



GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STUDIES OF BIRDS INCLUDING COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Purpose

In the context of studies and surveys of birds that might be supported by Birds New Zealand these guidelines provide a general framework for information management, including data capture and data ownership, the storage and analysis of data and the publication of conclusions and results.

These guidelines shall apply to national and regional projects having the endorsement of the Scientific Committee and to collaborative projects undertaken with other organisations supported by funding that may be provided by Birds New Zealand, or with funding provided by external donors via Birds New Zealand.

Background

A wide diversity of studies and surveys is implemented by Birds New Zealand, which generates a large amount of data. A standardised framework for the management of this information is needed that has the broad acceptance of members of the society.

Procedures

A distinction is made for projects having the formal endorsement of the society, and private projects that are the initiative of individual members.

1. Specifications of Projects

A: Specifications for Birds New Zealand national and regional projects that must be satisfied:

- A formal proposal for a regional project in the name of the Regional Representative (RR) should set out the project objectives, the location/s (if relevant), desk study work, field and/or laboratory activities, a proposed timeline, data analysis and reporting arrangements, and the estimated costs.
- A formal proposal for a national study having nation-wide scope can be made by any member, noting the same requirements for objectives, activities, analysis and reporting specified above.
- A national or regional project proposal must be endorsed by the Scientific Committee (SciCom). The SciCom may propose amendments to any aspect of a proposal that can be expected to improve its scientific value. Note: Endorsement of a new study by SciCom may lead to financial assistance being offered from the Projects Assistance Fund.
- A dedicated 'Project Coordinator' should be nominated who is committed to leading and managing project implementation, engaging the participation of members, taking a lead with data analysis and reporting, arranging presentations of progress and achievements at local meetings or at national conferences, arranging for the publication of results and writing one or more general reports, or formal papers for publication in *Notornis*.
- Field trips that will support implementation of regional projects should be advertised on the society's website, or by emails to local members, or in a regional newsletter so that members can be encouraged to participate in the activities of the study or survey.

Each RR is encouraged to review the status of current regional studies or surveys and those that have concluded, and determine who will write up and report on the results, and when this will occur. Technical advice of the SciComm may be requested in this regard, and is to be encouraged.

B: Specifications for a private project:

- A private project does not need the endorsement of the SciCom, nor is a dedicated Project Coordinator required.
- Funds held in regional accounts of the society should not be used to support the implementation of a private project.
- A private project does not necessarily involve other members (but other members may participate if invited to do so).
- Data is kept in private notebooks or archives.
- The results of a private project are not summarised or published in the name of the society.
- Field trips are not required to be advertised, nor are activities carried out by a Project Coordinator or in the name of the RR, and there is no requirement to inform others in advance of field activities.

Each RR is encouraged to identify “private projects” amongst currently active projects in their respective region, and to ensure that members are well aware of the specifications described above.

C: Arrangements for funding of studies or projects:

Arrangements for funding of studies or projects that might be supported by Birds New Zealand, or by external funding agencies, need to be described as a part of a proposal for new studies or projects. A budget showing estimated direct costs of each component and the timeframe of expenditure need to be specified.

2. Data management and ownership

- Data or other information that may include written text, extracts copied from documents, photographs or other imagery collected during the implementation of approved national or regional projects, including projects partially or fully financed using Birds New Zealand funding, shall remain the intellectual property of Birds New Zealand. Examples of Birds New Zealand funding are the Projects Assistance Fund and the Birds New Zealand Research Fund.
- The ownership of data and any other information that is assembled in collaborative national or regional projects involving the society and another agency shall remain the shared intellectual property of Birds New Zealand and the other agency.
- Shared ownership of data and of other information need to be defined during negotiations between the society and the other agency to establish a basis for collaboration in project design, implementation and funding, and to agree on shared data ownership. This is particularly important where society studies or other projects are funded by a grant from an external donor, or through a contract with an external agency.
- The question of shared ownership of data acquired through collaboration between the society (with funding provided by the society), and a government agency (such as the Dept of Conservation) will be addressed in a Memorandum of Understanding to be negotiated with each specific agency. Note: For studies that have concluded, one specific requirement might be that the “owner” of field data has first option for no longer than four years to complete analyses and write up the results of a study. The use of field data that has been collected and not reported for more than four years may be made available to anyone to study.

3. Data capture storage and archiving

- Data and other information should be stored and archived securely by the RR, or by a project manager. The aim must be to ensure secure long-term storage of data for all national and regional projects, in particular, for jointly funded projects.
- Each RR is encouraged to arrange for field information that has been collected in members' field notebooks during regional and or national studies to be summarised in a manner that will enable meaningful analysis and reporting. Technical guidance from the Scientific Committee may be requested.
- All records concerning the occurrence of live birds should be entered into the NZ eBird data record system with six months of project completion.
- Physical storage arrangements of field note books or other records are a matter of discretion depending on local circumstances but the aim is to ensure that field books, work sheets and other physical records are always kept safe.
- Digital information held in computers should be archived by the RR, and preferably backed up to 'cloud' storage or to an external computer system. A duplicate of digital records should be sent to the Executive Officer. A brief report concerning the status of data capture and storage for approved national and regional projects should be reported annually, noting where and by whom the data records are placed. In the case of regional projects this should be included as a paragraph in each annual RR report.

4. Data analysis, reporting and publication of results

- The aim should always be to complete the analysis of data in a timely manner and to report on the study without undue delay. This is particularly important where studies are carried out in collaboration with other agencies and where external donor or contract funding is provided.
- When necessary or desirable, request advice on data analysis and reporting from SciCom on any aspect of data analysis and reporting.
- Project managers, or recipients of grants, are strongly encouraged to submit annual progress reports to the Executive Officer for consideration by Council, and to write popular articles for publication in "*Birds New Zealand*".
- Project managers and RRs are encouraged to share progress reports and final reports with members at regional meetings and at annual conferences of the society.
- Every effort should be made to publish the results and conclusions of national and regional studies in *Notornis*. In the case of collaborative studies carried out with other agencies the society will seek through negotiation to secure the first option for the publication of the results and conclusions of studies.

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