

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non Native Species sub Group

Forestry Commission Offices, Aberystwyth

Wednesday 22nd June 10:30-15:30
15th Meeting

Minutes

1. Present:

Steve Jackson (WG) Chair
Alys Edwards (WBP) Secretariat
Niall Moore (GBNNSS)
Gabe Wyn (CCW)
Jo Hughes (CCW)
Nigel Ajax-Lewis (WTSWW)
Jo Miles (WG)
Dave Thorpe (EAW)
Jodi Massey (WG)
Sean Hathaway (City and County of Swansea)
Mark Malins (FCW)
Rob Griffiths (WG)
Matthew Ellis (CCW)

By Phone

Clare Eno (CCW)
Ian Laing (CEFAS)

Apologies:

Judith Oakley (City and County of Swansea/Oakley Intertidal)
Ceri Jones (EAW)
David Gilchrist (HTA)
Mike McCabe (CCW)
Sarah Bird (Chester Zoo)
Richard Poole (Dwr Cymru)
Caroline Price (RYA)
Trevor Dines (Plantlife)
Alison Smith (WG)

The Chair informed the group that Rob Griffiths has been appointed as Biodiversity Policy Manager within the SEED/NAMU Team in Welsh Government and will be chairing future meetings of the INNS Group.

The Chair also informed the group that an invitation had been received from the British Irish Council to provide a paper on invasive non-natives in Wales. **SJ** and **RG** will draft a first version and circulate for comment.

ACTION 1. **SJ** and **RG** to draft paper in non-natives in Wales for British and Irish Council and circulate to all for comment.

1. Chinese Mitten Crab (CMC)

Following the consultation paper presented to the GB programme board by the EA on the possible licensing of a mitten crab fishery in the Thames **RG** informed the group that the Welsh Government (WG) is in discussion with colleagues in EAW licensing team regarding their views on any possible future licensing of a mitten crab fishery in Wales. A paper detailing the Programme board members comments on a possible fishery in the Thames will be presented to the next meeting of the GB Programme Board, however the end decision lies with EA. CCW have advised against licensing.

CCW and EA are also working on issues relating to the possible translocation of CMC via mussel seed from the Dee to the Menai Strait SAC. A methodology for surveying for mitten crab is currently being developed by EAW, CCW, Bangor Mussel Producers and WG

ACTION 2. **ALL** to consider if evidence is available that shows that licensing a fishery is likely to risk increasing the rate of spread of a species like the CMC and forward to **RG/GW**.

2. Marine Biosecurity

GW highlighted the need for a high level marine biosecurity policy and enquired if WG could develop a code of best practice.

SJ noted there was a need to discuss this further with colleagues in the Marine Policy Team in WG. This may have already been considered as Invasive Non Native Species is one of the descriptors of Good Environmental Status (GES) under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) with a focus on pathway management.

ME informed the group that a successful event had been run recently in partnership with Chester Zoo, which focussed on Biosecurity (surveying and site selection), and it was suggested that similar events could be rolled out more widely across Wales.

Defra are currently thinking of taking forward a LIFE+ bid focusing on freshwater biosecurity, and it was questioned whether this could be developed into a GB wide bid. **GW** informed the group that CCW are also developing a bid with Ireland, Scotland, and England, focussing on pathway management which includes detailed costings. **IL** noted that pathway management was included as a recommendation under descriptor 2 of the MSFD and noted that this could be developed into a LIFE+ Bid.

<p>ACTION 3. NM and GW to progress the issue of biosecurity through Programme Board.</p>
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3. Wales Deer Strategy: sika deer sub-group update

MM updated the group on progress to date with the sika deer sub-group. The group met in Welshpool in May with representatives from FERA, WG, FCW, WTSWW, NNSS and the Deer Initiative.

Methods of control will be reviewed once the size of population is known. This will be addressed by a questionnaire of land-owners run by the Deer Initiative and A camera-trap survey conducted by Fera.

The group agreed that this is a priority and the Wales INNS group will draft an Invasive Species Action Plan for Sika Deer.

NM informed the group that a precedent had been set over compulsory access (and control) in Scotland. Scottish Ministers can designate anyone to control specific NNS if the landowner is non compliant. This could be addressed through the regulatory work stream of the Natural Environment Framework (NEF).

The next meeting of the sub group will be hosted by WTSWW in Cardigan in September.

<p>ACTION 4. NM to request that FERA cost camera survey of sika deer in Wales.</p> <p>ACTION 5. ALL to approach contacts on NEF regulatory work stream and ask to consider amendment of existing regulations to allow access to land.</p> <p>ACTION 6. NM to circulate link to the Scottish legislation on NNS.</p>
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4. Grey Squirrels in Wales

MM provided an overview of the grey squirrel problem in Wales, and highlighted that it was raised as an issue under the Woodlands for Wales (WfW) Conservation Plan, which identified WBP as the route through which to address the problem.

Potential partners were identified and include the Game and Wildlife Conservancy Trust, British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and Royal Forestry Society (RFS).

The group agreed that a similar approach to that taken in N. Wales would be the best way forward and could be focussed on one area such as the Llyn peninsula or Clocaenog. The focus at present should be on pilot areas and developing a rationale.

ME noted that the Interreg project; Mammals In Sustainable Environments (MISE) was ongoing and commented that the need for surveillance of red squirrels should be flagged. The Wales mammal biodiversity expert forum is also currently developing a LIFE+ bid for grey squirrel and mink control.

SJ noted that the Minister is meeting with BASC in the next few months and that a message could be taken from the group regarding joined up working.

- ACTION 7.** **SJ** to raise partnership approach to grey squirrel control as an item of interest with the Minister.
- ACTION 8.** **ALL** to send comments on grey squirrel control options to **MM**.
- ACTION 9.** **MM** to discuss potential joint LIFE+ bid with Liz Halliwell (CCW).
- ACTION 10.** **DT** to chase up details of Anglesey red squirrel project and send to **MM**.
- ACTION 11.** **MM** to draw up grey squirrel plan and bring to September meeting to seek endorsement from the group.

5. Scottish Approach to prioritisation of INNS

NM introduced the group to the Scottish approach to INNS prioritisation. The Scotland group have identified and decided upon priorities for prevention and control, rapid response, longer term and island priorities.

GW informed the group that she had been putting together a list of marine NNS for all marine protected areas (SAC, SSSI) in Wales and suggested that this could be prioritised in the same way.

- ACTION 12.** **NM** to circulate paper on Scottish approach to INNS prioritisation to all.
- ACTION 13.** **MMc** to update Risk Assessment document, to reflect a similar approach to Scotland and bring back for discussion and agreement at Septembers meeting.
- ACTION 14.** **ALL** to consider the need to include mechanism for allocating tasks in biosecurity policy from WG.

6. Risk Assessment Summary: (on hold until September 2011)

7. Environment Wales Project Proposals

AE informed the group that Environment Wales are currently administering a biodiversity grant fund (£140k) which is available to support the work of the WBP Wales-level groups. This financial year the INNS group is also able to

support projects and projects supported should be informed by the groups' priorities.

The first deadline has now passed so any projects supported by the group will need to be submitted for the second deadline of the 26th July 2011.

- ACTION 15.** **GW** to work up details of potential CMC project and send to **AE**.
- ACTION 16.** **MM** and **NM** to work up details of sika deer project and send to **AE**.
- ACTION 17.** **AE** to circulate further information on potential applications by 04 July 2011 and seek comment from the group.
- ACTION 18.** **SJ/RG** to email EW once applications have been agreed detailing the support of the INNS group.
- ACTION 19.** **AE** to seek clarity on the need to provide letters of support from individual organisations.

8. Update on on-going projects in Wales

SH updated the group on the Welsh knotweed natural control release.

DT reported that EAW are attempting to control the spread of *Crassula* on RSPB Conwy reserve. In September saline water will be used to flood freshwater lagoons creating brackish lagoons.

DT also updated the group on *dikerogammus villosus*. At present the species has still only been recorded at three sites. Grafham waters in Cambridgeshire and Cardiff Bay and Eglwys Nynydd in Wales. A number of other water bodies have been surveyed but at no further spread has been identified. A number of biosecurity measures are in place and the 'Check,-Clean-Dry' campaign is being promoted widely
<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/index.cfm?sectionid=98>

CCW will be running a programme of work this summer checking marinas for didemnum and additional NNS.

ME informed the group that the polecat population in Wales is thought to have hybridised with ferrets. DNA fingerprinting is ongoing an update will be provided to the group when available.

- ACTION 20.** **DT** to inform the group when *Crassula* control work is likely to commence.

9. Action Audit

The group agreed that the action audit would be updated before each INNS meeting, with Jo Hughes coordinating the CCW updates. All updates should be sent to AE prior to meetings. The Audit will be amended to include approximate costs and contacts, to enable it to act as a source of information on best practice/lessons learned.

ACTION 21. **AE** to amend the action audit as agreed.
ACTION 22. **ALL** to send Action Audit updates to AE by 01st
September 2011

10. GB/Europe Update

NM updated the group on the progress of the EU Invasive Alien Species Strategy. An impact assessment will be undertaken by the Commission with the aim of publication of the Strategy in 2012. A presentation is available on the GBNNSS website at the following link
http://www.ieep.eu/assets/448/ias_assessments.pdf

The EA in England have secured Water Framework Directive (WFD) money from Defra amounting to £5m over four years aimed at research. A large chunk of money is available to support local action groups (approximately £750k over 4 years). This money is only available in England however it may be possible to access funds for cross boarder sites such as the Severn estuary.

The Rivers and Fisheries Trust Scotland (RAFTS) have developed a biosecurity project in Scotland, with a focus on prevention, control and rapid response. England and Wales are currently considering development of a similar approach.

The 'Be Plant Wise' and 'Check-Clean-Dry' campaigns are still running and have been well received.

The Non-Native Species Information Portal (NNSIP) will be launched in September/October 2011. More information is available on the GBNNSS website at the following link
<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/factsheet/index.cfm>

11. AOB

It was noted that mortgages are increasingly being declined due to properties proximity to Japanese Knotweed. **JM** informed the group that a note was available from WG in relation to Japanese knotweed and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

ACTION 23. **JM** to circulate note on Japanese Knotweed and RICS to all.

Date of Next Meetings

28th September 2011: CCW Offices, Bangor

14th December 2011: EAW Offices, Cardiff

28th March 2012: Rhydymwyn (tbc)

Summary of Actions

- ACTION 1.** **SJ** and **RG** to draft paper in non-natives in Wales for British and Irish Council and circulate to all for comment.
- ACTION 2.** **ALL** to consider if evidence is available that shows that licensing a fishery is likely to risk increasing the rate of spread of a species like the CMC and forward to **RG/GW**.
- ACTION 3.** **NM** and **GW** to progress the issue of biosecurity through Programme Board.
- ACTION 4.** **NM** to request that FERA cost camera survey of sika deer in Wales.
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- ACTION 16.** **MM** and **NM** to work up details of sika deer project and send to **AE**
- ACTION 17.** **AE** to circulate further information on potential applications by 04 July 2011 and seek comment from the group.
- ACTION 18.** **SJ/RG** to email EW once applications have been agreed detailing the support of the INNS group.

- ACTION 19.** **AE** to seek clarity on the need to provide letters of support from individual organisations.
- ACTION 20.** **DT** to inform the group when Crassula control work is likely to commence.
- ACTION 21.** **AE** to amend the action audit as agreed.
- ACTION 22.** **ALL** to send Action Audit updates to AE by 01st September 2011
- ACTION 23.** **JM** to circulate note on Japanese Knotweed and RICS to all.

Outstanding Actions from Previous Meeting

- ACTION 1.** **MMc** and **MM** to discuss ariel mapping of rhododendron in more detail outside of the meeting.
- ACTION 2.** **AJ** and **GD** to discuss EAW assistance with monitoring of bio-control project developed by **WG**
- ACTION 3.** **ALL** to send comments/questions on EAW Invasive Species Mapping Project to **GD**
- ACTION 4.** **GW** to circulate CCW Outcome 21 dataset document to partners once complete
- ACTION 5.** **GW** to send further details and photos of barge cleaning to **NM** once available
- ACTION 6.** **NM** and **AS** to discuss capturing of INNS related costs outside of the meeting and feedback to next working group meeting.
- ACTION 7.** **SJ** to check with WEIF whether route for marine records is included in the data sharing charter.