

PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

THIRTIETH MEETING

MINUTES

NOBEL HOUSE, LONDON

Thursday, 8 February 2018, 11:00

1. Attendance / Apologies

Present:

Michael Sigsworth (Defra, Chair)
Niall Moore (Non-native Species Secretariat, Secretary)
Olaf Booy (Non-native Species Secretariat)
Mark Diamond (Environment Agency)
Adrian Jowitt (Natural England)
Alastair Locke (Defra)
James Lovesey (Defra, Marine)
Leanne Stockdale (Marine Management Organisation)
Kath Webster (Animal and Plant Health Agency)
Sarah Webster (Defra)

Phone:

Paul Rose (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)
Stewart Snape (Forestry Commission)
Stan Whitaker (Scottish Natural Heritage)
Martin Williams (Welsh Government)

Apologies:

Bill Badger (Defra – fisheries)
Nicola Spence (Defra)
Richard Pullen (Defra)
Sarah Wood (NRW)
Dominic Pattinson

2. Minutes of 29th Meeting on 31 July 2017

Paper circulated PB Feb18-02

The Board signed off the minutes of the previous meeting – with two small changes already highlighted by **Stan Whitaker**.

3. Actions/matters arising

Paper circulated PB Feb18-03

Actions 2, 4 and 6 were discharged. **Mark Diamond** updated the Board on Action 6 - the EA water transfer PAP. The Board welcomed the initiative. Colleagues in Wales and Scotland are also considering the position statement.

Niall Moore updated on progress with Action 1 (key issues of agencies relating to raising the profile of INNS and also resourcing). He has held discussions with three agencies to date and will bring a paper to the next Board meeting – although this is also linked to two other Actions (Action 3 on specialist capacity for rapid response) and Action 5 (on the potential benefits of EU exit). The Board highlighted the need for a comprehensive paper on resourcing sooner rather than later and suggested that Niall should develop this paper and bring it to the Board as soon as possible (within 3 months if possible). The Board agreed that:

- there should be an early (and possibly) extraordinary meeting of the Board to consider the paper(s) [Niall to consider how long he needs to do this and suggest an early date for the Board to review it];
- the paper(s) should consider individual components (border requirements; specialist capacity etc.) as well as tackling resourcing issues as a whole in an overall assessment and put the need in context of the overall resourcing of biosecurity and biodiversity;
- it is important to know how these costs fall on the different sectors and agencies;
- it may be worth having a number of options for the 'pitch' (e.g. prevention as a first priority, rapid response second priority etc);
- it should consider whether the overall assessment paper should include costs for improving biosecurity in the agencies (i.e. EA estimate costs to improve biosecurity with the agency of £13M).

<p>ACTION 1 – Niall to draft a comprehensive resourcing paper (or series of papers) for the Board's consideration – by 15 April. [This should ideally consider options of ambition and consequent asks for each country/organization].</p>
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4. GB Strategy

Exception reporting

Paper provided PB Feb18-04A

Alastair Locke introduced the paper – going through the key actions from the strategy where there are issues with delivery. These are:

Key Action 3.5 – Implement border inspections.

This has been delayed for some time due to staffing changes at Defra but will be picked up again in earnest later this month.

Key Action 4.5 – Review of detection and surveillance capabilities

There is now a workaround to the need for a JNCC review and things have moved on. The NNSIP project will continue to take forward this work, but the general point was made that non-native species need to be considered in the wider monitoring portfolio of government.

Key Action 4.10 – Foster capacity for rapid response

This issue will be covered by the overall resourcing paper (Action 1 above).

Key Action 7.10 – Legislation to implement the EU regulation

Defra and the Welsh Government are currently jointly consulting on the enforcement regime. The consultation will close on 3 April. To date there have been 38 responses. The consultation in Scotland has closed. Defra estimates that the SI will be laid in the middle of August.

Key Action 8.1 – Research working group

The group has now been established and had its first meeting in January.

Wales INNS programme

Paper provided PB Feb18-04B

Martin Williams provided an update for the Board and spoke to his paper. He noted that, despite the ending of the programme, a number of staff will continue on in the NRW team. Mark highlighted the value of communications from the Welsh Biodiversity Partnership on non-native species.

Country working group feedback

Scotland

- **Stan Whittaker** gave an update on progress to date, noting that the Scottish working group has not met since the last Programme Board meeting. He raised in particular the discovery of stoats on Hoy (Orkney), for which SNH are mounting a response.

England

- **Alastair Locke** updated on this item, and discussed the range of topics the EWG are considering (EU Regulation, EU Exit, restoration paper).
- The Board will consider the restoration paper for sign off once it is available and will then consider how it should be published / communicated.

Wales

- Martin updated on this. The Welsh Biodiversity Partnership will be topic-driven in future (e.g. 'resilience' will be the topic for next meeting) and focussed more on delivery.

5. Rapid Response

Contingency planning

Olaf Booy updated on this point. Good progress has been made on the six generic plans in England, Scotland and Wales. Plans have been agreed in principle for (i) terrestrial vertebrates, (ii) terrestrial plants, (iii) freshwater animals and (iv) freshwater plants for all countries. The marine plan is complete for England, but work continues on it in Wales and Scotland. Olaf will continue to work on the terrestrial invertebrates plan. The Board agreed that the four generic plans that have been agreed should be put before country working groups for stakeholder feedback, before coming back to the Programme Board for final sign off.

Updates from agencies

Environment Agency

- Water primrose eradicated from 13 out of 33 sites (when the campaign started there were only six known sites so the problem is still growing). Every pond is treated every year.
- Various-leaved milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*). Work continues to eradicate this species at its only GB site (of three ponds).
- Topmouth Gudgeon has been eradicated from 24 sites, with 4 to go (1 cluster of which is in Wales). When complete, this will be an important success to celebrate.
- Floating pennywort has received considerable attention in recent months. The EA used incident response to respond, spending £250k. This money is focussed on areas where the species is widespread. In time, it is likely to spread to many more water bodies causing similar problems. The EA are developing a strategy.

Natural England

- American Bullfrog. No bullfrogs were found during surveillance in Sussex and Essex in 2017, but NE will keep looking for the next few years. The Board were extremely pleased with this news.
- Marbled Newt. The Defra Minister is keen to tackle this species. He has asked NE to negotiate access with the landowners, which will now happen.

Animal and Plant Health Agency

- Ruddy ducks. Estimated UK population is now 18, of which 6 are adult females spread across 3 different regions. The only known breeding in 2017 occurred in Cheshire. A key issue remains around maintaining specialist capacity (staff with specialist firearms training). France now holds the majority of ruddy ducks and has applied for Life funding to deal with them.
- Monk parakeets. About 100 birds in four colonies are now reduced to one colony (four nests, c. 20 birds) on the Isle of Dogs, which are being dealt with by egg control. A working prototype of a novel nest trap (for adults) will be deployed in the Isle of Dogs in 2018. The APHA team were thanked for their good results on this.

Marine Management Organisation

- American lobster. The MMO prosecution of those who released lobsters off the coast of Brighton was successful – this was the first of its kind. The Board commended this work and noted the importance of communicating with Buddhist groups to prevent further releases.

Welsh Government

- Topmouth Gudgeon. eDNA has suggested this species may still be in two ponds that were previously thought to have been successfully treated. Work is ongoing to determine whether they are actually present or whether it is an issue with the eDNA tool.

Scottish Natural Heritage

- Purple pitcher plant. Action continues to remove the only population of this plant (in Scotland) - on Rannoch Moor.
- Ring-necked parakeets. There is an ongoing investigation into the possible population in Glasgow.
- Floating pennywort and parrot's feather. SNH are investigating sightings of these species and encouraging reporting.
- Carpet sea-squirt. Marine Scotland are looking at control options for the few sites where this species has been found. It appears to have died out from Largs marina.
- Racoons. No further news on the individuals that escapes in 2016.

6. EU Regulation

Implementing Regulation

The consultation on this is underway in England and Wales, including the use of criminal sanctions. The result may be one or two Statutory Instruments, with the aim to have this (these) laid in August.

List updates

Niall updated the Board that further listing of species of Union Concern will be delayed for at least a year in order to allow Member States time to put in place the relevant measures

for species that are already listed. However, there may be more of a focus on regional listing in the meantime.

Pathway analysis

Pathway analysis is moving forward, led by Olaf with support from the NNSIP team and will require several more months to complete. However, given the EU Regulation deadline, a shorter analysis to meet the minimum requirements of the Regulation has also been conducted. The next steps will be discussed further with Defra.

Management plans

Management plans required by the Regulation are in development, the first of which (signal crayfish) will be published on the NNS website shortly. Mark noted that the objective to 'contain' many species is ambitious and may not be feasible.

EU exit

Sarah updated the Board on this item and provided an overview of the issues. The Board discussed the potential role of the GB NNRAP to take on the functions of the EU Scientific Forum post EU exit.

Martin raised the issue that in other areas (e.g. animal health, plant health) groups have been set up to engage the DAs and these are moving into developing a framework approach. This has not happened on the non-native species side. Defra will follow this up.

ACTION 2 – Olaf Booy to share his draft analysis of pathways with Sarah Webster – by February 23.

ACTION 3 – Sarah Webster to consult colleagues re. ensuring non-native species are covered in the EU exit framework discussions (similar to animal and plant health) – by February 28.

7. Communications

Paper provided PB Feb18-07

Niall summarised the extensive communications activity that has taken place since the last Board meeting. He highlighted Invasive Species Week, which starts on Friday 23 March, launched at a BIC Ministerial meeting and the recently commissioned public attitudes survey.

Martin highlighted the need to keep Wales informed on initiatives and noted he has contacts in Welsh Water that he could pursue wrt funding.

8. BIC Workshop

Paper provided PB Feb 18-08

Sarah spoke to this item and highlighted plans for a joint Ministerial communique about collaborative working on: work on ID at the borders, regional listing, check clean dry, invasive species week, eDNA, Asian hornet, muntjac and carpet sea-squirt. In relation to regional listing, progress has already been made with Irish colleagues requesting this from the Commission and Defra has emailed the Commission to pledge UK support.

9. Secretariat Report

Niall highlighted key activities including: the Asian hornet response, mosquito contingency planning, overseas territories biosecurity work.

Paul Rose highlighted initiatives to improve coordination in the OTs on marine work. Paul will provide Niall with an introduction to the main JNCC contact.

ACTION 4 – Paul Rose to share JNCC OT Marine lead contact with Niall Moore – by February 23.

10. Pathway Action Planning update

Niall updated The Board on ongoing work on the Angling and Recreational Boating PAPs.

11. AOB

Offspring of Common Agricultural Policy

Adrian introduced this item and highlighted the potential opportunity with the replacement of CAP to include more work on non-native species. It is early days at the moment and so it is important to take opportunities to get involved in senior discussions. Defra's Environmental Outcomes Board will be looking at this, Mark Stevenson sits on this.

To pursue this it would be useful to have a wish-list of the top 10 outcomes we would like the scheme to achieve with invasive non-native species.

ACTION 5 – Adrian Jowitt to share a note of potential opportunities as a result of the offspring of CAP to the Board – by February 23.

Marine Pathways Group

James Lovesey noted that the marine pathways group has been continuing to coordinate work on marine non-native species across the UK and Ireland. A focus for them will be the development of a carpet sea-squirt action plan.

12. Date and location of future meetings

NNSS to scope for dates based on Niall's ability to produce the resource paper (mentioned earlier in the agenda). Provisionally in York.