

## Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non-native Species Group

Welsh Government offices, Aberystwyth

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

Meeting minutes – draft

**Attendance:** Leasa Fielding (Welsh Government), Holly York (WBP), Nigel Ajax-Lewis (Wildlife Trusts, WEL), Richard Poole (Dwr Cymru), Kathleen Carroll (WG), Theresa Kudelska (NRW), Jennie Jones (NRW), Dusi Thomas (Dwr Cymru), Lyn Byrne (Dee INNS project) **Dial-in:** Sean Hathaway (City and County of Swansea), Judith Oakley (CCS), Anthony Hicks (WG), Robert Smith (Public Health Wales), Lucy Cornwell (GB NNSS), Sharon Davies (WG)

**Apologies:** Bradley Welch (BBNPA), David Hall (Cardiff Harbour Authority), David Thorpe (NRW), Chris Tucker (NRW), Tracey King (Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association), Becky Phillips (JNCC), Dan Jones (Swansea University), Neville Rookes (WLGA), Jo Mullett (Knotweed Control), Emma Barton (RYA), Olaf Booy (GB NNSS), Niall Moore (GB NNSS)

### 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

LF (Chair) welcomed attendees.

### 2. Matters arising and actions from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will be published on the WBP website.

<b>ACTION 1: HY</b> to upload the minutes from the previous meeting onto the WBP website
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Most actions are complete (1, 2, 3, 5, 7-11) or agenda items (4, 6). Updates included:

Action 2: Investigate INNS data and biosecurity policies for CIEEM best practice – pick up through the communications plan.

Action 3: Terms of Reference updated and circulated. Action 5: Work plan updated and circulated.

Action 6: Priority Species for Action in Wales public facing document – on hold until 6-month review complete.

Action 7: Consultation on the strategy for Wild Deer management in Wales now closed. The Action Plan for Wild Deer Management in Wales 2017 – 2022 has been produced - <http://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/uploads/docs/45.pdf>

Action 8: OB circulated further information on the purple pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) – risk assessment is available [here](#). There are no known populations within Wales. The purple pitcher plant is present at Fenns and Whixhall SAC (situated on the Wales-England border) and believed to be on the England side only. It will be mapped and eradicated as part of the EU funded Bog LIFE project taking place on site

Action 10: LF contacted the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMMAG) to discuss biosecurity messages at the Volvo Ocean Race event – this is an agenda item at the next WMMAG meeting.

### 3. Communications plan

LF drafted a INNS group communications plan (Paper 3). The plan includes key information from the GB NNSS communications plan, Wales specific information and key messages. The objective of the plan is to provide consistent and straightforward messages to convey to a broad audience. Members welcomed the communications plan. Key discussion points:

- Audience – consider including additional audiences such as education (school level), forestry under landowner organisations, outdoor sports/recreation (incl. walkers), fisheries, tree & plant health, water users (freshwater and marine)
- ALL to share best practice examples/links to LF e.g. Dee INNS project has a dog walking guidance document
- Messaging aims 4 to include additional examples e.g. responsible collection of waste material when cleaning boats.
- NRW has developed a set of key messages for all stakeholders, relevant ones are listed in the document. Amend cost message – UK economy is £1.8 billion, GB economy is £1.7 billion
- The plan highlights the CCD materials available – highlight those available in Welsh

**ACTION 2: ALL** to provide further comments on the communications plan to **LF**

### 4. Invasive Species Week

Invasive Species Week will take place on **23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> March**. Now is an opportune time to begin planning potential events. 340 organisations were involved in the week last year. Contact Lucy Cornwell if you plan to hold an event. Members discussed potential to host an event with the new Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn AM.

Each day will be themed. UPDATE: themes as follows – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> Launch of Invasive Species Week, Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Ornamental plants, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Hitchhikers, Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Exotic pets, Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> Get involved/Local Action Groups.

The small foldout INNS booklet is particularly useful – members welcomed more stock.

**ACTION 3: LF and KC** to look at a print run of the small foldout INNS booklet

### 5. Group page on GB NNSS website

The GB NNSS website includes a page on the Wales INNS group, and likewise for Scotland and England groups. The Wales page is now out of date, and as such HY drafted an update (Paper 5). The format and content compliments the Scotland and England pages. Key discussion points:

- Additional Wales specific weblinks would be useful, particularly covering marine – suggestions incl. Public Health Wales, MBA, MCS, Marlin, Marine Pathways
- INNS definition discussed and agreed
- Highlight group membership – produce a document listing all member organisations and place on the WBP website and place a link to it on GB NNSS webpage

The group page on the WBP website, which contains in depth information and group documents remains, but will also undergo an update in consultation with the group

**ACTION 4: HY** to incorporate comments and pass to GB NNSS to update the website page. Produce a document listing all members and place on the WBP website

## 6. Newsletter

Further to discussions at the last meeting, the group are looking at producing an INNS group newsletter. The newsletter, a two page PDF will be trialled on a 3 times a year basis. It will include news, legislative and policy updates, events including training courses, biosecurity information, partner projects, funding updates, species alerts, research outcomes and more. A call for articles to group members will be held.

<b>ACTION 5: HY</b> to run call for articles and produce first INNS Group newsletter
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## 7. Welsh water presentation, followed by Q&A and discussion

Dusi Thomas, Welsh Water provided a presentation on DCWW's INNS actions to date, followed by a discussion (presentation circulated with papers). Key points:

- Welsh Water, like all water companies, work to a 5-year cycle. Currently in AMP6 (Asset Management Plan) 2015-2020. Heading towards AMP7 2020-2025. AMP7 provides an opportunity to incorporate INNS actions into business planning. Other drivers include legislative changes e.g. Infrastructure Act 2015, EU IAS Regulations and Environment (Wales) Act
- Welsh Water has produced a [biodiversity duty plan](#), setting out how they propose to comply to the Section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act.
- Key actions and outputs during AMP6 have included:
  - [UK Water Industry Research on INNS](#)
  - Education and awareness raising – communications plan, information for staff produced e.g. INNS fact sheets, identification guide, INNS of the month, reporting forms
  - Site specific actions based on risks, CCD campaign, washing facilities,
  - INNS funding scheme for third sector – supporting the delivery on the ground relevant to DCWW. Provided funding to the Dee INNS project led by North Wales Wildlife Trust, Weed eradication led by Wye & Usk Foundation
  - Working with other water companies – Water UK Industry Forum, South West Water have appointed the first dedicated INNS officer.
- DCWW's next steps – AMP7 planning provides opportunities, risk assessment/pathway analysis of assets, biological control trial, partnership projects, INNS fund.

General group discussion, particularly around co-ordinating action, evidence, prioritising efforts and resources. This included:

- Welsh Waters' INNS funding scheme – anyone with INNS projects, linked to DCWW, are welcome to have discussions now.
- Co-ordinating and resourcing INNS action in Wales? Dedicated INNS RAPID Life project taking place in England. Several potential Life projects in Wales which include some INNS action. Group could encourage partnership projects and share opportunities for funding. Funding opportunities can be included on the INNS Newsletter. Priority Species for Action in Wales list can be used to encourage action on priority INNS.
- INNS species and action reporting:
  - Useful to analyse INNS distribution to identify hot spots and identify gaps to target/encourage recording and help direct action
  - INNS species records distribution maps:
    - NRW are producing internal GIS INNS layer

- [NBN Atlas Wales](#) has been launched – users can view INNS species records, distribution maps and do some analysis in its spatial portal. Priority Species for Action in Wales and other INNS designates are listed on the Atlas.
- [Aderyn](#) provides access to wildlife sightings in Wales held by the LERCs
- Dee INNS project uses a [mapper](#) created by Cofnod to show species presence and to record if species are unmanaged, under management or eradicated. There is potential to extend this further
  - A clear data flow pathway document would be useful
- o Reporting on INNS action e.g. management:
  - Group previously utilised the Biodiversity Action Reporting System to record and report on INNS action on the ground. Unfortunately, the system recently closed. Work is underway on establishing alternative mechanisms, most likely with the development of an application on the NBN Atlas. Welsh Government currently sends out an annual request for information on INNS action.
  - Mapper used by Dee INNS project includes the ability to note species control work.

Members noted it would be useful to discuss the reporting of INNS sightings and INNS action, and the mechanisms to do so in more detail. As such, the next meeting is to be focused on evidence.

## 8. Mapping INNS distribution in Wales opportunities

This item was covered in item 7 discussions.

## 9. Priority Species for Action in Wales – 6-month review

The Priority Species for Action in Wales list was reviewed in March 2017, and as such is due it's 6-month review. The list has been reviewed by NRW, WG, WBP and incorporates previous group members' comments (see Paper 8). The review has included:

- Hyperlinking to further information e.g. legislative drivers
- NRW have suggested several additional species to be included – NRW have been gathering and interpreting information on INNS distribution in Wales, and running internal workshops with various work areas across NRW, particularly in relation to Area Statements of which several species have been identified as priorities.
- Suggested additional species:
  - o *Myriophyllum heterophyllum* (Broadleaf watermilfoil) in Cat 1
  - o *Azolla filiculoides* (Water fern) in Cat 3
  - o *Cotoneaster* spp. in Cat 3
  - o *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand pigmyweed) in cat 3
  - o *Neovision vision* (American mink) in cat 3
  - o *Picea sitchensis* (Sitka spruce) in cat 3 – *discussion on whether and if so how to include Sitka Spruce – a suggestion based on its impact on peatland bog habitats and protected sites. It is not a priority to removal on all sites.*
  - o *Prunus laurocerasus* (Cherry laurel) in cat 3
- Several species have been moved categories: Purple pitcher plant from Cat 2 to Cat 1, Asian Clam from Cat 1 to 2.
- WG Marine are considering whether marine should be included within this list, or separate and linked to. SD will look at further.

- Discussion on including additional information – can add a rapid response/management control column e.g. biosecurity, management, communications, links to species risk assessments, contingency plans. Hyperlink the species to the GB portal.
- Change from six month to annual review.
- Mention review outcomes in newsletter, and look at producing the public facing priority species for action list in Wales once review is complete.

**ACTION 6: HY and LF** to facilitate completion of Priority Species for Action in Wales 6-month review, including further consideration on Sitka Spruce (LF to contact forestry colleagues) and positioning of marine species (SD).

## 10. Asian hornet update

Confirmed sighting of Asian hornets at an apiary near Woolacombe, Devon in September. Defra, APHA and Bee inspectors implemented the Asian hornet contingency plan with the Asian hornets found and successful eradicated (nest found in a hedgerow). DNA analysis is taking place to ascertain if the Asian hornets are related to those found previously in Tetbury – preliminary results suggest they are not particularly similar. No Asian hornets have been sighted since the nest was eradicated.

## 11. Local Action Groups

An action within our group work plan to identify, encourage and support Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Wales. First step is to identify current LAGs and potential LAGs in Wales. Local Action Groups are a group or project focussed on reducing the risks and impacts associated with INNS in a locality. The GB NNSS supports the work of LAGs, including an annual workshop and a toolkit of resources – LAG’s can sign up and be listed on the GB NNSS website (<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?pageid=382>). Members discussed the LAG’s:

- Dee INNS Project is a LAG & umbrella to two smaller LAGs (LB working with GB NNSS for inclusion on the list on GB NNSS website)
- Potential LAGs – suggestions included Anglesey INNS work, Alyn and Chwiler Landscape Project, Stitch in time, Gwent Living Levels, Himalayan Balsam on the Ystwyth INNS free wards?
- Local groups may be qualifying as a LAG but not aware. Need to raise awareness and encourage local groups to register with GB NNSS. Need to generate list of all groups undertaking action on INNS, and make contact.
- Useful to map local groups – possibly on the WBP website.

**ACTION 7: HY and LF** generate a list of potential LAGs and contact them with LAG information. **ALL** to provide suggestions.

## 12. Partner updates

Updates from partners included, but not limited to:

Wildlife Trusts (NA-L)	Continued grey squirrel management, with the population of red squirrels expanding. The amount of Himalayan balsam control is reducing as a result of past control work undertaken.
Dee INNS Project (LB)	Practical work closing for the season, with over 2000 hours of control work carried out, plus volunteer time. Expression of interest accepted

	under the SMS process.
Wales Biodiversity Partnership (HY)	WBP Evidence Gaps project is being refreshed, and a workshop will be held on Ecosystem Resilience in 2018. Further details will be provided to the group as the project refresh progresses. No date has been set for the WBP conference yet. If it takes place before end of financial year, opportunities to link to Invasive Species Week. A refresh of the WBP website will take place – a short survey is being held. HY circulated link and thanked members for completing the survey. The WBP INNS group page will be updated; this will be done in consultation with the group.
City and County of Swansea (SH)	Receiving funding from the Welsh Housing Quality Standard to undertake knotweed control in areas of Swansea e.g. council land, social housing (as part of wider improvements to the home). Could this be an opportunity for other Local Authorities and WG?
Welsh Government (SD, LF, AH, KC)	<p>The marine plan consultation will be out soon and includes a proposed policy for INNS. A series of stakeholder events will be held. (now available (7 Dec to 29 March 2018)  <a href="https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/draft-welsh-national-marine-plan?lang=en">https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/draft-welsh-national-marine-plan?lang=en</a>)</p> <p>Drafting proposals for enforcement of new regulations – a consultation will take place and circulated to group when open. (now available (9 Jan – 3 April 2018)  <a href="https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/tackling-invasive-non-native-species-new-enforcement-regime">https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/tackling-invasive-non-native-species-new-enforcement-regime</a></p> <p>Grey squirrel management action plan consultation is open (until 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2018) – link <a href="https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/draft-grey-squirrel-management-action-plan-wales">https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/draft-grey-squirrel-management-action-plan-wales</a></p> <p>Considering producing a Japanese Knotweed leaflet for community groups, landholders, etc. NRW has a useful section on <a href="#">website</a> on JK. New strategies for psyllid establishment, with an autumn release planned – such as rearing from outdoor winter adults, cutting JK stands for different stages of growth. Small evidence of overwintering seen, with highest occurrence of eggs at the Swansea site. Himalayan balsam showing signs of rust infection in trials.</p>
Natural Resources Wales (JJ, TK)	Work highlights include: undertaken an internal biosecurity audit; completed an analysis on SoNaRR and provided recommendations; working on INNS evidence statements for Area Statements; inputting on new farming guidance; continued INNS communications e.g. distributing leaflets, CCD marine and angler signs (without boat); working with National Museum Wales to potential create a Welsh INNS collection; creating an internal GIS INNS layer. The INNS programme will be coming to an end in December, with Theresa returning to previous NRW post and Jennie continuing until March (now until March 2019).
Public Health Wales (RS)	Surveillance system in place with a network of traps laid around the South and West England for native mosquitos and in all 4 countries for invasive mosquitos. Plans to publish a UK paper on UK vector surveillance.

**ACTION 8: LF** to investigate opportunities for funding Japanese Knotweed control through the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, as successful by CCS.

### **13. Any other business**

**Management of Ship's ballast water and sediments (BWMC)** – this international convention came into force on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Background information on the BWMC was circulated, having been provided by Anais Rey, Aquainvad-ED PhD student. The regulations include a requirement for most large ships (e.g. large cargo, cruise ships) travelling in international waters to produce and implement a Ballast Water Management Plan and keep a Ballast Water Record Book. It is a reserved matter for the UK Government.

### **14. Future agenda items and date of next meeting**

Three meetings to be held in 2018 – around early 2018, August and November. Meetings can be themed to encourage additional member attendance. Future summer meeting could include a field visit, potentially to visit the Dee INNS project, with meeting at WG offices in Llandudno Junction.

The next meeting is to be held in early 2018 on the theme of evidence, data and mapping.

<b>ACTION 9: HY</b> to arrange the next meeting
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