

# **UK SPAR SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP MEETING**

**17 February 2015**

10:30 – 15:00, JNCC Offices, Peterborough

Final minutes

## **Attending in person;**

Ian Bainbridge, SNH, (Chair)  
David Stroud, JNCC  
Ant Maddock, JNCC  
Nigel Buxton, SNH  
Richard Hearn, WWT  
Cherry- Ann Vickery, JNCC, (minutes)

## **Video conferencing;**

Steven Dora, SG

## **Telephone conferencing;**

Megan Cameron, CLA  
Sian Whitehead, NRW  
Alan Drewitt, NE  
Heeran Buhecha, Defra

## **Introduction and general matters**

### **1. Welcome and apologies; matters for AOB; membership changes**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Heeran Buhecha was welcomed as Louise Leighton's replacement and introductions were given. Apologies were received from Sallie Baillie, Andy Tully, Michael McLeod, Jessa Battersby, Jeremy Wilson, Miranda Cooper and Ian Enlander.

### **2. Minutes of last meeting; amendments & approval**

IB asked the group if they had any comments on the minutes from the last meeting (1 October 2014)

The following amendments were suggested for the minutes to be accepted;

**Action 2:** MP to be clarified to read Matt Parsons

**P2 item 4** add 'Resources to help DS and DC with Phases 1 and 2'.

**Action 5:** Delete the word 'correct'

## **Oral updates and progress reviews**

### 3. Species accounts

DS briefly explained that there were 149 species accounts under review and 17 remained to be completed. Comments from the group had been received and DS would be incorporating these comments before final sign off. This was expected to take 2-3 weeks of his time.

**Action1:** DS reminded SWG to send him comments on all species accounts by the end of March.

### 4. SPI paper

DS explained the Site Provision Index as a method to advise on sufficiency at species level. A paper on the subject had been submitted to the journal Bird Study.

Comments on the paper had been received from the journal referees but a revised paper had not yet been finalised. Due to changes at the journal's editorial team a deadline for resubmission of the paper is the end of February 2015. The group would not be able to meet this deadline. A meeting to discuss how to respond to the referees comments will be held and the outcomes of this meeting will be fed into the timetable for publication of the final report.

**Action 2:** DS to circulate the referees' comments to the SWG

**Action 3:** DS, IB and JW to arrange a meeting in March to discuss timetabling and how to address the referees' comments.

IB explained to the group that Chief Scientists had been interested in whether the principles used in SPI could also be used for marine assessment.

### 5. Methods chapter drafts

DS explained that this chapter covered the processes used in the review. DS advised that any outstanding work on this chapter could be completed in a week.

### 6. Decision framework: spreadsheet checks

DS would finalise this and it would be available publicly. AM explained that during the final stages of production Neil Ellis (JNCC ) would sub-edit the final version of the review.

## Timetable

### 7. Next steps

Items 3-6 above were highlighted as main areas of work which needed to be progressed as a priority. AM explained that he had spoken to JNCC Communications regarding preparation of a new cover for the publication.

In order to spread the work load, IB asked the group for volunteers to provide additional help to DS in the preparation of the final versions of the species accounts. MP, NB, RH and SW offered assistance with incorporating comments, checking and minor editing.

**Action 4:** DS to meet MP, SW, RH and NB to discuss assisting with editing.

**Action 5:** IB, DS and AM to meet to discuss how to update the methods chapter.

**Action 6:** AM to arrange for the chapters and accompanying material to be uploaded to the website for comment.

DS advised that the decision framework was complete and did not need any revisions. The spreadsheet would however still need further checking by the sub-group.

**Action 7:** AM and DS to agree a timetable to finalise checks.

IB suggested that JNCC marine team should be approached to produce a section on the marine SPA process which could be incorporated into the review.

**Action 8:** AM to liaise with marine colleagues in order to produce a paper.

## **8. Publication date**

**Action 9:** AM and DS to discuss a timetable for finishing the report with the intention of producing a final report ready for submission to CSG by October with publication by the end of the financial year.

**Action 10:** AM to circulate the sign of process for the final report

## **Country reports**

SW said Wales were dealing with range and cropped habitat issues for example, the nightjar and Chough and were working with RSPB Wales.

AD explained that NE had drafted potential sites for Annex 1 species. The list consisted of six species including the spoonbill, crane and chough.

NB advised that SNH is currently working to identify a list of locations for each species i.e raptors, merlin, kite and seaeagle.

Ian Enlander updated the group by explaining that the NE SPA programme is currently awaiting ministerial clearance to commence stakeholder engagement on the marine SPA extensions/sites. These will include renotification of a number of existing coastal/seabird SPA. Completion of necessary designations is expected in December 2015.

## **Any other business**

### **9. Comments on phase 2**

DS presented the paper on the SPA Review (2008-15) Phase 2 UK Working Group on behalf of Dave Chambers. DS explained the content of the paper and highlighted;

- Lack of concensus of processes within Phase 2
- Range of provision – still being discussed
- Site boundaries

It was pointed out that the group was not at the point of identifying sites yet, but were gathering data at the UK level to do this. DS added that good progress had been made on producing the data.

### **10. Waterbirds: numbers on SPAs and other protected area**

DS presented this item and explained that this area of work was being undertaken under the WeBs contract. A draft paper would be produced following the final analysis which would be circulated to the group for comment.

**11. AEWA to update 1% levels and population estimates**

DS updated the group on progress and advised that the Meeting of Parties would meet in November for sign off of population estimates. Global population estimates and 1% thresholds would be presented to Ramsar in June and that action plans are currently in progress.

The AEWA Technical Group meets in two weeks. Among the items to be discussed are Species Action Plans and a proposal for a survey of sea ducks.

**12. Article 12 report update**

DS explained that this is a 6 yearly reporting round, compiled at EU level, which last reported in December 2013. Following completion the document is now available to view at the following;

<http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article12/summary> A Red List for Birds at EU and Pan-European levels is due out this year as part of ongoing work by the European commission and Birdlife and will in future be updated on an annual basis.

**13. June Ramsar COP – Defra to hold a stakeholder meeting in March**

DS advised that the next (12<sup>th</sup>) Conference of Ramsar will be held in June in Uruguay. A stakeholder meeting to consolidate a UK position will take place in March.

**Any other matters from the minutes (1 October 2014)**

**Action 1:** RH to send CAV a final version of the goosander report to upload to the website.

**Action 2:** AM to check the status of the paper on marine monitoring recommendations that was presented to CSG and check if it can be distributed to the SWG intersessionally.

**Action 3:** AM to see if a marine representative from JNCC can join SWG.

**Action 4:** AM to send a progress report to ESG in a month.

**Date and venue for next meeting**

The dates for the next meetings had previously been agreed for the following dates;

Tuesday 21 July 2015

Tuesday 3 November 2015