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JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

HALF YEARLY MONITORING REPORT FOR 2002/03

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on JNCC's performance for the first half of 2002/03, covering performance against key and supporting targets, an update on the financial situation and items relating to staffing matters.

2. Performance against targets

- 2.1 Detailed information relating to all 41 key targets can be found in Annex A.
- 2.2 Overall performance against targets is reasonable; only eight key targets and 10 supporting targets (of 54 supporting targets) are not on track. Performance has remained the same as the first quarter with 19% of key targets not on track.
- 2.3 Of the eight key targets that are not on track, three relate to implementation of the FMPR recommendations. These targets have been delayed because a decision is still to be made about the organisational framework and there are a number of legal questions to be answered about the different options. However, progress is being made to move this forward and a meeting to discuss the legal issues with Defra took place on 12 November 2002 – an update from this meeting can be found in the FMPR paper being presented to Committee (**JNCC 02 P23**).
- 2.4 Additional work received from Defra has meant that revision of policy advice for non-native species and biological translocations is now likely to be completed in the third quarter rather than the second.
- 2.5 With regard to developing and implementing a system for monitoring designated interest features on statutory sites, slow progress by some of the inter-agency specialist groups and a lack of staff resources at JNCC has hampered progress.
- 2.6 Some components of the public relations and publications target relating to dissemination of JNCC's work have slipped slightly due to delays in return of

manuscripts but mostly because the post of Communications Manager has been vacant for three months.

- 2.7 A staff shortage in the Habitats team has resulted in the remaining two targets (development of habitat surveillance programmes and habitat inventories) not being on track.
- 2.8 Where appropriate additional resources have been assigned to targets that have slipped and as such it is anticipated that the majority of key targets that are not on track at present will be back on track by March 2003.
- 2.9 With regard to the supporting targets, there are a number of reasons to explain why they are not on track - three targets have been delayed because of staff shortages, one because of extra work required by Defra and the remaining six because of various external factors such as the decision by the UK standing committee on biodiversity partnerships to postpone implementing conclusions until 2005.
- 2.10 The consequences of delays to targets have been assessed and appropriate stakeholders have been consulted.

3. Financial update

- 3.1 The financial situation has changed considerably since the beginning of the year, moving from a significant overallocation on the budget to a position where the anticipated spend now falls slightly short of the budget available (reasons for which are explored in point 3.2). Overall spend stands at 41% at the half yearly point. Figure 1 below indicates the overall position.

Figure 1: Summary of Spend Against Budget

	Corporate plan allocation (£)	Budget (£)	Spend (£)	% spend
A1 (salaries)	2,401,500	2,511,033	1,096,120	43.6
A2 (administration)	973,600	1,112,650	541,913	48.7
D (publicity)	30,000	117,000	70,255	60.0
E (contracts)	1,883,900	1,964,930	595,533	30.3
H (capital)	89,000	80,246	65,480	81.5
Total expenditure	5,378,000	5,785,859	2,369,301	40.9
Y (receipts)	-248,000	-508,405	-208,298	41.0
Total (£)	5,130,000	5,277,454	2,161,003	41.0

- 3.2 There have been unavoidable delays in implementing the FMPR recommendations and this has led to a significant underspend. CCW have made an additional contribution of £49k to cover increased salary costs

resulting from the pay award. We are also anticipating additional income from SNH (to cover pay progression) and EHS.

- 3.3 JNCC's Management Team are currently considering the options available for dealing with any potential underspend, e.g. by reinstating budgets for priority work that were reduced earlier in the year, and bringing planned work forward from next year.
- 3.4 In October 2002 JNCC reached the target of paying 95% of creditors within their specified terms, compared to 65% at the start of the year. This meets the target set out in the prompt payment code promoted by Government.

4. Staffing report

- 4.1 JNCC currently employs 101 people in either permanent or fixed term appointment posts.
- 4.2 Turnover for the year stands at 7.7%.
- 4.3 So far this year 16 posts have either been recruited or are in the process of being recruited. Recruitment for six posts (some of which are new and some are previous positions) remains on hold due to budgetary constraints and will be considered as part of the corporate planning process for 2003/04.
- 4.4 With regard to training, the number of days provided per person is slightly higher than at the same point last year, averaging 1.6 days per person. Most of the training conducted in the first half of the year related to the management development programme. The average number of training days is likely to be lower in the second half of the year and therefore the target of 3 days training per person over the whole year is unlikely to be met.

JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

HALF YEARLY MONITORING REPORT FOR 2002/03 - PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

The information below provides an update on progress against all key targets, listed by programme.

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
<i>Programme 1: Global conservation advice</i>		
Provide support to Government on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including contributing to effective implementation by the UK of all Articles of CBD (including BAP targets), acting as UK Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) focal point and monitoring progress of CBD implementation	Yes	JNCC staff attended the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties in the Netherlands from 7-19 April 2002. The UK delegation functioned efficiently and JNCC was particularly influential in shaping decisions concerning alien invasive species and the CBD strategy. Consultations with Defra on the priorities for CHM work this year have begun and JNCC has been requested by Defra to co-ordinate UK implementation of some of the key decisions taken at CoP6. To start the UK implementation strategy, JNCC has drafted a short paper on UK implementation of the global plant strategy to act as an exemplar for other UK CBD theme leaders.
Provide support to Government on the World Heritage Convention	Yes	JNCC continues to provide support to DCMS and is working with the IUCN and UNESCO on a range of global geological projects. We are also advising EHS, EN and Dorset CC in respect of management and policy issues on World Heritage sites.
Develop more effective means of influencing EU nature conservation policy, legislation and practice	Yes	The Brussels office has been established, with effective IT connections making a significant difference to communication, and JNCC is developing contacts in Brussels, especially at the Commission. Monthly briefings are prepared for agency contacts plus rough daily spot reports on emerging issues and events. Around a dozen local events have been attended and reported back on. Seven outside contacts visited the office during the second quarter and 13 agency staff came to Brussels. The 'influencing thematic strategies' element of this work is being handled by the relevant LCN/inter-agency network.

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
Provide support to Government on the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and its subsidiary agreements	Yes	<p>Main Convention: Colin Galbraith of SNH chaired the 11th meeting of the Scientific Council (September 2002), and was re-elected for a further three-year term (2002-5). JNCC provided scientific input on behalf of both the UK and the Agreement on the Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Sea (JNCC chairs the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee) to the Council meeting. JNCC prepared the UK report for the 7th Conference of Parties (September 2002) and provided input to a revised reporting format. JNCC and Dr Galbraith provided technical advice as part of the UK delegation to CoP7. The UK delegation made a significant contribution to the CoP, <i>inter alia</i>, steering the complex scientific debate on cetacean and great white shark proposals, chairing the drafting group that significantly improved several resolutions (including on windfarms, oil pollution, electrocution and EIA), and contributing to the Strategic Plan Working Group. The quality of the Defra/JNCC delegation led to the election of Defra as chair of the Standing Committee for the coming triennium (2002-5), putting the UK in a very influential position at an important time in the expansion of the Convention (there are now more than 80 Parties).</p> <p>African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement: JNCC attended the second Meeting of Parties in Bonn in October, as technical support to Defra on the UK delegation, having earlier drafted the national report for that meeting. A major role was played at MoP2 with significant contributions to the final outcome of the conference, in particular to defining a number of key tasks to be taken forward over the next three years by AEWA's Technical Committee. These include the potential development of headline indicators for waterbirds within the Agreement area, as well as reviews of status of a number of declining ducks in Europe, and further clarification of the criteria by which such declines are assessed.</p> <p>ASCOBANS: The Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS met in May 2002, chaired by JNCC. Among a number of issues agreed was a recovery plan for Baltic harbour porpoises and a proposal to move forward with a recovery plan for (southern) North Sea harbour porpoises. The First Meeting on the Memorandum of Understanding for marine turtles of the Atlantic Coast of Africa was held in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2002. Five further countries signed the MoU at the meeting, joining the signatures of twelve other States. France and Spain gave positive indications that they would sign the MoU. The conservation plan was updated, a format for national reports developed, and an evaluation of possible contributors for regional conservation projects was undertaken.</p> <p>Eurobats: JNCC participated in the Advisory Committee to the Eurobats Agreement, held in Romania.</p>

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
Undertake our duties as UK CITES Scientific Authority (fauna)	Yes	<p>70% of CITES licence applications dealt with in the second quarter were within service standards, which is an improvement on the first quarter figure of around 60%. The cumulative total of consultations up to the half year point is 13,694.</p> <p>The main focus of work has been on CoP12 preparation - a total of eight related meetings have been attended and major effort directed into the production of a brief on proposals to amend the appendices and on draft resolutions. JNCC participated in the 18th Animals Committee meeting (Costa Rica), 2nd Hawksbill Dialogue meeting (Grand Cayman), two EC Scientific review group meetings, completed UK submissions to deadline for CoP12 and attended the EC CoP12 preparatory meeting. JNCC also provided advice to the UK and Cayman Islands authorities on a captive breeding registration proposal for the Cayman Turtle Farm.</p>
Work to support the development and implementation of conservation initiatives and conventions in the UK Overseas Territories	Yes	<p>Advice has been provided to the FCO on a number of issues, including EIAs on the Falklands, exemption for a Cayman Island turtle farm under the SPAW Protocol, and contribution to the internal FCO review of their Environment Policy Department.</p> <p>Advice has also been provided on a number of applications to the FCO Overseas Territories Environment Fund and contributions made to the panel assessing FCO Environment Fund projects overall. FCO staff have visited JNCC to gain a better understanding of our work and routine liaison and advice has been maintained. The Hawksbill dialogue meeting in the Cayman Islands enabled links with Caribbean OTs to be developed.</p>
Provide support to Government on the Ramsar Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands of International Importance	Yes	The CoP will take place in November 2002 and briefing for government is at its final stages.
Provide support to Government on the Oslo and Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the north-east Atlantic (OSPAR)	Yes	<p>Habitat classification - Literature reviews have been received from France.</p> <p>Habitat mapping – The contract to run the OSPAR/North Sea habitat mapping workshop has been received from Defra. A successful workshop took place (jointly with CEFAS) at the end of October and the programme has been agreed.</p> <p>Habitats and species - Comprehensive advice has been provided via ICES. No activity took place on this during the second quarter.</p> <p>Marine Protected Areas – OSPAR’s MPA selection guidelines and MPA management guidelines have been edited and submitted to Germany via Defra. A briefing meeting on OSPAR MPAs was held with Defra prior to the 4th MPA workshop (July 2002, Roscoff, France) and was attended by JNCC.</p> <p>Ecological Quality Objectives - Advice has been provided by JNCC. Further development was agreed between the North Sea states and a workshop was attended.</p>

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
<i>Programme 2: Conservation advice - sites</i>		
Complete the submission to the European Commission of an agreed list of UK SACs, aiming to resolve any outstanding issues, such as site selection for harbour porpoises, during 2002/03	Yes	The UK listing is almost completed with a small number of sites required to satisfy the Commission's concerns. A bilateral meeting with the Commission will take place in February 2003, followed by a full meeting of the Atlantic Biogeographical Region in April. The Commission hopes to list SCIs in September 2003.
Work with the country agencies and Government administrations to achieve an agreed interpretation of 'favourable conservation status'	Yes	A workshop took place with the agencies in November 2002. The conclusions of the workshop were discussed and further explored with government the following day.
<i>Programme 3: Conservation advice - species</i>		
Develop areas of policy advice to government in relation to non-native species and biological translocations	No	Defra-related work is going well. Revision of JNCC and country agencies' policy for publication has slipped further, but is now scheduled for completion in the third quarter.
<i>Programme 4: Conservation advice – the wider environment</i>		
Assess how biodiversity indicators relate to sustainable development and begin to define standards for biodiversity indicators	Yes	The first meeting of the UK Biodiversity Indicators Forum took place on 4 March 2002. Subsequently, the outcome has been discussed within the UK Biodiversity Information Group. We now intend to implement recommendations from the forum and use the forum to establish positions on indicators to inform debate within the UK, Europe and internationally. JNCC responded to the EEA consultation on a proposed core set of biodiversity indicators in Europe and are contributing to a seminar organised by the European Topic Centre for Nature Protection and Biodiversity to discuss the core set of biodiversity indicators for Europe. JNCC also was invited to attend a meeting of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research that specifically addressed biodiversity monitoring and indicators. All of these initiatives are discussing standards for the selection of indicators.
Promote the importance of soil science in conservation	Yes	A JNCC-sponsored research project at Reading University has commenced. SNH and JNCC are preparing a paper on soil biodiversity/conservation issues for the OECD conference. A proposed inter-agency soil seminar (to be held next year) is in the early stages of planning.

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
Support research and provide advice to protect UK biodiversity from the potential damaging effects of biotechnology and, particularly, the introduction in the UK of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	Yes	Work programme targets are being met.
Provide advice on technical issues relating to the Water Framework Directive, such as the status of fresh and marine waters, freshwater typology and reference conditions	Yes	Work on this area is progressing and is ongoing.
Work on understanding climate change and its implications for nature conservation, both terrestrial and marine, in the UK and its Overseas Territories	Yes	The MONARCH 2 project has been revised and is progressing.
Publish an agreed statement on UK conservation policy and practice in relation to climate change, focusing on the management and protection of statutory sites and the delivery of BAP targets	Yes	Work in this area is progressing and is ongoing.
Ensure that climate change considerations are integrated into policy at all levels, and that there is a co-ordinated approach to climate change work in the UK across Government, agencies and NGOs	Yes	Work in this area is progressing and is ongoing.
Contribute to Defra's Review of Marine Nature Conservation (RMNC)	Yes	<p>The Irish Seas Pilot Service Level Agreement with Defra has been signed, and work began in June 2002. Overall, the project is very slightly behind schedule but is catching up rapidly and a project plan has been submitted to Defra. Contracts have been let for initial work on identifying stakeholders and data sources. Work on acquiring physical and biological data is proceeding.</p> <p>The RMNC Working Group meeting was attended. JNCC is taking forward work on nationally important sites, habitats and species, in conjunction with the country agencies –meetings were held in September and October 2002.</p>

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
Contribute to the development of UK and EU marine nature conservation strategies	Yes	The launch of the Marine Stewardship report in May 2002 was attended and other developments are being monitored.
<i>Programme 5: Survey and monitoring</i>		
Design and implement a general terrestrial mammal surveillance programme, and review the existing bats surveillance programme	Yes	
Implement threatened higher, common and lower plants surveillance programmes	Yes	
Develop and implement a system for monitoring designated interest features on SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, in close collaboration with country agencies, environment agencies and the National Marine Monitoring Programme	No	Information required for producing the CSM interim report was agreed with agencies, and the interim report produced. A workplan and timetable for receiving guidance from Lead Co-ordination Networks and Inter-Agency Working Groups has been agreed. In order to ensure guidance is available for the 2003 field season, JNCC has shifted resources into this critically time-limited task. It is now possible that all guidance will not be ready for the 2003 field season and the target may need to be revised.
Begin to design a monitoring programme to cover offshore sites	Yes	Draft guidance on a broad survey of offshore sandbanks by interested oil companies is in preparation but the main work is not planned to start until 2003/04.
Undertake seabed resource mapping for UK territorial seas	Yes	David Connor has been elected as chair of the ICES Marine Habitat Mapping Working Group. Meetings have been attended with the Hydrographic Office, Master Map, EN BAP habitat mapping and Defra's Integrated Mapping Workshop. Other activities are planned for later in the year. Related tasks are also listed under OSPAR and the Irish Sea Pilot Scheme.
Promote Common Fisheries Policy reform to enable sustainable fisheries	Yes	The European Commission published its proposals for CFP reform at the end of May 2002. These follow several years of development and broadly agree with the approaches that we have been espousing over this period. The inter-agency Marine Fisheries Working Group has considered these and a total of four responses have been submitted to various official requests. We have further developed the concepts of ecosystem-based management and regionalisation. Two meetings have been held with senior Commission officials and one with UK government officials/ Ministers. A key ICES advisory meeting was attended and advice drafted on bycatch of cetaceans and protection of cold-water coral reefs. A Commission advisory meeting was attended and advice drafted on cetacean bycatch reduction measures. One IUCN meeting on sustainable fisheries was attended. A stand at the UK's main fishing exhibition, Fishing 2002, was manned, leading to many discussions with the industry on relevant issues. The Fisheries section of JNCC's website was updated.

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
Provide advice to Government on offshore industries	Yes	Total statutory consultations in the first half of the year were: 18 Environmental Statements, 161 dispensations from ES's or amendments, 27 oil spill contingency plans, 58 FEPA/deposit consents, 3 decommissioning proposals and 107 seismic survey applications. Three meetings have been held with DTI on policy issues. Text for the introduced marine species section of JNCC's website has been prepared.
Support implementation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive	Yes	Advice has been provided at three meetings on DTI strategic environmental assessments of offshore waters. SEA 3 (for peripheral areas of southern North Sea) was launched in September 2002.
Programme 6: Knowledge management		
Maintain JNCC, UKBAP, Clearing-House Mechanism and CITES web sites; develop them to disseminate information on biodiversity, earth heritage and good practice in their conservation and sustainable use within the UK and internationally	Yes	Two major components have been added to the JNCC web site, i.e. the corporate plan and information on SACs. Revision work has been limited to specifying content management system requirements in line with the Management Team decision not to prioritise revision this year. The UKBAP web site delivered on-line reporting for HAPs, SAPs and LBAPs in September. UK CHM revision is largely complete and should be ready for release in November. During the final quarter we aim to provide a forum for the Overseas Territories on the CITES web site (on behalf of the FCO).
Contribute to the development of the NBN	Yes	JNCC has catalysed strategy development by the NBN Trust, although the process has been slow. We have helped the Natural History Museum revitalise its species dictionary commitments. We have also advised SNH on its new biodiversity data project, and are delivering additional NBN gateway mapping and habitat services for EHS and EN (on a repayment basis). Additionally, we have provided technical management to help deliver Defra targets through the Defra/NBN Trust joint venture.
Advise Government on the development of its national and sectoral biodiversity-related statistics and indicators and their European context	Yes	Work within the ESAG group of government is continuing although the government programme for review of biodiversity statistics is delayed. Negotiations on how JNCC can help maintain momentum have started.
Facilitate and co-ordinate biodiversity research	Yes	A Service Level Agreement with Defra has been signed and recruitment is underway.
Disseminate the products from JNCC's work, and raise awareness, influencing and promoting key aspects of the work more generally, using the most appropriate communications medium, including paper publishing and the internet	No	Progress is being made but has been slow in many areas of the work programme. Public Relations commitments have been fulfilled in line with the PR plan. Publications are running behind schedule and we anticipate that there may be problems with this backlog towards the end of the year. These delays are due to the lack of manuscripts being delivered on time from scientific officers. In addition, slow progress is being made to deliver the new JNCC web site.

Title	On track? (yes or no)	Comments
With key partners, refine broad habitats surveillance programmes, e.g. through development of future Countryside Surveys	No	Work on this target has been placed in abeyance due to lack of staff resources.
Facilitate creation of habitat inventories through development of standards and identification of best practice. Promote their use in surveillance and monitoring for Annex 1 habitats and BAP priority habitats	No	Work on this target has been placed in abeyance due to lack of staff resources.
<i>Programme 7: Services</i>		
FMPR implementation	No	FMPR implementation has slipped significantly, mainly due to lack of clarity concerning the requirement for legislative change. This matter is being vigorously pursued with Defra and a meeting with Defra's legal advisors took place on 12 November 2002.
Implement changes to financial management systems following the FMPR, in particular if JNCC becomes a body corporate	No	
If agreed following the FMPR, transfer staff to a single set of terms and conditions (or any alternative changes)	No	
Reduce the undesirable environmental impacts of operating JNCC	Yes	Work is ongoing and several additional initiatives, such as a greening week in early 2003, are planned. A full action plan will now be developed in 2003/04.
Ensure that the JNCC has an agreed strategic direction that delivers clear nature conservation gains and, in particular, bring UK Government and the devolved administrations' views more fully into the development of JNCC strategy	Yes	Consultation with Government stakeholders has been substantially completed. Amendments have been made to the existing Statement of Strategic Direction and the revised version is to be presented to Joint Committee in December 2002.
Reduce staff turnover to no more than 20% by the end of 2002/03 and 15% by 2004/05	Yes	Turnover for the year currently stands at 7.7%.