

Consultative Forum on Non-Native Species Policy

Novotel, Bristol

11 February 2004

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Telephone 020 7238 6000
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

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Consultative Forum on Invasive Non-Native species

Novotel Bristol Centre Hotel, 11th February 2004

Context

One of the key recommendations of the Review of Non-Native Species Policy was to convene a Forum to engage stakeholders in the development of future policies and programmes. Since the policy review two things have happened. Firstly, the Government and Devolved Administrations have published a joint response to the Review and secondly, they have issued a consultation paper on that response.

This is the first meeting for this Forum and effectively forms part of the consultation process described. The outcomes from this meeting and the overall consultation will feed into the Government's strategy on non-native species and the review of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 taking place in England and Wales later this year.

Environmental issues are devolved matters, and executive responsibilities are spread across administrations in each part of Great Britain. However, non-native species are no respecters of political boundaries, and just as the Review determined that action on non-native species should be undertaken on a GB wide basis, this first Forum has been called on behalf of Defra, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales. Future Fora may be called by individual administrations.

Meeting Purpose

To give the relevant stakeholders the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the report of the Non-Native Species Policy Review and the subsequent Government Response and Consultation.

To ensure a common understanding of the issues relating to non-native species policy making.

Desired Outcomes

All stakeholder groups participate in a discussion on a range of issues and assist in the development of policy priorities.

Delegates have the opportunity to volunteer to take forward actions, for example the development of Codes of Practice.

People leave the meeting feeling positive and motivated by the process; they feel that their views have been heard and that the Government will take them into account in the development of non-native species policy.

Presentation summaries

Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD)

Ian Bainbridge, SEERAD

The Working Group established by Defra to produce the “Review of Non-Native Species Policy” was established at the same time as the preparatory work was being undertaken for the CBD COP 6 Decision on ‘Alien Species that threaten ecosystems, habitat or species’.

Article 8(h) of the CBD itself makes a clear statement of principle over non-natives:

“Each contracting party shall, as far as possible and appropriate prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species”

This article and the paving work guided the approach of the Working Group and the resulting report to Defra.

This presentation will cover the 15 guiding principles agreed in Decision VI/23 at COP 6, and will present the three-stage hierarchical approach developed in principle 2, which should help to guide the prioritising of work on non-native species.

Details of the COP 6 decision, and the 15 guiding principles can be found at:

<http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-06&id=7197&lg=0>

Horizon Scanning Project

Jeff Waage, Department of Agricultural Sciences, Imperial College London, Wye Campus

We are almost mid-way in a Horizon Scanning scoping study for Defra on future biosecurity risks and needs. In consultation with Defra agencies, other UK and international institutions, and scientists working on invasive species, we are developing a modelling approach, which examines ecological and economic features of species introductions, ranging from animal and plant diseases to vertebrates and weeds. The aim is to build a general model with the help of case studies, which will indicate economic consequences of the introduction of certain kinds of organisms, based on key parameters. Then, to address horizon scanning, future scenarios will be constructed, and their effects on parameters predicted and used to modify the model, so as to estimate future risk.

Key parameters include rates of introduction, spread, area of affected commodity (e.g. crop, natural habitat), price and export markets, while key future scenarios will incorporate possible changes in trade, markets, climate and social values regarding agriculture, environment and introduced species. As this is work in progress, the presentation will focus on design and some case studies.

The Review of Non-Native Species Policy

Linda J Smith, Defra

Government announced during the passage of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, that it would undertake a review of its policies concerning non-native species. The need for a review was also separately identified in the Rural White Paper for England, but it was agreed that the review should proceed on a GB-basis. A key aim was to bring together the various sectors (i.e. policy interests across Government, Government agencies, trade and industry, and animal and welfare interests) to consider the issues. As a first step, Defra undertook consultation on terms of reference before establishing a Working Group with a linked network of corresponding members, aiming at an inclusive membership covering all interests. At its first meeting in June 2001 the Group agreed the aim of the review, as being

to evaluate the effectiveness of current procedures, identify main vectors for introduction and spread of non-native species, and put forward practical and proportionate, costed proposals to improve measures to limit the impact of non-native species, and identify organisations to take these forward.

It also examined key concepts to identify appropriate working definitions, and set out a key framework for future action, commissioning a legislative review and setting up three subgroups – Prevention, Remedy and Control, and Risk assessment, to take forward detailed work. The Working Group subsequently met a further 6 times, but also covered extensive additional ground in discussions and exchanges. Its final report, published in March 2003, followed additional editorial meetings and careful synthesis of the detailed work produced by the subgroups.

The report itself is a detailed document covering a wide range of key issues. It can be regarded in itself as an 'outcome'. But what else did this extensive effort deliver?

- It was a considerable exercise in joint working, developing constructive relationships across and within sectors (including within Government)
- It helped raise the profile of non-native species issues, focussing on genuine problems and seeking proportionate reactions; it sought to recognise and address public perception and concern; it helped develop thinking as ideas developed in international fora including CBD
- It made clear recommendations to Government, both in the context of the working groups on prevention, remedy and control and risk assessment, and also with regard to the more effective coordination of policy and action within and across Government, and better communication with the public
- It raised expectations regarding future actions, while demonstrating what could be done with limited resources, if there was effective partnership.

What didn't it do? We will consider later, whether you think it fulfilled its objectives and what you think needs to happen next.

Stakeholder Involvement

Jim Collins, Pet Care Trust / Sustainable User Network (SUN)

In the view of direct stakeholder groups (i.e. industry, wildlife utilisation groups, etc.) although not wholly inclusive the review of policy by Defra improved after it's initial start-up with greater representation of direct stakeholders. Never the less, room for improvement exists and a good number of direct stakeholder groups need to be drawn into the next stages of consultation. It is feared that Defra continue to pay undue attention to single-issue pressure groups at the partial expense of those whose activities Defra seeks to influence and or control. However, signs of improvement in these regards were evident throughout the policy review process on non-native species.

No one has deliberately introduced non-native species with the aim of doing harm and current known invasives in the U.K. have been introduced in a different scientific, social and political landscape than pertains today. All sectors - Government, state agencies, industry and conservationist/welfare groups (e.g. the continued reintroduction to the wild of injured invasive species such as Muntjac Deer) have contributed to the introduction of non-native invasive species into the U.K. Since all sectors have played a role in causing problems any solution must be based on a no blame scenario. Solutions must be tightly focused, proportionate and relevant in the specific context of the U.K. (i.e. not covering issues of concern in a Mediterranean country but of no biological relevance to British conditions). It is fundamentally important to remember - as stated in the Report - that only a very few non-native species are or could be invasives.

Industry Codes of Conduct are an essential tool in managing the issue of non-native invasive species and in securing direct stakeholder buy-in. Penalties should exist for those who fail to comply with such Codes of Conduct. In Risk Management and Assessment equal weighting needs to be given to benefits as well as costs of non-native species, including potential invasives, (for example, recent academic research and the associated reports have estimated that pet ownership saves the National Health Service £1 Billion per annum in the U.K. alone).

Outcomes Summary

1. Meeting Purpose

To give relevant stakeholders the opportunity to comment and feedback on the Non-Native Species (NNS) Policy Review, and the subsequent Government Response and Consultation.

2. Outcomes

2.1 *Feedback on the Outcomes of the Review*

We liked the...

- idea of a single body
- overall recommendations
- introduction of risk assessments
- three CBD principles
- fact that this has been put on the agenda
- opportunity for a diverse group of people to have an input

and the...

- common sense
- good balance in the recommendations
- fact that the review fulfilled most objectives
- 'education and awareness' actions
- learning from other countries

We are concerned that we need...

- some quick wins
- to bring together the economic and conservation interests
- to tighten up the legislation
- to decide what a non-native is
- commitment to a resource and to bring it in
- terms of reference for the 'body'

and that...

- we might get multi speed strategies because of devolution
- the information could have been disseminated more promptly
- action plan development is needed nationally and locally
- we don't know how to value the impact of non natives
- or who is accountable for the implementation of CBD

2.2 Feedback on the Government and Stakeholders Responses to the Review

We liked...

- the fact that there was no disagreement with the review recommendations
- there was reasonable acknowledgement for the 'body'
- the stakeholder response for clear 'codes of conduct'
- the positive responses to the 'publicity' recommendations
- commitment to engagement
- that the consultation went further than the response

but...

- the government response was weak on substance, priority and resource
- there was a lack of commitment to delivering the CBD principles
- 'risk assessment' needs more development
- there was not a lot of detail on the 'body', i.e authority and resources
- we need deliverable action plans for 'what next ?'
- attention is being deflected from the species already with us

plus...

- there was no new thinking for dealing with new hits
- 'polluter pays' is not applicable here
- there was a lack of clear commitment to action
- we need to have a clear policy on the strategy
- what Martin said had more teeth than the response, i.e the 'body' having authority knowledge and power

and...

- coordination with other bio-security initiatives was not mentioned
- there was not enough flesh on the bones. Stakeholders want to see a return for their input and money
- its not clear how we enforce compliance
- or how we mobilize information i.e. from the bodies recording invasive species

2.3 Recommendations for Defra

We recommend that Defra...

- agree the role, mandate and resourcing for the new body, i.e for it to coordinate, prioritize and ensure all the existing legislation that can be applied to NNS is enforced by April 2005
- develop the terms of reference for the body
- produce 3 scenarios of funding; with proposals for roles, responsibility and deliverables for each
- produces a clear strategy, responsibilities and a timetable, in the meantime, on education and awareness
- makes a clear commitment to maintaining this forum with clear milestones
- identify the highest priority species and what to do, in association with the PSA target on SSSI
- identify existing capacity and activities to make sure new activities do not duplicate

Participant feedback

For me, this meeting was...

- An excellent way of involving key stakeholders in the development of invasive NNS policy.
- I look forward to attending future meetings as the policy is implemented. It will be great to see Defra and government making real progress against this, as the second greatest threat to global biodiversity.
- Interesting because of the range of views expressed, slightly disappointing in its Anglo centricity, a déjà vu experience as there were no brand new issues raised, daunting because we have to manage both the process and expectations.
- Like the curates egg...good in parts

Thought provoking, encouraging, productive, reassuring, illuminating, stimulating, valuable, a starting point, an opportunity because...

- It brought together a variety of organizations who have a keen interest willingness to combat the spread of non native species.
- The process should lead to positive action being taken soon.
- The key issues have been debated openly.
- Other organizations and stakeholders share concern that this issue must be taken seriously by government.
- Of the open and balanced nature of the contributions.
- A diverse group of interested parties have discussed and agreed on a number of issues that are obviously very important to them.
- It has shed light on this important and multi faceted topic, by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders.
- Of the opportunity to meet with colleagues from a broad range of disciplines, to discuss an issue of relevance and concern to us all.
- To revisit all the issues on non native species
- We now need to put some collective vigour into making it happen.
- Of the unexpected contact, otherwise it has been still too far removed from the reality on the ground.

- Uninspiring because it hasn't actually led to anything tangible.
- less effective than I had hoped, too much presentation and not enough discussion. However, encouraging progress.
- A disappointment in that it has taken such a long time to get to this point.
- Frustrating because other participants were focused on unrealistic expectations (or maybe I am too pessimistic !)

Useful.....

- A useful insight into the approach to consultation by Defra on this issue, and the opportunity for our organization to think about how to respond.
- Very useful and hopeful as an update regarding non-native species policy. Very helpful overall.
- Most useful, but the facilitation was unnatural and unnecessary.
- Useful and informative, a chance to share and listen to views. Only useful if responses and issues raised are comprehensive and considered thoroughly .
- Particularly the presentations, but I think we could have spent longer on issues and forward thinking on possible actions structures etc, as we had a lot of intellectual ability at the meeting. Future meetings need to set a pace and address actions and delivery. Networking useful.
- Because of the interaction (interesting facilitation style though !)
- Not sure the initial games with the facilitator added anything- time would have been better spent on productive work.
- In airing the complex issues of assessing and regulating non-native species.
- Because it gave me the opportunity to hear views on invasive species etc from a very wide selection of people from different backgrounds and professional interests and fields of expertise.
- An opportunity to meet and re-meet people involved in non-native species.
- Because of meeting a diversity of people and expertise, and shaping and pushing for action.
- Because we have an understanding of the process to date, having been directly involved in the review paper, and the face to face interface with colleagues facing the same issues.

- Because it gave a lot of experience of what stakeholders really expect of government.
- In understanding the development of the strategy and being able to play a constructive part in its development, together with being able to network with other organizations with whom we share concerns about the issue but otherwise do not cross paths.
- Because of contacts made, a feeling that something may happen on invasives before we get the next one.

Interesting...

- And encouraging, demonstrates the will to do something and a degree of commitment for action as a result.
- And informative because it highlights certain areas that obviously need prioritising.
- And useful both for its content and for meeting people working in the field. Shame about the time wasted on the facilitator's ego trip.

and because.....

- It depends on what happens afterwards. If little or nothing happens or changes, then its just another talking shop. Actions will speak louder than words.
- It has indicated the degree of concern about the issue.
- It is a while since I witnessed democracy in action first hand in terms of policy development.

Very Informative....

- Because I had no knowledge of the review and now have some understanding of the issues
- To hear the views of stakeholders because it helps to provide feedback to the government assembly.
- Because it highlighted the very wide range of organizations affected by invasive non native species

Attendees contact details

Steve Ashby
Plant Health Quarantine Branch
Defra
Plant Health Division
Steve.ashby@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Dr Richard Baker
Central Science Laboratory
r.baker@csl.gov.uk

Chris Bear
Defra
European Species and Marine Team
chris.bear@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Sophie Bird
Defra
CITES Licensing Team Leader
sophie.bird@defra.gsi.gov.uk

John Bratton
Countryside Council for Wales
J.Bratton@ccw.gov.uk

Martin Capstick
Defra
Head of European Wildlife Division
martin.capstick@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Jim Collins
Sustainable Users Network
jcollin1@glcc.com

Charles Dutton
European Squirrel Initiative
c.dutton@europeansquirrelinitiative.org

Matt Fasham
RPS Ecoscope Applied Ecologists
Matt.fasham@rpsplc.co.uk

Iain Bainbridge
Scottish Executive
Ian.Bainbridge@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Louise Ball
Defra
Chemicals & GM Policy Division
louise.ball@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Paul Beckwith
British Waterways
Paul.beckwith@britishwaterways.co.uk

Colin Booty
Senior Scientific Officer
Wildlife Department
RPSPCA
cbooty@rspca.org.uk

Jonathan Brickland
British Waterways
jonathan.brickland@britishwaterways.co.uk

Mary Christie
Scottish Natural Heritage
mary.christie@snh.gov.uk

Ian Downby
BASC
ian.downby@basc.org.uk

Ian Epps
National Federation of Anglers
ianepps@freenet.co.uk

Dr Natalie Frost
Marine Ecologist
ABP Marine Environmental Research Ltd
nfrost@abpmer.co.uk

Dr Mary Gibby
Director of Science
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
m.gibby@rbge.org.uk

Dr Elaine Gill
Wildlife Management Advisor
Defra RDS
National Wildlife Management team
elaine.gill@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Steve Gregory
Principal Policy Advisor
Forestry Commission
steve.gregory@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Colin Hawke
Cornwall County Council
chawke@cornwall.gov.uk

Will Hellon
Defra
Fisheries Division
will.hellon@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Emelda Holt
National Assembly for Wales
emelda.holt@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dr Baz Hughes
Head of Threatened Species
The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Baz.Hughes@wwt.org.uk

PC Roger Jolliffe
Wildlife & Rural Crime Officer
Avon and Somerset Police
**Roger.Jolliffe@avonandsomerset
.pnn.police.uk**

Bridget Martin
Lancashire Law School
C/O Carol Menzies
cmenzies@uclan.ac.uk

David Gilchrist
HTA Nursery Stock Adviser
The Horticultural Trades Association
David.Gilchrist@the-hta.org.uk

Christian Gregory
Defra
European Species and Marine Team
christian.gregory@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Sean Hathaway
Environment Officer
City and Council of Swansea
Sean.Hathaway@swansea.gov.uk

Colin Hedley
Conservation Advisor
Countryside Landowners Association
Colin.hedley@cla.org.uk

Paul Holmes
Defra
Chemicals & GM Policy Division
paul.holmes@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Julian Hughes
Head of Species Policy Unit
RSPB
julian.hughes@rspb.org.uk

Phil Hulme
Head of Ecosystem Dynamics
Natural Environment Research Council
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
pehu@ceh.ac.uk

Neil Maddison
Conservation Officer
Bristol Zoo Gardens
nmaddison@bristolzoo.org.uk

John Mathias
Local Government Association &
Association of Local Government
Ecologists
jmathias@middevon.gov.uk

Noel McGough
Conventions & Policy Section
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
n.mcgough@mail.rbgekew.org.uk

Angela McTeir
Scottish Executive
angela.mcteir@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Eddie Mole
Curator of Horticulture
Bristol Zoo Gardens
BRISTOL
BS8 3HA
emole@bristolzoo.org.uk

Dr Sean Murphy
Head of Invasive Species
Management
CABI Bioscience
s.Murphy@cabi.org

John Pomfret
Inland Waterways Association
john.pomfret@waterways.org.uk

Trevor Renals
Environment Agency
**trevor.renals@environment-
agency.gov.uk**

Dr Pete Robertson
Head Of Wildlife Ecology
and Management Group
Central Science Laboratory
p.robertson@csli.gov.uk

Christine Rumble
Defra
European Species and Marine Team
christine.rumble@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Scott Sharples
Natural Environment Officer
Cornwall County Council
ssharples@cornwall.gov.uk

Dr Ian McLean
Head of Species Advice
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
ian.mclean@jncc.gov.uk

Tony Mitchell-Jones
English Nature
**tony.mitchell-jones@english-
nature.org.uk**

Niall Moore
Head of Wildlife Management
and Conservation Teams
Central Science Laboratory
n.moore@csli.gov.uk

Laura Naylor
OATA
laura@ornamentalfish.org

Paul Raven
Environment Agency
**paul.raven@environment-
agency.gov.uk**

Dr Jonathan C Reynolds
The Game Conservancy Trust
jreynolds@gct.org.uk

Mark Robinson
British Waterways
Mark.robinson@britishwaterways.co.uk

Ian Russell
Centre for Environment,
Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
i.c.russell@cefas.co.uk

Dick Shaw
CABI Bioscience
r.shaw@cabi.org

Georgette Shearer
Development Officer
The Mammal Society
gshearer@mammal.org.uk

Linda J Smith
Head of European Wildlife Division
Defra
linda.j.smith@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Neil Strong
Network Rail
StrongN.railtrack@ems.rail.co.uk

Dr Chris Sydes
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Chris.sides@rbge.gov.uk

Dr Simon Thornton-Wood
Royal Horticultural Society
simontw@rhs.org.uk

Peter Watson
Director
Deer Initiative
central@thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Christopher Weddell
Senior Horticulturist
Royal Horticultural Society
chrisw@rhs.org.uk

Jonathan Simpson
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Jonathan_Simpson@mcga.gov.uk

Dr Jean-Luc Solandt
Biodiversity Policy Officer
Marine Conservation Society
jls@mcsuk.org

Roger Sweeting
Freshwater Biological Association
rasw@ceh.ac.uk

Alistair Taylor
Natural History Museum
A.Taylor@nhm.ac.uk

Jeff Waage
Imperial College
London
j.waage@imperial.ac.uk

Judith Webb
Forestry & Timber Association
ftakeepers@aol.com

Debbie Wicks
Senior Biodiversity Manager
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
DebbieW@hwt.org.uk

Seating Plan

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|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 1</p> <p>Jim Collins John Harradine Emelda Holt Noel McGough Ian McLean Jonathon Simpson Linda Smith Roger Sweeting</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Table 2</p> <p>Ian Bainbridge Colin Booty Martin Capstick Nigel Gibbs Alison Smith Chris Sydes Simon Thornton-Wood Jeff Waage</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 3</p> <p>Paul Beckwith Charles Dutton Steve Gregory Will Hellon Sean Hathaway Bridget Martin Phil Walker Debbie Wicks</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Table 4</p> <p>Richard Baker Chris Bear Mary Gibby Baz Hughes Phil Hulme Roger Jolliffe John Mathias Trevor Renals</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 5</p> <p>John Bratton Natalie Frost Colin Hawke Sarah Jones John Pomfret Jonathan Reynolds Pete Robinson Jean-Luc Solandt</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Table 6</p> <p>Jamie Bartlett Jonathan Briggs Paul Holmes Angela McTier Tony Mitchell-Jones Alistair Taylor Peter Watson Judith Webb</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 7</p> <p>Steve Ashby Elaine Gill Neil Maddison Sean Murphy Ian Oxley Neil Strong Christopher Weddell</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Table 8</p> <p>Mary Christie Matt Fasham Ash Girdler Christian Gregory Julian Hughes Niall Moore Chris Rumble Scott Sharples</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Table 9</p> <p>John Hounslow Colin Headley Eddie Mole Jonathon Newman Georgette Shearer Rose Ward Max Wade</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Table 10</p> <p>Ian Epps David Gilchrist Peter McWilliams Paul Raven Ian Russell Dick Shaw Nina Turner</p> |