

**PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

**THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING MINUTES**

**DEFRA FOSS HOUSE, YORK**

**18 FEBRUARY 2020, 11:00**

**1. Attendance / apologies**

*Present:*

Sarah Webster (Defra, Chair)  
Niall Moore (Non-native Species Secretariat, Secretary)  
Christine Maggs (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)  
Emilie Hall (Defra, Marine)  
Kath Webster (Animal and Plant Health Agency)  
Mark Diamond (Environment Agency)  
Martin Williams (Welsh Government)  
Nicholas Greenwood (Marine Management Organisation)  
Olaf Booy (Non-native Species Secretariat)

*Telecon:*

Finn Eaton (Defra)  
Jo Long (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)  
Lyndon Baker (Defra)  
Matthew Bird (Scottish Government)  
Stan Whitaker (Scottish Natural Heritage)  
Theresa Kudelska (Natural Resources Wales)

*Apologies:*

Adrian Jowitt (Natural England)  
Ken Bradley (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, NI)  
Leanne Stockdale (Marine Management Organisation)  
Leasa Fielding (Welsh Government)  
Michael Sigsworth (Defra)  
Nicola Spence (Defra, Plant Health)  
Richard Pullen (Defra)  
Stewart Snape (Forestry Commission)

**2. Minutes of 33<sup>rd</sup> meeting on 19 June 2019**

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed off, with the following changes:

- The EA developed a revenue bid rather than a capital bid (page 2).
- The EA did not feel the note of the conversation on contingency planning correctly recorded their position, MD will provide suggested changes.

**ACTION 1: MD** to send modifications to the previous minutes, **NNSS** to make changes and recirculate - by March 31.

### 3. Actions / matter arising

All of the actions were complete or in progress. On a discussion around action 10 the Board agreed that legal advice on lethal control should be incorporated into contingency plans in England (contact at Defra legal: Jessica Hardern).

**ACTION 2: NNSS (OB)**, working with **Defra**, to incorporate Defra legal advice on lethal control of escaped animals into the vertebrate contingency plan – by April 30.

### 4. Northern Ireland joining the Board

*Paper circulated PB Feb 20-04*

As part of the UK's preparations for leaving the European Union (EU), agreement was reached between all of the UK administrations and Ministers for the GB Programme Board to become the United Kingdom Programme Board on Non-native Species, with an expanded remit which would include Northern Ireland, if the UK left the EU without a deal. As the UK has left the EU, and we have now entered a transition period, the situation needs to be reconsidered.

Northern Ireland formally requested to join the Board in November 2019 (as set out in the accompanying paper). The Board considered two questions: 1) should the Board be expanded to include NI for the purposes of replacing EU IAS Committee functions, and 2) should the Board be expanded to include NI in relation to all other matters. The Board also discussed the most appropriate timing in relation to these questions.

In relation to the first question, the Board decided that Northern Ireland should be invited to join the Board now for the purpose of replacing EU Committee functions.

In relation to the second question, the Board felt that inclusion of NI colleagues as part of the Board would enable it to fulfil an important coordinating function, even if they remained observers on GB matters, as is currently the case. This would need to be considered further as part of the scoping discussions on the review of the GB strategy. In this regard, it was noted that the all-Ireland Invasive Species Ireland strategy may be reinvigorated at some point and this would also need to be taken into consideration.

During this item it was noted that Scottish Ministers could not appoint Scottish members to a UK Board / Committee in the way the current SIs are drafted.

Lawyers from Defra and the Scottish Government are in touch about this and a further SI is likely to be needed to resolve the issue. This only applies to the UK Board, not the GB Board, as the latter is not set out in statute.

**ACTION 3: Defra** (or its Minister) to invite Northern Ireland officially to join the Board in relation to EU Committee functions.

**ACTION 4: Defra** to work with NI to review the terms of reference to reflect the Board's decision. To be worked up as a paper to bring back to the Board.

## 5. EAC inquiry and recommendations

### Resourcing

*Paper circulated PB Feb 20-05*

The EAC's report was published in late October 2019, which the government generally welcomed. The government response is currently with Number 10 and, if approved, could be submitted either as a Command Paper or sent to the EAC once it has re-formed.

On resources, a bid (£1.1M) has been submitted to Defra for funding in the coming year (2020-21); however, hopes that this will be funded are not high. Part of the problem is that invasive species tends to fall between funding stools (biodiversity and biosecurity) – it is important to try to avoid this by coordinating among Defra directors. Sarah agreed to facilitate a discussion between Defra directors to help with this. It would be necessary to also keep Chris Hadkiss informed.

For SR20 the NNS will be putting forward their own bid via APHA to Defra and providing narrative text and statistics to assist in raising the importance of INNS in the bids being prepared by others such as EA, NE and devolved colleagues in their own organisations. There are parts of the APHA bid which would be useful across GB – these should be flagged for the attention of Wales and Scotland. Coordination of these individual bids by organisations will be done through the NNS.

**ACTION 5: Sarah** to work to coordinate Defra directors in relation to the SR20 bid (particularly to avoid funding bids falling between biosecurity and biodiversity stools). Sarah will facilitate a discussion between Gareth Baynham-Hughes and Tom Walker – by February 29.

**ACTION 6: NNS** to circulate the government response (or the link to it) to the EAC committee once it is published.

### Inspectorate

The NNSS has been working on scoping the role of an inspectorate and in addition APHA has found some small resources to help do this (note this is not for the inspectorate, just the scoping exercise).

The product of this scoping work will be options for the Board to consider. However, this will not be done in time to input into the SR20 bid. Whether the inspectorate gets involved in incursion responses needs to be considered, as does overlap with existing functions (e.g. such as those in the EA, etc).

The Board agreed it would be useful for a small working sub-group to be established to support the development of the inspectorate, rapid response and resourcing bid.

**ACTION 7: Niall** to share the draft inspectorate scoping paper with the Board (noting it is very draft) – by March 31.

**ACTION 8: Niall** to establish a small task-and-finish sub-group of Board members (EA, SG, WG, APHA, Defra, MMO) to coordinate work on the inspectorate, rapid response and resourcing bid.

## 6. Pathway action planning

*Paper circulated Feb 20-06*

Niall commended the angling PAP to the Board and sought its approval before going out for consultation. The Board congratulated the angling PAP working group and thanked them for their excellent work.

The Board approved the PAP, subject to the following amendments:

- Where the paper states the Bern code has been amended, it should say adapted.
- Reference to the Boating PAP should make it clear that this has not yet been published (i.e. say 'forthcoming Boating PAP').
- NRW asked for Action 14 to be removed before the PAP is published. The Board agreed that Action 14 of the PAP should be edited to remove NRW. Suggested wording is ... "Cefas will carry out a review of the risk posed by moving bait associated with marine angling". If Cefas are not in a position to do this action 14 will be removed.
- On page 3 the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act in England should be added.
- The GB angling PAP should reference the Scottish angling PAP (could be included under scope).

Where actions are recorded against organisations that have not been on the group these need to be checked with those organisations (specific to the MMO and IFCA's).

The Board noted plans to monitor the PAPs implementation and flagged this as critical. The Board agreed that future PAPs should be taken forward on a UK basis.

**ACTION 9: NNSS** to consult MMO and IFCA's on action 13 to ensure they are happy to be listed – by March 15.

**ACTION 10: NNSS** to make edits to the angling PAP listed above before signing off the PAP for consultation – by March 15.

### PAP Consultations

Sarah introduced this item stating that it is a legal requirement to consult on the PAPs. She proposed publishing the plans on the GBNNSS website and inviting all stakeholders (those invited to the stakeholder forum) to comment. The NNSS could collate responses with the PAP group responsible for reviewing substantive comments and making modifications as necessary.

A concern was raised, however as to whether the approach outlined above will satisfactorily fulfil the statutory requirement to consult. This decision will be taken offline.

**ACTION 11: Defra** to confirm plans for the PAP consultation - by April 15.

### Future PAPs

Niall introduced this paper and flagged the need (as agreed at the last Board meeting) for two different horticultural PAPs, one for plants imported as ornamentals and another for contaminants that could be carried on these plants and associated soil, etc. It was suggested that Nicola Spence should be approached to suggest potential chairs for the two horticultural PAPs. Niall also mentioned the need for a PAP for companion animals, as discussed at the BIC workshop in January.

The Board were broadly happy with the principle that external organisations could / should act as chairs of the PAP groups.

## **7. EU regulation**

### Listing update

Sarah introduced this item. During the transition period if species are listed as being of Union Concern in the EU they will automatically be added into legislation in

England and Wales (at least). However, we do not expect any listing during this period.

### Domestic implementation

Legislation implementing the EU IAS regulation has now been put in place across the UK. In England and Wales a consultation on management measures has also been carried out, for which the government response is close to being published. A separate but similar consultation has been undertaken in Northern Ireland. Scotland has taken a different approach, partly because their legislation is based on white listing.

## **8. GB Strategy**

### Stakeholder Forum

The Board agreed to hold the next forum in Bristol. The NNSS will seek dates in June, but it will probably be the 3<sup>rd</sup> to coincide with the Rapid Life final meeting the following day.

### Review

*Paper circulated Feb 20-08A*

Niall introduced the paper and the Board agreed there were reasons not to start the strategy review in earnest, including workload, awaiting the outcome of the resourcing bids, waiting for the CBD targets to be agreed and EU exit transition plans. However, it should be possible to start the process soon in a light touch way, kicking it off at the stakeholder forum.

<p><b>ACTION 12: NNSS</b> to develop a paper scoping suggestions for the strategy review (including timings) to be circulated before the Stakeholder Forum – by April 30.</p>
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### Exception reporting

Niall took the Board through the exception report. There was discussion about the GB NNSS website and the need for it to be updated. The Board noted that updating websites can be extremely expensive and that the current website had many good aspects. While the Board understood the desire to overhaul the website, they did not consider this a priority. It was also noted that the website is hosted on old Fera servers over which we have little control.

**ACTION 13: NNSS** to explore options for moving its website to new servers – by April 30.

#### Country working group feedback

Wales – Much of the work is on the EnRAW bid, which is funded for a year helping to coordinate stakeholder work on invasive species in Wales.

Scotland – A recent meeting was held where issues around consolidating work after project funding stops was raised in detail. There was also discussion around PAPs and horizon scanning specifically for Scotland.

England – The last meeting of the England Working Group was on 14 May 2019, before the last Board meeting. The GBNS agreed to arrange the next EWG meeting in conjunction with Sarah.

**ACTION 14: NNSS** to arrange a meeting of the England Working Group in conjunction with Sarah.

#### CBD post 2020 targets

*Paper circulated PB Feb 20-08C*

The Board discussed the wording of Target 3 and supported the comments on this provided in the associated table. There was particular discussion around whether it was necessary to manage 'all' pathways of invasion and the apparent lack of emphasis on rapid eradication. Matthew Bird noted he will be at the open-ended working group in Rome.

### **9. Rapid responses**

#### Environment Agency

- Work continues to eradicate water primrose (39 sites in total, 13 of which have been eradicated), various-leaved watermilfoil (in a single pond, which will be eradicated in 2020), topmouth gudgeon (removed from 25 sites, 4 are in the process of being eradicated and the feasibility of eradication is being assessed in a further site) and the white river crayfish (initial eradication attempt failed).

#### Natural Resources Wales

- A person has been appointed to carry out a feasibility study for the eradication of topmouth gudgeon in Wales.
- The response to a racoon dog escape (August 2019) was not able to re-locate the animals and the response is now winding down.

#### APHA

- Work continues to eradicate monk parakeet (approx. 20 birds left) and ruddy duck (11-14 birds left).
- The response to a suspected racoon dog escape (September 2019) was not able to re-locate the animals and the response is now winding down.

#### Scottish Natural Heritage

- Work continues to eradicate the purple pitcher-plant on Rannoch Moor (the only population in Scotland). SEPA is exploring the possibility of eradicating parrot's feather from the one extant population in the wild (a large farm pond).
- The ring-necked parakeet population in Glasgow continues to grow (32 in Jan 2020, up from 28 in Jan 2019)

There was a general discussion about the racoon dog escapes in England and Wales and the difficulty of finding animals following escape. The Board agreed that we need a protocol for detecting recently-escaped vertebrates to ensure we have a clear plan to follow.

**ACTION 15: NNSS** to organise a joint lessons learned exercise for the racoon dog responses in England and Wales - by March 31.

**ACTION 16:** As part of the racoon dog lessons learned exercise the group should consider whether a protocol / guidance / SOP can be delivered to set out how to undertake initial detection of vertebrates following escapes or detections in the wild.

## 10. Secretariat report

Niall outlined the NNSS work over the past 8 months and highlighted the LAG workshop, BIC meeting, Asian hornet work, ELM, water companies, risk assessment and the NNSIP contract which is coming up for review.

**ACTION 17: NNSS** to circulate the latest GB horizon scanning report to the Board - by February 29.

## 11. AOB

Emilie raised the Biosecurity for Life project – a Life project putting in place biosecurity measures on 40 seabird islands, most of which are in Scotland. There is a cost of maintaining this after the project ends, including monitoring (£50-100k per



year). RSPB are looking for funding for this as part of the after Life work. This is tied into the MSFD measures and Islands Scotland Act and Plan.

Sarah noted there is a Human Wildlife Conflict Meeting in Oxford (<https://www.hwconference.org/About>).

## **12. Date of next meeting**

The Board agreed to look for dates in September 2020 in Cardiff.