



Steering Group meeting

10th June 2008

Programme

Organised by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Venue: Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, London

1 Background

The Tracking Mammals Partnership was established in 2003 to provide a framework for the various mammal organisations (see Appendix 1 for the detailed aims and objectives of the partnership), contributing to developing a coordinated approach to the surveillance of UK mammal species and providing a forum for organisations to address common issues on mammal surveillance. Since that date, the TMP has achieved a lot: it has published a major report on the status and trends of UK mammals and has a website with up to date information covering a wide range of factors to do with mammal surveillance.

1.1 Aims

The aims of the meeting are:

- i. To inform the TMP of the latest developments and projects undertaken by partners.
- ii. To assess the results and recommendations of the Small Mammal Pilot.
- iii. To discuss the current reporting of results and communication of policy relevant information to those who need it. What are the most effective ways of reporting and to whom?
- iv. To consider where we are now and where would we like to be and discuss what the major goals are and how they can be delivered. What are TMP priorities?

1.2 Outcomes

1. A revised TMP publication that better addresses the needs of the Partners and key audiences
2. An assessments of future surveillance and monitoring needs and how to meet them
3. A direction for the partners to drive the TMP forwards and deliver for UK mammal conservation

1.3 Programme

The meeting will start with a brief round table, followed by three sessions, each designed to achieve one of the aims and associated outcomes listed above.

Meeting chair: Pierre Tellier

Rapporteur: Anna Robinson

- 10h30 Welcome & tea/coffee
- 11h15 1. Minutes from last meeting
- 11h30 2. Round table – update from each partner on significant changes/achievements in last year and future projects
- Each organisation to prepare a short written brief that would be circulated prior to the meeting
 - This round table would be used to expand on specific projects as required and to answer specific questions
- 12h 3. Session 1 – *What future for small mammal monitoring?*
Chair: Simon Poulton
- Presentation of results and recommendations from study
 - Presentation of the project for a small mammal monitoring scheme
 - Can small mammal monitoring be done with other surveying?
 - Discussion on how to take small mammal monitoring forwards
- 13h Lunch break
- 13h30 4. Session 2 – *Are we making the right impact?*
Chair: Karen Haysom
- Assessing if we have the right balance of fact, interpretation, and extraction of relevant messages
 - Present/discuss the different reports and outputs and assess their strengths and weaknesses in comparison with reporting done by others (e.g. State of the environment type reports)
 - Analysis of results/trends
 - Assess what our audiences are and if the different outputs are relevant to these audiences
- 15h Tea/coffee break
- 15h10 5. Session 3 – *Where do we want to be in the near future?*
Chair: Marina Pacheco
- Assess what the information requirements within the partnership are (e.g. to address reporting obligations, policy needs)
 - Assess what the TMP should do to meet them (e.g. increasing the coverage of schemes to cover more species/provide localised trends/relate to other issues)
- 16h40 Wrap-up – key messages (Tony Mitchell-Jones)
- 16h50 Close

2 Meeting notes

2.1 Session 1 – *What future for small mammal monitoring?*

Chaired by Simon Poulton (The Mammal Society)

Small mammals are an important taxonomic group: they have a big ecological function in most habitats, cycling rapidly, key in food chains, extending transferring the energy from productivity from summer to winter. They are also widely affected by environmental pressures and are potential indicators.

Simon Poulton will present the key results and recommendations from the Small Mammals pilot project and present the Mammal Society's project for a National Small Mammals Monitoring Scheme.

The objective of session 2 is to assess the monitoring needs for our small mammal species and to determine what developments are needed to take small mammal monitoring forwards: how can a specific scheme be implemented at a national scale, should small mammal monitoring be undertaken alongside surveying already taking place?

2.2 Session 2 – *Are we making the right impact?*

Chaired by Karen Haysom (Bat Conservation trust)

Presentations:

- David MacDonald (WildCRU) – Point of view of the research sector
- Mark Stevenson (Defra) – Reporting requirements
- Jill Nelson (PTES) – NGO viewpoint: How best to get a conservation message across, who is the main target audience, and what is essential to maintain volunteer engagement?
- David Noble (BTO) – What is currently done by other sectors: the Breeding Birds in the Wider Countryside and State of the UK's Birds reports

Partnership reporting currently concentrates on giving summary 25- and 10-year trend statistics at a UK scale, with contextual information to aid understanding. Each organisation within the Partnership retains the responsibility of providing detailed reporting on species and their trends in relation to particular issues or problems.

The aim of this session is to discuss what we produce, both individually and as a group, and to have a constructive discussion on improving the impact we can make. It is hoped that all would welcome an opportunity to have some feedback and discussion and a comparison with what other sectors are doing (Birds of the Wider Countryside, State of the Environment, and State of the UK's Birds). It will also be an opportunity to review how the different publications present the information that is collected via the TMP and other sources, and whether these publications make full use of this data.

The main issues that will be considered are:

- Do we have the right balance of fact, interpretation, and extraction of relevant messages?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the different reports and outputs produced by members of the TMP and assess them in comparison with reporting done by others (e.g. State of the environment type reports)
- Who are our audiences and what do they need: are the different outputs relevant and useful for these audiences?
- Does the TMP need a reporting strategy to ensure it delivers policy relevant information more effectively?

2.3 Session 3 – *Where do we want to be in the near future?*

Chaired by Marina Pacheco (The Mammal Society)

Presentations:

- Lawrence Way (JNCC) – Mammal surveillance in light of JNCC Strategy
- Tony Mitchell-Jones (Natural England) – Country agency reporting and information requirements
- Karen Haysom (BCT) – NGO viewpoint: what are the BCT's needs and what do they expect from the partnership?

The TMP is delivering information on key species, through a suite of schemes and publications and via a coordinated approach. This approach gives the TMP great flexibility to tackle the key issues that mammal conservation will face in the near future.

The objective of this session is to (i) discuss where we would like to see the TMP in the next five years, (ii) what it should be delivering in terms of reporting, and (iii) what the information requirements within the partnership are and the surveillance of UK mammal species in the near future. It is hoped that the discussion would cover:

- Where would the partner like to be in the near future? What direction for the TMP and mammal surveillance? What are our priorities?
- Is the current data provided by existing mammal surveillance and monitoring schemes sufficient to fulfil reporting obligations and policy needs? Can it be related to environmental changes? Can it detect change and report a country level?
- What should be the profile of the TMP in the near future?

2.4 Wrap-up – key messages

Tony Mitchell-Jones will present the key messages of the three sessions and summarise the outcomes of the meeting, highlighting the conclusions reached and decision agreed.

Appendix 1 – Aims and objectives of the TMP

The main aims of The Tracking Mammals Partnership are:

- To develop and promote a co-ordinated approach to the surveillance of all resident British mammal species.
- To raise awareness of species in need of more detailed monitoring and management.
- To raise awareness of the general public to the status of British mammals and the importance of surveillance and monitoring.
- To provide a cohesive framework for the various mammal organisations in the UK.
- To secure resources necessary to deliver long-term surveillance/monitoring.

The main objectives of The Tracking Mammals Partnership are:

- To assess the distribution and abundance of all resident British mammal species to gain baseline data on populations.
- To assess trends in the distribution and abundance of all resident British mammals to defined levels of precision.
- To provide standardised survey design to allow for comparison of data collected by different surveys.
- To co-ordinate collection of survey data to agreed data standards, with analysis and interpretation of the results to provide information on changes in distribution and abundance of UK mammals.
- To make surveillance and monitoring data more widely accessible and available, while recognising data management issues, including confidentiality and data protection.
- To provide the ability to link the surveillance information obtained with that obtained from other surveys, e.g. habitat, climate, pollutants etc. This will provide an overall integrated monitoring network across the UK giving not only distribution, abundance and population trend information on British mammals but also links, at a UK level, to possible causal factors in changes in distribution and abundance.
- To report regularly on the changing status of UK mammals, via publications and the Internet, on behalf of the Partnership. Partnership reporting will concentrate upon giving summary population and/or trend statistics nationally or regionally, with suitable contextual information to aid understanding. Detailed reporting in relation to particular issues or problems will remain the responsibility of individual participating organisations (and others).

Appendix 2 – List of participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Bjorn Beckmann	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Philip Briggs	Bat Conservation Trust
Simone Bullion	Wildlife Trusts
Dawn Burnham	Wildlife Conservation Research Unit
Phoebe Carter	The Mammal Society
Dave Cowan	Food and Environment Research Agency
Karen Haysom	Bat Conservation Trust
Liz Halliwell	Countryside Council for Wales
Timothy Hopwell	The Deer Initiative
Trevor James	National Biodiversity Network Trust
David Macdonald	Wildlife Conservation Research Unit
Tony Mitchell-Jones	Natural England
David Noble	British Trust for Ornithology
Jill Nelson	People's Trust for Endangered Species
Marina Pacheco	The Mammal Society
Simon Poulton	The Mammal Society
Robert Raynor	Scottish Natural Heritage
Jonathan Reynolds	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
Anna Robinson	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Nigel Sharp	Welsh Assembly Government Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Mark Stevenson	Affairs
Pierre Tellier	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Roger Trout	Forestry Commission
David Wembridge	People's Trust for Endangered Species
Lawrence Way	Joint Nature Conservation Committee