**CONFIDENTIAL**

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Interviewer(s):

Respondent(s):

**INT: Okay. So, the first question is, how long have you been doing any kind of biological recording? And how did you start?**

P22: Probably since I was about this high. I got interested in butterflies and that was when I was about five. So, I’ve had a long interest in natural history, all my life, really. Whether you would call it recording, I mean, like a lot of these things, they start off as collecting, or they did then, it’s probably frowned upon now, more, but in those earlier days, you know, collecting butterflies and moths, for example, was an accepted thing. But it was part of the way of getting to learn, really. It’s the same with pressing flowers and things, which people used to do, making their own herbarium, which obviously they do for scientific reasons, now, but even in those early days that was part of it. And then, obviously, using books and things to try and identify things. So, I’ve always had that interest and I pursued a life sciences career, really. I mean I didn’t go straight into sort of ecology, natural history, as it were straight away, I did biological sciences. I then did a Master’s degree in ecology and then I did a PhD in microbial ecology and then I’ve done various postdocs on microbiology and food safety, etc, so, you know the score. [laughs]

**INT: Yes, it’s funny how life just takes you on a journey that you were not necessarily planning but-**

P22: I know, I started working for the [GOVERNMENT AGENCY] in 1993, actually, and then went into the [GOVERNMENT AGENCY] in 2000, when it was formed. So, that’s where I’ve been ever since. But I’ve had all the way along, aside from my professional life, I’ve had an interest in natural history generally, really, so I’d sort of, I suppose, regard myself as liking to know a little bit about a lot, rather than a lot about a little. You know, it always intrigues me that, you know, you’ve got some people that specialise in very, very narrow areas, which is fine, we need that, but you also need people that have a reasonable grasp across a wider range, which I try to do. I fail miserably sometimes, but that’s what I like because I particularly like the ecological approach to things, rather than just the taxonomic approach to it. So, that’s really what spurred my interest. So, I’ve kept up with that, really all the way through.

More recently I do two [WILDLIFE MONITORING SCHEME], Butterfly Monitoring Transects on my local patch and where I live in West [City], I’m quite fortunate that I’m literally 100 yards away from that spot, so I haven’t got to drive 20 miles to do the transect, I can literally walk out my door and do the transect so, I do that. I also do the [recording scheme] for the [wildlife charity], as well and I do that on my local patch but also down in [county] on the military ranges because I originally come from East [county] anyway, and there is a site down there, which is a military range, and I got in contact with somebody that was doing bee surveying that had to give up doing the transects, so I inherited it. It requires military passes and things to get onto, but it’s an amazing place because it’s more or less been untouched since the Napoleonic area, on shingle and it’s got a fantastic lichen flora and insect flora as well.

So, I do that and I also do one of the [RESEARCH ORGANISATION] pollinator monitoring one-kilometre squares, they’ve got 72 of these across the country and it requires putting out pan traps for about three months of the year. And I’ve got a site down in [county], on the edge of [NATURE RESERVE] that I do during the summer. It was a bit tricky last year because of Covid, so we only managed to do two dates, then, but the previous year I’d done all three.

So, that sort of recording and then I also record almost on a daily basis because I’ve got this local patch and I’ve been building up an inventory for this local site, largely using the app iNaturalist, I don’t know if you’ve come across that. I mean, in sort of biological recording, you’ve got iRecord, which is obviously the UK based one, which is, I guess, the preferred one for recording. But iNaturalist I’ve used since about 2016 because it’s a tremendous learning tool because you get this interaction with people that are identifying things, particularly groups that you don’t know, and so you have this learning process. And the fact that it’s international means that there may be people in Europe and beyond that are identifying things for you but, you know, we know in the UK that the number of specialists is quite limited, but by using something like iNaturalist, you’re drawing on a wider resource base, in terms of people to help identify things. I mean, obviously, that’s based on photographs and observations rather than a specimen and that, there are situations when you might want to collect a specimen and send it for further investigation. But what’s intrigued me is that a number of the people from the major museums, British Museum, are actually identifying things for people on iNaturalist, now. So, it’s been tremendous, really, so it’s enabled me to build up a really detailed picture of my local patch, which is obviously only one patch in the scheme of things but I’m actually quite keen on doing that for individual patches.

You know, rather than spreading the data gathering very thinly across the country, I almost like the idea of a sentinel type approach. I mean, I see some of this aspect coming through from my own work in food safety where we try to understand food borne disease and very often there, you know, you can say, well, maybe a sentinel approach to it is an alternative to trying to have a very thinly spread data gathering. So, I would like to think that around the country we could have particular spots that are surveyed intensively that would give us that level of change or detail that you wouldn’t get from spreading it too widely. Sorry, I’ve talked a bit.

**INT: No, that’s fantastic. So, do you, in terms of species on that local patch, then, is it literally anything you see you try and identify?**

P22: I don’t, although I’ve obviously got particular interests, I try not to discriminate between what I record. So, I’ve got records of most groups. So, I think we’ve got well over 1,500 species, now, from that site and it’s accumulating all the time. Plants are quite well recorded, about 250 species, this is a brownfield site, by the way, it’s old gravel workings in the [Valley] which were infilled 50, 60 years ago. Well, our house is built on one as well, but it was infilled with rubble from after the war from [City] and also bits of the, when they were digging the [MOTORWAY] out, so it has some alkaline areas as well. So, it’s actually quite rich in terms of flora, but it’s got bits of woodland that have developed over time as well, and it’s got the [River] as well, so it’s quite a mixed habitat on sort of floodplain.

Yes, plants are well recorded, I’m doing quite a lot on the beetles, I do the butterfly transect. I haven’t run a light trap out there but I do run it occasionally in my garden. But, you know, all of the groups, really, insect groups we try to record, molluscs, centipedes, everything. A lot of the groups I don’t have knowledge myself, but because I can post it onto iNaturalist, somebody who is an expert might get me closer to what it actually is that I’m trying to identify.

**INT: And then do you have people in the UK, specialists, that you could go to, for example for molluscs or?**

P22: Well, there are people and some of those are already on iNaturalist, so some of those will identify things for you on there, which is quite good. And within iNaturalist you can send messages to people. A lot of it is open and you can text somebody to respond within a message or comment but you can also send a private message, as well, and I’ve done that on a few occasions.

**[0:10:11]**

But it’s been tremendous because I’ve turned up all sorts of new things, new beetles. We got two new leafhoppers this year, which were new to Britain, one from this site, which was the first record for Britain, but another one which turned up in East Anglia at [NATURE RESERVE], down in [TOWN] in [county] and here, almost simultaneously in September last year. It was most bizarre. Yes, some strange things.

But I think by monitoring one site in detail, from my perspective, I can see more of what changes over time. You know, from season to season. Obviously, you know, on the larger scale you would get an indication of that, from things like the butterfly transect which is like a large sentinel system, anyway. But, you know, you can do that for butterflies but I guess it’s more challenging if you want to spread out from that and do everything else, you know. There’s lots of people that record birds and probably a fair number that do butterflies, but once you start to go beyond birds, butterflies, plants and a few other groups, it’s quite hard to find people that will record them, I think.

**INT: Yes, well it requires another level of expertise, I guess, doesn’t it? But then, like you say, if you’ve got that iNaturalist system, it opens that up, doesn’t it?**

P22: Well, I use a beating tray quite a lot, and I’m often out tapping the branches and things and I get a lot of people come up to me and are interested, including some people that have got relatives who are entomologists and things like that. But in the past, I’ve had children come up as well and they’re quite fascinated to see what’s on the beating tray and then you can point it out to them. I’ve had some in the past that I’ve shown them in iNaturalist and they quite like the idea that you can take a picture and upload it, and if you can get that spark of enthusiasm then, you know. We’re buying into an audience that already is embracing technology, probably more in a way than I have done in the past, so it comes as second nature to them to use things like apps to record information. I know that’s available in iRecord, but I think what the strength of iNaturalist is the learning ability of it, I’ve learned a tremendous amount from using it, about groups that I’ve never done any work on before.

**INT: Yes. And so, in terms of, I guess, touching on that, your motivations for why you record, so you kind of spoke about learning opportunities and looking at changes over time, do your motivations differ between the types of recording that you do and the sites that you’re recording at?**

P22: I have changed quite a bit. I mean it used to be just going out, seeing what’s there, very casually. But I’ve started, now, to take a more structured approach to it. So, at the moment, I’m doing a study of beetles on hawthorn and I’m looking at the time between the hawthorn before they come into leaf, right through to when they start flowering. So, I’ve been doing these transects, 100 metre transects with random selection of locations and then doing beatings of the trees and then recording quite, unfortunately, quite a limited number of beetle species, so it’s doable, because as you know, with insects, you can get totally overwhelmed by the diversity.

So, I’ve been doing that to try and understand more about the variation on the site and also the variation over time, as well. And, you know, I’ve seen, we’ve had a cold snap, as you know, recently, and I’ve seen the effect of that in the data, already. I quite like doing those sort of more systematic approaches rather than going out and saying, “That looks like a nice tree, I’ll go and tap that one. Or I’ll go and look at this patch.”

But I do, one of the things that I do try and do, and I think it’s something that I perhaps iNaturalist could improve on, is to actually record what you find it on. So, for example, if I beat a hawthorn bush, I’ll record what I found, not only as the photo and what I think it is or ask somebody to identify what it is, but I’ll actually say it was found on or beatings on hawthorn because I think that additional metadata is really important. And if you look on iNaturalist, it’s very rarely recorded, a lot of people will just, they’ll upload a photo but with no additional information. iNaturalist captures all the GPS location to a reasonable degree, and other factors as well, date, time, etc, but you know, just adding that additional field I think actually gives additional value to the data. So, for example, some of my data I’ve been able to look at preferences for a particular plant species. So, one of the new leafhoppers that’s turned up in Britain, I found that it tends to be on certain types of tree and you don’t find it on others. So, it’s only by collecting that sort of information, you get that level of detail.

**INT: And then who are you, are you sharing that information with anyone? So, you’re obviously doing a lot of analysis of the data yourself and it’s going onto iNaturalist, then is it shared with anyone else?**

P22: Well, we’ve got a local group, [local naturalists group], which is like a local conservation group and I’m also part of the [BOROUGH] Biodiversity Partnership which is the local authority and various environmental groups in South West [City]. And the idea is there that, we’ve actually got a meeting next week, and it’s to look at what’s going on in all the key sites in the borough and to hear about the management plan. So, we’ve had input to the management plan for [NATURE RESERVE], which is my local site, but I’m also on the [local naturalists group] group so I have input to the conservation measures, such as cutting of shrubs and clearance, mowing regimes, all those areas.

So, obviously the people that are on that group have different levels of expertise, so we’ve got a couple of very good botanists, we’ve got a bird person I’m sort of invertebrates, so it’s a useful mix because we may have different perspectives on what the priorities are. So, in other words, do you cut the trees down? What about the nesting birds? You know, the dead wood is important as well as the grassland. All those challenges that you have in conservation about, well, what is the priority in deciding how a site is managed.

**INT: Yes. And then are you looking at the interactions with other sites, as well, then? How they’re managed as a whole?**

P22: Not so much looking at the management of them. As I say, the convenience of having somewhere on my doorstep means that I can give that level of intensity to it, but I have got other parts down in [county] where I’ve done a lot of surveying as well, but not to the same extent because, I think, with Covid-19, it’s limited what we can do and, to me, it’s been fantastic to have somewhere I can just go out, escape from the house, but also to do a bit of recording, as well, it means I don’t have to travel outside the area.

**INT: Do you think that will have knock-on effect, then, do you think you’ll stick with that, just focusing more on local sites?**

P22: I think the thing I’ve sort of discovered from doing this, is, actually, there is no limit to this. The more you study a site, the more it unravels, the more you uncover as part of that process. You know, I thought it would be flattening off, you know, you’re collecting records of species and it will plateau off, but that hasn’t happened. It’s phenomenal to think how many species probably exist on some of these quite ordinary sites, really.

**INT: Yes. But it sounds like, brownfield sites tend to be quite complex, don’t they, in terms of topography and substrate? And there’s lots of opportunities, aren’t there, for little niches for and probably quite warm, as well, so you’re talking about species coming into the UK, that’s probably a good site for them to establish at.**

P22: Yes, people have said about this because we, you know, [City] seems to get a lot of these new species and I don’t know whether all the lorries and things just pile up from the continent. We did find some new beetles down in [county], very close to the Channel Tunnel and we thought they’d probably come through the Tunnel, hopped off onto [county] chalkiness.

**INT: Yes. So, the site is protected, presumably then, it’s not under threat of any?**

**[0:19:56]**

P22: It’s called a local nature reserve, you read into that what you will, but, I mean, my wife was having a look at this recently, she said, “I don’t think it really gives you that much.” Because a question came up about foraging because we’ve got a lot of horseradish growing there, which, actually, they wanted to reduce but somebody decided to come along and dig a load up and then that opened the question about, well, can people forage and what is reasonable? I don’t think digging roots up is permitted but I think foraging, in a sense, is okay on those sites because I think what’s called a nature reserve isn’t the same as, obviously not a national nature reserve, I don’t even know if it’s the same as an SSSI, I don’t know, maybe you know the differences between these things.

**INT: I think it does have some sort of statutory protection, if it’s a local nature reserve, but I don’t think that it’s at the level of a SSSI.**

P22: When the [City] Ecology Unit existed, it was classed as a Site of Metropolitan Importance. Its botany, largely, was the key thing because it’s got a very rich legume flora, largely because of the infills that were used. But, yes, it’s an interesting one and we’ve got challenges at the moment because of lockdown, and so forth, a lot of teenagers have been having fires and barbecues and party on there, it’s a bit of a challenge when you live in a very urban area but close to a green space, really.

**INT: Yes, well, you know, to be honest it’s the same up here, you go to kind of the local nature reserves and you can’t find a place to park because the demand is so high. People just want to go out for a walk, somewhere, don’t they?**

P22: We don’t have to park; I can literally walk across the road!

**INT: Is cataloguing what’s there, so the site might have more protection, is that kind of a motivation for you?**

P22: That was one of my objectives because before we moved here in the mid ‘90s, there have been threats, in the past, about building on the land because there’s obviously pressure for housing. And, you know, [BOROUGH] is quite fortunate in having quite a lot of green space, but you always worry thinking, well, brownfield sites, there’s always this view, don’t build on the greenbelt, build on the brownfield. But actually, you know, a biologically rich brownfield site, in the middle of an urban area, is something worth preserving. And there was a lot of objection at the time, but one of the reasons I wanted to do it, apart from my interest in collecting the information was to say, “Hey, you know, if this ever comes under challenge, here’s a data set that we can use.” Now there was a bit of, I suppose, concern that the data was being collected on iNaturalist because the preference was to put it in to iRecord, but some of my data has ended up in iRecord because I think there was a piece of work done to look at transferring records between the databases. I don’t want to have to put all my data in again, I mean, really, I think it’s for the software engineers to sort out a solution to this. I mean, you know, I don’t have a problem with sharing it with any of the others, it’s just the practicalities of making it happen, really.

**INT: Yes. And then you don’t want it ending up in twice, either.**

P22: Well, that is another thing as well. There was a sort of, GiGL was part of your project, I think, about the data having to go into iRecord. Well, you know, as I say, there must be ways to overcome that so the data is of value to organisations such as that, as well as at the individual level. I certainly wouldn’t want to abandon iNaturalist and use iRecord exclusively because I don’t think I would learn as much as I do from iNaturalist.

**INT: Yes. And when you say you’re learning, do people kind of give you more than just the name of a species, that they tell you a bit about its natural history?**

P22: Yes, well, I mean obviously it tends to be about your record, so you do learn from it, so there are observations. I mean, an interesting one, so for example, sometimes you’ll get one from somebody on the continent that makes a comment about something moving further north in Europe that you may not have picked up from a network in the UK. And I think it is this sort of wider network that’s giving us intelligence that we wouldn’t necessarily see on our own doorstep.

**INT: Yes. And is all the communication related to a specific observation, then? Or is there other conversation going on that’s more general?**

P22: Only through the, as I say, there’s a messaging facility, so I’ve had various requests come through to do various things, provide information. Yes, that happens almost like an email system. But I think most of the conversation, really, is around individual records. You know, you’ll get some people disagree, others will support you. I mean there is, for it to be verified, it has to have at least two people agree. One of the downsides of iNaturalist is sometimes people just agreeing with the expert rather than actually doing the legwork themselves to say, “I’ve checked this myself.” I think in the early days, I probably, you know, I took it on good faith from a lot of the experts but now I tend to wait for somebody else, if I’m not sure of it, I’ll let someone else decide whether they agree or not. And there are a few records that are sitting a bit in limbo-land because they’ve had a conflict of views, but then maybe that’s how they should stay, because if you haven’t got a specimen, you’re only going off what you’ve got in terms of an image, anyway.

**INT: So, it’s the feedback about the context that’s of most interest to you, you think?**

P22: Yes, I think so. And also, the statistics. One of the things that iNaturalist is really good at, is you can summarise it. It has the complete taxonomic hierarchy so you can see what you’re got in the different groups broken down, you can also look at it by date, it’s got quite a powerful search facility. So, for example, when I’ve beaten something from hawthorn, because that goes into my comments box, I can then search on hawthorn for everything, so I can bring up all the hawthorn associated ones and the others as well. And, in fact, I have wondered whether you could even add additional fields to it, whether you can personalise it and have new fields where you can add additional search levels as well. So, you could potentially gather more information on a record than the current core set that iNaturalist includes, to make it more powerful in terms of, you know, organising and structuring the data that is collected.

**INT: Yes, and so in terms of interrogating the data, say looking at changes from year to year and phenology, are you doing all of that in iNaturalist?**

P22: Well, iNaturalist provides you with a phenological graph of all the records, including the verified and non-verified. And it also, you can limit it by geography as well. So, you can have the world, Europe, UK, [county], Surrey, maybe even my nature reserve, or the local nature reserve here, so I can look at the seasonality on that nature reserve and compare that to the European or international picture.

**INT: So, you don’t keep your records locally on your computer as well and do any analysis in there?**

P22: I don’t do further analysis on it at the moment, I mean, you can download all the records from iNaturalist and one of the things that, I guess, worries me is, what’s the limits to this continually expanding? I mean, they’re always putting out requests for needing funding. I suppose my worry is that, you know, are we going to reach a crisis point in 10 years of maybe even less, where they say, “We can’t afford to keep storing all these images and the data.” And then, is that going to leave us in a difficult situation in the long term? So, it’s quite nice to have stuff uploaded onto this website, but there is a question in my mind as to, you know, what is the longer-term future for this? I mean on a world basis, it’s fantastic, they’ve got 60 million records on there but who is paying for it and how can you sustain it in the long term?

**INT: Yes, and if it really takes off, it’s just going to grow infinitely, isn’t it?**

P22: Yes, but who picks up the tab for it? And why? You have to sort of wonder why they’re doing it.

**INT: Yes. So, are there things that you worry about your data being used for that you wouldn’t want it to be used for?**

**[0:30:00]**

P22: Obviously it’s all freely available so you don’t have any control over that. What is quite nice is I’ve had people contact me to say, “Can I have permission to use one of your photos?” I mean I don’t protect all my photos to say they can’t be used, but it’s quite nice when somebody asks to use the photo. And I don’t have any problem with them using them in that way. But, yes, I mean, I would like to think that the data is used by professional ecologists, so if they’re doing a survey for a site that they can access it, as they could do with iRecord and can utilise the data for coming to conclusions about the value of a site, obviously they’d have to be a bit selective about which records they used, presumably just use the verified ones. But I think, you know, I would like to think that it has a use in that sense, whether it’s by, as you say, consultants that are doing pieces of work, more organisations like GiGL and others.

**INT: You don’t kind of see any feedback through iNaturalist, anyway, in terms of what the data are then used for?**

P22: No, not really, no. All we see is the summary of our data. So, you get an annual summary of what’s been collected. But there is a thing that’s run every year which is, it’s a weekend where they encourage different cities around the world.

**INT: Oh, yes.**

P22: And it should be at the end of this month, actually, and I’ve taken part in that over the last couple of years and that’s very intensive because it’s over a weekend. But I think that’s a really good opportunity to try and get children, more children involved in this, particularly in the city, as well, to show them that there is a lot on their doorstep which they can look at and it’s fascinating.

**INT: And then, in terms of the other sites that you visit down in [county], do your motivations for going to those sites, or you know, your reasons for going there, is that different from your reasons for recording in your local patch?**

P22: I think partly it’s because I grew up in [county] and they’re sites I know and I’m interested, I guess, when I was growing up, I was interested in them for the botany of the butterflies but now my interest has widened, I’m intrigued to know, well, what else is there, you know. Actually, there was along where, I lived there before the Channel Tunnel was built and I remember what that land used to be like and so, I’d looked at areas near there, to see what’s come in and as I say, we turned up these new beetles that had come in from the continent. And also, you know, sites that I’d never been to before. So, the ranges down at [TOWN], the firing ranges, that’s a fascinating site that you don’t normally have access to. It’s quite nice to have access to places that you can’t get into.

**INT: What was that through, the [RESEARCH ORGANISATION] scheme did you say?**

P22: Well, no, it was actually the bumble bee one, it was somebody that was doing the walk and she was changing jobs and she asked if I’d be interested in taking it on, and I hadn’t done bumble bees before so I decided to do that. You have to have the permits and it has to be when they’re not firing, obviously, and things like that. But it’s quite nice to go to those sites which have very little access because they’re quite interesting, you never know what you’re going to find.

Coming back to the point about interesting conversations on iNaturalist, I had somebody from Spain, for example, contact me. He was doing a project on a plant called [SPECIES], a *Jasione montana*, and he was looking at the, he was doing a molecular study across the whole of Europe and he noticed that I had records of it from these ranges down in [county] and he asked whether he could get some seeds. So, I got permission and sent him the seeds and he was able to characterize the [county] population versus the south west and the west. So, I think that international networking is really valuable.

**INT: Yes, definitely. Yes, it creates opportunities, doesn’t it? And, like you say, it’s just giving you that broader context, isn’t it? And I guess if people are also saying, you know, look out for this species coming into your area, then you’re going to be aware of it, aren’t you? And make sure you’re making an effort to look for it.**

P22: Yes. Interestingly, some of the new things that I’ve found in the UK have all been identified by continental entomologists. So, it’s not been the community here, it’s been people on the continent, because they’re familiar with them, they’ve seen them. I mean, one of the things that’s always intrigued me is that you come up with a list of, you know, you could choose one category of insects and say, “Well, how many species do we have of this in the UK and how many are on the near continent?” In other words, what, potentially, are we missing? And so, what is the potential for something to come to us, either because of climate change or travel or anything else? It would give us much more of an indication of potential new arrivals as much as what we have in our own flora and fauna.

**INT: And is there anything around pests and diseases, as well?**

P22: Oh, yes, yes. Several insects that, you know, new invaders, I think the Defra’s plant and health people I think up in York, at Fera I think they do sort of pest risk analysis and there’s several things I found, there’s a leaf miner called the zigzag leaf miner the old leaf miner, which is a pest, I think it’s actually the Balkans. I think it was, anyway, it came into the UK and I found it on my local patch when I looked and found it down in [county] as well.

**INT: Did you report that, then, to Defra?**

P22: Well, they didn’t want reports of it, I don’t think it was regarded to be serious enough, not like things like ash dieback and what have you but, no, the local authority was made aware and obviously the records were all on iNaturalist as well. But I think, you know, these are opportunities to record new things that are coming in. There’s a new shield bug called the marmorated shield bug which is a pest of fruit and various other crops, quite a serious one and that’s turning up now and there’s records on iNaturalist, I haven’t found that, yet. So, I think, you know, it does have that sort of potential, really.

**INT: So, how do you fit everything into the year? It sounds like it’s a full time job doing all your recording, going down to [county], doing all your transects, do your daily visit to your local patch and working.**

P22: Well, it’s not so bad because I live, literally, 100 yards from the site, I can go over there after work. And I’m not travelling to the office, I mean a year ago, I was working in the office in central [City], we are fortunate in having, our contracts are such that you can be office based, home based or multi-location, and I was already multi-location which meant that I was half of the time in the office and half of the time working from home. As you can appreciate, working from home gave me the opportunity to visit these other sites. But even in central [City], at lunchtime, I’d go into [Park] and do a bit of recording there and things.

**INT: So, do you have a plan at the beginning of the year of all the places that you want to visit?**

P22: The usual ones, I think. Before Covid I used to travel quite a bit, so there were opportunities, both in the UK and abroad to visit different places. My daughter is living in Spain at the moment, we had plans to go and see her and it would have been up in Andalusia, there are some fantastic reserves around there, but obviously it’s not happened. It’s a shame but, you know, that’s why, I think, this focusing on what’s on your doorstep is important. So, you can get to a level of interest beyond the sort of superficial level by looking deeper and deeper into what’s on your doorstep.

**INT: Yes, but you do, sometimes, act on requests from people to visit particular areas?**

**[0:39:57]**

P22: Yes, I’ve had that before, you know, “Come and have a look at that site.” And yes, it’s good to go to new places but I think one of the things that we’ve appreciated from having this local patch is that you haven’t got to sit in the car for an hour or half an hour to get there and then when you get there you might have two hours, whereas you can spend four hours out there.

**INT: Yes. So, would it have to be a particularly interesting species, or a particularly interesting site that would entice you to act on a request?**

P22: I think, not necessarily. If I thought that it was contributing something important, from a scientific point of view, you know. That’s why I think things like doing the one-kilometre squares or the transects is important because I can see some structure to the data. I mean it’s nice to go to new places on a casual basis and just see what’s there, actually, that’s quite nice but there’s the added value of collecting something that’s more structured because you can see something tangible that comes out of it, rather than the pot luck that you get when you go to different places. I mean, I haven’t been out to many new places, obviously, over the last year or so but I did get an opportunity, back in September, when, yes, my daughter was going back to Spain, after the summer, and I went on down to [Beach] and [Protected site], that was fantastic to go to somewhere new that I hadn’t been to before and some lots of interesting things down there. So, yes, it’s good to have that mix.

**INT: Yes, that kind of really local, specialised knowledge, but then also new places as well.**

P22: I think, you know, you get to a point saying, oh, it’s getting boring now, I’ve got this local patch, I’m going there all the time, I know every area of it, but I don’t get to that level because there’s always the anticipation that you might find something new or interesting, which does happen. So, you’ve got, you’ve always got that interest that it’s never dull because there’s always something new popping up.

**INT: And I think, particularly if you are willing to have the breadth of species that you’re looking at, as well. I think maybe if you were just looking at butterflies, you might get a bit bored.**

P22: One of the things I started last year, which I haven’t done before, was actually going out with a torch, at night and looking for beetles on dead wood. We’re fortunate that where we are is down, we’re near a lock, [Lock], and there were some very old standing Sycamores, dead Sycamore, and one that sort of, it’s still standing, but it’s starting to decay, and looking at it in the daytime, you know, you wouldn’t see much at all, but you go down there with a torch, at night, it’s absolutely masses of different types of beetles coming out of the wood.

**INT: That’s amazing.**

P22: Yes. I thought about suggesting to the local group that we have a mini-beasts, night-time safari by torchlight, because they wouldn’t have to go over rough ground, they could just go down the tarmacked road and they could actually appreciate what comes out of these dead tree trunks at night.

**INT: That would be great for kids, as well, wouldn’t it? If you could do it.**

P22: It’s always struck me, you know, when people have a bat walk, how many people turn up for a bat walk. Well, maybe we could have a mini-beast walk with torches, you know, that could be quite good.

**INT: Yes, definitely. I’d be up for that. [laughs] Well, thank you so much for your time, I think that is all of my questions. Just have a quick look. I guess, just going back to the point about acting on requests from people to visit particular sites, are there particular organisations or individuals that you would be more willing to act on those requests from?**

P22: I think, obviously, conservation organisations, I think, probably would be the main ones. As I say, now I’m doing the stuff for the butterfly and the bee and the [RESEARCH ORGANISATION] work, biological record centres, I guess. It’s a question of time because I’m still working full time as well, so, fitting it in around that is the challenge. But, you know, I enjoy doing it, it’s a good contrast from my day job. So, yes, I think I would go and look at things if individuals, if it was possible and individuals were able to support that. I mean I think there is a cost side, as well, I mean, fortunately, [RESEARCH ORGANISATION] will reimburse travel costs to get to sites to do some of the one-kilometre squares, for example. I think, obviously, if it’s covering travel costs and things is a positive thing, I think, particularly if there’s any distance, you know.

**INT: Yes, definitely. Okay, is there anything else that you wanted to say about your recording activities or motivations that you haven’t said?**

P22: Yes. One thing, and I encounter this in science, generally, is people don’t give much store by negative results. And, you know, in biological recording, we go out and we find the bug or the plant and it gets recorded, but how many people actually go out actively looking for something and don’t find it? So, I always see that there’s this balance, you know, we test a food for a pathogen, we find it, and that gets reported but the negative results, and it’s the same with publications as you know, the negative results tend not to carry the same kudos. But, actually, it’s still information, that you’ve looked for things and not found them. I have to say, I don’t actively look for that in my own data, but it’s something that could be looked at in a bit more depth.

**INT: Yes, it’s thinking about how to do that, as well, isn’t it? Because on places like iRecord, you can’t record negatives.**

P22: No.

**INT: Yes, it’s also having the facility to do it, isn’t it? And how that would be managed.**

P22: I know. We almost need a way of recording it, in a way, because actually, the effort or the number of occasions you’ve gone out, actively looking for something and not found it, is also important information.

**INT: Yes, absolutely.**

P22: This weighting is too much towards the finding of it.

**INT: Yes, definitely. Yes, that’s a really important point, yes. Okay, thank you so much for your time. If you’re interested in hearing more about the project and potential involvement in later steps, then I’ve got a sign-up link that I can email you.**

P22: Yes, okay, that would be interesting, yes.

**INT: Yes, so [RESEARCH ORGANISATION] have got a kind of mailing list for telling people about the next stages of the project, so you can just sign up your name on there. Yes, thank you very much and I hope it goes okay at the dentist.**

P22: Well, I was told last time that a wisdom tooth might need to come out but not today, I hope. [laughs]

**INT: No, no. Just brace yourself for that. Yes, thank you so much for your time.**

P22: All right.

**INT: It’s very much appreciated, very interesting talking to you.**

P22: Yes, yes.

**INT: Bye, bye.**

P22: Bye then, bye.

**Audio ends: [0:48:13]**