

PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

TWENTY FIFTH MEETING

MINUTES

DEFRA, BRISTOL

Wednesday 18 March 2015, 12:00

1. Attendance / Apologies

Present:

Chris De Grouchy (Defra, Chair)
Niall Moore (NNSS, Secretary)
Adrian Jowitt (Natural England)
Matt Ashton (Defra)
Mark Diamond (EA)
Gabe Wyn (NRW)
Olaf Booy (NNSS)
Richard Ferris (JNCC)
Jason Hubert (Forestry Commission)
Martin Williams (Welsh Government)
Trevor Salmon (Defra)
Alastair Ward (APHA) - telecon
Phil Boon (SNH) - telecon
Emma Boyd (Defra) - telecon

Apologies:

Hugh Dignon (Scottish Government)
Sallie Bailie (Forestry Commission)
Nick Bialynicki-Birula (NRW)
Colin Charman (NRW)
Adrian Jowitt (NE)
Ant Maddock (JNCC)
Pete Robertson (APHA)
Nicola Spence (Defra, Plant Health)

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2. Minutes of meeting on 03 October 2014

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-02

The previous minutes were signed off by the Board, with the following corrections: Martin Williams and Gabe Wyn to be added the attendance list.

3. Actions/matters arising

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-03

All actions were discharged or in progress, with two exceptions.

ACTION 1 (Previous Action 5) - **TS** to draft and circulate 'Duffer's Guide' for the EU Regulation.

ACTION 2 (Previous Action 6 *modified*) - **GW** to provide a paper for the next Board meeting summarising the work of the marine pathways project and highlighting relevant issues and including suggestions for how governance of the group could continue.

4. GB Strategy

Final sign off of text

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-04A

The draft Strategy was reviewed by the Board in its entirety. 19 issues raised by the NNSS were addressed by the Board and other comments provided. Modifications required by the Board are recorded in Annex 1. The Strategy was signed off by the Board, subject to these changes being made.

ACTION 3 - NNSS to make changes required by the Programme Board and produce final text of the GB Strategy by **27/3/15**.

Re-launch process and timetable

TS outlined Defra's intention to present the final Strategy to Ministers in May or June. He suggested that colleagues in Scotland and Wales may wish to consider similar timings.

MW stated that Welsh Government will need to initiate Welsh translation of the Strategy as soon as possible.

Implementation plan and priorities for action

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-04B

OB introduced this paper. The Board agreed with the recommendation for drafting the implementation plan but stressed the importance of significant stakeholder engagement at the earliest opportunity. It recommended that, once the draft was approved by the Board, stakeholders should be engaged to help finalise it.

The Board also agreed that, while NGOs involvement is critical, as a government strategy, government should lead on implementing the actions.

There was discussion on the role of Country Working Groups and the Board agreed that:

- they should be a forum for country level discussions (e.g. prioritisation), allowing the Board to provide a more strategic GB overview;
- they have a role in developing and delivering the GB implementation plan at a country level; and
- they should report back to the Board on relevant country level issues.

Programme Board governance

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-04C

NM introduced this paper and the Board then considered the questions posed by the paper:

1. *Should the Board continue to meet face to face or should/could we do the meetings via teleconference/videoconference/webinar?*

There was no support for the suggestion of meeting via teleconference / videoconference/webinar. However, the Board noted that better facilities should be provided for those members that were unable to attend in person.

2. *Subject to the above question, what frequency should the Board convene at in the future?*

The Board agreed that 2 meetings per year was appropriate.

3. *If the Board continues to have face to face meetings, is the pattern of alternating between England and Scotland/Wales appropriate?*

The Board's view was that meetings should be fixed and held in York preferably at Defra's offices in Foss House.

4. *With the forthcoming re-establishment of the England Working Group and the desire to make the Board a more Strategic decision making body, should the scale and level of membership of the Board change?*

There was broad discussion on this topic. The pros and cons of having high level decision makers at the Board vs. lower grade staff with more technical knowledge were discussed. The Board agreed that the level of representation required should be decided by CEO/Directors in each organisation on the Board. Therefore it was agreed that a template letter setting out the role of the Board and options for representation would be drafted for all organisations to use.

ACTION 4 – NNSS and RF to draft a template letter setting out the roles and functions of the Programme Board and requesting direction on appropriate representation.

5. EU Regulation

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-05

TS updated the Board on EU Regulation developments, in particular the first Management Committee meeting in Brussels on February 25. The circulated paper contained a preliminary 'list' of IAS of Union Concern plus a draft UK position on each and **TS** requested feedback to help inform this position.

ACTION 5 – Defra / NNSS to re-circulate the paper with the EU 'list' with additional information setting out the rationale for opposing and supporting species listing.

ACTION 6 – ALL to send comments on the suggested UK position on the EU 'list' to **Defra** by 27-3-15.

6. Secretariat Report

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-06

NM introduced this paper detailing the work of the Secretariat since the October 2014 Board meeting. **PB** queried when the recently approved risk assessments would be put on the NNSS website.

7. Rapid Responses – feasibility assessments

Paper circulated PB Mar 15-07

NM introduced the paper updating the Board on 12 species for which the Board had previously asked there to be an assessment of feasibility to eradicate them. **AW** gave a more detailed update on progress on Alpine newt and Egyptian goose.

8. NNS Indicator (Stephanie Rorke - NNSIP)

Stephanie Rorke (NNSIP and CEH) delivered a presentation on the development of the UK Non-native Species indicator. Note that a report on the indicator is available on the JNCC website:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4246>

ACTION 7 – NNS to circulate SR's presentation to ALL.
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9. Stakeholder Forum

NM informed the Board that the 2015 Annual Stakeholder Forum would be held on **16 June in Edinburgh**. As Scotland is the host country, **HD** will be asked to provide a Scottish Government chair for the event.

Suggestions for themes of the forum were:

- **RF** – increasing the profile of prevention; also potentially on engaging stakeholders and communication
- **NM** – starting the consultation on the implementation plan.

ACTION 8 – ALL to provide further views / suggestions on themes for the stakeholder forum.

10. AOB

MD raised awareness of EA biosecurity month currently underway. It has been a considerable success with webinars, pledges and other initiatives. **MD** will provide a note on the month to the NNS.

11. Date and location of future meetings

The next meeting will be in 6 months (date to be confirmed) in York.

Annex 1: Amendments to the Draft GB NNS Strategy agreed by the Programme Board on March 18, 2015.

The Non-native Species Strategy for Great Britain

Foreword

Contents

Annex 1: International Commitments Concerning Invasive Non-Native Species [NM to Complete update – on CBD] DELETE

Annex 2: Key Recommendations From “Review of Non-Native Species Policy: Report of the Working Group”, Defra, 2003

Annex 3: The Great Britain Non-Native Species Mechanism

Annex 4: Key Related Strategies [1. Necessary to include?] – NO, BUT IF THERE ARE KEY STRATEGIES MAKE SURE THEY ARE REFERENCED IN THE TEXT

Annex 5: List of Abbreviations [2. Necessary to include?] - YES

Annex 6: References [3. Necessary to include?] - YES

1 Introduction and scope

Our Vision

Our vision is that if this Strategy is fully implemented, biodiversity, quality of life and economic interests in Great Britain will be better protected against the adverse impacts of invasive non-native species because there will be:

- widespread awareness and understanding of the risks and adverse impacts associated with invasive non-native species, and greater vigilance against these;
- integration of invasive non-native species within the broader biosecurity agenda;
- 5. strong leadership and direction setting from government [NE suggestion];- MOVE TO FOREWARD

The Need for a Strategy

Successes of the 2008 Strategy

2 Strategic Aims

3 Prevention

The Convention on Biological Diversity Guiding Principles place a strong emphasis on prevention as the least environmentally damaging intervention, which maximises the reduction in adverse impacts and costs associated with tackling invasions. Taking action on pathways of introduction (both intentional and unintentional) and horizon scanning are key elements of prevention dealt with in this chapter. Other elements which contribute to prevention, including legislation, risk analysis, and public awareness are considered elsewhere in this Strategy.

The 2008 Strategy contains several actions related to pathway action but there has been a lack of progress in this area, mainly due to lack of evidence to support pathway prioritisation and management. However, this evidence gap is being addressed through the Non-Native Species Information Portal (NNSIP) and other projects including the classification of 37 broad introduction pathways and hundreds of sub-pathways. Furthermore, the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation contains substantial provision for the regulation of intentional non-native species introductions and management of unintentional pathways and this will influence how we take forward this important area.

Despite the stated priority given to identifying and preventing threats from new species that could be introduced to Great Britain, it is still the case that resources are more focused on dealing with already established species.

~~[6. NRW suggested addition: Prevention IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT via good biosecurity, pathway management and monitoring is IS particularly important in the marine environment where control and eradication is technically challenging and expensive and we will work here too with existing biosecurity regimes for example the IMO Ballast Water Convention and Hull Fouling Guidance where possible.] PLACE IN ABOVE TEXT.~~

Preventing the introduction and establishment of new invasive non-native species will continue to be a high priority in Great Britain. ~~[We will seek to identify and prioritise pathways that pose the greatest risk and develop Pathway Action Plans (PAPs) for priority pathways. Integration with the existing biosecurity regimes (Plant, Animal, Bee health etc.) will be strengthened, for example at the UK Border, and we will continue to engage with other Member States to implement the pathway requirements of the EU Regulation. We will also seek to assess and, if appropriate, re-prioritise our spending relative to long-term control.]~~ 7. Delete section within square brackets above as repeated in Key Actions below – NE suggestion. NNSS TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE

With 10-12 new non-native species becoming established each year, being able to predict in advance which species are likely to invade, establish and have a negative impact is extremely important. Horizon scanning is thus a key element of the prevention agenda and is extremely important for guiding our efforts on risk analysis, pathway management and contingency planning. In 2013 the NNSIP project carried out a horizon scanning exercise, engaging with a range of experts to identify non-native species that were likely to arrive, establish and cause negative impacts in Great Britain in the near future. By spring 2015, three of the top 10 species on the horizon scanning list had already arrived. We will continue to foster this approach, being mindful of developments across Europe, as well as in other parts of the biosecurity agenda, particularly the plant health risk register.

Asian Hornet: the first contingency plan in Europe

The Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*) is an aggressive predator of honey bees and other insects. It was introduced accidentally to France ten years ago where it quickly became widespread and it has also now reached Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Germany.

There is great concern that this species will reach Great Britain via imported goods or by simply flying across the Channel. Invasion would have a detrimental impact on the beekeeping sector and on the environment and would also pose a risk to public health.

Following the completion of the risk assessment in 2011 and an assessment of the management options Government decided on a general policy of preventing establishment of the species. In April 2012, the Asian hornet Response Plan was finalised. This is unique in Europe insofar as it covers a species that is not a statutory pest and is not yet present in the country. The Plan's main objective is to rapidly intercept and prevent the establishment of this species in Great Britain.

STATUTORY PEST TO BE ADDED TO GLOSSARY

Early detection is of vital importance to the success of the plan. We have established an alert system which allows the public to report sightings which are then identified by the National Bee Unit (NBU). To date all of the 1,000+ suspect reports have proved negative. There is also a network of sentinel apiaries which carry out active surveillance for the species.

If the Asian hornet is detected in Great Britain, the NBU and staff at the Animal and Plant Health Agency will work together to locate and destroy nests. The Plan has been tested in one desktop and two field Contingency Exercises and the response team has also been trained in France.



DELETE LEFT IMAGE AND REPLACE WITH CONTROL IMAGE

8. [Position of Case Studies – SNH suggest moving the case studies below the key actions in each chapter as it breaks up the flow.] - NNSS TO DO THIS BY POP UP BOX OR OTHERWISE MOVE TO END

Objective

To minimise the risk of invasive non-native species entering and becoming established in Great Britain. AND IN DOING SO WE WILL ENURE AS MUCH EMPHASIS ON PREVENTION AS POSSIBLE.

Key actions:

We will:

1. develop a robust approach to prioritising pathways based on potential impact of the species introduced and the effectiveness of pathway management;
2. analyse priority pathways to identify how they operate (e.g. origins, route, volume, temporal, spatial trends) and how risk can be reduced most effectively;
3. develop Pathway Action Plans for priority pathways in partnership with relevant stakeholders;
4. seek greater engagement with other EU Member States and other countries to improve pre border prevention;
5. implement border inspections for the species of most concern, seeking greater integration with the Animal and Plant Health regimes;
6. adopt and implement a clear process for regular horizon scanning of emerging threats, involving a broad range of stakeholders.
7. produce contingency plans for priority species in advance of incursions. These will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and set out clear roles and responsibilities.
8. foster and develop expertise and capacity for delivering contingency responses across government and relevant stakeholders, for example by developing centres of excellence and sharing capacity with the animal and plant health regimes.
- 8-9. [9. Do we need a key action to move more resources into prevention – EA suggestion?] ADD TO OBJECTIVE: “WE WILL ENSURE THERE IS GREATER EMPHASIS ON PREVENTING INTRODUCTION”.

4 Early Detection, Surveillance, Monitoring and Rapid Response

4.1 Early Detection, Surveillance, Monitoring

There is a clear need for accurate, up to date information on non-native species distributions to underpin much of our decision making - such as when it is appropriate to attempt eradication. To this end, the NNSIP was established in 2008 to provide, with the National Biodiversity Network gateway a central place for non-native species records in Great Britain. It has made considerable advances in engaging a wide range of organisations, increasing awareness of the need to submit data, developing methods and increasing the quantity and rate of flow of records including through citizen science. The development of a comprehensive database to collate information on past invasions has been vital for providing the information on which to base policy decisions. To support early detection of non-native species in Great Britain, we have also developed an alert mechanism which has proven successful and has elicited a large number of records for priority species.

[\[10. Add in a case study on surveillance in the marine environment – NE suggestion, SNH suggested a case study here too\] – AGREED, JAN MACLENNEN TO DRAFT A CASE STUDY.](#)

Considerable work is still required to maintain and develop the NNSIP, including engaging more organisations and, in particular, increasing data flow. The EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) also impose additional surveillance requirements on the UK, including species-specific surveillance and monitoring of high risk pathways and likely points of entry.

[\[We will continue to support the NNSIP and grow the alert mechanism to ensure it fits the needs of Great Britain and fulfils, among other things, the early warning requirement of the EU Regulation. We will seek to develop dedicated surveillance for our high profile species and pathways, including through the use of hotspot analysis.\] 11. Delete section within square brackets above as repeated in Key Actions below – NE suggestion. – NNS TO RESOLVE](#)

Objective

To develop and maintain an early detection, surveillance and monitoring mechanism that facilitates management responses, including rapid response, and fulfils the requirements of the EU Regulation.

Key actions:

We will:

1. continue to maintain and develop the NNSIP;
2. increase efforts to improve ~~[12. Delete text with strike-through - EA suggestion]~~ data flow for key species; **- AGREED**
3. continue to work with existing recording networks and citizen science initiatives to improve surveillance for non-native species;
4. ensure the Great Britain Alert System is more robust, with clear protocols, resources for verification and lines of reporting, and integrate it with other relevant schemes (e.g. Animal and Plant Health, EU Regulation, etc.);
5. review detection and surveillance capabilities in the light of policy requirements (including Water Framework Directive (WFD), MSFD and Regulation), horizon scanning and pathway analysis;
6. develop dedicated surveillance for high priority species and/or pathways (e.g. using hotspot analysis);

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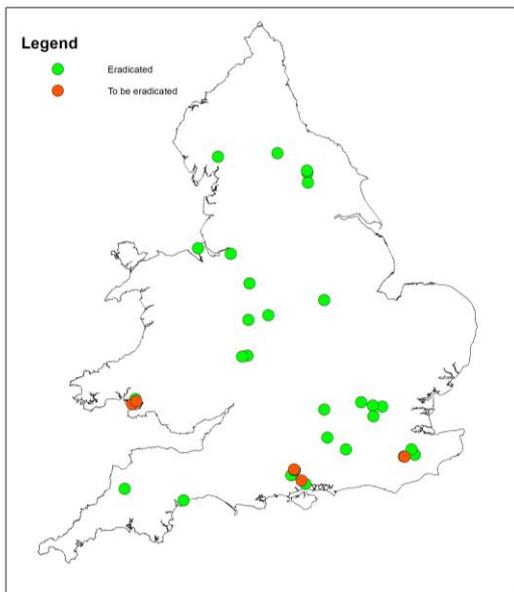
4.2 Rapid Response

Fish eradications

The Topmouth gudgeon (*Pseudorasbora parva*) is a small coarse fish from Asia which was introduced to the UK in 1984. It is potentially one of the most damaging non-native fish species to invade Europe due to its easy dispersal, rapid sexual maturity and high fecundity. If the Topmouth gudgeon became established in UK waters, the impacts on our native species and the fisheries they support could be severe.

Since its introduction, Topmouth gudgeon has spread across Britain through fish movements and the ornamental trade, with 23 populations identified throughout England and in South Wales. The Environment Agency started trial eradications using a piscicide in 2004. Due to its success, a five-year eradication programme was started in 2011, with the objective of total removal of the species from Great Britain by 2017. Currently there remain only 5 of the 23 confirmed Topmouth gudgeon sites in England and Wales. The eradication programme is on schedule to remove this invasive species from England by 2017 [\[13. Include the cost here \(£1.4million\) as suggested by SNH? – NO – THE COST SAVINGS OF EARLY ACTION ARE ALREADY HIGHLIGHTED IN THE CASE STUDY ON LUDWIGIA.](#)

The development of such expertise, tools and techniques support wider delivery of rapid response eradications for novel invasive fish and potentially other aquatic species including crustaceans, amphibians and invertebrates. To date, two other invasive fish have successfully been eradicated from Britain; fathead minnow in 2008 and black bullhead catfish in 2014.



Objective

To prioritise rapid responses and maintain and develop capacity to carry them out.

Key actions:

We will:

1. use risk management methodology to help identify and prioritise more species for rapid eradication in Great Britain;
2. make rapid eradication of key invasive non-native species by delivery bodies a ~~clear~~ priority for the Programme Board. In doing so, ~~delivery bodies will be required to provide~~ the Programme Board with seek regular updates on progress;
3. charge the Rapid Response Working Group with:
 - reviewing lessons learnt from past and current rapid responses;
 - reviewing and ~~reinforcing improving~~ protocols for undertaking rapid eradication;
 - engaging with industry and Non-Government Organisations to identify their roles in supporting rapid eradication initiatives;
 - reviewing media and communications lessons learnt in relation to sensitive eradication attempts and provide guidance for improvement;
4. identify and foster capacity and expertise in delivering rapid responses, including through sharing good practice within Great Britain, across the EU and internationally.

5 Long term management and Control

6 Building Awareness and Understanding

Objective

To raise awareness of invasive non-native species issues amongst the general public and key target audiences and, where appropriate, to bring about behaviour change.

Key actions:

[15. EA comment: we say we lack boldness in the text and then propose a set of key actions that don't seem bold. We need a key action to demonstrably change behaviour particularly in relation to biosecurity through investment in focussed, high impact campaigns.] AGREED. THIS CAN BE IMPROVED BY REORDERING ACTIONS SO THAT 3, 5, 8 COME FIRST. NNS TO STRENGTHEN POINT 3 TO MAKE IT MORE AMBITIOUS. REFERENCE TO NEW / NOVEL MEANS OF COMMUNICATIONS (E.G. SOCIAL MEDIA) SHOULD BE INCLUDED.

We will:

1. continue to assess public attitudes and evaluate the effectiveness of communication campaigns to inform the communications strategy;
2. charge the Media and Communications group with reviewing its existing plan and obtaining input from Non-Government Organisations/trade and specialists in further communications support;
3. build on the successes of existing campaigns, evaluating and refreshing them where relevant;
4. work with Non-Government Organisations/trade bodies to make better use of existing mechanisms to disseminate consistent messages;
5. use more targeted communications aimed at key sectors and pathways;
6. work with Animal and Plant Health colleagues to develop consistent messaging around biosecurity and maximise opportunities for collaboration;
7. maintain, update and develop the NNS website;
8. promote better access to information about invasive non-native species – especially for sectors and interest groups involved in key pathways;
9. continue to develop training tools including online resources.

7 **Cross-cutting provisions**

7.1 Governance and coordination

7.2 Prioritisation and Risk Analysis

In Great Britain we use risk assessments to help prioritise effort, and our risk analysis mechanism is probably the most advanced in the EU [\[16. Include a diagram/text outlining the risk analysis mechanism? If so - have as part of Annex 3 \(the GB Mechanism\), a separate annex or a Box here\]](#). **INCLUDE IT HERE** However, the assessment process continues to evolve and there are still a number of areas that can and should be improved:

- while the process has produced over 60 assessments since its inception (with 40+ additional assessments in progress), individual assessments can take a long time to be completed;
- on their own, risk assessments are of limited use for prioritising effort as they do not take into account factors such as how feasible or cost effective it is to respond to an invasive non-native species. For this, a risk management process is required; and
- better communication of the link between risk analysis and decision making in Great Britain will improve the transparency of the process and aid delivery.

7.3 Legislation

Objective

To assist in the development of a legislative framework in Great Britain for addressing invasive non-native species that is coherent, comprehensive and flexible.

Key actions:

We will:

1. Support legislators in the consideration of measures proposed by the Law Commission's Wildlife Law Project in England and Wales;
2. Support legislators in the development of measures to effectively implement the EU Regulation; and

3. Make better use of existing powers through improved co-operation and co-ordination between regulators, particularly developing a consistent approach to enforcement.

3.4. ADD ENSURE THAT ANY CHANGES ARE EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED, IF NECESSARY IN A TARGETED WAY

[17. EA Comment – should there be an action to communicate changes to those engaged in potential pathways of spread?]. – YES, SUGGESTED TEXT ABOVE

8 Research

9 Information Exchange and Integration

The dissemination of best practice among practitioners is necessary both to ensure the efficient use of resources and to ensure that lessons learned in one area can be implemented elsewhere. In addition, it is important to ensure that research outputs are widely disseminated.

Keeping up to date with best practice abroad is important to maintaining the best mechanisms for combating invasive non-native species in Great Britain. Furthermore, as a global problem, links with other global networks and initiatives such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Invasive Species Specialist Group (IUCN ISSG) are also important. Best practice developed in Great Britain might also be used to help initiatives outside Great Britain, for example in the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies or in other EU member states whose approach to invasive non-native species may be less developed.

~~We will, therefore, aim to ensure the Great Britain non-native species mechanism keeps up to date with invasive non-native species developments domestically and internationally.~~
[18. Delete? – NE suggestion]. AGREE

Objective

To ensure that Great Britain keeps up to date with non-native species developments domestically and internationally, and disseminates relevant information ~~domestically in the~~

~~most effective manner~~**EFFECTIVELY.** [19. rewording required – SNH] – **AGREE, NNSS TO FINESSE**

Key actions:

We will:

1. continue to input into wider Great Britain policy and biosecurity initiatives;
2. continue to work closely with Irish counterparts including through the British-Irish Council;
3. support an annual forum of Member States with shared objectives (consistent with the EU Regulation and the need for regional co-ordination);
4. develop a message board to improve information exchange;
5. strengthen support for the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, for example:
 - Continuing to support the invertebrate identification service;
 - Sharing technical expertise;
 - Providing support in the form of training, including biosecurity training ; and
6. continue to enhance and improve the NNSS website as a resource for all stakeholders.

10 Implementation and Review