

## Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

Minutes of the fifteenth Steering Group meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003 10.30am, IWC Seaclose Offices, Newport

**Present:** John Brownscombe, AONB Officer  
Matthew Chatfield, Senior Countryside Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Nick Cooper, DEFRA  
Andy Gordon English Nature  
Richard Grogan, Wight Wildlife  
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Hugh Milner, Forestry Commission  
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Carrie Temple, RSPB  
Tony Tutton, National Trust

**In attendance:** Jonathan Cox, Consultant

**Apologies:** David Langford, Country Landowners Association  
Joe Stevens, Environment Agency  
Ian Boyd Island 2000 Trust  
Kevin Watts, Forest Research  
Les Street, RSPB

**SG03/ 09** **Minutes of the last meeting** were agreed and signed

### **SG03/10** **Matters arising from the minutes**

SG02/14 Woodland Forum questionnaire has now been analysed. Forty-four replies were received. A large proportion of owners responding said that managing woods for wildlife was important to them. Other issues raised by the questionnaire are addressed in the HAP.

SG03/05 Countryside Stewardship NC reported that there had been a good attendance at the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January, and several new applications had come forward either via FWAG or Wight Wildlife. RG reported that a company called Green Agronomy are calling a meeting shortly. They will write up applications for stewardship for farmers.

### **SG03/11** **Woodland HAP**

Observations were invited on the final draft. A number of small corrections were made. It was noted that a number of the actions lacked timescales. Lead partners are asked to consider these so the action table for the HAP can be completed.

**Action: Please reply to AM by 6<sup>th</sup> June**

Kevin Watts of Forest Research was scheduled to attend the meeting to talk about the Visulands project but had been unable to do so. He will attend the next meeting to give a presentation on the programme. The Island will be involved in the scheme because of the JIGSAW project.

### **SG03/12** **Scope of the Farmland HAP**

This HAP is due to be completed by the end of the year. Consultation will be required with the NFU and CLA, and it is recognised that the national/european system for support of farming will be important in determining the outcome of any local plan. Some elements of CAP reform are due by September 2003.

Possible approaches were discussed and the following points emerged.

Potentially farmland is the greatest area of land on the Island which could contribute to biodiversity. The two extremes of farming are the intensive farmer with high production levels as the major aim, who could be encouraged to add on some elements of biodiversity to the farm operation, and the holistic ecological farming approach with much lower inputs and outputs, and the conservation of biodiversity as an aim of the business. There are many other farming operations falling between these two extremes.

Which species are indicators of good farmed land - what do they require? Farmland bird plans have been written elsewhere. Can all species requirements be met by a farmland plan? Can groups of species be identified which have similar requirements? Species are a good way of getting interest in the plan.

Should habitats be mentioned within the farmland plan? If so which ones?

The farming system is important to consider - land is used in rotation for example. In different parts of the Island, there are different landscape characters and different ecological considerations. The functional use of the plan is important - how does it encourage farmers to take up the idea of farming practices which encourage biodiversity?

The plan could provide a reference document for whole farm plans; entry level scheme payments could be linked to it for example.

Links could be developed with the branding initiative - brand can endorse good practice in production. It could parallel the Green Island Tourism Awards for businesses.

The plan could be useful in development control - planning gain as mitigation for schemes requiring planning permission.

**Action: It was agreed that JC would produce a document to take the process forward by the July meeting. There is farm census data on the DEFRA website. NC to provide figures relating to land under stewardship; AM to provide information about species.**

### **SG03/13      Estuaries HAP**

A paper was circulated listing a possible set of objectives for the Estuaries HAP. They have been derived from the Hampshire plan and they could be reworked to provide a more specific set of objectives for the Island.

Any plan for the Island must fit in to the Solent context. Hampshire produced a comprehensive document recently but there has been little progress. A recent meeting in Winchester aimed to revitalise the process. The Hampshire plan has each habitat treated separately; it is the intention to combine them for the Island plan.

Various existing documents (e.g. SEMS, Regulation 33 CHaMPs) have been used to provide descriptions of habitats; there is a lot of legislative material covering the area already and this document will aim to produce specific actions for the Island.

The extent of the habitats to be included was debated (Saline lagoons to be added to the list), and high tide roosts also need to be included. Some of the mapped habitat types lie along the Solent coast and it was suggested that the Isle of Wight Solent

Shore HAP might be a better title.

The question of measurable targets arose, and how these should be related to Solent wide targets. Sea level rise is an issue that needs to be addressed; there is likely to be loss of saltmarsh and coastal grazing marsh, and an increase in mudflats. There is a question of timing as to how rapidly these changes are likely to occur.

**Action: Feedback is requested to AM or direct to the Estuaries officer (Susan.Hawley@iow.gov.uk) by 13<sup>th</sup> June**

**SG03/14      Newsletter for the wider partnership**

A newsletter has not been sent since the publication of the Maritime cliffs HAP and if Steering Group members are able to provide copy, another is planned for July and the following offers were made.

Renotification of Hanover Point to St Catherine's Point SSSI	AG
Red Squirrel, Dormouse, Brown Hare survey results	RG
Benthic survey at Newtown )	
Knowles Farm )	TT
10 years of the goat project )	
Progress with HAPs	CP

**Action: material to be sent to AM by 27th June please**

**SG03/15      AOB**

- a) Feedback has been received on the progress of the Maritime Cliffs and Slopes HAP. A summary will be circulated with the minutes. It will be an agenda item next time, when monitoring of the Grassland HAPs also needs to be discussed.
- b) Wight Wildlife has completed a survey of Island woods for Red Squirrels and Dormice, and a Hare survey has also been done. A Water Vole survey is in progress at the moment.
- c) Suggestions for another public participation survey were requested; Marbled Whites or Great Crested Newts were suggested.
- d) Cridmore Bog The flood plain is to be restored and the water levels raised. English Nature and Environment Agency have allocated £50,000 between them to do the work. Stewardship agreements have been entered into to reduce pollution and run off. NVC surveys will be done to monitor progress.
- e) JIGSAW project; 8 schemes have been accepted so far. Once the national picture is complete, more money may be made available and another two schemes may be able to go ahead.
- f) Hampshire Woodland Forum is coming to the Island on 19<sup>th</sup> June and visiting Chillingwood Copse and Rowlands Wood.
- g) An Early Spider Orchid has been found growing on a lawn near Yarmouth (second record in recent years). It is a possible indicator of climate change.

**SG03/16      Date of next meeting 16<sup>th</sup> July 2003 10.30am Seaclose Offices, Fairlee Rd, Newport**