

Engaging and inspiring field participants: Motivations, values, challenges



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Elements to consider

Awareness of 'the ask'

Motivation to take part

Barriers to participation

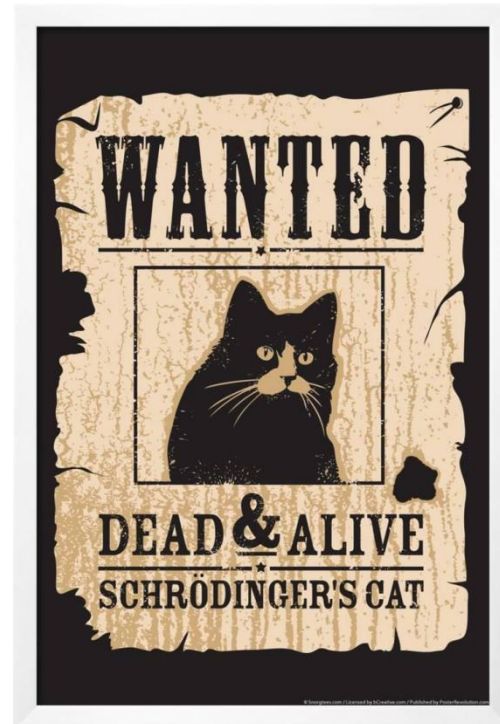
Any specialist skills needed

Sustaining engagement



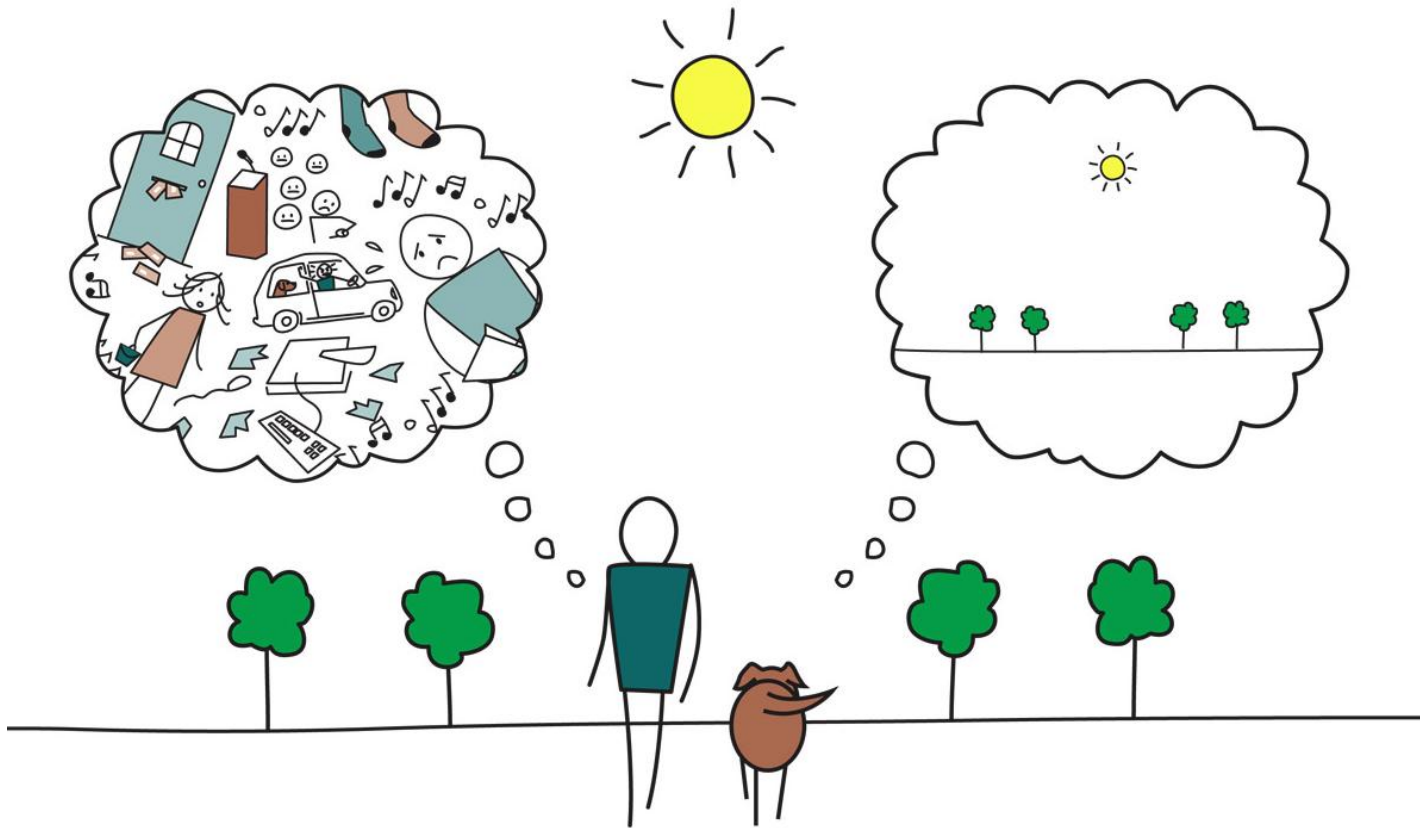
Awareness of 'the ask'

- Understand your audience
 - *who* do you need to reach?
- How can you reach them?
 - direct communications
 - 'media'
 - via Gatekeepers?
 - web searches
- Is this 'here and now' or longer term?
 - impact on strategy
 - resource implications



Motivation to take part

- Again - understand your audiences
- Recognise any differences between audiences



Motivation to take part - diversity

wanting to learn or share knowledge

Understanding



Resonance

- To inspire action you need to resonate:

“your raptors are under threat...”

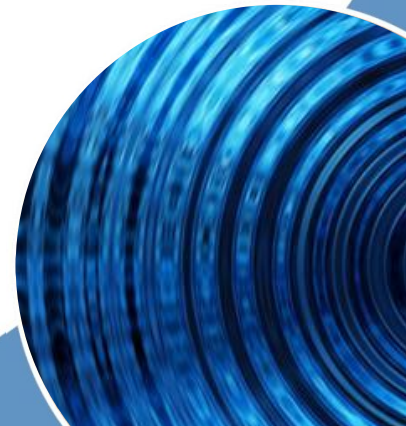
“what is happening in your local area?”

“you could be part of this team...”

“if you love raptors then...”

“are your children being exposed to toxins?”

you could help us to uncover these mysteries...”



Motivation to take part

- NC
org

*"I want to help
the birds in my
local area"*

*"Is it possible to set up a
monitoring framework to
detect future changes?"*



- A need to communicate clearly to manage expectations
- What does success look like?
- Co-production?



Barriers to participation

Again - understand your audiences...

- awareness of 'the ask'
- unconvinced of value
- method (time, complexity, weight)
- lack of understanding (e.g. method)
- money (e.g. additional travel)

- inertia / history / culture



Understand
Empathise
Minimise



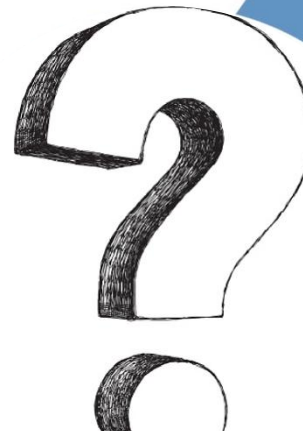
Gatekeepers
Peer advocates
Patience...



Specialist skills – training and information

- Is the method as simple as it could be?
- Are the methods clearly explained?
- YouTube videos
- Mentors / peer-to-peer

- Training courses



Keeping your volunteers happy...

- **Use** the data/samples
- Feedback – ideally both rapid and rich
- Facilitate interaction (multi-directional)
- Efficient data/sample collection
- Training/development
- Variety/flexibility – motivations & barriers can change
- Recognition/reward

All of this requires **ongoing resources**



Progression pyramid

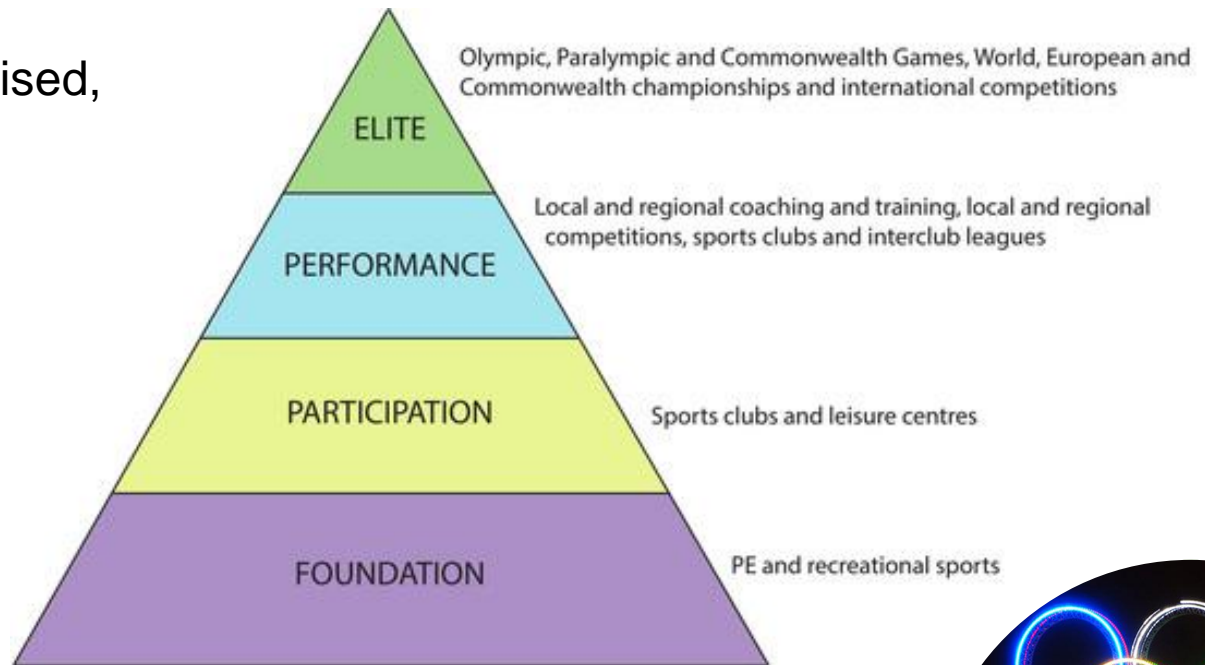
How to ensure adequate future skilled resource

Engagement → progression

High standards, specialised,
dedication needed



Fun, easy,
accessible, flexible

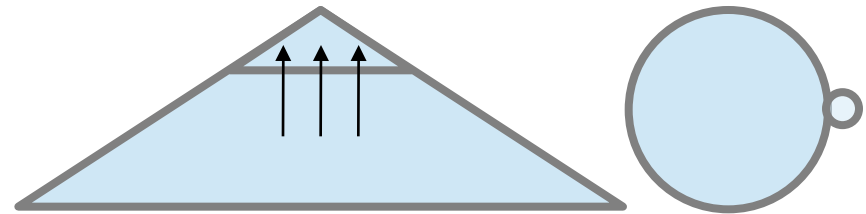


Example 1 – Tawny Owls



Aims:

- Population estimate and index of change
- Mass-participation for engagement (though meaningful)



Example 1 – Tawny Owls (TOPS)



Tawny Owl Point Survey 2018/19 INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

WHY WE ARE DOING THIS SURVEY

Despite being widespread across Britain, Tawny Owls are one of our less understood breeding species. BTO's core monitoring schemes are daytime surveys, so are not able to adequately monitor nocturnal owls. The BTO/RSPB/JNCC Breeding Bird Survey trends that we produce from one of our core surveys suggest that Tawny Owl populations are doing by carrying out periodic targeted surveys on these previous surveys, with the intention of relative abundance in Tawny Owl populations. Tawny Owls are most detectable in the autumn. To help relate the autumn counts to the next year, we also plan to repeat the survey year to year, by collecting information from breeding success derived from other BTO surveys.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

We want to provide reliable data on Tawny Owl occupancy and which can be repeated in future years.

- To compare with the results from other surveys.
- To compare Tawny Owl occupancy across different levels of urbanisation.
- To monitor changes in Tawny Owl occupancy over time.

HOW TO TAKE PART

Where to count: The Tawny Owl Point Survey aims to cover a selection of 2x2km survey squares (known as 'tetrads') across Britain. A nationwide selection of target tetrads has been produced with two different levels of 'higher' and 'lower'. Target tetrads will then be approved by your Regional Organiser and you'll be all set for the survey. If you are unable to visit a tetrad, available tetrads can also be issued by allocation by contacting your Regional Organiser. We would like you to make a series of counts within your assigned tetrad(s) from a single point location, which is selected by you as close as possible to the tetrad centre. In most cases this will be the nearest public access to the centre of the tetrad, but ideally it should be within 30m of the actual centre and the same for each visit. Points close to busy roads or where extraneous noise might affect the count should be avoided. You can familiarise yourself with the area; this can be printed off and sent to you if required. If you can't sensibly get within 300m of your area already be allocated, additional tetrads can also be released for allocation by contacting your Regional Organiser.

How often to make a count: Please make two visits to your tetrad, each visit with two consecutive (i.e. without a gap) point counts. The two visits should ideally be made within two weeks of each other. A point count lasts for 10 minutes, so usually you will do two consecutive point counts (2 x 10 minute point count) though we'd encourage those who are keen to make an additional third visit to the tetrad centre please consult your Regional Organiser to confirm your best survey approach.

How to do the point counts: During each visit, two consecutive (i.e. without a gap) point counts should be undertaken. Each point count should last exactly 10 minutes and results from each 10 minute period should be recorded separately, regardless of the time of day (or any previous) evening. Point count periods should fall within the two hours following sunrise and sunset (or any previous) evening. Point count periods should be undertaken on a maximum of three consecutive visits and three consecutive point counts, the visit lasting for 30 minutes. Other point count combinations up to a maximum of three visits and three consecutive point counts, can also be undertaken. The approach is quite flexible and can be adapted to suit your circumstances. If you hear/observe a Tawny Owl on any of your visits (or any previous) evening, you should record this in your survey log. Precipitation and wind both reduce calling activity and should be recorded. Precipitation and wind both reduce calling activity and should be recorded. Precipitation and wind both reduce calling activity and should be recorded.

occupancy a

• data submitted for ~2,900 tetrads
• "Occupancy was around 63–64% in 1989 and appears to have dropped to 54%"

How to record the owls: During each 10 minute point count you should remain stationary and record the number of Tawny Owls heard hooting and calling. At the end of the period an assessment of the total number of territories 'heard' during each separate point count period should be made. Due to the need to compare results with past surveys each count period should be considered independent and entirely separately when calculating the number of territories. For example, should owls be heard from consecutive point counts in such a way that you believe they represent entirely different territories but they did not hoot/call within the same 10 minute point count this **must** be recorded as one territory per point count, regardless of if you believe there are more territories present. Likewise should you hear an owl in the first point count but not in the second (or vice versa) it is important to record territories estimates of one and zero respectively. The criteria for the identification of a territory are:

- Single hooting or calling bird. No other birds heard within approximately 300m of it.
- Hooting bird with calling bird – at distance of less than approximately 300m of each other.
- Hooting bird with second bird hooting softly in response less than 300m apart. These last two categories both represent the male and female of a pair vocalizing to each other.

Two hooting or calling birds more than approximately 300m apart should be recorded as two territories. If two birds are hooting loudly together, they represent two males in a territorial dispute. A set of illustrative counts not only tell us about how well we detect owls that we want us to examine why that may be, especially if they were present.



SAFETY: When you are surveying owls after dark, especially if in remote areas, make sure that you let someone know where you have gone and when you expect to return. Always carry torches, a mobile phone, warm clothing and, in remote areas, a supply of food and drink. Volunteers are responsible for their own health and safety and should not put themselves in a position that could place them, or others in danger. You are strongly advised not to undertake any activity if you have any concerns about risks to your own or others' health and safety (<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/taking-part/health-safety>).

DATA PROTECTION: If you are providing name, address and other personal details, BTO will store and use your personal details in line with our published Privacy Policy. You can specify your preferences about the way we contact you at any time. For further details, see www.bto.org, or email info@bto.org, or phone 01842 750050.

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO THROUGH PROJECT OWL

Project Owl is an ambitious five-year programme of work, through which the BTO aims to improve our knowledge and understanding of our breeding owl species.

There are other surveys and studies with which you can help; you can also learn more about owls and what you can do to help them (including putting up a nest box). To find out more please visit www.bto.org/project-owl



Example 1 – Tawny Owls (TOCS)

- Mass-participation for engagement (though meaningful)

“Help us to understand calling behaviour and distribution, and to discover the impact of urbanisation.

*It’s easy to take part – **just listen for 20 minutes**
during at least one evening between September and March.*

*You can listen from your garden, local park or woodland
– or while lying in bed with the window open!”*



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“Bird lovers are being urged to give up 20 minutes every week to listen out for the “twit-twoo” call of the Tawny owl.

The British Trust for Ornithology is asking people to listen for the distinctive hoot from their garden, local park or woodland, once every week for the next six months.”



Example 1 – Tawny Owls (TOCS)



The difference we make

How you can help

Our science

Understanding birds

Develop your skills

Learn about our owls and how you can help them

Use these resources to learn how to identify owls; find out more about their ecology, fascinating behaviour and how to build next boxes for them.

Read our latest articles on [Owl vision](#) and [Owl hearing](#)



Long-eared Owl

The long-eared owl, also known as the northern long-eared owl, is a species of owl which breeds in Europe, Asia, and North America.

LISTEN TO A LONG-EARED OWL CALL

xeno-canto XC407504



0:00

0:26



Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) - call
Ashley Banwell
Breckland District, Norfolk, England, United Kingdom



Barn Owl

The Barn Owl has benefited from conservation efforts, in particular the provision of nest boxes, and its population has increased since the last national survey. There may now be as many as 10,000 pairs breeding across Britain & Ireland.

LISTEN TO A BARN OWL CALL

xeno-canto XC186611



Tawny Owl

The Tawny Owl is probably our most familiar species of owl, found in wooded habitats across Britain. The species is absent from Ireland, underlining its sedentary habits and reluctance to cross large bodies of water.

LISTEN TO A TAWNY OWL CALL

xeno-canto XC76765



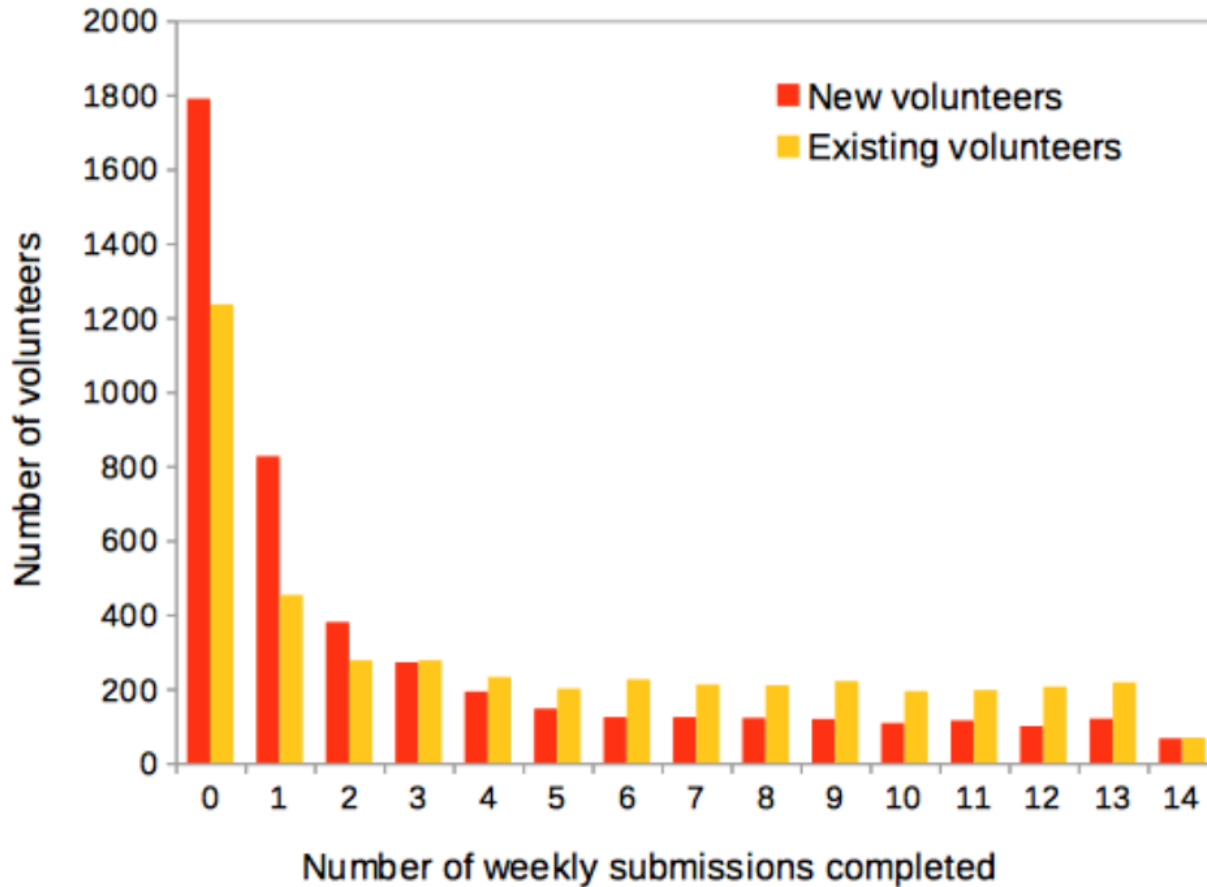
0:00

1:50

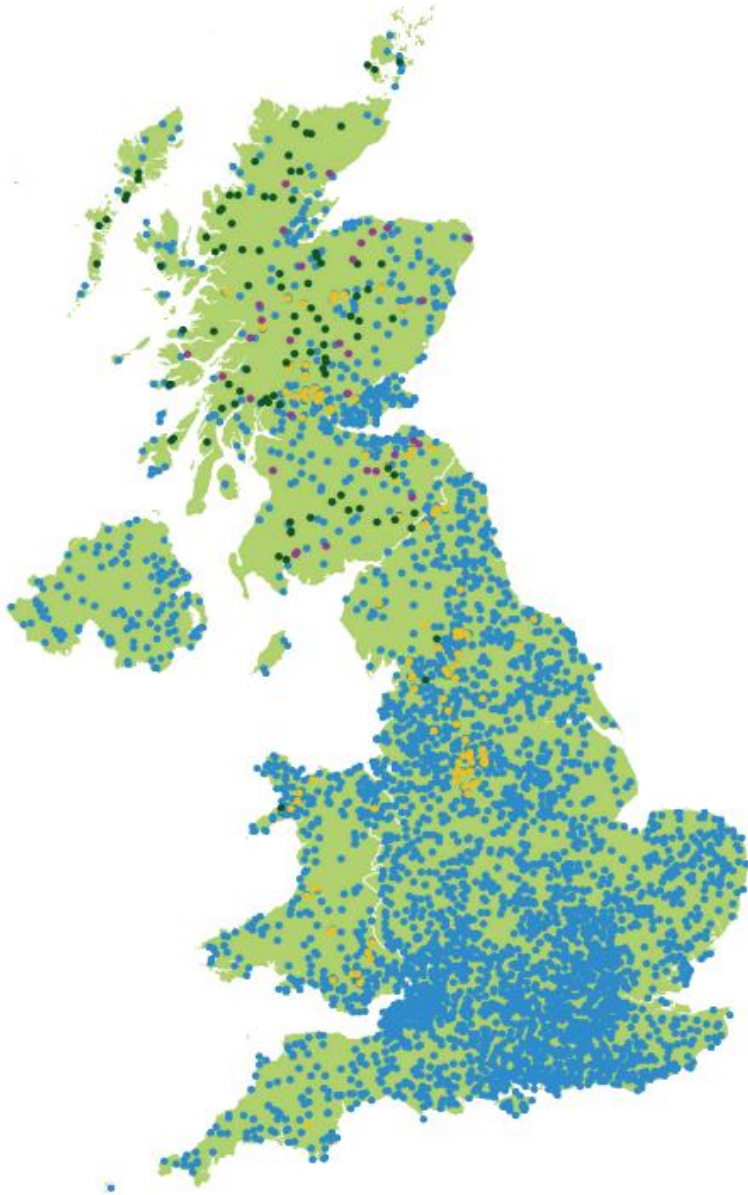


Example 1 – Tawny Owls (TOCS)

- Over 9,000 registered participants of which 51% had not previously interacted with BTO



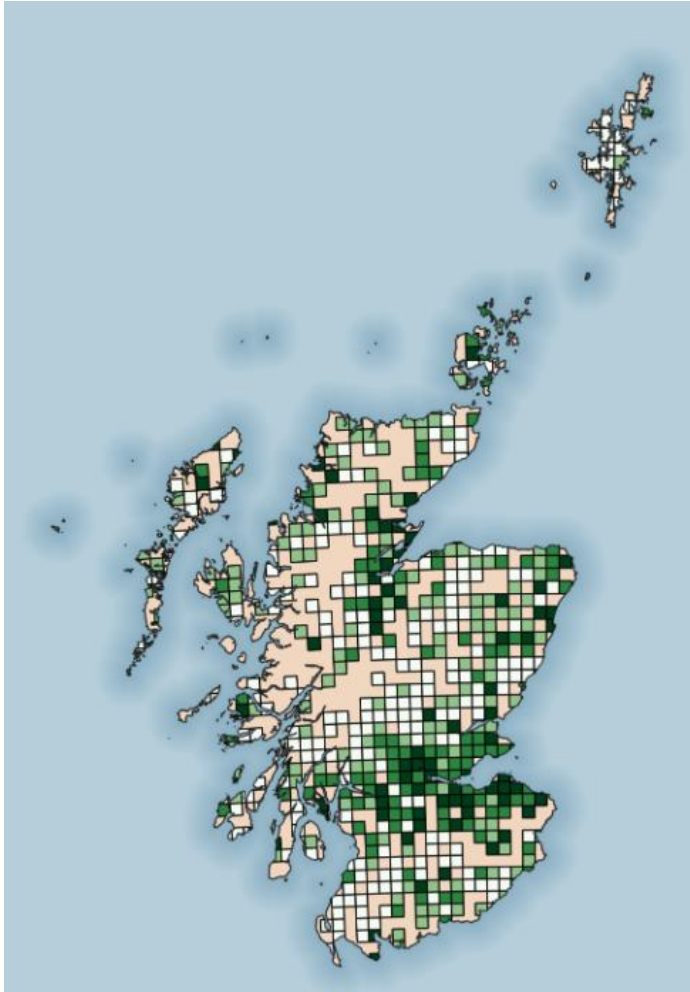
Example 2 – Breeding Bird Survey (Upland Rovers)



- 'Gold standard' survey
- Two visits per year to random 1km squares
- Over 4,000 squares covered
- We have made changes – high uptake
- Volunteers want to help us



Example 2 – Breeding Bird Survey (Upland Rovers)



- Sample biased towards lowlands / towns
- A different approach needed for remote areas



Example 2 – Breeding Bird Survey (Upland Rovers)

- Maintaining 'gold standard' stratification
- Single one-off visits allowed

BBS Upland Rovers

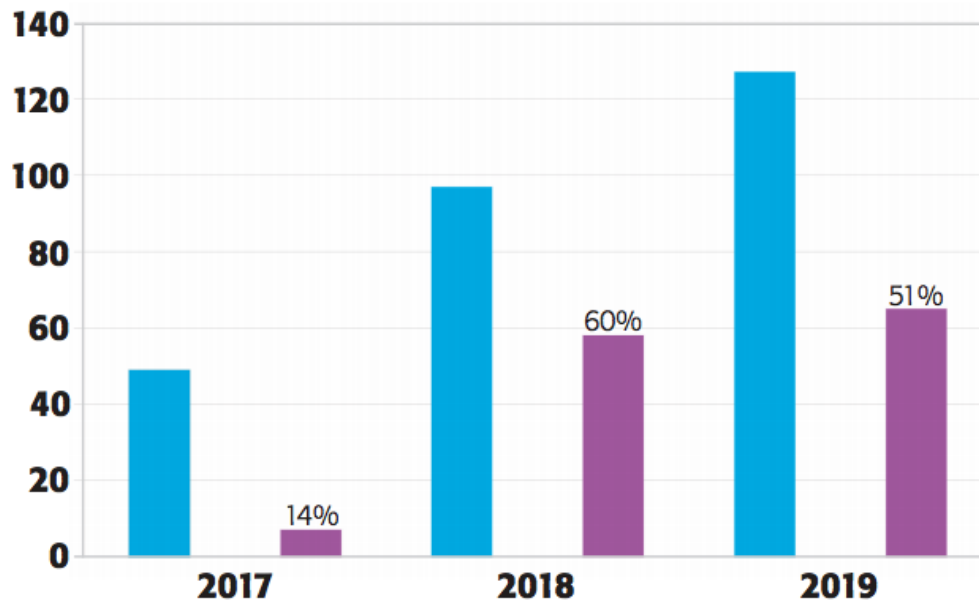
Memorable adventures. Priceless information.



Example 2 – Breeding Bird Survey (Upland Rovers)

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UPLAND ROVERS UPTAKE

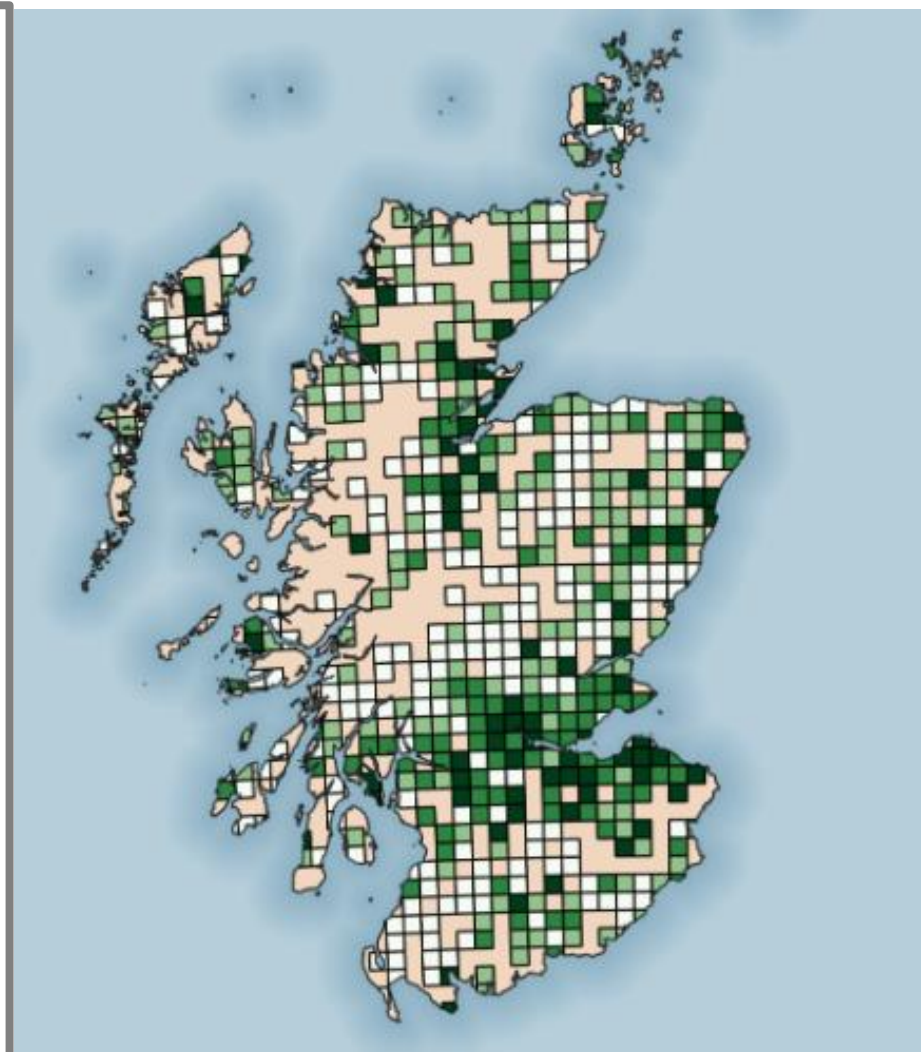
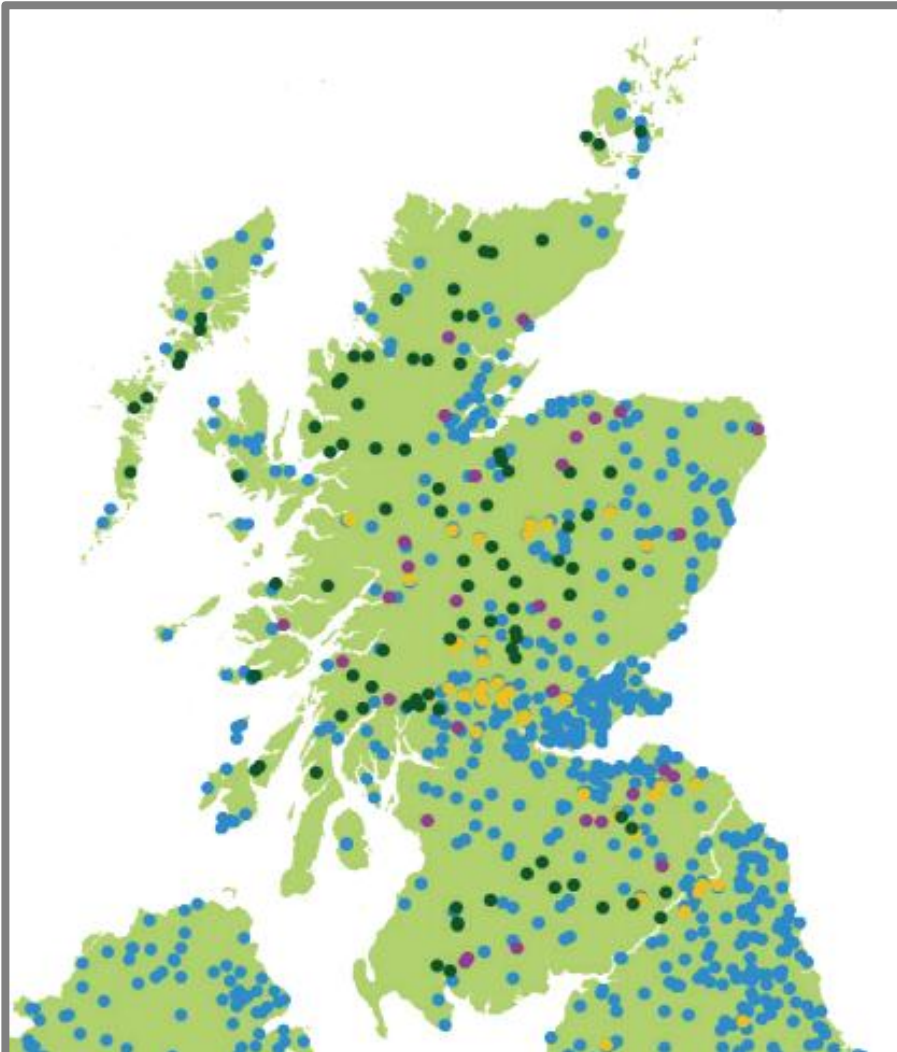


- Total number of Upland Rovers squares covered per year
- Number of those Upland Rovers squares covered twice in the year, along with the percentage of the total covered to which that relates



Example 2 – Breeding Bird Survey (Upland Rovers)

- Maintaining 'gold standard' stratification
- Single one-off visits allowed



Example 3 – Raptor monitoring in Scotland

- A long history of voluntary raptor monitoring in Scotland
- Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme was set up in 2002

HERDING CATS:

“A futile attempt to control that which is inherently uncontrollable.”



- Inertia / history to overcome
- Difficulties implementing best-practice
 - trends hard to produce
- Are they a 'volunteer'?
 - individual studies, or loyal to RSG
- Limited scientific understanding
- Alternative motivations
 - fun, numbers, persecution
- Data-entry not easy



Example 3 – Raptor monitoring in Scotland



- Raptor Patch set up in 2016
- Focus on Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Raven
- Consistent area-based monitoring

Benefits:

- Under-monitored species
- Trend production
- New volunteers
- Self-selection of local sites
- Volunteers view themselves as SRMS volunteers...
- But... requires co-ordination



Summary

- Think carefully about your audiences
- Make things as simple as possible
- Allocate resource to retaining and developing volunteers

