

Minutes of the 2nd WBAP Freshwater meeting

*Held at the offices of British Waterways Burgedin Lock House, Montgomery at
11.00am on May 19 2009*

Present:

Janet Buckles (Environment Agency Wales (EAW))
Gareth Davies (GD) Dept Rural Affairs Welsh Assembly Government (DRA)
Rebecca Good (RG) Pond Conservation
Tristan Hatton-Ellis (THE) Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Helen Keeble (HK) Pond Conservation
Huw Jones (HJ) EAW
Julian Jones (JJ) Radnorshire Wildlife Trust (RWT)
Rhydwen Mitchell (RM) Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
Stuart Moodie (SM) British Waterways (BW)
Dai Roberts (DR) Riverfly Partnership Wales (RPW)/SE Wales Rivers Trust (SEWRT)
Kate Williamson (KW) Snowdonia National Park (SNP)

Apologies: Emma Durward, Robin Woodyatt

2. The minutes from the first WBAP Freshwater meeting held on December 9 2008 were accepted as a true record.

3. Partners Update

Funding:

- CCW will provide 10K pa for 3 years to support the work of the group (THE).
- EAW may be in a position to provide funding for investigative projects only. EAW may also be able to provide training in identification techniques for volunteers Action HJ to follow up.
- British Waterways has provided funds to bring sections of the Montgomery canal to favourable condition, 50k to be spent on Guildford arm.
- The Riverfly Partnership has been granted 18k over 3 years from Natural England (NE). It may be possible to obtain NE's permission to spend some of this money in Wales. RPW may be able to provide resources in the form of staff/volunteer time. **Action DR to follow up.**
- There will be no funding available from extension of Tir Eryri but there may be funding for water related projects through a convergence bid with Conwy & Gwynedd Councils (KW).
- Keep Wales Tidy have funds and time available for biodiversity work. County Council Biodiversity Officers and County Recorders may also be a valuable resource (KW).

WAG TSD

GD presented an update of the progress of the proposed new agri-environment schemes.

- Ministerial announcement regarding Glastir entry level scheme was imminent at time of meeting. Will commence in January 2011.
- Higher level scheme still under consideration but expected to commence in 2012/2013.
- A resume of the progress of the scheme and a copy of the ministers announcement to be circulated to the group. **Action GD.**
- **Draft criteria for BAP perspective to be circulated for next meetings agenda. Action THE.**
- Catchment Sensitive Farming trial has ended and will not be extended to pilot. Support will be limited to farms in Nitrogen Vulnerable Zones. Water quality issues will be considered under Higher Level Glastir scheme.

WAG Fisheries

- Will feed into Axis 2.
- Will consider widening species list for Fish Passage Regs.

British Waterways

- Consultant to investigate effect of screening on Brook Lamprey at River Dee intake, Llangollen.
- Geomorphological and hydrological studies on River Usk on hold due to high water levels
- Monitoring of plants and condition of Montgomery canal to continue, Guilsfield arm to be redredged and restored.
- Administrative changes to be implemented, North Wales will be managed from Chester and South Wales from Gloucester.

Wildlife Trusts

- Severn & Wye Initiative, Living Landscapes;- agenda to be circulated to Group. **Action JJ**
- Suggest awareness raising and engagement for Water Framework Directive & Wales Environmental Link.
- Details of Ponds on the Wye Project to be circulated. **Action JJ**
- Heather, Pillwort & Ponds Project:- 12 ponds created in East Radnorshire.
- Watervole Project Officer has created 6 new ponds in the Marteg Valley.
- UK Eel conference attended by JJ.
- Otter survey:- Wildlife trust volunteers to be trained.

Riverfly Partnership Wales/SE Wales Rivers Trust

- ID courses provided for volunteers
- Involved in successful prosecution in Rhymney
- Partnership to produce postcard charts and fact sheets for 8 species.

SNPA

- Draft mammal actions and targets in circulation to be published end of June along with vascular plants, lepidoptera and birds. Targets are for species population size and distribution only, advice needed from species groups for delivery.
- Snowdonia BAP under review

Pond Conservation

Million Ponds Project has applied for funding for 15 ponds in first round of Biffa Award, now looking at new sites for next round. Important issues are planning permission, archaeology and removal of spoil from floodplain.

Environment Agency Wales

- Signal crayfish reported in Golbourne Brook with direct access to the River Dee and implications for salmon population.
- Possible Outcome 21 input to enrichment issues in Llyn Padarn and effect on Arctic Char population.
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel glochidia found on all rivers monitored this year, but load is very low. Funds available for impact study on the Afon Eden in summer 2009.
- WFD ongoing, implementation phase imminent
- Review of consents to end 2010.
- Working with Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water to reduce effects of cold water discharge on shad population at Llyn Brianne.
- River Dee entrainment, juvenile salmon and lamprey need mitigation.
- Outcome 21 with WAG, all SSSIs and SACs to reach favourable condition.
- Rob Strachan is lead co-ordinator for otter surveys.
- EAW is seeking partners for pond projects to meet target.

CCW

- Landscape scale conductivity project requires literature review for freshwater to develop number of sites protected and improve policies eg. dispersion of Great Crested Newts.
- Surveys of standing water BAP habitats required, but not including designated sites
- **Action: THE to circulate draft report and draft list of sites. Members to return proposals with maximum of 5 sites per member within 2 weeks of meeting.**
- Funding available to monitor char and gwyniad in partnership with EAW, including follow up to gwyniad translocation to Llyn Arenig Fawr.
- Lakes Life Bid to consider toolkit advice and measures for demonstration sites in Wales, CCW consulting landowners for Anglesey Lakes and Bosherton. Possibility of Biffa Award for Bosherton via National Trust.

Wales & LBAP Targets

- Targets for Freshwater habitats and species circulated by THE
- Diana Reynolds leads for WAG

- Need to appoint action leads and delivery agents based on Welsh and National actions with space for views of other ecosystem groups.
- Should species lead partners set species actions and create separate spreadsheet?
- Habitat groups can input actions for species but species experts to lead.

Action: Group to contribute actions for species, drafts to group by end of June

- KW & THE: Mammals
- THE: Herps (via Liz Howe)
- THE: Vascular plants (via Trevor Dines)
- HJ & THE: Fish
- KW: Check minutes of Task & Finish Group for who to contact.
- National level fish expert group may be formed.

Habitat Targets

- Some actions must be agreed jointly, starting points needed for comments

Actions:

- HK & RG to work up actions for ponds
- HJ, THE, JJ & DR to deal with rivers
- THE to deal with lakes
- JB to co-ordinate response and produce spreadsheet summary.
- Responses to JB by June 15
- HJ to find out how actions are co-ordinated in England

Flagship Ponds for Wales

List from HK and draft response circulated by THE after consultation with CCW

Action:

- Group members to nominate additional sites to fill in geographical gaps, 2 ponds per LBAP area by end July.
- KW to contact LBAP officers
- THE to collate data and send to RG

Survey Requirements for 2009

Suggestions:

- Yellow Mayfly May to July, next survey for large larvae would be November (DR)
- Baetis niger general survey work required. (DR).
- Funding may be available for report writing or larval surveys in autumn (THE)
- Possible GIS layer for riverflies to link to maintenance and other works (HJ)
- Surveys for fish in blockstone cover and gravel habitats in degraded rivers (JJ)
- Llanbedr air field for Great Crested Newts (KW)
- Survey a proportion of Million Ponds Project ponds (RG)

- Canada Goose moulting site, effects of eutrophication at Llan Gors Lake
- Captive breeding and stocking of mayflies (DR)

Action: Group members to send formal proposals to THE by end August

Priority habitats

Document circulated by THE, feedback received from group members.

- Will be useful for LBAP reviews (KW).
- Correction required: regarding Arctic Char location of Llyn Padarn should be Snowdonia National Park not Gwynedd (KW).
- Presence of species at important stages in life-cycle could be included (KW).
- Could be circulated to LBAP officers for feedback (KW).

Action: THE to check for relevance of freshwater habitats for bats particularly Barbastelle.

AOB

Questionnaire and document from Wales Biodiversity Partnership circulated by Tristan prior to meeting. Deadline for feedback is May 27.

Group members discussed their responses to the questionnaire during the meeting.

Action: THE to tidy up responses and re-circulate for additional feedback

Wales Biodiversity Conference to be held in Swansea on 16/17 September (KW).

Freshwater Biological Association Conference to be held in Bangor on 7/8 July (THE)

Next Meeting

To be held in Aberystwyth (venue to be arranged) on Wednesday 21 October 2009.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm

