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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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# NATIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE

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## Making Soundings: An Appeal for Information on Sound Collections

Although the advent of video is exciting and widespread, sound recordings still represent a valuable resource to which there is only limited access. In many fields the tape-recorder is still the least intrusive, most effective means of capturing the essence of an event. Despite the apparent dominance of visual images, sound remains the most efficient, transportable, and exciting of the media for communication.

Many public and private organizations in Britain have collections of sound recordings containing valuable material and many museum curators are becoming aware of the potential for such material to enliven their displays. But the fact remains that too few people know about the existence of recorded sound collections or have access to them. As a result, in this country, a valuable cultural resource is going to waste. The National Sound Archive (formerly The British Institute of Recorded Sound, and now a department of the British Library) is taking action to prevent such waste by bringing to public attention the value, potential, and availability of recorded sound.

One way of achieving this is through the production of a National Directory of Recorded Sound Collections. A very large number of museums, libraries, clubs and societies, hold collections of sound recordings on an equally large number of subjects. We are interested in hearing about the existence of these holdings, of all sizes and durations, whether on tape or on disc, in all subject areas (e.g. oral history, wildlife sounds, industro-mechanical sound, folklore, dialect, and so on.) Clearly we are more interested in original material, rather than that which is available commercially. But if you, or your organization, possess any recorded sound material, or you know where such material is located, (even if you don't regard it as a 'collection') please let us have details as soon as possible. If more people know about your sound collection - more people will know about the rest of your activities. Please send your information to Jeremy Silver, Research Officer, The National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2AS.