

10TH PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Minutes

11.00, 2nd July 2008
Nobel House, London

1. Attendance / apologies

Present

Stephen Hunter (Defra, Chair)
Niall Moore (NNSS)
Paul Raven (EA)
Deryck Steer (JNCC)
Angela Taylor (Defra)
Jessa Battersby (JNCC)
Sallie Bailey (FC)
Angela Robinson (SG)
Matt Ashton (Defra – minute taker)

Apologies received from:

Richard Cowan (Defra)
Peter McNabb (HMRC)
Huw Thomas (Defra)
Ian Hooper (SG)
Diana Reynolds (WAG)

SH welcomed all to the meeting, for the benefit of the minute taker everyone introduced themselves.

2. Minutes of meeting on 7 February 2008

Paper circulated – PB Jul08-02 Minutes of Feb meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Actions/matters arising

Paper circulated – PB Feb08-03 Actions from Feb

All the actions had been discharged or were now redundant. There were no matters arising.

4. GB Strategy

3 Papers circulated – PB Jul08-04A Strategy Launch Feedback, PB Jul08-04B1 Implementation Plan Forward Look and PB Jul08-04B2 Implementation Plan Reverse Look.

NM introduced paper 04A (detailing feedback on the GB Strategy Launch). The launch received variable interest - in Scotland two TV crews were present. There was no press present at either the England or Wales launches but subsequent press coverage has been good. Most of the press coverage was factual/neutral or positive but 2 out of 37 articles that mentioned the Strategy were negative overall. The Board agreed that, in general, the launch was a success and asked those who organised it to accept its thanks.

ACTION 1 – NM to draft a note for Ministers (to be used by administration as required) informing them that the launch was a success - by 30 July.

AR then introduced papers 04B1 and 2 - the three-month forward and reverse looks. AT updated on the position with the Central Data Repository - the project is progressing through the Defra procurement process with the aim of starting it in early autumn. WSC has also paid for some scoping work by

BRC. DS expressed his concern in the delay in commissioning this work and offered his assistance in getting it moving. AR mentioned the proposal that she and NM had drawn up to seek to tender for research to assess the economic impacts of non-native species in GB (including case studies of the cost/benefits of rapid response). SB mentioned that the FC is working along the same lines. AR also highlighted the need for prioritisation of species by means other than the standard comprehensive risk assessments (completion of which is slow). To this end she is looking for money internally in SG to develop an approach similar to that used in Ireland. There is also interest in funding this from Wales and Defra. The Board agreed with this approach but stressed the use of the term 'Prioritisation for Review' rather than suggesting the use of a slimmed down risk assessment.

NM outlined progress with the establishment of the England and Wales Working Groups and AR detailed progress with the establishment of Invasive Species Fora throughout the country. AR and NM then outlined the various LIFE+ bids that are in the pipeline and that address non-native species issues. These include: Regional control of mink (due to be submitted in autumn 2009 and led by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust); Novel non- chemical and low-chemical methods of tackling invasive plants and hull fouling organisms (to be submitted in 2008 and led by SNH); Biological control of invasive plants (submitted in 2007 and led by CABI); Invasive aquatic plants in Ireland (submitted in 2007). SH stressed that care needs to be taken on the SNH - led bid so that changes through the EU Thematic Strategy on Pesticides are considered.

For the forward look DS stressed the need to maintain publicity of non-native species issues by feeding items to the press regularly. The Board agreed SH's suggestion that the Media and Communications Working Group should examine what items would be suitable for publicising in the next 9 months (in advance of the production of the draft Media and Communications Strategy).

NM mentioned the BBC plans for a week devoted to non-native species issues in August. SH reported on his interview with BBC World for this.

PR commented that the format for the forward and backward looks was good but that there needed to be more stress of areas of high importance and highlighting of areas where delivery was problematic, along with commentary on budget and ability to reprioritise. The Board agreed with this and asked for 'headline reporting' at future meetings.

- ACTION 2 – AR to send SB information on the Scottish proposals and discuss the possibility of a joint funding approach on this work.**
- ACTION 3 – AT and DS to discuss ways of speeding up the commissioning of the Central Data Repository.**
- ACTION 4 – AR/NM to ensure the Media and Communications Working Group produces a short publicity plan for the next 9 months.**
- ACTION 5 – NM to speak to Defra Press Office to ascertain BBC plans for a non-native species week and to report any findings to the Board.**
- ACTION 6 – All to send publicity opportunities to NM.**

5. Stakeholder Forum feedback

Paper circulated – PB Jul08-05 Stakeholder Forum Feedback

NM introduced the paper outlining the events on the day of the Forum and the generally excellent feedback received. SH suggested that attendees were interested in case studies more than theory. NM suggested using an international speaker next year and the Board agreed. In general the Board agreed that feedback was very positive and that it was impossible to please all the people all the time as a wide variety of individuals were present. The Board also agreed to continue with the Forum, to hold it next year in York (as it has never been held in northern England), that it should be in May (but

avoiding bank holiday weeks and half-term school holidays) and that the panel session be replaced with a general issues raising slot at the end.

SH drew the attention of the Board to the issue of the UK Overseas Territories – which had been raised in a specific question at the Forum. He informed the Board that he had undertaken to write a formal letter to the FCO to clarify the position of invasive species issues in the OTs between Defra/FCO and the Board. The Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry on halting UK biodiversity loss includes a question on responsibility for the biodiversity in the OTs. DS to send SH the evidence JNCC presented for this. SH also suggested that an informal discussion with Graham Wynn (RSPB) would be useful to gain background information. The Board agreed with this approach.

ACTION 7 – DS to send SH the evidence to the EAC, relating to OTs.

ACTION 8 – SH to write to the FCO to clarify the position of invasive species issues in the OTs between Defra/FCO and the Board.

6. Programme Board Remit

Paper circulated – PB Jul08-06 Programme Board Remit

NM summarised the contents of the paper: that discussions between Matt Hartley (MH) (Defra Animal Health) and Huw/Niall resulted in MH requesting that we consult the Board about interaction between the GB Mechanism and Animal Health – specifically on wildlife disease issues. Following discussion, the Board agreed that there needed to be a more formal mechanism for consulting animal health and agreed to include MH as a corresponding member of the Board. The Board also agreed that there should be an input into the risk analysis mechanism on animal disease issues.

ACTION 9 – NM to add MH as a corresponding member of the Board.

ACTION 10 – NM to discuss with MH how to optimally link wildlife disease issues into the risk analysis process.

7. Rapid response

2 Papers circulated – PB Jul08-07A Rapid Response Working Group Update and PB Jul08-07B Rapid Response candidates update

NM updated the Board on progress with the Rapid Response Working Group: this was established in February 08 and has met three times since then, with a high amount of engagement with stakeholders, an ‘audit’ of available resources, both expertise and equipment, is progressing slowly from one meeting to the next and is intended to support the co-ordinating body in due course. At present, the group envisages two further meetings and are on target to deliver a final report by 31 December.

NM then detailed progress with the six species that the Board decided were priorities for rapid response at its meeting in February. These species are: *Ludwigia*, Bullfrog, Monk Parakeet, Topmouth gudgeon, African clawed toad and Oak Processionary Moth. Some progress has been made on all of them and this is outlined in Paper 07B. The Board welcomed the progress and highlighted the following issues.

Water Primrose – The Board suggested expanding publicity on this by sending an article to the Royal Horticultural Society and Anglers.

American Bullfrog – The Board noted the issue of problems with access to some land and urged the administrations to look into this issue.

Oak Processionary Moth – SB and SH updated the Board further on this species and SB circulated a paper for information. SH expects this to be a challenging issue to resolve. SB mentioned that there has been a ban on the import of nursery grown oak trees without suitable certification.

African Clawed Toad – After some debate the Board agreed that, considering the efforts that NE were making to eradicate the species in England, the toads should be removed from the remaining site in Wales. It was agreed that this topic should be put on the agenda for the next meeting as a separate agenda item with all the information available on access issues, location etc. This would include discussion with the researcher studying the toad population in Wales.

ACTION 11 – NM to gather all the available information on the African clawed toad in Wales for the next Board meeting.

ACTION 12 – NM to prioritise the finalisation of the African clawed toad risk assessment.

8. Secretariat Report

Paper circulated – PB Jul08-08 Secretariat Annual Report

NM introduced the report detailing the work of the Secretariat in the last PB year and SH invited comments or questions. SB suggested the inclusion of an extra bullet point for future work to include co-ordinating the initial phase of a rapid response. The Board agreed with this and also that the report should be sent to ministers in England, Scotland and Wales as well as its ‘publication’ on the Secretariat website.

ACTION 13 – NM to add extra bullet point on rapid response co-ordination to future work programme.

ACTION 14 – ALL to send comments on the Secretariat report to NM – by July 18.

ACTION 15 – Defra, SG and WAG to prepare submissions to ministers to accompany the Secretariat report – by September 30.

9. Risk assessment

Paper circulated - PB Jul08-09 Risk Assessment Outputs

NM updated the Board on progress with the Risk Analysis Mechanism. The main points of note are:

- 52 risk assessments are being progressed through the mechanism.
- 7 have been completed.

The Board has received the 7 completed risk assessments, plus [for each species] a 2-page document summarising conclusions and outlining management options.

Following a call for suggestions for species for future risk assessments, 69 species were suggested, 13 of which have been commissioned already (or completed under the RPS report).

The Board discussed the priorities for future risk assessments and agreed to feed back to the Secretariat with prioritised lists. They also discussed the issue of carp as a potential Water Framework Directive red list species and agreed to commission a risk assessment as soon as practicable to help resolve the issue. There was also discussion on the issues of former natives such as wild boar and beaver and it was agreed to offer the use of the non-native species risk analysis mechanism to help others determine risks of the specified species.

The Board welcomed the species summaries. There was some discussion on the presentation of the risk assessment conclusions. PR suggested that the uncertainty column on the table needed clarification. AR outlined the

proposed output from the methodology development project (due to report on 1 August) and following discussion it was agreed that both the current table and the new graphical output are useful. It was agreed that a number of options for summaries should be produced for the Board to consider at its next meeting.

There was a discussion on the need to incorporate climate change within the risk analysis process. It was explained that this had been identified through the RPS (peer review) project and is being taken forward in the current methodology development project.

It was agreed that it would be useful to seek feedback from stakeholders on the risk assessment summaries.

ACTION 16 – NM to produce a number of different risk assessment summaries for the Board to consider at its next meeting.

ACTION 17 – ALL to feedback on priorities for risk assessments to NM – by July 18.

ACTION 18 – NM to commission a risk assessment for carp - ASAP.

ACTION 19 – NM to seek views of number of stakeholders on risk assessment summaries.

10. Media and Communications working group progress

Paper circulated- PB Jul08-10 Media and Comms. Working group update

AR (as chair of the group) updated the Board on progress. The group's main objective is to draft a Media and Communications strategy. The group has had 2 meetings and is making good progress. It is due to report in December but this may be delayed to take account of the baseline questionnaire survey of public attitudes to non-native species – its outputs will be important to help inform the Media and Communications Strategy.

11. EU and CBD Progress

*2 Papers circulated – PB Jul08-11 EU and CBD Progress and PB Jul08-11B
CBD update*

NM introduced both papers on behalf of HT. There has been relatively slow progress on the development of issues with the EU IAS Framework. The progress in GB however has been praised. SH informed the Board that there will be a EU-wide Plant Health review soon. HT had attended the CBD CoP in Bonn in May and the UK Government made a commitment on invasive non-native species (prompted by GISP) at the CoP.

**ACTION 20 – ALL to send comments on the IEEP figures [in Paper 11] to
NM.**

12. Emerging issues

Paper circulated – PB Jul08-12 Joint EA/NE Post

Japanese Knotweed Biological control – AT outlined progress with the licensing process. The PRA (Pest Risk Analysis) was now finished and the WCA application was about to go to ACRE. SH stressed the precedent-setting nature of this application.

Phytophthora - SH informed the Board that the consultation on Phytophthora is to be launched on July 15. The consultation will close in mid-October.

Joint EA/NE post – PR informed the Board about the proposal for a joint EA / NE post which shall be proposed internally soon. The post-holder would work

with fora to take forward issues on non-native species in the freshwater environment. This post may act as a model for other bodies to follow. The Board agreed that this was an important step to aid delivery of the Strategy.

13.AOB

DS enquired if anyone had heard the mention of a Biosecurity Agency in Parliament. NM promised to look into this. PR and SH enquired about progress with the Schedule 9 list as they have both been receiving enquiries related to this.

ACTION 21 – NM to check Hansard for mention of a Biosecurity Agency and to inform DS of the outcome.

ACTION 22 – AT to prepare a short briefing note for PR and SH on progress with the Schedule 9 and proposed ban on sale species.

14. Date and location of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in late September/October, potential dates to be circulated.