

UK SPA & RAMSAR (AVIAN) SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

1. Summary

- 1.1. This is the sixth report of the SPA & Ramsar (Avian) Scientific Working Group (SPAR SWG), and includes all issues considered at meetings during 2007. During this period the Group met twice; 23rd May and 4th October (the usual February meeting was cancelled).
- 1.2. The SPAR SWG was established by Defra and the devolved administrations in 2001, following publication of the 2001 SPA Network Review, to assist government in further development of the SPA and Ramsar networks. A framework of activity was established through the Group's Terms of Reference and good progress has been made over the last six years in developing the scientific rationale needed to support development of the networks. A summary report on areas of work and progress, drawing on the published Annual Reports¹, is presented in Appendix 1.
- 1.3. Feedback was received from the *Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee* (N2KRSC) on the recommendations of the 2006 Annual Report. The single recommendation related to a marine issue and the group could not take a decision as marine issues were outside of its remit; the N2KRSC suggested that the recommendation be sent to the new Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group (MBPSG).
- 1.4. This report includes reviews of a number of work areas:
The proposed 2008-2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review; Marine SPAs; Site Provision Index; Common Standards Monitoring of SPAs; Lough Neagh case study; white-tailed eagles, and; the treatment of new populations. A list of briefings presented to the Group is included in Appendix 2.
- 1.5. A provisional work programme for 2008 is appended to the report (Appendix 3). This programme does not reflect any of the work outlined in the JNCC paper on the possible scope of the proposed 2008-2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review.
- 1.6. A key element of the report is to summarise the recommendations of the Group to the N2KRSC; there were none made in 2007 due to the ongoing nature of areas under consideration.

¹ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1770>

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The SPA & Ramsar (Avian) Scientific Working Group is a consultative group that was established in November 2001 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to assist government administrations and the statutory conservation agencies in further developing the SPA and Ramsar networks within the UK, in particular promoting the coherent management of the networks and monitoring of sites.
- 2.2. The Group considers UK-scale scientific and technical issues regarding the SPA and Ramsar (avian) networks in the terrestrial and marine environment.
- 2.3. The Group comprises representatives from Government departments, devolved administrations and their statutory conservation agencies across the UK, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and scientists from the voluntary conservation sector and other stakeholder groups, such as land-owners and managers, the water industry, marine and business sectors. A list of organisations represented in the Group is given in Appendix 4.
- 2.4. The Group sits within a network of fora for the consideration of Natura 2000 issues:
 - bilateral discussions between NGOs and the Country Agencies
 - the *UK Natura 2000 & Ramsar Forum*²
 - the *UK Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee* (N2RSC)
 - the *Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group* (MBPSG; established in 2006)It provides advice and recommendations to the *UK Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee* as well as acting on issues identified by them.
- 2.5. Formal *Terms of Reference*, along with an initial framework for discussions, were established at the Group's inauguration (See the 2001-2002 Annual Report). This framework was further developed into a rolling work programme. The *Terms of Reference* were revised in 2004 to add consideration of development of the UK Ramsar (avian) network to the Group's remit (Appendix 5).
- 2.6. The Group meets up to three times per year. Issues for discussion are typically supported with briefing papers that are circulated prior to each meeting (a full list for 2007 is given in Appendix 1). JNCC provides the Secretariat for the Group and hosts a web-page³ on which selected briefings and the approved minutes of meetings are published.
- 2.7. The role of the *Annual Report* is to summarise active areas of work considered in the meetings of a calendar year, clearly denoting advice to Government, seeking the guidance of the *UK Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee* and the *Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group*, and also highlighting issues of a policy nature that were raised within the year but are outside of the remit of the Group. It also provides a provisional work programme for the following year (Appendix 2).

3. Response from the Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee to the 2006 SPAR SWG Annual Report

- 3.1. The *Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee* (N2KRSC) considered the 2006 Annual Report at its May 2007 meeting. The single recommendation in the 2006

² <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/natura-ramsar-forum/index.htm>

³ <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1770>

Annual Report related to a marine issue; such issues were no longer the remit of the N2KRSC and so it was recommended that the SPAR SWG Secretariat submit the report to the new Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group and request that it consider its recommendation.

4. Other feedback from the Natura 2000 & Ramsar Steering Committee

- 4.1. Arrangements for the various groups involved in Natura 2000 changed through the year, following a Defra review, and the Group was consulted on these changes. Of importance was the aim to create a separate governmental committee to inform policy on the marine side (terrestrial and marine are handled by different directorates in both Defra and Scottish Government). The Group expressed concerns that such separation would create divergence in policy and requested that it should continue to have a cross-cutting role in advising on scientific issues, especially as it was the only forum available to the NGOs in which to discuss science issues. The Group noted the thematic approach proposed by Defra for the Natura 2000 & Ramsar Forum and agreed to bear these themes in mind in developing its work programme.
- 4.2. JNCC had presented its paper on the possible scope of the 2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review to the November 2006 N2KRSC. The committee recognised the importance of the review and agreed that it should be undertaken. It also accepted most of the paper's recommendations, with some rewording, but noted that funding decisions would be taken outside of the committee.
- 4.3. JNCC presented its final paper on the Cropped Habitats Information Project (CHIP) to the May 2007 meeting of the N2KRSC. The committee requested JNCC to provide it with some specific examples of what the proposed approaches might mean in terms of new areas to consider for protection; it would then consider the proposals in more detail.

5. Progress during 2007

5.1. 2008- 2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) Networks Review

- 5.1.1. The Group discussed feedback from the November 2006 N2KRSC meeting (see 4.2). The NGOs expressed concern over the terminology adopted by the committee (network was 'substantially complete'; next review was a 'health check'), and re-iterated that they still consider there to be significant gaps in the network; they noted that they would raise this in the Natura 2000 & Ramsar Forum.
- 5.1.2. JNCC presented a paper to the Group setting out a draft project plan, but noting that there was still uncertainty over funding for the review; the plan attempted to identify where significant consultation with the Group was likely to be needed. It was agreed that the context for review in Northern Ireland should again be on the basis of an All-Ireland approach and that consultation with colleagues would be required and needed to be planned into the process.
- 5.1.3. Scottish Government noted that it was working on a formal response to the review proposals set out in the JNCC paper. RSPB sent a response on the proposed scope of the review to the Chair of the Group in late September 2007, but this was not discussed at the Group's October meeting due to timing. However, the Chair noted that the RSPB response touched on both policy and science issues and that the Group would only be able to discuss the latter. The Group agreed that

it would consider any formal responses to possible scope of the review early in 2008.

5.1.4. The Group noted that the Advocate General's opinion regarding the legal case against Ireland within the European Court of Justice (failure to implement the Birds Directive) had been published and that the court ruling should be made in late 2007/early 2008⁴. The opinion highlighted some areas that the Group felt should be discussed, for example SPA provision for dispersed species like kingfisher, and it agreed that it would undertake an initial review of the judgement in 2008 and if necessary provide a briefing to the N2KRSC on its relevance to the SPA review.

5.2. *Marine SPAs*

5.2.1. JNCC provided two comprehensive updates on progress in developing approaches to SPA provision in the marine environment. However, there were no technical papers presented to the Group during the year. The Group requested that JNCC consult it over the results of the work on breeding red-throated divers in 2008, and also to ensure that members were invited to take part in the technical workshops on analysis of ESAS data being planned by JNCC.

5.3. *Site Provision Index*

5.3.1. JNCC/RSPB circulated a revised version of the Site Provision Index (SPI) paper outlining what was required to finalise the index, including sensitivity analysis. The Group agreed that it was desirable to develop operational guidance for the index to avoid confusion over what it was designed to do and acknowledged again that the index was not intended to be deterministic. It was noted that the index would provide a more objective way of assessing those species for which site-based conservation will only ever make a minimal contribution.

5.3.2. In order to finalise the index JNCC/RSPB agreed to develop a questionnaire to consult more widely and then hold a small workshop to help test it, both with the aim of completing an index for presentation to the N2KRSC in 2008.

5.4. *Common Standards Monitoring of SPAs*

5.4.1. JNCC provided an overview of the results relating to SPAs from the first CSM assessment, which was published in 2006 by JNCC.

5.4.2. The Group agreed that it would be useful to further develop the analytical approaches in the overarching CSM assessment, especially to improve understanding of scale of pressures (via site rather than species focussed analyses).

5.4.3. The role of surveillance in CSM was discussed, and it was noted that a strategic assessment of surveillance would be beneficial to help understand how CSM will be supported in future and whether there were any gaps in our ability to monitoring the condition of sites and species within the SPA network.

5.5. *Lough Neagh case study*

⁴ ECJ ruled on 13 December 2007 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:62004J0418:EN:HTML>)

5.5.1. In November, EHS presented the results of studies on declines in diving ducks at Lough Neagh⁵; the total assemblage of non-breeding waterbirds using the lough has halved over the last 20 years, with very rapid declines in most diving duck species. The study was a comprehensive assessment of local ecological conditions and of the international context for the migratory species for which the lough is classified.

5.5.2. The study's ecological assessment had shown that the condition of the lough was favourable; this had led to a conclusion that the declines in some bird species were being driven by factors operating outside the local area. Evidence for re-distribution of birds to other areas within the flyway was inconclusive, largely due to low precision of estimates at other sites, and national and flyway scales. The overall conclusion drawn by EHS was that remedial action was not necessary given the good ecological status of the lough and so it was unlikely that numbers of declining species would be recovered.

5.5.3. The Group agreed that the study demonstrates good practice in the approach to assessing causes of change in status of birds on a protected site and should be more widely published.

5.6. *White-tailed eagles*

5.6.1. The Chair of the Sea Eagle Project Team (SEPT) provided the Group with an update on the work of the team and its relevance to the Group. SEPT & SNH had commissioned a project which would include investigation of spatial and temporal patterns in home range occupancy and offered to present the outcomes of this work to the Group in future. SEPT had considered the Group's request to assess the feasibility of home range analysis and was of the opinion that a modelling approach, like that used for golden eagles, would not be feasible for white-tailed eagles. Hence, if SPA provision was pursued then site boundaries would probably have to be determined from local data in each case.

5.6.2. The Group agreed that the SEPT research should inform its own work on developing concepts for re-introduced species (see 5.7).

5.7. *Treatment of new populations: concepts*

5.7.1. JNCC presented a short paper outlining possible concepts for the treatment of new populations under Article 4 of the Birds Directive. The paper used two example species that had undergone rapid population increase in the UK over the last 30 years to both develop and test concepts. The general conclusion was that sites of importance to a species early in its population establishment continued to remain important as the species increased and spread into new areas.

5.7.2. Improvements to the approach were discussed and JNCC agreed to further develop the concepts by examining a few additional species, including those that

⁵ Allen, D. & Mellon, C: Factors Relating to the Wintering Population of Diving Duck on the Lough Neagh System. A report commissioned by the Environment and Heritage Service. Report No. 06/01. Contract number: CP1149/304. I.M.D. Maclean, N.H.K. Burton and G.E. Austin: Declines in over-wintering diving ducks at Lough Neagh and Lough Beg: comparisons of within site, regional, national and European trends. Report of work carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology under contract to Environment & Heritage Services BTO Research Report No. 432. August 2006.

had established only briefly and then become extinct and a re-introduced species.
JNCC agreed to present a revised paper to the Group in 2008.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of progress to December 2007 of work areas of the SPAR SWG

Work Area ⁶	Papers/progress	Recommendations accepted by N2KRSC
SPAs for species with new national surveys since 1997	Papers on status of following species considered: twite, spotted crake, ring ouzel, chough, little egret, corncrake, golden eagle. No progress on review of 2002 peregrine survey.	SPA provision should be assessed for the English twite population as part of the 2008-2010 review. Proposed boundary setting options for chough should be used to progress any future SPAs. Proposed population estimate for ring ouzel be adopted for future review of SPA provision. Consideration of little egret be deferred until 2008.
Using new population estimates	Considered implications of changes to international and national population estimates, and a few taxonomic issues	Wetlands International's list <i>Waterbird Population Estimates</i> should be adopted into operational use once approved by Ramsar CoP. Proposed treatment of mute swan and eider populations is followed.
Review of cases of sites or species rejected at Stage 2	Policy issue referred to N2KRSC	N2KRSC upheld use of the SPA selection guidelines as a two stage process and not strict criteria.
Review of sites no longer qualifying	Agreed that this is a site monitoring & management linked issue and should be discussed as part of the 2008-2010 SPA review	No referrals
Using data for site selection, data needs and data standards	Considered implications of the timetable for national surveys of rarer species. Agreed to develop guidelines covering data uses in support of SPA classification and data standards, but lower priority and so little progress	No referrals

⁶ Work areas correspond to those set out in the Group's Terms of Reference (as amended in 2004; Appendix 5)

Work Area⁶	Papers/progress	Recommendations accepted by N2KRSC
Monitoring the SPA network	Reviewed birds' guidance and progress in site monitoring through the Common Standards Monitoring approach. Apprised of latest developments in Wetland Bird Survey data access and Alerts System	No referrals
Treatment of passage waterbirds and rocky shore waterbirds	Consideration of Ramsar approach to mixed populations. Review was undertaken of BTO's ⁷ Non-estuarine Waterbirds Survey. A new survey took place in 2006/07. Intention is to review both surveys as part of the 2008-2010 SPA review.	No referrals
Cropped habitats: international approaches and issues for UK (CHIP)	Papers on inclusion of cropped habitats in SPA networks elsewhere in EU and on ecological needs of species in UK considered. Recommendations on cropped habitat maintenance needs for species in SPA network made to N2KRSC.	N2KRSC requested further information prior to making decisions on CHIP recommendations (outstanding).
Generic site management issues at UK level	Agreed low priority, so little work done, but one case study reviewed for its generic approach to assessing causes of unfavourable status	No referrals
Site selection for rare Annex I species outside of the breeding season	Reviewed the 'minimum of 50 rule' and agreed to uphold it, but to review its application on a species specific basis as needed	No referrals
Data issues for wintering gulls	BTO gave overview of results of 2002/03 winter gull survey. Agreed to develop an approach to SPA provision for informing the 2008-2010 SPA review (little progress)	No referrals
Data issues for wintering raptors	Considered an advice note, but no progress since	No referrals

⁷ BTO is the British Trust for Ornithology

Work Area ⁶	Papers/progress	Recommendations accepted by N2KRSC
SPA provision for re-establishing raptors	Considered principles for treatment of re-establishing, re-introduced and colonising species (further work to be done). Reviewed the status of white-tailed eagle, osprey and red kite. Agreed to defer further consideration until principles agreed by N2KRSC in 2008	Further review of SPA provision for red kite and osprey is deferred to the 2008-2010 SPA review
Research needs for assessing bird movements inside composite SPAs	No progress; agreed to undertake as part of 2008-2010 review	No referrals
Mixture of measures required to meet species protection requirements	Concepts developed via a sub-group (using Chough as an example); the <i>Site Provision Index</i> originated from this strand of work and has been through several iterations, but remains to be finalised in 2008	Proposal to explore mixture of measures supported, but no further referrals
Marine SPAs	Considered significant volume of work from JNCC and supportive of statistical approaches	Noted SPAR SWG support for the analytical approaches used by JNCC for marine species; red-throated diver, Manx shearwater, and northern fulmar
'Sweep-up' review of outstanding network needs (2008-2010 SPA review)	Draft scope and timetable for a review considered. JNCC submitted advice papers to N2KRSC. Views of the Scottish Government and RSPB considered. Awaiting steer from government on scope, timetable and funding of the review	JNCC's recommendations broadly accepted with some rewording; N2KRSC re-iterated its commitment to a review. Discussions on funding to be taken outside of the Committee
Ramsar review	Advice note developed and submitted to N2KRSC.	N2KRSC noted advice note and agreed that further review of Ramsar provision for birds be undertaken as part of the 2008-2010 SPA review

APPENDIX 2

List of briefing papers presented to the SPAR Scientific Working Group during 2007

Note: Some of these papers may be available from the JNCC website. However, some papers presented to the Group were preliminary/draft briefings or confidential to the Group and most of these will not be published (these are noted). PowerPoint presentations are not published on the website.

May 2007

- Site-related conservation: development of an index for breeding birds in the UK (SPAR_230507_1) (JNCC/RSPB draft briefing)
- Common Standards Monitoring for SPAs (JNCC PowerPoint presentation)

October 2007

- Draft project plan for the 2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review (SPAR_041007_1) (JNCC draft spreadsheet)
- Overview of progress in developing approaches to SPA provision in the marine environment (JNCC PowerPoint presentation)
- Lough Neagh: report on study of diving duck declines (EHS PowerPoint presentation)
- Treatment of new populations under Article 4 of the EU Birds Directive (SPAR_041007_2) (confidential JNCC briefing)

APPENDIX 3

SPAR SWG provisional work programme for 2008

Items for short-term consideration that will be presented to the N2KRSC or Marine Biodiversity Steering Group for consideration during 2008 (agreed for attention prior to any future review of the network)

2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review: recommend revisions to the proposed scope of the review, dependent on the views of government administrations, conservation agencies and NGOs.

2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review: assist in developing project planning and identify role of SPAR SWG, dependent on decisions of the N2KRSC and funding status.

2010 SPA & Ramsar (avian) networks review: consider the implications of the ECJ ruling on implementation of the Birds Directive in Ireland and produce briefing for the N2KRSC if necessary.

Cropped Habitat Information Project: develop example single species reviews to provide a better understanding of the potential implications of the CHIP approach (extent of new areas that may require some form of additional protection).

Marine SPAs: as required, but including review of JNCC's work on methods for analysing non-breeding red-throated diver densities, habitat requirements of breeding red-throated divers and ESAS data analysis.

Site Provision Index: assist JNCC and RSPB in finalising the index and guidance for operational use, and make recommendations to N2KRSC.

Concepts for the treatment of new populations under Article 4 of the Birds Directive: review further work by JNCC and agree recommendations to the N2KRSC.

APPENDIX 4

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE SPA & RAMSAR SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Environment and Heritage Service, Department for the Environment (Northern Ireland)
National Assembly for Wales
Scottish Government
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Natural England
Countryside Council for Wales
Scottish Natural Heritage
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Wildlife & Countryside Link
Scottish Environment Link
National Farmers Union [also acting on behalf of Undeb Amaethwyr Cymru/Farmer's Union of Wales, and National Farmers Union Scotland]
ABP Marine Environmental Research
Water UK
Country Land & Business Association [also acting on behalf of Country Land & Business Association in Wales]
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

APPENDIX 5

UK Special Protection Area & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group (SPAR SWG)

Terms of Reference (revised 2004)

Aims

The UK Special Protection Area & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group (SPAR SWG) is a consultative group established by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to assist government administrations and the statutory conservation agencies in taking forward the further development of the SPA and avian Ramsar networks within the UK, in particular looking forward to the coherent management of these networks and monitoring of sites.

The Group will consider UK-scale scientific and technical issues regarding the SPA network in the terrestrial and marine environment. In particular, it will consider a range of issues raised in the context of the 2001 SPA review, *inter alia*:

- issues in respect of those species where the 2001 SPA review has indicated that there may be future cases for additional SPA provision, in particular, in the light of new national surveys, analyses, and conservation needs;
- consider those issues which the 2001 SPA review indicated as outstanding;
- the development of understanding of broader European contexts as relevant to informing the evolution of the SPA network within the UK;
- the implications of revisions of estimates of the sizes of bird populations, both nationally and internationally;
- the development of understanding of data needs for SPA classification and management, and the further development of systems and processes to ensure the timely delivery of such information; and
- the application of processes to monitor the SPAs individually and collectively.

The Group will also consider and advise on scientific and technical issues regarding the avian aspects of the UK Ramsar network. In particular, it will consider the avian aspects of the Ramsar Reviews, providing advice to the UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee. In addition, it will, if requested by the Ramsar Review Steering Group, provide advice on avian Ramsar issues in the UK Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

There is a significant range of potential issues to be addressed by the UK Special Protection Area & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group. The attached Annex seeks to outline the principal activities regarding SPAs and orders these into short, medium and long-term priorities. An initial task for the Group will be to develop a more detailed work programme, with key 'milestones', based on this Annex. The

work programme will also include elements previously identified by the UK Ramsar Review Steering Group.

The activities of the Working Group in assisting government to meet the scientific and technical requirements of the Birds Directive will be complemented by discussions taking place within each of the countries. It will work closely with the UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee. A UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Forum will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to consider broader issues regarding the development and management of the Natura 2000 and Ramsar networks.

Composition

The Group will be representative of the Government departments/devolved administrations and their statutory agencies across the UK, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and representation from the voluntary conservation sector as well as other stakeholder groups. The Group will thus comprise representatives of: Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Scottish Executive; National Assembly of Wales; English Nature; Scottish Natural Heritage; Countryside Council for Wales; Environment and Heritage Service; JNCC; and a representative selection of voluntary conservation agencies plus other stakeholder groups, such as those representing land-owning, land management, water industry, marine and business sectors, with the necessary scientific expertise.

On occasion, representatives from other organisations may be asked to attend where there is the need for information of a specific nature to be discussed by the Group.

Method of operation

It is anticipated that the Group will hold about three meetings per year, with actions between these periods being taken forward by electronic communications.

Chair and Secretariat

The Chair will be appointed by government prior to the first meeting. The Secretariat will be provided by JNCC who will convene and support the Group.

Sub-groups

It may, from time-to-time, be desirable to establish smaller sub-groups to resolve certain issues. These will be time-limited and will focus on concluding specific tasks on behalf of the Working Group as a whole.

Reporting

The Scientific Working Group will provide regular updates of its activity to the UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee.

Issues for attention

The Scientific Group will develop a work programme with priority given to the following issues:

1. Appraisal of any further sites/boundaries/species which may qualify on the basis of high quality data from the 1992/97 data window of the 2001 network review.
2. Development of a strategic approach to further work to resolve issues outstanding from the 2001 Review.
3. Appraisal of further sites based on substantial high quality datasets collected during 1997-2000, and later 2001-2004.
4. Development of a strategic approach to the collection and interpretation of new data, information on population sizes, and site monitoring.
5. 'Sweep-up' review of outstanding network needs commencing with data window concluding 2005/6 (*i.e.* review starting in autumn 2006) informed by outcomes of monitoring processes.

Framework for future update of UK SPA network

		Bilateral contact at country level	UK SPA & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Forum	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee
Forum and process	Lead organisation	<i>Country agencies</i>	<i>JNCC</i>	<i>DEFRA</i>	<i>DEFRA</i>
	Geographic scope	<i>Country</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>UK</i>
	Objective	Detailed consideration of site-related issues within countries.	Consideration of UK-scale scientific issues related to the SPA network (note not policy issues).	Government to disseminate key messages regarding the future development of the <i>Natura 2000</i> network in the UK, and Liaison Group to be a sounding board for relevant advice and opinion. Includes broad range of non-conservation stakeholders and sectors	Government to consider and decide upon policy and management issues, including those raised that the Scientific Working Group
	Issues for resolution and timescale				
Agenda	Immediate (by end 2001) <i>Issues for attention = 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of additional SPA provision for Capercaillie (any data up to 2001) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of SPA Scientific Working Group and determination of timetabled workplan based on items listed below: Confirmation of issues outstanding from the 2001 SPA Review 		
	Short-term (by end of March 2003) <i>Issues for attention = 1 and 2</i> <i>Commence 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of SPA provision for wintering Smew Possible cases for boundary extensions Initiate discussion on sharing knowledge of site management regimes for SPAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of SPA provision for species where major new national surveys or existing data are already available since SPA review data window (ie 1997-2000: eg Spotted Crake, Ring Ouzel, Twite?) Consider broad implications of new population estimates nationally (Avian Population Estimates Panel 2 in early 2002) and internationally (waders in 2002) Planning of national survey timetables to align with SPA reporting timetable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The context of UK network of Natura 2000 sites and its contribution to conserving UK wildlife and habitats in relation to obligations under the Birds and Habitats Directives Sustainable development in relation to SPAs and the wider countryside The SAC network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the views of the scientific working group and offer it and the Liaison Group opinions and reactions.

	Bilateral contact at country level	UK SPA & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Forum	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee
<p style="text-align: center;">A g e n d a</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review specific cases of site/species rejection at Stage 2 ● Review specific “sites no longer qualifying” ● Develop shared understanding of use of data in site selection processes, and advise on new or supplementary data collection, and data collection standards ● Commence processes to monitor site series and its performance in national and site contexts (including alerts processes, and to guide management) ● Issues surrounding treatment of sites for waterbirds on passage and on rocky shores ● Look at policies in other EU Member States regarding the scientific basis for incorporation of cropped habitats within SPAs 		

	Bilateral contact at country level	UK SPA & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Forum	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee
<p>Medium-term (2003/4 to end March 2005)</p> <p>Issues for attention = conclude 1, continue 3 commence 4 and 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration of additional SPA provision under Stage 1.4 where additional high-quality data are currently available ● Site specific management issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration of SPA provision for species where major new national surveys have become available since SPA review data window (2001-2004: eg Chough, Red Kite, Golden Eagle, Peregrine, Nightjar, Merlin). Consideration of implications of Seabird 2000 results for seabird colonies. Overall priorities to be discussed and agreed. ● Continue to consider, if necessary, issues regarding incorporation of cropped habitats within SPAs ● Monitoring and reporting protocols for the UK SPA network including consideration of Common Standards Monitoring and WeBS Alerts scheme ● Generic Site management issues at UK level ● Develop site selection approach for rare Annex I non-breeding birds ● Consideration of data issues surrounding possible SPA provision for wintering gulls and wintering raptors (especially on coasts) ● Possible SPA provision for re-establishing raptors (Red Kite & Sea Eagle) ● Review needs for longer term research requirements to determine movements of birds between component parts of composite sites 	<p>Continued discussion of issues listed above and any other topical issues arising from the issues of the day</p>	<p>Consideration of respective roles of site-based as contrasted with wider-countryside measures for conserving UK wildlife and habitats in relation to obligations under the Birds Directives</p>

A
g
e
n
d
a

	Bilateral contact at country level	UK SPA & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Forum	UK Natura 2000 and Ramsar Steering Committee
<p>Long-term (2005/6 to end March 2008)</p> <p>Issues for attention = conclude 3, 4 and 5</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration of SPA provision for relevant species as major new national surveys become available ● ‘Sweep-up’ review of outstanding network needs commencing with data window concluding 2005/6 (<i>i.e.</i> review starting in autumn 2006) informed by outcomes of monitoring processes 	Ditto	Ditto