Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non Native Species Group Meeting City and Council of Swansea Civic Centre

10th April 2014

MINUTES

Attendees

Dave Thomas Welsh Government DT (WG) Nigel Ajax-Lewis NAL Wildlife Trusts Nick Bialynicki -NBB Natural Resources Birula Wales (NRW) Kathleen Carroll (by KC WG phone) DF Dan Forman Swansea University Sean Hathaway SH City and County of Swansea (CCS) Anthony Hicks ΑН WG Niall Moore (by NM GB non-native phone) species secretariat (GBNNSS) Judith Oatley JO CCS/Oakley Intertidal Gabe Wyn (by GW NRW phone) Holly York ΗY Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP)

Apologies

Colin Charman	NRW
Richard Poole	Dwr Cymru
Neville Rookes	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
Paul Stebbing	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
Chris Tucker	NRW
David Thorpe	NRW

Guests:

Lucy Cornwell, GB NNSS

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and notification of AOB (Chair)

DT extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

2. Actions and minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be published on the WBP website. Chair thanked Julian Thomas for minute taking. The majority of actions from November's meeting have now been completed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items (Actions 4, 5 & 12) or ongoing. See below:

Action 8. Jennifer Kelly to provide a draft copy of the Non-native Species Themed	Draft copy will be available August/September – for consideration at
Action Plan for the group to consider	November meeting
Action 11. All – It as suggested that a Task and Finish Group should be established to report on the INNS Programme of Action/Work Plan 2013-2015 in next June's meeting. No decision was made how and when this would be taken forward. It was agreed that everyone would relook at the Action/Work Plan before the next meeting so that it can be re-drafted to improve structure and to include "Milestones" for each activity. WG to include legislation timelines in the Work Plan	T&F Group not yet established. Work Plan to be discussed later.

Action 1. WBP (HY) to upload the Minutes from the previous meeting to the WBP website

3. NAW's Environment and Sustainability Committee Inquiry on INNS

The committee has undertaken an inquiry on how the problem of INNS is being addressed in Wales. WG has accepted all 8 recommendations and will report to the committee regularly. Exploratory chats are taking place with NRW. WG support INNS through REF projects, Nature Fund and the Marine Pathways Project. Discussion regarding what can be achieved with current resources, and what additional resource is needed.

WG welcomes the assistance of the group; particularly with recommendation 5 (writing to E&S committee on an annual basis to set out progress in combating INNS) and 6 (considers the merits of managing INNS on a river catchment basis when defining the areas for an areabased natural resource management approach.). INNS Group Work Plan and Action Audit will be useful to highlight progress.

4. Terms of Reference

ToR discussed by group and several amendments proposed including updating meeting location details and importance terms (Priority, Delivery, Advice, Supporting).

Action 3. All members to provide any further comments to HY by end of April

Action 4. HY to circulate updated document for final comments

5. Membership

Membership discussed – group noted it would be beneficial to have full details of who members represent and their specialisms to identify any gaps. Noted potential gaps of representative of National Parks, and discussion over who represents all Local Biodiversity Partnerships (Sean Hathaway?).

Action 5. HY to circulate membership list for members to complete details to enable the group to identify gaps

6. Action Audit

INNS Action Audit is currently held in word format, and available via the WBP website. The audit requires updating to provide a comprehensive picture of INNS actions across Wales, and will be useful for future committee reports. Members felt the document would be better in Excel format. A discussion regarding the move of the Action Audit to BARS took place, including the advantages of viewing spatial distribution, quantifying work and allowing summaries of work taking/taken place. Attendees agreed to trial using BARS for INNS actions, with HY to give a presentation on BARS at the next meeting.

Action 6. HY to convert word document to Excel and discuss with JO re missing actions

Action 7. HY to give presentation on BARS for action audit group

Action 8. NAL to email details on joining BARS and INNS Group

7. NNS media and communications & campaign update

Presentation by Lucy Cornwell, GB NNSS on the Non-native Species – Communications in GB.

8. Welsh Government update

The Environment Audit Committee is due to publish their report on invasive non-native species on the 16th April. NM and Helen Roy (Centre of Ecology and Hydrology) provided input. Onus for the inclusion of native EU species and species of local concern, along with looking at pathways of movement with greater co-ordination of biosecurity, border checking, prioritisation and action plans.

The GB Strategy Review has been well received since its introduction in 2008. Five years on the strategy is now being reviewed, with likelihood of ministers providing firmer recommendations in coming months. The review is expected to be released in late 2014/early 2015 although further information will be provided in coming months.

The Japanese Knotweed CABI project is in its 4th year. Results so far show little evidence of establishment and breeding which is in line with what CAPI predicted at this stage of the experiment. This is due to the licence conditions restricting the numbers of psyllid released. To confirm whether a large population has the ability to establish, breed and cause damage to the knotweed, CABI will conduct a concurrent experiment in the field using contained units and much higher population of pysllid.

Defra has banned the sale of five Invasive aquatic plant species (Water Fern, Parrot's Feather, Floating Pennywort, New Zealand Pygmy weed and Water Primrose) from 6 April 2014 in England. Unfortunately, a last minute issue has halted the ban coming into force in Wales at this time.

Action 9. EAC report on INNS to be circulated to group when available

Action 10. WG to provide clarity on timelines at June meeting

9. Work Planning

Summary of the work plan 2014/15 provided to Tracey Lovering (WBP) for presenting to Wales Biodiversity Strategy Board.

Group noted the usefulness of the work plan as a good starting point to show the key performances. Suggested amendments/updates to make more usable: Resources required, clearer distinction for drivers e.g. GB Strategy, insure it is clear who is responsible. Useful to highlight the sections using a traffic light approach to show what we can do with current workload and resources, and what is aspirational.

Wales Biodiversity Strategy (Nature Recovery Plan) due to be launched at Royal Welsh Show.

Action 11. CT to update WP and circulate as necessary

10. All Wales Mink Eradication Programme

An all-Wales collaborative programme between NRW, BASC (The British Association for Shooting & Conservation) and Wildlife Trusts to develop a mink control strategy for water vole conservation in Wales. The purpose of the strategy is to help prioritise action and resources. The document is being drafted. This work has been undertaken by Wales Mammal Biodiversity Forum, which has members from the statutory agencies, local biodiversity partnerships and NGOs. Targeted areas, linked to specific water vole areas will be focused upon.

DF raised the concern over limited Water Vole information within the programme, and the need to look at available academic research and gain more evidence base. A report published by University of Oxford highlights identifying Mink distribution based on detection of field signs can be problematic with DNA analysis highlighting false identification of mink scats. (http://lutreoladotorg.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/the-accuracy-of-scat.pdf).

Focus of mink control appears to be on the benefits of Water Vole populations, but uncertainty over the evidence supporting this, and the impact of mink eradication on other species populations such as rats, pheasants.

Group noted a potential for **evidence gaps** within this subject, and the need to capture these views in a formal way.

Action 12. DT to liaise with other group members for further discussion (E.g. David Thorpe NRW, Jean Matthews NRW, Rob Parry WTW, Lizzie Wilberforce WTSWW) and report back

11. Evidence Gaps

WBP Evidence Gaps Project launches on 30th April, at Cardiff University Sustainable Places Institute. DT and Liz Howe (NRW, Species Expert Group Chair) are leading a workshop on 'Native and INNS species associated with wet ecosystems'. Several members (DF, HY, NBB) noted their intention to attend the launch and ability to help support the workshop.

INNS Group has created a list of species priorities for INNS EGs, but questions need to be formulated. Evidence gap 'Autoecology and Management of Freshwater INNS' proposed by Tristan Hatton-Ellis circulated to group.

All members are welcomed to suggest potential INNS related Evidence Gaps. At this stage, only a title (and short description if you wish) is needed.

Action 13. HY to circulate request to all members for Evidence Gaps. All members to provide

12. Partner Updates (All)

Chair thanked partners for their updates. These are useful, particularly from those unable to attend the meeting. Updates included:

NBB provided an update on WFD 2nd Cycle 'Challenges & Choices' Consultation. Next steps will review comments via the WFD INNS T&F Group from the 14 WFD Catchment workshops to identify any proposed actions and then develop proposed actions for the Welsh River Basin Management Plans based on this information. The offers some have already made through the current consultation process to work in partnership to deliver INNS actions in Wales are warmly welcomed. NRW would welcome all similar offers along with more INNS action proposals so that these can be incorporated into the draft Plans. A full NRW update was circulated via email.

NM: Environmental Audit Committee due to publish report on INNS on 16th April (http://www.nonnativespecies.org/news/index.cfm?id=140).

Action 14. All to provide partner updates ahead of next meeting. HY will email to remind.

13. Future agenda items

Possible presentations include:

- Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) and it's use for INNS Action Audit (Holly York, WBP)
- Crayfish control (Paul Stebbing, CEFAS)
- Citizen science theme
- PhD Japanese Knotweed physiochemical non-native Petasites spp. control (Dan Jones, Swansea University).
- Marine Pathways Project update (Gabe Wyn, NRW)

14. Any other business

Jo Mullett (Knotweed Control) requested to join as a corresponding member - a potential commercial representative. DT will respond.

15. Date of future meeting and close

Date of next meeting to be arranged. Group decided on location as Aberystwyth (Welsh Gov offices)

Action 15. HY arrange date of next meeting (end of May -3^{rd} week of June).