

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non Native Species Group Meeting

Ladywell House, Newtown

27th November 2013

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees

Dave Thomas	DT	WG
Richard Poole	RP	Dwr Cymru
Kathleen Carroll	KC	WG
Julian Thomas	JT	WG
Neville Rookes	NR	WLGA
Nick Bialynicki - Birula	NBB	NRW
Lizzie Wilberforce	LW	Wildlife Trust
Niall Moore	NM	GB - NNSS
Colin Charman (by phone)	CC	NRW
Chris Tucker (by phone)	CT	NRW
Gabe Wyn	GW	NRW

Apologies

Dan Forman	Swansea University
Nigel Ajax-Lewis	Wildlife Trust
Sean Hathaway	SCC
Jo Hughes	NRW
Paul Stebbing	CEFAS
Judith Oakley	Oakley Intertidal
Sarah Bird	Chester Zoo
Mike Morris	Severn Rivers Trust
Dave Thorpe	NRW
Matthew Ellis	NRW
Anthony Hicks	WG

Guests:

Tamsin Brown, Welsh Government

Jennifer Kelly, Natural Resources Wales

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and notification of AOB items (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 and would be published on the WBP website by Welsh Government. The majority of actions from June's meeting have now been completed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items or on-going. See below:

Action 2 - All to compare results of ADAS study with prioritisation work to enable worked examples, using the risk management tool developed, to be provided to Welsh Government."	Progress
Action 13 – All to consider where there is a potential to publicise the WBP Evidence Gaps.	To be discussed later.
Action 17 CT and MMcC to ensure Rhododendron sub-group meets in advance of the next meeting in November and provide feedback at the meeting) be carried forward to our February 2014 meeting.	CT will contact each Ecosystem group chair to get names for members interested in joining a group and then seek to arrange a meeting to take the action forward.

Action 1 – Welsh Government to upload the Minutes from the previous meeting to the WBP website.
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3. EU/UK/GB Updates (GB NNS Secretariat and NRW)

EU/UK

NM provided an overview. The UK Government was considering its response to an EC proposal for a Regulation published 9 September 2013 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. At present, the proposal suggested one level of obligations in relation to a maximum of 50

species of Union concern that are not native to any part of the EU, and lesser obligations in relation to all other invasive species including species native in at least one Member State but invasive elsewhere. Three working groups have been set up in the UK to consider technical, stakeholder and policy issues.

GB

NM updated Members on the key issues currently being considered by the GB NNS Programme Board, which met on 29 October 2013, including invasive species action plans for crayfish, floating pennywort, sacred ibis and Indian house crow.

GB review - CC provided feedback on the DEFRA-led workshops which focussed on the prevention and awareness of INNS.

Action 2. CC to circulate updates following the two INNS GB strategy review workshops held at Defra on prevention and awareness of INNS.

Action 3. NM to circulate the guide to EU legislation which Trevor Salmon (Defra) produced regarding the proposed EU IAS Regulation.

Action 4. DT to arrange meeting with Craig Lee (Defra) to discuss how INNS work in Wales can be incorporated into the review of the INNS GB strategy. Any comments from members to DT by 15th January.

4. WBP Conference INNS Workshop

NBB provided an overview of the workshop “INNS – the darker side of connectivity” hosted by NRW and WG at the Wales Biodiversity Conference on 18 September 2013. The workshop was well attended with marine, freshwater and terrestrial issues covered. Delegates were most concerned with raising the awareness of INNS. People are very keen to do more and there is a lot of public awareness. Positive feedback had been received from stakeholders.

5. WBP Ecosystem and Species Expert Group Chairs

DT reported that he attended the WBP Ecosystem and Species Expert Group Chairs meeting on 28 October 2013 where he updated Chairs on the proposed EU IAS Regulation.

The WBP Steering Group had been replaced with a Strategy Board which would assume the majority of the former Steering Group’s terms of reference. Membership of the Strategy Group and WBP Group Chairs would be amended, where appropriate, to ensure inclusion of organisations previously represented on the Steering Group. WBP Group Chairs may therefore include representation from a Chair of a Local/Regional Biodiversity Network/Partnership/Forum to ensure local connections are retained.

Action 5. Revised membership and terms of reference to be considered at the Working Group's February 2014 meeting.

Following the State of Nature Report (wildlife "at crisis point" in Wales) the Minister for Natural Resources and Food made an announcement at the Royal Welsh Show that a £6m fund would be available to support nature projects. Chairs agreed that Ecosystem and Species Expert Groups should provide a representative at Welsh Government workshops to engage, support and enable local biodiversity groups to develop concepts and ideas to submit to the fund. As the workshops provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their thinking with others and to explore thematic or spatial synergies, potential partnerships and deliverability, Members agreed that the INNS Working Group should also engage with the process. Discussion followed regarding the criteria and which schemes would receive support. Workshops to discuss the allocation of these funds have been arranged in Merthyr, Cardiff, Aberystwyth and Llandudno. Consideration was given on how the group could feed and input ideas.

Action 6. DT to represent INNS Working Group at Welsh Government Nature Funding Workshop to gather information about the £6m Nature funding announced by the Minister for NRF at the Royal Welsh Show.

6. Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Chair welcomed Tamsin Brown to the meeting who provided background information on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the aim of which is to put in place measures to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status in Europe's seas by 2020. Members were invited to complete the programme of measures matrix for Descriptor 2 and provide feedback.

Action 7. Tamsin Brown to circulate finalised version of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive's programme of measures matrix.

7. Life Natura 2000

Chair welcomed Jennifer Kelly to the meeting who presented an introduction to the Life Natura 2000 Programme for Wales. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of an overlap with other schemes, and at what stage stakeholders would be informed. Consideration was given to the possibility of linking the MSFD, Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Life Natura 2000 projects to ensure that the actions are the same.

Action 8. JK to provide a draft copy of the Non-native Species Themed Action Plan for the group to consider.

8. Water Framework Directive 2nd Cycle Planning

NBB provided an overview of the 2nd Cycle River Basin Management Plan for 2015 - 2021 and the forthcoming consultation (from July 2014). NRW's ambition for Wales' water bodies is to achieve 50% "Good" status by 2015 and deliver objectives for Natura 2000, Bathing Water and other protected sites. WFD 2nd Cycle River Basin Management Plans are a key opportunity to identify priority INNS actions that need delivering and NBB encouraged Members to fully engage with the process. The Working Group should support INNS input to the Consultation process as it develops, to help secure appropriate actions within the statutory River Basin Management Plans.

Action 9. NBB to forward links and papers regarding the Water Framework Directive 2nd Cycle Planning.

9. REF Project Update

NM updated Members. 97 applications received, 13 INNS related. 3 INNS Projects (Dee Estuary, Welsh Marinas and the Gower Limestone Coast) have been approved.

Action 10. CT to circulate link to the REF Project Update.

10. INNS Programme of Action / Work Plan 2013-2015

DT commended Alys Morris for developing the WBP INNS Group Work Plan as a "live" document and invited Members to populate the work plan in respect of each of the activities listed (and to suggest other activities). Discussion followed on what level of information / detail needed to be recorded on the Work Plan. Consideration was given to adding the following: rapid response mechanism, other organisations and lead officials to be identified, input MFSD, Natura 2000 and WFD, sub groups, timeline under legislation and communications. It was suggested that a Task and Finish Group should be established.

It was agreed that Communications would be fundamental in delivering key INNS messages.

NBB is developing education material on INNS for youth groups such as the Scouts.

Action 11. All - It was 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.. It was agreed that everyone would look at the Work Plan before the next meeting so that it can be re-drafted to improve structure and to include "Milestones" etc for each activity. Welsh Government to include legislation timelines in the Work Plan.

Action 12. NM and Lucy Cornwell, GBNNS, to arrange a session for the February 2014 meeting on how Media and Communication are fundamental to driving messages concerning INNS.

Action 13. All - by 13 December, provide appropriate INNS issues for DT and his Deputy Director to raise with senior NRW colleagues.

Action 14. CT to prepare an action response plan regarding chipmunks by end January.

Action 15. All – contact NBB if you are aware of any schemes which produce educational material on INNS.

11. INNS Evidence Gaps

The Research Project Proposals provide opportunities for the UK research community to meet priority evidence gaps raised by the environmental sector in Wales.

The Working Group needs to consider comments provided against each INNS evidence gap. For INNS, we have listed our priority species but need to identify the specific issue(s) needing to be addressed. For example, where is the problem; is the INNS spreading; what ecological damage is being caused; how quickly is the INNS breeding; where are the sites that need protecting etc? The Working Group also needs to formulate questions and provide project specifications, through Research Project Proposals, identifying which are "High", "Medium" or "Low" priority. The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2014- 2020 is currently being drafted and provides an opportunity for including awareness and actions regarding INNS.

Action 16. GW to circulate British and Irish Council research list on INNS Evidence Gaps to all members.

Action 17. All having regard to the WBP Evidence Gaps Project, comment on the listed activities on the evidence sheet, by 31 January.

12. Partner Updates

Members provided updates on recent INNS work which included: Carpet Sea Squirt in Holyhead marina, Japanese Knotweed in Swansea, Himalayan Balsam, Grey Squirrel, Zebra Mussels, Canada Geese, Cray Fish and Water Primrose.

Action 18. All to provide partner updates ahead of the next meeting.

13. Items of Business for 2014 meetings

Any items of business for 2014 to be submitted to DT by 31 January.

14. Any other business

None.

15. Dates of future meetings

- 26 February 2014 Tan y Bwlch Room, Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth.
- 25 June 2014 Dyfi Room, Welsh Government, Ladywell House, Newtown.
- 26 November 2014 Dyfi Room, Welsh Government, Ladywell House, Newtown.