

# Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

## STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the tenth Steering Group meeting held on 11th December 2001 10.30am  
IWC Seaclose Offices, Newport

**Present:** Judith Beard, Environment Agency  
Matthew Chatfield, Senior Countryside Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Andy Gordon, Conservation Officer, English Nature  
Richard Grogan, Wight Wildlife Officer  
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council  
Lucy Wager, AONB Assistant

**Apologies:** Ian Boyd, Island 2000 Trust  
Fiona Dixon, NFU  
David Langford, Regional Director, Country Landowners Association  
Carrie Temple, Conservation Officer, RSPB  
Tony Tutton, Property Manager, National Trust  
Debbie Wicks, Species and Habitats Manager, Hampshire & Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust

**In attendance:** Jonathan Cox, Consultant

**SG01/45 Minutes of the last meeting** were agreed and signed

**SG01/47 Matters arising**

SG01/43b Newsletter circulated; approximately 75 paper copies and the remainder electronically, including all members of IW Council. Electronic distribution saves considerably on time, photocopying and postage. 31 replies (out of 75) to questionnaire so far, updating contact details and gauging interest in the plan. A number of organisations would be willing to provide material for the BAP newsletter and/or publish BAP related articles by other organisations in their own newsletters.

SG01/43 SSSI notification. AG reported that there was a reluctance to notify more sites as SSSIs unless they were perceived as being under threat. The result for Cranmore should be known in January, and it has received backing at a high level. The Luccombe to Shanklin area should go forward in the third quarter of next year. Hanover Point to St Catherine's Point (re-notification) and St Catherine's Point to Ventnor will go to the committee in the following year. There is a problem with drawing the landward boundary of these sites, as the erosion of the cliff over the next 50 years has to be taken into account.

**SG01/48 Maritime Cliffs and Slopes HAP**

a) Comments from IWC Coastal Management have already been incorporated.  
IWC Archaeologists have no further comment, but are pleased to be consulted.  
IWC Geologists have made some technical amendments to text, but comment is still awaited on progressing the RIGGs system. There is a need to implement the Island Geological Strategy and to pursue the World Heritage site proposal.  
Geologists and Archaeologists to be approached to see if they would find it useful to attend BAP Steering Group if there are matters in their area of interest on the agenda.

b) CP has had useful discussions with IWC Rights of Way manager. Gains for biodiversity on the cliffs could be incorporated into the implementation of the Rights of Way strategy. RoW are in regular dialogue with farmers and landowners, and could introduce biodiversity into their discussions. It may be possible to make biodiversity a larger part of the Interreg 3 project. They would be keen, if funding were available, to have a scheme where whole cliff-top fields were acquired, rather than incremental 3 metre strips as footpaths are lost to erosion. Sources of funding could include Leader Plus, LIFE and Ecoenhance. Changes in the stewardship scheme are due to be made in the next few years and it is important to prepare for these changes now.

c) There were further discussions on the HAP by the Steering Group.

It was felt that Objective 5 (p.10), requires targets and there was a discussion as to how biodiversity gains could be brought into Strategic Coastal documents. The Coastal Strategies are principally about coastal protection. Policy documents such as SMP, UDP should have reference to BAP habitats when they are reviewed. DEFRA objectives should also relate to biodiversity. JB reported that there is a document on the 'Current Consultations' section of the DEFRA web site ([www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/current](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/current)) relating to Guidance on the role of flood and coastal defence in nature conservation in England. Responses are sought by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001.

**Action: Comments to DEFRA on Guidance paper by 31 December**

**All**

d) Species audit: CP reported that he had been in correspondence with Adam Wright, a consultant entomologist. He has made useful comments on the inclusion of various invertebrate species in the light of survey work he has carried out on the Island. TT had raised the question of the isolation and extinction of colonies as a result of increased rates of erosion; was this a natural process or the result of human activity? This was discussed and it was felt that there may be a cyclical process, of rapid erosion followed by a period of stability. It was felt that there was no need to change the text as it did not relate directly to an objective or action.

After discussion, it was felt that there was unlikely to be a requirement for any separate Species Action Plans for species associated with Maritime cliffs.

It was agreed that the species audit ought to be subject to review, perhaps at two-yearly intervals, to incorporate the most recent information.

e) Dates are to be agreed for targets with the relevant sections of IWC and English Nature. A system for monitoring the HAP needs to be devised. The HAP should also be presented to the appropriate Council committee for their information

**Action: Contact Archaeologists and Geologists re their attendance at a SG meeting**

**CP**

**Action: Compile target dates in consultation with others**

**CP**

**Action: Make minor amendments to HAP in light of consultations**

**JC**

**Action: Produce a species list for Maritime Cliffs and Slopes to form an appendix to the HAP**

**AM**

**Action: Produce a revised species audit for publication with the first group of HAPs**

**AM**

**Action: Monitoring system for HAPs to be devised**

**CP/AM**

**Action: Arrangements to be made for presenting first group of HAPs to Council Committees**

**MC**

## **SG01/49 Grazing Topic Report**

The Grazing and Grassland Management Topic Report has been circulated. Some comments have been received, mostly supportive, and minor modifications will be made.

Comments made by the National Trust were the most controversial, relating to the grazing of saltmarshes. This was discussed and it was felt that the biodiversity gains from grazing were sometimes apparent but not always clear. The document will be modified in the light of the discussion.

The question of condition assessments was raised. AG will provide table for deciding if grassland types are in favourable condition which can be put in as appendices.

The Grazing Topic report is to be developed into a series of HAPs. JC felt that it would be possible to produce three draft HAPs by the end of the financial year. These would be:

- Calcareous grasslands
- Acid grasslands and heathlands
- Neutral grasslands

These would be produced as first drafts in February, to be discussed at the next Steering Group meeting. RG was concerned that Wetland HAPs should be taken forward as they were voted as a priority at the start of the process. They will be dealt with in 2002/3 but it was felt that ongoing developments (the grazing project, the appointment of an Estuaries project officer, and the publication of an illustrated woodland biodiversity document) has resulted in a need to refocus our objectives. However, all the main HAPs should be produced within a three year period.

**Action: Make minor revisions to the Grazing and Grassland Management Topic report** **JC**

**Action: Three draft grassland HAPs to be produced in first draft by mid February** **JC**

## **SG01/50 Feedback from Grazing Project and Branding Initiative studies**

AG and RG gave brief summaries of the findings of the two projects. Draft copies of both reports are now available and will be circulated to the Steering Group for comment. Comments should be sent directly to GFA RACE at the Royal Agricultural College before Christmas.

A meeting was held yesterday with the consultants, AG, RG, Joanna Richards (Isle of Wight Partnership) and Jeremy Bolas. Concern was expressed by the consultants about a lack of vision for the project ; the Grazing Topic was considered to provide this. The final reports are due at the end of January, and the dissemination meeting is planned for the first week in February. Isle of Wight Partnership have offered a venue and AG requested that the IWC provide refreshments for the meeting.

The next stage of the project is to put together an application for a HLF grant to fund a project officer.

The question of funding from other sources was discussed. The Countryside Stewardship scheme is not sufficient and needs to be more flexible. Wight Wildlife has been subcontracted by Island 2000 to provide 'top-up' funding to Stewardship schemes in the area of the central chalk ridge. The CROW Act may result in further funding being released by English Nature and the Countryside Agency.

**Action: Comments on Branding Initiative and Lifescape Project documents direct to GFA RACE by 20 December** **All**

## **SG01/51 Funding**

Details of the current IW BAP funding position were circulated. There will be sufficient funds to cover 2000/2001 financial year but the only funds promised for 2001/2002 to date are from English Nature.

JB said that she would talk to Tim Sykes regarding any conditions attached to this years funding and to the possibility of further funding next year.

It was agreed that JC could be paid for his Grazing Topic report now again on production of the next suite of first draft management plans at the end of February.

**Action: IWC to process JC's current invoice JC**

**Action: JB to discuss funding from EA for 2002/2003 JB**

**SG01/52 Any other business**

The Isle of Wight Red Squirrel Forum are looking to update the Red Squirrel; Strategy as a Species Action Plan. Draft document to be presented to their next meeting in January 2002. It was requested that the draft be sent to members of the Steering Group for comment to ensure that the SAP objectives do not cut across HAPs for a range of habitats.(**Action CP**)

IWC will produce binders to hold all HAPs, SAPs and Project Reports for the next Steering Group meeting.  
(**Action IWC**)

**Date of next meeting: 15 March 2002 10.30 am Seaclose office**

Provisional dates of other meetings Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2002  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2002

all at 10.30am Seaclose Office