

Tees Valley Wetland and Coastal Action Group

Tuesday 11 March 2008

Draft meeting notes

Attendance – Allan Snape (Northumbrian Water), Helen Herring (Wildflower Ark), Keith Ferry (R&CBC) Ian Bond (HBC), Robert Woods (INCA), David Laing, Steve Cooper (HBC) Sue Antrobus (BAP Co-ordinator).

Apologies – Neil Docherty (SBC), Emily Barrett (MBC), Katy Dickson (Environment Agency), David Braithwaite (RSPB). , Russell McAndrew.

Tees Valley “pondscape” data

Allan has received data on location of ponds from Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Sue will forward data recently received from Neil for Stockton. He has started work on entering the Hartlepool data and will contact people if queries as he progresses.

Actions; Ian to send Allan a GIS pond layer that he has for Hartlepool

Robert to send Allan pond details from sites that INCA has information on

Allan to bring GIS data to next meeting so we can do some opportunity mapping

Regional Pond survey

The survey has been printed and is ready for distribution. Copies still with the Eye Project at moment. It was noted that there is a need to distribute them as soon as possible as frogs already spawning.

Sue fed back on the survey and a discussion followed. Whilst the survey is likely to be useful in generating amphibian records across the region, in the Tees Valley it is very similar to the amphibians and reptiles postcard survey carried out by the Tees Valley BAP Partnership in 2007. The survey is more about species in ponds rather than the ponds themselves. Key information on size of ponds, surrounding land use and vegetation in ponds were dropped from the final survey as their was concern from the EYE project that these questions would not be understood by some members of the public. This is very disappointing, however the pond pack should be a good opportunity to send people information on key issues such as invasive species, creating garden ponds to benefit wildlife and provide an opportunity to engage people in more detailed pond surveys.

The Survey is being launched in the Tees Valley at Cowpen Bewley on Thursday 10th April. This is in the school holidays and will be an event aimed at families with children. Hartlepool has also tagged some pond events with the survey in the week starting 14 April.

Actions; Sue to get copies to Steven for mailing out with the Hartlepool events programme

Tees Valley amphibian and reptile data

Ian has now collated a wealth of amphibian and reptile data from multiple sources that go back to 1984. Ian has discussed this with Jeremy Garside and it was agreed that the best people to act as data holders would be the EYE project, with some sort of data sharing agreement. Sue mentioned that the EYE project would soon be recruiting another officer, through Natural England funding, to handle data. Helen pointed out that on the wider issue of records, it would be useful to have some sort of “recorder facilitator” in the Tees Valley to compliment the EYE project and who could send data from local recorders to the EYE project as local recorders are generally happier to give their records to a local contact.

Purple milk vetch species action plan (SAP)

Helen and Sue met last week to discuss and a draft set of targets and actions for this species that Helen has drawn up were circulated. This would be a new priority species for the Tees Valley, it is nationally

threatened. It would replace the globeflower SAP which has been successful and no further action needed. The first priority is to check, this summer, the sites where it has been recorded in the past. It is a simple plan, and more actions may be added once we have a clearer picture of its present distribution and population sizes.

Pond habitat action plan

We revisited draft targets and actions that were discussed this in depth at the last meeting and compared with the targets of the national targets from an article in the latest Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers (IEEM) newsletter. We decided that it is going to be difficult to give all the targets numerical goals at the moment.

***Action: Ian and Sue to tighten plan as much as possible for entry as draft plan onto bars
Sue to check again with Nick Brodin if actions and targets are recorded in the local BAP that is being carried out by Natural England and other national organisations.***

Interesting news

- Congratulations to the Wildflower Ark on their Heritage Lottery grant on their grasslands project in Redcar and Cleveland.
- Biological Freshwater Association has some practical courses on aquatic ecology and pond classification. ***Action: Sue to email link around group or post to members without email.***
- Allan: the two tern nesting rafts have been moved from the brinefields (where they were sitting too high on the silt) has been moved to Cowpen Bewley and Rosemere Park.
- Robert: setting up moth surveys on 6 industrial sites; of these 4 have reed beds. One group of moths which are thought of as climate change indicators are the 6 species of Wainscots. These are associated with reed beds and their distribution is moving north.
- INCA are doing some survey work on the aquatic invertebrates of the saline lagoons at the Brinefields.

Focus of next meeting

Brainstorm on activity, targets and actions for the reedbeds action plan (2008-12)

Action: All to have a think and bring any information to the next meeting

Date of next meeting

Thursday 19th June at the earlier time of 9.30 am at Billingham Beck