

*'people and biodiversity'*

**Report of the  
UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference  
2004**

June 21 – 22, 2004 National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff

## Programme

### *'people and biodiversity'*

UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference, June 21 – 22 2004

National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff

#### **Monday 21 June 11.30 – 20.30 National Museum / Millennium Stadium**

11.30 – 12.15 **Registration and coffee**

12.15 – 13.00 **Lunch**

13.10 **Chairman's introduction** - Brian Harding, Director of Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use, Defra and Chair of UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee

13.25 **Welcome** - Carwyn Jones, Minister for Environment, Wales

13.35 **Spotlight on Wales** - June Milligan, Head of Environment Division, Welsh Assembly Government

13.55 **Getting people involved** - Paul Manners, Learning Executive, BBC

14.20 **Introduction to workshops** - Bob Earll, facilitator

14.30 **Coffee/Tea break**

15.00 **Workshop sessions**

- 1) Engaging the public in wildlife recording
- 2) Engaging people in practical conservation projects
- 3) Engaging people in scientific recording
- 4) Education and communication
- 5) Making the social and economic connections

16.05 **Amateurs as Experts: harnessing new knowledge networks for biodiversity**  
- Rebecca Ellis, University of Lancaster and Johannes Vogel, Natural History Museum

16.30 **Overview of workshops and opportunity for questions**

17.00 **Summing up of the day's proceedings** - Jane Dalgleish, Head of Wildlife and Habitats Division, Scottish Executive.

17.15 **Arrangements for evening reception, introduction to tomorrow and close.**

19.00 - 20.30 **Reception** – hosted by Welsh Assembly Government at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium

## Tuesday 22 June 9.00 – 14.15 National Museum

9.00 – 9.20 **Registration**

9.30 **Chair's introduction**

9.35 **What's coming up – commitments and challenges ahead** - Brian Harding,  
a) 2005 reporting  
b) Review of HAPs and SAPs  
c) Targets review  
d) WSSD/ EU target 2010  
e) Climate change

9.55 **Route map to 2005 and beyond** - Martin Harper, chair of Wildlife and Countryside Link Biodiversity Task Force

10.15 **Questions from the audience**

10.30 **Introduction to discussion groups** - Bob Earll, facilitator

10.45 **Coffee break**

11.10 **Discussion groups**

- 1) What do you want from UK BAP 2005 Reporting ?
- 2) Priority species and Habitats and delivery of conservation action
- 3) Climate change and the UK BAP

12.20 **PlantNet and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation** - Nicholas Wray, curator of University of Bristol Botanic Gardens

12.45 **Summing up of workshops** by rapporteurs and questions from the audience

1.15 **Overview of the day** - Bob Brown, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group

1.30 **Close**

### **Lunch**

2.15 Stay on for an optional behind the scenes tour of the museum

## Summary of Events

### Day 1, 21 June

#### *Introduction and themes*

**Brian Harding**, Director of Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use, Defra and Chair of UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee welcomed the delegates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> UK Biodiversity Partnership conference. The conference came at a time when European commitments to biodiversity have been reaffirmed at the EU stakeholder conference in Malahide; with challenging targets to 2010; and at the point where UK was embarking upon an important review of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The two themes of the conference reflected this:

- getting people engaged and involved with biodiversity work, particularly in monitoring and recording; and
- the forthcoming report on and review of UK Biodiversity Action plan.

**Carwyn Jones**, Minister for Environment, Wales welcomed the audience to Cardiff by reminding them that Wales was currently the only devolved country to have a duty for sustainable development. This was taken very seriously with a clear realisation that progress must be measured in more than GDP - vibrant communities, a healthy environment, a thriving economy and the realisation that everyone has a place to realise their potential were important issues for the Welsh Assembly. Although Wales had its fair share of challenges there was a wide realisation of the importance of the natural environment and biodiversity to Wales. It was particularly important to engage with people, to develop balanced partnerships, in order to gain their support. The Minister noted that the Malahide conference had once again outlined the challenges for everyone on a European scale. The first objective arising from Malahide in support of the sustainable use of our natural resources called to ensure conservation of Europe's most important wildlife habitats and species within a thriving wider environment. Acknowledging the importance of this the Minister wished the conference well.

#### *Are we one year closer to halting biodiversity decline?*

**June Milligan**, Head of Environment Division, Welsh Assembly Government opened the conference with a direct challenge to the delegates as to the Scale, Relevance and Seriousness of their efforts in engaging People with Biodiversity. One year on from the first UK Partnership conference how much had the Partnership achieved? The challenges are still very real. How well were we engaging others?

Visually reminding the conference that it was Wales Biodiversity Week 2004, June drew on evaluation evidence from the successful 2003 event, which had engaged 6,000 people in 72 locally-led events, but had failed to grab media attention. This reflection gave rise to the question of *Scale*: what was the relative importance of 2,750 Going Wild in Caerphilly, and 60,000 people signing up with the Bill Oddie to Make Space for Nature in their garden?

The results of a survey of Welsh Assembly Government employees, specially conducted in preparation for the Conference, offered insight into how non-conservation professionals viewed biodiversity. Although most respondents offered a sound definition of the 'biodiversity' word, and cared 'a lot' about biodiversity, their "single most important things to do for biodiversity" – ranging from Kyoto implementation through harmonious town planning to recycling (and the rest!) - did not map neatly onto the biodiversity community's priority actions. This gave rise to the question of *Relevance*: would it be better to start by understanding and responding to people's concerns?

And finally, drawing on a quote from Malahide that 'Biodiversity is... the Stuff of Life', June challenged the conference to consider the question of the *Seriousness* of our engagement with people. Were we facing up to those who argued that clearing out some of the 'Stuff of Life' clutter was part of the evolutionary process and no bad thing? And were we ready to turn those arguments about the dynamic nature of nature on their head and argue that the pressures of climate change made care of the *Very* 'Stuff of Life' even more important?

### **Getting people involved**

**Paul Manners**, Learning Executive, BBC made a presentation which explored BBC research into audience motivation and interest and how to trigger action, using the BBC's 'The Big Read' project as a case study.

BBC research indicates around 30m people are interested or very interested in nature / natural history. To help in targeting campaigns these have been broken down into different segments - for instance those who are 'child led' (motivated by their children), those who simply want to watch and enjoy programmes on TV ('armchair action') to 'concerned campaigners' (actively involved in conservation activity).

The BBC is currently conducting focus group work to better understand the motivation of these audience groups and how to trigger their activity in conservation. Lessons learned from their reactions to Britain Goes Wild on BBC2 recently indicate that we shouldn't overestimate our audience's knowledge or underestimate their interest in the subject.

### **The BBC Big Read campaign was presented as a successful campaign, characterised by the following features:**

- It asked the audience to do something very simple - vote / nominate their favourite book
- It was pitched to appeal to more than just a committed few (ie not the 'best book' ever written, but your 'best-loved' or favourite book)
- It felt like audience participation was adding up to something greater
- It pooled the creative and operational energy of all the key sector partners - particularly libraries and booksellers, who saw it as a major opportunity and promoted it accordingly
- It significantly extended the social networks and partnerships involved through outreach work targeting key audiences

### **These lessons posed tough questions for the conservation sector:**

- How well do we know and understand our audience?
- How good are we at coming up with actions that are simple and immediate enough for people other than enthusiasts to get involved?
- How good are we at working together to deliver a big idea?
  
- How good are we at working with other partners to establish new routes to new audiences?

### **A few simple conclusions were drawn:**

- Start with the audience
- Keep it simple
- Make it purposeful and the impact tangible
- Work in partnership - both with your own sector, but also by looking outside to new partners

## **Getting People Involved - Introduction to workshops**

Delegates broke out into Workshops which looked at five different aspects of engaging with public on biodiversity projects. These short reports reflect the very different nature of each of the sessions

### **1. Engaging the public in wildlife recording**

The workshop began with a brief summary of two projects, **Richard Bashford** (RSPB) talked about the success of the 'Big Garden Bird Count' as a mass participation wildlife recording project. **Russel Hobson** (BCW) talked about the 'Butterfly Guardians' project as a means of capturing volunteers interest and drawing them in to more detailed recording of BAP species. For more information, visit [rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](http://rspb.org.uk/birdwatch) (Big Garden Bird Count) or email [info.bcw@btconnect.com](mailto:info.bcw@btconnect.com) (Butterfly Guardians).

#### **Some of the conclusions to emerge from the workshop included:**

- Keep the initial approach to the public simple to maximise the numbers who feel able to become involved.
- Identify your audience (specialist advice is available), speak to them in a language they understand through a medium they are familiar with.
- This may require a number of entry points (e.g. social, medicinal, cultural etc.) and have a simple message about why the recording is important and why help is needed. The key aim is initial involvement of the public not data quality.
- The provision of feed back and establishing mechanisms for increasing the participants' involvement in biological recording needs to be considered at the survey planning stage.
- This all helps to make participants feel part of a wider, active recording community. Finally don't forget to say thank you!

#### **Bullet Points from Participants:**

- Are we asking overly complicated questions?
- Are we too concerned about the quality of the data at the expense of involvement?
- Don't under-estimate public's desire to know more.

#### **Aims of Engagement:**

- Getting people out of their houses.
- The basic value of just getting people to participate.
- Its not about recording but building a sense of community. This could be web community, social community.
- BBC research suggests the school is the strongest loci for the local community but there are curriculum constraints and teachers suffering overload of information. FC have education officers actually visiting schools to overcome this.
- Focus on UK BAP to raise awareness.
- Keep people interested beyond putting dots on maps.
- Produce feedback appropriate to the level of involvement.

#### **Opportunities:**

- Web based approaches for less high profile taxa.
- Working with other communities e.g. Anglers, ramblers etc.
- Making links between wildlife and people – myths, medicinal uses, cultural significance.
- Give species common names e.g. success of giving fungi English names.

- Make use of technology e.g web based, interactive identification tools, getting teenagers to text in survey results.
- Better links between BBC programmes and local action – forward planning and consultation.

#### **Barriers:**

- For male dominated societies/groups there is a potential problem of working with children.
- Knowledge is not getting passed between generations.
- Lack of focus in a survey.
- Resources in general but a particular problem for smaller Societies and uncharismatic taxa.
- Most guides not aimed at the generalist.
- Terminology to help identification is excluding

## ***2. Engaging people in practical conservation projects***

**Rob Salmon of the BTCV in Wales** looked at engaging people in practical conservation projects; the workshop considered barriers, the vision, and outcomes.

**Barriers** Delegates were asked to consider some of the potential barriers to volunteering on any conservation project.

#### **Issues raised were:**

- People may feel that they are not sufficiently knowledgeable or experienced.
- There may be a perception of the type of social group engaged in the activity.
- Peer pressure may be a factor, particularly for young people.
- People may not be aware that the opportunity exists.
- The project may be taking place at a time unsuitable for some potential volunteers.
- Costs, both financial and in terms of time, may be a factor.

**The vision** After a good deal of discussion and debate, delegates outlined the following points for a vision of biodiversity action in the next 5 years:

- Those working in the sector **must** embrace the word 'biodiversity' rather than seeing it as a barrier.
- Projects should be matched to volunteers' interests and local needs, rather than bringing people in from a wide area.
- Local & central government should be encouraged to consider biodiversity impact of all activities and have statutory targets, including those related to funding, for implementation of Action Plans.
- Commitment to maintaining status quo for currently common species while promoting those on priority listings.

**Outcomes** Although not much time was left for this the following points were noted:

- More people involved in projects, but only as part of wider plan.
- Better promotion and organisation of local tasks.
- Establish networks of local groups.

[www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)  
[www.btcvcymru.org](http://www.btcvcymru.org)

BTCV's UK website  
 BTCV in Wales website



### 3. *Engaging Volunteers in Gathering Biological Data*

**Bob Bloomfield and Alistair Taylor** from the Natural History Museum, London lead this workshop the purpose of which was to explore issues surrounding the involvement of citizens in biological recording, and to get feedback on a number of activities the National Biodiversity Network had developed in response to these issues.

The workshop group was very aware of the difficulties of involving citizens in biological recording, particularly the need to maintain the quality of data when seeking to increase the quantity gathered, and the number of people involved.

The workshop also highlighted the need for a flexible and personal approach to citizen involvement, highlighting the role of mentors in encouraging volunteer progression, and the value of both accreditation and feedback to volunteers.

The workshop identified a number of barriers to involvement affecting both volunteers, and biological recording organisations. Barriers to volunteer engagement included lack of time, a lack of commitment and a lack of previous environmental awareness training. Barriers preventing recording organisations working with volunteers included a lack of resources, regulatory barriers to working with the public (health and safety, freedom of information) and the need for training in working with volunteers.

The results of the workshop will be used by NBN to further refine its education and training development proposals and to inform the biological recording community.

### 4. *Education and Communication*

**Stephen Gough of Bath University** lead this workshop which engaged participants in the development of a 'segmentation tool' designed to identify particular audiences for education and public awareness activity in relation to biodiversity, and to help design appropriate interventions for them.

Participants were introduced to two key sets of distinctions. The first is between Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3 thinking about learning and the environment. Type 1 theories promote the teaching of environmental science, and assume that, once people have the facts, their attitudes, and therefore behaviour, will change. There is a wealth of evidence, however, that this rarely happens. Type 2 theories promote teaching about alternative lifestyles, drawing on social science. Once again, the lack of success of such approaches has been notable. Type 3 theories assume that because of uncertainty and complexity the exact nature of the problems may be incapable of precise specification for the foreseeable future. This is to accept that what is (and can) be known in the present is not adequate, and that desired 'end-states' cannot be specified. This means that any learning must be open-ended.

The second distinction is between *information*, *communication* and *mediation* as approaches to education, training and public awareness.

During the workshop groups of participants used a stakeholder analysis tool to classify potential audiences, and analysed these in terms of the distinctions outlined above.

#### Bibliography

Dick, B. (1997) Stakeholder analysis [On line]. Available at <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/stake.html>

Scott W and Gough S (2003), *Sustainable Development and Learning: Framing the Issues*, London, Routledge.



## 5. Making the Social and Economic Connections

During the course of a lively discussion **Dave Stone** of English Nature explored with delegates the positive contributions that biodiversity conservation can make to delivery of social and economic goals. This is a wide subject area but the major focus of discussion addressed the question 'What are the key elements of linking social and economic connections to biodiversity?' Links to key sectors were highlighted; tourism, gardening, public health, agriculture and local economies, industry and development. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile for countries to gather case studies and real life examples to use as a measure success, and galvanize the evidence base to support the links. It was felt that the development of a 'Biodiversity benefit quotient' would help the development of 2 or 3 clear targets.

This is clearly an area of increasing importance for sustainable biodiversity delivery. The Group flagged **four questions** that should form the foundation of future work in this area:

- 'What are the key elements of linking social and economic connections to biodiversity?' - suggested as a theme for a future conference.
- 'Are we avoiding linking agendas to protect our own funding?' – Response to this was 'why should we get money from other sectors? We need to gather the evidence for other sectors so that *they* can embrace and deliver biodiversity.'
- 'It is possible to hit more than one socio-economic button at the same time – e.g. cycling = tourism & health & sustainable transport
- 'Each sector needs a simple indicator – and they need to be involved in coming up with that indicator because then they have ownership'

Following the workshops delegates re-assembled in the main lecture theatre.

### *Amateurs as Experts: harnessing new knowledge networks for biodiversity*

**Rebecca Ellis** University of Lancaster and **Johannes Vogel**, Natural History Museum  
*Rebecca Ellis, Claire Waterton, Gill Stevens, Bridget Peacock, Fred Rumsey, Steve Brooks, Brian Wynne, Robin Grove-White & Johannes Vogel* are all involved with this project

The Natural History Museum is working in partnership with English Nature through two co-ordinator posts to promote the greater engagement of amateur naturalists in UK Biodiversity, focussing on cryptogamic plants and invertebrates. These posts aim to improve communication and add value to the contribution of specialist societies, the conservation agencies and other research organisations with specific reference to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan species. The three main objectives of the work programme are:

- To delivering BAP conservation by initiating, coordinating and executing surveys and monitoring for rare, under-recorded, endangered and conservation relevant cryptogamic plants and invertebrates and engaging the relevant specialist societies in the 2005 BAP review process
- To alleviate the taxonomic impediment by training naturalists and others to become "experts" for specific groups of organisms or habitats and by producing user-friendly identification guides,
- To bring people and nature together by forming innovative partnerships and engaging countryside actors such as anglers and ramblers

Recent examples of successful projects include:

### **Riverfly identification and survey workshops**

Since 1997 workshops have been run by amateur naturalists at the John Spedan Lewis Trust for the Advancement of Natural Sciences for fly fishermen and river keepers to increase the understanding of the identification, monitoring and surveying of riverflies. A wider collaboration, including specialists from the Natural History Museum and the National Recording Scheme Officers, is now delivering regional workshops teaching anglers identification techniques and encouraging them to contribute data to the National Trichoptera (Caddis flies or sedges) and Ephemeroptera (May flies or up-winged flies) Recording Schemes

### **Survey of the Bryophytes of Arable Land (SBAL)**

The Natural History Museum and English Nature are working with the British Bryological Society (BBS) on a survey of mosses, liverworts and hornworts of arable land. Arable land has a distinctive bryophyte flora, which has often been neglected in the past, with the result that we now have little idea of how its bryophyte flora is changing. BBS volunteers will be involved in this national recording scheme over the next three years.

Associated with this practical work is an ESRC funded cross-disciplinary research study, involving sociologists, anthropologists (IEPPP, Lancaster University) and natural scientists (Natural History Museum, London) entitled: 'Amateurs as Experts: Harnessing New Knowledge Networks for Biodiversity'.

'Amateurs as Experts' was a three year study of amateur naturalists, biodiversity scientists and policy makers involved in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan process. The aim was to throw light on the 'knowledge politics' inherent in current initiatives to enroll new 'actors' (from amongst 100,000 active UK amateur naturalists) into the formal UK biodiversity policy process. Whilst experimenting with new ways of engaging the knowledge and enthusiasm of amateur naturalists, the UK biodiversity policy community have so far had little experience of, a) carrying out such social experiments, or b) evaluating their progress, benefits and/or problems. Through ethnographic research methods, the study will monitor the processes involved, clarifying their social and 'knowledge' dynamics, whilst also fostering patterns of interaction between social and natural scientists and policy actors.

Weblinks:

[www.nhm.ac.uk/science/biodiversity/UKBiodivindex.htm](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/science/biodiversity/UKBiodivindex.htm)  
<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/ieppp/amateurs/>  
<http://www.english-nature.org.uk/>  
[www.ramblers.org.uk/elms/](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/elms/)  
[www.jonathan.sleath.btinternet.co.uk/SBAL/intro.htm](http://www.jonathan.sleath.btinternet.co.uk/SBAL/intro.htm)  
<http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum/atfnews/news03/ramblers.htm>  
<http://www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/publication/PDF/ENRR481.pdf>

Related media coverage:

Jha A 2003. 'If you find one, give it a hug' *The Guardian* – Science, September 16<sup>th</sup> 2003  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/life/feature/story/0,13026,1043837,00.html>

Bowler, Pete 2003 Identity crisis *The Guardian* – Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2003,  
<http://society.guardian.co.uk/societyguardian/story/0,7843,1034041,00.html>

Leadbeater, C. 2003 Amateurs – a 21<sup>st</sup> century remake. *RSA Journal* June 2003., p.22-25  
<http://www.rsa.org.uk/acrobat/leadbeater.pdf>

The Natural History Museum/English Nature 2003 Amateurs as Experts *English Nature Magazine* Jan p.10-11

<http://www.english-nature.org.uk/magazine/default.asp?issue=65&id=277>

BBC Material World 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/thematerialworld.shtml>

Contact: UKBiodiversity@nhm.ac.uk

### ***Overview of workshops and opportunity for questions***

The workshop leaders reported back to the audience on the themes of their sessions. A number of consistent themes emerged from their deliberations including and were summed up by **Bob Earll**:

- *Understanding your audience.* This emerged as an important theme in many of the workshops and indeed it had been stressed by Paul Manners talk. With this understanding comes the ability to engage audiences effectively.
- *Social science methodologies.* A variety of social science methodologies could be particularly helpful in enabling an understanding of audience and the engagement process, in particular assessing the barriers which stopped people volunteering. A number of the speakers had referred to these techniques and Stephen Gough's workshop and Rebecca Ellis's talk focussed on this.
- *Simplicity.* It is helpful if there are simple messages and tasks. If a variety of entry points into the engagement process are available this can help build the confidence of the participants
- *Feedback.* Feedback is essential to maintain engagement and it was worth thinking through what rewards might be used to provide incentives for people. There a wide range of reasons why people take part in volunteer projects
- *Volunteer projects – many forms.* The importance of volunteers to support work on biodiversity is well understood. As the fly fishing example provided by Johnnes Vogel showed with thought and encouragement important new groups can be targeted effectively
- *Training workshops – oversubscribed.* A number of the speakers mentioned during their talks that when specific training events had been organised for particular activities these had proved very successful and often over-subscribed
- *Behaviour changes.* This issue arose particularly often in the report back sessions in relation to what was hoped to emerge from engaging the public more widely. To take this seriously would require insights from social science

### ***Summing up of the day's proceedings***

**Jane Dalgleish**, Head of Wildlife and Habitats Division, Scottish Executive Biodiversity and People means *everyone* attending the conference or not. Is the conference sufficiently **diverse** and should other interests be represented? Do we need a less elitist culture in the biodiversity process? Scottish Biodiversity Strategy messages are that biodiversity offers something to everyone and everyone can contribute.

We need to keep the message **simple** and neither overestimate knowledge nor underestimate interest. The sustainable development message is that it can make a difference in terms of quality of life.

We have common objectives in global, European and UK terms and need to work in **partnership**. At UK level we need a short clear statement of principle, covering efforts throughout the UK and taking account of country strategies, focusing on the 2010 target to ensure that the message is consistent. We mustn't reinvent the wheel but we do need to strengthen the UK Partnership in the right way in order to meet the 2010 challenge.

As Carwyn Jones said, the times are exciting.

## **Day 2, 22 June**

### ***What's coming up – commitments and challenges ahead***

**Brian Harding**, Chairman UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee, introduced the morning session by outlining some of the commitments coming up for the UKBAP between now and 2006. Ten years on from the publication of the first Action Plans there was an opportunity to undertake a thorough assessment and review of the UKBAP through:

- A report on progress with priority Species and Habitat Action Plans
- A review of the priority species and habitat lists to make sure they are still relevant
- A review of the targets within each action plan to make sure they are consistent and up-to-date.

These 3 processes were in the early stages of development and an [introduction to the reporting and review process](#) and [proposed timescales](#) was included in the delegates pack. Delegates would have an opportunity to contribute to their development through the workshops later in the day. The groups leading the processes would be consulting widely to ensure that the goals were achieved and that the additional workload on those involved was minimised.

Consideration of climate change should be factored into the BAP process where appropriate, for example in relation to the targets review. Research was already underway to improve understanding of the impacts of climate change. For example, the MONARCH project was looking at likely impacts on priority species and habitats. The emerging evidence should be taken into account and policy and action plans adapted accordingly.

Commitments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to reduce the rate of global biodiversity loss by 2010 and the more stringent commitment made by European environment ministers to halt the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2010 were key drivers in directing policy and maintaining momentum in the biodiversity process. Reporting as part of the UKBAP would make an important contribution to meeting these wider obligations. The UK continued to play a major international role and had recently had a significant influence in developing indicators to monitor progress towards the 2010 targets.

### ***Route map to 2005 and beyond***

**Martin Harper**, chair of Wildlife and Countryside Link Biodiversity Task Force, outlined the Wildlife link view of the current position which was described in Link's report *Sustaining Biodiversity: revitalising the Biodiversity Action Plan*.

Much has been achieved in the UK since the introduction of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process 10 years ago. Many of our most threatened species and habitats are now protected thanks to Government working with industry and NGOs at the national and local level. Species such as Deptford pink, bittern and the large blue butterfly have been pulled back from the brink thanks to concerted conservation efforts.

However, with over a third of habitats and a quarter of priority species still declining, there is still much to be done.

Nineteen organisations have collaborated through the Wildlife and Countryside Link and its sister Links in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to produce a new report *Sustaining Biodiversity: revitalising the Biodiversity Action Plan*. This report calls upon the Government in partnership with industry and the voluntary sector to:

- Ensure all Government policies and programmes contribute towards biodiversity objectives.
- Revise the list of priority species to take into account species that are still declining.
- Provide sufficient resources for nature conservation in order to enable national targets to be met.
- Strengthen monitoring and surveillance of wildlife.
- Put in place a timetable to review the Biodiversity Action Plan process

It is vital that the UK BAP process be revised and made fit for meeting the international target to both halt the decline of biodiversity by 2010 and to adapt to the realities of climate change.

This new report will help instil new life into the way we deliver nature conservation in the UK. It cannot be overstated how essential biodiversity is to every one of us: it feeds us, cures us, clothes us, inspires us and even creates employment. Economic and social development must not be at the cost of biodiversity: Government policies must be sympathetic to the needs of wildlife as well as people – the future survival of both depends on it.

**The conference then split into three discussion groups looking at key elements of the current reporting round.**

### **1. What do you want from UK BAP 2005 reporting?**

In this workshop, lead by **Robin Wynde** (RSPB) and **Pete Brotherton** (English Nature) valuable feedback was gained from a cross section of people involved in the partnership on the following:

- How the 2002 reporting information had been used.
- What information could be sought from Lead Partners and LBAPs in 2005.
- What other types of information on BAP progress from other sources could be sought.
- What form of reporting participants would favour.

It is clear from the first exercise that, although some people had not used the 2002 information, most had and in a wide variety of ways. This included 'internal' functions such as plan management for LBAPs and Lead Partners and 'external' work such as influencing priorities or briefing Ministers. It is also apparent that many of the uses, such as identifying information gaps, were an important first stage but this had not yet necessarily been followed up by conclusive action.

There is much varied information that we could seek from Lead Partners and LBAPs in 2005. We will have to consider carefully the utility of this information and the workload that collecting this will place on individuals and organisations.

The workshop illustrated that there are a variety of information needs/desires even within the biodiversity partnership and we need to plan carefully how we communicate the outcome of 2005 reporting to internal as well as external audiences.



The outputs of the workshop have been written up and will be circulated to all members of the BRIG 2005 reporting group. They will also be available from the UK BAP website (<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/Library.aspx>).

## ***2. Priority species and habitats and delivery of conservation action***

**John Robbins** and **Gy Ovenden** (Defra) and **Joanna Drewitt** (Scottish Executive)

### **Q. Do the UK habitats and species action plans remain an effective means of delivering the conservation action required?**

There were a number of views. In particular, successes of the BAP were illustrated by their focussing of efforts, people and funds on important priorities. BAP succeeded in raising profile and providing a common process for action and appreciation of obstacles. Benefits were also identified in the shape of targeted actions having helped direct research and local achievements. However, the main weaknesses of BAP were considered to be their overly bureaucratic and complex nature, the excessive number of actions, their tight focus but gappy nature. Other failures were identified as the poor data supporting the BAP, a lack of integration with policy agendas and poor overlaps with LBAP processes.

### **Q. Is there a need for alternative or additional delivery mechanisms to address threats affecting habitats and species?**

The general consensus was 'Yes', but there were a number of conditions attached that any alternative delivery mechanism should consider. These were that there should still be a prioritisation approach, that targets were still relevant and that there would still be the need for improved linkages between national, country, regional and local priorities. There were some firm views expressed that there should be a great deal more dynamism (particularly in terms of approach) than exists in BAPs in any replacement delivery mechanism. There should be a means of developing either short or longer plans according to threat and the relevant actions required. Need to keep in mind the 2010 target as a key milestone for objectives and need to ensure there is sufficient capacity to deliver at appropriate scale. Alternative delivery mechanisms should also have linkage to new Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and associated lists.

## ***3. Climate Change and the UK BAP***

### **Introduction**

**Andy Stott** Defra and **Pam Berry** (ECI Oxford)

The results of recent research on climate change show that there are potentially significant impacts on biodiversity as a result of climate change. The aim of the workshop was to facilitate discussion on the importance of recent climate impact change studies for the forthcoming reviews of actions, targets and lists of priority species and habitats, and how the research could be used to inform the reviews.

Pam Berry (ECI, Oxford) provided a brief update on research results drawn from the MONARCH, REGIS and ACCELERATES projects. The conclusions of the research were that:

- The 'climate space' for most species will be affected by climate change
- That change will be species specific.
- Species within the same habitat will respond differently.
- How the climate will change will vary regionally and seasonally.

Amanda Miller and Deborah Long (Plantlife) initiated discussion by giving a response on behalf of lead partners for two plant species. Points raised in both presentations are included in the summary of the discussion.

## **Summary of Discussion**

### **Role of HAPs and SAPs.**

HAPs are a mechanism to identify and implement adaptation and mitigation measures. A risk is that species within the same community will respond differently to change, as a consequence generic habitat actions may not be effective for specific species, therefore flexibility in habitat management is required. This would require stronger links between existing HAPs and SAPs to enable species and regional actions to be included within the relevant HAP.

The model can identify risks, such as invasive species and opportunities for expansion. Feedback through the HAP and SAP process could validate assumptions.

Lead Partners require detailed information on risks to their species. The existing model can indicate whether a species is a winner or loser, but further research is needed on species dispersal and distribution.

### **Development of Targets and Objectives.**

The development of overarching targets in addition to HAPs and SAPs are required. Themes include the development of landscape approaches to address fragmentation and improved integration of policy.

To promote a landscape approach the implications of change must be communicated to a wide constituency in a clear and simple manner. The maps are valuable, but need to be downscaled and include areas for adaptation

Targets for the restoration of both habitats and ecosystem process are needed to aid species dispersal. These could take the form of both the creation of receptor sites or management prescriptions to aid colonisation.

### **Review of Priority Species.**

Priority species tend to have a restricted distribution, due to factors other than climate. Modelling can give an indication whether measures are likely to be effective or where opportunities for expansion occur. In instances where measures may be ineffective the loss of a population in a specific location may have to be accepted but with current uncertainties the precautionary principle applies and if accepted this must be communicated in a manner not to undermine effective initiatives elsewhere.

The criteria for the prioritisation should reflect the potential decline of species due to loss of climate space.

## **Key Points**

### **Needs of Lead Partners.**

- In general terms what are the impact of climate change on their species or habitat.
- Is climate change a significant factor for their species.
- Lead Partners need to develop links with researcher to establish need and validate assumptions.
- Lead Partners need to know where concentrate effort.



### **Criteria for listing of Priority Species:**

- need to include risk of climate impacts.
- need to take into account the feasibility of reversing decline within the context of climate change.

### **How can the BAP process best address climate change?**

- by setting challenging targets for habitat restoration and creation.
- by enhancing resilience to climate pressures.
- by enabling species to adjust to new climate conditions.

### **Improved Communications.**

- Need to raise awareness across a wider range stakeholders.
- Messages must be clear and simple.
- Care must be taken not to undermine existing conservation efforts.

### **Need for Further Research.**

- Research needs to be refined to identify and reduce uncertainties.
- Downscaling is required to inform actions at a local level.
- The need to be improved understanding about the ecology of some of the priority species to identify appropriate measures.

### ***PlantNet and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation***

**Nicholas Wray**, Curator, University of Bristol Botanic Garden gave a presentation on PlantNet: The Plant Collections Network of Britain and Ireland is the national network of botanic and heritage gardens and arboreta, promoting botanical collections as a national resource for research, conservation and education; and facilitating networking and training among holders of plant collections.

The *Global Strategy for Plant Conservation* was adopted as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002. It consists of 16 targets aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010. *Plant Diversity Challenge: the UK's response to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation* was published in February 2004 (see [www.incc.gov.uk](http://www.incc.gov.uk) or [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)).

PlantNet is seeking to make a co-ordinated contribution from botanic and heritage gardens to *Plant Diversity Challenge*, in particular by bringing together those in *ex-situ* and *in-situ* plant conservation, through partnerships with local groups and organisations and national bodies. We would like to offer facilities in PlantNet gardens and the skills of their staff in botanical horticulture, taxonomy, plant conservation and education to those working on UK endangered species. Many of these species are in cultivation in PlantNet gardens.

The plant collections in botanic and heritage gardens all over the country are a national resource, which can be used to highlight the importance of our native flora, the threats it face and the work being carried out to conserve it. PlantNet gardens are visited by millions of visitors every year, and this huge public interface offers a great opportunity for conveying information on plant conservation.

PlantNet is keen to work with other organisations in the UK to support plant conservation at local and regional levels, particularly through species action and recovery plans.

For further information, please contact Judy Cheney, PlantNet Administrator (jc151@cam.ac.uk).

## **Overview of the Conference**

**Bob Brown**, Chairman of Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group summarised the conference. As Jane Dalglish said at the end of the first day, summing up a conference like this was virtually impossible, but several things were clear, and they needed to be stressed. There has been lots of progress towards meeting biodiversity targets and reporting on this, but there is a vast amount still to do. Nonetheless the commitment and enthusiasm are all too evident, which is as well because the challenges were enormous.

As a relative newcomer to the process, Bob summarised his role. NIBG was established by DoE in N. Ireland, comprising representation from industry, farming, fisheries, education and conservation to oversee the delivery of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy – both biodiversity targets and a range of cross-cutting policy issues that affect biodiversity. In essence the role is to monitor and report progress (first report due in 2005), to champion the process and build awareness, to encourage local biodiversity work, and to ensure that biodiversity work is achieved in an all-Ireland context.

The context of this Partnership conference is somewhat Irish too, in terms of the recent EU conference under the Irish Presidency, with its 'Message from Malahide'. As Brian Harding said, this provided a kick start to the target of halting biodiversity loss in the EU by 2010. In order to achieve this, 18 broad objectives had been identified each with roughly 15 major sub-targets if 2010 were to be achieved. This represented a massive challenge, and when we consider that in the UK about a third of habitats and quarter of species are *still* declining, we should recognise that conservation good practice needs to begin at home as a matter of urgency. The target of 2010, less than six short years away, meant that it simply couldn't be 'business as usual' – the whole tone and urgency of each country's biodiversity work must be stepped up. The forthcoming Netherlands Presidency is going to take up this challenge, and Martin Harper has flagged up the importance of the UK Presidency after that, as well as the need for a thorough 'MOT' of the biodiversity process after the 2005 reporting. This process should also account more fully for the different processes underway in each of the devolved countries of the UK.

Brian has stressed the need for transparency, openness and inclusiveness in the processes delivering for biodiversity, and this needs to be further emphasised. The challenge is to get the message out beyond our own biodiversity community.

Paul Manners urged us to 'know our audience' so that we communicate with them in a way that resonates positively with their interests. Examples like the success of the Bill Oddie programme, and the thousands of people who visit botanical gardens should be hammered home. Do we need a strategy to communicate? Should we not be structuring this two day event to make it accessible and attractive to non-biodiversity folk? It may well be time to consider what we want from our conference – to debate amongst ourselves and prepare for 2006 – 2010, or whether we want to broadcast in a much wider arena. There is a role for both aspects, but we need to communicate to the outside world in some major new way if we were to bring the wider community with us, and to stand the faintest chance of achieving a halt to our biodiversity losses by 2010.

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