

## Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Steering Group meeting held on 8th September 2004, 10.30a.m.  
IWC Seaclose Offices, Newport

**Present:** Matthew Chatfield, Senior Countryside Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Andy Gordon, English Nature  
Richard Grogan, Wight Wildlife  
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Hugh Milner, Forestry Commission  
Martin Munt, Dinosaur Isle  
Lucy Sheffield, Environment Agency  
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Patrick Stephens, Woodland Manager, Forestry Commission  
Melanie Wallace, Student placement with Forestry Commission

**Apologies:** John Brownscombe, AONB Officer  
Brendan Burley, Defra  
David Langford, Country Land and Business Association  
Jackie Mellan, Environment Agency  
Les Street, RSPB  
Carrie Temple, RSPB  
Tony Tutton, National Trust

**SG04/19 Minutes of the last meeting** were agreed and signed

### **SG04/20 Matters arising from the minutes**

a) Local GAP. MM reported on progress. A draft of part of the plan has been sent to Jonathan Marwood, English Nature Peterborough for comments. There are still more parts to be added, but it is on target for being completed by the end of October. Some of the themes in the project e.g. World Heritage coast also come into work proposed by other projects on the Island.

b) The draft of the Woodland Bats SAP has been sent to Ian Davidson-Watts for comment, and also Forestry Commission. All comments would be gratefully received. Nikki Hions of English Nature and Jonathan Cox (manager of Briddlesford Copse) will also be asked to comment.

**Action: Feedback to CP by end of October. Completed SAP to be available for next Steering Group meeting** **ALL**

c) Go Wild on Wight Update (MM)

Plans are well advanced for the 2 day Festival at Dinosaur Isle on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October. 25 groups are taking part, including all local groups with a natural history interest. There will be talks, demonstrations and activities.

The Isle of Wight features in a number of the television programmes, and the BBC is providing leaflets for publicity purposes. A logo has been designed by Steve Collins of the IWC Publications Unit. There is a 2 page slot booked in Wight Insight and a press release has been prepared. A list of senior officers and members of the council to be invited is to be prepared. The event is seen as an example of partnership building, and promotion to the community.

#### Progress with IW BAP exhibit (AM)

A new set of display boards has been purchased, and some work commissioned from the IW Council Publications Unit. The visitors to the event will be asked to contribute to an alphabet of Island Wildlife, and to a 'promise tree' saying what they will do for wildlife over the next year. A small handout called 'Go wild on the web' has been designed to give a list of web-sites with biodiversity information. There is also the opportunity to give some information on the progress of the BAP.

#### d) Monitoring

Two replies have been received so far in relation to the grazing HAPs. Defra ecologists are finding it particularly difficult to cope with the pressure of work, but they have new ecologists starting today so are hoping to resume a more active role with the LBAP.

It may be better to carry out the monitoring of all HAPs once a year and the views of the Steering Group are sought on the best time for this.

The difficulty of judging the genuine success of schemes for biodiversity was discussed.

From October 2004, local BAPs will be required to report progress via BARS (Biodiversity Action Recording System) which has been under development. Once the requirements of this system are clear, then hopefully the local monitoring process can be modified to suit.

#### e) Newsletter

Two articles and some snippets of news have been supplied so far. An article about the Go Wild on Wight event is to be produced, and other suggestions for topics were made.

**Action: Any more articles to be sent to AM by 27<sup>th</sup> September 2004. Target for publication of newsletter is mid October. ALL**

#### **SG04/21 Community Biodiversity Action Plan**

A draft document had been circulated, which was discussed. It will ultimately feed into the Community Strategy for the Island.

Various issues were raised in discussion.

- There should be links with the local GAP and parts of this publication could be incorporated into it.
- The concepts need to be presented appropriately to relate to the Community Strategy themes.
- It also needs to link to the Local Development Framework
- There is a need to promote the economic value of wildlife to organisations such as SEEDA
- The term 'biodiversity' may not be the best to use - would 'wildlife' be better?
- The document as it stands is intended to be a technical document to go alongside the other Action Plans.

- Something to engage people is required - it was felt that this should be an illustrated 'glossy' publication for circulation to decision makers and the wider public. The six points on page 2 could be used as 'headlines', not only in this document, but whenever any of the Steering Group organisations are putting across biodiversity issues.
- It could also be a working document for use by organisations (e.g. parish councils, schools etc) wishing to incorporate biodiversity into their plans, and assist them with applying for grants to do work etc.
- Linking Nature conservation and art is another angle which has been successful elsewhere
- Examples of work by Steering Group members should be included

**Action: All Steering Group members to forward any comments on the document to AM by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004. Draft to be revised and circulated again to Steering Group. The members of the wider partnership will be invited to comment on this second draft (article in Newsletter, and information at Go Wild on Wight event and on web site) by the end of November. The final draft will then be prepared for the December Steering Group meeting. ALL**

**A 'glossy' publication will be produced for the wider public; preliminary costings and a timescale will be investigated by AM before the next Steering Group meeting. The possibility of a public launch at Dinosaur Isle will also be investigated. AM**

#### **SG04/22 Local Records Centre**

English Nature is encouraging the Countryside Section of the Isle of Wight Council to look at the possibility of providing a central point of contact for biological information for the Isle of Wight. Some habitat data is already held on GIS and new information from a recently flown set of aerial photography is expected soon, which could plug gaps in habitat information.

There are enquiries from developers (often tending to be vague), but not sufficient to make a local records centre as run in other parts of the country a commercial proposition. At present the Countryside Section passes requests for species information to the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society. The issues with habitat and species data are different; in particular, species information would need to be updated by a new survey.

There is a need for data collation and interpretation to be provided as part of the service, which could be charged for along with the provision of data.

There is the possibility that a web interface could be set up for the deposit and transfer of information, with some feedback to see how the information has been used. A biological information centre could also 'signpost' other sources of data in cases where a recorder does not want to make the data directly available to the centre. There is no formal protocol for obtaining information at the moment and those requesting data may approach individuals directly. If a good protocol could be set up, money could come in to finance other activities of recorders.

A researcher from the local records centre in Sussex who is looking at habitat data in the south-east is visiting the Island next month as part of a project to see how such data is held and supplied throughout the southeast region.

**Action: A draft document will be tabled at the next Steering Group meeting**  
**MC**

#### **SG04/23 Species Action Plans**

Consideration needs to be given to the development of Species Action Plans. Criteria need to be developed to decide which species need them: some may be flagships for their habitat; others may have very specific requirements which are not met by the habitat action plans. It may be possible to develop local plans by modifying or adopting existing national plans. Once species have been selected, local experts will need to be found to produce the SAP.

**Action: RG to produce criteria for selection of species, for circulation before the next Steering Group meeting.**  
**RG**

#### **SG04/24 Marine HAP**

RG reported that documents on marine biodiversity have been produced regionally (an area stretching from Hampshire to Kent), as the issues need to be considered in context. Managing the marine environment is not possible but prevention of damage should be an objective.

Lisa Browning could talk to the Steering Group at some time in the future, to give further information on marine biodiversity.

RG agreed to keep the group aware of developments in regional Marine HAPs.

#### **SG04/25 Any other business**

##### a) County Flower

The Pyramidal Orchid has been nominated as the Isle of Wight County Flower. Plantlife are now suggesting to all counties that their flower should be formally adopted or recognised in some way. It may be possible to do this via the Community Action Plan.

b) Copies of A Medina estuary circular walk leaflet, produced by the Estuaries Officer, Sue Hawley, were circulated.

#### **SG04/26 Date of next meeting**

**WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2004 10.30AM SEACLOSE OFFICES, FAIRLEE RD NEWPORT**