

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non Native Species Group

Ladywell House, Newtown

26th November 2014

Attendees

Dave Thomas	DT	Welsh Government (WG)
Nick Bialynicki - Birula	NBB	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Sean Hathaway	SH	City and County of Swansea (CCS)
Anthony Hicks	AH	Welsh Government (WG)
Kathleen Carroll	KC	Welsh Government (WG)
Dan Eastwood	DE	Swansea University
Dan Jones	DJ	Swansea University
Holly York	HY	Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP)
Richard Poole	RP	Dwr Cymru
Gabe Wyn	GW	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Nigel Ajax-Lewis	NA-L	Wildlife Trusts
Lucy Cornwell	LC	GB non-native species secretariat (GBNNSS)
Sarah Bird	SB	Chester Zoo
Jo Mullett	JM	Knotweed Control
Judith Oakley	JO	CCS, University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Niall Moore (Dial-in for Deer Strategy)	NM	GB non-native species secretariat (GBNNSS)
Elen King	EK	Welsh Government (WG)

Apologies

Alana Ward	Royal Yachting Association
Dan Forman	Swansea University
Chris Tucker	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and notification of AOB (Chair)

DT extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

2. Actions and minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be published on the WBP website. Chair thanked HY for minute taking. The majority of actions from June's meeting have now been completed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items (Actions 8/9 work plan, 10 Evidence Gaps) or ongoing. See below:

Action 4. Membership: HY/DT to investigate who can represent LBAPs and NPAs and send letter of invitation	HY discussed with WBP team. Sean McHugh (WBP communications officer) will be contacting all LBAPs & NPAs later in year to discuss their representation on all WBP groups and highlighting vacant positions.
Action 2 (June 14): WG to report on progress of recommendations from the Environment & Sustainability Committee Inquiry on INNS in Wales when applicable	Ongoing. Report to committee on an annual basis. 8 recommendations have been dealt with. A key element will be the progression on combating INNS in Wales, of which partner updates on activities will be included. WG will circulate a short template to group to log specific work.

All Wales Mink Eradication Programme – Dan Forman has followed up with Mammal Group to resolve.

Action Audit - HY continuing to add old activities from 'word' document onto BARS and encourage members to record INNS activities on BARS. Two NRW funded BARS training sessions will take place early next year – South and North Wales. HY will circulate more information to INNS members when available. In future, Action Audit reports from BARS will be provided at each meeting. WBP INNS Action Audit on BARS can be viewed here <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/project/show/37645>

Tax relief to control Japanese Knotweed -RP (Dwr Cymru) – removal of Japanese knotweed could qualify for land remediation tax relief – giving up to 150% capital tax relief, with 2 years to claim. Costs include treatment on and off site. The relief is aimed at business and as an incentive to convert brownfield sites. Information available on hmrc website.

Action 1. WBP (HY) to upload the Minutes from the previous meeting to the WBP website
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3. 'Optimising Physiochemical Japanese Knotweed Control in the UK' presentation by Dan Jones, Swansea University

Dan Jones, Swansea University presented his work on optimising physiochemical Japanese Knotweed Control.

A series of long-term, large-scale controlled field trials in place to study the best practice control methods for Japanese Knotweed – refine technical understanding of control

techniques, enhancing knowledge of control efficiency and costs, develop understanding of site restoration and/or remediation following successful knotweed control and, communicate knowledge re methods and efficacy to stakeholders.

Trailing 21 proven and novel control methods on 64 225m² controlled field trail plots at three sites in South Wales (Lower Swansea Valley Woods, Swansea Vale Nature Reserve and the largest Taffs Well near Cardiff). Applications methods include spraying, stem injection, cut & fill, turning before herbicide application and cutting before herbicide application. See presentation (link below) for observations of initial findings. A full economic evaluation of all control methods will be undertaken. Site restoration techniques will be reviewed and considered in the context of integrated knotweed management.

A copy of the presentation and other work is available here
http://figshare.com/authors/Daniel_Jones/555958

Thanks to Dan for the informative presentation.

4. Invasive Species Action Plans

Six ISAPs have been published (2010 – 2014) with a further 5 under development (<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=92>). ISAPs contain aims, objective and an action plan. Action plans need to be realistic to reflect availability of resources and ongoing commitment to the GB strategy. GW: helping GB NNS with the Carpet Sea-squirt ISAP under development to coordinate action to slow the spread of this species.

Members are encouraged to read and feedback on ISAPS. Is the Programme Board evidencing the delivery of the action plans?

- **Sacred IBIS** (*Threskiornis aethopicus*) – a clear role for zoo agencies to help prevent this species from establishing in GB e.g. distribution of Action Plan and raise awareness across zoos in GB. SB: Reporting of zoo escapes is not recorded as readily as wanted, particularly those less glamorous species. IBIS is in Welsh Zoos (E.g. Folly Farm). A role for the British and Irish Association of Zoos (BIAZA).
- **Non-native Crayfish** – predominately an issue around the Wye in Wales. Listed on W&C Act Schedule 9 so if caught it should not be returned to water. WG: Meeting with Olaf, GB NNS to discuss AP for crayfish with Action Plan members to assess whether this AP is achievable within the 2015 timescale listed. Opportunities for group to progress Crayfish ISAP include e-learning for biosecurity awareness, local groups actions, potential to work with Natural England on the Wye, potential to link delivery in the Water Framework Directive.
- **Topmouth Gudgeon** (*Pseudorasbora parva*) – eradicating successfully on sites in Wales. Funding has been available to help eradicate at some sites but a challenge to find money. Dwr Cymru owns a large site with TG. RP: Site is a water supplying reservoir which would require emptying to eradicate. Bid for money from NEP, the funding programme mechanism for Dwr Cymru. Receiving £100,000 for invasive species - £60K for direct management on sites, £20K for awareness and £20K for other organisations e.g. landowners upstream.
- **House Crow** (*Corvus splendens*) – Not know in Wales.

- **Water Primrose** (*Ludwigia grandiflora*) – 5 year eradication programme by NRW (EA) in South Wales. In one enclosed water body – carrying out herbicide spraying programme. On the cusp of species being eradicated.
- **Asian Hornet** (*Vespa velutina*) - response plan (not an ISAP). No confirmed sightings in GB. Not on the W&C Act as not present in the UK.

Action 2. Sacred IBIS ISAP: GB NNS (LC) to contact BIAZA

Action 3. Topmouth Gudgeon ISAP: RP to send note to **DT** on actions helping to deliver Topmouth Gudgeon ISAP, particularly in regard to the GB strategy

Action 4. ISAPs: ALL to provide any comments on ISAPs, particularly delivery work against action plans.

5. WFD 2nd Cycle Planning (Nick Bialynicki-Birula, NRW)

Water Framework Directive 2nd Cycle is in its consultation phase. Please all look at the consultation, particularly in relation to Invasive Species. Consultation is available online, until end of March 2015. Guidance is available from Nick. Progress update will be provided at a future meeting.

NRW were successful in two proposals to the WG Small Business Research Institute (SBRI) – ‘Improving the regeneration of native species and soil health to mitigate the impacts of NNS’ and ‘Managing the impact of aquatic invasive INNS’. These will be combined into 1 package. SBRI funds public sector problems requiring new initiatives. A £300,000+ pot will be available for competition to seek initiative ideas to tackle INNS e.g. biosecurity issues. Ideas will be initially assessed by a small panel, and then undergo feasibility studies to gauge viability.

6. Update on Deer Strategy

Update on Non-native deer species in Wales’s paper provided by Chris Tucker. The Wales Deer Action plan group met in October and the reported progress on the action plan is positive.

Monitoring of deer in the Teifi area indicates three distinct groups present in the area – a small population of Sika deer (possibly as few as 12) on land management by an eNGO in a valley, Red deer on farmland above the valley and a population of Red/Wapperty cross. These three populations do not appear to interact at present. The populations are currently being monitored, with annual stalking by locals. GB NNS: An opportunity to remove a high risk species from GB while the population remains low. Eradication would align with GB Strategy, of which the group strives to support. Group agreed eradication should be actioned. Although issues surrounding health and safety – a dense woodland and surrounding land in multiple ownership these could be overcome e.g. enticing deer out of woodland (GB NNS can advise further).

Action 5. DT to respond to Wales Deer Action Plan Group (CT) that eradication is the preferred route.

7. Update on Rhododendron Strategy

Update on Rhododendron Strategy Development paper provided by Chris Tucker. Group noted paper as a useful update. Members concerned that Rhododendron has been mentioned as a pollinator friendly plant by Pollinators Taskforce.

8. Welsh Government update

WG focused on raising profile of INNS issues, particularly cross-cutting across departments.

- Set up an **INNS Policy Forum**. Action on 1st meeting to elevate issue wider through NRM Programme Board. Chris Lea & Dave Thomas took a paper to the board on 1st July. The paper made several recommendations – 1. Formal recognition of INNS as an added financial pressure (the board in turn requested firmer figures for the cost of INNS), 2. Agree that INNS needs to be fully integrated into area-based approach Natural Resource Management, and 3. Agree to develop a strategic approach with key stakeholders and to integrate INNS into their research programmes. The INNS Policy Forum met for a second time recently. The forum welcomed Niall Moore, GB NNS and Dr Helen Roy, CEH.
- EU **IAS** (Invasive Alien [Non-native] Species) Regulation was approved by European Council and will come into force on 1st January 2015. Full details of the regulation can be found on the GB NNS website (<http://www.nonnativespecies.org//index.cfm?sectionid=7>). The regulations will see a change in domestic regulations such as greater border controls.
- Response to **Environmental and Sustainability Committee Inquiry** – DT will circulate a report which WG hopes will assist its response to the inquiry to group for input.
- Reviewing **GB Strategy**. The strategy has been operational since 2008, and follows a 5 year review process. The review process commenced in 2014 and is now complete. All comments have been collated and a likely revised strategy will be launched early 2015.
- **Species Control Orders** update: The SCOs are currently at Commons stage. A few amendments have taken place – SCO will not be relevant for native W&C Ac so only non-native species listed. It is subdivided into native (not in scope), invasive (in scope) and animals no longer present (i.e. former native – in scope, unless a licenced release). Greater flexibility within process e.g. if an agreement is thought to be reached with a landowner soon after the 42 days negotiation deadline a SCO will not be issued.
- The **Quagga Mussel** arrived in London at the beginning of October and remains confined to the London/Thames area. The Check, Clean & Dry (CCD) protocol has been employed, particularly by Thames Water. New CCD protocol to use hot water, although group noted that hot water is not always present/available.
- **Bi-lingual INNS materials**: A need for Welsh translations to be made available so that campaigns can be promoted including the upcoming e-learning on biosecurity.
- **Squirrelosity** – a UK LIFE+ bid supported by NRW and led by Wildlife Trusts, Forestry Commission and Red Squirrel Initiative. The project proposes novel approach – not just grey squirrel control, but to establish prevention work. The strategy can then be promoted as a ‘tool’ to roll out across Europe.

Action 6. DT to circulate INNS report for members input towards the Environment & Sustainability Committee enquiry.

9. Work Planning

Work plan needs to be more user friendly and easily linkable to partners work. Useful to prioritise activities on work plan e.g. top 3 for action, top 3 for funding priority. WG – work plan will be useful in annual report to committee and to assess capacity. Useful to go through work plan in a dedicated workshop style

Action 7. Work Plan workshop at next meeting.

10. Partner updates

Thanks to partner updates provided prior to meeting.

- SH (CCS): **ASBO's** – approached by several TV & radio companies to be interviewed on mater. Although good on paper and costs can be recovered it does require staff time and resources to take on case.

Action 8. ALL – record enquiries received to highlight need for resources.

- **Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 9** – JNCC led group (including GW, NA-L) are reviewing criteria. Species included within Act will be focused on from now until January, then a wider consultation in Feb-April 2015. GW: Groups input on species covered by Act will be useful.

Action 9. ALL to provide partner updates ahead of meetings. HY will remind.

11. Communications Plan

Elen King, Senior Communications Officer (non-press) at WG joined discussions.

First draft of communications plan circulated prior to meeting. Group welcomed and noted the importance of a communications plan documents. Discussions points noted:

- Focus on target audiences and key messages – are these correct? Are they any missing?
- Targeting audiences - GB NNS has two key communication campaigns with different audiences – Check, Clean, Dry (aimed at anglers, boat users) and Be Plant Wise (aimed at gardeners)
- No communications budget is available
- Ministerial communications – useful to have a good opportunity for ministerial engagement e.g. re-launch of GB Strategy? New regulations? Launch of e-learning?
- Website – review INNS page on Welsh Government website (look at .gov website as a good source of information, include links to GB NNS for further information) and make better use of WBP INNS webpage
- Need for resources to be available bi-lingual.

- GW: Marine pathways project producing bi-lingual codes of practice for boat owners.
- Communications plan by 1st April 2015.

Action 10. WG – look at INNS page on WG website. **HY** look at INNS page on WBP website.

Action 11. ALL - look at communications plan and provide comments to DT/HY by mid Jan

12. Evidence Gaps

Group requires an INNS Evidence Gaps Lead (please get in touch with Tracey Lovering for more information).

Dan Eastwood highlighted the importance of Evidence Gaps from an academic point of view – helpful to build partnerships, gain funding and help future employment.

Group noted that an update on evidence gaps progress and steps forward would be useful. Workshop on EGs would be useful, picking up on actions from the Evidence Gaps Launch INNS workshop.

Action 12. HY to invite Tracey Lovering to June's meeting to provide an update on Evidence Gaps

13. Future Agenda Items

Action 13. ALL to provide any agenda items to HY.

14. Any other business

- Royal Welsh Winter Fair is on 1st & 2nd December – INNS leaflets at WG stand
- GB NNS – e-learning for biosecurity will be launched shortly. Group to promote.

15. Close

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

Action 14. HY to arrange date of next meeting