

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non-native Species Group

Welsh Government offices, Swansea

16th August 2017

Minutes

Attendance: Leasa Fielding (Welsh Government), Becky Phillips (JNCC), Holly York (WBP), Nigel Ajax-Lewis (Wildlife Trusts, WEL), Anthony Hicks (WG), Richard Poole (Dwr Cymru), David Hall (Cardiff Harbour Authority), Kathleen Carroll (WG), Sean Hathaway (City and County of Swansea), Dan Jones (Swansea University) **Dial-in:** Olaf Booy (GB NNSS), Theresa Kudelska (NRW), Jennie Jones (NRW)

Apologies: Alison Smith (WG), Nicky Davies (BBNPA), Bradley Welch (BBNPA), Jo Mullet (Knotweed Control), Judith Oakley (CCS), Louis Macdonald-Ames (Wye and Usk Foundation), Dusi Thomas (Dwr Cymru), David Thorpe (NRW), Niall Moore (GB NNSS), Jo Cable (Cardiff University)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

LF (Chair) welcomed attendees.

2. Matters arising and actions from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and will be published on the WBP website.

ACTION 1: HY to upload the minutes from the previous meeting onto the WBP website

The majority of the actions are complete or agenda items. Action 2 is deferred. Action 4 and Action 6 around Be plant wise stickers and CCD signs have been taken up by Hilary Foster, NRW INNS team as part of the work reinvigorating the biosecurity campaigns. KC will seek an update from HF on this.

ACTION 2: DTh to continue to investigate INNS data and biosecurity policies for CIEEM best practice

3. Nature Recovery Framework

HY gave an update on the Nature Recovery Framework. The Nature Recovery Plan is now known as the Nature Recovery Action Plan using the acronym NRAP to avoid confusion with the NRP acronym used for the Natural Resources Policy. A NRAP Implementation group has been established to steer and drive the delivery and implementation of the NRAP at a local and national level. The group met for the first time on the 3rd August. The focus of the first meeting was to confirm the role of the group and set its initial priorities. The group has a wide membership – including WG, NRW, WBP Support Team, JNCC, NGO's (including WEL), WLGA, ALGE, Local Nature Partnerships, National Parks, Welsh Water, Farming sector representatives and other private and public sector organisations.

Task and Finish expert groups will be commissioned by the NRAP implementation group to provide specific expert input or undertake a specific task. The species and ecosystem groups will close, and membership of these will be drawn into task and finish expert groups.

This INNS group is recognised as having an ongoing need and scope and as such will remain as a standing group. The immediate task and finish expert groups were agreed and will be on: Future Land use; Reviewing and updating Part II of the NRAP; S7 list review; S6 guidance; Evidence Gaps Project; Restoration and Resilience; Planning and biodiversity and the WBP conference. The later will most likely take place in Spring 2018 rather than the usual September timeslot.

The NRAP Implementation group will take feedback and recommendations from these groups (including our INNS Group) and provide recommendations to WG Ministers and NRW, particularly regarding Area Statements, Section 7 of the Environment Act and the CBD target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020.

Note, the marine actions identified in the NRAP (including marine INNS) are being delivered by the Marine and Fisheries Division working group in partnership with the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group and the Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group. Sharon Davies, WG is a key contact and also sits on this group.

Work around the framework has also included the move of the WBP Support Team hosting to NRW. This helps secure the long-term future of the support team and provides greater links with NRW. Both staff are based at the NRW Ty Cambria office in Cardiff.

4. Discussion on the revised Terms of Reference

The groups' Terms of Reference has been updated and open to comment by the group members. Group discussed the Terms of Reference:

- Chair – the chair of the group shall be appointed by the WG. Members present agreed they would like the chair to continue as WG (LF).
- Scope seems to cover everything needed
 - Could amend the scope (i) to reflect directing action on our prioritised species for action. The work maintaining the prioritised species for action in Wales is listed as an action under the 'promote action' section of the work plan.
- Attendees agreed with continuing the number of meetings at 3 per annum.
- Update the last sentence of the second paragraph to reflect the progress under the NRAP framework.

ACTION 3: HY and LF to update the Terms of Reference with the small amendments

5. Discussion on the revised Work Plan

LF, KC and HY have drafted a work plan for 2017 onwards. The work plan follows the scope, as listed in the Terms of Reference. Actions have been suggested under 5 main headings: Promote action; Raise awareness; Best practice; Information exchange; and Expertise. LF ran through the draft work plan and members discussed the content:

- Promote Action; Include an additional action under 'Maintain the list of priority Species for Action in Wales' about reporting actions taken against our priority species.
- Raise Awareness; WBP INNS Group communications plan – use the recently published GB NNSS communications plan as a basis. Keep short and simple.
- NRW provided detailed comments on the work plan – these included:
 - Promote Action: Local Action Groups – encourage engagement with the LAGs in Wales and establish how the INNS group could help support them.

- Support the production and maintenance of a Wales priority species for action GIS layer. This layer will be used by NRW e.g. for Area Statements work.
- Raising awareness: NRW have lots of CCD materials available. Interested to know if there are any gaps. Members have found the small fold out INNS guide particularly useful. A new poster has been produced for ports to highlight the risk of taking equipment abroad.
- Best practice – amend the ‘Promote the Code of Practice on SCP’ action to ‘explore the opportunity’ to hold an awareness raising event on the key messages and use of the provisions in Wales for stakeholders.
- Discussion on promoting and reporting of INNS sighting:
 - iRecord is now the preferred method of reporting. Recording on PlantTracker goes through to iRecord. iRecord data goes onto the NBN Atlas
 - LERC’s INNS data is regularly transferred onto the NBN Atlas at full resolution
 - Research and citizen projects often now include the use of apps. Important to ensure these feed records through to iRecord/NBN. NNSIP (The Non-native Species Information Portal) keeps track of all INNS apps.
 - INNS apps are listed on the GB NNSS website [here](#).
- Newsletter scoping:
 - A newsletter could be a way of disseminating communications to stakeholders. The newsletter can contain general INNS items circulated on emails by HY and wider such as news, legislation and policy updates, events, best practice, partner projects, funding updates, etc.
 - This could be quarterly
 - Photos available on the GB NNSS gallery
 - Style to be a 2-page PDF format document emailed to INNS group and wider.
 - Needs to be bilingual (HY to check for translation costs in WBP budget)
 - Decision – newsletter to be trialled.

ACTION 4: HY to produce a newsletter for November

ACTION 5: HY and LF to incorporate comments onto the Work Plan and circulate

6. Priority Species for Action in Wales list – communications plan

The INNS priority species for action in Wales list was agreed at the last meeting, and will be reviewed in early 2018. The list has been circulated to the WBP INNS Group members and corresponding members and will be put on the WBP website.

Discussion around producing a more public facing document highlighting the species?

- A public facing document would be useful – particularly for sharing wider to those with less INNS knowledge. Public facing document could be circulated wider for example to Local Nature Partnerships members
- A public facing document could:
 - Be more user friendly and engaging
 - Include species information e.g. picture, links to the GB NNSS information portal
 - Add more narrative around the purpose of the list
 - Include information on recording INNS species
- Useful to provide hyperlinks on both documents e.g. to the invasive Alien Species of Union Concern, etc.

- Can we learn anything from the presentation from the Scottish list?

Members agreed two lists would be useful – our list as is and one as a public facing document.

Discussion around action on species listed, particularly section 2 management species – include an additional column on our list to record actions. Monitoring is ongoing on the Aesculapian Snake – range does not appear to have increased. A study may take place looking at the impact of the snake – findings will be useful to understand the impacts and help with the media communications. Could we look for small opportunities e.g. INNS free areas such as creating a INNS free Ceredigion? Species at low levels eradicated at a local level e.g. Swansea authority are almost free of Giant Hogweed through eradication work.

NA-L queried the exclusion of American Mink and *Crassula helmsii* and the listing of Japanese Rose. The list will be reviewed in early 2018 and these species will be discussed in the review.

ACTION 6: HY to draft a Priority Species for Action in Wales public facing document

7. Partner updates

Updates from partners included, but not limited to:

Welsh Government (LF, KC, AH)

- Species control agreements and species control orders: The [Code of Practice](#) for SCP setting out how they should be applied was published in May.
- Successful GB NNS stakeholder Forum held in Principality Stadium in June
- Continuing work to implement the EU IAS Regulations around penalties and sanctions. Hoping for a consultation in the Autumn to set how these could work.
- The Deer Strategy Action Plan (including invasive deer) has just been published.
- KC attended the Grey Squirrel management workshop where the grey squirrel draft action plan was discussed. Feedback has been collated and a formal consultation is planned in September.
- A bilingual check, clean and dry poster has been produced for ports
- WG are funding the Japanese Knotweed CABI trials again this year. Although overwintering wasn't that great, survival rates are high enough to warrant further trials. The Japanese Knotweed board are now known as the combined biocontrol steering board to reflect their widening remit e.g. looking at *Crassula helmsii* and *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*. Work is continuing around the use of rusts on Himalayan balsam.

ACTION 7: KC to circulate the Deer Strategy Action Plan

Natural Resources Wales (TK, JJ)

- Carrying out a biosecurity audit within the organisation – findings will be gathered and published internally with recommendations for improving biosecurity.
- Carrying out an audit of research carried out or commissioned by NRW
- Working with SMNR (Sustainable Management of Natural Resources) – reviewed SoNaRR and provided recommendations to NRW Board for future iterations in terms of INNS. Inputting to the Area Statements process to ensure INNS is embedded.
- Drafted Wales level generic contingency plans.
- Supporting GB level work on producing a restoration paper.

- Topmouth gudgeon – assessments in the process of being completed and will receive the results of eDNA analysis shortly.

GB NNSS (OB)

- The second tranche of the list of IAS of Union concern has been published. The third tranche is being commented on in November. Defra, on behalf of the UK, is developing management plans for species under the EU IAS Regulation. Hope to share these drafts soon.
- Eradication work is underway in Scotland on the purple pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*), a problem particularly in bog habitats. No known extant populations in Wales but there was a historical population in North Wales. Species is listed on our priority species for action in Wales list under category 2. A risk assessment is available [here](#). Please look out for the species, particularly on bog habitat.
- Concern in Scotland and North England on the Pacific Pink Salmon – 2017 has seen more records with spawning filmed in Scotland, although this spawning may be unsuccessful. EA guidance note circulated.
- Concern in Southern England about Asian tiger mosquitos. Main pathway to England is in vehicles from Calais. Mosquito eggs found in Folkestone last year and larvae recently in Ashford – eradication took place by Local Authorities. Public Health England are leading on this. Central government staff (APHA, EA) have been trained on eradication to support Local Authorities in the swift eradication of the species. DH asked what action was being taken in Wales.
- Pathway Action Plans for angling and boating are in development.

ACTION 8: OB circulate further information on the purple pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*)

ACTION 9: LF to confirm what planning is taking place for mosquitos in Wales. **Update:** LF confirmed Public Health Wales are in discussion with colleagues in England re occurrences in south east England and surveillance in Wales.

JNCC (BP)

- BP is the JNCC Welsh Liaison Officer, based in NRW offices in Cardiff. BP is working on creating links between WG, NRW and JNCC, particularly to link expertise and identify opportunities.

Wildlife Trust (NA-L)

- In the balsam bashing session – seeing results from the hard work with less work needed each year.
- Continuing grey squirrel management. Red squirrels appear to be expanding their range – may be due to the grey squirrel management and the introduction of pine martens (appear to prey on greys over red squirrels).

Dwr Cymru (RP)

- The DCWW INNS Funding scheme is still open. The fund is open for third party organisations for INNS management anywhere in Wales. Link: <http://www.dwrcymru.com/cy/Media-Centre/News-Summary/2015/06/Dwr-Cymru->

[Welsh-Water-commits-160000-to-schemes-which-will-boost-the-natural-environment.aspx](#)

- Pirri-pirri bur recently found and eradicated at DCWW site
- Produced an INNS guide for DCWW staff. This includes species identification, recording and biosecurity messages.
- Welsh Water has written a biodiversity action plan which includes actions on INNS. This will be published shortly.

Cardiff Harbour Authority (DH)

- Undertook annual visit of marinas in Cardiff Harbour - all have biosecurity signage in place.
- Cardiff bay is hosting the Volvo Ocean Race in May 2018. This is a large sporting event with racing boats coming from Rhode Island and logistics from Brazil. A full biosecurity plan will be required. DH will circulate the plan in due course for group members to input comments. Members discussed the opportunities of promoting the biosecurity message at the event – the event does include a conference which will be on marine plastics which could be a potential route. The Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group are also looking at the event.

ACTION 10: LF to contact the Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group to discuss biosecurity messages at the Volvo Ocean Race event.

Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers (RP)

- The Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers are hosting a big event in Wales in November 2018. Teams from all over the world will attend to take part in a competition. RP can put forward biosecurity information to include in the information packs.

ACTION 11: KC/LF to circulate new CCD angler's poster

City and County of Swansea (SH)

- Work of late has included working on Japanese Knotweed monitoring with CABI, Completing Japanese Knotweed surveys on the Gower, starting Sea buckthorn work on a private landholding. Delivering INNS CPD training in Manchester on behalf of the council.

8. AOB

Pembrokeshire marine invasive day in Milford Haven on 13 September.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 22nd November, Welsh Government offices, Aberystwyth

The meeting was followed by a site visit to Dan Jones' Japanese Knotweed management field trial site in Swansea. Members were also joined by Peter McDonald, WG. Many thanks to Dan Jones.

