

Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly



C5. Data Access Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The provision of access to data pertaining to the biology and geology of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is a core function of ERCCIS.
- 1.2 As a member of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), ERCCIS operates according to the NBN data exchange principles. The wildlife and geological information ERCCIS holds should be made available for use in not for profit decision-making, education, research and other public benefit purposes.
- 1.3 Data is only useful when it is used. Therefore, the overarching principle guiding access to data at ERCCIS is one of open and equal access to all individuals and organisations.
- 1.4 Access to the data ERCCIS holds needs to be undertaken in a controlled and managed way.
- 1.5 ERCCIS will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, which it is registered under through its host organisation Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

2. Background

- 2.1 ERCCIS collates, manages and disseminates biological and geological information about Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Data are received from a variety of sources and in different formats.
- 2.2 Biological information comes in the format of species records which ERCCIS manages on computer databases. It is this information that is most frequently disseminated.
- 2.3 Information is supplied to data users after completion and submission of an Information Request Form. The data user must sign to agree with the Terms and Conditions under which the data are supplied to them.

3. Data Access

- 3.1 ERCCIS provides information through the Wildlife Information Service, which offers an enquiry service to request wildlife information for a particular purpose. This service is available to everyone from conservation organisations, members of the public, students, recorders and commercial and statutory organisations.

- 3.2 ERCCIS does not charge for the supply of data. ERCCIS does charge however, for the time invested by staff to collate, manage and disseminate that data.
- 3.3 ERCCIS will make data belonging to a data provider available to them upon request.
- 3.4 Data held by ERCCIS remains the intellectual property rights of the data provider. By submitting records and other information to ERCCIS, ERCCIS has the right to hold, copy, process and incorporate the data supplied into its data management system.
- 3.5 The right for ERCCIS to use this data can be withheld or withdrawn by the data provider at any time.
- 3.6 Biodiversity data should be used to encourage positive impacts on the natural environment. Where negative impacts are likely to occur as a result of supplying data to a data provider, ERCCIS has the right to withhold access to this data.
- 3.7 ERCCIS will restrict availability of wildlife information that it deems to be environmentally, commercially or personally sensitive in nature.
- 3.8 ERCCIS may restrict data access for the following reasons:
 - 3.8.1 If complete access is likely to increase the risk of environmental damage or put sensitive species at risk.
 - 3.8.2 If release of data is likely to jeopardise the supply of future data.
 - 3.8.3 If the data provider has requested that data remains confidential.
 - 3.8.4 Some data may be withheld if it is commercially sensitive, or still under preparation prior to publication and is therefore, incomplete. These restrictions may be temporary depending on the circumstance.
 - 3.8.5 Data that contains personal information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal information is not supplied to third parties.
- 3.9 ERCCIS will make sufficient metadata available to allow data users to assess the scope, uses and constraints of the information provided.
- 3.10 ERCCIS will make relevant Policies and Procedures available on the ERCCIS website to allow data providers and users alike to view the standards and procedures by which ERCCIS operates.

4. Related Policies

A4. Charging Policy

A7. Privacy Policy

C1. Data Ownership and Acquisition

C4. Metadata Management

5. Related Links

Version 2
April 2009
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www.ercis.co.uk