

Non-Marine Recorder's report 2024

The year 2024 was another very warm year in Britain and Ireland, as worldwide. It was notably warm and stormy at either end of the year, while the summer was relatively cool (Met Office). The Society ran four non-marine field meetings and obtained, once again, records from a wide variety of sources. In May, a talk on the Society's non-marine work was given at the National Federation for Biological Recording conference, and in November we held a Conservation and Recording Forum meeting in Cardiff (and online).

New data received

In 2024, over 17,000 new records were readied for import into the Society's database, representing around 200 species and over 90 vice-counties: 8800 (50%) of these were submitted directly, with 7600 (45%) via iRecord and 750 (4%) via iNaturalist in iRecord. Particular thanks are due to Chris du Feu for verifying the vast majority of slug records on iRecord, and for kindly mentoring newcomers.

The number of snail records harvested from iNaturalist is much lower this year, because I have found myself unable to deal with the sheer volume of data coming through. This leaves around 10,000 records from 2024 (which, as noted in previous reports, overwhelmingly concern large common species) to deal with at a later date. In the meantime, I have attempted to find and incorporate the few iNaturalist records of greatest interest. Just to keep me on my toes, it is clear that certain research grade iNaturalist records do not always make it into iRecord automatically (*Helix lucorum* is a good example) so I do make the occasional visit to iNaturalist itself.

Some readers will also be aware of the rather active Facebook group, 'Land and Freshwater Mollusca, Britain and Europe'. Although not affiliated with the Society, this group does a great service and people often share interesting finds on it. Members may be relieved to hear that many of those who solicit ID confirmations on Facebook go on to submit their records to iRecord, where they can be verified and harvested by the Society.

The number of direct submissions in 2024 was strongly boosted by over 5000 records submitted by Graeme Lyons, many from general invertebrate site surveys over the years. Other major datasets from fieldwork were submitted by David Adams, Jim Alder, Keith Alexander, Mags Cousins, Terry Crawford, Chris du Feu, Rosemary Hill, Adrian Sumner, Peter Topley, Clive Walton, Tony Wardhaugh, Derek Whiteley and Martin Willing. Terry's included many from Yorkshire where he has been involved in a fascinating records-based assessment of the 'State of Yorkshire's Nature' for molluscs (Fitter *et al.* 2024). Martin's were extracted from commissioned surveys of the rare *Pseudanodontia complanata* and *Vertigo angustior* (Willing 2024a, b). New member Jim Alder has been doing some detailed work re-examining *Azeca goodalli* sites in Derbyshire (VC57). Interesting records were also generated by the Society's field meetings at Hampstead Heath, Middlesex (VC21, Brock 2024) and Withymead, Oxfordshire (VC23, Morton & Walker 2024), the latter

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providing several species taken for DNA sequencing by the Darwin Tree of Life Project. I thank everybody for their contributions.

New vice-county records

Twenty-five new VC records were recognised for the census this year, as listed below. Records received via iRecord are marked with * and those from iNaturalist with **.

West Cornwall with Scilly (1): *Selenochlamys ysbryda*, Madron, Penzance, 16/11/2024, J. Bergin.

South Hampshire (11): *Tandonia cf. cristata*, Dairy Lane, Nursling, 16/3/2024, J. Claxton.*

North Essex (19): *Theba pisana*, Jaywick, 27/10/2024, S. Taylor & D. Bain.

Middlesex (21): *Deroceras panormitanum* s.s., Frogna, Hampstead, 6/2/2024, N. Brock (confirmed by dissection).

Berkshire (22): *Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*, Farmoor Reservoir, Cumnor, 27/12/2024, killerrexy1.**

Cambridgeshire (29): *Paralaoma servilis*, RSPB Hope Farm, 20/2/2024, D. Cormack.

Northamptonshire (32): *Papillifera papillaris*, Burghley House, Stamford, Peterborough, 30/9/2024, C. Read (figure 1).

Montgomeryshire (47): *Selenochlamys ysbryda*, Kerry, Powys, 7/2/2024, R. Evans.

Durham (66): *Hygromia cinctella*, Path Head Watermill, Blaydon, 12/5/2024, J. Cunningham.*

North Northumberland (68): *Theba pisana*, Annstead Dunes, 3/9/2024, R. Comont.*

Isle of Man (71): *Ambigolimax parvipenis*, Billown Nature Reserve, 29/7/2024, S. Harvey (confirmed by dissection)*; *Physella acuta*, Ballasalla Nature Reserve, 29/7/2024, S. Norris.*

Dumfriesshire (72): *Hygromia cinctella*, Edinburgh Road, Dumfries, 5/10/2024, M. Haddow.*

Kirkudbrightshire (73): *Hygromia cinctella*, Fleet Street, Gatehouse of Fleet, 1/11/2024, J. Logan.*

Peeblesshire (78): *Vertigo geyeri*, Ravens Cleugh, Craigengar, 16/7/2024, C. Walton (confirmed by M. J. Willing).

Roxburghshire (80): *Hygromia cinctella*, Kelso, 18/6/2024, A. Smith.* In September 2024, *H. cinctella* was also found at Kelso and at Hawick by Adrian Sumner.

Fife (85): *Arion vulgaris*, Rosyth, 5/10/2022, C. du Feu. This new VC occurrence was not noticed until 2024, when Chris submitted a number of other records of *A. vulgaris* from around Fife.

Stirlingshire (86): *Myosotella myosotis*, Skinflats, Falkirk, 10/6/2024, C. Walton. Clive also found *Assiminea grayana* at this site at the same time; also a new VC record although we now treat this species in the marine dataset (see Walton 2024).

East Perthshire (89): *Planorbarius corneus*, Bamff Estate, 1/6/2024, R. Mackay-Austin.*

South Aberdeenshire (92): *Hygromia cinctella*, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, 30/10/2024, G. Baxter.**

East Inverness-shire (96): *Hawaii minuscula*, Inverness Botanical Gardens (hothouse), 14/12/2024, F. Hutchinson*; *Zonitoides arboreus*, same data (hothouse).*

West Ross & Cromarty (105): *Limacus maculatus*, Kyle of Lochalsh, 4/7/2024, M. Borrowman.

Outer Hebrides (110): *Physella acuta*, Lochside, North Tolsta, 25/3/2023, D. Batty.*

Fermanagh (H33): *Corbicula fluminea*, Lough Erne at Culky Enniskillen, 13/10/2024, G. Blake.* A rapid follow-up survey sought to establish the extent of this species in the River Erne (thanks to Jan-Robert Baars and Maeve Foley for additional information, including a report by Caffrey & Coughlan 2016).

As usual, most new VC records concern spreading non-native species. They include species with scattered records (e.g. *Deroceras panormitanum* s.s., *Paralaoma servilis*) and others that are already widespread. For example, a continued northward expansion of *Hygromia cinctella* was indicated by five new VC records, four of them in Scotland.

Planorbarius corneus and *Physella acuta* also continue to spread in Scotland. Meanwhile *Theba pisana* was recorded from another part of the north-east coast of England and, extraordinarily, on the south-east coast for the first time. *Theba* has been well-known for around 200 years in the south-west of Britain and Ireland and is a difficult snail to overlook. Simon tells me the dune habitat at Jaywick is the result of sea defences built around 20 years ago, so it seems almost certain that *T. pisana* is a recent arrival there (figure 1).

The outstanding exception – a new VC record of a rare native species – was Clive Walton’s discovery of *Vertigo geyeri* in the Pentland Hills of Peeblesshire (VC78) (figure 1). The identification was confirmed by Martin Willing. Not only was this a new VC record, but the first record of *V. geyeri* in the whole of southern Scotland. This rare and declining post-glacial relict is known only from a handful of places in Britain. Clive’s site was a calcareous flush at around 400 m elevation, in a fairly remote area that had probably not been previously searched for this tiny species. One hopes that other sites may yet be found in the region.

Other noteworthy records

Other good finds in 2024 include reconfirmation of the presence of certain rarely recorded species. *Valvata macrostoma* was re-found in Oxfordshire (VC23) at Blenheim Park SSSI by Mags Cousins (via iRecord). This was the first record of *V. macrostoma* in this part of England since 1978. Some fine photographs of *Ponentina subvirescens* were posted on Facebook from Lundy, North Devon (VC4) by Mandy Dee (figure 1). This was the first record of it from the island since 1965. The bivalve *Rangia cuneata* was confirmed still living at Hubbert’s Bridge, Boston, South Lincolnshire (VC53) by Liam Andrews (where the recorder suggests it appears to be being preyed upon by otters). A new sand dune site for *Vertigo angustior* was found by Martin Willing in vegetation samples from

Nicholaston Burrows in Glamorganshire (VC41). And new sites were found for the mysterious *Arion* sp. ‘Davies’ at Bishopthorpe, Mid-west Yorkshire (VC64) by Jane Thomas and at Ormesby Hall, North-east Yorkshire (VC62) by Tony Wardhaugh (figure 1). These observers’ attention to detail in noticing the peculiar appearance of these slugs is impressive.

Work on the database

At the time of writing, I have not yet been able to update the NBN (National Biodiversity Network) with the data compiled in 2023 or 2024. This delay may be disappointing, not only to recorders themselves but also to other conservation organisations that use our data for mapping and reporting purposes. In previous reports I have mentioned some of the difficulties I have been having with the Recorder 6 software in which our records are held. With the help of Mike Weideli, I reinstalled and updated Recorder 6 on a new PC in early 2024. This has resolved some of these problems, notably updating the species list. However, others remain including the need to clean up and divide a large amount of our data, and frequent problems with both importing and exporting records.

Having spent the last few years canvassing for alternative systems from those running other recording schemes, such as LERCs (Local Environmental Records Centres), the NBN and the BRC (Biological Records Centre), and especially regarding Indicia for iRecord, I am now sure we need a more simply structured database for our Non-Marine Scheme, at least for the next few years. It also needs simple and specific fields for vice-counties, ‘shell only’ and subfossil statuses, and to work across all regions (GB, IOM, NI, ROI, CI and so on). With the help of David Slade of SEWBReC (the South-East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre), I have extracted the data from Recorder 6 and saved both the .csv file output and the 2022 Recorder 6 database as a backup. After experimenting with MS Access, I have settled on the more flexible and easier-to-use Filemaker Pro for the new database. In part this is due to the wider range of import and export options in Filemaker than MS Access. This has already made it much easier to spot and correct a large number of gaps, duplications, inconsistencies and errors in the dataset. Work continues which I hope will make our non-marine recording more efficient and more accurate in the years to come. In the meantime, rest assured that all records are compiled and kept safely on behalf of the Society. Some exciting molluscs have already begun to appear in 2025!

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figure 1: (clockwise from top left): *Vertigo geyeri*, Craigengar, Peeblesshire (photo: Clive Walton); *Arion* sp. 'Davies', Ormesby Hall, North-east Yorkshire (photo: Tony Wardhaugh); *Theba pisana*, Jaywick, North Essex (photo: Simon Taylor); *Papillifera papillaris* Burghley House, Northamptonshire. (photo: Chris Read); *Ponentina subvirescens*, Lundy, North Devon (photo: Mandy Dee, via iRecord).