

Avon BAP Water and Wetlands Group Meeting
 21st September 2006
 10 am – 12.30 pm
 Avon Wildlife Trust



Chair: Melissa Clarkson
 Minutes: Lucy Rogers

Agenda		
1	<p>Introductions & apologies Present: Melissa Clarkson (EA), Lucy Rogers (ABP), Mary Wood (AWT), Jo Illsley (BRERC), Paula Spiers (AVP), James Field (NSLMP), Miriam Woolnough (BANES).</p> <p>Absent: Craig Stenson (AWT), Tim McGrath (AWT), Helen Hall (BCC), Oda Dijkterhuis (British Waterways SW), Chris Klee (BW), Mike Johnson (RSPB), Kate Jeffreys (EN), Sam Jarvis (NSC), Susan Stangroom (NSC), Dave Willis (SGC), Ruth Barden (WW), Kathy Derrick (BLR), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), Tim Corner (BRERC), Chris Sperring (Hawk and Owl Trust).</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mink Data – JF co-ordinating data on mink control – Clevedon wildfowlers control sites that are of interest to them. JF will keep in touch and record this. Will also hold training event on water voles and mink rafts. ▪ Bleadon Levels – does have water voles. First confirmed record in N. Somerset for several years. ▪ Liver Fluke in otters – No update, lots of otter RTAs to sample at present. ▪ Water vole trip – very successful, saw and photographed wattervoles. Plan another field trip next year, suggested crayfish. LR to organise. 	LR
3	<p>Avon BAP Terms of reference</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 ack 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
4	<p>Crayfish update – MC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EA and AWT collected and translocated native Crayfish on 	

	<p>8th/9th August. Found over 200, from By Brook in Wiltshire, moved to Congresbury Yeo. Bybrook also has signal Crayfish upstream, which will eventually threaten them. Native crayfish collected were all sexed, measured and data recorded. No signal crayfish found.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will return in spring to check progress. Has potential to be very successful technique. ▪ Publicity has been good – in national papers and BBC website. ▪ EA discouraging public from catching any crayfish due to ease of confusing native and non native spp. 	
5	<p>Pond project (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and wetlands focus group initiative. Applied for HLF funding in Dec 05. HLF like project but asked us to resubmit bid having addressed the issue of lead applicant (BRERC) not having a bank account in their own name as this is held by BCC. • Decided that AWT will lead project instead of BRERC, to get around these difficulties. However BRERC are still be fully involved in the application to HLF and ARAG are still the mechanism for involving volunteers. • HLF also asked that all ponds in the project be public access ponds. There are 102 public access ponds in Avon: 13 FoA, 13 LNR, 4 WT, 27 BCC, 45 Common land. • HLF will not fund capital works, but aim to get funding in for this once project up and running. • So have resubmitted bid as AWT led project and addressed further points. Should hear in October. • Pond Conservation have offered support and help once we get funding from HLF. • There are many privately owned ponds that will also need surveying, and many unmapped ponds. MW trying to get ponds on private land mapped in BANES. Could use local community to help map? • BRERC has mapped only 5% of ponds that are in existence. Aerial photographs could be useful. FEPs should also help. • Mary Wood is running a pond project in 3 parishes in SGlos and Nsom, which will recruit and train local people to record ponds and GCNs. Project will be finished by March. <p>26/09/06 – We have heard from HLF that we have funding for the Pond Project – Hooray!</p>	
6	<p>Avonmouth water voles (LR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BCC (HH) and AWT (RS) initiative after many years of AWT surveys in area. Project brief written and circulated to W&W group and others ▪ Asked for money from Bristol Partnership and Bernard Sunley Trust. Unsuccessful. EA were keen but cant give money due to DEFRA overspend. ▪ The Water For Wetlands Group hold meetings every 6 months and are helping to address issue of getting funding for this 	

	<p>project. JF attended meeting on 13th September in Exeter, possible that could get funding from water companies if also address water quality and urban flooding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could join with SWT and GWT to have landscape scale project and funding opportunities. LR to pursue. ▪ BANES – Kennet and Avon Canal population smaller than it was – keen to get project off ground. ▪ Somerset levels – cant manage some water courses in Somerset due to number of water voles so a landscape scale project might help. 	LR
7	<p>Toad crossings (Mary Wood)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wildlife Trusts no longer co-ordinate these, and relies on volunteers, and road closures. 2 roads close for toads. In Avon used to be 20 crossings, now down to 10 due to habitat loss, fishing clubs removing weed used for spawning, development and mortality on roads. More than 25% killed on roads. ▪ Difficult to get volunteers for it as unpredictable, can be anytime from Jan to April and difficult to coordinate. ▪ Very little is known about status of toad population, though thought to be going down, garden ponds are too shallow. ▪ Need to make clear to drivers what road sign means. Most UAs and Highways Agency keen to put signs up as toads are a hazard. Need to make sure that they come down when not needed. ▪ MW has more information if people want it. ▪ JF will contact fisheries in area to discuss water voles and will also take opportunity to raise issue of otters and toads. 	
8	<p>Avon Frome Feasibility study – (PS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Looking into how to improve and manage the Avon and Frome river valleys and the Bristol and Bath railway paths to meet the needs of local people and visitors. ▪ 10 year plan, will be applying for funding. ▪ Currently at consultation stage, many responses from questionnaire sent out, but low turn out at workshops. ▪ JF to give PS contact for otter group. 	JF
9	<p>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 	

	<p>maintain, restore and re-create wildlife can best be met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>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>LR to investigate further.</p> <p>Could look at SSSI information, as many SNAs will contain high proportion of SSSIs.</p>	LR
<p>10.</p>	<p>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 <p>BARS can help focus on targets. What are the targets each group is responsible for? How do we address new issues?</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>Use this to direct work of focus groups. Eg woodland group – targets</p>	

	<p>concentrate on parkland or veteran trees?</p> <p>Can now use BARS to see what targets we have we set, and theoretically what work are we doing to meet targets. See printout of all targets and objectives</p> <p>Targets this group are responsible for -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross cutting actions for water and wetlands • Standing open water • Reedbeds and sedgebeds • Watercourses and floodplain • Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh • (elements of purple moor-grass and rush pasture). • Water vole • Crayfish. <p>Looking though targets, a lot are being addressed by ongoing work. Not sure where PMG&RP is in Avon. LR to check.</p>	LR
11	<p>BARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Now have all Avon BAP targets and SW targets for Avon on BARS. Can also add details of SNAs once calculated. ▪ Can get print outs of targets etc. All should be able to access this info. Must use this to keep track of progress against BAP and use to direct work of Water and Wetlands group. ▪ Intend to use BARS as up to date action plan, and avoid writing more SAPs. ▪ Working with other UAs closely, each has access to each others BARS data. ▪ LR will tackle BARS one action plan at a time and contact partners to ask about progress. 	LR
12	<p>Review of Avon BAP actions cont – Cross cutting actions for water and wetlands</p> <p>All actions are OK, and all ongoing. Need to update list of partners.</p>	LR
13	<p>Updates around the table</p> <p>MC – Unfortunately Signal Crayfish have been reported on the Frome, so will have to wait and see what happens. EA reorganisation happening soon, N. Wessex and S. Wessex to merge. Also DEFRA cuts.</p> <p>JF – Funding runs out end of March, but looking for more funding, and applying for Landscape heritage bid which includes biodiversity and heritage. NSLMP could become part of a bigger project. Also linking up with another person to share farm visits for catchment sensitive farming.</p> <p>MW – Wildspaces – BANES BAP publishes – 10 action plans, now</p>	

	<p>ready to implement, each championing certain SAPs. MW responsible for GCNs, Jane Briggs – Watervoles and White Clawed Crayfish. LR to ask JB if she wants to join W&W Focus group meetings. BANES holding a Wildspaces meeting on 26th September.</p> <p>JI – BRERC have collection of slides, will scan them soon so available to all.</p> <p>Chris Klee - Remind everyone that if there is anything which people believe Bristol Water can do, especially at its reservoirs, then I will be happy to help. I'm restoring a pond (1,000 sq m) near Woodford lodge this autumn as a wildlife pond and would be happy for extra input if you wish.</p>	LR
14	<p>AOB</p> <p>Greater Water Parsnip – Bristol Zoo Gardens and AWT reintroduced this to Avon this summer, by planting in rhynes at Clapton Moor. It is now listed as an Avon BAP spp.</p>	LR
15	<p>Next meeting date</p> <p>Tuesday 20th March from 10am – 12.30 at AWT.</p>	