

PRESS RELEASE



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A million records for local wildlife information centre

The region's local environmental records centre was flying high as it celebrated gathering a million records of local plants and animals this week.

South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC) is the local hub for wildlife information in Dumfries & Galloway and Ayrshire. The Centre collates and shares information about the region's species and habitats to help paint a better picture of where they are found. The crucial one millionth record was of a Redshank at Loch Ryan, a wading bird from one of the region's most important wetlands. The information was part of the county bird records which are collated each year by the county bird recorder and published by the local Scottish Ornithologists' Club branches in the local bird report.

The Centre's growing collection of information is largely thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteer wildlife watchers. People send in their sightings either via local or national recording schemes or direct to the Centre, where the records are collated in SWSEIC's database.

So far records of more than 11,500 different plants, animals and fungi have been gathered from around SW Scotland. Not surprisingly, birds make up the largest proportion of the Centre's records, followed by moths, plants and butterflies. The Mallard is the most frequently recorded species, with Chaffinch and Blackbird making up the top three.

SWSEIC Manager Mark Pollitt said,

"When the Centre was launched in 2004 we had no records collated locally at all. Now, with the help of a growing army of local wildlife enthusiasts and improved sharing of information, we have over a million records helping us to improve our understanding of where both common and rarer species are to be found."

Mark added,

"The information we hold is a hugely valuable resource and it's there for everyone to use. It's helping us to look after our natural heritage for future generations to enjoy."

"We're very grateful to everyone who has contributed information, but we're still only just scratching the surface in terms of our local knowledge. It's a very big region, and there are still many species and places we know surprisingly little about."

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Stuart Graham, Funding Officer with Scottish Natural Heritage said,

“The Centre provides a great focus for people’s wildlife records from across the region. These records are very helpful to monitor trends and changes in our environment as well as highlighting the most sensitive areas that require our conservation efforts. We are delighted that the army of local recorders have helped the record centre pass this very special milestone and look forward to the 2 millionth record!”

The Centre is hosted by Southern Uplands Partnership and is grateful for the continued support it receives from Scottish Natural Heritage and the four local authorities.

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Please note that due to hearing impairment it may not always be possible to speak via telephone, and communication via email would be preferred.

Notes to editors

1. SWSEIC was originally founded as Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre (DGERC) in 2004 and changed its identity in 2017 to reflect the expansion of the Centre’s area to cover Ayrshire.
2. SWSEIC aims to support the collection and dissemination of high quality environmental information relating to the region. The Centre maintains a growing database of environmental information which originates from members of the public, expert naturalists (many of them volunteers), local and national nature conservation organisations and researchers. The information is made available locally and nationally to planners, developers, researchers, local wildlife groups, schools and local communities who are interested in particular sites or species.
3. SWSEIC is currently undertaking a two-year project called ‘Where’s Wildlife in Ayrshire?’. The project aims to encourage people throughout the region to get involved in wildlife recording – collecting information about where different plants and animals live. It will work with local wildlife enthusiasts of all abilities – beginners and experts – and help to improve access to local environmental data.