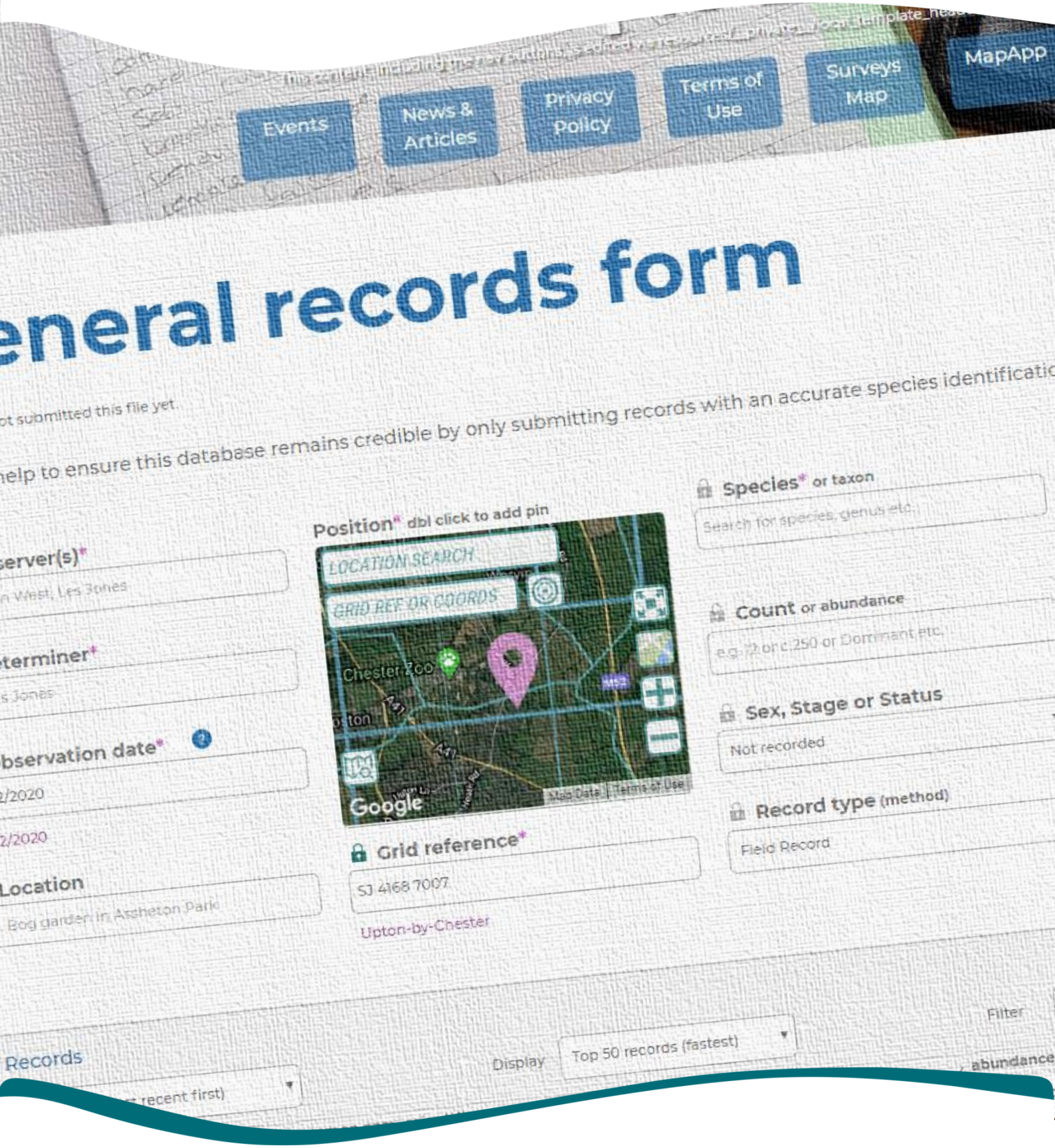
Getting Started with Swift

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

April 2020



Getting Started with Swift

Introduction

Swift is a biological recording application. It was created to enable you to record, and report upon, the wildlife you observe. It aims to promote the capture, and availability, of high quality, local biodiversity data for conservation purposes.

We've tried to develop a tool which is easy to use and works on most devices, so long as you have an Internet connection.

Registration is quick and free. Once you've registered you can submit records, run reports and much more.

Swift is administered by your Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC). It was developed by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) as part of the Carbon Landscape Citizen Science Project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The screenshots in this guide show the generic Swift colours and fonts. These may differ from the styles used by your LERC. Either way the methods described in this guide remain the same.

Climate change, and local changes in land use, affect species distribution and migration patterns year-on-year. Without a regular supply of new data our information upon wildlife would quickly become out of date. By submitting your wildlife observations you are contributing towards wildlife conservation. Your records inform decisions, design appropriate interventions and direct conservation projects. Thank you for your support.

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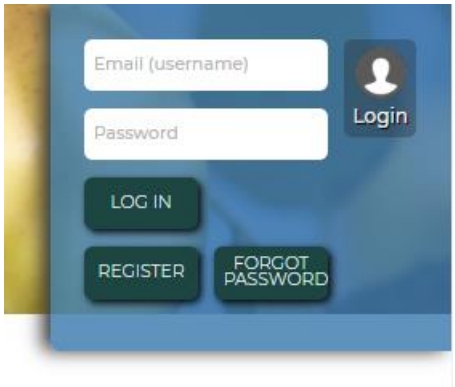
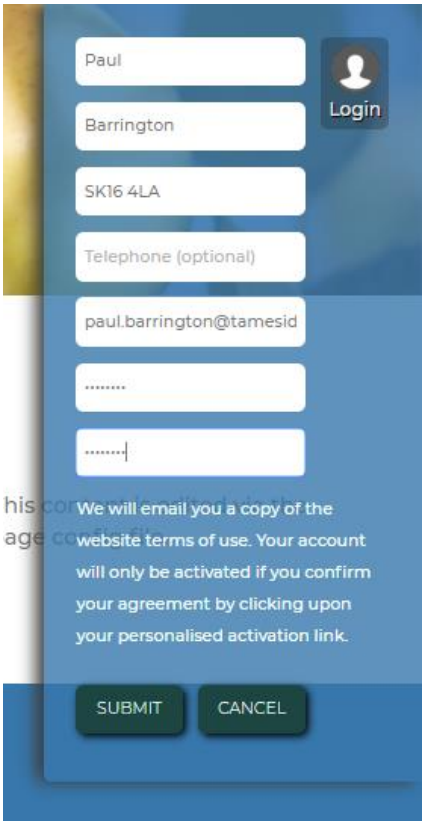
Registration

We encourage all users to create a user account before submitting any records. Whilst you can submit records as an unregistered user, having an account allows you to use Swift to its full effect.

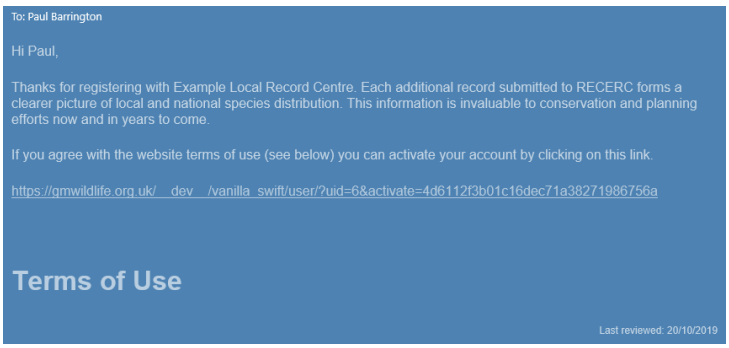
Click on the Login icon (top-right) and select Register





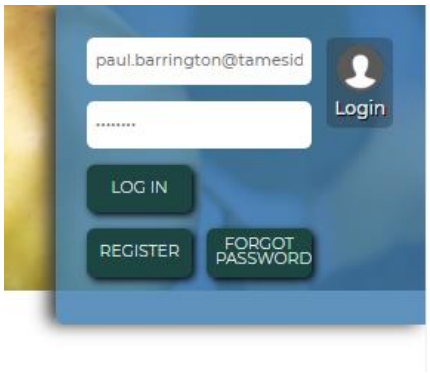
Fill in your details and click Submit

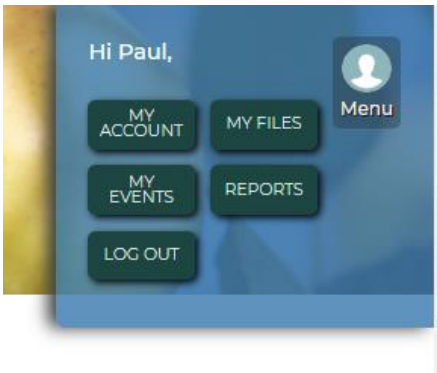
If you agree with the Terms of Use detailed within your welcome email then click on your account activation link. Sometimes our welcome email might end up in your junkmail folder.



Click on the Login button.

Enter your username and password and click on Log In





Click on the Menu button at anytime to display your top-level navigation options.

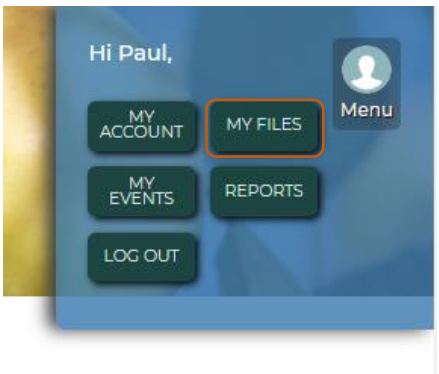
Your LERC determines which buttons are displayed so your menu may look different.

Create a recording file

Swift encourages users to organise their records into logical recordsets. We call these files. Until you are more familiar with the way Swift works, and have a better idea of how you want Swift to work for you, we recommend creating a new file for each survey visit you undertake.

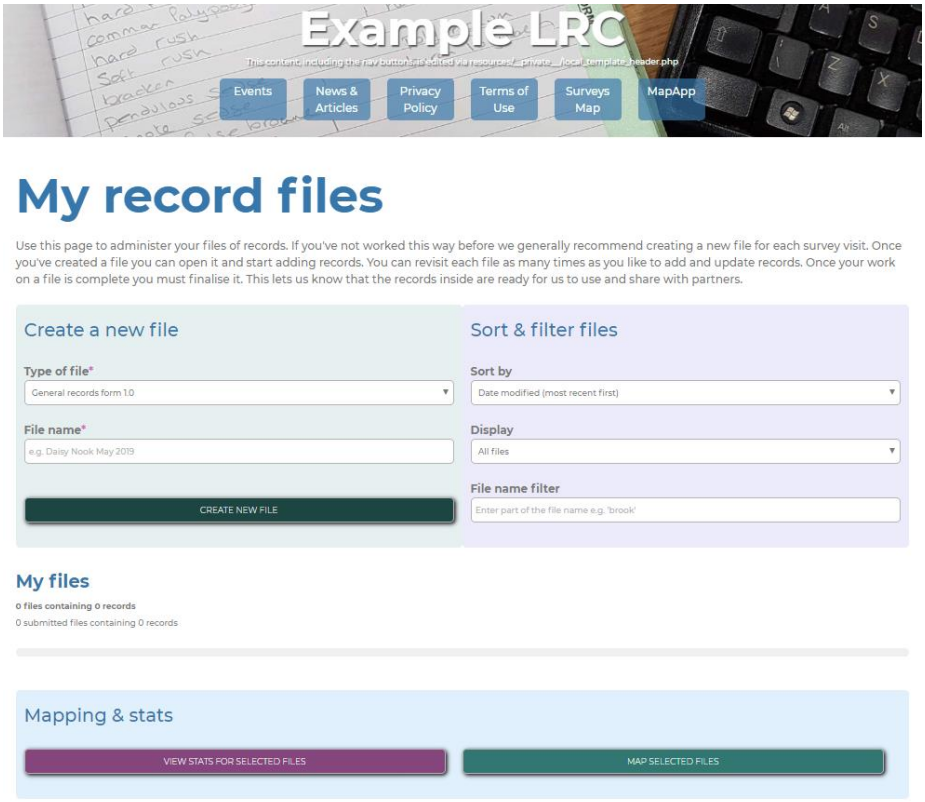
Once you've created a file you can add, update and delete the records within it as you please. When you are ready to share your records with us you need to finalise your file. Once you've finalised a file you lose the ability to update the records within in it. You can however report upon, and download, a copy of your records at anytime. Finalised files are made available for use by your LERC and its partner organisations.

Open your Menu and click on the My Files button.

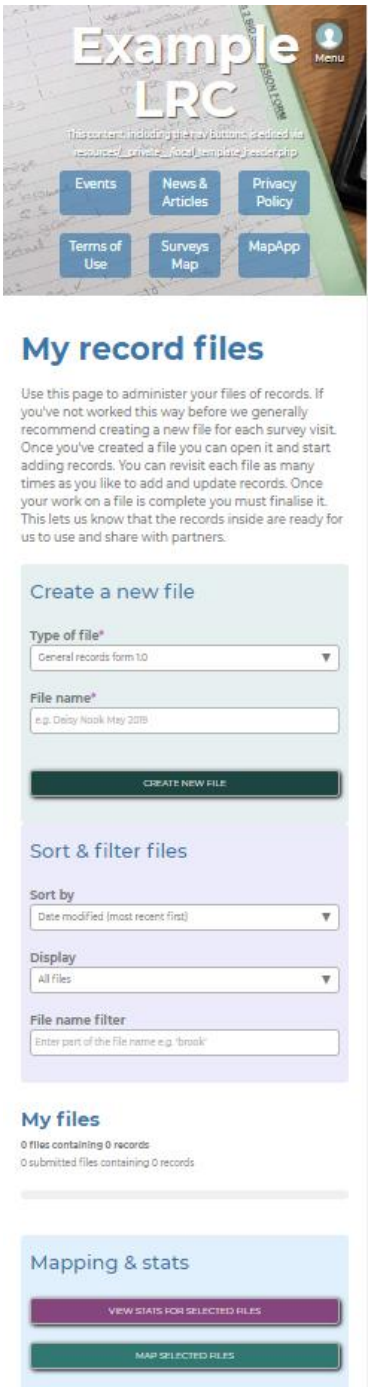


The My record files page is displayed. *Note: The layout of each page changes depending upon the device you are using. Changing the orientation of phones and tablets will also often rearrange the layout of a page.*

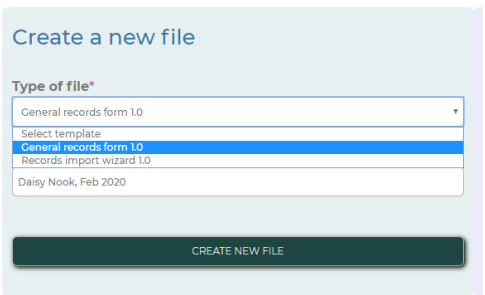
Widescreen device



Narrowscreen device



Swift allows LERCs to provide any number of data entry forms. This Getting Started guide covers just the General records form.



Select 'General records form' from the Type of file field.

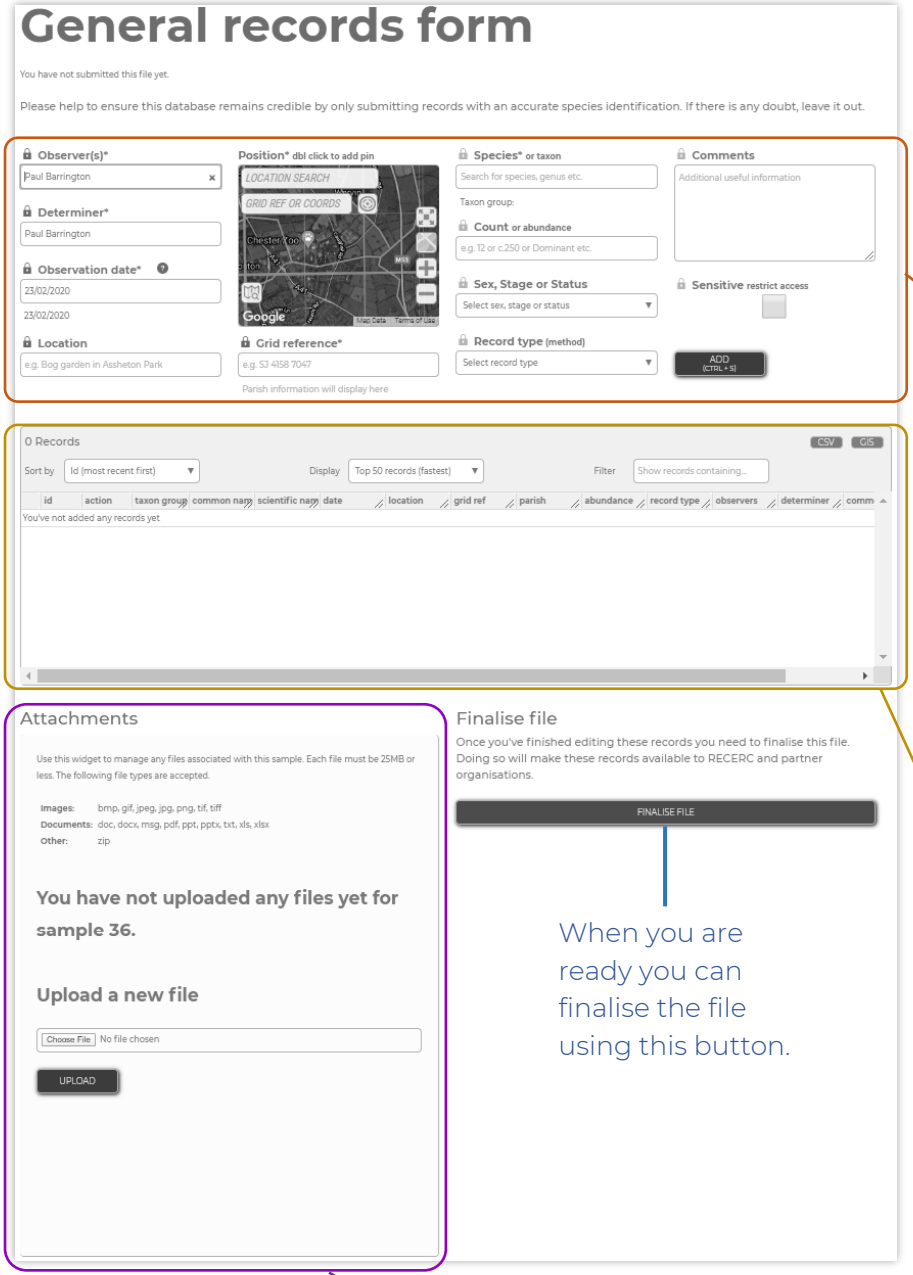
Enter a name for your file.

Click on Create new file.

Overview of the general records form

Widescreen device

Narrowscreen device



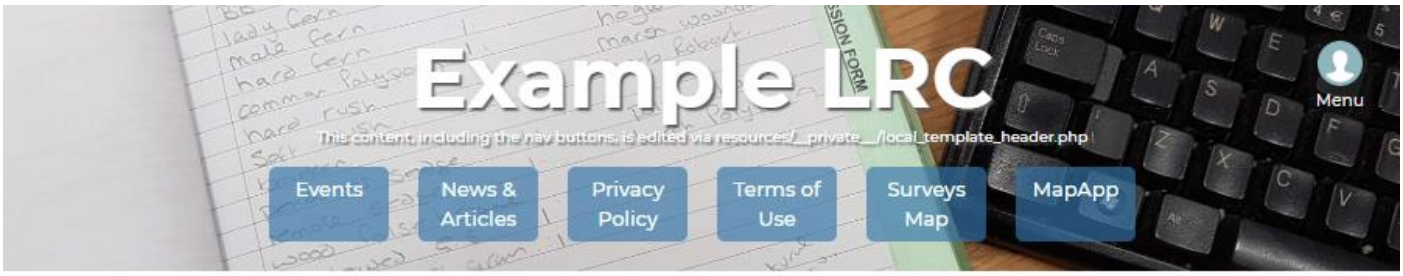
This area contains input boxes, and an interactive map, for capturing your observation details.

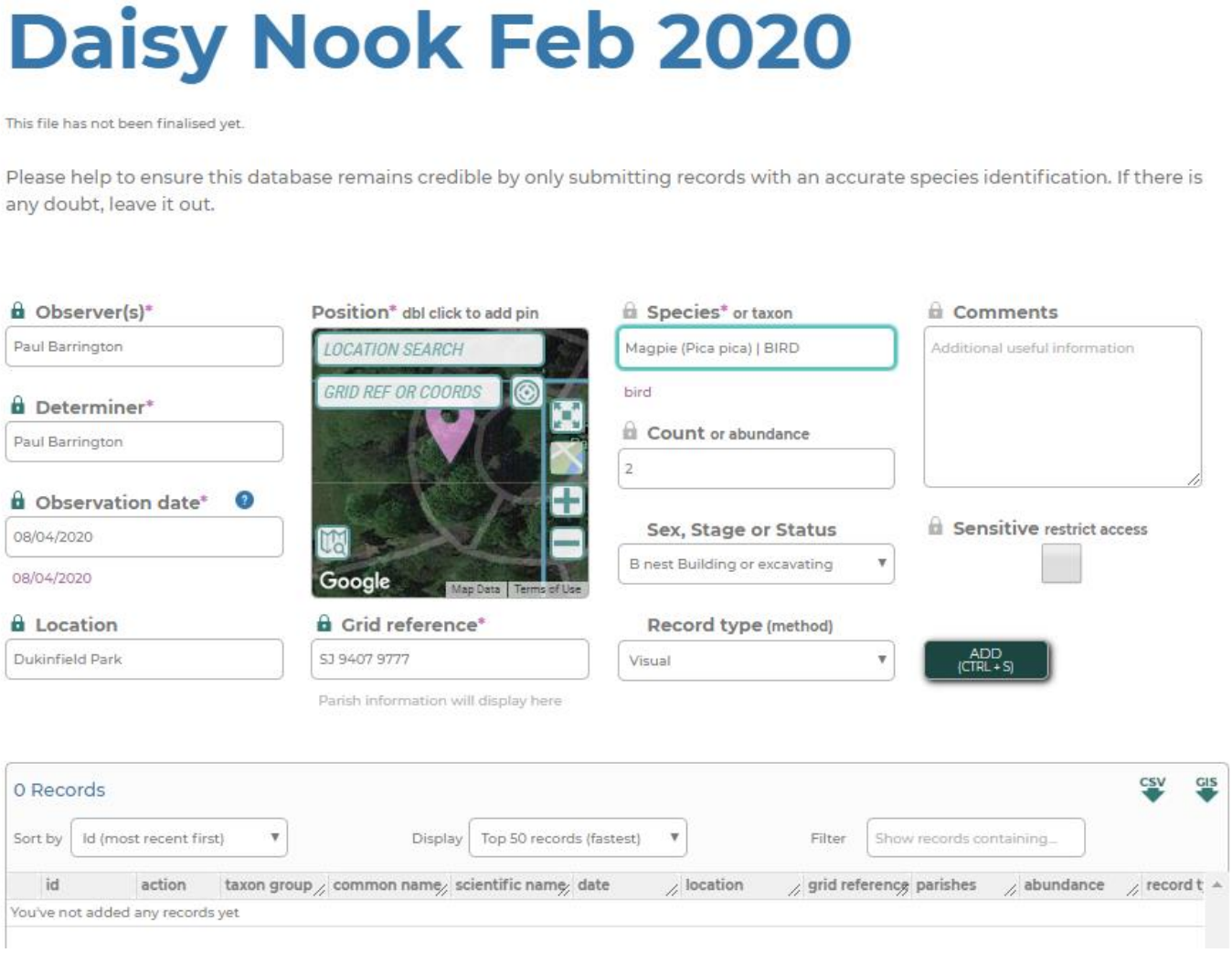
When you are ready you can finalise the file using this button.

This area displays this file's records. You can sort and filter the records and there are csv and gis download buttons.

This area is used to manage any files (attachments) associated with this recordset e.g. photos or a copy of the licence return form etc

Adding, editing and deleting records

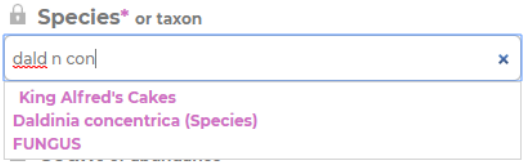
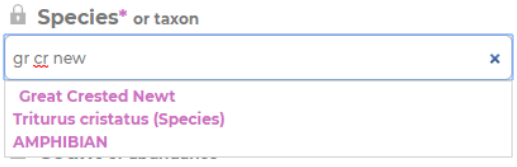
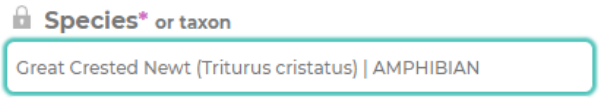




The following pages explain what to put in each field and how to use the interactive map. Mandatory fields are marked with a *

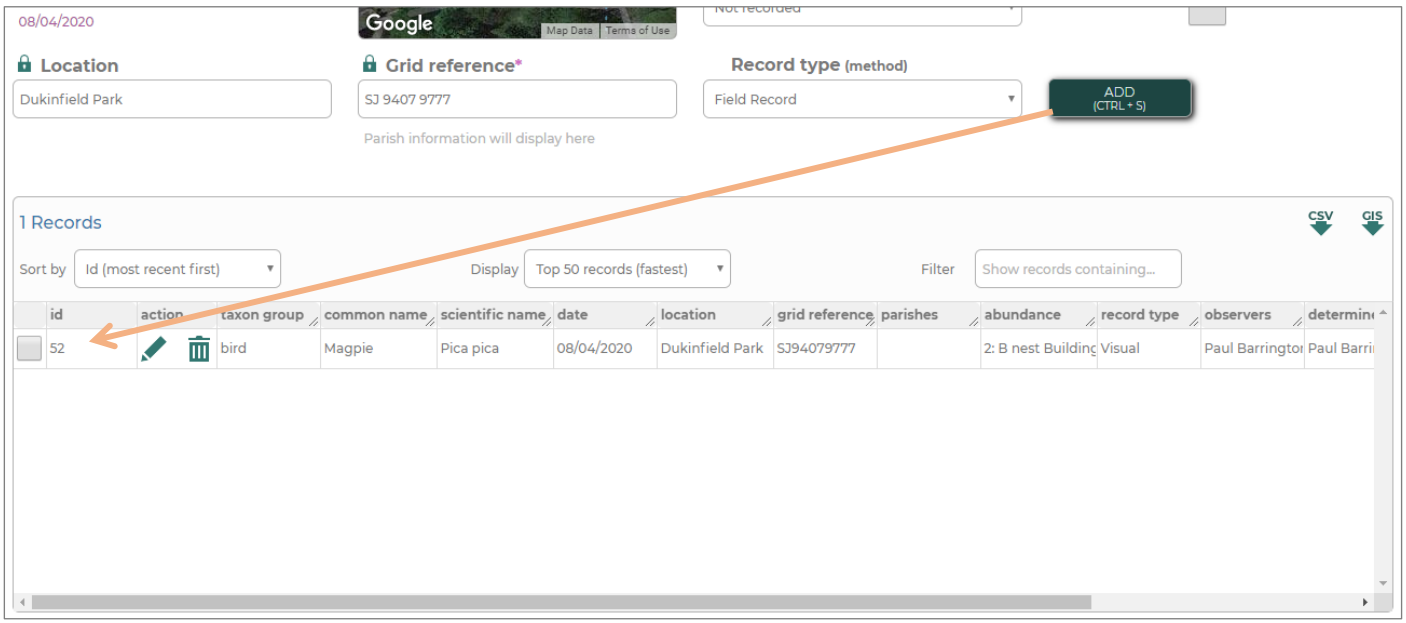
Understanding data entry

Field	Notes
Observers*	This is the name, or names, of the person(s) that made the original species observation. Separate individuals using a semi-colon e.g. 'Paul Barrington; Anna Cooke; Philip Stanley'
Determiner*	This is the name of the person that identified the species. For most records this will be the original observer e.g. a hedgehog or magpie are unlikely going to require a second opinion. If a more experienced recorder has determined the species for you use their name instead. For instance you might have sought advice from a moth or fungi specialist to determine the species you observed.
Observation date*	This is the date that the observation occurred on. The following dates, and date ranges, are valid. Specific dates are more useful than ranges. dd/mm/yyyy *e.g 16/04/2019* yyyy-mm-dd *e.g 2019-04-16* today or t yesterday or y last Monday *or variations* dd/mm/yyyy to dd/mm/yyyy *e.g 13/04/2019 to 16/04/2019* yyyy-mm-dd to yyyy-mm-dd *e.g 2019-04-13 to 2019-04-16* Aug 2019 or August 2019 *e.g 01/08/2019 to 31/08/2019* Mar 2019 to Jun 2019 or March 2019 to June 2019 *e.g 01/03/2019 to 30/06/2019* Winter 2019 *e.g 01/12/2019 to 29/02/2020* 2019 *e.g 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019* 2017 to 2019 *e.g 01/01/2017 to 31/12/2019*
Location	Add a location description if available. This could be a place name, an address or a description e.g. on the southern face of the stone bridge.
Position* and Grid reference*	The interactive map and the Grid reference field are linked. Adding, or dragging, a pin on the interactive map updates the Grid reference. Likewise entering a grid reference relocates the pin on the map. Search for a location *inc parks, addresses and postcodes* Enter a spatial reference Recentre map to pin Recentre on my location (uses GPS) Toggle fullscreen Satellite vs road map Zoom controls

Field	Notes
Species*	This field is linked to your LERC's local species dictionary. It contains most of the species you will encounter within their operating territory. If you can't find the species you are trying to record it could be a first for your area! Contact your LERC for support. You can search against known common names, scientific names and BTO 2-letter codes. Tip: Use spaces as wildcards to speed up data entry OR if you are unsure of spellings e.g. dald n con OR gr cr new    Once you've selected a valid species (or taxon) the field highlights in green
Count	Where you can count the number of individuals enter a number. If you have to estimate e.g. a large flock, then you can add c. before the number e.g. c.150 Where counting individuals isn't sensible, for instance a carpet of Bluebells you can enter a DAFOR value. These are Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional and Rare. The field will accept any other value e.g. Small Population, 20% Coverage.
Sex, Stage or Status	The options available are dependent upon the taxon group of the species you are recording. Here are some tips for starting out. Birds: Try and record the highest level of breeding evidence observed e.g. Singing (S), Territory (T), Nest Building (B), Carrying Faecal sac or Food for Young (FF) etc. Bats & Badgers: It is important to select whether this was a Bat Roost or a Badger Sett as appropriate. This changes how we use these records.

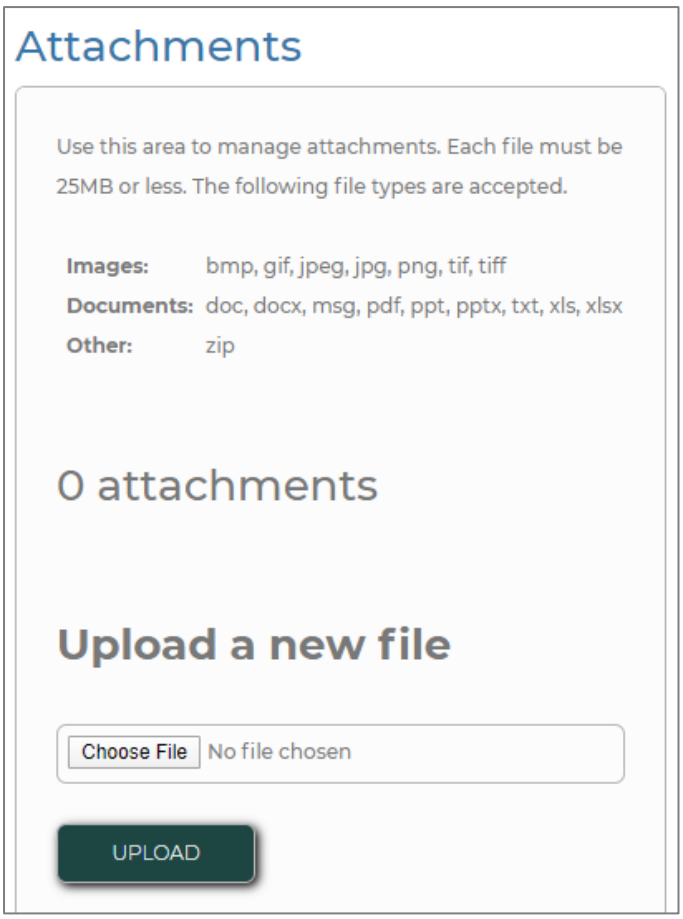
Field	Notes
Record type	This is the method of observation. Most of the time it will be visual or auditory. Alternatively, you may have used a trap, this is quite common for invertebrate recorders, or eDNA kit.
Comments	Any additional information.
Sensitive	We automatically apply a sensitive flag to records for many species including badgers and Schedule 1 breeding birds, including birds of prey. You can choose to make a record sensitive by checking this box. The sensitive flag masks the precise location of the record, location information and hides the comments from all users apart from LERC officers and bona fide partner organisations.

Once you are done entering your observation details click on Add (or use Ctrl + S) and your record will be transferred to the records table below. Repeat this process to add more records to your file.



Use the edit button to recall a record for editing. Alternatively use the delete button to delete this record.

Managing attachments



This file management widget is integrated into a number of forms across Swift.

It allows you to attach files to this collection of records. Uses include attaching:

- Habitat survey information
- A transect map
- Copies of your licence return or ecological survey report
- Email correspondence with a verifier
- Photographs of the habitat or a specific species*

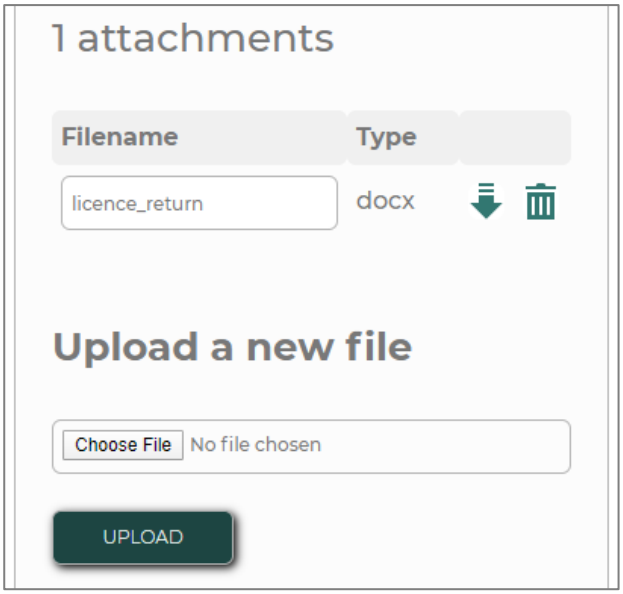
**Tip: If you are uploading an image or file which relates to a specific record then please include the record id (shown in the record table) as part of the filename. You can easily rename your files.*

To upload a file click on Choose File and then select the file you want to attach. Finally click on Upload.

You can rename a file by overtyping its name.

There are also download and delete buttons.

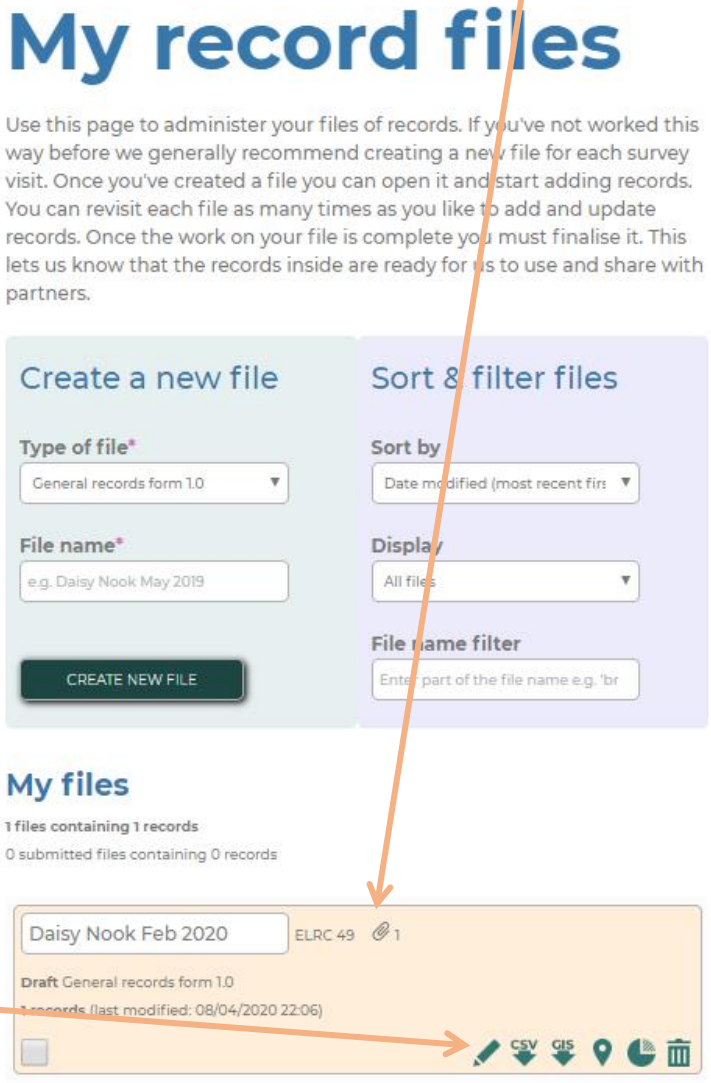
Repeat this process to add more files.



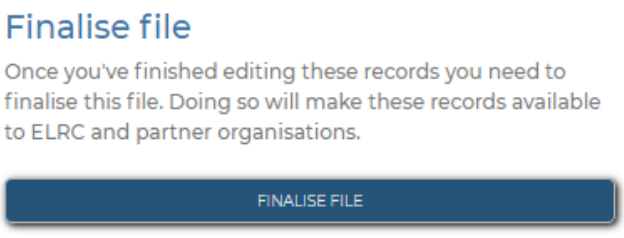
Returning to and finalising your file

If you return to your My Files page you will notice that this file is showing as a ‘Draft’ file.

Your LERC, and its partners, won’t use the records in your file until it has been finalised.



You can reopen any of your files (regardless of whether they are finalised) using the edit button.



Once your file is open click on Finalise File.

Thank you for sharing your records with us.

End of information