



Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership

Coastal and Wetland Action Group

Wednesday 26 January 2011

Attendance; Anne Gladwin (MBC), Toby Collett (RSPB), Heather Sugden (Dove Marine Lab), Allan Snape (Northumbria Water), David Laing, Rachel Jackson (TVWT), Martin Allen (Wildflower Ark), Sue Antrobus (BAP Co-ordinator).

Apologies; Deborah Jefferson (HBC), Robert Woods (INCA), Ben Lamb (Tees Rivers Trust).

1. Matters arising and other updates

Mink recording and control

Kenny is continuing to record any mink sightings in the Tees Valley, there have been 5 records since August 2010, at Dormans Pool, Brewsdale, Nunthorpe, Thornaby and Saltholme. Sue asked that members of the group encouraged colleagues and volunteers to send in records and also records of any dispatches they make.

Deborah has emailed regarding a reliable contact that may be able to assist with mink control in the Hartlepool area.

Action: Sue to follow up contact.

Update from the Tees Rivers Trust

Ben is not able to attend meeting and sent an email update. Key points

The Tees Rivers Trust will shortly be starting a sediment reduction programme in the Leven catchment. Part of this work will involve training volunteers in id and mapping techniques and best practice control of Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed. He is unsure about the mink population in the catchment, but sure they are present and would like to tie in their control with the work that the BAP have been doing. Outside the Tees Valley area he says that a 2.2m heritage lottery bid is being put together for a Heart of Teesdale project. This has had 1st round success and the main project bid is currently being written. The Tees Rivers Trust is on the project steering group and he is keen to see an invasive species initiative as part of the suite of projects. His thoughts are that given this bid, a similar bid being submitted by the AONB and another being prepared by Anne Louise Orange, there is potential for funding from the 3, augmented by potential funds from the Assoc of Rivers Trusts, to employ a Tees Catchment invasive initiative co-ordinator.

He has spoken at numerous angling club AGMs about invasive control, especially mink and balsam, and there is definitely a lot of interest and numerous potential volunteers. He says that he would welcome any thoughts from the BAP and if any members would like to meet up and discuss potential partnership work this year, he is keen to hear from them.

Invasive wetland species

A flyer from the Yorkshire FWAG advertising a half day training event was circulated. This event is aimed at farmers and land managers and focusing on Japanese Knotweed, giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam. It is being held on Wednesday 2 Feb at Menethorpe near Malton. The group discussed this and the date and location meant that no one would be able to attend but that something similar in the Tees Valley would be very well received.

Action: Sue to investigate further with FWAG, Tees Rivers Trust and Environment Agency.

Martin mentioned that the number of plants on schedule 9 has increased.

Action: Martin to find email links and forward to rest of group.

Terry Douthwaite has offered to collect records on *crassula* and other invasive wetland plant species and send to ERIC .

2. Marine workshops and surveys in Tees Valley with the Big Sea Survey

Heather was welcomed to the meeting and gave a summary of the Big Sea project that is being run by the Dove Marine Laboratory. For details visit <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marine/learning/bigsea.htm> The project runs until August 2013 and stretches from the Scottish border in the North to Saltburn in the south. One of the key areas that they looking at are the rocky shore at Saltburn. This will be one of 3 localities in the North East where a quarterly bio-blitz survey will be carried out. They can provide full training for volunteers. A free workshop is being held on 15 July at Saltburn. So far over 250 volunteers involved but need more in the Tees Valley. Everyone agreed that it looked very exciting and would provide great data and enjoyable volunteering opportunities. Posters and flyers were given out. There new website will be www.bigseasurvey.co.uk

Action: All to promote involvement in the project

3. Tees Valley NVC fen habitat survey- end report

This survey was funded by Natural England and was carried out by the Wildflower Ark during 2010. A summary of the findings have been posted on the TVBP website at

<http://teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk/1873/fen-habitats-mapped-in-the-tees-valley/>

Martin summarised these. Anyone wanting further details on specific sites can access the data (excel and GIS) by contacting the TVBP, via Sue or Martin.

4. Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast European Marine Site (EMS) Management Scheme

Allan gave a comprehensive introduction and update on this initiative. The objectives of this are to establish a framework within which relevant and competent authorities and other stakeholders will manage their activities in order to fulfil their duties under Habitats Regulations for the above Special Protection Area (SPA). In April 2010 a Disturbance Study quotation request was sent to local universities and Katherine Simpson at York University (MSC student) was appointed in July 2010. The study was to: review existing disturbance studies, survey disturbance activities, produce a stakeholder questionnaire and have them filled in by users, raise awareness of the EMS, survey disturbances and their current/future impact on habitats and species and to produce a Code of Conduct for the activities. The study was funded by Natural England and overseen by Aisling Lannin (Natural England). She has carried out an amazing number of questionnaires of coast users, 289 questionnaires were collected at the six sites (North Sands, Hartlepool Rocks, North Gare, South Gare, Coatham Sands and Redcar Rocks) and a draft Code of Conduct has been drawn up. This and a more detailed summary will also be sent with these meeting notes.

5. Data sharing on results of Pondscape

Rachel gave an update on what data the project has generated and plans for data sharing and dissemination of findings. A short summary paper was submitted to the TVBP steering group meeting yesterday. The Pondscape datasets held is information on 1134 ponds, with varying degrees of detail, ranging from a grid reference plotted on GIS to comprehensive biological surveys. New data from project is:

Surveys following a reduced version of the National Pond Survey (NPS) format on 428 ponds.

This survey collects information such as pond type, surrounding land use, area designations, shade and vegetation cover, species observed. This survey has been adapted from the National Pond Monitoring Network (NPMN). The NPMN aims to increase the amount of data collated on the UK's ponds and to make it publically available. Data from this can be interactively viewed on their website.

Predicted System of Multimetrics (PSYM) surveys and analysis for 34 ponds

The Predictive SYstem for Multimetrics PSYM is the standard method for assessing the biological quality of still waters in England and Wales. Using a standardized method means we can compare biodiversity between ponds and also compare the biodiversity of ponds to that in rivers and lakes. These surveys include recording of invertebrates to family level

Wetland and marginal vascular plant surveys on 31 ponds. These surveys have mapped and describing plant communities and species lists of plants carried out by the Wildflower Ark.

Amphibian surveys on over 350 ponds to establish species present to update historic surveys.

Landowner details of ponds have been verified for almost 50 % of ponds. During the project management advice was provided on ponds for landowners/ managers. This information has been collated.

The Project is working to make some data available on Google maps. This was discussed with a suggestion that this could be applied to other datasets for other habitats if it works well. There was a discussion on the possibility of Italian newts being in the Tees Valley but they are unable to be distinguished without genetic testing.

As this is the last meeting that Rachel will be attending, she was thanked for all her hard work with best wishes for the future.

The date of the next meeting will be on 24 May 2011, at 10am at Billingham Beck Visitor Centre