

Wales Mammal Biodiversity Action Forum

Minutes of the 9th Meeting

27th February 2013, by VC

1. Welcome, introductions

Present:

Bangor Liz Halliwell (CCW - Minutes), (CCW - Minutes), Ceri Morris, (CCW – MISE), Catrin Slade (work placement student, CCW), Iolo Lloyd (FCW)

Llandeilo Steve Lucas (BCT - Chair), Isabel Macho (Carmarthenshire CC), Jenny MacPherson (VWT – MISE), Lizzie Wilberforce (WTSWW), Henry Schofield (VWT), Mike Jenkins (EAW), Hazel Thomas (CCW)

Apologies: Jean Matthews (CCW) Rob Strachan (EA), Nida Al-Fulaij (PTES), Jane Garner (CCW), Matthew Ellis (CCW), Claire Bryant (CCW), Ian Danby (BASC), Rob Parry (WTSWW), Kate Williamson (The Mammal Society), Sarah Bird (Chester Zoo), Paul Sinnadurai (BBNP), Dan Forman (Swansea University)

2. BAP Process update

Species Expert Group met in February although some concerns were expressed about how productive the meeting was. Iolo Lloyd mentioned that that Wales Bird Forum was preparing a paper on how the group interacts with WBP and Ecosystem groups..

ACTION 1 – LH to ask Sian Whitehead about Wales Bird Forum paper on links to Ecosystem groups.

Article 17 reporting – LH reported that the country level reporting had been completed and JNCC were now compiling amalgamated UK level reports. Completed reports will go out to consultation in next few weeks.

Dormouse BAP meeting – LH provided an update from the recent England and Wales meeting. Minutes are available from Liz on request. LH noted that NE are now developing species conservation plans (instead of BAPs) for all their section 41 mammals under the England Mammals Taxon group. HS commented that it would have been useful to have a CCW rep at the Mammals Taxon group.

The Bat BAP group is due to meet at the beginning of April.

The Mammal Society has been successful in securing a grant from CCW for a Wales officer. The post will concentrate on implementation of the harvest mouse and hedgehog BAPs as well as providing support for mammal recorders. Interviews for the post are due towards the end of March.

With the establishment of Natural Resources Wales there is currently uncertainty regarding future funding streams to support the work of the '3rd sector'. There is some concern that it may be more of a procurement rather than grant-in-aid approach.

3. Project/partner updates

Updates were circulated prior to meeting. IL suggested that it would be useful if people were able to identify any outcomes from projects and reports that have been produced.

Mike Jenkins outlined the otters and fishery case that Rob Strachan is currently involved in. The EAW are being sued by an individual who claims that otter damage to his fishery is the responsibility of the agency. [*Post meeting note – the case against EAW was dismissed*]

The VWT People and Pine Martens project officer (David Bavin) has now started. The project is funded by the Co-op carrier bag levy. David will be undertaking public attitude surveys using roadshows and mailouts, hair tube surveys (focussed on the Cwm Rheidol area) and local talks. Hair tubes have been set up in local woodlands near where the Aberhafesp pine marten was found.

The MISE project is holding two events in March for volunteers and members of the MISE Advisory Group to celebrate the halfway point of the MISE project.

4. Mammal BAP Action Plans – implementation

Steve Lucas has produced a draft generic bat action plan. IM has suggested that actions which relate to statutory obligations, eg notify sites, assess planning applications should not be included in Action Plan things to do as they are an obligation and are difficult to report on. However, it was agreed that they should still be referred to in the Action Plans to ensure the full picture of the relevant activity is maintained.

It was suggested that we should be asking Species Expert Group for advice of the format for Action Plans. However, it was noted that purpose of the Action Plans is to provide advice to LBAPs on what they should be doing and also as a lever to demonstrate the need for certain pieces of work to take place (eg funding applications or influencing policy). Some narrative explaining the purpose of the plan may need to be added.

ACTION 2: Steve to review bat action plans, complete the generic action plan for bats and circulate.

ACTION 3: Liz to identify whether any of the remaining mammal species action plans could be amalgamated into overarching plan.

Glastir – Steve met with Chris Tucker to discuss the Glastir woodlands scheme and bats. He has produced a spreadsheet setting out which species may benefit from each of the prescriptions. It was an attempt to establish how forestry policy fitted in with bats and if there were any gaps.

ACTION 4: Steve to re-circulate Glastir and bats spreadsheet

5. Priority projects and funding opportunities

Data collation becoming more fragmented with LRCs, NBN, BRC i-Spot etc. There doesn't seem to be one single repository for data. SL requested that CCW, as statutory agency, needs to try to resolve. Concern was expressed that data should be available for policy and decision making, as well as planning.

ACTION 5: LH/JM to raise concerns regarding dataflow between LRCs, NBN etc with CCW data team.

LW pointed out that LRCs are concerned about making all their data available on the NBN as they need to have sufficient income to maintain the business. They are also wary of NBN data as they consider the verification standards are not as high.

Hedgehog – the new MS Wales Officer will help to roll out hedgehog survey.

Dormouse – ongoing work on connectivity mapping needed which could then be used as predictive element for Glastir woodland creation. Such spatial work could also be given to LBAPs and try to influence local work for dormice. IM – getting good success in engaging volunteers. Jacqueline Hartley found 3 or 4 new sites working with volunteers.

Water vole – EAW may have a mink trapping project at Llanelli. Will also be doing habitat management with possibility of taking underweight individuals to feed up and release or use in Gwendraeth – next catchment over from Llanelli..

Rare Woodland Bats – habitat modelling work underway. CCW funding to run 3 workshops with volunteers is no longer available. Decisions on next stage will be taken once have modelling maps. Funding is still needed to run the workshops and additional equipment. Bechstein's work would need mist-netting and harp trapping.

ACTION 6: Jean to provide update on rare woodland bats mapping work

ACTION 7: Jean, Henry and Steve to consider next steps for rare woodland bats project and whether it would be possible to apply for ERD funding. May be problem with timing.

LHB – Modelling work is ongoing.

ACTION 8: Jean to provide update on Landscapes for Lessers project.

Harvest mouse – results from Chester shown that bait pots technique works. Will continue to trial at other sites. Lizzie noted that they have been successful in getting harvest mice to use feeding stations at Parc Slip. JMCP going to visit to look at methods being used. Could run a training day at Parc Slip.

ACTION 9: Jenny, Ceri and Lizzie to arrange a MISE harvest mouse training date at WTSWW Parc Slip reserve.

Otters – MISE project will focus on Dwyryd catchment, Pembrokeshire coast and possibly Cefni catchment on Anglesey. Catrin Slade is going to be collating coastal records collected by MISE project to date.

Red squirrel – MWRSP was successful in receiving funding from ERD fund. Still priority for project to receive further funding. Wales Squirrel Forum meeting next week. .

Bats – VWT work to exclude GHB from LHB roosts is ongoing.

VWT planning a UK wide **polecat** survey. Focus will be on spread of range in midlands area, but also some areas in Wales which don't currently have records. Also thinking about feral ferrets hybridisation/introgression from Cardiff

Steve drew attention to the fact that SITA have established a funding panel for Wales. Applications need to be within 10 to 20km of landfill sites.

6. WMBAF work programme

Discussion re item 6 on the work programme, regarding the need to improve links between Ecosystem Groups and LBAPs. Could request Ecosystem Groups to provide an update on species work. Iolo expressed concern that there is little link between the Ecosystem Groups and the LBAPs, although it was recognised that this varies regionally across Wales.

The WMBAF work programme was discussed in order to identify updates for the forthcoming year. It was felt that most of the items listed were still relevant although Iolo suggested that the work programme could be more structured with specific actions and target dates.

It was agreed that WMBAF serves a useful purpose, particularly in ensuring that we're not all working in isolation from each other. WMBAF also sets a framework to identify gaps and priorities for work areas. It also helps to provide LBAPs with a focus and lead on what should be doing. Steve noted that a significant difference between WMBAF and SEG is that we tend to be more practically focussed rather than trying to influence policy.

It was agreed that it would be valuable to have a rotating chair.

7. Minutes of the last meeting and action points

No comments received on the minutes.

ACTION 1 - Liz to send list of WG ERD funded projects out to group. Completed.

ACTION 2 – JM to send out note on UKWVSG meeting. Completed

ACTION 3 – Lizzie to check with Rob if most recent WV records are included in mapping project. WT holds any data they receive locally. Dataset collated by WT at a UK level is not being regularly updated and so it is accurate up to that point – about 3 years ago.

*ACTION 4 - CCW to ask for LBAP rep for north Wales. Carry over **ACTION 10***

ACTION 5 - CCW to circulate final partner update. Completed.

ACTION 6 – LH/JM to go back to Julia/Tracey before Ecosystem Group Chairs meeting and re-consider how to take forward. Chairs' meeting was postponed and no longer appropriate.

ACTION 6 – Ceri to check if there's a N Wales Forum. There is a NE Wales Biodiversity Network and a Snowdonia Wildlife Forum.

ACTION 7 – Ceri to set up harvest mouse VC. Carry over – will be implemented whilst setting up harvest mouse training day.

ACTION 8 – Jenny, Jean and Rob to discuss water vole genetics project in MISE.

Carry over. **ACTION 11**

ACTION 9 – Liz and Jean to contact Kate for update on Mammal Atlas. Update included in final partner updates for meeting.

*ACTION 10 – Jean and Liz to circulate data collation results for harvest mouse, etc as soon as available. Will be available soon following completion of Article 17 reports. **ACTION 12***

ACTION 11 – SL to send Glastir gaps analysis spreadsheet to Jean. Completed.

7. Any other business

VWT Pine Martens and People attitudes survey – Henry would like to send out to all to encourage as many people as possible to compete.

Lizzie noted that there is concern about the impact of cuts to National Museum in Cardiff.

8. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the use of VC was fine and made attendance easier for some group members.

Dates for the next meetings: **25th June** (focus on Mammal Society project and to be chaired by Iolo Lloyd) and **8th October**