

## **2008-2010 SPA & RAMSAR (AVIAN) NETWORK REVIEW: SUMMARY NOTE FOR NATURA 2000 & RAMSAR STEERING COMMITTEE ON INITIAL DISCUSSIONS IN THE SPA & RAMSAR (AVIAN) SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP**

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### **Background**

At establishment of the SPA & Ramsar (avian) Scientific Working Group (SPAR SWG) in November 2001, Defra and the devolved administrations identified the need for a review of the SPA network in 2008 (see *Framework for Future Update of UK SPA Network* appended to the Group's Terms of Reference), based on the work of the Group. In 2004, Defra requested that the review begin in 2008 and be published in 2010. The scope of the review was broadened to include review of avian elements of the Ramsar Network in 2004.

To initiate consideration of the scope, costs and timetable for the review JNCC presented a paper to the October 2005 meeting of the SPAR SWG (see below). The Group agreed that JNCC should both develop the paper further for consideration later in 2006 and also provide the N2RSC with a summary note. It is anticipated that a detailed paper will be sent to the N2RSC in late 2006/early 2007.

**The N2RSC is asked to note the preliminary proposed scope, timetable and estimated costs for the 2008-2010 SPA & Ramsar review and anticipate a detailed proposal in late 2006/early 2007.**

### **Summary of JNCC paper on scope, costs and timetable for the 2008-2010 SPA & Ramsar Network Review and decisions of the SPAR SWG**

JNCC proposes a more focussed review and not to repeat a full review as was done in 2001. Our advice is that it should be focussed on key issues outstanding from the 2001 review with the primary objective of identifying network development needs that will deliver real conservation benefits (note that future network status assessments will be delivered via the Common Standards Monitoring programme). SPAR SWG is supportive of both the proposed approach to and scope of the review.

Key points (see also table (a) in Appendix 1 for more detail):

- For a small number of species a complete review of the UK population and SPA provision is recommended. Measures of network completeness and the question over the need for protection of cropped habitats will influence the final list of species for which a full review might be worthwhile.
- The review will present an opportunity to consolidate the marine SPA guidance in a single reference document, but discussion within the JNCC Marine Natura 2000 Project Group is needed to confirm the scope of marine SPA work to be included in the review.
- On the basis of work already completed by the SPAR SWG, it is anticipated that the review will provide a more complete Ramsar review for avian interests.

- The review will also present an opportunity to develop thinking on some of the broader issues affecting the SPA & Ramsar networks, such as network functioning and coherence, the role of designated sites alongside other measures in achieving desired (favourable) conservation status, and possibly network resilience to climate change and adaptation.

JNCC is keen that the review is science focussed, based on the work of the SPAR SWG since 2001, and is a JNCC/SCA technical publication. It will be endorsed by the Joint Committee and will constitute formal advice to Defra and the devolved administrations on achieving Priority Objectives 1 & 2 of the *Conclusions from the EU Conference 25 years of the Birds Directive* (Bergen op Zoom 2004). This approach will bring clarity to the separate mechanisms of network review and policy development. JNCC proposes that it manages the project and is responsible for publishing the results. The SPAR SWG will have a consultative role in developing and performing the review.

Given that the review will be published in 2010, there will be a need to begin some work in 2007/08, but for the majority of work to be done in 2008/09 and the first half of 2009/10. This means that appropriate funding will need to be available in each of these three financial years, which will require planning in 2006/07.

## APPENDIX 1

### Summary of possible scope and preliminary estimates of cost of the 2008-2010 SPA & Ramsar network review

#### (a) Summarised possible scope of review, preliminary estimates of JNCC staff time and cost for contracted work

Subject	JNCC staff time (days)	Estimated cost (£) of contracted work
Background and aims	5	
2001 Review - describe outcomes for identified development needs (possibly including development of marine SPA guidance)	35	4,000
Population estimates - comment on revisions and use of thresholds	5	
Species accounts - updates or new reviews (c. 15-20 species)	20	10,000 <sup>1</sup>
SPA provision index	5	
Cropped habitats	5	
Updating the existing Ramsar network for selected species	30	
Review of Ramsar network for selected species	50	
The role of Common Standards Monitoring in assessing the SPA and Ramsar networks	5	
Network functioning and coherence, and possibly climate change impacts and adaptation	5	15,000 <sup>2</sup>
Mixture of measures for achieving desirable conservation status (the role of SPAs and other measures) – concepts developed from examples	10	10,000 <sup>2</sup>
Sub-total	175	39,000

<sup>1</sup> Small contributions to this section may be possible from within existing partnership programmes such as the BTO/JNCC partnership and the BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC Wetland Bird Survey.

<sup>2</sup> Work on these subjects should ideally begin in 2007/08.

**(b) Preliminary estimates of project administration and publication costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>JNCC staff time (days)</b>	<b>Estimated cost of contracted work (£)</b>
Meetings	20	1,000
Publication (includes copy edit and layout; 500 copy colour report)		20,000
Sub-total		21,000
<b>Total estimated cost of the 2008-2010 SPA and Ramsar network review</b>	<b>195<sup>3</sup> (c. £30,000)</b>	<b>60,000<sup>4</sup></b>

<sup>3</sup> JNCC staff time includes inputs from Species, Seabirds, Data Custodians and Communications staff, but the estimated level of 185 days cannot be met fully by current staffing levels – it is anticipated that a fixed-contract post will be needed in 2008/09 to meet estimated staffing needs. Staff costs will be around £30,000.

<sup>4</sup> Provisionally the estimated full cost for contracted work would be best split into around 25K in 2007/08, 15K in 2008/09 and 20K in 2009/10.