

PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

TWENTY NINTH MEETING

MINUTES

NOBEL HOUSE, LONDON

Monday 31 July 2017, 11:00

1. Attendance / Apologies

Present:

Richard Pullen (Defra, Chair)

Niall Moore (Non-native Species Secretariat - Secretary)

Bill Badger (Defra – fisheries)

Olaf Booy (Non-native Species Secretariat)

Mark Diamond (Environment Agency)

Theresa Kudelska (Natural Resources Wales)

Paul Rose (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)

Stewart Snape (Forestry Commission)

Leanne Stockdale (Marine Management Organisation)

Sarah Webster (Defra)

Kath Webster (Animal and Plant Health Agency)

Martin Williams (Welsh Government)

Phone:

Craig Lee (Defra)

Adrian Jowitt (Natural England)

Stan Whitaker (Scottish Natural Heritage)

Apologies:

Nicola Spence (Defra, Plant Health)

Sarah Wood (Natural Resources Wales)

Emma Boyd (Defra, Marine)

Des Thompson (Scottish Natural Heritage)

Roger Coppock (Forestry Commission)

2. Minutes of 28th Meeting on 30 November 2016

Paper circulated PB July17-02

The minutes were signed off by the Board, with the following correction:

- P5. SEPA update. A small patch of floating pennywort was removed from Elgin, not water primrose.

3. Actions/matters arising

Paper circulated PB July17-03

All actions were discharged, except Action 1 (below).

ACTION 1 (previous Action 1): 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

4. GB Strategy Implementation Plan

Exception reporting

Paper circulated PB July17-04

Under Action 3.5 - **Sarah Webster** outlined the ongoing work with agencies (e.g. Border Forces, APHA plant and animal reception centres) to put in place appropriate border inspection for the EU IAS Regulation. There were many questions about this process (i.e. links with CITES inspectors, work going on elsewhere in the EU, potential need for eDNA tools, relationship with Border Force, relationship with DAs). **Sarah** was asked to circulate a short progress report to the Board.

Under Action 4.10 – **Olaf Booy** updated the Board about work to support the Department of Health’s contingency planning for invasive mosquitos, including training APHA and EA staff in mosquito control. There were concerns that there is no clear incident management system in place. **Olaf** has raised this several times with the contingency planning group and will continue to do so. **Kath Webster** noted that APHA have a well-developed incident management system that could be useful. **Olaf** agreed to keep relevant members up-to-date with developments and come to the Board as necessary if assistance is required.

Under Action 7.10 – **Craig Lee** updated the Board on ongoing work to introduce enforcement powers for the EU IAS Regulation. The plan in England and Wales is to use existing criminal offences, which will cover release into the environment, ban on sale and import. In addition, **Craig** is working on developing a comprehensive civil sanctions regime, with the aim of a write round in September. The financial limits of the civil

sanctions are low - **Craig** has proposed increasing them but is not sure whether this will be successful. In Scotland, SNH is supporting Scottish Government on this work, but waiting to see how things progress in England. In Wales, NRW will be the enforcement body. In England, discussions with NE are ongoing.

Under Action 8.1 – Plans for the Research Working Group were largely covered under item 3. **Craig** highlighted that it is important to progress with this work.

ACTION 2: Sarah Webster to produce and circulate a short progress report on implementing border inspections – by September 15.

Country working group feedback

England – **Craig** reported that the focus of the last meeting was largely on EU exit. There was also discussion about the next list of species of Union Concern and the genus level risk assessments that are being considered by the Scientific Forum. The group also welcomed and discussed its latest draft of a paper on restoring habitats after INNS management.

Wales – **Martin Williams** updated the Board on major departmental changes in Welsh Government (including the amalgamation of the previous Environment and Agriculture departments). Leasa Fielding now chairs the Welsh group which has refreshed and finalised its priority lists.

Scotland – **Stan Whitaker** reported that the Scottish group is developing a strategy for established riparian plant species (based on the Rhododendron plan). A LIFE bid is also being developed (for submission this year) to improve biosecurity for important seabird island habitats. There is also the statutory group, which is focussing on developing the contingency plans and rapid response cases; this included rapid biosecurity work done in relation to recent carpet sea squirt outbreaks.

5. Rapid responses

Maintaining specialist capacity

Paper circulated PB July17-05A

Niall Moore introduced this paper, including its key recommendations relating to the establishment of a virtual team to respond to incursions in Wales, Scotland and England; with core funding provided by the three governments to sustain the team. In peacetime, the team could be used for various purposes (e.g. to remove existing priority species, help tackle long term management species, undertake research into eradication and control).

In general the Board felt the proposal had good potential, but needed more specifics and detail. It should clearly set out why we need a virtual team (i.e. very specialist skills that could not easily recruited and need to be rapidly deployed) and be clear about what decisions we want the Board to make. Specifically it needed to include:

- More information about the specific capabilities of these teams, where these are within government and why they need to be retained.
- More detail about what the team will do in peacetime and who sets the group's objectives.
- How this team could bring in additional resource if necessary (escalation) and who / where would that come from? Could this team provide core expertise, supported by other teams if necessary?
- Which of the contingency species are likely to be the most expensive / most likely to require escalation?
- Whether costs could be shared more widely (with countries other than those in GB)? In particular, Northern Ireland.
- Whether staff from other agencies / countries should be considered as part of the virtual team (e.g. **Stan** suggested a Scottish 'in-kind' contribution could be in the form of several trappers based in Scotland).

ACTION 3: NNSS to draft (with input from the RRWG) a revised paper on the virtual team providing more detail (and options) to cover the points raised above. This could be in the form of a Ministerial submission (with detail in annexes).

Contingency plans

Olaf updated the Board on work to progress contingency plans. There has been good progress in Scotland, with plans agreed in principle for terrestrial vertebrates, terrestrial plants, freshwater animals and freshwater plants. In Wales, the plan for terrestrial vertebrates has been signed off in principle and additional plans are expected soon. The aim is to have all plans, except terrestrial invertebrates, signed off in principle in September 2017. **Olaf** will continue to work up the terrestrial invertebrate plan with the help of the Rapid Response Working Group. Country Working Groups will be used as a forum for stakeholder comments / engagement on agreed plans (the Board decided this at its previous meeting). The intention is to test the plans through a series of exercises over the coming year.

Updates from agencies

Paper circulated PB July17-05B Monk Parakeets

Scotland

Purple pitcher plant eradication will be started soon (Rannoch Moor).

Ring-necked parakeet removal is planned from Glasgow.

There have been a number of sightings of rats and stoats on previously rat/stoat-free offshore islands. Responding to these has cost approx. £15k.

England

Monk parakeets - work is progressing (successfully) to remove monk parakeets in England, but there remain issues around access. APHA are working up a nest trap which should make it easier to trap birds rapidly. The Code associated with Control orders is now in place so we do have power to gain access if necessary.

Water Primrose populations are either eradicated or under management, except one in Greenwich; however, the Environment Agency has contacted the landowners and is expected to bring this under management soon.

Myriophyllum heterophyllum - has been eradicated from two of the only three ponds known with this species in England; however, resources have run out for eradication at the last pond (which has been hampered by the presence of Great Crested Newt).

Topmouth Gudgeon – 22 of 27 sites have been eradicated. Total eradication on schedule for 2019. American Bullfrog work carries on to check eradication has been successful, including the suspected Essex site.

Ruddy Duck work continues with a few individuals removed.

Pacific Oyster case in Cornwall is ongoing from an enforcement perspective, with fertile oysters removed in an MMO led operation involving 25 staff over two days.

6. Comms Strategic Plan

Paper circulated PB July17-06

Stan introduced the updated Comms Strategic Plan, which was commended and approved by the Board.

Mark recommended taking the Environment Agency's biosecurity questionnaire into account when designing the public awareness survey work. **Richard** asked **Sarah** to consider approaching the behavioural change unit in Defra. **Theresa Kudelska** said that NRW's biosecurity audit has now been completed.

7. EU Regulation

Implementing regulation / List Updates

Sarah led on this item, updating the board that 12 species have been added to the list of Union Concern in the first update, including 3 animals and 9 plants. Associated restrictions and obligations will come into force on 2 August 2017, except for Raccoon Dog which will come in on 2 Feb 2019. Risk assessments for the second update (third list) will be considered by the Scientific Forum in November 2017.

Management plans

For the first list of 37 species of Union Concern, management plans need to be in place by Feb 2018. However, the development of plans is resource intensive and so they need to be prioritised. **Sarah** is working with APHA to develop criteria for prioritising the plans, noting that plans are only required for 'widespread' species.

Post EU Exit issues

An SI is being worked up covering invasive non-native species to correct operability issues stemming from EU exit. The powers needed for this are subject to the successful passage of the Repeal Bill through Parliament. **Niall** highlighted that there may be benefits of exit that we could consider. **Richard** agreed that, given Ministerial interest, we should work up a paper on the potential benefits of EU exit for improving our biosecurity / work on INNS. He asked **Kath Webster** to provide a contact in her team that is working up potential benefits to plant / animal health from EU exit to help inform this.

ACTION 4: **Kath Webster** to identify the member of her team that has been working up potential benefits of EU exit for plant / animal health and send to **Niall**.

ACTION 5: **Niall** and **Sarah** to work up a paper on potential benefits of EU exit in relation to invasive species biosecurity / management.

8. Secretariat report

Paper circulated PB July17-08

Niall and **Olaf** updated the Board on work undertaken and future priorities.

9. Pathway Action Planning Update

The Boat Pathway Action Plan group has met twice since March 2017. Progress is being made; however, this is a complex PAP and is likely to take some time to deliver results (possibly 18 months).

The Angling Pathway Action Plan group has met once since July 2017 and is making good progress (aim to report within 12 months).

The Environment Agency is working on a water transfer pathway action plan. This will take the form of a position statement, which has been developed. Maps are being developed showing the connectivity of water bodies

Canals were discussed as a gap in the development of PAPs for freshwater species.

Craig highlighted that Paul Bratby from APHA is working on non-native species in the internet trade.

<p>ACTION 6: Mark Diamond to circulate information on the water transfer PAP when it is available.</p>

10. AOB

MMO informed the Board that they have established a new team to deal with Blue Belt issues (including invasive species) in the OTs.

11. Date and location of future meetings

NNSS to scope for dates in Jan/Feb 2018.