

WETLANDS BIODIVERSITY DELIVERY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Nov 08

1 Purpose

This paper sets the terms of reference for a Wetland Biodiversity Delivery Group to ensure that activity in relation to wetlands is well co-ordinated and supported within Northern Ireland. The activities of the Group will facilitate effective communication between the relevant government agencies, the private and voluntary sectors, including the maintenance of links with the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

2 Scope

Relevant Habitat Action Plans to be considered by the group include:

- Fens
- Reedbeds
- Aquifer-fed naturally fluctuating waterbodies
- Eutrophic standing waters
- Mesotrophic lakes
- Marl Lakes
- Coastal & Floodplain grazing marsh
- River and Streams.
- Ponds.

Relevant action for priority species as agreed by the group.

3 Objectives

The main objectives of the freshwater and wetland HAPs are:

- To **maintain** the extent of existing habitats.
- To **enhance** the ecological condition of existing habitats to achieve *favourable condition*.
- Where possible **increase** the area of each type of habitat through **restoration**.

The remit of the Wetland Biodiversity Delivery Group should include:

- 3.1 The co-ordination of arrangements for **monitoring** and **reporting** on habitats in the context of Biodiversity Action Plans.

- 3.2 The **co-ordination** of activity on wetland habitats, including
- Development of best practice
 - Advice on relevant Biodiversity Action Plans
 - Providing guidance for landowners and other stakeholders
 - Liaison with wetland interests in the Republic of Ireland and UK
 - Interpretation, education and knowledge sharing
 - Advising and contributing to WFD and River Basin Management Plans
 - Inputting biodiversity action into BARS.
- 3.3 The identification and support of **research** needs.
- 3.4 Establish, deliver and review the Wetlands Biodiversity Work Programme.
- 3.5 The consideration of cross-border catchment management issues.
- 3.6 The provision of Wetlands biodiversity advice to government.

4 Representation

Proposed members of the Group are:

Chairman NIEA Natural Heritage
 DARD – Rivers Agency,
 DARD – Service Delivery Group
 DARD – Central Policy Group
 Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
 DOE, NIEA – Water Management Unit
 DCAL – Inland Fisheries
 Loughs Agency
 Ulster Farmers Union
 NI Agricultural Producers Association (invited but no reply)
 NI Freshwater Task Force – 2 NGO reps
 Ulster Anglers Federation
 NI Coarse Fishing Federation
 Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
 NI Biodiversity Group
 David Griffiths - University of Ulster
 Alan Keys or Mark Horton – Ballinderry Fish Hatchery
 David Laughlin – Bann Systems Ltd
 NI Local Government Association (invited but no reply)
 National Parks & Wildlife Service
 Local Biodiversity Officer representative – Seamus Burns.

Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Advisory Committee
Forest Service NI

5 Organisation

Each representative will be expected to meet their own costs of membership. It is envisaged that the Group will hold a business meeting twice a year together with a field trip.

NIEA will provide secretariat services to the Group.

6 Review

The effectiveness, Terms of Reference & membership of the Group will be reviewed on a yearly basis.