



Hampshire Biodiversity
Information Centre

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

www.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/hbic

Charging Policy – updated 1st April 2011

Introduction

The purpose of the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) is to “collect, collate, manage and disseminate information of known quality on Hampshire’s biodiversity to those who require it, to increase knowledge and understanding, and to enable informed decisions to be made about factors affecting the environment”.

As a public authority HBIC also has a statutory duty to make environmental information that it holds available to any person that requests it under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. However, the supply of information under the Environmental Information Regulations does not automatically give the requester of the information the right to re-use that information. Separate permission needs to be obtained from the copyright owner, as set out in the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005.

In addition, HBIC follows the seven Data Exchange Principles promoted by the National Biodiversity Network Trust (please see HBIC’s Data Access Policy for more details).

Background to the data held by the Hampshire Biodiversity information Centre

Data that is held by HBIC includes both manual and electronically held data, and comes from a variety of sources, including;

- data supplied by voluntary recording groups and individuals via data exchange agreements
- surveys funded by a range of organisations including Hampshire County Council, District and Unitary authorities, English Nature, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, and Environment Agency, via service level agreements & grants.

The data comprises boundary and attribute data for designated sites, priority habitats and notable species locations. See sections 4-7.

The ownership of all information collected under the service level agreements remains the property of the HBIC Partnership. Data provided by recording organisations & individuals via data exchange agreements remains the property of that organisation or individual and HBIC can only provide copies of such data to third parties as set out in the individual data exchange agreements.

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow for the fact that sensitive information (including that supplied and owned by third parties) is only released after careful consideration of the request and with the consent of all the parties involved. Regulation 12 lists all the exceptions to the duty to disclose environmental information including where “its disclosure would adversely affect – the protection of the environment to which the information relates” The associated guidance states that information on the location of nesting sites, rare habitats and endangered/protected species may need to be withheld to avoid the risk of damage. However, the disclosure of such information can also be vitally important to ensure protection of that species or habitat.

Sharing information about Hampshire’s wildlife

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Partnership includes local authorities, Government agencies, wildlife charities and biological recording groups.

Charging Policy

1. Data requests from commercial organisations

See also Section 7 for requests from farmers & other landowners

Information from HBIC in itself is free, however HBIC reserves the right to charge a (non-profit) fee to **commercial organisations** to cover the costs of staff time & overheads for administering the request and retrieving, checking, manipulating and presenting the data. A percentage of the income received is also redirected to the Hampshire species recording groups in recognition of the data they supply to the Centre.

A minimum of one hour's staff time will apply to all requests and **will be charged at the rate of £150.00 + VAT per hour, followed by half hourly increments at £75.00 + VAT each.**

To improve efficiency, HBIC no longer provides quotes for requests likely to take 2 hours or less to complete, unless specifically requested. On receiving a completed Information Request Form HBIC will conduct a brief check to ensure relevant data exists within the search area and to estimate if the request is likely to take longer than 2 hours to complete.

If relevant data exists and the request is estimated to take **2 hours or less** to complete (i.e. the charge will be £300.00 + VAT or less) then **no estimate** of the cost to supply the data will be sent to the data requester. The request for data will be processed within 10 working days of receiving a completed Information Request Form and the commercial body will be invoiced for the staff time taken to supply the data.

If no relevant data exists within the search area, then the fee will be waived.

If requested, a quote can be provided within 5 working days of receiving a completed Information Request Form, regardless of time estimates, but this could result in a delay in providing the data and incur extra staff time. If a quote is required, this needs to be clearly stated in the comments box on any submitted Information Request Form. Data will normally be supplied within 10 days of the enquirer confirming they still wish to proceed. If no response to the estimate is received after 15 working days (from the date the quote is sent) or if the data requester decides not to proceed with the data request, the requester will then receive an invoice for the cost of the initial search of **£75 + VAT**.

If relevant data exists and the request is estimated to take **more than 2 hours** to complete, (i.e. will cost more than £300.00 + VAT,) a quote to supply the data will be sent within 5 working days of receiving a completed Information Request Form. This estimate of the cost will need to be agreed with the data requester before work commences. Data will then be sent within 10 working days of this confirmation. However, if no response to the estimate is received after 15 working days from the date the quote is sent or if the data requester decides not to proceed with the data request, then the requester will receive an invoice for the cost of the initial search of **£75 + VAT**.

Commercial requestors can set an upper limit of cost greater than £300.00 +VAT if they wish to avoid waiting to receive a quote. This upper limit of cost should be clearly stated in the comments box on any Information Request Forms submitted.

Urgent request : If data is required more urgently than within the 10 days specified then a priority response can be made. This will be subject to staff availability and may incur a 100% surcharge. Urgent deadlines should be stated in the comments box of the submitted Information Request Form.

Please note therefore;

Once an Information Request Form has been submitted from a commercial body, they will be invoiced at the rates given above unless no relevant data exists. Requestors are invited to contact HBIC before submitting an Information Request Form if they would like to discuss any aspect of their data request.

Sharing information about Hampshire's wildlife

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Partnership includes local authorities,
Government agencies, wildlife charities and biological recording groups.

2. Exemptions to charges

No charges will be made for requests for information from the following individuals and organisations, except where additional printing costs are incurred which HBIC would otherwise be expected to cover:

- Members of the public for non-profit making private study, research & local interest projects.
- Students and County Council funded educational establishments.
- Voluntary non-profit making organisations, community groups, charities & parish councils
- Local authorities & other organisations, including recording groups who have either service level agreements or data exchange agreements with HBIC

Charges may also be waived for the supply of data to projects that are of direct benefit to the work of the HBIC Partnership.

3. Office visits

A data requester may come into the HBIC office by prior appointment to examine any hard copy survey data free of charge. If copies of the data are then required, or they wish to examine electronically held data, then charges for staff time as set out previously will apply.

4. Basic data searches

The following types of data can be supplied:

- Provision of maps from the GIS for a given search area, with supporting data. The maps can be either in hard copy, .jpg or .pdf format and can show designations and BAP Broad/Priority habitat. Supporting text/legend will include details of the designations and habitat types shown.
- Copies of Phase 2 survey reports detailing descriptions of vegetation communities and taxon lists for particular sites, provided in .pdf format.
- Output from MapMate/GIS listing Notable and Protected species found within a search area.
- Lists of sites for a particular taxa with attribute details

Since the fees cover the staff time taken to retrieve and compile the above types of data, the fee can be dependant on the size of the search area, the type/s of information required and the amount of information, where it exists (subject to sensitivity status), within the particular search area. As a rough guideline, an average request for designated sites, habitat data and notable/protected species information within a 1 - 2km radius of a specified grid reference normally takes between 1 and 2 hours to complete.

5. Provision of digital GIS data

When digital GIS data is downloaded onto a CD ROM or sent by email then a limit on the area of GIS data to be made available will be set at a maximum of one 10km x 10km square (100km²) per request. A standard charge of £100 + VAT will apply for an area covering up to 50km² and £200 + VAT for up to 100km². The requester will also be required to sign a separate data supply agreement which covers use of the digital data, OS copyright etc. for the limit of the project specified, or for up to one year - whichever is the shorter period.

Sharing information about Hampshire's wildlife

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Partnership includes local authorities, Government agencies, wildlife charities and biological recording groups.

Where a great deal of staff time is expended in preparing the data for download, there will be an additional minimum charge of half an hour's staff time of £75.00+ VAT followed by half hourly increments at £75.00 + VAT each.

6. Supplying citations for Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

Any boundary information on SINCs always includes the designation criteria, however, if a fuller summary of a site's interest is required, then a full SINC citation may need to be prepared. When preparing and supplying citation information for individual SINCs, a charge of a half hour's staff time (£75.00 plus VAT) per summary will be applied.

7. Provision of Wader & Brent Geese data

Wader & Brent Geese data can be made available (if appropriate) for a specified search area via a normal data request. In addition it is possible to buy the Waders and Brent Geese Strategy CD for £100+VAT, as a one off payment and this can be used in all subsequent projects. The CD contains a copy of the strategy (pdf) plus tables of Brent and wader records, as well as maps and GIS files of current, and future use.

More information on the strategy can be found here- <http://www.hwt.org.uk/pages/solent-waders-and-brent-geese-strategy.html>

8. Supply of data direct to landowners

A habitat (Phase 2) survey report is normally provided free of charge directly to a landowner after his land has been surveyed by HBIC. If a landowner or his agent requests a second copy of a habitat (Phase 2) survey, or if a new landowner requests previous existing survey data of their land, then this will be provided at a cost of a minimum half an hour staff time i.e. £75.00 plus VAT, depending on the volume of data requested.

If HBIC is providing additional relevant biodiversity data (including maps of designations, priority BAP habitats and species both on the landowners land and nearby) for entry into the Environmental Stewardship Scheme or for supporting a planning application then charges will apply as for other commercial bodies, see Section 1.