

Minutes of the 1st WBAP Freshwater meeting

*Held at the offices of the Countryside Council for Wales, Newtown at 11.00am on
December 9 2008*

Present:

Jeremy Biggs (JB) (Pond Conservation (PC))
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)
Stuart Moodie (SM) British Waterways (BW)
Dai Roberts (DR) Riverfly Partnership Wales (RPW)/SE Wales Rivers Trust (SEWRT)
Arfon Williams (AW) Dept of Fisheries, Welsh Assembly Government (DF)
Kate Williamson (KW) Snowdonia National Park (SNP)
Robin Woodyatt (RW) WLGA / All Wales Biodiversity Steering Group (AWBSG)

Apologies: Geoff Liles

2. New UK BAP Process: THE gave a brief summary explaining the purpose of the group and the background to its formation. At a UK level, implementation of the BAP process has been patchy due to poor communication between the UK expert groups and the LBAP coordinators. Recent restructuring means that UK level expert groups are now at country level, these will provide advice and be responsible for listed habitats and species. Details are contained in circulated documents or from Biodiversity Co-ordinators.

Representation on the Group:

The advantage of increasing the number of organisations to be represented on the group was discussed. The main advantage would be an increase in the range of expertise available to the group, however a larger group would be require more management. It may be necessary to consult the Policy Group on representation issues.

Actions:

AP1: Invite Forestry Commission to send representative.

AP2: Engage with large land mangers such as Farmers Unions, Country Landowners Association & National Trust. **AW** to act as contact with Farmers Unions.

AP3: **DR & RW** to contact John Stoner as representative of Association of Rivers Trusts.

AP4: HK to be main representative for Pond Conservation in future meetings.

AP5: Encourage wider representation of LBAPs eg. Freshwater specialist Emma Derward, Powys LBAP. **KW** to contact suitable representatives.

3. Remit of the Group:

The Terms of Reference contained in Appendix 1 of the circulated document were accepted by the group.

Existing activity and resources in Wales:

All parties then summarised existing work linked to freshwater BAP with their respective organisations. The group will produce a paper summary of this work for circulation to LBAP partners and WBP.

4. Immediate prioritisation exercise for 2008-2009

5a. Wales /LBAP level targets

- Some species missing from list
- Now national & regional targets, Wales targets produced for new UK BAP
- Lepidoptera, birds & vascular plants well covered

5b Prioritise actions

- Possibility to cluster some species with similar habitat requirements eg. shingle beetles, 3 species of bat.
- John Webber has done some work in England regarding priority habitats & species.
- May need to contact specialist groups for actions.
- Need to be more specific regarding actions from database.

- National BAP for ponds suggests 4 main targets ie. maintenance for high quality, creation of new ponds, restoration, ?, most important actions already prioritised.

- Need to traffic light priorities for concentration of resources at LBAP level, guidance already agreed. Widespread species can be noted as such. Suggest consultation with National & Wales species groups to create document & match up with BAP areas.

- Carry out pond exercise for other habitats

- GIS analysis for rivers

- Need to examine actions for links, eg. Vicky Kindemba, freshwater link for Buglife.

- Suggest focus on specific rivers, HJ queried benefits of fencing on some rivers and recommended examination of factors that may cause lack of response.
- IAP analysis.

5c. Identify priority areas

Concentrate on sites not already protected and species not widespread.

Actions for next two years:

- Pond invasives: eg. *Crassula* threat to Llyn Tegid, crayfish fungus, spread of Zebra Mussel by boats & canoes. Action: Dissemination of knowledge by production of pocket identification guides. Plan for immediate action.
- Pond creation: For BAP species, possible actions co-ordination with Tir Eryri, press releases, on-shelf projects. **JB** to discuss contact with schools with **RW**.
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel: concentrate effort to improve water quality on key sites. Contact Billl Brierley or Shaun Birke for details of possible Environment Agency funding. This would require matched funding
- Riverfly habitats
- Lamprey: Progress recording scheme to collect baseline data. Create buffer zones on targeted rivers to reduce access for phosphate as a result of silt loading. Identify vulnerable catchments.
- Rivers: Create inventory of 'naturalness' for Welsh rivers as follow up to River Corridor Surveys and River Habitat Surveys.
- Eel: **DR** proposed moratorium on eel fishing. Parasites and climate change are possible reasons for decline.
- Lowland mesotrophic lakes: possible opportunity for restoration through catchment sensitive farming, to start 2010. Group or individuals could influence future development.
- Watervole: Mink control ongoing, Swansea University project is looking at effectiveness. **JJ** to e-mail CCW. Actions for water voles in Wales document

5. Longer term issues

Need baseline for species population & range, concentrate monitoring and collect data from other sources. Action: contact other ecosystem groups to create links and discuss correlation of data and sharing between groups.

6. Practical considerations

7a. Lack of representation of LBAP officers on ecosystem groups may be due to lack of support from employers. **KW** to feed back concerns to WBP.

7b. Group to provide advice to landowners by collating available information on habitat management for dissemination.

7c. **AW** to act as link to Policy Group

7. Resourcing

- EAW to provide secretariat.
- **DR** to act as link to WBP.
- Funding may be available from CCW for desk studies or surveys **(THE)**.
- Funding streams may be available for costed projects through SNP **(KW)**.
- Meetings to take place twice a year.
- **All** group members to consider provision of resources.

9. Any other business

No matters raised

10. Next meeting

To be held at 11.00am on Tuesday May 19 2009, at British Waterways Office, Montgomery.