

Wales Mammal Biodiversity Action Forum Meeting 20 October 2010 CCW Offices, Newtown

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Present: Liz Halliwell (CCW) Chair, Rob Strachan (EA), Lizzie Wilberforce (WTSWW), Rob Parry (WTSWW), Steve Lucas (BCT), Matthew Ellis (CCW), Jean Matthews (CCW) Minutes, Kate Williamson, by VC (SNPA)

Apologies: Iolo Lloyd (FCW), Nida Al-Fulaij (PTES), Mike Jenkins (EA), Sarah Bird (Chester Zoo), Henry Schofield (VWT), Ian Danby (BASC), Isabel Macho (Carms CC)

2. BAP Process update

Species Expert Group (SEG)

- Species can potentially be added/removed from S42 list on an annual basis via WBP. It is likely that there will be another round of funding for habitats projects via WAG although the details are not yet available. No information is available on outcome of with last year's projects. In light of the NEF and Biodiversity Inquiry the SEG agreed species leads need to continue to be proactive in taking forward species action. The SEG will be preparing report to highlight species successes (Liz Howe is preparing a project plan).
- The SEG have requested top 5-10 actions for mammals, other groups will also be asked to do the same.
- Next meeting of SEG (23rd Nov) will aim to agree a species response to NEF.
- The BAP targets task and finish group that KW sat on has finished operating.
- WBP to write to all Species Leads to outline their role.
- Need to ensure that WMBAF is effective in getting its message across and makes that most of the opportunity to make the links between LBAPs and UK and Wales groups. Currently there is little dialogue with EGs though despite emphasis in NEF for delivery of conservation action through EGs.
WMBAF needs to have representation from all biodiversity partnerships in Wales, or ensure that information is reaching those that need it. Some LBAPs operate regionally or hold regional meetings, eg NE Wales, GlamBAG, and GwentBAG.
LBAP across whole of north Wales meet twice a year.

AP1 – LH/JM to ask WBP Secretariat Sean McHugh to send WMBAF minutes to LBAP officers.

Q – how can we help LBAP officers to identify actions they should be doing. KW suggestion to use columns in action sheet – to discuss this afternoon.

UK BAP groups

Some UK BAP groups continue to meet regularly, eg red squirrel, dormouse, otter, water vole and bats. Others are now inactive, eg brown hare. UK BAP groups' role is more about exchange of information rather than co-ordination of activity.

AP2 – JM to list reps from UK groups & to request written updates for this meeting.

Ecosystems groups

All Ecosystem Groups have also been asked to identify their 10 priority actions and have been preparing priority projects. There has been some discussion with Upland EG, although priority projects have been agreed ([see WBP website for list](#)).

The Freshwater EG seems to be active and is attended by KW. The Woodland EG hasn't met recently.

Some actions from the Non-natives Forum are not being taken forward because over perceived over-regulation.

3. Natural Environment Framework (NEF)

The NEF is now out for consultation. Documentation makes little mention of biodiversity or species and the emphasis is on ecosystems. ME commented that species compensation and mitigation activities add to connectivity and should be included in analysis.

Carmarthenshire LBAP is putting in response to consultation to question future role of LBAPs.

It was agreed that WMBAF did not need to send its own response, but that WMBAF members of the SEG should raise issues relevant to mammals in the SEG response (noted above). In particular, there is a need to flag up actions that are species-specific and can't be delivered solely through ecosystem management. The WMBAF should only comment separately if we feel that the SEG response is lacking anywhere.

AP3 – ME to circulate ARC response to the NEF and also the pan-European biodiversity consultation

4. Glastir

Kevin Austin attended the last SEG meeting. Application forms for the All Wales Element were sent out in Oct. The scheme is due to start in 2012 and has a target to sign up 80% of Wales. In the Targeted Element, the points scoring prioritises soil, carbon and water for the first 2 years. However, farmers may still be required to undertake species work, as compliance with species requirements in identified core areas is mandatory. Maps produced for the species Targeted Element can be reviewed annually and the first opportunity will be in June next year.

The woodland creation scheme has some exclusions from new planting e.g. in red squirrel or water vole areas. FCW are preparing guidance to identify areas where there should be no planting, planting following written advice and planting with contract manager advice. There will be only 16 contract managers for the whole of Wales (compared with 70 project officers in Tir Gofal). GHB and LHB farmer fact sheets are to be launched at winter fair.

5. Project updates

WMBAF member project updates were circulated prior to the meeting.

Rob Parry added that a Cardiff University student will be trialling the small mammal refuge technique using 600 sheets placed out at Parc Slip. The methodology used will be written up. RP would like to see if the technique can be used for upland water vole survey and will also compare refugia with bait tubes for water shrew surveys.

Rob Strachan gave a verbal update for EAW. The Otter Survey Wales' report will be avail in December. The number of positive sites has increased from 73% in 2002 when the last survey was undertaken to almost 90% and otters were recorded in all catchments. Anglesey, the catchment with the lowest occupancy in 2002 had

increased from 18% positive to 67.5%. The Dyfi/Mawddach areas did not perform as well as expected, but this could be artefact of weather or some other factor.

Colonisation of coast not picked up well and should be a priority future priority. Otter post-mortem work is continuing at Cardiff University – 80 of 200 animals were from Wales and were mostly juvenile males.

KESS Masters studentship (European funding stream for 1 year Masters by research) to look at genetic differences between water vole populations in upland/lowland areas and comparing Anglesey and mainland. DNA will be extracted from droppings. Dropping will be collected by staff, student and vols – a collecting kit will be made available.

The re-introduction of water voles at Llangorse using captive bred animals has funding to continue in 2011.

Chris Tucker (FCW) update by email noted that the FCW forestry guidance for otters, dormice and bats have been updated on the FCW website. A research/monitoring project on dormice in forestry is being established in Crychan forest in mid-Wales.

Beaver reintroduction – final report about to be completed and will be given to Jane Davidson for her consideration. In Scotland Adrian Wallace ASFB(?) has offered to speak to other fisheries agencies with concerns.

AP4 - Action JM/LH to get contact Scottish fisheries contact details for RP/AL-J.

It was agreed that the written reports provided a useful mechanism for updating members on activities, although it should be remembered that not all mammal activity in Wales will be included. WMBAF members should aim to send an update prior to each meeting. It was emphasised that the task should not be onerous and even one or two lines or project titles is very useful and will give others the opportunity to request more details.

6. Mammal BAP Success

Following SEG agreement to document species BAP success Liz Howe has put together document outline. Need to identify case studies eg effective partnership working, increased awareness as well as success.

Examples of BAP success discussed were:

- Roads and Otters Steering Group
- More knowledge on species ranges
- Non-natives control (mink and grey squirrel)
- Loss of species prevented
- LHB monitoring programme
- Otter survey Wales

Tracey Lovering is collating information to help LBAPs identify successful projects which could be rolled out to other areas. It was suggested that this info could be extracted from BARS. Information on projects that aren't on BARS could be collated using a simple form (e.g EA form E) that is centrally put on to BARS.

7. Terms of Reference and Work programme

No further comments were received and the documents have been agreed.

8. Minutes and action points from meeting on 22nd February.

No comments on the minutes were received.

	Actions from 22 nd February meeting	By whom	Progress
1	Disseminate information on process to LBAP officers and ask them to disseminate to local groups.	KW	Completed
2	Email all on current contact list to see if they want to remain as members of the group and if so as full members or corresponding members.	LH/JM	Completed, although some not responded. New action LH/JM to finalise new AP5
3	See if anyone missing from list & let JM know.	LH/JM	Completed
4	Send out revised ToR	LH/JM	Completed
5	Send out draft Work Programme	JM / LH	Completed
6	Send brief notes from 23 Feb Actions/Targets Task and Finish Group meeting.	KW	Not done, but available on WBP website. Group wound up at last meeting.
7	Prepare update in advance of meetings. Disseminate updates to SEG and to LBAP partnerships	ALL JM/LH & KW	Completed. New AP6 All to send any additional updates or amendments to LH by 1 November, and then LH to send updates to Sean McHugh for circulation to LBAPs.
8	Send any comments on spreadsheet by 8 th March.	ALL	None received
9	Revise spreadsheet & provide explanation / proviso re use of mammal action spreadsheet	JM	Completed
10	Produce Dormouse Action Plan as template by Easter	LH?	Completed and circulated for discussion at meeting
11	Produce as many of other APs as possible before June meeting	Species Leads	SL produced draft bat plans
12	Circulate paper on small mammal trapping	RP	Completed

9. Any other business

None

10. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that we should continue to aim to meeting every 4 months, giving the flexibility to cancel the occasional meeting if no demand.

Meetings in 2011 will be on:

Thursday 17th February 2011 – discussion of priority projects.

Monday 20th June 2011

Wednesday 12th October 2011 – targets/actions review

Workshop topics

A Mammal Action Plans - agreement of format and draft dormouse and bat plans

Draft dormouse and bat action plans were circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the format of the dormouse action plan should be adopted for the other species, following a couple of amendments.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- units for targets need to be appropriate for the size of the plan area.
- it was felt that it may not be necessary for the targets to be disaggregated to LBAP level.
- The actions implementation section is explanation of any issues arising from the actions, e.g. special considerations or issues that need to be addressed prior to implementation.
- Agreed it would be helpful to include a map to show LBAP areas where actions are relevant. Priority areas for different actions could also be shown.
- the Species Lead Partners are responsible for preparing the draft Action Plans, but they need to work with Action Lead partners to ensure delivery.
- draft plans should be presented to WMBAF for agreement and then the completed plans sent to SEG for signing off. They should then be posted on WBP website.
- habitat management actions need to be flagged up with the relevant EG.
- Example of how this is being dealt with by Anglesey for bats. Encourage LBAP officers to send theirs to Species Lead for info & comment. WMBAF to support Species Leads and maintain consistency.

AP7 LHa to circulate plan to Action & Species Leads (clarify Action Lead in table) & list Species Lead.

AP8 Action leads to aim to have some further ones finalised in advance of SEG meeting to send out by 15th November

B Priorities for mammals - priority actions for SEG & for EGs

Species Expert Group has asked for priority actions where action is needed to prevent (local) extinction in the next 5 years. (Seems to be same as **priority projects for EGs upland group**)

Probable mammal priorities for different species were discussed:

- red squirrel (focal sites – Anglesey, Clocaenog and mid-Wales. Mid-Wales probably most likely to go extinct),
- water vole (both rs & wv involve control of non-natives) long term mink control on Anglesey & protect other key sites.
- harvest mouse (not likely to go extinct, but survey urgently needed so that can manage site & link to ecosystem goods & services)
- Bechstein's (distribution),
- barbastelle (maternity roosts & distribution) (lack of information & habitat loss).
- Pine marten (current action sufficient at present).
- Dormouse (identification on new records in Ceredigion),
- Local conservation action for lessers (L4L)

RP Top priority for SEG –1) projects that can't be delivered by EGs. 2) Research & monitoring, 3) Generic projects for all taxa, or which can be delivered through an EG. Need to think about getting into mammal priorities into the Ecosystems Groups and SEG

AP9 LH to speak to Steve Bladwell re timetable for submitting priority actions.

C. Wales Water Vole Strategy

Format to follow Wales Red Squirrel Conservation Plan (JM) with detailed content from RP & RS for south & north Wales.

RS showed maps from WT's modelling water vole distribution based on 2008 data

1. distribution of individual sites with buffer \2km width \x 500m
2. take out populations with 6km strength
3. 35km linear buffer – 3 populations only and Anglesey population vanishes.

8. Minutes and action points from meeting on 22nd February.

No comments on the minutes were received.

Summary of Actions from meeting 20 October meeting 2010

		By whom	Progress
1	Ask WBP Secretariat Sean McHugh to send WMBAF minutes to LBAP officers.	LH/JM to	
2	List reps from UK groups & to request written updates for this meeting	JM	
3	Circulate ARC response to the NEF and also the pan-European biodiversity consultation	ME	
4	Send Scottish fisheries contact details for RP/AL-J.	LH/JM	
5	Finalise WMBAF membership list	LH/JM	
6	All to send any additional updates or amendments to LH by 1 November, and then LH to send updates to Sean McHugh for circulation to LBAPs	ALL LH	
7	Circulate plan to Action & Species Leads (clarify Action Lead in table) & list Species Lead.	LH	
8	Action leads to aim to have some further ones finalised in advance of SEG meeting to send out by 15 th November	Action leads	
9	Speak to Steve Bladwell re timetable for submitting priority actions	LH	