

PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

TWENTY SEVENTH MEETING

MINUTES

APHA, YORK

Thursday 12 May 2016, 11:00

1. Attendance / Apologies

Present:

Richard Pullen (Defra, Chair)
Niall Moore (NNSS - Secretary)
Olaf Booy (NNSS)
Michael Coyle (MMO)
Mark Diamond (EA)
Justin Dixon (Defra, Plant Health)
Adrian Jowitt (NE)
Pete Robertson (APHA)
Trevor Salmon (Defra)
Martin Williams (Welsh Government)

Phone:

Emma Boyd (Defra, Marine)
Julia Garritt (FC)
Craig Lee (Defra)
Catherine Murdoch (Scottish Govt.)
Des Thompson (SNH)
Sarah Wood (NRW)

Apologies:

Hugh Dignon (Scottish Government)
Phil Boon (SNH)
Dominic Pattinson (Defra)
Nicola Spence (Defra, Plant Health)

2. Minutes of 26th Meeting on 29 October 2015

Paper circulated PB May 16-02

The previous minutes were signed off by the Board with the following amendments:

- Numbers on page 8 relating to monk parakeet work were incorrect as were statements about the feasibility of eradication. NNSS to follow up with PR after the meeting and amend the minutes accordingly.
- 'Formerly' to be replaced by 'formally' under item 4.

3. **Actions/matters arising**

Paper circulated PB May 16-03

The Board went through all the actions that were ongoing or not discharged and agreed that Actions 5 and 7 were standing items for the NNSS and should not remain as actions.

Action 10 and 11 were discussed together. On Action 11 MW reported that he has flagged up with senior officials / ministers issues related to the increased funding burden. CM suggested that any letter could be linked with resource needs associated with contingency planning. AJ agreed that the most important thing is that agencies are clear on the need for rapid response, there are fewer issues in relation to long-term work. MD thought it would be ideal for any letters to be sent by September and ideally to cover 'biosecurity' and 'invasive species'. TS thought that this timing would be difficult but RP agreed that timing is important (in relation to business planning). The Board agreed that the purpose of any letter would be to help steer corporate plans (and to ensure that the Board has members that are of sufficient seniority to make decisions). PR stated that he would prefer a letter about opening a dialogue about maintaining capacity and MW stressed that we need to be clear what the ask is while MC agreed, stressing that the letter should be about the 'new ask'.

RP suggested and the Board agreed that a paper should be pulled together detailing the key issues for each of the agencies and what were the best communications channels and ways to influence them. The paper would detail the existing and new asks of the agencies and that only following this could a letter be drafted.

<p>ACTION 1 (replacing previous actions 10 and 11): NNSS to contact the agency representatives on the Board to ascertain their key issues and also how to best influence their senior management and to draft a short report for the governments by June 30.</p>

4. **GB Strategy Implementation Plan**

Paper circulated PB May 16-04

CL introduced the paper and there followed considerable discussion on the optimal format for reporting progress with the strategy implementation plan and the Board agreed that it would prefer more reporting by exception. There was discussion of the RAG colouring and whether there was a need for more categories or whether arrows to indicate the direction of travel would be more appropriate. TS suggested that it would be useful if the implementation plan could reflect the prioritisation exercise and the Board agreed (e.g. by adding 'very high' to the priority column for those species).

Reverse and forward looks

CL introduced the forward and reverse looks. There was praise for INNS week and the need to grow it. JD noted that APHA colleagues (Alex Steele) have regular interactions with Amazon and Ebay. AJ queried whether we were sufficient linked in to plant health, e.g. £17M additional for plant health border inspection. The Board discussed Key Action 4.5 (on reviewing monitoring capabilities) and suggested that this should have been included in the forward look and that it should have been red.

ACTION 2: NNSS to ask JNCC to expedite assessing the monitoring and surveillance needs of the IAS Regulation, as well as relevant parts of WFD, MSFD and the GB Strategy by May 31.

ACTION 3: CL to update the implementation plan by incorporating the priority changes agreed in December 2015.

Risk register:

The Board discussed the risk register and agreed that the 'Risk owner' should be the organisation with responsibility for tracking risk. PR stated that rapid response resourcing should be higher than amber. RP asked if the Board thought that the programme of work was on track. MW / TS suggested that the elephant in the room was resources. MD agreed that there are large elements of the Programme that were a cause for concern and that biosecurity should be red as this is not good enough across government. RP stated that we need a really robust assessment of the risks of something going wrong. The Board agreed that actions in the implementation plan that hinge on resources which are not agreed or available should not be rated green.

Strategy resource needs

TS expressed concerns about a lack of progress on estimating resource requirements. NM confirmed that progress has been made in many areas (e.g. rapid response) but not

all (e.g. research). AJ raised the issue of improved linkages with Plant Health and the Board agreed that these need to be improved.

ACTION 4: NNSS to draft a preliminary paper to provide a rough estimate of resource requirements to deliver the GB Strategy and to circulate this to the Board - by June 15.

Country working groups

CL reported on the work of the England Working Group, highlighting work on pathways, spider imports and habitat restoration. CM reported on the work of the Scottish Working Group, highlighting the rhododendron management plan (with more plans coming for other species, including riparian plants). Their autumn meeting will discuss any need for new legislation / legislative change. MW reported that the Wales Working Group is developing a three year work plan for INNS and is re-vamping the old prioritisation exercise with which the NNSS has been helping. The Board discussed mechanisms for sharing information between the three groups and the three chairs agreed to share finalised minutes of country working group meetings.

5. Rapid responses

Paper circulated PB May 16-05

Working group updates and contingency planning

NM introduced the paper updating the Board on developments with the Rapid Response Working Group. MC agreed to review the position of the MMO in the redrafted decision tree (as per previous action in the RRWG). OB updated on progress on developing contingency plans.

Agency updates

EA

MD reported on:

Water primrose – there has been no change since his last report.

TMG – the number of sites has increased from 24 to 27. 20 of these are already eradicated and there is now an eDNA tool which is being used to detect them. The aim is

to eradicate all English populations by 2018. The two sites in Wales remain outside this plan.

MD also reported on white river crayfish which is in 2 ponds on a commercial fishery. EA are likely to start the process of setting up a species control agreement (depending on the consultation).

NE

AJ reported on:

American bullfrog – the eradication is ongoing and few individuals remain and these will be removed this summer after which NE will be monitoring.

Raccoon – a single animal was reported near Sunderland (there have been persistent reports in this area for several years). The draft contingency plan was followed and it worked smoothly, the individual being trapped and taken into secure captivity.

Raccoon dog - four animals escaped from a pet grooming business in North Yorkshire. The owner set up traps to try to relocate them, but they have not been re-caught.

Marbled newt – this has been reported from several sites in Devon from garden ponds. NE has visited the site and gathered information with the aim of removal.

APHA

PR reported on:

Ruddy duck - numbers down from 6,000 to just over 20. Remaining animals have been an issue because of a few sites not allowing access, but this is being resolved. The main issue now is the population on the Continent. The Netherlands has been extremely slow to take action but the French are pulling together a LIFE bid to complete control in Europe.

Monk parakeet – the population down to about a third of what it was. There are still two sites which are now a problem. Existing methods are slow and a nest-trapping method would be more efficient but this needs R&D.

ACTION 5: OB to send the draft contingency plans to the Board - by May 31.

6. EU Regulation

TS reported that the first list of 37 species is expected to come into force in mid-summer. The Governments have been concentrating on permitting, surveillance, border control etc. TS reported that work is underway on a second EU list, but that UK is keen not to rush this list, especially as the quality of many of the risk assessments was inadequate.

ACTION 6: TS to send the draft second EU list to the Board by - May 31.
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7. Secretariat report

Paper circulated PB May 16-07

NM outlined some highlights of the Secretariat work since the last Board meeting. There was discussion of the success of the website but queries on the reliability of webstats. The resourcing paper needs to be added to the NNSS priorities.

8. Pathways action

Papers circulated PB May 16-08A and B

Zoos PAP

NM reported on progress with the development of the Zoos PAP which is now complete and the Board was asked to sign it off. The Board signed off the PAP with one amendment: altering Action 11 – ‘NSS’ to replace the reference to the Zoo PAP Working Group) and further suggested it would be good to approach societies like ZSL to adopt the guidance formally and/or champion it.

Future PAPs

NM introduced the paper and there was considerable discussion on which should be priority PAPs to take forward and whether NGOs/industry should be asked to lead on / chair PAP working groups. There was some concern about their ability to represent all parties, their representation across GB and the risk of the result potentially being a ‘shopping list’ for government. However, the Board agreed that angling and boating/canoeing were priorities for PAP development and that a stakeholder led PAP should be explored with Emma Barton and, subject to her agreement, be trialled for boating/canoeing. This would be consistent with Ministers wish to empower others to take responsibility for action. The Board agreed to review the approach in future the light of experience of this trial. On amphibian and reptile releases the NNSS and Defra will pursue

in a more light touch way (and see how this approach could be extended to pets more generally).

ACTION 7: MD to approach Emma Barton to sound her out on establishing and chairing a PAP working group and to report back to the Board - by June 15.

9. Stakeholder forum

There was a brief discussion on possible topics for the Annual Forum in York on July 8th. All to send suggestions to NM as soon as possible.

10. AOB

There were two items raised:

UK Islands strategic plan: NM briefly mentioned progress on this item and agreed to circulate the current draft of the plan drafted by RSPB.

PR mentioned the issue with matched funding for APHA using Defra money.

ACTION 8: NM to circulate the draft UK Islands Strategic Plan to the Board for comment - by June 15.

11. Date and location of future meetings

To be held in York. NNSS to scope for dates in November 2016.