

**PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES  
THIRTEENTH MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**FERA, SAND HUTTON, YORK; MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2009, 11.00**

**1. Attendance / apologies**

*Present*

Francis Marlow (Defra, Chair)  
Niall Moore (NNSS, Secretary)  
Sallie Bailey (FC)  
Jessa Battersby (JNCC)  
Olaf Booy (NNSS)  
Richard Cowan (Defra)  
Mark Diamond (EA)  
Mark Fletcher (Fera)  
Verity Hunter (NNSS, Minute taker)  
Simon Mackown (Defra) – for lunchtime presentation and remaining Items  
Angela Robinson (Scottish Government) – until Item 12  
William Somerfield (WAG) - via audio link

*Apologies received from:*

Ian Hooper – (Scottish Government)  
Diana Reynolds (WAG) – William Somerfield standing in  
Nicola Spence (Fera) – Mark Fletcher standing in  
Huw Thomas (Defra)

FM, in the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Minutes of 12th meeting on 23 March 2009**

*Paper circulated – PB Sep09-02*

The Minutes of the 12th meeting were agreed.

**3. Actions / matters arising**

*Paper circulated – PB Sep09-03*

Action 2 – NM said that the draft Ministerial report is still in progress, for which he apologised. The aim had been to finalise it by 22 May but this was not possible due to the heavy workload at the time. He asked whether the Board would still like the report to be produced. The meeting was strongly in favour, with RC stressing that it is important in the current climate that the Board is

seen to be delivering, and FM was also supportive. JB reminded the meeting that 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity.

Action 3 – RC pointed out that the likely volume of RAs required under the Aquaculture Regulation was far less than that indicated in the minutes of the previous meeting. The case for cost sharing with industry is currently being considered by Treasury.

Action 4 – NM and JNCC are to convene a workshop to assess the need for a Marine Working Group. This should be progressed over the winter with the aim of holding a workshop in the New Year. RC requested involvement in this.

All the other actions had been discharged.

There were no matters arising.

**ACTION 1** – NM to circulate draft Ministerial report to the PB by end November.

**ACTION 2** – NM to report back to the next PB on progress with a possible Marine Working Group.

#### 4. GB Strategy

- **Implementation plan (forward / reverse look)**

*2 Papers circulated – PB Sep09-04A and 04B*

OB introduced Paper 04A, beginning with the Reverse Look and speaking only to the items on Amber:

6.3 - The modified risk assessment tool is now being trialed with some RAs but there are some ongoing difficulties. The new management module is being moved forward.

6.5 – The design of Pathway Action Plans (PAPs) will be developed over the next few months in conjunction with stakeholders.

7.11 – to be discussed later on this agenda.

8.7 and 11.3 – The project database is being expanded at present. The website is being overhauled with the aim of a re-launch at the end of October, perhaps with the projects database as well.

OB then introduced the Forward Look, noting that the PB needed to make decisions on items 7.12, 9.4 and 9.4a. RC observed that this appeared to involve a heavy workload and the Board would need to set priorities. OB and AR explained that some tasks are already quite close to completion and the Country Working Groups are helping take some of them forward. AR said the Implementation Plan has already been refreshed to account for these actions.

In HT's absence, AR introduced Paper 04B, emphasising that the paper aims to show where the GB Administrations are contributing to the implementation of the Strategy, and asked for comments and an indication of priorities. FM thought it might be useful to annex the paper to the Implementation Plan and the Board agreed. RC thought it needs a clear indication of 'work in progress'.

**ACTION 3** – Secretariat to circulate link to the revised Implementation Plan.

**ACTION 4** – NM to annex Paper PB Sep09-04B to the Implementation Plan on the website after suitable editing.

## 5. Secretariat Report

*Paper circulated – PB Sep09-05*

NM summarised this paper and there was some discussion of particular items.

### All-Ireland Working Group

This project is currently being re-tendered. RC pointed out that there are some difficulties in setting up Irish cross-border bodies and wondered if there should be a strategy for Northern Ireland alone. JB pointed out that for purposes of EU negotiation, NI is part of the UK remit.

### EU IAS Group

RC was worried that the definition of 'non-native' is not consistent throughout the EU. FM said there was a risk of unduly burdensome regulation coming from the EU and there was a need to work closely with them as they prepared their proposals, to avoid this. JB thought the Overseas Territories need to be included in the developing EU Strategy but RC did not want these administrations to be burdened unduly. RC suggested that the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands should be included.

### Website

The number of visitors to the website has been growing strongly and the re-launch at the end of October should help this further.

### Future work programme

NM said the priority areas are: implementing the Media & Communications Strategy, the response to *Didemnum*, drafting ISAPs, developing PAPs and startup packs for Action Fora, helping with the implementation of the Aquaculture Regulation, helping establish the NNSIP and the website re-launch.

FM thought there is now a clear sense of the priorities for future work.

MD asked if and how biosecurity and border control fits in to the programme. There appears to be a lack of knowledge and coordination as regards GB and the public perception seems to be that there is little control or regulation at

points of entry. There was some discussion on this point and the Board agreed that this was not a priority area at the moment.

**ACTION 5** – NM to clarify plans for an Irish NNS Strategy with relevant Northern Irish officials.

**ACTION 6** – NM to add the Marine Working Group and the Ministerial Report to the Secretariat's work programme.

## 6. Risk assessment

*2 Papers circulated – PB Sep09-06A and 06B*

OB introduced the papers. He said that Defra and the Scottish Government are looking to support sales bans with RAs so that those that are still outstanding are being prioritised. RC questioned the coverage of species and said that, as crayfish are already licensed, nothing should be in the country except signal and native crayfish.

The Board considered the Risk Assessment Summary Sheets and agreed that the graph was confusing. The Board decided it should be replaced with more explanation of the accompanying table. The confidence column should not contain colours. MD said that the language in the Impacts box needed to be consistent across the RAs. The Board agreed that Risk Assessors will be given a short time (c. 10 days) to comment on the summary sheets to ensure they accurately reflect the conclusions of the risk assessment.

The Board discussed the Pacific oyster risk assessment. NM asked for a steer on the way forward. MD stated that he believed that government and industry discussions are needed. FM asked who is the policy lead and RC named Lee McDonough and Anthony Hynes.

SB asked whether climate change is included in the assessment of risk. OB said that this issue was considered when the RA process was being modified but it was a difficult area to cover adequately. NM asked how incorporating climate change could best be accomplished and how it might be resourced. The Board felt that it should be embedded in the process as good climate change projections are now available and work has been done on some species. OB asked if he should develop a shortlist of species (that have or are being risk assessed) to be prioritised for assessing the impact of likely climate change scenarios. The Board agreed with this approach.

**ACTION 7** – NM to contact Defra policy leads to discuss bringing together relevant parties to agree a way forward on Pacific oysters.

**ACTION 8** – OB to remove the graph from the summary sheets and replace it with an explanation of the table.

**ACTION 9** – OB to draw up a shortlist of species (that have or are being risk assessed) to be prioritised for assessing the impact of likely climate change scenarios.

## **7. Invasive Species Action Plans (ISAPs)**

*Paper circulated – PB Sep09-07*

OB invited the Board to comment on the appropriateness of the format of the ISAPs. NM stressed that it is a summary document with comprehensive links to more background information (such as risk assessments, ID sheets etc.). The Board liked the format but RC cautioned that the aims needed to be feasible. FM said the aims may need to be agreed by the Board and/or Ministers and asked what are the next steps. NM said that he intended that the Secretariat would begin drafting more ISAPs - prioritised in consultation with the Board, Country Working Groups and other stakeholders. RC asked if Ministers should be advised before issuing an ISAP. FM thought this should happen, even if most ISAPs reflect already agreed policy. MD suggested prioritising species which currently involve most effort and AR agreed that some ISAPs could be used to help redirect control efforts. RC stated that we should not try to produce too many ISAPs too soon and that the Board needs to prioritise species for which taking positive action is possible.

**ACTION 10** – NM to draft a list of proposed species for which an ISAP is a priority, in consultation with Country Working Groups and others as necessary, and circulate to the Board by November 30.

## **8. Talk by Simon Mackown (Defra) outlining the main findings of the Public Awareness Survey in England**

## **9. Media and communications**

*2 Papers circulated – PB Sep09-09A and 09B*

- **Strategic Plan for GB**

AR asked the Board to consider the draft Media and Communications Strategic Plan with its eighteen recommendations in three sections. The plan has recommended a series of key messages and recommends focussing on the high-priority stakeholder groups and elements of the general public associated with high-risk pathways. A series of costed options are set out in the plan.

FM welcomed the paper and the Board agreed that this was a very useful document with sensible recommendations. The Board thanked the working group for its efforts.

MD informed the Board that Defra has contributed £2m for INNS issues related to the Water Framework Directive and NM stated that £200-250k of this sum is earmarked for a public awareness initiative which will concentrate on the horticulture trade and the aquatic environment. A specification document for this campaign is being discussed with the Central Office of Information (COI) on 29 September.

RC said it is vital to engage with the retail trade, particularly the large aquatics suppliers. SB agreed, citing the case where Forest Certification had encouraged big retailers to take part. FM felt it would be difficult to obtain any extra Defra funding, although NM said that Defra Marketing is also contributing money. SMcK wondered how the Strategic Plan's messages would be embedded across Government. FM said there is funding for the Secretariat to carry out individual species case studies and SB and SMcK asked to be copied in on the grey squirrel study as it is being developed.

AR said that Option B is the one currently being progressed. RC reminded the Board that this is short-term funding only which must be used in the current financial year. FM reminded the meeting that Ministers must be kept informed in the lead-up to the launch of the initiative.

The Board approved the draft Strategic Communications Plan.

- **International Biodiversity Day (IBD)**

SMcK introduced Paper 09B. IBD on 22 May had involved a big effort to publicise the message about invasive non-native species across GB. Forty-seven projects had taken place, with stakeholders, particularly the National Trust, playing a crucial part. The survey of public attitudes, some more ID sheets and the Natural England horizon scanning document had all been published on the day, but unfortunately the impact was not as large as had been hoped for. OB said he had received positive feedback, including from Europe, and considered the day a success.

- **ID sheets**

OB informed the Board that 41 ID sheets were now on the website and 23 more are in progress. They have been very well received.

- **Monthly media monitoring reports**

NM asked the Board for its views on the usefulness of the monthly media monitoring reports provided by the Secretariat. The meeting felt that the reports were useful, although not always read closely. It was decided to make the reports quarterly rather than monthly, but to alert the Board if any particularly newsworthy item arose meanwhile.

**ACTION 11** – VH to continue providing media monitoring reports on a quarterly basis, with extra alerts if needed.

## 10. Rapid Response

3 Papers circulated – PB Sep09-10A, 10B and 10C

- **Working Group Report**

NM presented the draft Rapid Response Working Group Report and covering note (Paper 10A) on behalf of HT to the Board for approval of the general direction of travel. HT intends that the WG will have one further meeting to finalise the report which will then be presented to the Board for approval. NM drew attention to several areas of concern that the working group had identified such as resourcing rapid responses and the lack of statutory responsibilities in many areas. FM considered it a good, balanced document and the Board agreed that there were no major issues with the direction of travel. MD asked if there were any contingency/emergency funds that could be accessed. JB enquired if the Board thought that JNCC should be on the proposed core rapid response group. RC thought that it should.

- ***Didemnum* – sea squirt**

NM reported that *D. vexillum* is spreading within Holyhead Marina and the infestation in the Dart Estuary is worse than at first thought. WS said that a submission had gone to the Welsh Minister and CCW has the go-ahead to start eradication with money from WAG. NM said that £30k of Defra funding is available for a survey in England. A Working Group has been established, an ISAP has been circulated and helplines have been set up by SNH and NE. WS stated that the control trial would begin at Holyhead this week.

- **Individual species actions**

### Water Primrose

MD said this is now eradicated in the wild except for two newly-discovered infestations in Bridport and Gloucester. OB said that the most northerly occurrence in the world had been discovered in July in Scarborough, and that the ID sheet had prompted the first report from Ireland.

### American Bullfrog

NM said that Natural England is continuing its eradication campaign on this species. Only one animal was culled this year compared to 5 last year and over 100 in 2007, an encouraging trend. New DNA detection techniques are being researched.

### Monk Parakeet

MF reported that research into removal methods is continuing. One nest has recently been found on a mobile phone mast.

### Oak Processionary Moth

SB/NM updated the Board on progress – over 1,000 nests removed this year which is almost double last years total (although this is partly due to increased search effort). SB reported that the costs of control are escalating.

### Topmouth Gudgeon

MD reported that action is planned by the EA for this winter, especially on the key site on the River Lee to prevent further spread. EA will also be targeting the Fathead Minnow on its only known site near York.

### African Clawed Toad

WS said that an eradication attempt will be made in Wales in Spring 2010, coordinated by EA. WS will update the Wales WG at its meeting on 24 September. More toads have been discovered close to the site in Lincolnshire where an eradication attempt was underway.

## **11. WFD monies**

MD said that river basin plans had been submitted to Ministers in England and Wales for approval by the end of December. All the plans support the GB Strategy. Of the £2m recently allocated by Defra to support INNS issues related to WFD, £550k is for R&D on biocontrol, e.g. Himalayan Balsam; £250k is for awareness raising; £40k is for the forum starter packs; £200k is for rapid response; and £600k is for local initiatives. The remainder will be used for eradication programmes.

## **12. Stakeholder Forum 2009/2010**

*Paper circulated – PB Sep09-12*

VH reported that the Secretariat is at the early stages of planning for the 2009/2010 Forum. A Forum of one-and-a-half days in London in April 2010 has been the basis for negotiations with the Royal Horticultural Halls conference centre and Imperial College, the latter appearing better value. Board members were concerned about the expense of holding the Forum in London and preferred to have one day only. They also felt that April was too early and preferred mid-May.

<b>ACTION 12</b> – VH to take forward planning of the Forum on the basis of one day in London in mid-May 2010.
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## **13. Biofuels**

*This agenda item was withdrawn.*

## **14. Emerging issues**

- **Scottish Legislative Review**

In the absence of AR, NM spoke to this item. There have been 475 responses to the public consultation, mostly on legislative provisions other than those on non-native species. There is no introduction date at present but it is expected to be April/May 2010.

**15. AOB**

- **Japanese knotweed Biocontrol project update**

FM said that he had attended the project launch which had been very successful. The project is presently out to public consultation and Ministers will decide on the way forward in the New Year.

- **Scottish/English progress on Schedule 9/sales ban proposals**

SMcK introduced this item (for England only): the intention is to add any new species to Schedule 9 by April 2010 and to introduce the bans on sale by October 2010. The latter need a completed risk assessment as the evidence base underpinning the ban. The lists are now shorter than those that were in the original consultation.

<b>ACTION 13</b> – SMcK to circulate the finalised Schedule 9 and sales ban lists to the Board.
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- **Current research: GB Economics project, *Glis glis* work by FR, etc**

NM reported that CABI had been commissioned to undertake the economics project and a Steering Group meeting would be held on 1 October. It was expected that work would be finished by mid-January 2010.

SB apologised for having no update available on *Glis glis* work.

- **Other matters**

Marine Management Organisation

RC queried to what extent the Board is concerned with marine matters. He reminded them of the creation of the Marine Management Organisation which will be responsible for the marine environment, port development licensing, cleaning of shipping, and numerous other matters which could increase the risks of NNS release. Should the MMO be represented on the Board?

Chinese Mitten Crabs

OB reported that Paul Clark of the Natural History Museum who has worked on Mitten Crabs has in the past suggested the establishment of a fishery to exploit the species. OB attended a meeting (that included representatives from Defra, EA, London Port Authority, Cefas, SAGB and the Fishmongers Company) where the attendees were unanimously against such an idea, but

has now received an invitation from Dr. Clark to a workshop on the commercial exploitation of Mitten Crab. He asked for a steer on responding to the invitation.

RC warned that without detailed knowledge of the species' density dependence a fishery could cause the remaining animals to thrive. NM thought a fishery would encourage movement of animals and hence worsen the situation. SB queried whether a public servant should be able to propose an action liable to be against the public interest. SB and MD pointed out that some non-native species are already exploited for agricultural purposes, so any general Board position on commercial exploitation in general would have to be very carefully worded. NM asked whether he should draft a letter to Dr. Clark on the matter and the Board agreed.

**ACTION 14** – All members to consider the Board's position on marine matters and discuss it in greater depth at the next meeting.

**ACTION 15** – NM to draft and circulate a letter to Dr Clark discouraging the proposed workshop on the commercial exploitation of Mitten Crab and copy it to senior management at the Natural History Museum.

## **16. Date and location of future meetings**

The Board agreed that the next meeting should be in January 2010 in Wales.

**ACTION 16** - VH to circulate dates for a meeting in January 2010 in Wales.