for the River Kennet • Amphibian and Reptile Trust • Ashmolean Natural History Society of Oxfordshire • BBOWT • Berks Ornithological Club • Binfield Badger Group • Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland • British Dragonfly Society • Butterfly Conservation • Canal and Rivers Trust • Cherwell Swifts • Freswater Habitats Trust • Friends of Ruscombe Wood • Friends of Wargrave Chalk Pits • Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire • Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers	• International Otter Survival Fund • Lower Windrush Valley Project • Moor Green Lakes Group • National Water Vole Database • Newbury District Ornithological Club • Oxford Swift City Project • Oxfordshire Badger Group • Oxfordshire Flora Group • Peoples Trust for Endangered Species • RecordPool • River Thame Conservation Trust • UK Caddis Recording Scheme • Weevil & Bark Beetle Recording Scheme • Wild Cookham • Wild Maidenhead • Wild Trout Trust • Worton Bird Group • Wychwood Flora Group

3. ENGAGE WITH A BROAD CUSTOMER BASE

Our data are used by a diverse customer base, but within this, TVERC is currently reliant on a small number of customers for the majority of our income. We are seeking to diversify our income stream by increasing income from other sectors such as community groups, conservation NGOs, university researchers, land management advisors and Parish & Town Councils. In 2020/21 we secured over £46k from customers other than local authorities, ecological consultants and the Environment Agency. This is a great achievement which we hope to build on in subsequent years.

TVERC Customers	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Local authority (incl. contractors)	£186,418	£186,415	£175,095	£171,825
Ecological consultant	£159,610	£107,649	£129,460	£117,516
Environment Agency	£15,104	£15,104	£17,280	£17,280
Natural England	£0	£0	£2,663	£0
Conservation charity	£9,035	£9,725	£10,380	£12,678
Other	£24,083	£7,283	£3,570	£7,138
Utilities company	£0	£5,250	£0	£0
Individual recorder / recording group	£350	£1,572	£2,682	£4,375
Community / Parish Group	£395	£0	£995	£3,593
Landowner	£2,155	£22,925	£1,310	£1,830
AONB	£0	£0	£0	£642
Scientific Researcher	£10,210	£1,800	£135	£0
Student / Teacher	£78	£0	£0	£0
Member of the public	£75	£635	£455	£75
TOTAL	**£407,512**	**£358,358**	**£344,025**	**£336,952**
Total for "Top 3" customers	£370,110	£309,168	321,836	306,621
Total for all others	£37,402	£49,190	£22,190	£30,331

4. USE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO INTERPRET NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DATA

WEST BERKSHIRE VALIDATION ALERT LAYER

A problem currently facing West Berkshire Council (WBC) is the volume of planning applications that are being submitted without the appropriate ecological surveys. The high number that need to be checked takes up a significant portion of staff time, and therefore WBC are looking at ways in which they can reduce the volume of inadequate applications.

TVERC on behalf of WBC, have created a "validation alert layer" based on protected species, invasive species and sites that WBC can use to quickly and easily demonstrate whether a development requires an ecological assessment.

5. COLLABORATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DRIVES OUR DEVELOPMENT

TVERC believes that working closely with the fantastic science and environmental organisations in Berkshire and Oxfordshire is essential in order to maximise the impact we can collectively make on improving our environment.

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

We have links with Imperial College London (Silwood Park), Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University and Reading University. These links work well for attracting student volunteers to carry out data management and project work, particularly for the 'Consultancy' modules in the MSc courses run by both Reading and Oxford Brookes Universities.

TVERC offer a variety of benefits to students in addition to the experience of volunteering, such as free data, as well as discounted entry to our conferences and training courses. In order to raise awareness of these benefits and the work TVERC and record centers do in general, several members of the team have given lectures to under- and postgraduate students at Oxford Brookes and Reading University.

In 2020-21 TVERC hosted the following placements:

- June 2020 Oxford University micro internship on LERC Data Quality Review
- November 2020 Oxford Brookes University placement student on Accessible Wildlife Sites
- December 2020 University of Reading placement student on species gap analysis: Hedgehogs
- December 2020 Oxford University micro internship on species gap analysis: Skylarks
- December 2020 Oxford University micro internship on species gap analysis: Hazel Dormouse
- March 2021 Oxford University on Horizon Scanning

CEH HOUSING ASSOC NERC AWARD

TVERC supported CEH in a project to provide biodiversity enhancements to social housing projects in Bracknell Forest.

Julie Kerans, our biodiversity officer carried out some baseline surveys of a Southern Housing Group site in Bracknell to identify features of value for wildlife and, in collaboration with CEH staff, made some recommendations on possible enhancements that would increase the site's wildlife interest. This included advice on plant species that would be suitable for the site. TVERC was also present at the BioBlitz where we had the opportunity to engage with residents, offering wildlife gardening advice (and some plants) and led a plant walk to highlight some of the species growing locally.

We have also provided a data search for the site and some of the recommended enhancements would provide habitats for species that have been recorded recently in the area (such as stag beetles).

This project has now been completed and CEH have launched the 'Biodiversity Toolkit'.

OXCAM NATURAL CAPITAL

TVERC provided technical support to the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University in the production of the OxCam Arc Natural Capital Plan mapping. This work triggered important discussions about data availability in conjunction with other Local Environmental Record Centre's leading to the provision of OxCam Arc Natural Capital layers that respect TVERC's data licensing. Projects like this are a showcase for the varied and valuable use of the data that we collect and reinforces the importance of continued support for TVERC's environmental data curation role.

6. WE ARE A RESPECTED PARTNER IN PROVIDING AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR POLICIES

Making policy relies on a robust evidence base. TVERC already provide trusted and scientifically robust evidence on which others base policy. We will continue to do so, as well as developing new products and services, based on sound science, that are trusted and respected by our partners and customers.

ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS AND MANAGEMENT ADVICE

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

Local Wildlife Site surveys are one of the core services that TVERC continues to provide across the two counties for the majority of the Local Authorities. Despite a late start this year due to Covid-19, we carried out a total of 45 LWS surveys in 2020-21. Thanks to the help of our volunteers, specialist species group surveys were completed on several sites for birds, invertebrates and rare plants. Survey reports were produced and taken to the site selection panel. The full detail of these is in appendix I.

OXFORDSHIRE SURVEYS

This year TVERC carried out surveys of 26 existing and proposed Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in Oxfordshire, along with several possible extensions. This added 4900 species records to the database.

Particularly interesting sites visited over the summer include Farmoor Reservoir LWS, Radley Gravel Pits LWS and a site near Hook Norton.

We spent two days at Farmoor Reservoir LWS which is one of Oxfordshire's largest Local Wildlife Sites covering 190 ha. As well as the huge reservoir which attracts good numbers of wildfowl, it includes diverse wetland and meadow areas. Species seen included a range of wetland plants with tufted vetch, common reed, bulrush, greater and lesser pond-sedge, common club-rush, marsh woundwort, meadowsweet, great burnet, water mint, purple loosestrife, skullcap, lesser spearwort, common spike-rush and brookweed.

Another treat was recording marsh helleborine at Radley Gravel Pits LWS. This site is a series of former gravel workings and surrounding areas of grassland and woodland in the floodplain of the River Thames. Some of the pits have been in-filled whilst others have been retained as water bodies. It includes species-rich grassland to the west at Barton Fields with pyramidal orchids, wild carrot, lady's bedstraw, meadow crane's-bill, common bird's-foot-trefoil, oxeye daisy, wild marjoram, cowslip, yellow rattle, betony and small amounts of field scabious and common restharrow.

Another highlight was locating the lousewort previously recorded at site near Hook Norton in species-rich grassland on the steeper valley banks formed by the upper reaches of the River Swere. The grassland here was especially rich with both calcareous and acidic influences. It includes devil's-bit scabious, betony, salad burnet, tormentil, meadow vetchling, lady's bedstraw, dropwort, black knapweed and harebell.

BERKSHIRE SURVEYS

In 2020, 19 Local Wildlife Sites across Berkshire were successfully surveyed throughout the season. Our Berkshire Biodiversity Officer, Caitlin Coombs undertook a Phase One Habitat survey on each site, whilst a skilled team of volunteer surveyors carried out systematic surveys for a range of specialist species groups including dragonflies, butterflies, water voles, leafhoppers, sawflies and acueleates.

Some highlights of the season were:

- Visiting Lough Down LWS, a rich chalk grassland on a steep bank, flanked by species-rich hedgerows and chalk scrub. The site was beautiful, carpeted with the yellows of lady's bedstraw, St John's wort, agrimony and birds foot trefoil, the pinks of common centaury, wild basil and greater knapweed, and the purples of harebell, small scabious and wild marjoram. Autumn gentian, eyebright, pale toadflax, yellow-wort, and pyramidal orchid were personal favourites. We also found numerous badger setts.
- McIlroy Park LWS, a publicly accessible hilltop park in Reading with areas of Ancient Woodland, which includes a large-looking tree rotted throughout the entire core, leaving behind only the outer layers of bark where all the essential vessels for survival reside. The tree is listed on the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory.
- A disused gravel pits site south-west of Reading, which is designated as a LWS on the basis of its rich bird life. As well as the surplus of dragonflies and butterflies enjoying the standing water and the

nectar-rich bankside vegetation, we were treated with first-class sightings of Canada geese, common sandpiper, lapwing, little and great crested grebe, cormorant, grey heron, and green woodpecker, amongst many others. Reptiles are also taking advantages of the mosaic of habitat types present here.

- Ancient Woodland Indicators were rich galore within a complex of woodland patches designated as LWS in Wokingham. Stinking hellebore, woodruff, wood anemone, pendulous sedge, wood spurge, yellow archangel, wood melick, wood millet, Solomon's seal, sanicle, black bryony and nettle-leaved bellflower were amongst those recorded.

PONDHOUSE COPSE SURVEY

TVERC was commissioned by the Englefield Estate to undertake a pond survey of a pond located within the Englefield Estate grounds, in an area of woodland known as Pondhouse Copse. The overall aim of this report was to establish whether the pond could support protected species such as great crested newts, to identify any other ecological features of importance, and to inform potential management measures for the site.

Taking into account the survey findings, historical management, adjacent land use and the pond's potential to support priority species, management recommendations will help to enhance the quality of the pond, the habitats supported, and the biodiversity value of the site.

This report will also inform whether further great crested newt surveys are required to determine presence or absence within the pond.

INTERPRETING NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DATA

WEST BERKSHIRE SITES ASSESSMENTS

Baseline biodiversity assessment for additional Local Plan sites in West Berkshire. This project has been successfully completed. TVERC carried out site assessments for 45 Local Plan sites to provide information in the species, habitats and sites on or near Local Plan sites and assign a RAG level based on these findings

WEST BERKSHIRE ROAD VERGES

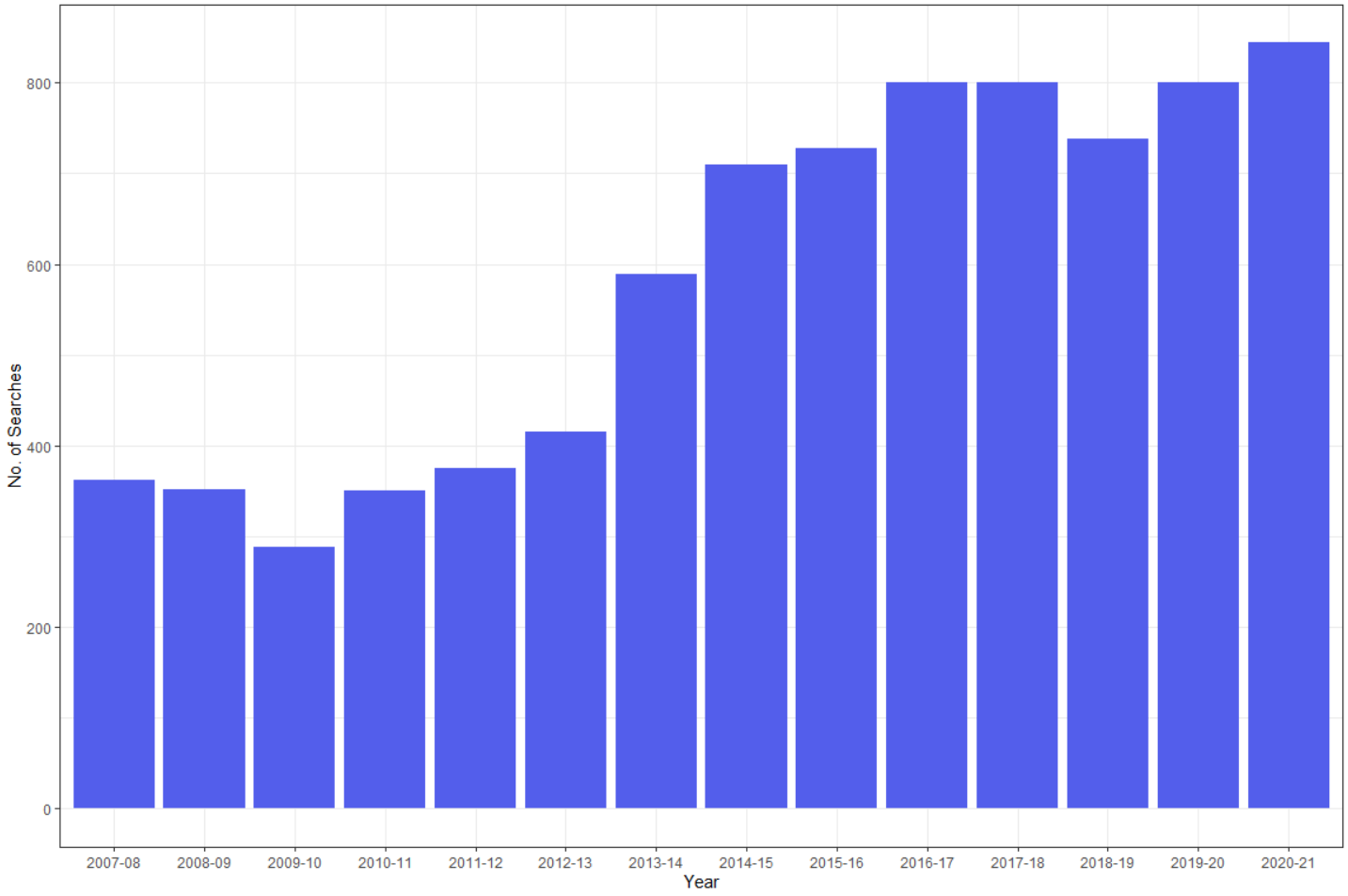
TVERC are working with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to identify important road verges in West Berkshire and carry out a risk assessment to identify the priority road verges to further survey work and management advice. The desk study phase has been completed, and the surveying will now be completed by BBOWT.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE GARDEN VILLAGE NET GAIN UPDATE

TVERC have worked closely with the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) in the planning and provision of BNG and have a high level of technical expertise and experience in using the BNG calculator. TVERC was asked to provide an update on the biodiversity net gain units for the West Oxfordshire Garden Village using DEFRA's updated metric.

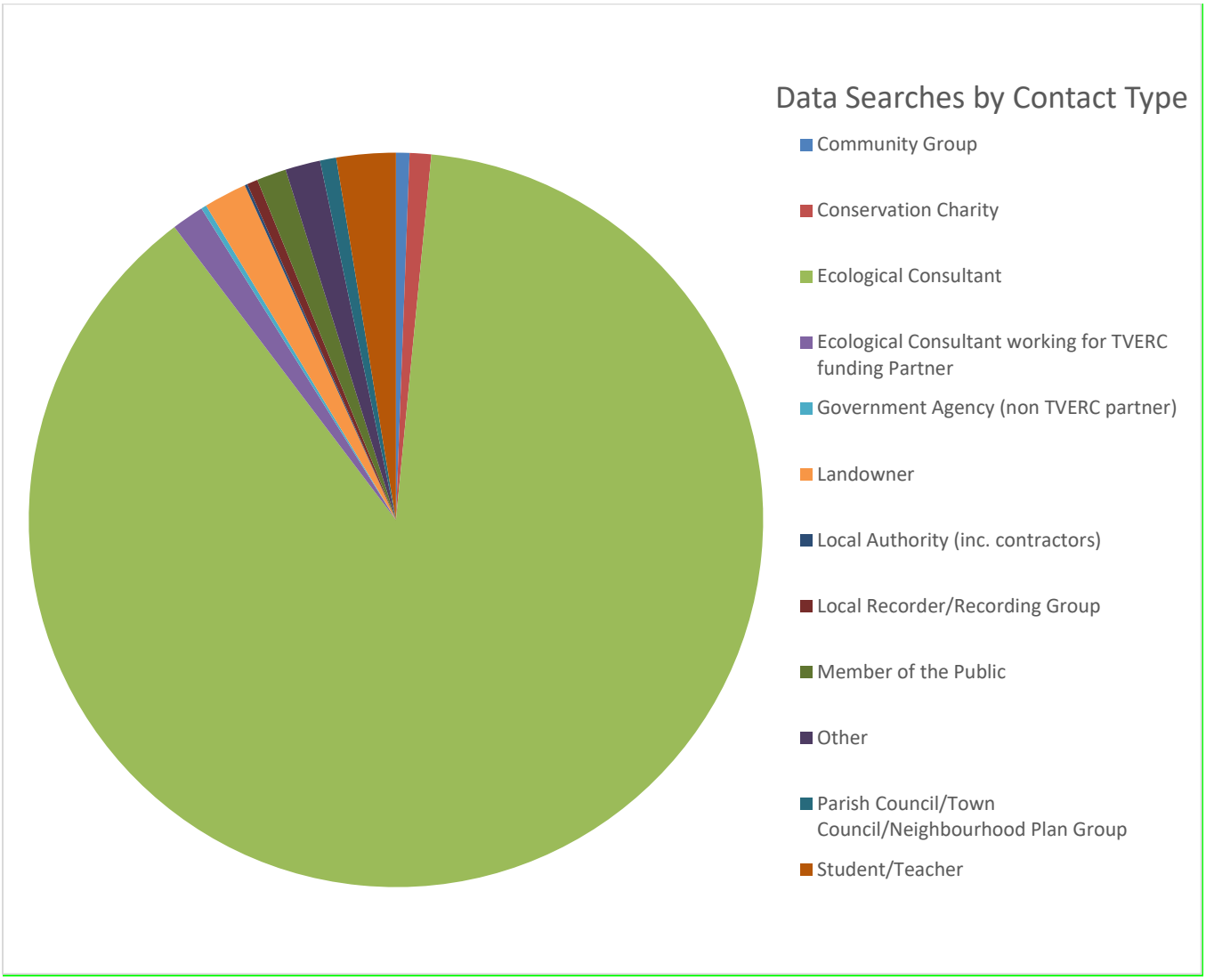
DATA SEARCHES

We have continued to improve our data search processes to automate many of the tasks for extracting and supplying data. We are now spending less time on each one. This year we used 127 days for data searches compared to 193 in 2018-2019, which leaves more time for collating, checking and importing data. TVERC carried out 844 data searches in 2020-2021. This was an increase on 2019-2020 when we carried out 738 data searches.



TVERC charges for data searches based on the time to extract and present the data and a contribution towards the annual cost of collating and managing the TVERC database. TVERC waive this charge for data searches for individuals, landowners and conservation organisations where the data will be used solely for conservation purposes. In these cases, a donation is requested, to cover the costs of extracting and presenting the data. We also waive the fee for initial single species & bat searches, so although we carried out 844 data searches, a charge was made for only 766 of these, bringing in a total income of £164,970 for 2020-2021.

A variety of customers request data searches, and the vast majority come from ecological consultants, 744 this year. The proportions can be seen in the graph and table below.



	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Community Group	5	7	4
Conservation Charity	8	0	0
Ecological Consultant	744	689	656
Ecological Consultant working for TVERC funding Partner	12	0	5
Government Agency (non TVERC partner)	2	0	1
Landowner	16	14	14
Local Authority (inc. contractors)	1	0	0
Local Recorder/Recording Group	4	0	2
Member of the Public	11	0	8
NGO/Government Agency (TVERC partners)	0	0	1
Non-Government Agency	0	0	1
Other	13	90	36
Parish Council/Town Council/Neighbourhood Plan Group	6	0	0
Scientific Researcher /Student/Teacher	22	0	10

Our data is requested for a variety of purposes, and an outline of these can be seen below.

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Comment on a Planning Application	5	0	8
Conservation/Research of a Single Site	5	0	9
Education or Research	28	17	12
Land Management	0	30	0
Land Management (For Conservation)	25	0	14
Land Management (Other)	12	5	10
Neighbourhood Plan	5	0	3
Other	26	71	32
Planning Application/Development	698	658	614
Utility Maintenance	40	19	36

DATA PROVISION TO PARTNERS

TVERC provided updated datasets to our partners. These are essential to ensure that our partners comply with planning policy and wildlife legislation and that sound decisions are made about where to focus conservation effort, how best to manage land and where to direct development to minimise impacts on the natural environment.

The updated datasets TVERC provided to partners were:

- Protected & notable species (July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020)
- Buffered protected species & notable (July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020)
- House sparrows, starlings and swifts (July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020). Rebranded "Birds in Buildings" with the addition of house martin nest records in March 2020
- Swift Hotspot Maps (provided to all partners from March 2020, previously only Oxford City)
- Local Wildlife Sites (May 2019)
- UK Priority Habitat (NERC Act S41 Habitats of Principle Importance) (December 2019)
- Invasive non-native species layer (July 2019, November 2019, January 2020)

There were no changes to the following datasets:

- Conservation Target Areas / Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Local Geological Sites

IMPROVEMENTS TO EVIDENCE-BASE

WEST BERKSHIRE AWI

Revising the AWI will have a number of important benefits and enable sound decisions to be made about the acceptability of proposed developments, identifying preferred locations for strategic sites and infrastructure, directing biodiversity conservation work in the most effective way, climate change adaptation and mitigation, wood fuel initiatives and historic landscapes. TVERC will review West Berkshire ancient woodland.

The final checking of woodland parcels is underway before presenting the final results to West Berkshire Council.

CHERWELL DISTRICT WILDLIFE SITES

There are currently several different designations for sites of importance to wildlife with differing degrees of protection through UK and European wildlife and planning law. These include sites of European importance (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas), national importance (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and county importance (Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)). To help inform the local authority planning process, some district and unitary councils have also identified sites that have significance for their authority at a more local level. TVERC was commissioned by Cherwell District Council to carry out additional surveys of some Cherwell DWS.

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORKS

Nature Recovery Networks (NRN) are a key part of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The concept of a Nature Recovery Network is simple - it should extend and link existing sites of wildlife value, and should therefore form the core of any network

OXFORDSHIRE

The development of a draft network map has been carried out collaboratively by a partnership of local nature organisations, led by TVERC, Wild Oxfordshire and BBOWT and overseen by Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Advisory Group. Extensive consultation with a wide group of stakeholders has ensured that the map has been scrutinised by the wider environmental community in Oxfordshire. TVERC used a wide range of data and a variety of analytical approaches to identify the draft NRN for Oxfordshire. This will be submitted as part of the evidence base for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to inform the pattern of development in the county up to 2050.

BERKSHIRE

The Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (BerkLNP) has asked to create a draft NRN for Berkshire, which has now been submitted to stakeholders for feedback.

OXFORDSHIRE TREESCAPES

We are currently in a climate crisis, and although tree planting is not the only solution, it is still a viable option for offsetting carbon emissions. However, care must be taken to not plant trees on unsuitable land, as tree planting on grassland will lead to a loss in biodiversity, not a gain.

Oxfordshire Trees for the Future are leading a project to devise and implement a single unified plan for the optimizing of tree cover in Oxfordshire that all parties with an interest in land management and nature recovery can actively support and participate in, and that sets and example nationwide. TVERC undertook the technical work for this project in selecting parcels of land that have the potential for tree planting without compromising land-use or biodiversity.

CONSERVATION TARGET AREAS

TVERC completed an update of the Conservation Target Areas boundaries in Cherwell. And sent the updated layers to the appropriate customers. The updated boundary is also sent out in data searches and as part of the Service Level Agreements.

BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Green Infrastructure relates to the spatial planning and management of networks of multi-functional open space, designed and managed for delivering public benefits such as improving quality of life, enhancing biodiversity, reducing flood risk, or increasing resilience to climate change.

Bracknell Forest Council have asked TVERC to carry out an update of the 2017 Green Infrastructure (GI) layers in the borough in light of new evidence. This project has been completed.

TOE NET GAIN SUPPORT

Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) have asked TVERC to comment on Net Gain applications as an independent assessor of the assessment's quality and realism.

TVERC have completed this exercise for two applications and have attended meetings to determine whether an application should be approved or not, providing evidence and support to TOE and the Oxfordshire Net Gain Working Group.

BRACKNELL FOREST POND MAPPING

Bracknell Forest Council have asked TVERC to map the ponds of the region and this has been completed. The project will allow the Council to begin the process of planning for a change in the way Natural England issue European Protected Species licenses, when such species are affected by development. Natural England are proposing to move towards a landscape approach to favourable conservation status for Great Crested Newts, whereby there is a coordinated approach to protecting and enhancing habitats for Great Crested Newts rather than a case-by-case approach to mitigating and compensating for the impacts of development on individual newts.

MONITORING CHANGE

BERKS SINGLE DATA LIST 160

TVERC provide an analysis of the SDL 160 for each of the Berkshire unitaries. Site management data is collated to calculate the number of local sites that are in positive management for the six Unitary Authorities. Local authorities are required to report to DEFRA on the SDL 160 each year as a measure of their success of protecting the biodiversity in their area.

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

TVERC analyses environmental data and produces an annual monitoring report to Local Authorities in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The AMR reports on a number of environmental indicators that help to monitor biodiversity within their district including changes to Local Wildlife Sites, Priority habitat and Priority Species, the status and distribution of water vole or farmland birds, SSSI condition and non agri-schemes habitat creation and management.

7. WE REMAIN AT THE CENTRE OF A NETWORK OF RECORDERS

TVERC has good relationships with local recorders and recording groups who are a key source of our data. We will strengthen these relationships so that TVERC remains the hub for biological recording in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The TVERC Director sits on the Oxfordshire Environment Board, Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group, Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and attends the Berkshire Local Authority Ecologists group.

BERKSHIRE LNP SECRETARIAT

TVERC continue to provide the secretariat for the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership.

OXFORDSHIRE ENVIRONMENT BOARD SECRETARIAT

TVERC continue to provide the secretariat for the Oxfordshire Environment Board.

8. PROVIDE VALUED SUPPORT TO, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH, CURRENT AND FUTURE RECORDERS AND PARTNERS

Biological recorders are essential to the future success of TVERC and to evidence-based decision-making. Much of the data in the TVERC database comes from volunteer recorders and so supporting them is an essential part of the work TVERC carry out.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

We provide technical support for recording groups who are collecting and analysing data across Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

SIBTHORPE RECORD UPDATE

TVERC was asked to perform some analysis of our botanical records to identify modern equivalent records of plants reported by Sibthorp in his book Flora Oxoniensis published 1794.

This project will help provide a link between the present day and historic flora of Oxfordshire, to highlight species apparently lost over time and to focus future searches for some of these species. Of the original 726 records transcribed from Sibthorp, 115 or 16% of them had modern counterparts in the same tetrad.

SALT CROSS GARDEN VILLAGE NET GAIN UPDATE

West Oxfordshire District Council are preparing an Area Action Plan for the proposed Salt Cross Garden Village, located near Eynsham. This will set out how the new development will be taken forward, what it will look like and how it will function. TVERC was asked to use the Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Salt Cross Garden Village, along with ecological reports and the TVERC habitats database to develop two "scenarios" for delivering BNG on site. Each scenario is indicative and serves as examples of how BNG can be designed into the site, while maintaining and enhancing the environmental characteristics of the local area, without significantly compromising the area of development.

EQUIPMENT LOAN

We have survey equipment and books available to loan to recorders, and this is advertised on our website. In 2020/21 we loaned 25 small mammal traps to Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

RECORDING GRANT

To support projects that improve the quality, quantity and or coverage of voluntary species recording in Berkshire and Oxfordshire TVERC annually provides a Recorders Grant Scheme. The fund is administered by the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE). Applications may be standalone grants to support better recording or they may be linked to a larger biodiversity application to TOE (www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk). In 2020/21 we funded the following projects (see Appendix II):

17/06/2020 Volunteer expenses for year 4 of High Park Biodiversity Survey £500.00

17/06/2020 Survey equipment for West Oxfordshire Farmland Bird project £1,327.00

08/10/2020 Rare plant surveys as part of year 3 of the Saving Oxford's Wetland Wildlife project £500.00

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

TVERC organise a local Recorders Conference to share information amongst volunteer recorders and increase their knowledge so they can provide us with even better data. We also provide training courses and talks to local groups.

TRAINING COURSES

Unfortunately, during 2020/21 we could not provide any training sessions due to Covid-19 restrictions we hope that if will be possible to resume these in the future.

UNIVERSITY OF READING LECTURE

Robbie Still was invited to give a lecture to undergraduate students about working in ecology as a young professional. It covered insights into his experiences since leaving university and included how to get your first opportunity in the environmental sector, how conservation and farming can work together, and rewilding – the theory and application behind 21st century conservation.

AUTUMN RECORDERS CONFERENCE

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the conference was held online and run over to sessions on Friday 20th & Saturday 21st November. Although a different set up this year and with only a few glitches, we had a successful turnout with over 50 people attending the conference, many who are recorders or members of local organisations.

The series of talks over the two days demonstrated how so many of us, despite restrictions and following appropriate guidelines, are still very much as busy as ever in dedicating our work to better enhance and protect our natural environment.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the conference, with a special thanks to the speakers: Robbie Still, Ellie Mayhew, Yolanda Vazquez, Harriet Carty, Sam Cartwright, Nick Marriner, Michael Wilson, Colm O'Caomhanaigh, Rachel Pearson and Jon Cole.

SPRING RECORDERS CONFERENCE

Once again, we held our Spring Recorders' Conference virtually over two mornings on Friday 26th & 27th March, with over 60 people attending each day. Thank you to everyone who attended and a big thank you to all of our wonderful speakers!

We enjoyed a variety of talks and presentations starting up with our very own Robbie Still with an **introduction to TVERC** and an insight into some of our recent projects in particular the **OxTrees project**. Marc Botham from CEH told us about the **Biodiversity Toolkit for Housing Providers**, a collaborative project with BBOWT NERC Science and Bracknell Forest to name a few. Sophie Cunnington, Wild Oxfordshire gave a great talk on the **Yellow Wagtail Project** which presents a unique opportunity for a landscape scale project. Fraser Cottington updated us on the progress of **Lea Farm Lake** and the amazing birds recorded at the site. Claire's '**Review of the Status of Bats in Berkshire'** gave us some interesting facts. We learned from Tricia Marcouse, **Reading Climate Action Network** projects and what they hope to achieve 'Our aim is to make Reading a climate-resilient town with net zero carbon emissions by 2030. We're encouraging everybody to work together to achieve this'. To close the first day, Josh Deakins, a micro intern student, described his analysis and findings of the **distribution of hedgehogs against protected areas within Berkshire and Oxfordshire.**

Day 2 started with a session '**Ask the Data Manager'**, with Ellen from TVERC answering some of your questions. Noah Walker followed introducing us to the **West Oxfordshire Farmland Bird Project** and their surveys to monitor farmland bird populations. With Des Sussex, County Dragonfly Recorder, we learned some under-recorded areas for **dragonflies and damselflies** are the Lower Windrush Valley, River Loddon and Thames downstream of Reading. Barry Anderson, Wokingham and District Veteran Tree Association took us to **Charvil** and its veteran trees. Great discussions followed Mike Copland, **Wild Cookham** and Fiona Hewes, **Wild Maidenhead** presentations. We closed our conference with another TVERC micro intern student, Kieran Storer on 'Skylark population trends in Oxfordshire and Berkshire'.

It was great to see new and familiar faces and to continue to share information, resources, knowledge and the great work many of us continue to do to help conserve our environment.

9. OUR VALUED AND RESPECTED STAFF RETAIN AND DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS, EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE

OFFICE STAFF

We are a team of ten people, but we have had a few leavers over this year so currently there are seven of us. Many of the team have temporarily stepped in to cover parts of the vacant roles, and to work extra hours to allow us to minimise the impacts of these vacancies.

Steve Wilkes, Director - Development and delivery of the TVERC service.

Ellen Lee, Biodiversity Data Services Officer – Data management, analysing and presenting data for commercial customers and project work.

Robbie Still, Biodiversity Data Manager - Data management, analysing and presenting data for commercial customers and project work.

Julie Kerans, and Caitlin Coombs, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Biodiversity Data Officers - Surveying local wildlife sites with the help of volunteers, analysing and presenting data for project work.

Yolanda Vazquez, Biodiversity Projects Officer - Surveying local wildlife sites, analysing and presenting data for project work.

Filipa McGuinness, Admin Officer - Finance, admin & promotional tasks to ensure the smooth running of a busy office.

Adela Nistora, Biodiversity Data Assistant - Data management, presenting data for commercial customers and project work.

STAFF CHANGES

We have had some changes in our team over the last year, Dan Carpenter, our Projects Manager left us in September 2020 to work in the private sector. Katherine Lister, our Data Manager left us in January 2021 to be closer to home where she will be joining Barnsley Council. Katherine Holmes, our Berkshire Biodiversity Officer, left us in December 2020 to spend some time with her family and Caitlin Coombs will now stay on as the new Berkshire Biodiversity Officer. Camilla Burrow, our director left us in November 2020 to start her new role as Wild Oxfordshire Director and so we welcomed Steve Wilkes as our new Director in October 2020.

CAMILLA BURROW

"I've been wanting to move into the charitable sector for some time now, and I think there's lots of potential to achieve great things at Wild Oxfordshire, supported by society's realisation and acknowledgement that there's a climate change and biodiversity emergency. Wild Oxfordshire has the ambition to grow, and to increase its influence in strategic conservation and I feel like this is an opportunity to make this happen and achieve some big gains for our environment. I will continue to be advocating for the importance of data-led decisions and the essential work TVERC does whilst at Wild Oxfordshire. I also very much hope that Wild Oxfordshire and TVERC will work even more closely together in future."

DAN CARPENTER

"After four and a half years, I am leaving TVERC for a new job in the private sector. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at TVERC.

It has been fantastic working with the biological recording community in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and getting involved in some of the work happening in the community. It has also been a privilege to work with the talented and committed TVERC team.

Much has changed over the last four years - TVERC has worked hard to make managing and sharing data more efficient and less time consuming. As a result TVERC has increased the rate at which it adds data to its database, which is now above 3 million species records. Over 1 million records have been added in the time I have been at TVERC.

I have also been lucky to be involved in some really interesting projects, from the Oxford Swift City project, Ancient Woodland reviews, pond mapping and green corridor work for neighbourhood plans to the recent publication of the draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network. And there are more interesting projects ongoing which I look forward to seeing come to fruition. The TVERC team continue to prove their capabilities, delivering work of high quality which is really valuable in making evidence based decisions about the natural environment in the Thames Valley.

Change always creates uncertainty, but I know that the team will rise to the challenge and will continue to offer high quality data and services to all of its customers. And I will continue to be an advocate for TVERC and record centres more widely - their work and their data are increasingly important in a world experiencing great environmental pressure."

STEVE WILKES

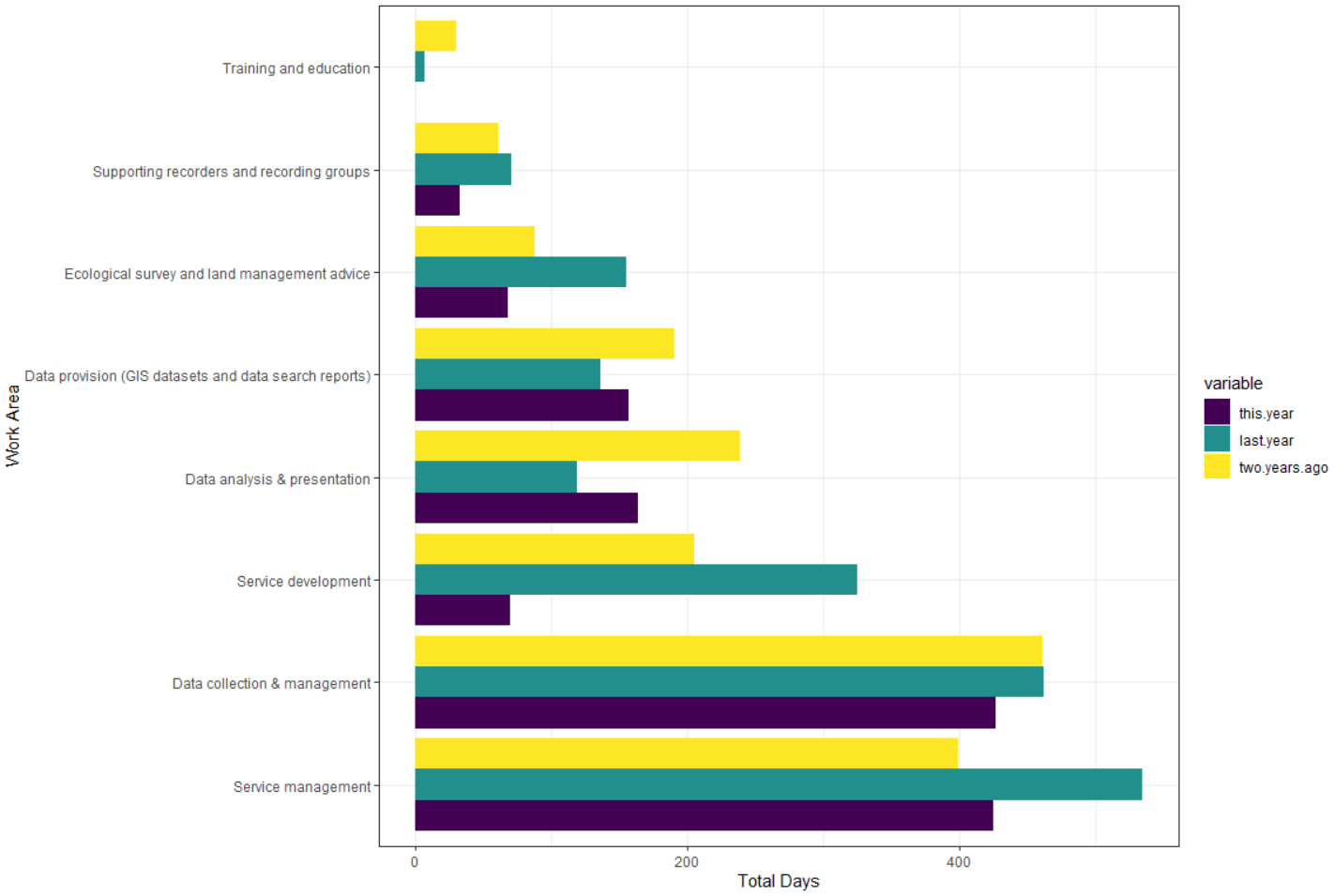
Steve previously worked with utilities companies in the UK and around the world to help them to collect and make use of data from their networks more effectively and to use this to provide a better service for their customers, reduce waste and manage their businesses better.

Over the last year he has been refreshing his ecological background, completing a Masters in Conservation Ecology at Oxford Brookes, and exploring how technology can support informed ecological decision making.

He is looking forward to helping continue TVERC's work in curating a comprehensive biodiversity information hub for our counties and to further its use to support responsible decision making for development, land management, conservation.

STAFF TIME

The chart and table below illustrate the time spent by the TVERC team on different elements of the TVERC work programme over the last three financial years. In 2020/21 there were several leavers and there have been significant lags in refilling these positions, reducing the number of man days available during the year particularly reducing our capacity for work on service development. Also, the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions have curtailed the work done to support and train the recording community. In 2020/21 The majority of staff time was spent on Data collection & management (427 days) and Service management (425 days), Service development (325 days). 33 days was spent on Supporting recorders.



Work Area	2020-21		2019-20		2018-19	
	Days	Percent	Days	Percent	Days	Percent
Data collection & management	427	32%	462	26%	461	28%
Service management	425	32%	534	30%	399	24%
Data analysis & presentation	164	12%	119	7%	239	14%
Data provision (GIS datasets and data search reports)	157	12%	136	8%	191	11%
Service development	70	5%	325	18%	205	12%
Ecological survey and land management advice	68	5%	155	9%	88	5%
Supporting recorders and recording groups	33	2%	70	4%	61	4%
Training and education	0	0%	7	0.5%	30	2%

VOLUNTEERS

TVERC are fortunate to get the help of volunteers to carry out some data processing, species recording and site surveys. We also rely on help from volunteers to manage and input data into our database, and this is where the majority of their time was spent, 85% this year. In 2020-2021, 5 office volunteers were recruited and trained remotely. Working from home they carried out 45 days of voluntary tasks. In addition, several volunteers provided in total 8 days of time to surveys species for the Local Wildlife Sites project. If all this volunteer work had been carried out by paid staff, it would have cost TVERC over £6,000.

Work Area	Days		
	2020-21	2019-20	2019-20
Data management	45	105	105
Local Wildlife Sites	8	6	6
Project development	0	0	0
Publicity & promotion	0	0	0
Recorders Conferences	0	3	3
Volunteer training & development	0	0	0

FINANCE

TVERC is a 'not-for-profit' organisation so any surplus income over expenditure is re-invested into the service, except for that which is held in the Reserve. TVERC is an internal trading unit within OxonCC meaning that our budget must balance to zero each financial year, but we can hold funds in a separate Reserve account.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that sufficient income is obtained each year to cover the costs of running the TVERC service. Financial forecasts are reviewed monthly, with reports to the Steering Group every three months. Charges may be increased or decreased differently than is forecast here, depending on the future situation. TVERC will work to ensure that any fee increases are kept to a minimum for all our customers by ensuring our processes are as efficient as possible.

The biggest expenditure is on staff salaries. However, staff time is also the biggest asset TVERC has, as it is the staff time spent on projects, data searches and data licenses which bring in the income.

We ended 2020-21 with a net surplus of £73,625, leaving TVERC in a strong position to continue to invest in improving our service, ensuring we are resilient to change.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Starting Reserve balance	***£269,031**	**£230,619**	**£295,788**
Expenditure	£333,887	£372,386	£313,113
Income	£407,512	£358,358	£344,025
Year-end balance	£73,625	-£14,028	£30,912
Year-end Reserve balance	**£342,656**	**£187,729**	**£230,619**
Redundancy costs	£56,650	£55,000	£57,125
3 months running costs	£96,650	£92,000	£90,500
Allocated (RIA)	£51,940	£32,053	£55,412
Enabling fund	£137,416	£8,676	£27,582

*NB: Reserve Balance confirmed with OxonCC Finance March 2021

INCOME

TVERC is funded via a number of ways, as shown in the table below. All of these funding streams contribute to the annual cost of collating and managing the TVERC database, resulting in economies of scale for our customers.

Income	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Local authorities SLA	£128,635	£132,790	£138,753
Environment Agency SLA	£15,104	£15,104	£17,280
Commercial data searches	£138,985	£111,827	£113,684
Commercial data licences	£25,985	£14,680	£23,056
Projects - LA funded	£55,553	£51,325	£36,343
Projects - NE / EA funded	£0	£0	£0
Projects - other funded	£43,190	£31,060	£13,774
Donations	£60	£1,572	£1,137
TOTAL	**£407,512**	**£358,358**	**£344,025**

Projects 2020/2021	Revenue (net income)
West Berkshire AWI	£0.00
Cherwell DWS	£3,603.00
CEH Housing Association NERC	£1,450.00
Berks LNP Secreteriat	£2,650.00
OxEB Secreteriat	£1,660.00
Nature Recovery Networks	£8,940.00
SDL160	£5,617.75
AMR	£5,233.00
Oxon Trees	£18,620.00
West Berks Road Verges	£2,900.00
OxCam Natural Capital	£8,700.00
West Oxon Garden Village Net Gain	£290.00
CTA Update	£275.00
BFC GI Update	£241.67
TOE Net Gain Monitoring Standards	£1,450.00
Pondhouse Copse Survey	£580.00
West Berkshire Site Assessments	£2,800.00
Salt Cross Garden Village Net Gain	£4,060.00
Berkshire NRN	£6,380.00
Sibthorp Record Update	£290.00
TOE Net Gain Support	£180.00
Reading Uni Lecture	£60.00
Total	**£75,980.42**

EXPENDITURE

The majority of TVERC's income is spent on staff (including volunteer expenses). Our staff and volunteers are the biggest asset TVERC has, as it's the staff time spent on projects, data searches and data licenses which bring in the income. Our staff and volunteers also work continuously to improve the TVERC service and data products we can offer our funders.

Expenditure	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Staff (salaries, expenses, training)	£293,962	£315,429	£278,099
Project expenses	£482	£19,068	£834
Overheads (equipment, printing, postage etc.)	£5,717	£5,894	£1,809
Premises (paid 'in kind' by OCC)	£16,575	£16,500	£16,500
Recorders Fund and Conference	£2,750	£4,486	£3,614
Investment in service (data tools, website etc)	£14,400	£3,375	£12,257
Investment in service (Separation and CiC set-up)	£0	£7,634	£0
TOTAL	**£333,887**	**£372,386**	**£313,113**

MANAGING FINANCIAL RISK

Due to Oxon CC accounting rules, the Business account must balance to £0 at the end of each financial year, but 'surplus' monies or deficits can be moved into or out of a Balancing account.

The TVERC Reserve is also kept in the Balancing account. The TVERC Reserve mitigates TVERC from financial risk. The policy that the Reserve covers the costs of staff redundancies plus three months running costs was agreed by the Steering Group in the September 2012 meeting.

The enabling fund consists of the 'surplus' monies which we will use for investment in TVERC services, such as our plans to separate from OxonCC and set up as a Community Interest Company.

At the end of 2020/21, there was £342,656 in the TVERC Balancing Account.
The table below outlines the allocations.

Project funding RIA (to be carried forward to 21/22)	
P20-05 Oxon CC project	£36,510
P15-14 Cherwell DWS	£4,060
P21-01 Wokingham Ponds - GCN eDNA surveys	£2,500
P20-03 Oxfordshire Tree Mapping Project	£1,680
P20-16 Berkshire NRN	£1,450
P19-10 Berks LNP secretariat	£925
P19-11 OxEB secretariat	£4,815
Reserve	
Redundancy costs	£56,650
3 months running costs	£96,650
Enabling fund	
Service Improvements	£67,000
Website, Social Engagement Project	£14,550
Move & independence costs	£55,866

APPENDIX I – LWS SURVEY AND SELECTION

Panel decision	Meaning
Retain	Existing LWS resurveyed and designation as LWS confirmed
Accept	Proposed LWS surveyed and designated as LWS
Deselect	Existing LWS resurveyed and de-designated as LWS
Reject	Proposed LWS surveyed and not designated as LWS
Deferred	Insufficient information to make decision
Denotify	

OXFORDSHIRE SURVEYS

The following sites were taken to panel in 2021.

CHERWELL

Site code	Site name	Decision
51D06	Bletchingdon Road Verge (East)	Defer
33R01	Cradle and Grounds Farm Banks	Retain
43L02	Deddington Mill	Defer
41V08	Wet Wood and Swamp near Yarnton	Retain
33X02	Tadmarton heath Reserve	Defer
34V01	Wroxton and Balscote Mills	**Accept**
34V01	Possible extension to Wroxton and Balscote Mills	NA

WEST OXFORDSHIRE

Site code	Site name	Decision
41K07	Acrey Pits	Retain
20T02	Carterton Grassland	Retain
NA	Fields north of Minster Lovell Meadows	Reject
42K01	Hollybank Marsh	Retain
32Q01	Lower Farm Meadow	Retain
31F07	Minster Lovell Meadows	Additional info only
30Y01	Tar Woods	Retain
30T07	Rushey common and Tar lakes	**Accept**

VALE OF WHITE HORSE

Site code	Site name	Decision
58H07	Chalk Pit and Lane, Blewbury	Retain
50F01	Fiddlers Elbow Marsh	Retain
40X01	Hinksey heights (possible extension to harcourt hill scrub)	**Accept** as extension
59I03	Radley Gravel Pits	Retain
40N01	Farmoor Reservoir	Retain
NA	Farmoor Reservoir - other Thames water field to south east	Reject
39G01	Baulking Quarry	**Accept**

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

Site code	Site name	Decision
68C01	Cholsey Marsh	Retain
67P10	Hardwick Riverside Pasture	Retain
78C02	Highmoor and Lower Common Wood	Retain
78C01	Holly Grove	N/A
58M06	Lids Down	Add as proposed LWS
68D02	Pond north of Cholsey Marsh	Defer
58W01	South Stoke Marsh (south) proposed extension	**Accept** as extension
77N03	Span Hill Chalk Pit	**Accept**

BERKSHIRE SURVEYS

The following sites were taken to panel in 2021.

BRACKNELL FOREST

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU86Z01	Lily Hill Park pLWS	**Accepted**
SU86Z11	Longhill Park SANG pLWS	Reject
SU87K02	Bryony Copse/Temple Copse	Retain

READING

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU67S01	River Kennet/ Kennet & Avon Canal	Retain
SU77G04	Reading Cemetery	De-select
SU67S01	Mcllroy Park (inc. Round Copse)	Retain

WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU88G02	Temple Golf Course	Retain
SU88L03	Carpenters Wood, Dungrove Hill	Retain

WEST BERKSHIRE

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU37D04	Coppington Down	Defer
SU37U01	Winterdown Bottom Down	Retain
SU37U02	East Garston and Warren Downs	Retain
SU58V05	Lough Down	Retain
SU36S04	Hayes Well Field	Defer
SU66D05	Padworth Lane Gravel Pits	Retain

WOKINGHAM

Site code	Site name	Decision
SU78W01	Rosehill Wood pLWS	Reject
SU78W05	Cannon Wood (+ pLWS ext)	Retain and accept extension
SU78X02	Wet woodland at Aston	Retain and reject extension

APPENDIX II – TVERC RECORDING SCHEME PROJECTS

YEAR 4 OF HIGH PARK BIODIVERSITY SURVEY AT BLENHEIM

Description - To describe all aspects of High Park, beginning with geology and soils, then archaeology, history, the landscape, the trees (especially the ancient and veteran oaks and also other ancient trees on the site), the other flora including vascular plants and bryophytes, mycology including lichenised and non-lichenised fungi, the fauna including invertebrates (e.g. molluscs, spiders, insects especially saproxylic beetles but also butterflies and moths as well as Diptera, Hemiptera and Hymenoptera) and vertebrates (amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals among which bats and deer, with a history for the latter from park deer to feral and wild) and concluding with management and conservation of this most important site for ancient oaks in England and an SSSI as well as part of a World Heritage Site.

The aim is to conduct a survey of all macro-biodiversity across the Animal, Fungal and Plant Kingdoms in the SSSI of High Park (c. 120 ha) within Blenheim Park, Oxfordshire. Information about its geology, history and past management will also be gathered. The data collected are to be submitted to TVERC and will be used to describe High Park in a book to be published in collaboration with Blenheim Park, Natural England and possibly other sponsors. The book will be multiple-authored and edited by Aljos Farjon.

The funds are used to support travel costs for the volunteers.

Outcomes - The survey started in February 2017 and is being carried out over a four year period with input from a large number of volunteers. The coronavirus lockdown had a significant impact on this project as only a couple of the volunteers who live close to Woodstock were able to get to the site early in the survey season due to the travel restrictions. Fortunately, the Estate have been sympathetic and granted the project full access through the summer into the autumn for the first time. With no young pheasants released, the cause of seasonal closures of the High Park, the groups were given permission to continue surveys. The importance of this was significant because it enabled the successful survey of several groups of organisms into November. Having missed part of the Year 4 survey season, further surveys will be undertaking in 2021, extending year 4 into year 5

WEST OXFORDSHIRE FARMLAND BIRD PROJECT

Description - The aim of the project is to increase the farmland bird population of West Oxfordshire and to monitor population health. The main target species is the Tree Sparrow (expanding the populations from Chimney Meadows and North Wiltshire), but the group are also targeting Corn Bunting, Skylark and Yellowhammer. Nest boxes have been put up to increase breeding and supplementary feeding is being supplied to help winter survival. Additionally, the group are working with farmers to try and improve the land for wildlife alongside modern agriculture. For example, by improving hedgerow management they aim to increase available nesting and feeding habitats and, to stop birds being pushed off the land, the group are encouraging the planting of wild birdseed crops and leaving margins of uncut wildflowers.

Outcomes – Fortunately, most of the study sites are short walk from where team member live so that, although unable to undertake bird ringing surveys, observational bird counts were undertaken throughout last summer. Additionally, extensive breeding bird surveys and bird ringing surveys were carried out once restrictions had been lifted including more time monitoring nests as part of the BTO Nest Record Scheme and, as a result, the group gained a deeper insight into the breeding ecology of many farmland bird species during the grant period. For example, they found and monitored 14 Corn Bunting nests at three study sites, and this accounts for 25%-50% of the nests monitored annually in the UK.

Using information from the detailed nest monitoring, the volunteers identified areas of the arable crop and wildflower/grasslands that should be kept undisturbed by any farming activities during the breeding season and reported this to the farmers Interestingly, they found that a large proportion of Corn Buntings nested in stewardship scheme field margins or wildflower plots where they are safe from most farming activities, rather than in nearby cereal crops. This may be an example of the behavioural evolution where this species is now preferentially nesting in grassland areas where they are less vulnerable to the early harvesting of winter-sown crops. The group will carry out similar surveys into breeding Corn Bunting over the coming years to establish whether birds are preferentially nesting outside the cropped areas. The data collected for Corn Buntings, alongside other nests found in grass field margins (including Yellowhammers, Reed Buntings and Stonechats), has allowed the group to show farmers the benefit of leaving their uncropped areas undisturbed until the end of the breeding season in September.

The funds were used to buy bird rings, mist nets and 14 x 12- port bird feeders. Noah Walker, who lead the West Oxfordshire Farmland group, presented at our Spring Recorders' Conference in March.

SAVING OXFORD'S WETLAND WILDLIFE PROJECT

Description – Run by the Freshwater Habitats Trust, the Saving Oxford's Wetland Wildlife project aims to provide a range of very different opportunities for people from a diverse range of age groups and backgrounds to become directly engaged in

(a) Understanding and conserving the rare and varied freshwater wildlife found so close to Oxford, and

(b) Protecting important freshwater sites around Oxfordshire.

These sites form a network of habitats which support the range of special freshwater plants and animals that are holding-on in the Oxford area. The project is undertaking practical conservation work at specific sites and ex-situ conservation of rare species at three other sites.

The TVERC funding was awarded to support the rare plant surveys at specific sites in the Oxford area.

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