

Dragonfly Recording Network Data Access Policy

1. General policy statement

- 1.1 **Dragonfly Recording Network** will provide others with access to the data and information that we hold and manage. The availability of data is managed responsibly in line with the policy set out in this paper.
- 1.2 This *Access to data policy* is used to help inform specific access decisions and to prepare access position statements for individual datasets held and managed by the **Dragonfly Recording Network**.

2. Background

- 2.1 The collection and provision of wildlife data is a core function of **Dragonfly Recording Network**. The wildlife data we receive is processed and collated into larger sets of data that provide more complete information for a given geographic area, time period and/or data subject.
- 2.2 Data and information are only useful when they are used, and, generally, the availability of more and better information helps improve the quality of decision-making. Therefore the overarching principle guiding access to data collected and held by **Dragonfly Recording Network** is one of open and equal access to all organisations and individuals wherever possible and appropriate.
- 2.3 **Dragonfly Recording Network** is an impartial source of wildlife data of known quality to support decision-making, education, research and other public benefit activities. A balance needs to be struck between making data widely available and protecting the interests of the environment, **Dragonfly Recording Network**, and our data providers. We use the policy framework set out below to help us achieve this balance in a rational and consistent way.

3. Wildlife Data Access Policy

3.1 Policy Statement 1

<p>Biodiversity data should be easily accessible to enable their use for decision-making, education, research and other public-benefit purposes.</p>

- 3.1.1 This is the founding principle of **Dragonfly Recording Network**. We will make the data we hold available to everyone wherever possible in accordance with the remaining data access policy statements.
- 3.1.2 The policy statement reflects our belief that, for wise choices to be made about the environment, the many viewpoints involved should have access to and use information about the environment, and that informed decisions are better than uninformed ones. The wildlife data held by **Dragonfly Recording Network** will be made easily accessible to give all organisations and individuals an equal opportunity to find and use the same information where this is in accordance with the remaining data access policy statements.

3.2 Policy Statement 2

Making biodiversity data available should reduce the risk of damage to the environment. If it is likely to have the opposite effect, availability may need to be controlled.

- 3.2.1 **Dragonfly Recording Network** recognise that some biodiversity data, if released into the wrong hands, could lead to damage to the natural environment. Understanding the probability and impact of risks allows us to manage this responsibly. We adopt a presumption in favour of allowing access to data and ensure that availability is restricted only when it is truly necessary.
- 3.2.2 We assess the sensitivity / risk of damage to the environment (including species, habitats, as well as designated wildlife and geology sites) against defined criteria. These criteria have been agreed in partnership with representatives of our data providing community (individual recorders, recording groups and organisations).
- 3.2.3 **Dragonfly Recording Network** publish lists of those data currently regarded as sensitive on the relevant section of our website (<http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/>). These lists are categorised and reviewed annually. An indication of who has been or will be granted access to sensitive data is also given.

3.3 **Policy Statement 3**

Accompanying information (metadata) including details on subject, ownership, methods and limitations of interpretation, will be made available alongside any data we make available to allow users to assess their scope and potential uses.

- 3.3.1 Metadata provides valuable context to the data we make available, allowing users to build a greater understanding of the limits within which a dataset can be use appropriately. **Dragonfly Recording Network** will, wherever possible, ensure adequate levels of metadata are collated for the data we make available. This information will be provided alongside data whenever they are made available to users.
- 3.3.2 It should be recognised that, at the present time, many datasets currently held by **Dragonfly Recording Network** have limited metadata. Creating meta-data for all our existing data holdings will take time. Metadata for newly generated data is being documented as part of the data collation process.

3.4 **Policy Statement 4**

A clear transfer of authority should be made when a biodiversity data resource is put together, to allow us to use and pass on data to others in line with this policy framework.

- 3.4.1 **Dragonfly Recording Network** is committed to seeking clear permissions from our data providers that allow us to use and pass on data to others in accordance with this Data Access Policy.
- 3.4.2 **Dragonfly Recording Network** will take appropriate steps to ensure that anyone that submits wildlife data to us has had a clear and reasonable opportunity to learn about how

we will use and make that data available to others. This Data Access Policy represents one of these measures.

3.4.3 **Dragonfly Recording Network** will use appropriate mechanisms to form a clear point of agreement between ourselves and our data providers. The mechanisms used will be tailored to the needs of different data providing groups. Individuals submitting wildlife records will be referred to this data access policy either verbally or through a clear statement placed on our recording forms. Larger data submissions and exchanges with recording groups, organisations and partners will be supported by clear licence agreements (written in plain English) clarifying how the data will be managed and used.

3.5 **Policy Statement 5**

Our framework of terms and conditions will be made publicly available to help reassure data providers that control will be exercised responsibly in the management and use of their data.

3.5.1 **Dragonfly Recording Network** will make all our terms and conditions, practices and procedures readily available to the public. This Data Access Policy, together with other relevant policies, is available to anyone on request and on our website (<http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk>) for those with Internet access.

3.6 **Policy Statement 6**

Personal data must be managed in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and/or any subsequent legal provisions.

3.6.1 All organisations that hold information relating to living individuals are subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. **Dragonfly Recording Network** is registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner.

3.6.2 **Dragonfly Recording Network** has published a *Privacy Policy* in accordance with best practice advice. This clearly sets out the following:

1. Who we are.
2. Why we need personal information.
3. What we do with it and who else we make it available to.
4. When we will dispose of it.
5. How we will safeguard it.
6. How you can check the information we hold on you.
7. How to get more information and how to complain.

3.6.3 **Dragonfly Recording Network** is committed to seeking clear permission to hold basic information about individuals that provide us with data in accordance with our *Privacy Policy*. We usually do this in conjunction with permissions to use data (see section 3.4 above).

3.6.4 Please refer to our *Privacy Policy* for more information about the personal data we collect and use. For more information about the Data Protection Act contact the Data Commissioner (Tel:01625 545 745) or visit www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

3.7 **Policy Statement 7**

Basic facts will be made freely available (except for handling charges if needed) for not-for-profit decision-making, education, research and other public-benefit purposes. Wherever possible resources for data provision will be managed so that any charges for not-for-profit uses are minimal and charges for commercial uses are realistic and do not discourage use of the data.

- 3.7.1 Wherever possible **Dragonfly Recording Network** does not charge users for access to data. However, we do reserve the right to charge a handling fee for the supply of data and information where doing so requires a significant investment of staff resource. Refer to **Dragonfly Recording Network's Charging Policy** for more information about our data handling charges.
- 3.7.2 The bodies that fund **Dragonfly Recording Network** recognise that significant resources are required to maintain our data collection, management and data provision activities in the long term. They also recognise that the continued provision of useful data is heavily dependent upon nurturing and sustaining our data collection and management activities. As such they have committed to contributing resources to support each of these activities. In many cases this is done through a Service Level Agreement (see section 3.7.3 below).
- 3.7.3 Significant data users are encouraged to enter into 3-5 year Service Level Agreements (SLA) with **Dragonfly Recording Network**. SLA's are used to resource the services that a particular data user may ask us to provide. They also provide a means by which the costs of data collection, management and dissemination can be shared between organisations with common needs, with the benefit of access to a wider pool of information that would otherwise be unavailable. This is important, as few organisations want to pay for the data collation and management; they generally only wish to pay for the end product. Therefore a high proportion of SLA income of reasonable duration is essential to give **Dragonfly Recording Network** security and ability to invest data management, including the employment of staff.
- 3.7.4 **Dragonfly Recording Network** is committed to supporting our data recording community and we actively promote the importance of this to our financial supports and data users. A significant amount of the financial resources we receive are used to better support and help sustain recording activities. For more information about how **Dragonfly Recording Network** are supporting the data recording community please refer to the recording section of our website (<http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk>).