

Natural England Commissioned Report writing guidance

The guidance and best practice examples below have been developed to help ensure Natural England Commissioned Reports are written in a style and format that is suitable for publication. This guidance is not compulsory, but failure to present a report in an acceptable format may prevent or delay publication. If your organisation has a standard house style that you would prefer to use, you can check whether it is acceptable by emailing the details to technicalinformationexchange@naturalengland.org.uk.

- Text should be 11 point Arial.
- When referencing text, tables, figures etc use the title, heading or sub-heading.
- All Natural England publications must follow the **Natural England style and grammar guide**. The summary can be seen below and the full document is available on request.
- Tables should be clear to read on an A4 page (landscape or portrait) without having to condense the text or use complicated structures within the table.
- The report should be a single document. Where **photographs and illustrations** are used a high resolution copy should be sent as a separate file. For **graphs and charts** the underlying image or spreadsheet should be available as a separate file. Pdf documents should be avoided.
- Where links to websites or e-mail addresses are included in text or reference, please check that these can still be accessed. Short-lived web-pages or web-based documents should not be linked to. Please include the date last accessed when referencing web-pages.
- Reports should be legible when printed in black and white. **Colour** should only be used where black and white fails to convey sufficient information. Cross-hatching or shading can be used to show detail. Shading levels should be as different as possible as clear differences on the screen may not be obvious when printed.

Acknowledgements

[Text]

Preface (optional)

[Text]

Summary

[Text - including the specific objectives for the project and/or for the report. Unless specifically stated otherwise, reports should contain findings, they should not include recommendations.]

Methodology (optional)

[Text]

Conclusions (optional)

[Text]

Contents Page

The contents page should be set up using the formatting tools to specify Chapter numbers and titles, then the hierarchy of headings. Using 'Insert – reference – index and tables' will compile a contents page with links to the relevant pages in the document. See example contents pages below.

Likewise, Appendices can be created as explained above for Chapter headings and shown below. Also tables, figures and plates should be captioned and linked as above and shown on the following pages.

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1 Chapter one

Heading

1.1 Each paragraph can be numbered, but do not introduce any additional sub-level numbering. For example do not use:

1.1.1. Instead the next paragraph should be 1.2.

1.2 You can introduce subsets within a paragraph using:

- or,
- 1) or,
- a) as is most appropriate or fit for purpose.

Sub-Heading

1.3 Tables should be clear, readable and captioned with an explanation of content. Table number and title should be above the table.

Table 1 Some title

Category	Somerset Levels	Pevensy Levels	Berney Marshes
Pass (9)	1	2	7
Fail 1 (7 or 8)	6	12	11
Fail 2 (5 or 6)	11	5	2
Fail 3 (<5)	2	1	0

Table notes can be added here

1.4 If the table breaks across a page, it should be set out as below:

Table 2 Some title

Description	Means of achieving	Methods / notes	Priority
12 Test of the effectiveness of access management techniques	Research contract or PhD	Experimental manipulation of access management measures across a suite of reserves (eg NNRs or RSPB reserves). Possibly enhanced / refined and further tested through use of virtual reality	***

Table continued...

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Description	Means of achieving	Methods / notes	Priority
13 Documentation of individual access management measures on different sites	Conservationevidence.com write-ups, student projects	Before and after visitor monitoring to show effectiveness of access management measures (path surfacing, car-park closures, new paths, sign posts etc). Ad hoc as opportunities rise	*
14 Review of management of tern colonies	Research contract / student project (see also 5.2.1)	Review of the extent to which wardening, fencing, etc reduce disturbance at tern colonies. Distance people are kept away from the birds.	**
15 Effectiveness of hides / screening in reducing disturbance	Research contract / student project	Review of different designs used to reduce disturbance. Written as a best practice guide.	*

1.5 An example of a poor table can be seen below. It is small, the content is unclear and it is difficult to cross-reference the lines of figures.

Table 3 An example of a table that is difficult to interpret

No. quadrats	Parameterisation of best fitting model								All
	d	a,d	b,d	c,d	a,b,d	a,c,d	b,c,d	a,b,c,d	
3-4	15	18	24	29		5	1	5	97
5-9	2	20	35	56	4		1	6	124
10-14		3	10	33	3	1		5	55
15-19			12	19	3	2			36
20-29			1	27	5	1		2	36
30-39			1	21	3			1	26
40-49				8	6		2		16
50-99			2	31	12		8	1	54
100-199				19	17	1	8	1	46
200+				25	13		9	7	54
All	17	41	85	268	66	10	29	28	544

Non-zero nests	Parameterisation of best fitting model								All
	d	a,d	b,d	c,d	a,b,d	a,c,d	b,c,d	a,b,c,d	
2				13		2			15
3	10	21	13	7		3	2	4	60
4	6	10	33	41	3	1		11	105
5	1	7	27	30	6	1		3	75
6		3	12	177	57	3	27	10	289
All	17	41	85	268	66	10	29	28	544

2 Chapter two

Use of figures and plates

2.1 Titles and numbers for figures and plates should be below the image.

2.2 An example of a poor figure can be seen below. Text on both the figure and the legend is far too small to be read clearly.

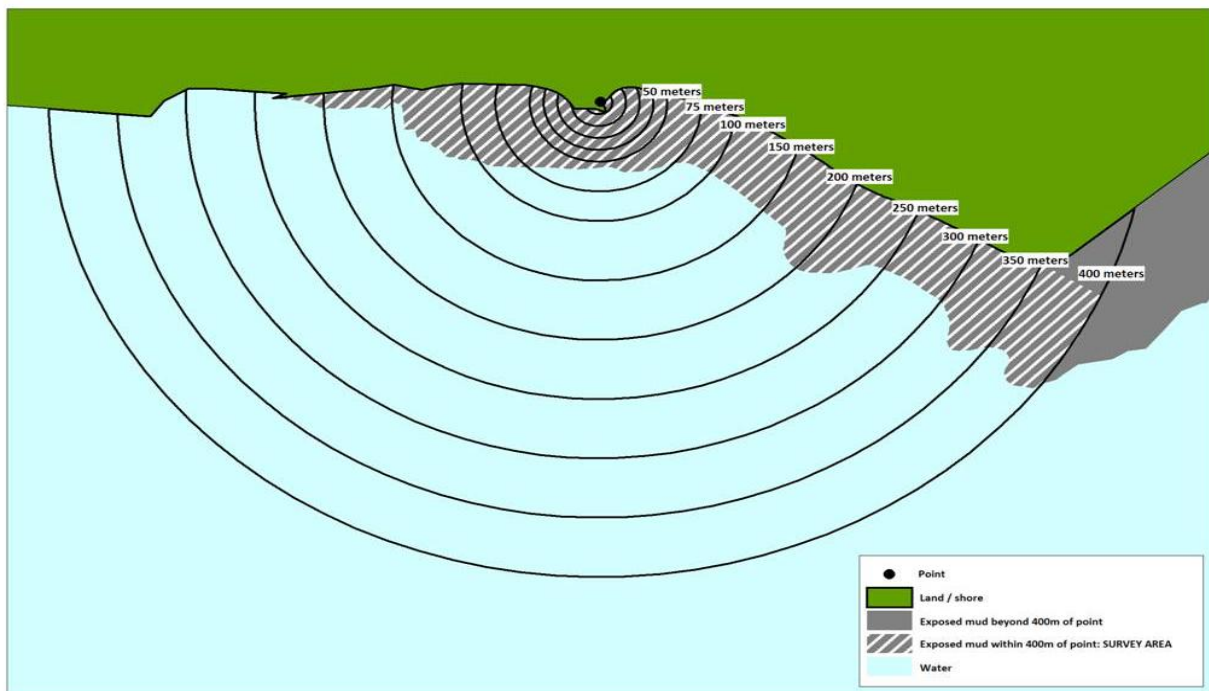


Figure 1 An example of a poor figure

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2.3 An example of a poor figure can be seen below. Even enlarged much of the text is small and, being of low resolution, will not stand further enlarging.

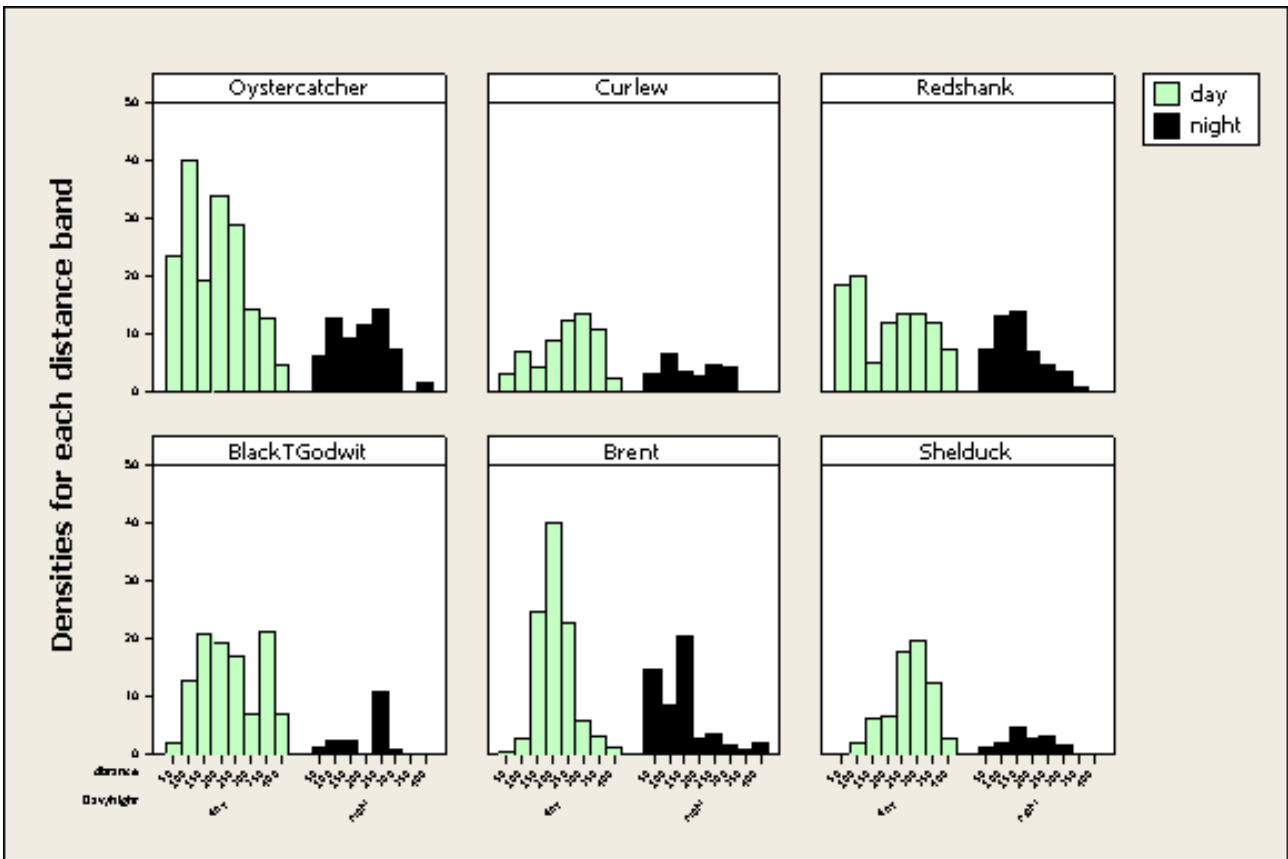


Figure 2 An example of a poor figure

2.4 An example of a poor plate can be seen below. The resolution is low (150 dpi) and the file size small (17 KB) so the image will be difficult to enlarge. Little detail is discernable at this size.



Plate 1 An example of a poor plate

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2.5 An example of a good figure can be seen below. It has a high resolution, the text is minimal and readable and it will work and convey the same information in grey/black/white.

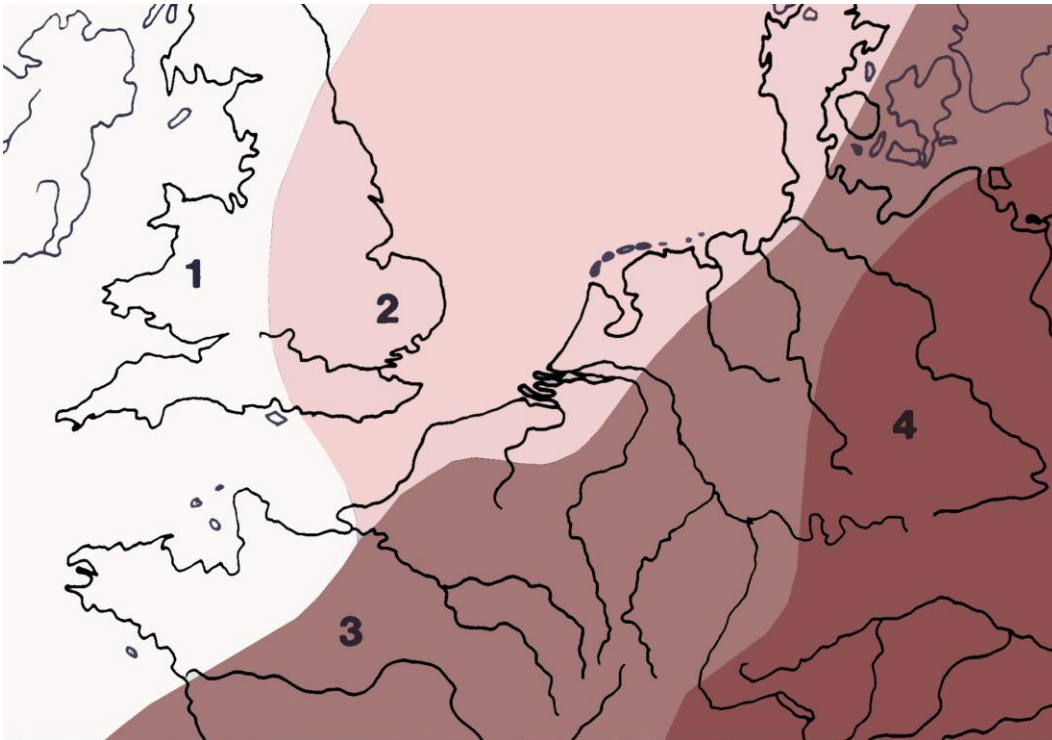


Figure 3 An example of a good figure

2.6 Example of a good figure can be seen below. The text is clear and the figure could work in black and white if required.

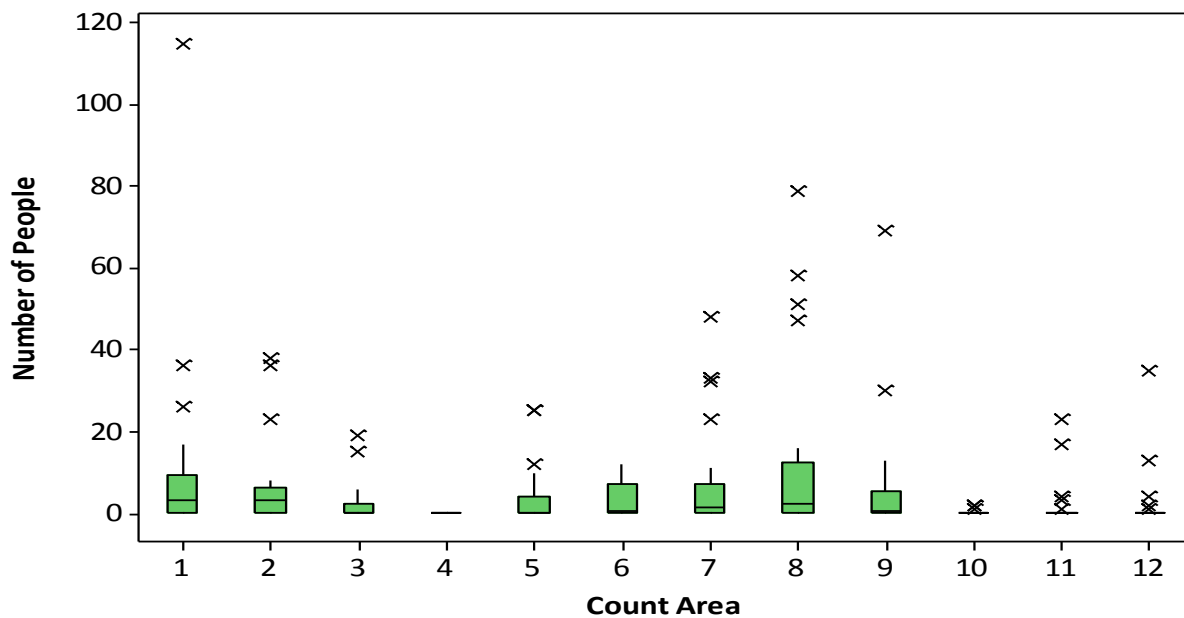


Figure 4 An example of a good figure

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2.7 An example of a good plate can be seen below. It has high resolution (300 dpi), the file size is large (386 KB) and the image is sharp and shows detail so it will not require enlarging.



Plate 2 An example of a good plate

3 Bibliography

OTHER, A.N., OTHER, A.N. & OTHER, A.N. 1999. Some Paper. *Some Journal*, 1(1), 1-999.

OTHER, A.N. and others. 2001. Some Paper. *Some Journal*, 1(1), 1-999.

OTHER, A.N., OTHER, A.N. & OTHER, A.N. 1999. Some Online Paper. *Some Journal* [online], URL: www.somewebsite.htm [Accessed January 2007].

OTHER, A.N., & OTHER, A.N. 2005. *Some Book*. Vol. I. London: Some Publisher.

OTHER, A.N., & OTHER, A.N. 1992. Some Chapter. In: OTHER, A.N., eds. *Some Book*, 1-999. London: Some Publisher.

Some online information source [online]. URL: www.somewebsite.htm [Accessed January 2007].

Appendix 1 Summary of Natural England style and grammar for technical publications

Abbreviations must be explained unless they are commonly used.

Adviser not advisor.

Information in **bullet-pointed lists** should be introduced with a colon.

Dates are written day–month–year, for example: Monday 1 January 2000.

Double quotes are used to signify speech, single quotes are used to highlight 'special' words.

eg not e.g., - preferred term '**for example**'

To **emphasise** individual words use bold type or italics rather than underlining them.

ie not i.e., - preferred term '**that is**'

After a **full stop** there is only one space before the next sentence begins.

Headings and subheadings should start with a capital letter then continue in lower-case.

Natural England not NE.

Names

- Latin names consist of a genus name followed by a species name. For example: *Galanthus nivalis*.
- If the common name and Latin name are used together there is no need to put a comma between them, and the Latin name is not placed in brackets.
- Where a Latin name is repeated, or more than one species of the same genus is mentioned, the genus name can be abbreviated.
- The common names of organisms are written in lower-case.
- Proper names must be capitalised.

References/Further information

Within text a reference should consist of the author's surname and relevant year both within brackets. Where more than one reference is cited at the same time, separate them with a semi-colon.

'and others' not 'et al'

See Section 3 above for the format of references in the bibliography.

Table A Some table caption **For demonstration purposes (see p 6)**

Figure A Some figure caption **For demonstration purposes (see p 7)**

Plate A Some plate caption **For demonstration purposes (see p 8)**