

Funding for volunteer recording activities ***Murdo Macdonald***

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have offered £3000 for 2 Sept to 1 Feb 2009, and £5000 from 2 Feb 2009 to 2010, to support volunteer biological recording in Highland. This will need to be backed by claims and a brief report, and they will pay 30p/mile and a flat rate of £25 per night.

The commitments agreed are

- The activities will concentrate on lesser-known groups, taxa of conservation significance, and poorly recorded areas;
- The activities funded will be restricted to those *where no other financial support exists*;
- All taxon records obtained will be entered in the HBRG taxon database.
- The qualifying area will be the Highland Council area, excluding the part covered by the Cairngorms National Park.

The work will

- identify and survey species of local importance;
- cover areas where there is little biological recording;
- cover taxa which are poorly recorded;
- cover taxa in official conservation lists.

Qualifying taxa will normally exclude mammals, birds, vascular plants, butterflies & moths, and dragonflies. However, these groups may qualify if the area visited is especially under-recorded and there is no other funding for the activities. The number of records we have for 10km squares is available on the website, 'Taxon database' link, and then 'Breakdown by 10km squares'.

Attention will be concentrated on lower plants (fungi, lichens, mosses, liverworts), the less popular invertebrates (not butterflies, moths, dragonflies or bumblebees), taxa of local importance or interest, and taxa on the Scottish Biodiversity List and the UKBAP Priority list. Links to these lists are on the HBRG website, 'Links, Resources' page. Some of these will not normally be included because of existing national initiatives (e.g. Red Squirrel, Capercaillie, Black Grouse).

Specimens of many of these groups will need to be collected and passed to specialists. HBRG can provide collecting tubes and advice on who can do the identification - but please check with us before targeting a group with which you are unfamiliar, to ensure that the services of a specialist are available. If you are uncertain whether your plans fit with the conditions of the grant, please contact me to discuss.

All records arising from the activities must be provided to the standards required by HBRG for inclusion in the taxon database.

The funding is open to any volunteer biological recorders in Highland, not just to HBRG members.

Please direct any queries to me at records @ hbrg.org.uk (remove the spaces round the '@').