

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

MINUTES

**DEFRA, ROOM 821, 9 MILLBANK, LONDON
Thursday 29 September 2011, 11.00**

1. Attendance/apologies

Present:

Huw Thomas (Acting Chair, Defra)
Niall Moore (NNS, Secretary)
Sallie Bailey (FC) – by telecon
Kylie Bamford (Defra, Marine)
Olaf Booy (NNS)
Mark Diamond (EA)
Hugh Dignon (Scottish Government)
Delyth Dyne (Defra, Fisheries)
Richard Ferris (JNCC)
Robert Griffiths (Welsh Government) – by telecon
Verity Hunter (NNS, Minute taker)
Stephen Jackson (Welsh Government) – by telecon
Alex Kinninmonth (Defra, Fisheries)
Ron Macdonald (SNH)
Pete Robertson (Fera)
Jon Webb (NE)
Gabe Wyn (CCW)

Apologies received from:

Ellen Huis (Scottish Government)
Francis Marlow (Defra)
Gavin Ross (Defra)

HT explained that on this occasion he would be chairing the meeting in the unavoidable absence of FM who was called away at short notice to attend a Nature Directors meeting in Poland.

2. Minutes of 17th Meeting on 22 March 2011

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-02

The Minutes of the 17th Meeting were agreed without comment.

3. Actions/matters arising

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-03

Action 1 – NM reported that work on the country working group prioritisation exercises is ongoing – carry over.

Action 3 – NM reported that work on summarising figures on volunteer effort is ongoing. He has requested the help of the Media & Communications WG – carry over.

Action 13 – HT said the Rapid Response MOU was due for renewed signatures but there were still some non-signatories from the last round. Rather than simply re-issue therefore, we need to consider its future - either by refining it or taking a new approach. GW thought it would be useful to reconvene the WG for a review of lessons learned. HT said key “lessons learned” from the early days of the “killer shrimp” response had been captured but agreed it would be useful to re-convene the group and take stock. MD said that EA probably would not sign the MoU but would respond as necessary, as had already been the case with the shrimp. HT said that he would discuss the MoU with Francis Marlow and reconvene the Rapid Response WG at a convenient time to discuss the above.

All other actions had been discharged and there were no matters arising.

ACTION 1 (previous Action 1) – NM to report back the results of the Country working group prioritisation exercises to the Programme Board at the next meeting.

ACTION 2 (previous Action 3) – NM to continue to collate figures on volunteer effort.

ACTION 3 – HT to re-convene the RRWG to examine lessons learned, review the earlier framework and consider the future approach.

4. GB Strategy

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-04

- Implementation plan (forward/reverse look)

NM introduced Paper 4, beginning with the Reverse Look and highlighted the Key Actions that were on amber.

On 6.4 OB reported that work on Pathway Action Plans is likely to continue for some time. After some discussion it was decided that a flexible response is necessary.

On 6.8/1 HT reported that work on Ban on Sale in England and Wales had become caught up in the ‘burden of regulation’ issue and the coalition Government’s various

checks and balances on making new regulations, including more recently the 3 year moratorium on regulation affecting small businesses. The minister was still keen to progress it and Simon Mackown will be looking at how to move it forward on his return in October. SJ said that Wales had been disappointed by the delay and would show support as necessary. MD was keen to have a dynamic list of species with a mechanism for routine updates.

NM then introduced the Forward Look by highlighting those items on High priority. MD said he thought Item 6.1 on awareness raising should also be in this category. He said that EA has money available which could be used for this and the Board agreed that we should look to be more ambitious with the available 'communications' WFD funding for England.

ACTION 4 – NNS to draw up a list of priority species for contingency planning in time for the next PB meeting and consider using priority species as a way to identify a number of key pathways for scoping PAPs.

ACTION 5 - NNS to discuss more ambitious use of available WFD (England) communications funding with Defra Communications colleagues.

5. Secretariat Report

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-05A

NM introduced the Secretariat Report. He reported that work on the EU Strategy has taken up much of his time recently and summarised the current position. OB had been leading on the RA development work with EPPO which is ongoing. Regarding Meetings with stakeholders HT was supportive of the range of meetings and bodies with which the Secretariat has been involved and said it was an important part of the Secretariat's function to help build and maintain awareness and cohesion across GB. NM agreed but said it is hard to maintain this range of meetings with reduced resources hence a degree of selectiveness is necessary. NM said that there are still a number of RAs to be signed off by the PB but they are in a range of different formats. Work is ongoing on RA summary sheets which will make the process slightly easier. OB said he would be happy to receive any comments on the RA formats. On Monitoring NM said that a full version of NNSIP will be available soon. He pointed out the Secretariat Website Summary and said the hits are up by approx 50% on the same period last year. On Rapid Responses he reported that the Wales WG had agreed to prioritise eradication (if possible) of Sika deer and preparations are in hand to plan for winter work to assess their numbers and distribution.

- **Draft ISAPs**

Papers circulated PB Sep 05B-F

OB introduced the draft ISAPs for five species. He drew attention to the addition of the multicolour map which indicated a regionally variable response to a species. More hydrological information will also be incorporated. The first Contingency ISAP is for the Quagga Mussel but the draft needs developing. The Board welcomed the work to develop the ISAPs but emphasized the importance of ensuring ownership by all named stakeholders in each before they are finalised; and in particular by the relevant policy homes and agencies for whom they introduce policy or delivery commitments. There was also discussion over consistency of language. GW suggested combining Urgency and Aim and the Board agreed to remove Urgency where not needed. HD asked what happens to the ISAPs and HT explained that they derive from a key action in the GB Strategy where the intention was to produce them only where they added value to co-ordinating or directing action on a particular species by a range of stakeholders. They are a statement of intent with regard to that species but caution is necessary so that we are realistic in terms of expectations and resource commitments. RF asked for hyperlinks to be included, e.g. to references, and MD asked how they would be signed off. OB noted that the draft ISAP would be taken forward by a relevant group of stakeholders and that 'buy-in' would be a key part of this process.

OB introduced the ISAP for Crayfish and said that a Government and agency meeting had been held to discuss the ISAP. There is a pressing need for a more consistent approach but it is still unclear which management methods are effective so more research is needed. OB said that Cefas are currently doing a crayfish review and he would take forward the comments raised at the PB. NM said the Irish authorities are very concerned about crayfish arriving in Ireland and this issue should be included in the Cefas work. Defra Fisheries confirmed that they were content with this overall approach.

OB noted that comments on the ISAPs would be welcome but that the Board would have another chance to comment on them once they have been further developed.

ACTION 6 – OB to incorporate the PB's comments into the development of ISAPs and Cefas' crayfish project.
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6. England WFD Funding

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-06

NM reminded the PB that the EA had received £92m funding from Defra to help deliver the WFD, of which £5M (over four years) was earmarked for non-native species issues. Money has been allocated to Local Action Groups, Communications and research (mainly biocontrol). There is also money allocated to the EA for eradication (currently of *Ludwigia*, Topmouth Gudgeon and Black Bullhead). NM asked if some could be used for work on marine pathways and the Board thought this would be a good idea if it is related to overall objectives for WFD and INNS. JW said that NE also has funds available to spend on WFD INNS issues. They currently have £380k for 31 INNS projects including some technical work on *Dikerogammarus*.

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7. Chinese Mitten Crab – fishery proposal

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-07

HT introduced this item on a proposed Thames CMC fishery. This paper is asking the Board what policy position it recommends in relation to this issue. HT suggested that the third question (on limiting the number of licences) was more of a technical question that the Board should not have to address and the principal issue was whether it was appropriate to authorise a fishery for CMC on the Thames (HT also noted there were wider implications about the exploitation of INNS in general). AK filled in the background to the proposal, informing the Board that the EA has the power to refuse or authorise fishing activity in the Thames and that there is already illegal catching of CMC taking place. MD added that the EA is keen to get a policy steer from the Board. The main reason the EA wishes to authorise a fishery is to protect eel and otters, both at risk as bycatch from illegally set traps. MD said the EA feels that a legalised fishery would self-regulate against any illegal activity. GW noted that this would be better achieved through greater enforcement.

MD said there is no evidence that people deliberately spread CMC and the usual means of colonisation by the species is by planktonic dispersal or in ballast water. He cited an email from Paul Clark of the Natural History Museum as evidence to this effect.

GW disagreed strongly with the assertion of a lack of evidence for deliberate spread by people. She said that CMC had been found to be spread deliberately by humans, as shown by a recent paper from Canada (É. Veilleux and Y. de Lafontaine 2007) which suggested that this is the second most cited vector for spread of the species. She also cited an email from Paul Clark stating that deliberate spread was a significant risk¹.

MD said there is no ban on sale in GB and large numbers are already imported from Holland. GW advocated a ban on sale and said a specific CMC fishery should not be encouraged.

¹ Note the GB Non-native Species Risk Assessment for this species (completed by Paul Clark) includes the following relevant information:

“Question 2.2 (How rapidly is the organism liable to spread in the Risk Assessment area by human assistance?) states:

Response: very rapid - 4 [highest score] | Level of uncertainty: LOW – 0 [lowest score]

Comment: This too is extremely difficult to assess. For example the most westerly Thames record during the NHM survey of November 1999 was Staines. The crabs were in the dumped spoil of dredgings from the Hampton Court area. Further as with the introduction of nonnative crayfish, these were deliberately spread around England by human assistance. Mitten crabs too could be physical transported and deliberately introduced into other watersheds.”

RMcD strongly agreed with GW and voiced serious concerns about setting precedents, not only for this species but also for other species besides CMC. RG also agreed with this.

HT said that at present there appeared to be contradictory advice about the practicality of deliberately and successfully seeding new populations and that in the face of any industry lobbying, there needs to be clear and robust rationale for refusal. Whilst it was generally agreed that exploitation of some other INNS such as the Grey squirrel could be acceptable on the basis that it would very probably do little further harm in England, GW and others were clear that the CMC situation in Britain is not yet at that stage. MD said it was untenable to withhold permission on the basis of what other people might do. RG thought that a line should be drawn on principle and we should not legitimise the activity. If we cannot quantify the risk then we should not allow the activity. PR pointed out that there is always a spectrum of risk during the early stages of establishment and asked at what point should exploitation be allowed. GW said that allowing a fishery would send out conflicting messages, particularly on the issue of biosecurity. SB supported the application of the precautionary principle in the light of conflicting advice. NM asked if there is any research on ease of establishment for CMC.

GW said that there was no evidence to show that the species could not become established by the release of adults. MD believed that legalising fishing will aid compliance in the long term. RG asked about the legal implications and compensation. HD asked if we are yet at the tipping point for this species. He considered that Scotland would be unhappy if the authorisation went ahead. RMcD said he would support an assessment of the risk posed by fishermen and others moving the species. PR raised the issue of cost sharing and was uneasy about one area incurring costs for another. HT concluded that, in the absence of consensus and in the face of reservations from many on the Board, and taking account of the apparently contradictory advice on the risk of successfully spreading the species, the issue will need to be postponed. He suggested that there is a need to resolve the risk of spread issue through further looking at the available research/evidence. These results should be reported back to the Board and a further discussion should look at the 'policy principle' issues too with a view to reaching a consensus. MD said the EA would be content to wait for these results.

<p>ACTION 7 – NNS to look into the feasibility of Chinese Mitten Crab seeding and spreading and then report back to the PB.</p>
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8. EU Strategy update

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-08

HT updated the meeting on developments with the EU IAS Strategy. He said that a new legislative instrument (probably a Directive) is expected in the third quarter of 2012. Working Groups had been tasked with feeding into this and the UK had made

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substantial input. HT and Nick Turner of Defra will be engaging with stakeholders to explore a number of cross-cutting issues. HT had recently been to an EEA-hosted meeting in Copenhagen at which the Commission had given a presentation indicating that it is still considering issues such as whether to include economic and human health issues, use of the Wildlife Trade Regulations, implications for the EU Plant Health Regime etc. An internal EU consultation process will continue until April. Blacklisting rather than whitelisting is looking most probable with respect to import, movement etc. of species. A proportion of NM's time has been offered to the Commission to help as the UK seems to have made most progress in developing a comprehensive policy framework and has practical experience of turning policy into action. Overall, the Board welcomed a very detailed and useful paper. MD observed that the surveillance implications are interesting.

9. Rapid Responses

- ***Dikerogammarus* update**

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-09A and Briefing Note

HT reported that there are still only three sites known to have populations of Killer Shrimp. Many other suitable sites are being surveyed but no animals have been found. The Check, Clean, Dry campaign was launched in March and a recent stakeholder event was held at Grafham Water to acknowledge and emphasise the importance of the biosecurity actions taken there. User groups nationwide have made a big investment in action and have been extremely supportive of the campaign. Several pieces of research, funded from different sources, are underway including identification of suitable disinfectants to strengthen biosecurity measures but there are no conclusive or usable results as yet. HT said that European colleagues at a Bern Convention IAS meeting in Malta had been impressed with the UK response.

HT thought the Rapid Response Working Group should be reconvened for a Lessons Learned exercise. MD reminded the meeting that there had been no contingency plan in place but the response had been very successful using standard health and safety style risk assessments as the basis for action. Approx £250k had been spent so far. Monitoring is continuing but the species has not yet been found in any river systems.

- **New priority species**

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-09B

NM noted that the Board had agreed in 2008 that six species (out of 12 suggested) were priorities for rapid response – action on these to date was summarised in the paper. In June 2010 the Board asked the Secretariat to identify any further candidate species for rapid response to help maintain a pro-active approach to this. The Secretariat (following consultation with experts) had prepared a paper

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suggesting 22 species either for immediate rapid response or investigation into its feasibility. GW noted that from a GB viewpoint there were no marine species as eradication is so difficult for marine species. The Board then went through the paper, species by species, and the following decisions were made.

1. Edible Dormouse.

SB thought this should not be a priority and the Board agreed that this should not be a priority species for rapid response at this time.

2. Chinese Water Deer.

Following discussion on the veracity of the Low risk score NM commented that risk assessors often err on the side of caution until a species becomes widespread. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

3. Egyptian Goose.

The meeting felt there is not yet a significant impact but RMcD thought it was a higher priority in Scotland. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

4 & 5. Green and Wall Lizards.

JW suggested these species be combined. The meeting thought more research into impacts is needed, especially the potential as a vector for viral diseases. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

6. Aesculapian Snake.

NM said work on this species is ongoing and Defra (through NNSS) is willing to contribute a small amount of funding for a PhD student to do work on removal in England and Wales. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

7. Alpine Newt.

JW supported extermination of this species because of the chytrid issue. This species was agreed as a high priority for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

8. Black Bullhead.

MD said the EA is already working on this species which they consider a potentially significant problem. This species was agreed as a high priority for rapid response (subject to confirmation that the species only occurs at one or a small number of enclosed sites).

9. Red Swamp Crayfish.

There was some discussion over removal methods. This species was recommended as a high priority for rapid response (subject to confirmation that the species only occurs at one or a small number of enclosed sites).

10/11. Spiny Cheek and Virile Crayfish.

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MD asked about novel control methods. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility (in particular if there were suitable eradication methods) and cost of rapid response.

12. Carolina Fanwort.

MD said that no chemical controls are currently available. This should be investigated. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

13. Large-flowered Waterweed.

No chemical controls are available and MD thought mechanical removal methods should be investigated. This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

14. Duck Potato.

This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

15. Cape Pondweed.

This species was agreed for an assessment of the feasibility and cost of rapid response.

16. Pirri-pirri Burr.

JW said that NE controls some of this plant but it was not regarded as a high priority. The Board agreed that this species is not a high priority for rapid response.

17. Giant Rhubarb.

18. American Skunk-cabbage.

19. Indian Fountain Bamboo.

20. Early Pampas Grass.

21. Hairy Bamboo.

22. Greater Cuckooflower.

The Board agreed that all the above terrestrial plants should have a Rapid Risk Assessment carried out. Control options should then be investigated for those that are not widespread. HT suggested that a single research project might look at effective control methods for a range of INNS plants.

10. & 11. MSFD implementation

Presentation on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive – Defra, Marine Programme

Kylie Bamford summarised the current situation with MSFD and in particular Descriptor 2 (on non-native species). The PB agreed that there are many areas of mutual interest and significant synergy between the Board's remit and the MSFD. The following areas were highlighted: monitoring/surveillance, pathway management, use of bio-fouling indices, birds and mammals on offshore islands. HT

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thanked Kylie for a very useful presentation and asked for it to be circulated to the members.

ACTION 8 – NNSS to set up a meeting or teleconference with interested parties to review issues of common concern on MSFD and Marine pathways, and identify opportunities for synergy (e.g. research work etc).

ACTION 9 – VH to circulate the presentation on the MSFD to the PB.

12. Evidence needs

Paper circulated PB Sep 11-12

HT introduced this paper from Nick Turner of Defra (and NNSS) summarising his work on the collation of evidence needs to support the GB Strategy – this was meant to guide those wishing to see their INNS related work feeding into policy-relevant issues. There was a mixed response over the issue of balance between providing a strategic steer to the evidence/research community and being prescriptive as to very specific evidence needs. MD thought it a good framework from which to hang some of the specific calls for research at the current meeting. RMcD thought it read too much like a 'shopping list' and that it needed more work on prioritisation, perhaps with weighted headings. HT felt that avoiding detailed prescription invited the innovation and imagination of the research community across a broad range of evidence areas and asked whether each Administration would prefer to decide its own priorities. SB thought that leverage over funding may be lost if priorities are set by each Government alone. HT asked that more thoughts be passed on for consideration.

ACTION 10 – ALL to send comments on evidence needs paper to OB and/or Nick Turner, Defra before the next Board meeting in February.

13. Asian Hornet

Papers circulated PB Sep 11-13 & A

Note: This item was dealt with after Item 5.

HT introduced the paper and summarised the three options: 1. Do nothing. 2. Accept establishment and attempt to mitigate impacts. 3. Attempt to prevent establishment. He mentioned that an FoI request had been made by The Independent on Sunday possibly indicating growing public interest. NM said that the Hornet had first been found in France in 2004, had spread rapidly and was likely to arrive in GB via one of several pathways. Southern England and South Wales are the main areas at risk, particularly around ports. The NBU has carried out a Risk

Assessment which shows a potentially serious impact on honeybees and other pollinators. Their paper on management options was attached as an Annex.

The PB thought the response should very much depend on the numbers that turn up in GB. SB asked about human health implications and NM said there is no evidence of an increased problem with stings in France (Note – to date there have been two fatalities that are definitely attributable to this species in France). JW pointed out that other wasp species have arrived in GB before as they are very difficult to stop and the biodiversity impacts are unlikely to be large. He was sceptical that the Asian Hornet could be stopped. SJ asked if there is a food security or ecosystem services risk and JW thought these would be minimal. PR reported that sentinel hives are already in place and this network of beekeepers could also be used to disseminate information more widely. He stated that Bee Health Policy would welcome a steer on any immediate problems and that they were most concerned about being drawn into long term control of a species whose invasion may be unstoppable. SB said that FC contacts have already been alerted about the danger from timber imports. RMCD said that southern Scotland could also have a suitable climate for establishment and thought that surveillance coupled with a review of the cost/efficiency of attempting to prevent establishment would be best. NM said that the Secretariat has already been getting alerts from the public; all so far were false alarms. PR said that the Regional Bees Inspectors have been made aware of the Hornet and are on the alert.

HT thought a blend of options 2 and 3 would be best but questioned who would respond to a finding of the species. JW agreed with this option. MD also agreed and suggested that options 2 and 3 added up to a contingency plan. PR said a clear exit strategy is needed to indicate when the species becomes too widespread to eradicate. He suggested that a rapid response could be carried out by Local Authority pest controllers but with a central co-ordination role for the NBU/NNSS. NM agreed that there is a need to talk to Local Authorities in high risk areas. HT said it would be good to raise awareness but a response plan may be needed so that responsibilities and expectations are clear. Three different policy areas are involved so discussion is needed, and possibly a working group. The Board agreed to recommend a blend of Options 2 and 3 – increase surveillance for the species and scope out a contingency plan (especially examining costs and also who would do what in the event of the species appearing in GB), but also including an explicit exit strategy where action is no longer cost-effective.

<p>ACTION 11 – NNSS to identify leads for a possible working group on the Asian Hornet and to scope out a contingency plan.</p>
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14. NNSIP update

NM gave a verbal update. After 2 ½ years' work the NNSIP is ready for a public launch in October/November. [Post-meeting note: launch is now postponed to January 2012.] There are still a few issues to be tidied up. The first draft of the final project report has much interesting information on pathways, origins of NNS etc. A second draft of the report will be circulated to the Board. Defra has agreed to fund

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the continuation of the Portal for six years with JNCC administering the project (which has just been put out to open tender).

ACTION 12 – NM to circulate a second draft of the NNSIP report to the PB.

15. Japanese Knotweed psyllid update

HT gave a verbal update. He said there are now 16 sites (half actual release sites and half controls) in Phase 2 of the release and the psyllid is still in the core release areas. Further releases may be made in the future to support its establishment. There have been no adverse environmental impacts so far. HT also reported that there is to be a meeting between CABI and the regulators to discuss a possible fungal agent for use against Himalayan Balsam.

16. AOB

Glyphosates

JW asked if the Board was aware of the risk of losing glyphosate as a control for aquatic weeds. There have been various reviews but he would like to know the PB's views on a strategy or any alternatives. MD said that the EA does have relevant standards which is based on an average annual concentration for waterside plants. HT said he would feed any concerns into the relevant policy area.

ACTION 13 – JW to send MD questions on glyphosate use by email. HT to be copied in so that he can feed views to the relevant policy area.

Law Commission review

HT explained that the Law Commission has started a review of wildlife management legislation in England and Wales. A consultation will be held July-October 2012 and this will lead potentially to a draft Bill in 2014.

17. Date and location of future meetings

NM suggested that the next meeting be held in York in January/February 2012. Dates would be circulated.

ACTION 14 – VH to circulate dates for the next PB meeting in York in January or February 2012.