

Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group  
Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008  
Oxford Island

**Attendees**

Bob Davidson (NIEA – NH -Chair)  
Caroline Marshall (Lough Neagh Advisory Committee)  
Robbie Marshall (Ulster Angling Federation)  
Paddy Boylan (Loughs Agency)  
Seamus Burns (Biodiversity Officers Forum)  
Godfrey McRoberts (Countryside Management Branch)  
Eileen Mallon (NIEA -WMU)  
Judith Bankhead (Rivers Agency)  
Marcus Malley (NILGA)  
Robert Rosell (AFBI)  
David Griffiths (University of Ulster)  
Kieran Mullan (UWT)  
Mary Gallagher (NIEA -WMU)  
Mark Horton (Ballinderry Fish Hatchery)  
Alan Keys (Ballinderry Fish Hatchery)  
Phil Davidson (Freshwater Taskforce)  
Neil McCulloch (NIEA - NH)  
John Early (NIEA - NH)  
Helen Paul (NIEA – minute taker)

**1. Introduction**

Bob introduced and welcomed the new members to the group.

**2. Apologies**

David Garrett (Central Policy Group), Valerie Crozier (NI Water), Garry O'Neill (DCAL Inland Fisheries)

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

	<b>Action Points C/F from meeting on 15/05/07</b>	<b>Progress</b>
AP 2	<b>Bob</b> to advise the group when PPS2 is published for consultation	C/F
AP4	<b>Anyone</b> with information on lakes in NI should send Mary the information	C/F
	<b>Action Points C/F from meeting on 06/11/07</b>	

	<b>Action Points C/F from meeting on 06/05/08</b>	
AP2	<b>Bob</b> to look into how BARS and PAIRS could possibly be linked	C/F
AP13	<b>Bob</b> to invite Forest Service	C/F

#### **4. Matters Arising**

John advised the group that he had made enquiries in relation to running a BARS training event but unfortunately due to staffing availability this would have to be deferred and would be arranged at a later date.

Bob advised that Planning and Flood plains was an agenda item and that action points 3, 4, 5 & 6 would be covered under that item.

Bob informed the group that he still had to contact Forest Service with reference to representation at the group. He advised he would be meeting with Stuart Morwood of Forest Service shortly and would discuss representation.

#### **5. Reports from UK River , Pond and Lake HAP meetings**

John gave an update on the development of the UK River Habitat Action Plan. He advised that it was still in the very early stages of development and the group would be kept informed of progress. He briefly gave an overview of the use of various parameters through GIS to identify Rivers in NI for the purposes of the River HAP.

A discussion took place and it was agreed that Brown Trout and near natural reaches should be considered as part of the process for identifying Rivers in NI for the purposes of the River Habitat Action Plan.

**Action Point 1:** John to include Brown Trout and near natural reaches as part of the process.

**Action Point 2:** John to provide information on the development of the River HAP at the next meeting.

Bob informed the group that he had attended the UK Pond HAP meetings and explained that the Pond Habitat Action Plan was still at an early stage but at a more developed stage than the River HAP. He advised that NIEA were funding Pond Conservation to run a project to identify important areas for ponds within NI (IAPs) for the purposes of the HAP. He suggested that the group could possibly run a workshop on ponds once the report is completed.

John advised a draft version of the Pond HAP was available on Pond Conservation's website. The draft targets for NI have not yet been agreed.

Bob gave an update on the UK Lake HAP group. He advised that John was in the process of developing a database of lakes within NI in conjunction with NIEA WMU. This database could then be queried to identify the various tiers of lakes.

Bob went on to give the group an update on the development of a joint UK Lake Life+ bid. He advised the group that it was still unclear as to what shape any potential bid would take due to the requirements of Life+. He advised the Magheraveely Marl lakes had been put forward by NIEA and the Crom Lakes in Fermanagh due to their relatively small catchment areas.

Bob advised the group he will keep them updated on the Lake HAP and Pond HAP development.

## **6. Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group work programme**

Bob advised that John had made progress on updating the comments section of the work programme but that this would need to be filled out further using information supplied by other group members.

### **Action Point 3: ALL to send John updates on actions in the work programme.**

Bob discussed the overall update of the work programme for the group as it was nearing the end of its 3 year cycle. It was agreed that Bob/John would prepare a revised draft work programme and send to the group for their comments/changes. Godfrey pointed out that as DARD was such a large department it would be better to have the appropriate section listed. He agreed to give comments on which section within DARD it should be.

Bob informed the group that the deadline for the UK reporting (BARS) was the end of November 08 and that the NIBG were pulling together a report with a deadline for information at the end of December 08. Bob explained that from BARS it should be easier to identify any gaps in information but unfortunately BARS was not as widely used as hoped. Bob asked for everyone to send any information of work they have carried out to Neil. Bob informed them that he would be happy to accept the information in any format or Neil could meet individually with the organisation.

During discussions it came to light that some people had not received the email issued enclosing the reporting forms and list of habitats and species. It was agreed that this email would be sent again to the group.

**Action Point 4:** Bob to email revised draft work programme to the group in early 2009 for comment/change.

**Action Point 5:** Godfrey to give comments on who within DARD should be listed against actions.

**Action Point 6:** ALL to email comments on the revised draft work programme when it is sent out.

**Action Point 7:** Neil to arrange to have the email with the attached reporting forms and list of species sent to group members.

## **7. Reporting on Wetland Priority Habitats**

John had circulated a paper on reporting on wetland priority habitats to the group prior to the meeting. He explained that reporting information of UK priority habitats and species was required by the end of November 2008 and that this data will be supplemented and used in compiling the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group report early in 2009. He informed the group that the reporting is being undertaken through the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) and that the data sources are the condition monitoring of designated sites (mainly Areas of Special Scientific Interest) and the preliminary results of the NI Countryside survey. He asked the group for comment/agreement on the information to be used for the reporting.

The group agreed the information to be used for the reporting.

## **8. Co-ordinating work for Freshwater Pearl Mussels**

Bob gave some background on the various UK BAP species.

He asked the group to consider building on the existing Freshwater Pearl Mussel Group at Ballinderry or if there was merit in setting up a new group specifically to look at Freshwater Pearl Mussels on a wider scale. Bob also asked for views on running a potential FWPM workshop and inviting experts from Ireland and GB to it.

Alan gave an update on the PhD project at Ballinderry Fish Hatchery. He advised that there is a steering group for the PhD and it was agreed that this group should be used to discuss the way forward for Co-ordinating Freshwater Pearl Mussel work.

**Action Point 8:** Bob to discuss a potential workshop focussing on Freshwater Pearl Mussels at the next Ballinderry Freshwater Pearl Mussel Group meeting.

## **9. Co-ordinating work for priority fish species**

Bob advised the group that recently new fish species had been added to the UK BAP species list. These new additional fish species included the Brown Trout, Eel and Sea Trout. He advised that as of yet no Species Action Plan was available for them.

Bob advised that he would hope to see in the future someone working solely on priority fish species conservation within NI. He advised that the group needs to consider whether to build on an existing group or set up a specific group to look at priority fish species. It was agreed that 'co-ordinating fish conservation' should be added as an agenda item at the next Water Framework Directive Fish meeting.

**Action Point 9:** Paddy/Robert to arrange for 'fish conservation' to be added to the agenda at the next Water Framework Directive Fish meeting.

## **10. Invasive Alien Species Update**

John gave an update on the Invasive Alien Species contract, the recent conference in Athlone and the various eradication projects ongoing. He advised the group that through the Natural Heritage Research Partnership a PhD had recently started looking at Aquatic Invasive Species and a smaller project concerning Muntjac Deer.

John asked if anyone else in the group would like to give any updates on any of their areas of work. Paddy gave an update on *Didemnum spp.* at the marina at Carlingford lough and Robert gave an update on the PhD Sarah McClean is carrying out on Zebra Mussels.

A discussion on the movement of non-native fish species, such as Pike and Roach, took place.

John encouraged everyone to subscribe to the newsletter on the Invasive Species website as it provides a lot of information on various projects and upcoming events. He further advised the next Annual All-Ireland Invasive Species in Ireland Forum would be taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> April 09 at QUB.

## **11. Future Workshops**

Bob explained that part of the group's terms of reference was to hold at least one workshop a year. He asked for suggestions for a workshop for early 2009. Suggestions put forward were (in no order of preference):

1. Freshwater Pearl Mussels.

2. Conditions/ Definitions.
3. Priority Fish species.
4. Ponds.
5. Lake Restoration.
6. Fens.
7. Planning and floodplains.
8. Wetlands Awareness,
9. BARS.
10. Water Quantity.
11. RBMPs and Wetlands.

These topics were all discussed and it was agreed that the Planning and Floodplains workshop would be arranged for October 09 and a Conditions/definitions workshop would be arranged for early 2009.

Eileen agreed to arrange the Planning and Floodplains workshop and Bob/John agreed to arrange the conditions/definitions workshop.

**Action Point 10:** Bob/John to arrange a conditions/definitions workshop for early 2009.

**Action Point 11:** Eileen to arrange a Planning and Floodplains workshop for October 09.

## 12. Planning and Flood Plains

Bob asked the group if they were happy this agenda item would be covered the workshop on Planning and Floodplains which was agreed to be arranged for later next year. This was agreed.

## 13. AOB

There was no other business to discuss.

## 14. Date of next meeting.

Dates for the meetings in May and November next year are to be arranged.

### Summary of Action Points

AP1	John to include Brown Trout and near natural reaches as part of the process.
AP2	John to provide information on the development of the River HAP at the next meeting
AP3	ALL to send John updates on actions in the work programme.
AP4	Bob to email revised draft work programme to the group in early 2009 for comment/change

AP5	Godfrey to give comments on who within DARD should be listed against actions.
AP6	ALL to email comments on the revised draft work programme when it is sent out.
AP7	Neil to arrange to have the email with the attached reporting forms and list of species sent to group members
AP8	Bob to discuss a potential workshop focussing on Freshwater Pearl Mussels at the next Ballinderry Freshwater Pearl Mussel Group meeting.
AP9	Paddy/Robert to arrange for 'fish conservation' to be added to the agenda at the next Water Framework Directive Fish meeting
AP10	Bob/John to arrange a conditions/definitions workshop for early 2009.
AP11	Eileen to arrange a Planning and Floodplains workshop for October 09.