**Cumbria Bird Club Records Panel**

**Constitution May 2018 – updated 11th July 2022**

1. **Membership.** The Records Panel shall consist of a County Recorder (appointed by Council and acting as Chairman of the Records Panel ), the Regional Recorders (also appointed by Council), Secretary (appointed by the Records Panel) and up to five members selected for their skill and experience as observers. Nominations for membership of the Panel may be made by Council, by members of the Records Panel or by nomination from five Bird Club members. Elections of new members take to place by the Records Panel at the start of each calendar year.
2. **Periods of Service.**
3. The period of service of the County Recorder will be four years, but they must be confirmed in office, annually, by Council. At the end of this period of service if no new candidate comes forward the County Recorder can stand for a further four years and then on an annual basis until a new County Recorder is found.
4. Regional Recorders have no set period of service, but must be confirmed in office, annually, by the Council.
5. The Records Panel Secretary has no set period of service, but must be confirmed in office, annually, by the Records Panel.
6. Ordinary members will serve for five years. To ensure the abilities and dedication of Club members may be utilised, one of the ordinary members should retire annually, usually the longest serving, but if no other candidates come forward, they main remain on the panel for a further year (or years, if there are no candidates in future years).
7. **Duties of the County Recorder** shall include
8. The County Recorder will be the point of contact for the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and deal with any correspondence associated with the BBRC. Copies of the BBRC records will be sent to Panel members for information.
9. The County Recorder will be the point of contact for the Rare Birds Breeding Panel (RBBP) and deal with any correspondence associated with the RBBP.
10. Revising, annually, the status of species on the Cumbria list and, from time to time, the criteria for which the status is defined.
11. Maintaining a record of all occurrences of vagrant, rare and scarce species in the county. In addition maintaining, where possible, a record of occurrences of all uncommon species. This will be an official Cumbria Bird Club document.
12. Managing the downloading of all electronic data from national sources such as BirdTrack and BirdGuides and local sources such as Birding Cumbria and the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre. For significant records from these sources, the County Recorder is to supply the contact details of the observer to the relevant Regional Recorder.
13. Writing the species accounts for the vagrant and rare species for Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria.
14. Advising/assisting the editors of Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria, if so requested.
15. **Duties of the Regional Recorders** shall include
16. Being the point of contact for observers and managing all records and descriptions from observers.
17. Sending all records submitted to the Cumbria Bird Club Archivist for processing for the compilation of the annual bird report in Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria.
18. Reviewing all records submitted to them and requesting descriptions where necessary.
19. Seeking to obtain descriptions which they know will be required.
20. Passing descriptions to the Secretary for circulation to the Records Panel.
21. Sending an acknowledgement of the decision of the Records Panel to the observers of record.
22. **Duties of the Records Panel Secretary** shall include
23. Circulating descriptions requiring adjudication to the Panel members and setting a date as deadline for the return of Panel member’s decisions.
24. Collating the decisions of each record from the Panel members and informing the Records Panel of the collective decision.
25. Annually collating a spreadsheet of the decisions to pass to the editor of Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria.
26. When necessary, sending reminders to Panel members three days before the deadline.
27. Maintaining a list of records for which there have been three dissenting votes and circulating this list before a Records Panel meeting.
28. Maintaining a record of periods of service of Panel members.
29. **Duties of the Records Panel** shall include
30. The adjudication of all Cumbrian vagrant and rare records submitted, as well as any other record deemed necessary by a Regional Recorder. The Cumbria boundary is as defined in the Cumbria Bird Club constitution.
31. Voting. All members of the Panel are entitled to vote, but it is understood that members with little or no personal experience of the species being assessed, or of closely related or similar species, may normally wish to abstain.
32. Voting should be by e-mail, leaving meetings to discuss difficult records and policy issues.
33. If fewer than six members vote, regardless of how they vote, the final assessment of the record should be deferred until such time as more members can vote. If the low number voting is due to abstentions, the advice of an appropriately experienced observer should, if possible, be obtained, and the record, together with the experienced observer's comments, then be brought back before the Records Panel.
34. For a record to be accepted, of those voting, there should not be more than two persons dissenting. If there are three dissenting votes, there will be another circulation of the record, with the circulation of comments from Records Panel members and e-mail discussions before another vote is taken. If there are still three dissenting votes, final judgement should be deferred until the record can be discussed by the Panel at a meeting where a further vote will take place. At this meeting if after discussing the record three times without resolution, the record should be declared Not Proven, however if no meeting is possible another circulation will be permissible. Should any further information come to light, any two Club members may ask for a record which was previously rejected to be reconsidered by the Panel.
35. Panel members will have four weeks to reply with their decisions to the Secretary. The Secretary will send a reminder to any Panel members who have not replied three days before the deadline.
36. Review past records when necessary.
37. Panel members are not allowed to vote on their own records.
38. The Records Panel should meet at least once a year.
39. **National Rarities.** As a rule BBRC records will be sent direct to the BBRC, however if they are sent to the County or Regional Recorders, the County Recorder will submit the record to the BBRC and will then send an acknowledgement to the observer both at this stage and again when a decision is published by the BBRC. The County Recorder is authorised to send such records to the BBRC without circulating them to the Panel members although, in practice, they may wish to discuss non-straightforward submissions before doing so. Copies of the BBRC records will be sent to Panel members for information.

NOTE: This version of the Constitution has been produced from the ‘Rules’ drawn up by a full meeting of CBC Records Panel held on 13th May, 1991, a revision of the procedures agreed at the Records Panel meeting on the 15th October 1992, a revision agreed at the Records Panel meeting on 20th January 2014 and some minor revisions agreed by the Records Panel at meetings on 3rd May 2018, 7th September 2021 and 11th July 2022.