

**Avon BAP Coastal and Marine Group Meeting
1st March 2006, 2.00pm – 4.30 pm
BRERC Ashton Court Visitors Centre**



**Chair: Rachel Sharp (AWT)
Minutes: Lucy Rogers**

Item	Actions
<p>1 Introductions & apologies Present: Rachel Sharp (AWT), Sue Ford (EA), Richard Bland (BNS), Lucy Rogers (Avon Biodiversity Partnership), Bob Corns (EN), Pauline Homer (NSC), Mark Courtiour (NT), Amber McCarthy (AWT volunteer). Apologies: Tim Corner (BRERC), James Field (North Somerset Levels & Moors), Helen Hall (BCC), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), Alison Slade (SGC), David Villis (SGC), Allan Davies (JSPTU), Ruth Barden (WW), Mary Wood (AWT).</p>	
<p>2 Actions from meeting of 4th October 2005 Reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC to ensure biotope survey data goes to BRERC – TC will ask BC and ensure this happens. LR to remind TC • RB modifying Estuary WeBS count data so BRERC can use. RB and TC to liase. Copy of counts will be emailed to group. Also counts are soon to be available from EN and CCW. • EN ditch survey data not collected in a form useful to BRERC – JF to organise meeting with representative from EN, BRERC and C&M group to resolve. • Fish records – SF still chasing obtaining data from national fish population data base. • RMB has found selection of reps from angling groups and will approach to ask for someone to attend C&M group meetings. LR will liase. • PH to report back on Portbury Wharf wildlife site near Ashlands. Wetland area has been created, and hides due to go up. • PH to talk to PWWs and YACWAG <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE aggregate levy bid – CHaMP workshop was rescheduled and aggregate levy hasn't progressed. BC to check that fund still open and email group • Pilning site is owned by Richard Parry, who is keen to create a wetland and is talking with EN and RDS. He has also asked Slimbridge consultancy to undertake a wetland feasibility study. Keen for public access. John Martin will let Partnership know if input from Partnership required. 	<p>LR/TC</p> <p>RB/TC</p> <p>JF</p> <p>SF</p> <p>LR/RM B</p> <p>PH</p> <p>BC</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LR currently entering BAP onto BARS. Will contact partners if they need to have input into reporting on projects. 	
<p>8. Review of Avon BAP actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAP should be dynamic document. Important to review Estuary actions to assess whether still relevant. <p>Objective 1: Encourage the use of managed realignment as a viable and attractive option for coastal defence, to permit the creation of further areas of priority habitat in order to offset predicted losses to sea level rise</p> <p>Objective 2: Encourage management of the foreshore and surrounding hinterlands that is favourable to coastal wildlife and priority habitats</p> <p>Objective 3: Enhance the quality of the existing saltmarsh in terms of community and species diversity and, where necessary, restore the nature conservation interest through appropriate management</p> <p>Objective 4: Protect the existing sanddune resource and encourage accretion by active management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Support the activities of the Severn Estuary Conservation Group, working towards a holistic view of the estuary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group may not be active at present. RS to report back ⇒ Support the development of an estuary-wide coastal habitat management plan and defence management plans, which will feed into shoreline management plans, ensuring that they take account of available mechanisms for the management and creation of priority habitat and identify potential areas for managed realignment ⇒ Support the establishment of the Severn Estuary European Marine Site Management Scheme and related projects ⇒ Develop recommendations for positive work where realignment has occurred to progress the creation of priority habitats, publicising and disseminating them ⇒ Encourage and/or implement appropriate management of priority habitats and look for opportunities to enhance, restore and create intertidal habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realignment will result from ChaMP. AWT are looking at developing a project with BCC in Avonmouth. NT are undertaking scrub management at Sand point. NSC are creating wetland at Dowlais farm. NSLM project are creating flight ponds on farmland. This group could work with BASC to develop a flight ponds project. ⇒ Give due consideration to applications for dredging licences to ensure no adverse effects on biodiversity interest in the estuary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand dredging still occurs in the estuary. SAC designation should help reduce this. This group should keep an eye on this. ⇒ Discourage mechanical beach cleaning close to dunes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS - The beach is not cleaned near the dunes, only in the sport area. • Litter – no coordinated approach to raise awareness of litter problems or reduce litter. Partnership could raise awareness of litter, and lobby government and manufacturers to make litter biodegradable. ⇒ Make use of the potential provided by existing estuary management partnerships in taking forward the actions in this 	<p>RS</p>

plan

- LR to ask Gill Bell from the Marine Conservation society in Wales to attend meetings.

LR

Objective 5: Where possible ensure that new developments affecting the estuary, whether directly or indirectly, do not have an adverse impact on biodiversity interest.

- ⇒ **Use the planning system and development control processes to prevent development in areas which could be used for coastal realignment or in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion or where development will have an adverse effect on priority habitats or exacerbate flood risk elsewhere and to protect and enhance existing resource**
- ⇒ **Where possible ensure that coastal defence or other construction works do not lead to a loss of, or damage to, estuarine priority habitats and where possible enhance them.**
- Difficult to fund coastal realignment projects. This group cannot really help with this at present, although can give informal support. The Bristol Port will impact on SPA/SAC, and the mitigation required may allow an opportunity for realignment.
- This group may be able to help more with grazing marsh than salt marsh. Grazing marsh is more vulnerable to drainage, agriculture etc. May be feasible to buy and wet this land. Avon levels is a large area in which to achieve this. **This group and NSL&M could scope up a project.** LR to talk to JF.

LR/JF

Objective 6: Improve estuarine water quality to ensure that existing priority habitats fulfil their important ecological and conservation role

- ⇒ **Maintain and where possible improve estuarine water quality (linked to discharge and dredging consents)**
- ⇒ **Investigate, monitor and take action on pollution events**
- This objective is being met. Need to keep a watching brief, but cannot improve water quality further as remaining pollution is heavy metal/land based. Fish numbers may be increasing as power stations kill fish, eg Hinkley point kills 4 mill fish over 4 inch every year.
- The proposal for a barrage on the Parrat and Avon could affect eel numbers. **This group could comment on the proposal.**

Objective 7: Monitor condition and extent of priority habitats in the estuary

- ⇒ **Monitor status of birds in the estuary**
- This is being addressed, but there is a need for other studies to improve data (see item 6).
- NSC want to monitor birds at Dowlais farm. RB to give names to PH

RB/PH

Objective 8 - Increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of the estuary's biodiversity and its favourable management

- ⇒ **Raise awareness of the importance of and threats to estuary habitats**

<p>⇒ Review, collate and publicise guidance material on estuary habitat management</p> <p>⇒ Disseminate information about whereabouts of priority habitats and their sensitivities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are raising awareness through production of the estuary leaflet, Severn Wonders festival and Marine week etc. • It might be useful to raise awareness of pollution and litter • The SW Biodiversity Partnership have produced a Nature Map with information on priority habitats. AWT want to produce an Avon BAP atlas from the Nature map, with details of what habitats need to be created and restored. Would help targeting projects. Could be a project for this group, needs funding. • Guidance material for habitat management –BC will circulate EN references on this 	BC
<p>9. Access issues – discussion with NSC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABP drafted a letter to send to NSC expressing concerns over increased access to estuary foreshore. However, this has been superseded by the feasibility study produced by NSC in November 2005 on production of a recreational route. The partnership do not have any immediate concerns as the path is back from the coast. • The stakeholders meeting will be on 30th March and AWT, English Nature and Environment Agency are already on the invitation list. Please let NSC know if there are other bodies you would want to see on the list. There would be no restriction if groups wanted to send more than one representative. • There will be a consultation draft that all would be welcome to comment on. • The proposed next step after the end of this contract depends on what the recommendations are from the consultants - NSC will consider the options presented and take a set of proposals forward to their Executive or Executive member which ever is the most appropriate. • CA are currently looking at the issues involved in increasing coastal access. 	
<p>10. Updates around the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF - Review of Environment Agency consents under the Habitats Regulations is ongoing. Stage 2 is complete and English Nature / Countryside Council for Wales are being consulted. Work to inform stage 3 assessment is ongoing, with reports due soon for the water quality and sediment studies. Interpretation of fish records from screens at Hinkley Point Power Station is underway, and it is hoped to do something similar for data from Oldbury Power Station. The Severn Estuary CHaMP is due to be published soon, and there is a meeting on 13 March. • RS – AWT, BRERC and FOA are currently undertaking a GI study of Avon that includes coastal habitats. The work should lead to increased use of the coast by the public. The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts is running a national campaign on the Marine Bill. AWT currently looking at funding a study in Avonmouth on waders, flight ponds etc. 	

<p>11. AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birdflu – do we need to think about this? We can act as a rational voice. LR to circulate Royal Society of wildlife trusts information if appropriate.• Website links – could partners link their websites to the Avon BAP website if they havnt already.	
<p>12. Next meeting date Wednesday 20th September. 10.00am – 1.00pm. Venue tbc.</p>	