

Avon BAP Water and Wetlands Focus Group
 14th March 2006, 10.00-1.00pm
 BRERC Ashton Court Visitors Centre
 Chair: Melissa Clarkson (EA)
 Minutes: Lucy Rogers



Item	Actions
<p>1. Introductions & apologies Present: Melissa Clarkson (EA), Mary Wood (AWT), Paula Spiers (Avon Valley Partnership), Craig Stenson (AWT), Lucy Rogers (Avon Biodiversity Partnership), James Field (North Somerset Levels and Moors Project), Ritchie Smith (AWT volunteer), Amber McCarthy (AWT volunteer).</p> <p>Apologies: Tim McGrath (AWT), Alison Slade (B&NES), Tim Corner (BRERC), Helen Hall (BCC), Kathy Derrik (Bristol Living Rivers Project), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), Chris Klee (Bristol Water), Oda Dijkterhuis (British Waterways SW), Kate Jeffreys (EN), Sam Jarvis (NSC), Susan Stangroom (NSC), David Villis (SGC), Ruth Barden (WW), Chris Sperring (Hawk and Owl Trust), Mike Johnson (RSPB).</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mink data – JF co-ordinating everyone involved in mink control in the area, to try and make whole areas mink free. Need mink data. BASC collating it. JF to talk to RMB. 	JF/RMB
<p>3. Newt and Pond project – update (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project is a 2 year project to be led by ARAG, with a part time member of staff to co-ordinate volunteers to survey, manage and create ponds for GCN. Have WW and BW funding. Waiting to hear about HLF application. No news at meeting, but have now heard that they want more information from us before the project can go ahead. We will visit them in April and then resubmit. 	
<p>4. Crayfish update - CS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WC Crayfish surveys 2005 – surveyed river Chew catchment, 1 population in Chew Magna. Also surveyed Wellow Brook and found some WCC. No Signal Crayfish at either site. Work funded by WW. Best WCC population is in Frome where PS working. Further work needed on conservation and raising awareness. Translocation - Planning to translocate crayfish from sites where they are under threat such as the Bybrook in Wiltshire. Looking for suitable receptor sites – best site is Congresbury Yeo, where there are no resident populations of any crayfish spp. Every thing is in place for translocation. Working closely with EA experts. Currently looking for more funding, have some WW funding. 	
<p>5. NSL&M update – JF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project has now been running for 10 years. Dealing with landowner liason and stewardship applications including Dowlais Farm restoration. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also working on water level management with EA and EN and IDB. Raising water levels at Puxton Moor, looking at other SSSIs. • Busy working with the mid Somerset otter group – Improving data collection, training new surveyors and rejuvenating group. • Working with Clevedon wildfowlers, surveying their flight ponds, and organising a wolver training day for wildfowlers. • Working with YACWAG on a bat box scheme. Important as recently found Bechsteins and Barbastelle. • Also working on advice leaflet for farmers and display panel. 	
<p>6. Water voles in Avonmouth LR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helen Hall and Rachel Sharp keen to start a wolver conservation project in Avonmouth as this is the biggest population in Avon, and has been well surveyed for the last 10 years. It is under threat from development, pollution and poor management of rhynes and could benefit from a coordinated and strategic conservation strategy. Currently not under threat from mink. • We cannot stop development but could engage with industry, IDB etc to improve the habitat, and conserve key sites. Possibly purchase land. Plan to appoint project officer. • Funding – IDB, BCC, EA, industry, Highways Agency. • Need to be ahead of developers • Group agreed to support this project, it is an action in the BAP. LR will write up project brief and circulate to group. • BAP also says that we should identify key sites – need to check Bleedon levels, as conflicting information about whether wolveres are there or not. JF to check 	<p>LR JF</p>
<p>7. Other new projects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas include invasive species, mapping waterways, mink, grazing marsh, flight ponds. This group could work with BASC to develop a flight ponds project and may be able to help with grazing marsh. Coastal and Marine group discussed that Grazing marsh 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. • Group felt that we have more than enough to do at present. Difficult to do an invasive weed project when not covered at the national level. 	
<p>8. Review group members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group happy to continue with meetings, pool of people available to attend are small, but are the right people. 	
<p>9. BARS</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>10. Review of Avon BAP actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAP should be dynamic document. Important to review actions to assess whether still relevant. Group reviewed ‘Watercourse and Floodplain’ actions and decided that most are ongoing. Not clear who is undertaking Objective 2 action 2 – mapping key area for conservation. LR to investigate. Most are not specific enough to report back on BARS at this stage. 	<p>LR</p>
<p>11. Updates round the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PS – Expanding partnership to cover Frome. Outlined Avon Frome feasibility study. PS to send LR a copy. • MW – SGlos pond project and toad crossings 	<p>PS</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC – Crayfish plague in Sherston, Wiltshire, a big problem. • JF – Liver Fluke found in 6 otter carcasses in Somerset. Potentially a big problem. • CS – Meeting with MC to discuss funding crayfish translocation. • KD - Please tell Kathy if you want to be on the mailing list for the magazine. Busy with river walks, and mapping invasive weeds. Also, public consultation on abandoned trolleys in March and April. Respond online at BCC website /trolley 	
<p>12. AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water vole trip – Group felt it would be good to have a trip to Portbury to see the watervole reintroduction site with Chris S and Jen N. LR to organise • LR asked if partnership members could add a link from their website to the Avon BAP website. 	LR
<p>13. Next meeting date Date and venue tbc</p>	