

UK Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group
18th Meeting – 3 September 2008
JNCC, Peterborough
MINUTES

1. Present

Malcolm Vincent (JNCC, Chair)

Nicola Hutchinson (WCL)

Matt Shardlow (WCL)

Greg Mudge (SNH) Video link

Paul Rose (JNCC)

Ant Maddock (JNCC, Secretariat)

Jim Munford (NBN)

Sarah Webster (Defra)

Deborah Long (SEL) Video link

Ruth Waters (NE)

Bill Somerfield (WAG) Phone link

Richard Weyl (NIEA)

Apologies:

Liz Howe (CCW); Joanna Drewitt (SG)

2. Final acceptance of minutes of last meeting

The draft minutes were accepted.

3. Actions from previous BRIG meeting (see attached)

Old Action 1: This action was to place all 65 habitat definitions on the UK BAP website and the work was complete except for four habitats. It was agreed that all definitions be placed on the website by end of September and any definitions still being worked on by end of September would have text indicating that work was ongoing. As soon as the outstanding definitions were complete, they would be placed on the web.

ACTION 1: Ant to put the list of completed definitions on the UK BAP website on 1 October 2008

Old Action 3: This action related to BRIG being kept informed of the progress with the Terrestrial Biodiversity Surveillance Strategy. Although little has changed to date, BRIG will be kept informed.

ACTION 2: Carried forward. BRIG to be kept aware of the future development of the Terrestrial Biodiversity Surveillance Strategy and to be engaged in an appropriate way in the Surveillance Implementation Group

Old Action 9: The Stage 1 data were ready and would be put on the UK BAP website this September

Old Actions 6 & 7: These actions related to a pilot study involving the UK Habitat Groups. These groups have not yet met so the actions will be carried forward

ACTION 3: Carry forward the actions to invite some of the UK Habitat Groups to conduct a pilot study involving species

Old Actions 2, 4, 5, 8, 10 - On the agenda

4. Substantive items

Discussion on improving data availability to UK BAP through the NBN

{Richard Alexandra (NE) gave a presentation on LRCs at the September 2007 BRIG meeting. This was followed by Geoff Johnson (NBNT) at the June 2008 meeting on the role of National Schemes and Societies and NBN. The action from the June meeting was for a paper to start a discussion on improving data availability to UK BAP through the NBN}

Steve Wilkinson, the JNCC lead on NBN, introduced his paper. NBN is a valuable tool that pools a large amount of additional records to “standard” data sets such as those owned by Butterfly Conservation, British Bryological Society, RSPB, *etc.* The problems experienced by users of NBN that were highlighted at the June 2008 BRIG meeting are well known and an NBN strategy is in place to try to deal with these. The main thrust of the strategy is to identify taxa and focus on getting these onto NBN. Further, a tool is being developed to help with record verification; however, this tool is not ready yet. But what is required is for users to engage more with NBN managers to point out problems they experience (e.g. location errors). NBN can then react to these problems and improve the service.

Although BRIG is in support of NBN and wants to see progress, the accuracy of records remains a problem for users. Without having some understanding of which records are accurate and which have not been checked (and therefore potentially incorrect), inaccurate records could be used in influential circumstances.

Resolving issues of accuracy of NBN records is not straight forward but there was support for the idea of tagging the records which had been checked for accuracy. Various suggestions were made including considering the accreditation work done by NE and referring unusual or odd records to an expert. It was suggested that these discussions between WCL and NBN be continued.

ACTION 4: Steve and Matt to discuss issues of accuracy of NBN records and Steve to report back to BRIG

ACTION 5: Steve then to consider holding a workshop to further discussion resolving these issues

Summary of Standing Committee’s decisions on the Species and Habitat Review, the Forward Process and the timetable

{This is an action from the June 2008 meeting for a summary of Standing Committee’s decisions regarding the UK BAP and a suggested timetable for consideration }

BRIG felt that this summary was an accurate reflection of the state of play but recognised that it had little control over the details and timing of work done by the countries. Therefore BRIG agreed to redraft this paper, including the edits that were made during the current BRIG meeting, to focus on first, the summary of Standing Committee’s decisions and second on recommendations to Standing Committee of what needs to be done to complete the UK elements of the BAP work. In addition, countries would be invited to add the details of the work they were doing.

The discussion on this paper was useful as it highlighted a number of issues that need resolution by BRIG and by Standing Committee. These included post 2008 reporting, target setting and success criteria especially how these relate to applying the 2006 “new” targets to the process developed for the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats, and more details of how the Terrestrial Biodiversity Surveillance Strategy fits into the UK BAP. A Gantt chart summary of this paper should be prepared as well.

ACTION 6: Ant to redraft the paper to reflect the Standing Committee decisions and recommendations for further BRIG UK work and to prepare a Gantt chart summary of this paper

ACTION 7: Ant to invite the countries to contribute to this paper actions and any deadlines or timetable for the work they are doing

Species expertise and Habitat Groups

{This arises from a Standing Committee action to organise the collation of information on generic advice on habitat management for species at a UK level for all Habitat Groups}

The countries are identifying species habitat links in various ways and there is a need for some UK co-ordination of this and to set up a means by which this information can be pooled into a UK-wide collation of best practise. There was support for having some form of UK web-based “manual” containing this country work. This needs to fit into the whole UK BAP process and to the thinking about using targets.

ACTION 8: JNCC to liaise with the countries about the work they are doing to link species and habitats, then to pool this work into a UK-wide collation of best practise, identify gaps and share this information

ACTION 9: Standing Committee to be informed that BRIG would like to recognise the important role being performed by Lead Partners and that there is a feeling in the Partnership that this role is not recognised

Recommendations on success

{This arises from a Standing Committee action to consider how success could be determined together with a monitoring and reporting process}

There were some comments on terminology used in this paper and BRIG agreed that the details of “conservation dependent” species needed to be better explained. BRIG felt that there were three pieces of work that need to make more progress before we would be in a position to start actually applying the principles we agreed around the success criteria:

- countries had made progress on how they were taking species actions forward and what they were going to do around the subjects of targets (new and existing) and lead partners.
- more clarity on how the list would be managed and reviewed in future
- how we would report post-2008.

It was agreed that this paper reflected BRIG’s considered opinion on success and that this should now be left until we had made some progress with the work listed above.

ACTION 10: Standing Committee to be asked when would be best for BRIG to reconsider success and success criteria

5. Brief updates

Maintaining the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats (general ‘housekeeping’ steps)

This item arose because two moths *Euxoa tritici* (White-line Dart) and *Rhizedra lutosa* (Large Wainscot) were omitted from the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats. This was an administrative error that occurred during finalisation of the large invertebrate spreadsheet and was picked up by Matt Shardlow and Mark Parsons after the lists were approved by ministers. The scientific case for their inclusion is strong, both got through on the decline criterion and both exceed the 50% decline in 25 years based on the Rothamsted survey data.

BRIG agreed that this was part of maintaining the UK BAP list and suggested expanding the details of such “housekeeping” issues which should include administrative errors, dealing with taxonomic changes, and establishing the periodicity and timing of these housekeeping events (perhaps after each reporting round).

BRIG agreed that the moths should be put onto the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats and that a note to this effect be sent to Standing Committee for approval.

ACTION 11: Standing Committee to be advised that BRIG recommends that the moths *Euxoa tritici* (White-line Dart) and *Rhizedra lutosa* (Large Wainscot) be placed on the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats

ACTION 12: Sarah to outline the housekeeping ideas for the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats in a paper for the next Standing Committee meeting

BRIG work programme/implementation plan

There was a common thread in this meeting that BRIG needs to focus on UK work; to draw together issues such as the actions discussed under the item dealing with the summary paper, the most efficient incorporation of existing (2006) targets into the new process, the post 2008 reporting; collation and sharing of information where feasible, the Terrestrial Biodiversity Surveillance Strategy, and the housekeeping *etc.* *etc.* An output of this work should be fed into BRIG’s work plan to provide a plan of tasks to be done.

ACTION 13: Ant to include the actions that arise from a reconsideration of the discussions at this 18th BRIG meeting into a more detailed version of the work plan

BRIG / BRAG Research contract (verbal update)

The research contract had been sent to four contractors but all declined. It was agreed that the contract be rewritten and sent to a new list of contractors. The description of the work should be tightened and reference to ongoing or repeat monitoring actions should be removed. The contract should cover research and one-off surveillance actions only and this should be better described in the contract specification.

ACTION 14: Ant to work with the research contract steering committee to resend the contract

2008 Reporting Round (verbal update)

The Reporting Round started a few days earlier than planned. Ant thanked Megan Ellershaw and John Bedford from Natural England who worked hard to get the questions on BARS.

Communications group (verbal update)

ACTION 15: Ant, Paul and Nicola to prepare a paper on BRIG’s communication for the next BRIG meeting

6. Standing items

Country groups

The England report had been received but there was no time to discuss this.

BARS

A BARS report had been received but there was no time to discuss this.

7. Next meeting

Ant to trawl for dates for a meeting in late January prior to the April Standing Committee meeting

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