

Guide for completing the CAWOS Recording Spreadsheet

IMPORTANT: IF YOU ALREADY PUT YOUR RECORDS INTO BIRDTRACK THEN PLEASE DO NOT ALSO SEND A SPREADSHEET, THIS WOULD CREATE DUPLICATES.

The spreadsheet designed to enable upload into BirdTrack. There are 6 compulsory columns, in green, along with an additional 12 that are optional. A full list of these can be seen below and this guide will detail how data should be entered within each column header. The spreadsheet itself has a note on each column heading to give a quick reference. There are significant differences between the old recording form and this one particularly around Dates and Counts, it is very important to follow the new guidelines.

When completed please save the spreadsheet with the date and your name in the filename.

List of all column headers that can be used in the recording spreadsheet. Green denotes a mandatory field.

Column Header	Category	Content - more detail below
Date	Required	Please use only a precise date for sightings.
Species	Required	English name
Place	Required	Where possible please refer to the published Cheshire and Wirral Gazetteer when listing the site name and grid ref. A more detailed location can always be included under 'Visit Comments'; in this case the more precise grid ref (if given) will still be held against that record and included in the 'Pinpoint' column. A new site can be added if it not listed in the Gazetteer, or if it is an important birding location which was missed off the original list. Please let us know if this is a new site in the main body of your e-mail and provide the 6-figure grid ref, the nearest town or village, with a suggested site name.
GridRef	Required	If using grid references, the upload tool will recognise only two (e.g. TL88), four figure (e.g. TL88 66) and Tetrad (e.g. TL88Y) grid references.
Count	Required	This field must be a text field rather than a numeric one: if necessary use the Format Cells facility in Excel to amend it. The value of the field must be either an integer numeric value, optionally preceded (note the c must be before the number) by "c" or followed by "+", or "Present" or "x" to indicate presence only. Four- or five-digit integers cannot contain a comma, i.e. you must put 10000 rather than 10,000. Explicit ranges of integers are not allowed: instead put the lower value in Count and put details of the range in Obs_Comment. If there is no value in Count then a value of "Present" will be assumed by the update procedure.
Observer	Required	Your name
Pinpoint	Optional, but preferable	If you have a 6 char grid ref please add it here, in format : aannnnnn
Visit comments	Optional	A text field for entering comments on visit.
Obs_Comment	Optional	A text field for entering comments for a particular sighting, including age, sex, plumage, activity and behaviour.
Weather	Optional	A text field for entering weather notes.
Count type	Optional	Field used for indicating a particular type of recording. See the detailed guide for more instructions.

Sensitive	Optional	Please enter 'Y' to indicate if a sighting should be noted as 'Sensitive'.
Habitat	Optional	A text field for entering notes on habitat for a particular sighting.
Breeding	Optional	Field used to indicate the level of breeding evidence noted. See the detailed guide for more instructions.
Start time	Optional	
End time	Optional	

Formatting

Certain columns, such as 'Breeding' require the cells to be formatted for 'Text' entry. In Microsoft Excel, you can do this by right clicking on the cell, and then clicking on 'Format cell(s)'. Next, click on the 'Number' tab and select the 'Text' option. Click on 'Ok' to finish.

The spreadsheet does not need to include all column headers, only those for which you are intending to enter data.

Date

The exact observation date is required for each sighting you are uploading. There are several different date format options that you can use:

- DD/MM/YYYY
- DD-MM-YYYY
- DD-MM-YY
- DD-MON-YYYY
- DD-MON-YY

We no longer have the same flexibility as in the 'old' system with dates so if this is a Week/Month/Annual, or any other variable, summary then specify the first date and enter an appropriate comment in the Observer Comments field.

Species

Use the English or Scientific name. They do not have to be entered in any specific order.

Place

Where possible please refer to the published Cheshire and Wirral Gazetteer when listing the site name and grid ref. A more detailed location can always be included under 'Visit Comments'; in this case the more precise grid ref (if given) will still be held against that record. A new site can be added if it cannot readily be included under another site already listed, or if it is an important birding location which was missed off the original list. Please let us know if this is a new site in the main body of your e-mail and provide the 6-figure grid ref, the nearest town or village, with a suggested site name.

The 'Place' column should contain a relevant CAWOS site name where observations were made. Please avoid overly general site names (e.g., 'Yorkshire', 'North Norfolk'), those giving no location information (e.g., 'Home', 'Garden') or those revealing sensitive information such as your actual address (e.g., '123 Fake Street, IP24 2QQ' or 'Golden Eagle nest'). If you are recording sightings from your garden, using the local suburban district or village name are sufficient.

GridRef

This must be a four-figure, two-figure or tetrad grid reference, e.g. SK0069, SJ29 or SJ76F. If you have a six-figure reference, work out the four-figure reference from it to go into GridRef and put the six-figure reference in Pinpoint (see later).

Count

This field must be a text field rather than a numeric one: if necessary use the Format Cells facility in Excel to amend it. The value of the field must be either an integer numeric value, optionally preceded by "c" or followed by "+", or "Present" or "x" to indicate presence only. Four- or five-digit integers cannot contain a comma, i.e. you must put 10000 rather than 10,000. Explicit ranges of integers are not allowed: instead put the lower value in Count and put details of the range in Obs_Comment. If there is no value in Count then a value of "Present" will be assumed by the update procedure.

Observer

Your name.

Pinpoint

If you have a six-figure grid reference, please use this field. This is especially important for significant and rarity records.

Start and End Time

In the spreadsheet it is possible to add Start and End times to your visits for a particular site, which can add significant value to any list-based observations. These can be entered in the following format:

- HH:MM
- H:MM

Note that Start and End times must be entered in separate columns and be in the standard five minute blocks (e.g., 00:05, 00:10).

Visit comments

This column allows you to enter any comments or additional information you may have for a particular visit. There is a 1,000 character limit for this field. Text in excess of this may be cut off or cause the upload to fail entirely. Only one visit comment needs to be entered per visit. In particular it should be used to expand Place information.

Obs Comment

This optional column can be used for any comments relating to species observation, for example behaviour notes. This field has a 1,000 character text limit and should not be confused with the visit comment.

Use this column for sex, age, plumage, activity and behaviour detail.

Weather

As with visit comments column, this optional field allows you to enter comments regarding the weather encountered during your visit. This field has a 500 character limit and only needs to be entered once per visit.

Count type

This column can be used to highlight visits where species were recorded in a particular way. The field can only contain numbers, with each number representing a certain count type:

Code	Type	Comment
0	General	For all general records
1	Seawatch	For records logged during seawatches
2	Visible migration	For records logged during visible migration
3	Roost count (tidal)	For records logged during tidal roost counts
4	Roost count (other)	For records logged during other roost counts
5	Atlas	For records logged during Atlas surveying

Sensitive

For sightings of sensitive species or those involving a more unusual species at a sensitive location, this column can be used to mark and hide it from public outputs in BirdTrack. Entering either a 'Y' or a '1' marks a sighting as 'Sensitive' on the spreadsheet.

Habitat

Any particular notes on the habitat for a species sighting can be entered in this column. There is a limit of 200 characters for this field.

Species included in the rare species list are automatically hidden from public outputs during the breeding (and/or during the non-breeding season, for some species). Records of such species do not need to be manually set to 'sensitive'.

Breeding

Although only an optional field, adding breeding evidence for any of your sightings during spring and summer will significantly increase the value of your data. The breeding evidence needs to be entered as a number with the cells formatted for 'Text'.

Code	Summary	Old category
0	Migration, Flying or Summering	M, F, U
1	Nesting habitat	H
2	Singing male	S
3	Pair in suitable habitat	P
4	Permanent territory	T
5	Courtship and display	D
6	Visiting probable nest site	N
7	Agitated behaviour	A
8	Brood patch on incubating adult	I
9	Nest building	B
10	Distraction display	DD
11	Used nest or eggshells	UN
12	Recently fledged	FL
13	Occupied nest	ON
14	Faecal sac or food	FF
15	Nest with eggs	NE
16	Nest with young	NY