

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group
11th Meeting – English Nature offices, London
11h00; 14 September 2006
MINUTES

1. Present:

Deryck Steer (JNCC, Chair); Ant Maddock (JNCC, Secretariat); Hilary Allison (WT); Pete Brotherton (EN); Liz Howe (CCW); Julian Hughes (LINK); Paul Rose (JNCC); Sarah Webster (Defra); Michele Calnan (WAG); Jim Munford (NBN); Matt Shardlow (LINK); Joanna Drewitt.

Video link: Felix Otton

Apologies: Malcolm Vincent (JNCC); Brigid Primrose (SNH); Richard Weyl (DOENI); Judith Young (SE); Robin Wynde (LINK).

LINK reported that Robin Wynde, chair of the 2005 Reporting Round sub-group, was stepping down from BRIG as the 2005 Reporting Round group. Deryck thanked Robin for his skilful chairing of the 2005 Reporting Group during a challenging time and to a difficult time-scale.

2. Final acceptance of minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted after a query about Action 7 - Pete to consider how survey information might be addressed through Local Records Centres. After discussion it was agreed that because of the English Nature involvement in a UK review of Local Record Centres taken by Richard Alexander from English Nature, Pete was best placed to carry out this action.

Action 1: Pete to act as the main provider of information to BRIG on Local Record Centres

3. Actions from previous BRIG meeting (Actions are attached)

Actions completed: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Action 3 was carried over until Malcolm was back

Action 8 is on the agenda

Action 15. Standing Committee had an issue with the ToR of BRAG and a group was set up to review the ToR. The results of this review are due soon and the new ToR will be sent to BRIG as soon as they are available.

Action 2: Paul to write a short paper on BRIG's style – Malcolm will now take this forward as the new chair of the group

Action 3: Paul to email the BRAG ToR to BRIG when these are available

4. Carried over items

4.1 Future work for BRIG

Review of the BRIG paper

This paper differed from the BRAG review in that it was a self assessment which was considered valuable. Since inception BRIG had focussed on the reporting round and two reviews, now that these were coming to an end, it was timely to consider the other work listed in BRIG's ToR.

One of the problems is that the ToR and the work programme are the same which is not helpful.

Action 4: Ant to circulate the ToR to BRIG who should consider if they are broad enough and then to think about a work programme that will be discussed at the next BRIG meeting.

The table below was extracted from the Looking forward paper (BRIG1104_7_looking forward) which was discussed at the end of the BRIG meeting.

	Action in Terms of Reference	Progress	State
1.	Review of priority habitats and species action plans.	Stage 2 being discharged through sub-group chaired by Steve Lee Bapty	☺
2.	HAP/SAP Targets review	Signed off by BRIG; closure report expected	☺
3.	2005 Reporting	Final report due; closure report expected	☺
4.	Dissemination of Information	Never considered explicitly. No strategy, milestones or measures of success.	☹
5.	Coordinate monitoring/surveillance of HAPs, SAPs and wider biodiversity.	JNCC is preparing a paper for Standing Committee detailing surveillance work	☹
6.	Biodiversity Indicators forum	JNCC/DEFRA are coordinating but BRIG is not involved.	
7.	Website	Revised and updated with BRIG involvement as necessary.	☺
8.	Liaison with other bodies and networks	Improving. NBN is making links. BRAG links not good	☹
9.	Other activities	Information gap analysis - JNCC paper to Standing Committee detailing process to resolve these gaps	☹

1. Stage 1 of the Species and Habitats Review was almost complete and Stage 2 was starting with Steve Lee-Bapty as chair.
2. The targets work was complete and BRIG is awaiting a closure report. Ministerial sign off is due in October 2006.
3. The final report is being prepared and a closure report for this work is due.
- 4 – 9. These items will be discussed at the next BRIG meeting when a 2007 work programme will be developed. It was agreed that item 4 be merged with item 7 as part of a communications strategy.

Action 5: The 2007 work programme to be developed in a strategic and open discussion at the next BRIG meeting

Co-ordination of survey and monitoring strategy and gap report to Standing Committee

Because of JNCC's Surveillance work programme, JNCC was tasked at the April Standing Committee meeting to submit a paper to the Standing Committee on how to take forward work to fill the information gap. To do this JNCC was developing a framework that considered species attributes (rarity versus commonness; within or outside designated sites; suitable for monitoring by volunteers or professionals *etc.*) and used these to assign species to a surveillance scheme.

The proposal would use existing surveillance schemes as much as possible and consider modifying these rather than developing new schemes. However, in some cases the development of new schemes may be unavoidable and Lead Partners would be responsible for proposing a suitable surveillance scheme and/or research programme.

Action 6: Ant to circulate the surveillance gap paper to BRIG at the end of September and receive comments by 4 October 2006

Given the short time between receiving comments from BRIG and submitting the paper to Standing Committee, it was asked how any differences in opinions would be resolved. Differences would be conveyed to Standing Committee within the context that JNCC would take the broader framework view and BRIG the more specific view.

Action 7: Jim to provide a list of where survey money is available

The overall surveillance programme paper, not this information gap paper, would be placed onto the JNCC website when it was completed within the next week or so. BRIG to keep informed of this work.

Future direction of the UK BAP strategy

Sarah was tasked at the April Standing Committee meeting to draft an initial framework on UK Biodiversity work beyond the current UK BAP review. The paper presented to BRIG was therefore not detailed nor a statement of the UK BAP but a structure or framework looking at work in six areas:

- Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- Protecting the best wildlife sites
- Targeted action for threatened species and habitats (and alien invasive species)
- Embedding Biodiversity and ecosystem services into all sectors of policy:
- Engaging People
- Developing the Evidence Base

There were a number of suggestions offered on how this paper may be improved:

- There may be a place for a section on the wider countryside
- This paper would be ideal as a framework document overlying the excellent previous paper submitted to Standing Committee which explains the details

- There may be a place for a section on knowledge transfer and advice
- There may be a place for a section on commissioning research (it is important to separate autecological research from survey)
- A valuable addition would be to explain the institutional relationships among the partners in the UK BAP partnership e.g. Lead Partners, Country Groups and HAP groups. This may help clarify the roles. A diagram may be the best way of conveying this information.

Overall, it was noted that government is keen to look at biodiversity conservation and the environment at the moment. The timing is right for this paper to inform government in putting forward new and attractive ideas for their political agenda. To do this government needs to understand their commitments to biodiversity. This paper should be written clearly and explicitly therefore so that government is not lost in the detail.

5. Feedback from Sub-groups

5.1 Targets Review Sub-group

BRIG approved the query in the Target sub-group report that those species and habitat plans that do not have revised targets for any reason retain their current targets, but that these current targets be clearly labelled as such. Species no longer considered to be priority species by the PSHRWG would not have targets.

The work of the Targets sub-group is complete. A full list of the new targets for species and habitats is available from Pete Brotherton or Gavin Measures at English Nature; most of which are quantitative. BRIG has seen these targets and Pete asked how this work should be signed off.

BRIG signed off the work of the Targets sub-group noting that a closure report is required that should have:

- A cover note which frames the targets in the context of ecosystem resilience, climate change, the Species and Habitats Review and noting that resources are limited. Sarah submitted this cover note as a late paper for this meeting as this note is needed by ministers for their sign off
- An executive summary required for sign off by ministers. This to include a summary overview of the spreadsheet details
- List of issues such as retaining old targets for species and habitats without new targets
- Complete targets spreadsheet as an annex

Representatives from the countries are in discussion about making ministerial sign off in all four countries consistent. BRIG will need to deal with any ministerial comments on the targets.

Action 8: Pete to email the targets to the Standing Committee to get ministerial comment on the targets

Action 9: BRIG to comment on Sarah's target cover note by Thursday 21 September 2006

Action 10: Pete to enlist help to get the targets overview section completed

Action 11: Pete to complete the targets closure report and then circulate the report to BRIG

BRIG thanked Pete, Gavin and the Targets sub-group for their work.

5.2 Species and Habitats Review Sub-group

Standing Committee did not want the new list to be published until there was a clear idea of how conservation action would be delivered. LINK expressed concerns that if the List of UK BAP Species and Habitats was not published soon there would be a loss of inertia and expectations. Steve Lee-Bapty, chair of the new PSHRWG, recognised this and would try to provide as much information as soon as possible to enable the Standing Committee to sign off publication of the list. In addition, BRIG and PSHRWG would need to manage the expectations of the UK BAP community through a communication strategy.

Action 12: Ant to convey the concern to the chair of PSHRWG that there is a need to publish the Stage 1 list as soon as possible

5.3 2005 Reporting Sub-group

Robin Wynde, the chair of the 2005 Reporting sub-group, and Ant had agreed that the bit of work needed to publish the final 2005 report on the website would be done by JNCC with help from the rest of the 2005 Reporting sub-group and overseen by Robin.

Action 13: A final closure report on the 2005 Reporting Round needs to be presented to BRIG

5.4 Climate Change Sub-group

Hilary summarised her report and concluded that although the work was not complete, it was nearly so. BRIG agreed that the work should be published as a UK BAP Partnership paper. David Milliband wants to have biodiversity and climate change issues mentioned on Biodiversity Day, 22 May 2007. The group will aim to publish the paper in time for Biodiversity Day.

Action 14: Hilary to circulate the climate change paper to BRIG for comment by Thursday 21 September 2006

Action 15: The climate change paper to be sent to Standing Committee in October as work in progress

Andy Stott submitted a late paper that proposed to "climate-proof" the new UK BAP targets. Ant apologised to Hilary, chair of the Climate Change sub-group, for sending this paper out before consulting her.

The paper responded to a request from John Robbs, chair of Standing Committee, for BRIG to ensure that the new targets were set within the context of climate change. The paper proposed that, without changing any of the targets, the Climate Change sub-group could develop generic guidance under which the new UK BAP targets could be implemented.

BRIG had a number of concerns about this proposal noting that because there is a high degree of uncertainty, it was not possible to provide evidence-based assurance that the new targets will be sustainable in the face of climate change. Climate change had been considered when the targets were proposed. There was potentially a lot of work involved in this proposal and the current Climate Change sub-group does not have the capacity to do this at the moment. BRIG wanted to discuss this proposal in more detail with Andy Stott to see how it could be taken forward. A group was set up to meet Andy.

Action 16: Hilary, Pete, Joanna and Clive Walmsley to meet Andy Stott to resolve difficulties with the climate -proofing proposal and establish what is needed and what can be done.

5.6 Review timeline update (attached)

Action 17: Ant to make update the timeline and merge 2004 into a single column

6. Standing Items

6.1 Standing Committee Actions

It was noted that the Standing Committee minutes were not seen by all members of BRIG. It was agreed that the Standing Committee minutes would be appended to the agenda of the BRIG meeting following the Standing Committee meeting. This would enable BRIG to identify the Standing Committee tasks with which BRIG needed to engage.

Action 18: Minutes of the Standing Committee meetings to be appended to the BRIG agenda

Action 19: Ant to circulate Paul's CBD guidance on NBSAPs

6.2 BRAG

LINK reported that they were no longer on BRAG.

It was noted that David Switzer was on secondment in London to help consider biodiversity issues in relation to the NERC duty in England.

6.3 Country Groups

The country group reports were accepted.

6.4 NBN

The NBN report was accepted.

6.5 BARS

The BARS report was accepted.

Action 20: Pete to give a demonstration of BARS at the next BRIG meeting

7. Any other Business

There was no other business.

8. Date of next meeting

BRIG identified three dates for Malcolm to consider;

Monday 4 December 2006

Monday 15 January 2007

Tuesday 16 January 2006

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group

11th Meeting: 14 September 2006

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- Action 5:** The 2007 work programme to be developed in a strategic and open discussion at the next BRIG meeting
- Action 6:** Ant to circulate the surveillance gap paper to BRIG at the end of September and receive comments by 4 October 2006
- Action 7:** Jim to provide a list of where survey money is available
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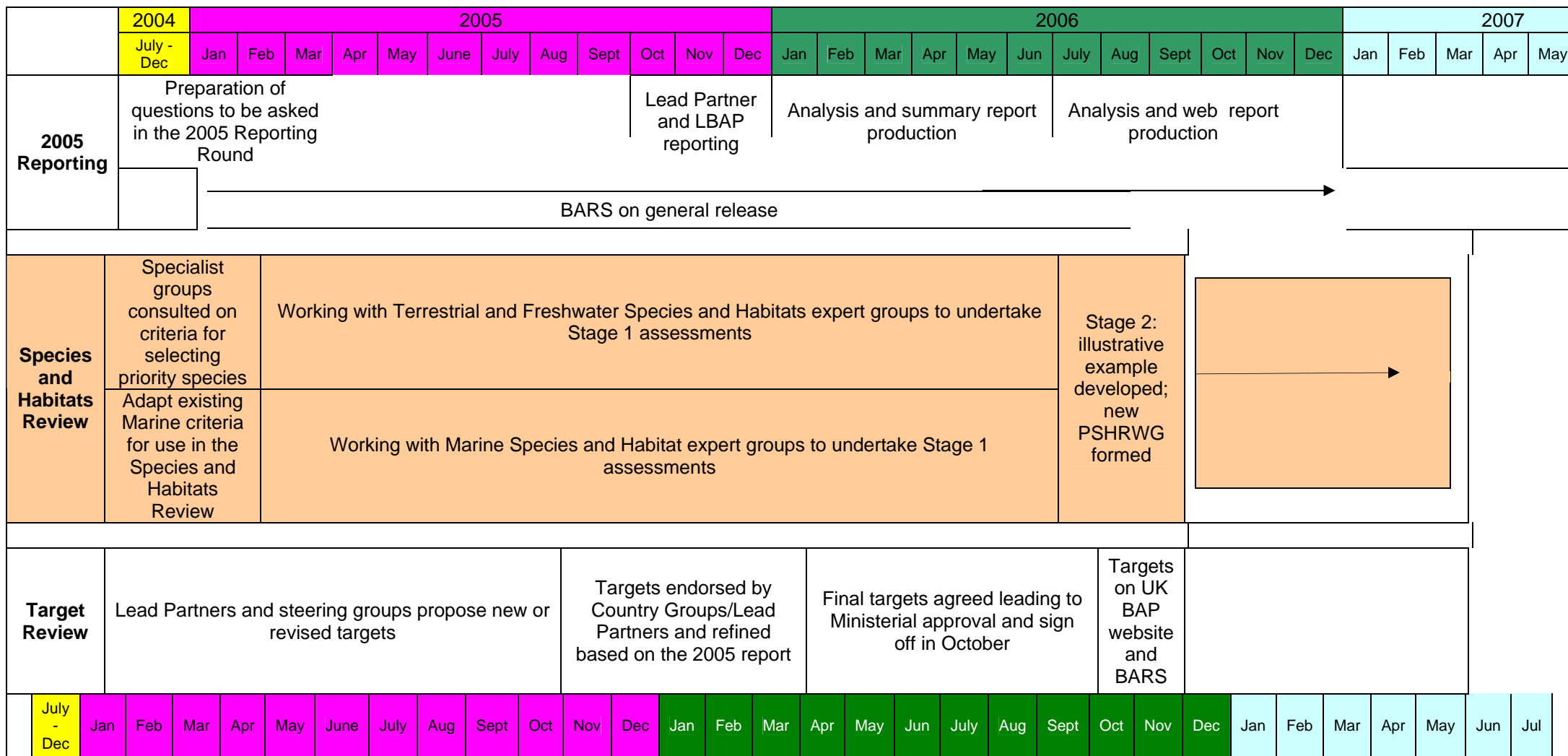


Figure 1. Main BRIG milestones. The main sub-group work programmes as listed on the left and the details of the work within these sub-groups is listed in the body of the Figure.