

TEPoP 3rd Annual Meeting: 11th Oct 2019, Peterborough

The 3rd annual meeting of TEPoP was hosted by JNCC in its Peterborough office on the 11th Oct 2019. The day was well attended, with representatives from all scheme partner organisations, as well as policy representatives from all countries of the UK. The meeting was also attended by CEH and BTO representatives from the cross-scheme 'Terrestrial Surveillance Development and Analysis' (TSDA) project, who worked with JNCC in the meeting's development and delivery. Delegates had the opportunity to hear presentations on a wide range of surveillance issues, discuss funding and cross-scheme engagement in workshops, look at a poster display and network with each other over lunch.

Scheme updates

A highlight of the day was a series of 5 min talks from all the TEPoP surveillance schemes. There were some common themes running across several schemes including the involvement of volunteers recording multiple taxa, improvements to websites, and the development of new methods and analyses. It was very encouraging to hear schemes outline developments inspired by other TEPoP partners (such as UKBMS now offering "holiday squares" to improve upland coverage, akin to the BBS "upland rovers").

talk highlights

- Many BBS recorders engage with other taxa including mammals and butterflies, and a pilot tick study has been trialled
- UKBMS locations monitored have doubled in last 10 years to 2868.
- The new British Bat Survey development and pilot is progressing well, using passive acoustic sensors deployed by volunteers.
- The WeBS Online data entry system, and the NPMS website have been completely revamped and improved
- Good progress has been made towards developing a [new plant species indicator for the NPMS](#).
- A [report](#) outlining the NPMS's development and aspirations for data application has recently been published.
- The young pollinator monitoring scheme is already generating significant data, with 1307 flower-insect timed counts, and 731 pan trap samples collected in 2018.
- Avian demographic recording is now benefitting from improved online data entry tools, allowing greater spatial accuracy to be captured.
- The biological recording, verification and interpretation partnership highlighted the huge amounts of data collected in 2018: 11.4m species records of 42,284 species, from 177,845 recorders
- GPS tagging Pink-footed Geese has helped to identify new sites that geese are visiting and will inform population censuses.

JNCC surveillance strategy update

Over the last couple of years JNCC has been reviewing its Terrestrial Biodiversity Surveillance Strategy and the work it supports in its Terrestrial Evidence Programme. Senior Biodiversity Evidence Specialist, Niki Newton, gave an overview of the review process, and the draft new terrestrial evidence strategy that JNCC have been developing. The strategy outlines different types of evidence JNCC aims to generate, on genes, populations, species, communities and ecosystem distribution, structure and functioning. Headline activity areas include improving 'capacity in biodiversity recording', 'data collection', 'data processing, analysis and synthesis', and 'data use'. We are conscious of the ever-changing context in which we carry out surveillance, with evolving evidence requirements, resources, and potentially game-changing new technologies such as Earth Observation, DNA technologies and more advanced acoustic detectors. A key role that JNCC has specialised in is in keeping an eye on novel technologies, understanding how they may be applied to conservation and biodiversity surveillance work, and facilitating their effective use. To this end, JNCC have recently employed a new Earth Observation Specialist – Paula Lightfoot – who gave a really interesting talk on the use of drones in biodiversity monitoring. Please get in touch if you would like a copy of her useful handout!

TSDA updates

The TSDA project is now in its third year, carrying out cross-cutting work in support of the TEPoP schemes and investigating making better use of the data coming out of them. The meeting included presentations and opportunity for discussion around a number of areas that the TSDA partnership have been working on.

topics

- **Assessing monitoring coverage and gaps** – how good is current monitoring, how much data do we need, how could it be improved? (report soon to be published on JNCC website)
- **Predictive modelling research priorities** – how can TEPoP data be used in answering different types of policy questions. Report: <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/3c468323-bf6c-4fef-bf51-212fa2fe4e46>
- **TEPoP data products – Improving opportunities for reuse** – how can we make data more findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable? Report: <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/0054348c-40a5-461d-b150-39cfe89fffe0>

Workshop: Funding and options for scheme development

The funding workshop aimed to share experiences of accessing different types of funding, with a particular focus on how working in partnerships may help to increase opportunities to fund scheme development. Delegates discussed examples of funding types they had successfully or unsuccessfully applied for and well as discussing other potential funding sources they would like to investigate or avoid.

Funding sources	<p>Tried successfully Individuals (including volunteer contributions in Garden Birdwatch and bird ringing); corporate, commercial and farming sectors; selling scheme outputs; philanthropic organisations and other charitable funding (eg Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, HLF); local and regional initiatives and businesses; Government and international sources</p>	<p>Would like to try Individual ‘big donor’ philanthropists; certain local and regional sources; academic and research councils; the corporate sector; other areas of Government; new international opportunities.</p>
	<p>Investigated or applied for but with less success Local Enterprise Partnerships; EU LIFE projects; research councils; the corporate sector; volunteer contributions; ‘voluntourism’</p>	<p>Funding sources we don’t want to pursue Selling advertising space on scheme websites. (Cautions and caveats were raised with regard to several other potential funding options.)</p>

Alongside the discussion of specific funding sources, a lot of points were raised on general factors that are useful to bear in mind when applying for funding. It was widely noted that it is hard to get new funding for ongoing projects or long-term monitoring, and that it is really important to take account of what funders are interested in and to frame the bid appropriately e.g. engagement (charitable funders), scientific relevance (research funders), societal/economic benefits (government/business), demonstrating or developing data management/processing (technology companies).

The importance of working together efficiently as a community was raised so that where possible, benefits arising out of successful funding applications (e.g. code for an online recording function) can benefit the wider monitoring community. There was also a suggestion that it may be worth developing a more strategic cross-scheme approach that focusses on what we collectively need, and how we can jointly engage with funders.

The value of obtaining ‘in-kind’ resources, although not the initial focus of the workshop, was noted as being potentially very valuable. The NPMS, for example, has already started forming partnerships with National Parks who are promoting uptake of the scheme in their areas.

The workshop identified key points to consider when deciding whether to pursue a particular funding route:

- **Volunteer perception** - volunteers can react negatively to some funding options
- **Retaining independence from the funder** (both in practice and in appearance)
- In case of **incomplete funding** plan how to fund the rest of the project
- **Longevity of funding** – how does funding fit within a long-term project
- **Relevance** of funding source to TEPoP objectives, and chance of success

Workshop: Cross-scheme engagement with volunteers and policy

Cross-scheme engagement with volunteers could include joint publications for volunteers, shared resources or events, promotion of one scheme by another (potentially on the same survey site), and integrating aspects of recording different taxa within an existing scheme. Cross scheme engagement with policy makers could include joint publications, indicators, meetings, webinars, online information hubs etc...

Key benefits of cross scheme engagement with volunteers include increasing interest and motivation, and a means of expanding recording coverage. Greater cross scheme working and targeting existing recorders to widen their participation may be more efficient and effective than targeting the general public, and there may be analytical benefits of co-located sampling. However, there were risks identified, for example, recorder fatigue, recorder ID skill levels in another taxon group, distraction from primary taxa, risk of suboptimal sampling stratification, site impacts such as trampling, and the extra scheme resource needed to co-ordinate changes. When considering cross-scheme engagement with policy, it was acknowledged that there are already some effective initiatives in place such as the State of Nature Report, and UK Biodiversity Indicators. It was felt that joint engagement can have greater impact but noted that we don’t want to ‘re-invent the wheel’ and that we should be cautious about message overload. It was suggested that we review existing mechanisms to engage with policy makers. The pros and cons of several specific practical ideas for cross-scheme engagement were discussed, including a cross-scheme promotional leaflet and a TEPoP resource hub on the JNCC website.

UKTEPoP 2019 organisation attendance:

Butterfly Conservation, Bat Conservation Trust, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, British Trust for Ornithology, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland), Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Forestry Commission, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, National Museums Northern Ireland, Plantlife, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Natural Heritage, Welsh Government, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.