



Biodiversity Action Group Implementation and Monitoring Subgroup Minutes

2pm Thursday 15th January 2009
Sherwood Forest Trust Offices, Edwinstowe

Present:

Chris Comerie (Minutes)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Carl Cornish	Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers (NB)
Nick Crouch (Chair)	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Ecologist
Louise Duffy	Environment Agency (EA)
Louise Fleetwood	Sherwood Forest Community Rangers (SFCR)
Tristan Galletly	Forestry Commission (FC)
Katherine Garton	Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)
Deanne Gow	British Waterways (BW)
Chris Jackson	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG)
David Parkin	Notts Birdwatchers (NB)
Norma Saunders	Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT)
Lesley Sharpe	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
Chris Short	Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT) Volunteer
Sheila Wright	Nottingham Natural History Museum (NNHM)

1. Apologies

Kira Besh - Mansfield District Council (MDC); Julia Gallagher - RSPB; Caroline Harrison - Natural England (NE); Alex Morley - Bestwood Country Park (BCP); Karyn Stander - Sherwood Forest Trust (SFT); Felicity Washbrook - Mansfield District Council (MDC).

2. Previous Minutes

Previous minutes were accepted as a true record of the previous meeting. Grammatical and spelling errors were identified and these will be altered accordingly.

CJ reported back against Action 1 that currently he was finding reporting on BARS very difficult for two main reasons. Firstly the training provided by NE has been insufficient and secondly the BARS system was more complicated than it needed to be and it was unclear where data should be entered into the system to allow partners to retrieve their information in a report. In addition data provided by the Notts partnership was not necessarily the kind of information that was required at a UKBAP level and the partnership should be looking to provide detail in a more land based quantifiable form (such as those set for the majority of the habitat action plans). CJ is currently working with some of the BAP partners (NCC and NWT) to map their estates by LBAP habitat thus enabling them to report back their own data to the LBAP more easily.

TG informed the partnership that the list of birds being used as criteria to assess eligibility for the new WGS/WIG for Woodland Birds was close to being confirmed and would be circulated soon. TG believed that Hawfinch and Garden Warbler had been added to the list. The grant scheme would encourage woodland management to help improve populations of the birds included in these lists. DP expressed doubt that the Woodlark and Firecrest should be on a woodland bird list.

The Barn Owl figures, Action 6, have not yet been compiled by BAG. DP believed that Notts Birdwatchers held all the county data for this species and advised CJ to contact Notts Birdwatchers.

The Terms of Reference as per Action 7 are undergoing a final alteration and CJ will be distributing them imminently.

3. Update on HAPs and SAPs targets review

CJ informed all that there were currently details on the UKBAP website of the new habitat definitions for the complete list of 65 UKBAP Priority Habitats (including the new habitats included in 2007). In addition there was also the stage 1 evidence used to identify the 1149 priority species now included in the UK BAP (www.uk.bap.org.uk).

4. Update on Notts HAP targets

CJ reported that there had been very little progress with regards to targets setting for those HAPs currently without smart targets. CJ was hoping to progress things with the EA with regards to Rivers and Streams and would also talk to them about the data that they held on ditches.

KG informed the partnership that when trying to create baseline data for Post industrial habitats in Nottinghamshire, data has been included from over 400 sites in the county (data was taken from the national land use database). Of the 400 sites looked at 18 of these were categorised as meeting the HAP criteria for post industrial land (mainly former colliery and railway sites). CJ and NC expressed concern over the difficulties of collecting data for urban sites and it was suggested that it may be easier to split these two habitat types into two separate habitat action plans, one for post-industrial and a second for urban. This proposal was put to the I&M sub group and it was agreed that splitting the two plans would be a good way forward with regards to these two habitats.

14,000 ha of Parkland and Wood Pasture are currently recorded on the layer created as part of their work with Baker Shepherd and Gillespie for English Nature (now Natural England). CC indicated that Mark Speck of NWT has surveyed many of the parkland sites in Notts as part of a contract with Natural England and suggested that CJ contact Mark to discuss this further.

There has been no progress with ditch habitats but definitions and where to obtain information on this were discussed. CC highlighted that EA (managing the main rivers) and IDB's were most significant agencies to the conservation of this habitat. NS raised the importance of ditches in relation to water vole habitat, working with the EA and the Drainage Boards was proposed as a way forward.

NS has produced a draft of the orchard HAP. An orchard management book will also be produced as a Sherwood Forest Trust publication. The SFT are also undertaking research into the Nottingham Colonel, an ancient cider apple unique to Nottinghamshire. A discussion broke out on the habitat loss of orchards and their importance in relation to regional character and species, and the definition of orchard was clarified with regard to the HAP which would be mainly concerned with traditional orchards rather than commercial ones.

NC has mapped Black Poplars in the county after visiting most of the sites with Norman Lewis.

CJ has been approached by Richard Yarnell (lecturer at Nottingham Trent University) with respect to the BAG partnership's intentions to produce a SAP for Hedgehogs. Dr Yarnell is undertaking research within the county looking into reasons for the national declines in hedgehogs and will be undertaking research involving radio tracking work. CJ had suggested that the BAG partnership would welcome Dr Yarnell's input if he was willing to draft a SAP for hedgehogs and had also suggested that Dr Yarnell may be interested in preparing a presentation that could be given to the subgroup at a future meeting. SW raised the issue of slug pellets and their adverse effect upon the Hedgehog while NS stressed the importance that a SAP for Hedgehogs would have for the LBAP.

Action 1: NC and KG to look into creating a HAP for Post Industrial Habitat (or Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land – to be more in-line with the UKBAP).

Action 2: BAP partnership to look for an author of a HAP for Urban habitat.

Action 3: CJ to continue chasing up habitat target data for those habitats that currently do not have smart targets.

Action 4: CJ to chase Richard Yarnell's response with regard to giving a talk and creating a local SAP for Hedgehogs.

5. UKBAP species (the Notts list)

In 2007 the new UK BAP species list was completed and CJ coordinated the help of species experts in the County who identified those species on the UKBAP list that were present in Notts. All the other LBAP's in the region also produced their own similar lists and these were passed onto the East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership. CJ is expecting to be contacted before the end of the financial year by the EMBP about arranging a date for a regional workshop in which priority species for the region will be discussed and selected. CJ will pass on this information as soon as he is made aware. SW informed CJ that the species experts would require some warning time for a meeting as they needed to build this into their busy work schedules.

Action 5: CJ to pass around meeting date when it is passed onto him by Charlotte Gault/ Warren Priest.

6. LBAP list of species of Conservation Concern

The current list of species of conservation concern in the appendices of the LBAP document is 10 years old and requires a review and update. The list of species of conservation concern for birds will be updated using the Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers list that was created in 2006. The list for moths and beetles is due to be reviewed in 2010 by Sheila Wright.

In the meantime it was suggested that there was a need to create a species pending list to be added on the Appendices (List of Species of Conservation Concern) and this would be for species for which new information came to light between the review of species lists.

The need for this list had arisen due to the discovery of the Welsh clearwing in Sherwood NNR during 2008. The Welsh Clearwing is not currently on the UKBAP list and as a result its listing in the LBAP appendices SoCC is all the more important. The group discussed the need to raise new species and also to remove species from the list of species of conservation concern as a standing item on the BAG I&M subgroup agenda.

The sub-group expressed concern over the original LBAP documents selection process for its list of species of conservation concern. The original list was partly made up of species that had been nominated by the general public. As a result the list included species that were popular with the public but that had very little scientific reason for being on the local list of SoCC. As a result it was decided that future lists would be based on survey data and meeting criteria so that the LBAP document had more weight and reasons for species inclusion could be backed up with evidence.

Action 6: CJ to add Species Pending List as a standing item on the BAG I&M subgroup agenda's.

7. Priority species/habitats - 2009 work programme

The habitat of hedgerows has been carried over from 2008 as very little promotional work was undertaken. Erin McDaid will be contacting SW in the near future to discuss the hedgerow moth species that she feels should be the focus for the BAG priority species for 2009.

Promotion of the priority habitats and species will begin during April/May time, with the BAG hedgerow leaflet being used to promote good management of hedges and focusing on the moth species chosen by SW (possibly by encouraging records to be sent in to the records centre/ and promoting good hedgerow management for hedgerow moths).

Action 7: CJ to remind Erin McDaid about the need to contact SW in the near future.

8. Update on partner projects

DP (Notts Birders) informed the subgroup of how the survey work was proceeding with respect to the second year of the bird atlas (the mapping project of birds in the British Isles conducted every twenty years). In Nottinghamshire around 500 tetrads required surveying. The survey involved looking at each tetrad in Nottinghamshire four times during the survey (twice in summer and twice in the winter). Nationally 36,000,000 records have been compiled, local record validation has begun and it is hoped that this process will be finished in the next few months. With the data, sites of importance will be identified and the data will be passed to the Biological Records Centre.

CC (NWT) The B and B scheme is going well with extra hoppers and nest boxes being located at new farms. The scheme is advertising for additional watchers in Langold and Retford. Habitat enhancement survey work and surveys for water voles on the Fleet have been completed. Paperwork from the Heritage Lottery Fund is due to be received soon and this will allow NWT to advertise for a new posts to be based at the new offices in Lound.

LD (EA) Work with NWT on the Fleet has been completed and plans for the creation of scrapes on both the Hook in West Bridgford and the Idle Valley are still moving forward. Survey forms for the BAG Japanese Knotweed Survey have been passed onto EA staff to record this species when they are out on site undertaking river surveying.

SW (Nottingham Natural History Museum) Moth records are being collated for 2008. A list of SINC sites that meet the criteria for amphibians and reptiles has been compiled. There are a number of sites that may need further survey work and this is something that could possibly be coordinated by the BAG and the NARRS volunteers.

TG (FC) The woodland birds project is ready to launch in the Peak district, East Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and the Sherwood natural area (WIG 80). There has been a £2,000 top up on the Woodland Creation Grant and as part of the WIG grant, bird surveys will be carried out. More details can be found on the Forestry Commission website.

DG (BW) during the winter they have been conducting reed management with volunteers and a hedge survey in Nottinghamshire focusing on gaps and spaces in hedgerows. Following the completion of two very successful consultation events before Christmas, external consultants are currently being interviewed to work with Hester Kapur and Christine Jordan of the Trent Vale team to review and update the original Audience Development and Access plan. This, together with the new, more detailed, business plan will form the basis of the Stage Two submission which will be heading off to the Heritage Lottery Fund at the end of March. The partners have pretty much completed their plans for projects for the first year and have outlined projects for years 2 and 3. These are currently being reviewed against the feedback received from the public to ensure they are meeting all the requirements. There are still some funding issues to be resolved over the next few months but the partners remain confident of putting the full funding package in place by the deadline.

NS (Sherwood Forest Trust) - In her absence Karyn Stander sent through details of her latest work with respect to the LBAP. SFT have almost finished the Farm Environmental Plan and Higher Level Scheme for Bestwood Country Park, they have undertaken advisory site visits to the 30 Conservation Grant Scheme applicants and administered the grant on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council and marked up trees for routine woodland management on a number of sites.

For Sherwood woodland habitats, they have arranged and supervised forestry contractors, heavily thinning 2 areas of pine plantation and creating 2 clear fell areas at Ransom Wood Business Park. This involved the marking of trees, application for grant aid, supervision of contractors felling, extraction and sale of timber and additional contractor mulching the site prior to restocking.

For heathland habitats, SFT have arranged and supervised the cutting of 2 ha of heather at Budby Forest South/Oak Tree Heath and the subsequent restoration of sites of heathland by spreading the heather at Mansfield Conical, MARR, Oak Tree Heath mitigation land, Berry Hill housing estate with smaller amounts of material to Worksop Golf Club, Racecourse Ground Mansfield, Blidworth Dale and Ransom Wood Business Park. In November 2008 the project officer organised the Sherwood Habitats Forum at Hexgreave Hall which was attended by 50 landowners and managers where 8 speakers gave a range of presentations on wood fuel and short rotation coppice, the project officer has also

had a series of articles printed in Essential ARB magazine on the work of the Trust.

LS (FWAG) HLS schemes have been submitted for 2 sites of SSSI grassland and 2 for ancient woodland, and on a 15 ha site near Besthorpe cattle have been introduced for wet grassland management.

In her absence Julia Gallagher (RSPB) sent through details of their projects. In Beckingham, the RSPB scheme received planning permission late in 2008 which is fantastic news and they thank everyone who supported their application from Beckingham, Gainsborough and Nottinghamshire. Because of the time taken in the planning system, the project is now looking at ground works to install water control features and create the scrapes in 2010. Lapwings have already responded to the reversion to grassland with successful breeding on site for the last couple of years. The fully restored site will support many more Lapwings and will benefit the existing Water vole population as well as the sites' wetland insect fauna and flora. In Langford Lowfields, Tarmac working closely with the RSPB completed the land form for phase 2 of the quarry in November 2008. This will create nearly 20 ha more reed bed which has already been planted with reed donated by the phase 1 area. A long term solution for phase 1 has been developed by the RSPB and Tarmac and work will start later this year. Langford Lowfields has a volunteer work party to progress works. RSPB has been successful in a bid to NE's 2010 Biodiversity Challenge Fund to work in Nottinghamshire and Derby to recover farmland bird populations within target areas. They have now recruited a Project Officer, Mike Reid who will work from NE's Chalfont Drive Office. He will be in a post on the 22nd of January and the post is funded until March 2011. The project will work within farmland bird hotspots as identified through the Bird Conservation Targeting Project (RSPB, NE, FC) focussing on corn buntings and other farmland bird assemblages. The key objective of the project is to engage significant numbers of the farming community in creating and positively managing key habitats for a suite of farmland birds (especially Grey partridge, Lapwing, Turtle dove, Yellow wagtail, Tree sparrow and Corn bunting). This will be achieved through the provision of farm specific surveys and targeted advice leading to the delivery of high quality agri-environmental scheme agreements (ELS and HLS) in support of BAP targets and the national PSAS target for farmland birds. The project will aim to support partner HLS applications as well as submitting applications through the project. The project will also deliver the RSPB's Volunteer Farmer Alliance (VFA) surveys and will look to work closely with county partners in the promotion of other conservation efforts such as the NWT's farmland bird bed and breakfast scheme.

CJ (BAG) A recording form for Japanese Knotweed has been produced and has been promoted around the BAG partnership and on the BAG website. CJ is working with NWT to undertake an event to promote the biodiversity duty at Broxtowe Borough Council. Watton Prison have requested advice for the land inside and surrounding the prison.

KG (NCC) The drafting of a funding bid for work at Ransom Heath for SITA is underway. Lots of time responding to planning case work.

NC (NCC) Planning approval for the incinerator has been given. A planning application is being submitted for the Sherwood Forest Visitor's Centre in the near future. This will be a slimmed down version of the plan for the original visitor's centre. Data gathering is underway for the National Indicator 197.

Action 8: CJ to send reminder around the partnership for funding bids.

Action 9: CJ to contact SW with respect to amphibian and reptile surveying of Nottinghamshire sites.

9. Feedback from the Steering Group

CJ - there is a post shortfall of £7,000 per year for which EA and FC have been approached.

Paul Owen and Jenny French have left the city council so there is no longer a nature conservation officer, JF's previous line manager (James Dymond) is now the BAG contact at the city parks section.

Action 10: CJ to approach James Dymond to see how the Paul Owen and Jenni French leaving will affect Nott'm City input into BAG.

10. Feedback form the Awareness sub group

A training day for volunteers/local groups has been discussed and the annual forum LBAP event is in the early stages of preparation - suggestions of a theme and ideas for venues are welcomed.

11. Outstanding matters arising

None.

12. AOB

LS - It is hoped that a DEFRA funding application for a hedgerow survey will be undertaken this year. If time allows Leslie will contact representatives from SFT and NWT to build on the ideas that were developed in 2007/8.

NS - a student at Hallam University is looking for project work and has approached SFT. , the group discussed this but needs more information on the hours the student can work and who will pay for travel expenses for this.

CJ - Many of the LBAP habitat and species action plans are now 10 years old now and are getting dated. As a result CJ will be contacting lead partners to encourage them to be more active in updating the data on the action plans they are responsible for.

Action 11: CJ to contact lead partners to update the introduction and current plan sections of the action plans they are responsible for

13. Date of Next Meeting

2pm Thursday 16th April 2009. Civic Centre, Rushcliffe

(MEETING DATE AND VENUE REARRANGED)

2pm Thursday 16th July 2009. Old Ragged School, Nottingham.

2pm Thursday 15th October 2009. Idle Valley Centre.

2pm Thursday 14th January 2010. Venue TBA