

WBP Invasive Non Native Species Group Meeting

Swansea Civic Centre

26th November 2012: 19th Meeting

MINUTES

Attendees

Dave Thomas	DT	WG
Alys Edwards	AE	WBP
Olaf Booy	OB	GBNNSS
Jo Hughes	JH	CCW
Nick Birula	NB	EAW
Colin Charman	CC	CCW
Lizzie Wilberforce	LW	WTSWW/WTW
Matthew Ellis	ME	CCW
Judith Oakley	JO	Oakley Intertidal
Sean Hathaway	SH	Swansea City Council
Ben Wray	BW	CCW
Anthony Hicks	AH	WG
John Lambert	JL	Afonydd Cymru
Neville Rookes		WLGA
Paul Stebbing	PS	Cefas
Lyn Burn	LB	NWWT

Apologies

Nigel Ajax-Lewis	WTW
Dave Thorpe	EAW
Chris Tucker	CT
Richard Poole	RP
Richard Poole	RP

Dave Thomas introduced himself as the new Chair of the Wales INNS group, following the move of policy responsibility for invasive species to the Plant Health team within Welsh Government.

Neville Rookes, WLGA, has also joined the group replacing Craig Mitchell who has now left WLGA for a new role.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. All outstanding actions from February's meeting have now been addressed.

ACTION 1. AE to circulate outstanding documents to INNS Group members.

1. Ecosystem Resilience and Diversity (ERD) Project Update

Alys Edwards provided an update on ERD funded projects for the current financial year. In total eight INNS projects received funding across a number of WBP groups, including the INNS, Woodland, Urban and Species groups, covering a number of issues including grey squirrel control, invasive plants and sika deer control. It is not yet clear if additional funding will be available in 2013/14 however attendees agreed there was a need to consider Welsh priorities and encourage appropriate projects in the event of future funding.

ACTION 2. JH to check with Julia Korn if all INNS ERD Projects 2012/12 are on schedule to be delivered and feed back to group.

2. INNS Group Terms of Reference

Dave Thomas introduced the draft Terms of Reference, produced by CCW for consideration by the attendees. There was agreement that overall the document struck the right tone, however it was acknowledged that the group currently had a broad remit and there may be a need to focus on priorities through development of a clear work programme.

ACTION 3. AE to revise draft ToR and circulate for comment.

ACTION 4. ALL to send comments on ToR to AE by cop **21st December 2012**, to be agreed at February meeting.

It was agreed that providing reference to the role of members with statutory responsibility for INNS (Welsh Ministers, CCW, EAW, FCW, and Police) within the ToR would be useful.

3. EU INNS Directive Implementation

Dave Thomas provided an update from the recent GB Programme Board meeting, held on the 26th September in Bristol. Timings for the publishing of the EU Directive have now slipped and is expected February/March 2013. Both Defra and GBNNSS have been engaged with process from the outset and Niall Moore (GBNNSS) has been seconded to Brussels until the end of January to work on development of the Directive.

Following recommendations from the Programme Board on implementation of the Directive an EU project board will be established comprising members from Defra, the devolved administrations, Gibraltar, lawyers, economists, plant health, JNCC and possibly the nature conservation bodies.

A discussion followed around the ability of the group to engage in policy development and thinking around implementation of the Directive and it was agreed that a standing item could be added to the agenda to enable discussion on issues being raised and implementation of actions on the ground. Contribution to this work can also be included in the annual work programme for the group.

CCW/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will be contributing to UK Group through JNCC and can also feedback to the group.

ACTION 5. Welsh Government to establish list of core working group colleagues who would like to contribute to policy discussions in relation to implementation of the EU Directive and promote engagement via email.

ACTION 6. DT to raise issue of alignment of EU Directive with Plant Health Directive at upcoming Defra/Scottish Government liaison meeting and feedback.

ACTION 7. AE to add contribution of INNS group to UK Project Board to agenda for February meeting.

A UK stakeholders group will also be established and it will be important to ensure stakeholders from Wales are represented.

Training was also raised as an issue by the UK Programme Group and a training sub-group has been established, which will feedback to the group. It was noted that training is required in order to meet the needs of the GB strategy framework, with three areas highlighted for focus: biosecurity, identification and surveillance, and management. There was general agreement that there was a growing need to raise the profile of biosecurity issues and development of generic biosecurity guidance, although resourcing this work could be an issue.

Sean Hathaway also noted that there was a need to offer training to Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) members in identification of invasive plants, as a result of a growing issue with misidentification of Japanese knotweed.

Delays in the development of Invasive Species Action Plans (ISAPs) was also raised as an issue

Satellite populations of ring necked parakeets have been identified in Wales, with known populations in Cardiff and incidental sightings in Swansea. Full impacts of these populations is currently unclear but thought to impact native nesting birds and have additional human health impacts. Future control options may need to be considered following further work to establish accurate distribution data and population size.

ACTION 8. SH and NR to contact Laura Palmer (Cardiff CC) for details of sightings/records and feedback to Dave Thomas and Olaf Booy in advance of next programme board meeting.

An application has been submitted for licencing of a fishery for Chinese Mitten Crab (CMC) in the Thames. There is currently a presumption against commercial exploitation of INNS, however this has never been formally agreed at a UK level. The likelihood of similar issues arising means there is a

need to think more generically about issues and progress things on a broader context and more we think like this, the more we can defend situation.

ACTION 9. NBB to provide update on the guidance developed in relation to signal crayfish and parallels which can be drawn.

Nick Birula provided feedback on the Topmouth gudgeon project in south west wales, which is in its infancy but is currently running on schedule and looks likely to achieve eradication in the area.

ACTION 10. NBB to report back on outcomes of Topmouth gudgeon eradication project at spring meeting.

4. Aesculapian Snakes

Two populations of Aesculapian snakes currently exist in the UK, one in north Wales and one in London. Although relatively confined to date, these populations could easily spread and are therefore seen as a priority for action. The north Wales population is thought to have originated as a result of escapees from Conwy Zoo and therefore it is the zoo who should take responsibility for control/eradication. Attendees agreed a plan of action needed to be developed, including an outline of risks, principles etc. with the final decision on appropriate action to be taken by CCW, with the support of WG, as the agency responsible.

ACTION 11. CCW/WG to discuss taking forward Aesculapian snake eradication work and feedback at next meeting (Spring 2013)

ACTION 12. DT to consider development of process for INNS group to deal with similar issues should they occur in the future.

5. Feedback from WBP Chairs Meeting

The WBP Chairs Group meeting was held on Tuesday 20th November in Aberystwyth. The main item of interest is the Welsh Government proposal to revise the structure and governance of WBP and its constituent groups. The proposal is outlined in the WBP Steering Group paper, circulated to INNS group members prior to the meeting.

CCW are currently formulating comments to the consultation, the deadline for which is **Friday 21st December 2012**. The current existing proposal is that the INNS group would move outside of the WBP to reflect priorities as a result of the EU Directive. The suggested role of group is likely to have an increased focus on UK/GB delivery; however it is unlikely that the proposed changes would have any significant impact on membership and work programmes for the group, although it will be important to ensure that links to local delivery are not lost.

It will be important to determine implications of this for any future funding, which in the past has been guided by WBP wales-level group priorities and assessed by WBP Groups.

ACTION 13. ALL to send any comments on Welsh Government paper to Alys Edwards
aedwards@wtwales.org for collation by cop Thursday 20th December 2012

6. Japanese Knotweed Update

Sean Hathaway provided an update on the CABI bio-control agent trial. There are no clear timescales for the project, although current evidence suggests overwintering this year and re-release is planned for 2013. Outputs of the trial are not yet clear although long term the aim is for control and not eradication.

Lyn Burn updated attendees on the planned release of Balsam rust, which CABI are hoping to release spring 2013 or 2014. Attendees were unaware of whether wider consultation/risk analysis had been undertaken in relation to this work.

ACTION 14. OB to follow up progress on Balsam rust work and feedback to the group.

The RICS consultation on impacts of Japanese knotweed on residential property has now closed. Outputs are aimed at residential surveyors and has led to the development of a RICS RISK Assessment Framework for Japanese Knotweed which should be completed if Japanese knotweed is identified as an issue.

<https://consultations.rics.org/consult.ti/japaneseknotweed/viewCompoundDoc?docid=1228212&sessionid=&voteid=>

An additional consultation is planned in relation to commercial property although to date RICS has been unable to secure internal funding to progress this work. WBP INNS Group is noted as consultees and will be informed when this work commences (likely to be 2013/14)

A number of questions on impacts/distribution and control measures for Japanese knotweed have recently been submitted to the Environment Minister John Griffiths and it was agreed the group could have a role in running an information event for AMs on the subject on non-native plants in Wales. The focus of the event will need to be considered carefully.

EAW have been undertaking mapping of Japanese knotweed using GIS and remote sensing data in a few key areas across Wales, primarily linear corridors in the south Wales valleys, to determine if stands can be identified. Local officers are using data to enable more strategic planning of work. However, issues have arisen over how data is collected, for example data collected in winter doesn't allow data for stand height to be incorporated, which is key. Using this data EAW are attempting to develop risk based maps, which provide a confidence level of low, medium or high to allow for strategic focus for control/removal.

ACTION 15. AH to discuss proposal for Assembly event with focus on Non-Natives with WG
Private Office, to be hosted by the Minister and feedback at Spring Meeting

The British Bee Keeping Association (BBKA) have issued a statement on approaches to Himalayan Balsam, to share with bee keepers, which includes advice on control, and it is important to feed this information into the development of the Welsh Government Pollinators Plan.

It was agreed that the Group should spend some dedicate some time to further consideration of issues around knotweed and balsam as it is likely that growing numbers of queries will be received and it would be useful to develop lessons learned from approach to these plants highlighting examples of where non-action can lead to serious problems and emphasising importance of horizon scanning.

ACTION 16. INNS Group to consider issue of widespread non-native plants and develop strategic plan.

ACTION 17. AE to add development of strategic plan for widespread non-native plants to agenda for spring meeting.

7. Invasive Shrimps and National Response Management – *Dikerogammarus villosus* and *Dikerogammarus haemobaphes*

Two confirmed sites for *Dikerogammarus villosus* (Dv) in Wales: Eglwys Nunydd & Cardiff - no known expansion to date. A new Pontocaspian invasive shrimp species has been confirmed in England *Dikerogammarus haemobaphes* (Dh). However, at present there have been no positive identifications in Wales.

The National Task Group addressing the on-going Dv/Dh issues will be providing an updated National Briefing Note incorporating Dh and a new Dh National Risk assessment is being developed and will be available from the GBNSS website shortly
<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/alerts/index.cfm?id=3> .

Paul Stebbing provided an update on CEFAS research on improving biosecurity by trailing chemical and other treatments. CEFAS have tested a range of products and have had positive results from use of carbonated water, which leaves animals unconscious even over short exposure times and use of heated water, which proved effective when temperatures of above 43 degrees were used.

A desk study has also been conducted on potential methods eradicating Dv which concluded trapping effectiveness could be improved and required further examination. Studies have also shown that in the UK Dv seems to lack a number of diseases to which it is susceptible in Europe and this will need to be explored in further detail.

8. Aquatic Biosecurity Good Practice Guidance

The Check, Clean, Dry campaign continues to be key biosecurity tool for aquatic invasives
<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/checkcleandry/index.cfm>

Members should refer people to the GBNSS pages for further information on biosecurity. The GBNSS are collating biosecurity good practice via their website and any examples should be sent to them or to EAW.

EAW are helping to develop detailed aquatic operational biosecurity guidance for EA staff and are keen to share this more widely for others adopt or modify as they see fit. EAW would welcome comments on draft monitoring guidance and will share when it becomes available. EAW is also

helping to develop an aquatic biosecurity E-learning package for all EA staff. EAW is keen to share this more widely with others for them to use as they see fit and due to be available next spring.

Broader online training is also being developed by the GB Training Working Group, which should be available to any stakeholder through the GBNNSS website, ensuring a consistent approach to biosecurity across the whole of the UK.

The GB Programme Board have also asked the GBNNSS to establish a group to look at biosecurity across UK and develop consistent approach.

ACTION 18. NBB to share EA operational biosecurity guidance once available.

ACTION 19. ALL to feedback any comments to NBB.

ACTION 20. NBB to share EA E-Learning Package once available.

9. WFD Annex D Actions & Reporting

Nick Birula informed attendees that the formal reporting process for the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is now taking place and the EAW's WFD team are collating information on Natura 2000 actions that individual organisations have within the River Basin Management Plans and CCW's Special Sites Database. Nick has provided a response on behalf of the WBP INNS Group

ACTION 21. NBB to share responses made on behalf of the group.

ACTION 22. ALL to report any difficulties experienced during reporting to the WFD team.

River Basin Management Plans set the strategic approach to delivering the European Water Framework Directive in Wales. This is s start of planning for the 2nd Cycle and as no one organisation can do it alone, working across sectors and co-delivering in partnership are essential for improving and maintaining the water environment in Wales. EAW are now consulting on the next WFD planning programme for following 6 years (2nd WFD Cycle) via their 'Working Together Consultation'.

EAW are looking for innovative approaches to effectively engage partners in River Basin Planning as they move into a new organisation in Wales and would like WBP Members views on how we can improve how we work together and to explore future aspirations. **The consultation closes 22nd December2012.** For information on how to get involved in the consultation visit the [consultation website](#).

ACTION 23. AE to add INNS Group approach to WFD to agenda for Spring Meeting.

10. BARS and INNS Action Audit

Alys Edwards introduced the new BARS website, which was launched in April 2012. The new system has been built from the ground up to offer a consolidated pot of action data describing individual actions taken to benefit biodiversity, enabling BARS to offer a range of powerful mapping and summary tools. Actions can then be linked to a project or range of projects enabling the collation of information at different levels.

The new system will provide an important source of evidence to support delivery and reporting of work within the UK to protect and enhance important habitats and species. BARS offers a central tool to collate such data which is typically held in widely distributed sources and in a range of formats.

WBP INNS pages have been set up on the BARS test site <http://test.ukbars.org.uk/project/show/26816> and the proposal is to move the INNS Action Audit (currently held as a word document on the WBP website) to BARS. Trail actions have been added to the test sit to test the usefulness/feasibility of this approach.

Attendees were in broad agreement that a more spatial representation of INNS actions would be useful and agreed to review work to collate existing INNS actions on BARS at the spring meeting

ACTION 24. AE to develop WBP INNS pages on BARS and collate details of existing INNS actions to enable live session at February meeting.

11. Risk Assessment Prioritisation

Attendees considered the revised Welsh prioritisation document, circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that the document requires further refinement and additional information around generic/specific actions required and categorise action (research, awareness, management and control etc.) Some species present such as Didemnum and sika deer have existing action plans in place and therefore can be addressed quickly. The three existing document should be linked to enable a clearer picture of the situation in Wales to be communicated.

It was agreed that there was a need to finalise this work I order to be clear about Welsh prioritise and to guide prioritisation for funding and local action. Do we need to convene a sub-group to progress this work.

ACTION 25. AE to convene sub-group to finalise prioritisation work in advance of the next meeting.

12. Law Commission Review of Wildlife Legislation.

Dave Thomas informed attendees that Welsh Government will not be submitting comments to the Law Commission Consultation. CCW will be submitting comments, which will include comments on Section 8 (Invasive Non Native Species) and are happy to share comments with INNS Group members. The deadline for submission of comments is this Friday 30th November.

ACTION 26. JH to circulate CCW comments to the group on section 8 of the Law Commission Review.

ACTION 27. Anyone wishing to submit comments in relation to INNS issues please direct them to Dave Thomas David.Thomas4@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK by cop **Thursday 29th November**, who will collate on behalf of the group.

13. UK/EU Update

Olaf Booy provided an update on the GB INNS Strategy, which is due for review next year. Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL) have convened a group which will lead NGO input to the review, on behalf of NGOs across the UK.

ACTION 28. AE to confirm with Wales Environment Link (WEL) whether Welsh NGOs are represented through the WCL group.

Training has been identified as a key piece of work over the coming year (see earlier comments)

Communications work is also being addressed and a list of UK wide stakeholders being developed by the GBNNS.

A new on-line invasive plant tracker tool created by Bristol University, the EA and CEH, in close partnership with the GBNNS, which can be downloaded as a free App (PlantTracker), which allows you to take a photo of the plant in the wild with your smartphone, and upload the image (and location automatically) to a central database. If you don't have a smartphone, you can also use the website at <http://planttracker.naturelocator.org/> The website also contains a map which shows you the current (uploaded) distribution of each species. Data submitted is verified and sent to the NBN. <http://planttracker.naturelocator.org/>

14. Partner Updates

(See attached document)

15. Date of future meetings

27th February 2013, Welsh Government Building: Trawsgoed Room

26th June 2013, Ladywell House, Newton: Banw Room

27th November 2013, Ladywell House, Newton: Banw Room