

# Tips to get started with wildlife recording



Whether you are new to wildlife recording, or are looking for a new challenge to add variety to the records that you already make, here are three top tips from the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative's Forth Nature Counts project which ran from May 2014 to March 2018. *Happy recording!*

1. Decide on a location to record in – perhaps this is your cycle to work or school, where you walk your dog, the extent of your garden or the area you can see from your window at work. Each day/time you decide to record, make a list of **what** you see, **when** this was (the date) and **the location** where you made the records (eg grid reference, or name of place). Each of these are key details for a good wildlife record and you will be asked to add these when submitting your records to the Inner Forth Nature Counts form on iRecord at [www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-inner-forth-records](http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-inner-forth-records)
2. Each month IFLI's Forth Nature Counts project promoted a short list of 3-4 species to target your recording activity on. The monthly lists can be downloaded from the Forth Nature Counts page of the IFLI website (<http://www.innerforthlandscape.co.uk/projects/recording-celebrating/forth-nature-counts>) and are still relevant as these species remain under-recorded or locally scarce. Your new records will help to build the datasets about these species. Keep an eye out for these species each month and add your records to the [Inner Forth Nature Counts form on iRecord](#).
3. Explore somewhere new by walking one of the six Forth Nature Counts Survey Walks. Between 2014 and 2018 these were walked by dedicated volunteer Nature Recorders, but by making the Survey Walk guides available to download via the Forth Nature Counts page of the IFLI website, we hope that more people will try this type of regular and repeatable recording. Remember to add your records to the [Inner Forth Nature Counts form on iRecord](#).

**What is a Survey Walk?** This is a repeatable transect (route) of 2-3km in length that has been designed to cover a range of habitats and can be walked by experienced naturalists and those looking to build their knowledge or give citizen science a go! Transects are routinely used to gather wildlife records in a repeatable way. Forth Nature Counts Survey Walks for the following sites can be downloaded from the IFLI website: Fallin Bing in Stirlingshire; Kinneil Local Nature Reserve in Falkirk; Kinneil Estate in Falkirk; Valleyfield Woodland Park in Fife; Black Devon Wetlands in Clackmannanshire; and Devilla Forest in Fife.

**Tips to keep you safe when recording:** Before you head out to survey, check the forecast (and perhaps delay your trip in inclement weather), make sure that you tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return (or take a friend/family member with you), wear suitable clothing for the weather forecasted, wear sturdy shoes, and perhaps take a drink and snack. None of the Forth Nature Counts Survey Walks involve entering or crossing watercourses, or farmland. We advise you not to enter water or mudflats and to keep an eye on the tide if you are exploring the shoreline anywhere in the UK.

**Interested in doing more?** You could sign up for regular volunteering, species ID workshops or recording schemes run by conservation charities such as Bumblebee Conservation Trust, BTO Scotland, RSPB Scotland, Buglife Scotland, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, British Dragonfly Society, Scottish Badgers, Bat Conservation Trust, Froglife, Botanical Society of the British Isles, Marine Conservation Society, British Phycological Society, Scottish Fungi, Scottish Wildlife Trust. Or contact your local biological records centre such as [Fife Nature Records Centre](#) (covers Fife) or [The Wildlife Information Centre](#) (covers Lothians and Borders, Falkirk, Stirling, Clackmannanshire, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park).

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