

## South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan

### WATER AND WETLANDS

Minutes of meeting on 13th October 2004

Present:

Lyn Jenkins, EA

Phil - Somerset IDB

Ruth Bardon, Wessex Water

James Millett, RSPB

Angela Garcia, Bournemouth & W Hants  
Water

Brian Watkis, SW Assoc of Drainage  
Parties

Dave Lewis, Cornwall CC

Loveday Jenkin, Cornwall CC

Mervyn Winslade, SW Assoc of Drainage  
Parties

Nick Harrison, Defra Flood & Coastal  
Defence

Phil Collins, EN

Heather Sohl, SWRBP

Colin Studholme, SWWT

#### **1. Apologies**

#### **2. Targets and Indicators**

A Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Programme has been agreed by the SW Regional Biodiversity Partnership. The full programme can be found on the Partnership Work pages at <http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk/framesets/Option4.htm>. This requires 18 habitats and 18 species to be monitored as indicators throughout the region. These are based on the sectors within the SWBIP.

Those suggested for the Water and wetlands sector include:

BAP Habitat	Chalk Rivers
BAP Habitat	Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
Non-priority habitat	?
BAP priority species	Otters
Common & widespread species	Aquatic Invertebrates
Common & widespread species	Salmon

Chalk rivers are not found in Cornwall. EA monitor macro invertebrates.

CFGM is key habitat for restoration in Devon and Cornwall, showing change in action and delivery.

Reedbed could be considered as indicator. Don't know proportion of natural vs artificial.

#### Action

All to suggest non-priority habitat that could be used as an indicator.

All to let HS know of any monitoring programmes, especially if they are long term.

Water Vole are not suitable as they are either found in abundance where present or are totally absent/very rare.

Otters are found across the region, and data exists already over a long time.

Common and Widespread spp - Aquatic invertebrates will show biodiversity trends as well as water quality. This is monitored but needs collation.  
 Rununculus spp - is data available?  
 Ragged Robin - patchy distribution. Is data available?  
 Waterbird survey - good data available  
 Grey Heron is poor indicator of habitat.  
 Salmon populations - data available for artificial stocking levels. Biased to the west with 1/2 examples in east.

### 3. Moving forward the Programme of actions

The actions in the tables have been listed according to the timescale set within the SWBIP.

Key to Timescale:-                 Short = 2004-2007  
   Medium = 2007-2010  
   Long = 2010-2014

<b>Objective 1</b>			
Manage water and wetlands using an integrated and sustainable approach to increase biodiversity.			
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Delivered by who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	Promote the concept of sustainable abstraction and continue a programme of restoration measures to alleviate low flows.	EA, Water companies.	Ongoing
2	Promote the wise use of water by businesses and in the home.	Lead: EA, Water companies Partners: NGOs, Industry and small / medium businesses	Ongoing
3	Develop integrated land management plans for reducing flood risk and providing sustainable water supplies on a catchment basis for people and wildlife.	EA	Medium

#### Action 1:

AG - reduced abstraction by 50% in the River Allen and looking at effect of abstraction in the River Avon

RB - Looking at abstraction in River Avon, working with EA

BW - Less than 20 cubic metres of abstraction does not need a licence but this still causes problems for drainage and biodiversity. Suggest that EA monitor what is happening.

Fishing lakes also take a lot of water but run under the 20 cubic metre rule.

Action LJ to take to water abstraction unit of the EA and get this moved up the Defra agenda.

#### Action 2:

Promote the message to industry and see whether there are existing programmes.

Sedgemoor DC encourage water butts

AG - get the message to hotels and B&Bs, which should all be metered.

Advice to small businesses can be given through the Federation of Small Businesses Water Boards?

Action: Follow up with organisations giving advice to small businesses.

#### Action 3:

Refers to catchment flood management plans and CAMPS

EA area commenting on this

Water Basin Management Plans will be produced through the WFD.

Action: W&W group to make people aware that they can comment on this.

Catchment scale land management plans are developed by all partners not just EA.

Integrated land and water management at a catchment scale is needed with actions under this.

Action Promote catchment scale models and partnerships, e.g. Cycleau project, showing best practice. [www.cycleau.com](http://www.cycleau.com).

A transnational conference will be held in SW next year which may provide an opportunity.

<b>Objective 2</b>			
Continue improvements in water quality, including minimising diffuse pollution by reducing run off of water and soil from farmland.			
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Delivered by who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	Continue to protect rivers, lakes, wetlands and coastal waters through the monitoring and control of point source pollution.	EA	Ongoing
2	Continue the improvement works carried out on sewage treatment works to reduce nutrient inputs to rivers.	Lead: Water companies Partners: EA	Medium
3	Raise awareness among landowners and managers about the problems of soil compaction in the region and promote best practice for soil husbandry.	Lead: RDS, agricultural advisors Partners: NFU, CLA, FWAG, Landowners, contractors, EA	Medium

Action 1:

Ongoing action with EA delivering with some changes expected from WFD

Action 2:

Point source is in hand or getting there.

Combined sewage and storm water overflows are used in Cornwall to prevent damage through storm events.

BW - flooding does not consider overflow from hard surfaces, e.g. roads.

- need the public to report on point source problems and for EA to feed back to them.

- need to report this and encourage the public

RB - AMP 4 - with English Nature are looking at levels and whether there are effects.

Cycleau - looking at waste from humans, animals, birds and what proportion is from what.

Biodiversity impacts - algal blooms in estuaries

Not directly related to biodiversity but there is no forum to discuss this within.

Action 3: **Top priority issue**

Richard Smith, EA is talking to FWAG and other advisors about encouraging farmers to reduce run off.

Suggested that this action should sit it a separate objective to 1 and 2.

Need to build links across to the Farming and Food sector.

Need better communication of existing demonstration sites. AES review should include this.

Action Get message through to farmers through farm demonstration sites. Work with F&F sector group.

<b>Objective 3</b>			
Ensure regional policies and strategies promote the conservation and enhancement of rivers, wetlands and coasts.			
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Delivered by who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	Provide timely advice and input to regional strategies and initiatives.	SWRBP	Ongoing
2	Protect floodplains from unsuitable development through the planning system.	LAs, EA	Ongoing
3	Provide financial incentives to landowners for flood management and target the new Environmental Stewardship scheme to support floodplain restoration.	RDS	Short
4	Provide advice on wetland restoration for flood risk management to inform future Catchment Flood Management Plans and Flood Management Strategies.	SWRBP, EA	Short-Medium
5	Encourage riparian landowners/managers to adopt best practice for the sustainable management of rivers and riparian land.	Lead: Landowners, FWAG, Rivers Trusts, Anglers Partners: RDS, NFU, CLA, NT <b>EN, RSPB, SWWT, LAs</b>	Medium
6	Develop conservation initiatives to reconnect rivers and wetlands at a landscape scale and restore key wetland areas to increase wildlife, help to alleviate flooding and provide other benefits to the water cycle.	Lead: LAs, EA, IDBs, NGOs Partners: GOSW, NFU, CLA, RDS, FWAG, NT, AONB Partnerships, Landowners, developers, <b>EN</b>	Medium-Long
7	Promote the recognition of floodplains as a key component of sustainable flood risk management.	EA, LAs, IDBs	Medium-Long
8	Initiate and/or support targeted recovery projects for key species and assemblages of plants and animals for example, water vole, breeding waders, native crayfish, great crested newts, southern damselfly, floodplain invertebrates, reedbeds and floodplain forests, linked to UK BAP targets.	EN, LBAPs, NGOs, EA, FWAG, NT, landowners	Medium- Long

Action 1:  
In hand

**Action 2:**

In hand in theory as guidance is provided. Towns, Cities and Development guide on planning and biodiversity should address this.

EA are producing something too,

Action LJ to circulate publication and All to look at how well this addresses the issues and act accordingly.

**Action 3:**

Watch this space as the targets are developed and check that this is included in the system.

**Action 8:**

Action HS to collate information from LBAPs on projects.

**Action 5:**

Need catchment approach. Link to Objective 1, action 3.

Everything is not achieved through voluntary agreement.

**Action 6:**

Nature Map is delivering this, with Rebuilding Biodiversity.

Need to get local input to ensure that these schemes are maintained.

Action All to email HS/LJ with projects in this area, even if it is in the pipeline and funding is not yet confirmed.

<b>Objective 4</b>			
Restore degraded rivers and wetlands to provide multiple social, economic and environmental benefits, and open up opportunities for tourism and recreation linked to the water environment.			
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Delivered by who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	Promote best practice for the long-term management of rivers, streams and wetlands.	Lead: EA ,NGO's, FWAG, NT Partners: IDBs, AONB Partnerships, Landowners, Angling Clubs	Short
2	Improve the implementation of Water Level Management Plans to reverse the impact of past drainage schemes.	Lead: Defra Partners: EA, EN	Short
3	Establish at least three large scale and high-profile river/wetland restoration projects in the South West.	Lead: NGOs, FWAG, LAs, EA, NT Partners: businesses	Medium
4	Produce a Regional Rivers and Wetlands Map of target areas for collaborative restoration projects linked to UK BAP targets, using the Nature Map. This should include wetlands of cultural interest for example water meadows.	SWRBP	Medium

5	Encourage new targeted woodland creation schemes and riverside planting to assist in stabilising riverbanks.	Lead: FC Partners: FWAG, Landowners	Medium
6	Seek opportunities for coastal and fluvial managed retreat as part of flood defence schemes.	Lead: EA Partners: EN, LAs, NT	Medium
7	Encourage local partnerships bringing together farming, drainage authorities and biodiversity interests to improve management of existing wetland sites through management agreements (EN) and Water Level Management Plans (EA, EN, IDBs, Landowners).	Lead: EN Partners: EA, Landowners, IDBs, AONB Partnerships, NFU, CLA, FWAG	Medium-long

Action 1:

Overlaps with previous action

Action 3:

Overlaps with landscape scale initiatives

Action 2:

Are partnerships effective?

WLMP and condition assessment failed on Somerset levels and moors. Are the criteria for favourable condition set correctly?

Action More communication is needed within this sector as some partners are unaware of issues and outcomes.

<b>Objective 5</b>			
Raise awareness of the value of green spaces alongside rivers through our towns and cities resulting in the creation of urban river corridors.			
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Delivered by who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	Provide a link to the South West Biodiversity Project website to disseminate best-practice for wetlands projects.	SWRBP	Short
2	Ensure proactive planning to promote river channel restoration, the creation of green spaces and riverside walks as part of urban regeneration.	Lead: LAs Partners: EA, LSPs	Medium-long

Action 2:

Action HS to add the Cycleau project to the SW Biodiversity website.

Action All to email any other projects to HS to add to website.

#### **4. Stakeholder events**

We need wider awareness and engagement.

Events could relate to discussions that we had today, e.g. soil compaction and engaging with Local Authorities re:LDF development.

Organise site visits to look at cases in action.

JM - catchment scale planning - need to make a strategy but is that jumping the gun?  
Action plan for delivery at the Catchment scale.

Somerset - the Parrot catchment project has had events.

LDF - don't know how this is going to work, and might need to be based on catchments (hydrological areas).

- local authorities are finding this difficult.

- need to inform people on hydrological catchments not just planning catchments.

Consider using hydrological units in the Nature Map and then look at BAP habitats and species there to prioritise.

AG - water companies could not take a lead in organising these events but could provide help.

RB - Looking at the Wessex Water BAP and local projects coming out of this.

Action LJ to pursue South West Water for their involvement in the group. The group could also be enhanced by representation from Defra RDS and more planners.