

**Avon BAP Coastal and Marine Group Meeting
20th September 2006, 10.00pm – 12.30 pm
Avon Wildlife Trust**



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

Item	Actions
<p>1 Introductions & apologies Present: Rachel Sharp (AWT), Sue Ford (EA), Lucy Rogers (Avon Biodiversity Partnership), Bob Corns (EN), Pauline Homer (NSC), David Bird (UWE), Don Metcalf (Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers).</p> <p>Apologies: Mark Courtiour (NT), Richard Bland (BNS), Tim Corner (BRERC), James Field (North Somerset Levels & Moors), Helen Hall (BCC), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), David Villis (SGC), Allan Davies (WEP), Ruth Barden (WW), Mary Wood (AWT).</p>	
<p>2 Actions from meeting of 1st March 2006</p> <p>Reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. JF • Fish records – SF still chasing obtaining data from national fish population data base. SF • PH to talk to PWWs and YACWAG PH • Biodiversity by design – Oldbury nuclear power station, LR to liase with Charlotte Pagendom LR • 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 Agrigroup. LR • Guidance material for habitat management –BC will circulate EN references on this BC <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biotope survey data to BRERC – SF will ask ASERA for CD with all the data on it. SF 	
<p>3. Severn Estuary Leaflet (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finished! Thanks to everyone for input and financial contributions from NT, SGlos and NS. Discussed where to best distribute leaflet to target walkers already using area rather than attracting in new people, and will provide PDF of leaflet for partners websites once available. • Will distribute to TIC's, SEP, Power station visitors centres. PH to ask 	

Gareth Withers	PH
<p>4. Avon BAP Terms of Reference (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LR has drafted TOR to be able to give to new partners joining who may not know anything about BAP work. ▪ There are now over 40 partners with the most recent being the MCS, UWE, SEP and Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers. ▪ LR has circulated TOR to Steering group and all have fed back comments. Includes details of how Avon BAP relates to UA BAPs, structure of Partnership and what is expected of partners. ▪ All new and existing partners will be sent a letter with new TOR and asked to sign up to actions and endorse the BAP and partnership approach. 	LR/ALL
<p>5 Severn Wonders Festival and SEP (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about the festival held last June, including details of talks presented can be found at: http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/partnership/forumfiles.html • The SEP are considering holding further festivals in the future. 	
<p>6. Marine Bill update (RS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Link involved with Marine Bill, The Wildlife Trusts are part of Wildlife Link, with Joan Edwards as the Marine Campaign Officer. • Wildlife Trusts, including AWT, applying for funding to raise awareness, campaign and lobby MPs about Marine Bill and marine environment. Want to tighten up marine conservation legislation. • Many conferences happening about this issue. • Blue Infrastructure work planned for the future. • Marine spatial planning is coming, and will cause challenges in the future. • Should help to meet targets in BAP. • Other partners, such as EA and EN are involved, but at a high level. • Results of DEFRA consultation due to be published in December 2006. • Not known yet which organisation the Marine Bill will sit with or who will police it, could be NE or DEFRA. Will have to know in next 6 months once Bill goes through parliament. • Devon and Cornwall WT have been approached by central government with funding for marine protected areas. <p>22/09/06 – Joan Edwards has just reported that the Marine Bill consultation phase 2 will not be out until at least June 07! This might be either a White paper or Draft Bill.</p>	
<p>7. Barrage (RS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS sits on SE Conservation group, with all conservation groups around the Severn estuary. Met recently to discuss barrage. Organisations such as RSPB and the WLTs are publishing position statements saying they are not against renewable energy, but the barrage is in the wrong place and at the wrong scale. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not going to work because has been tried before, not viable economically, environmentally or on cost grounds. • However, business is behind it, and the Welsh Assembly could decide to back it. • May be the opportunity to generate more data from estuary, and revisit old data if proposal goes further, eg prey density. 	
<p>8. Nature map update and mapping SNAs (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SW Nature Map shows the best areas to maintain and expand (through restoration and/or re-creation) terrestrial wildlife habitats at a landscape scale. Should be available on internet soon. • Nature Map was produced by the SW Regional Biodiversity Partnership. It selects landscape scale blocks of land, known as Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs), to improve habitat networks and to sustain wildlife within them. <p>NM is expected to be used by the region’s decision-makers, organisations and businesses to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify major biodiversity concentrations and where targets to maintain, restore and re-create wildlife can best be met • Assist in targeting Environmental Stewardship Scheme • Focus for biodiversity partnerships and projects in the region • Develop projects that help biodiversity to adapt to climate change • Formulate sustainable choices for development - through Local Development Frameworks and the Regional Spatial Strategy • Support from nature conservation organisations to landowners and managers <p>Mapping SNAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Avon BAP has set targets and actions (currently on BARS), but not specified locations. • Nature map has designated areas of important biodiversity (SNAs) in Avon • SWRBP has also set habitat targets for Avon using Nature Map as a tool for maintenance targets. Restoration targets drew on other info as well. <p>To help focus our effort in meeting targets and actions in Avon, and clarify things, could we take NM one step further to produce ‘BAP atlas’ of Avons SNAs with areas of priority habitat that need maintaining and restoring. This could focus our effort. Each focus group could contribute to producing BAP atlas.</p> <p>Need to use existing initiatives such as BAP, SW Targets, Nature Map in an integrated way to direct work at the local level.</p>	<p>ALL/LR</p>
<p>9. Focus Group development plan and targets (LR)</p> <p>Now that first priorities have been achieved, need to agree priorities for future.</p> <p>Can use BAP as starting point, but</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need to prioritise 	

2. A lot of the actions are ongoing (and therefore don't need our help although they need reporting on), need to focus on what the ABP should be doing to fill gaps
3. Need to plan for next 1, 5, etc years.
4. For each focus group we need to know what targets are and who is responsible
5. Partners should feel ownership

This group is responsible for the following action plans:

- Estuary
- Coastal and Floodplain grazing marsh

We can now use BARS to see what targets we have we set, and theoretically what work are we doing to meet targets, and therefore where the gaps are.

The BAP process has been good for raising awareness and getting biodiversity into policy – RSS and LDF etc. The RSS says no net loss of biodiversity in SNAs and we need to meet these targets. UAs need to map any loss of habitat. Mapping SNAs will help.

Using BARS targets printout, can see if we are hitting targets:

CFPGM is at risk from development, and any salt marsh expansion will be at expense of CFPGM.

Need more Dowlais farm schemes to re wet CFPGM so that restoration exceeds loss to development and saltmarsh.

DEFRA agrienvironment schemes should help meet targets, but not enough money altogether. Need to record if don't hit targets as well as if do.

Sea buckthorn a problem on sand dunes as invasive and taking over. Need project to reduce sea buckthorn. NE will have no money for first few months but will still need to agree management proposals with NSC. – to discuss at next meeting?

LR

The EA has targets for CHAMP, looking at estuary as a whole, floodrisk management on Welsh side may affect English side and vice versa.

10. BARS (LR)

- Now have all Avon BAP targets and SW targets for Avon on BARS, (and details of SNA targets once calculated?).
- All should be able to access this information. Must use this to keep track of progress against BAP and use to direct work of focus group.
- Intend to use BARS as up to date action plan, avoid writing more SAPs.
- Working with other UAs closely, each access to others BARS.
- Will tackle bars 1 action plan at a time and contact partners to ask about progress.

LR/ALL

<p>12. AOB</p> <p>Wind turbines (RS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW want to erect 3 big wind turbines on the Severn estuary. We know that bats and birds can be affected by turbines, particularly if sited in wrong place. • BC -We need data on nocturnal bird migration in estuary, as currently have no data though it is thought bird movement at night is significant. • As discussed at last meeting this is a priority for EN, who are looking into radar surveys to determine migration. However would be very expensive. • This is an issue that needs tackling as more wind farms are proposed in other areas. <p>Access (PH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on tidal trail between Clevedon and Weston-S-Mare underway. • BC - EN don't want trail as will increase disturbance to birds. Teal have significant population which will be affected, and resting lapwing and redshank will be disturbed. EN would rather the trail goes inland. • SF – EA would not recommend using top of existing banks for trail as may not be there in a few years time. • Planning trail may be premature as could be selected as area for 'refuge' and consequently aborted. 	
<p>13. Updates around the table</p> <p>BC- May be last meeting due to reorganisation of EN to NE</p> <p>SF – Review of Environment Agency consents under the Habitats Regulations continues. The stage 2 assessment is complete and with English Nature /Countryside Council for Wales for comment, stage 3 has begun and investigations to inform stage 3 are ongoing.</p> <p>The Agency is planning an improvement scheme for the tidal flood defences on the Conglesbury Yeo.</p> <p>The Severn Estuary CHaMP (Coastal Habitat Management Plan) is due to be released soon.</p> <p>The Severn Estuary leaflet and poster produced by ASERA are due to be circulated in October. http://www.severnestuary.net/asera/pubs.html</p> <p>There are also guidance notes for developers (on nature conservation and archaeology) and archaeologists in preparation by SEP / ASERA.</p>	
<p>14. Next meeting date</p> <p>Tuesday March 6th 10.00am – 1.00pm. Avon Wildlife Trust.</p>	