

**UK PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES  
FIRST MEETING MINUTES (APPROVED)**

**BY ZOOM**

**10 MARCH 2021, 10:00 – 11:45**

**1. Attendance / apologies**

*Present:*

Richard Pullen (Defra, Chair)  
Niall Moore (Non-native Species Secretariat, Secretary)  
Chris Graham (Marine Management Organisation)  
Christine Maggs (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)  
Colin Edwards (Scottish Forestry)  
David Jam (Forestry Commission England)  
Emilie Hall (Defra - Marine)  
Gavin Measures (Natural England)  
Jennie Jones (Natural Resources Wales)  
Julie Lane (Animal and Plant Health Agency)  
Mark Diamond (Environment Agency)  
Mark Preston (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - Northern Ireland)  
Martin Williams (Welsh Government)  
Matthew Bird (Scottish Government)  
Olaf Booy (Non-native Species Secretariat)  
Richard Gray (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - Northern Ireland)  
Sarah Webster (Defra)  
Stan Whitaker (NatureScot)

*Apologies:*

Keith Connal (Scottish Government)  
Ben Dipper (Scottish Government)  
Nicholas Greenwood (MMO) – replaced by Chris Graham  
Neil Riddle (Forestry Commission) – replaced by David Jam  
Kath Webster (APHA) – replaced by Julie Lane  
Nicola Spence (Defra, Plant Health)

**2. Minutes of meeting on 7 September 2020**

*Paper circulated (PB Mar 21-02)*

The minutes were signed off with no modifications.

### **3. Actions / matters arising**

*Paper circulated (PB Mar 21-03)*

All actions were discharged.

### **4. UK Programme Board Terms of Reference**

*Paper circulated (PB Mar 21-04)*

The Chair welcomed all to the first meeting of the new UK Programme Board on Non-native Species and particularly welcomed colleagues from Northern Ireland as full members.

The Terms of Reference of the new UK Programme Board were approved.

The Board agreed that the chair should alternate between Defra and the Devolved Administrations. The Secretariat will continue to provide secretariat services and help develop the agenda with each chair. Meetings ideally will be face-to-face but could be virtual where necessary.

The Secretariat will continue as GB for now and will serve and report to the UK Programme Board.

#### ***Update from Northern Ireland***

As new members to the Board, colleagues from Northern Ireland were invited to give an update on invasive species work underway. There is a lot happening in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol, the IAS Enforcement and Permitting Order (NI), providing training, developing protocols for rapid eradication and working on widespread species (e.g. grey squirrel control). A report in relation to the incipient muntjac population is being considered and work is starting on an invasive species indicator.

The invasive species strategy in Northern Ireland is old and due for review. Hopefully this work will commence soon. Consideration will be given to an all island approach.

### **5. Inspectorate & resourcing**

*Paper circulated (PB Mar 21-05)*

Niall introduced this paper explaining that it is the third time it will be seen by the Board. He acknowledged that there are many unanswered questions and so the proposal for the coming year is for a more detailed scoping exercise. The Board was keen to ensure this scoping exercise included piloting of inspectorate activities, which Niall confirmed it would.

Martin noted that good progress has been made over the past year in relation to the inspectorate and we are getting closer to operationalising something. The proposed work is therefore very welcome to move us forward. Welsh Government will support this by providing funding and is also funding a post at NRW that would be able to assist. Scottish Government confirmed that they will also provide resources for the scoping; however, they reserve their position in terms of Scottish involvement in any future inspectorate. Defra is also hoping to contribute to this work.

The inspectorate report was signed off by the Board.

## 6. Research strategic plan

*Paper circulated (PB Mar 21-06)*

Niall introduced this paper asking for comments on the strategic plan. The intention is that the Board's comments will be taken into account before circulating the plan to a wider network from the research community. Once comments from this network are received the plan will be updated and brought back to the Board for final approval.

The Board agreed that the draft plan should be circulated as planned although the Chair asked for any show-stopping comments to be sent to the Secretariat by March 26th.

There were differing opinions on whether the final strategic plan should provide more specific research questions or remain high level. The Board agreed that it would be best to keep the report high level, but subsequently to add more specific detail to the plan in annexes.

### **Gene drives**

Sarah spoke to this item and noted a recent publication in Nature Science modelling the use of this technology for grey squirrel control. It is very early in the research process. Defra policy in this area falls under the GMO team. Christine noted that gene drives are rather divisive and likely to have little public support in the UK. Niall noted that it is premature to develop a policy position on this at the moment. Richard made clear that there were no decisions being put to the Board, but we can maintain a watching brief.

<p><b>ACTION 1:</b> All: to send any 'show-stopping' comments on the draft evidence strategic plan to the NNSS by March 31.</p>
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## **7. Stakeholder forum**

The Board agreed that this should be virtual. It should focus on 1-2 issues – e.g. the review of the GB Strategy and aim for late June, which fits with the completion of the strategy review report.

## **8. GB INNS Strategy**

### ***Strategy Review***

Sarah explained that a contract has been let for this work, with DAs and GBNNSS as part of the steering group. It will include questionnaires and targeted interviews. Once the review is complete, the strategy will then need to be updated.

## **9. Rapid Responses**

### ***Updates from Agencies***

EA - Overall the *Ludwigia* programme is going well. The long-standing issues with *Myriophyllum heterophyllum* control are ending and it should be eradicated by summer 2021.

NRW – Topmouth Gudgeon has been found at an additional site in Wales. One dead coati has been reported, but this species is not considered a risk.

APHA – No Ruddy duck were shot since September and numbers are now estimated at 14 individuals. Monk parakeet – there was no control in 2020 due to Covid restrictions.

NatureScot – Floating pennywort eradication has been confirmed. The purple pitcher-plant eradication is being monitored. Roost counts for ring-necked parakeet in Glasgow have not been carried out because of Covid. Asian Semele in Granton Harbour not yet been confirmed, but NatureScot is following up.

DAERA – Muntjac work continues, following the report commissioned by NNSS as part of the BIC work. Numerous Asian hornet reports last year, but clearly they were mis-identifications.

MMO – no new information to update.

## **10. Secretariat Report**

*Paper circulated (PB Mar 21-10)*

Niall briefly covered this paper.

**11. AOB**

None.

**12. Date of next meeting**

Scottish Government agreed to host and chair the next meeting. GBNNSS will look for dates in September 2021. The meeting will be held in person if possible.

**ACTION 2:** GBNNSS to seek dates in September for the next UK Board meeting.