

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non Native Species Group Meeting

Welsh Government offices, Aberystwyth

20th June 2014

Attendees

Dave Thomas	DT	Welsh Government (WG)
Nick Bialynicki - Birula	NBB	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Kathleen Carroll	KC	WG
Lucy Cornwell (by phone)	LC	GB non-native species secretariat (GBNNS)
Sean Hathaway (by phone)	SH	City and County of Swansea (CCS)
Anthony Hicks	AH	WG
Richard Poole	RP	Dwr Cymru
Gabe Wyn	GW	NRW
Holly York	HY	Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP)

Apologies

Nigel Ajax-Lewis	Wildlife Trusts
Colin Charman	NRW
Dan Forman	Swansea University
Michael McCabe	NRW
Niall Moore	GB - NNS
Jo Mullett	Knotweed Control
Judith Oakley	CCS, University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Neville Rookes	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
Paul Stebbing	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
Chris Tucker	NRW
David Thorpe	NRW

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

DT extended a warm welcome to all attendees. The planned Knotweed control presentation by Dan Jones, Swansea University has been postponed for a future better attended meeting.

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 HY for minute taking. The majority of actions from April's meeting have now been completed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items (Actions 4, 5, 7, 11 & 13) or on-going. See below:

Action 2. WG to report on progress of recommendations from the Environment and Sustainability Committee Inquiry on INNS in Wales when applicable.	Carry forward to November meeting
Action 12. All Wales Mink Eradication Programme: DT to liaise with the group members for further discussion (E.G. David Thorpe NRW, Jean Matthews NRW, Rob Parry WTW, Lizzie Wilberforce WTSWW and Mammal Group) and report back.	Ongoing. KC asked Dan Forman to produce a paper (In progress).

AH: Update for ban on the 5 Invasive aquatic plant species (Water Fern, Parrot's Feather, Floating Pennywort, New Zealand Pygmy weed and Water Primrose) – in contact with Scotland who are due to launch a consultation in the summer. Scotland is reviewing the species listed to see if any additional ones should be added.

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

3. Species Control Orders

The Infrastructure Bill was introduced in the House of Lords on 5th June 2014. The Bill can be found at: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/infrastructure.html>. The Bill makes provision for the control of invasive non-native species through species control agreements and orders and related matters. A new subsection 14 (4A) in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will provide for measures relating to species control agreements and species control orders to be contained in Schedule 9A of the Act.

Species control orders enable access to premises for species control if an agreement cannot be reached after 42 days of negotiation by an environmental authority. In exceptional circumstances, an emergency species control order will be issued without first offering a species control agreement. The environmental authorities in Wales are Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Ministers. Only Welsh Ministers can make an agreement or SCO for premises that consist of a dwelling. A code of practice will be developed (and agreed by WG & DEFRA). Compensation may be payable (e.g. knocking down door).

Legislation is in discussion in the House of Parliament. It is a draft, with hope for the bill to be in place before the next general elections.

The group indicated their support for the introduction of SCO. Communication management e.g. how SCO may be applied with examples, code of practice would be beneficial.

What do premises mean for marine and lease holders? Premises considered to be the landowner including vessels. KC to clarify bill in terms of marine and lease holders (**Action 3**)

Action 2. HY to circulate KCs summary document

Action 3. KC to clarify bill's definition of premises for marine and lease holders

4. Terms of Reference

Amendments to Terms of Reference agreed. The ToR shall be reviewed annually.

5. Membership

Membership spreadsheet circulated to group to confirm and update details. Gaps in membership engagement discussed – group noted lack of LBAPs and National Park Authorities representatives. Other potential gaps include National Trust, Severn Trent Water (suggested contact Richard Spence), Welsh Water, South East Wales Rivers Trust (Anthony Rees), Zoos in Wales representative, Network Rail, representatives from the construction industry, British Marina Federation.

Potential to revise meeting structure with 'themed' sessions e.g. specific species groups, key topics, field meetings. Group members not attending could transfer to corresponding members.

Action 4. HY/DT to investigate who can represent LBAPS and NPAs and send letter of invitation. HY draft letter. HY review past attendees/organisations to see which ones have dropped off radar.

6. Action Audit: Use of BARS presentation (Holly York)

Introduction to BARS provided to group. BARS includes relevant actions and objectives relating to INNS e.g. Research – to better understand the impact of non-native and/or invasive species, Species Management – to control invasive or other non-native species, Education/awareness raising, Survey/monitoring, etc.

The Action Audit has been created as a project (link below).

Comparison of word action audit against BARS action audit presented and discussed:

- BARS also enables us to record activity status (e.g. underway, aspirational, completed), progress of the activity, to record location (mapping the area of project/activity) and to record the extent (instances, size of area).
- BARS enable us to report on activity using spatial mapping and defined filterable attributes. For example 'All species management actions to 'control invasive or other non-native species' – for Wales or a specific location, a specific species, at a specific

time. It gives us the ability to look at distribution of activity and generate statistical summaries.

However, BARS does not record costs. Users need to be aware of what results show – it is not a species distribution map and can reflect uptake of schemes, mapping effort.

Group supports use of BARS for recording INNS activities.

What next? Entering old activities on BARS, link all relevant actions on BARS to Action Audit project, Encouraging/Engaging with potential users to record INNS on BARS (Action Audit is on our work plan), Specific instructions for entering activity and reporting for INNS and provide report & BARS links prior to meetings. **(Action 5, 6 & 7).**

Links:

BARS: <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk>

WBP INNS Group: <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/project/show/27225>

WBP INNS Group's Action Audit: <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/project/show/37645>

Help & Guidance: <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/help> or contact Holly York for training.

Action 5. HY enter old activities on BARS where possible & link all relevant actions to the Action Audit 'project'

Action 6. HY encourage members (& other potential users) to record INNS activities on BARS. ALL Investigate use of BARS for organisations

Action 7. HY provide BARS report & links as Action Audit for next meeting

7. Welsh Government Update

INNS Priorities for DT & team cover 3 main areas of work;

1. Response to Environment & Sustainability Committee
2. GB Strategy
3. Implementation aspects of EU IAS Regulations

Management and support of WBP INNS Group by WG will continue. Lead policy of INNS day-day by DT, AH & KC.

Group welcomes other members to become more active and noted the importance of the WBP INNS group.

INNS update within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill 2014 (UK Act):

“A community protection notice may require the control or removal from premises occupied by a body or individual of a plant of the following description -

- (a) Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica),*
- (b) Himalayan Balsam (Impatiens glandulifera),*
- (c) a plant specified in an order made by the Secretary of State.”*

If Japanese Knotweed is a nuisance a notice can be put on the owner for it to be removed, particularly when it is encroaching on neighbouring properties. This is being tested through case law.

8. Work Planning

Chair welcomed members' comments on the work plan. Group noted the need to make the work plan more user friendly and to clearly show activities of the work plan which are underway.

Suggestions/Comments include:

- Tick box if 'activities' are recorded on BARS (or other sources)
- Should they be seen as 'activities' or 'objectives'?
- Limited resources – a lot in the work plan. Some 'activities' are projects – identify activities which contribute to these sections to create manageable chunks, then review to identify lead.
- Add additional comments fields – what we already do (things that we do) and what needs doing/aspiring to do? NRW trial adding 1. Partner contributions and 2. Comments to work plan (**Action 8**).
- Incorporate Local Biodiversity Action Plans with Invasive Species mentioned. Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership recently produced an Invasive Non-Native Species Action Plan (<http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/project/show/37479>).
- Update Research section – contact academic representatives on group for input (**Action 9**).

Action 8. NRW (NB-B) to trial and send HY updated work plan using the additional fields – partner contributions (what we do) and comments

Action 9. HY contact academic representatives on group for input on research section

9. Evidence Gaps

Feedback from WBP Evidence Gaps Launch on 30th April provided to members. See WBP Evidence Gaps Project Launch workshop notes for further details. A series of actions were made following discussions at the launch. Action 2 to note – 'Further work is needed by INNS Group to develop and communicate the range of INNS Evidence Gaps that need addressing, from simple small scale surveys to complex studies suited to post doc research.' Use as a sign post for academics to use for dissertation titles, including what we would be expected.

New Evidence Gap 'What are the distributions and status of non-native terrestrial molluscs in Wales?' by Ben Rowson, National Museum Wales.

Action 10. HY to circulate EG's launch document, highlighting INNS Actions

10. Partner updates (All)

GB NNSS (LC): The annual stakeholder forum was held in York on 22nd May. The event was well attended. The strategy review was a topic discussed. The NNNS e-learning has been released. This provides an introduction to non-native and invasive non-native species and guidance on identification and reporting (<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/elearning/>).

NRW (NB-B) (See update document for full details): Highlights:

- Outstanding funding bid for eradicating Top Mouth Gudgeon in SW-Wales. NRW are looking at other funding opportunities to support this work.
- A new invasive crab - Asian Shore Crab has been found at Aberthaw power station outfall. NRW have produced a fact-sheet and will survey in August with Heritage Coast Staff. The key message is good biosecurity.
- The Marine Pathways project is going well with 3 NRW staff and 1 Bangor University staff on CEFAS cruise.
- Rhododendron sub group – CT has requested proposals for membership from all Ecosystem Group Chairs. This will be taken forward with WBP Woodland Ecosystem Group.
- The Wales Deer Action Plan Group met in January. Survey work has shown a population of Sika in West Wales. Eradication is difficult due to land ownership and consents to cull. The group will revise the action plan (with SCO a possible consideration).
- INNS strategy and policy advice formally recognised as a topic within Biodiversity and Fisheries, led by Hazel Drewett.
- NRW have developed and submitted two ‘Expressions of Interest’ proposals to WG’s Small Business Research Initiative – one seeking innovative control solutions for INNS such as Signal Crayfish and Chinese mitten crab, and the other is seeking innovative solutions to improve soil health to increase the regeneration of natural species.

NRW (GW): SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) have published Marine bio-security planning guidance (<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1294630.pdf>). The invasive non-native brown seaweed Japanese Kelp Wakamine (*Undaria pinnatifida*) has been found at Holyhead Marina.

Knotweed Control (JM – read by HY): Jo Mullett has joined the INNS group. Jo works on Japanese Knotweed in domestic urban settings, land, garden development sites, etc. through her company Knotweed Control and is also one of the contractors involved in the Cotoneaster control on the South Gower Coast. This is a joint REF project with the National Trust, Plantlife, WTSWW and the City and County of Swansea. Jo also undertakes training for WTSWW (Invasive Species on 2nd Aug at Tondy) through her other business About Wild Wales. Jo also does biodiversity schools work in Neath and Port Talbot funded through their NRW grant and for the City and County of Swansea for their RDP Countryside Connections Festival.

City and County of Swansea (SH): Himalayan pulling taken place, including finding one plant in Swansea Bay arena – an unusual place to appear. Proposed lagoon/barrage in Swansea Bay – CCS has requested prevention measures for INNS during construction of lagoon wall. NRW (GW) has also requested a full biosecurity plan is put in place.

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (RP): Secured up to £100,000 for a 5 year funding period for INNS management - £60,000 for practical work, £20,000 for education/awareness work and £20,000 for grant aid to 3rd parties working on INNS. Project to roll out in March 2015. Aim to record on BARS. Possibility of receiving tax relief to control Japanese Knotweed.

Action 11. RP to provide more information on tax relief to control Japanese Knotweed when available

Action 12. All to provide partner updates ahead of next meeting. HY to email reminder

11. Future Agenda Items

Knotweed control presentation by Dan Jones, Swansea University (postponed today).

Action 13. HY to request agenda items when circulating minutes and action points

12. Any other business

GW: The European funded programme, LIFE has its latest call for Nature & Biodiversity projects. These can be for a specific site or Wales wide and include non-native species e.g. prevention, early warning, awareness, etc. The fund runs until 2017, with an October deadline for submitting ideas. The funding requires 25% match funding. Further details here:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/life2014/index.htm>.

GW: Nature Fund: Pack came through last week. Potential recipients can 'bid' from now until November. INNS is seen as a cross cutting theme within the 7 areas. Workshops are running to promote partnership and collaborative working.

SH: Running an IEEM course on Japanese Knotweed and Invasive Flora this year.

13. Close

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Action 14. HY to arrange date of next meeting.