



Humber Nature Forum

10.00 a.m. Thursday 23rd March 2017
 Humber Room, The Ropewalk, Barton upon Humber

Minutes

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Present

Kevin Bayes (KB)	Humber Nature Partnership
Daryl Burdon (DB)	HNF Vice-Chair/ Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies.
Darren Clarke (DC)	Humber Nature Partnership
James Copeland (JC)	NFU
Tony Edwards (TE)	HNP Chair /Humber Environmental Managers Network
Qinhua Fang (QF)	Xiamen University, China
Andrew Gibson (AG)	HNF Chair/Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Adrian Koster (AK)	Royal Geographic Society
Matt Millington (MM)	Hull and East Yorkshire LNP/ North Yorkshire and York LNP
Cliff Morrison (CM)	HNP board member
Tim Page (TP)	Natural England
Chris Routh (CR)	Humber Wader Ringing Group
Leanne Smart (LS)	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Apologies

Melanie Hudson	Marine Management Organisation
Tom Jeynes	ABP
Alan Jones	Humber Nature Partnership
Gordon Kell	Humber Nature Partnership
Clare Langrick	Humber Environmental Data Centre
Emily Ledder	Natural England
Barry Longstaff	Humber Conservation Volunteers
Karen Patterson	Environment Agency
Dick Shillaker	Yorkshire Branch of British Dragonfly Society
Andy Smith	
Fran Smith	Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
Tim Smith	North East IFCA
Andrew Taylor	North Lincolnshire Council
Simon Wellock	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

AG welcomed the group and chaired the meeting.

2. Guest Speaker Claire Argent (Natural England): *Our Current Understanding of River and Sea Lamprey in the Humber Estuary*

The PowerPoint presentation given by Claire can be found on the Humber Nature Partnership website www.humburnature.co.uk

3. Humber Management Scheme (HMS) and Catchment Partnership update

KB summarised the highlights from the HMS work of 2016 and outlined some of the priorities for action in 2017. The highlights included:

- Recreation Planning - Coastal Path
- Bird Tracking carried out by a partnership led by the Humber Wader Ringing Group and the BTO
- Habitat Improvement Clay Pits/LWT Far Ings
 YWT Outer Humber
 RSPB Whitton Sands
- In-combination database
- Replacement of EMS Signs

Priorities for 2017 include:

- Recreational planning including the England Coast Path and three Local Recreational Management Plans
- Completing the In-Combination database and promoting its use
- Identifying a single site where direct action could make a contribution to habitat improvement on the estuary

4. ENGLAND Coast Path Update (Natural England)

TP provided an update on progress with the Mablethorpe to Easington section of the England Coast Path which will follow both banks of the Humber Estuary as far inland as the Humber Bridge. A copy of the latest England Coast Path (Mablethorpe to Easington) Newsletter is available on the Humber Nature Partnership Website ****. A copy will also be forwarded to the Humber Chemical Focus for possible incorporation onto their website.

JC suggested that some positive media coverage of the process and benefits would be helpful.

5. Humber updates

5.1 Humber Nature Partnership

KB suggested the idea of creating a Big Humber Birdwatch to raise the profile of the important bird populations and to kick-start a Citizen's Science project to engage more of the public with simple forms of bird monitoring.

5.2 CM explained his personal involvement in

- Mapping curlew populations on Lincolnshire Grazing Marshes
- Assisting NE with Coastal Path planning by providing expert knowledge of the Donna Nook/ Saltfleetby- Theddlethorpe section of coast

5.3 Natural England

TP provided an insight into the breadth of NE engagement with the Humber Estuary presently which includes:

- Developing the England Coast Path
- Work on Lampreys
- Working with EA on the planning of realignment sites and the review of the Flood Risk Management Strategy which will require a full Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Advising on Alkborough Flats Management Planning and staffing

- Dealing with a dispute with the Sailing Club at Barton Pits, concerning consents for management works
- Linking with the Humber Wildfowl Committee
- Working with landowners
- Running a Bird Declines Workshop
- Working with the Humber Management Scheme and HNP
- Reactive development matters such as the Yorkshire Energy Park, the Able Marine Energy Park, Brough Airfield, Whitton Sands, South Humber Gateway
- Input to Local Authority Development Plans – Hull, North Lincs and Northeast Lincs are all active at present
- The update of NE's Favourable Condition Tables and Conservation Advice for the Humber

JC asked about progress on assessing the success of existing managed realignment sites. TP responded that there would be answers to high level strategic questions soon, but there was no current timetable for addressing individual site assessments. DC noted that assessment would be complicated by the variety of functions these sites are expected to provide including a response to coastal squeeze and compensation for individual developments.

5.4 Hull and East Riding LNP

MM reported on the focus of initial work from one of our neighbouring LNPs. HER LNP will be working on

- The Water Environment and Catchment Partnership coordination
- A Green Infrastructure/Natural Capital Strategy as a guide for planners and developers
- Links to the Health agenda
- Nature Tourism

5.5 AK provided the following thoughts

- Earthworm populations have slumped since the tidal surge. Loss of anecic earthworms may increase rates of runoff of surface floodwater
- RGS have an academic group visiting Spurn in September
- Would lamprey make a good inclusion in the Countryfile Calendar?
- Restrictions will be imposed on the use of glyphosate soon.
- Howsham Mill on the Derwent has an Archemedian Screw turbine generating electricity which may make a useful study site for possible impacts on lampreys
- Wood pressure treated with linseed oil makes an environmentally more benign alternative to tantalised wood, from which noxious chemicals may leak into adjacent water courses

5.6 Humber Wader Ringing Group

CR explained the activities of HWRG. They ring (including colour ring) waders caught at Kilnsea Wetlands and Welwick Saltmarsh between October and March. They completed a successful pilot study last year using GPS tags and have developed a Scientific Strategy based on the technique. The tags cost £500 each and this summer HWRG will be fund raising to continue and expand their work to other sites.

5.7 Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

LS noted that LWT work at Far Ings had focussed on reedbed management using a trucksaw borrowed from North Lincs Council; and on dealing with fly-tipping

5.8 Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies, University of Hull

DB noted that benthic and bird monitoring at sites around the estuary was ongoing and that a significant piece of work involved post-construction monitoring of seabirds at the Humber Gateway Offshore Windfarm.

A lot of IECS current research is located away from the Humber e.g. DB is currently working on a NERC-funded project relating to the impact of oil and gas decommissioning on marine protected area integrity and the wider ecosystem services they provide.

5.9 University of Xiamen, China

QF was invited to accompany DB to the HNF meeting. QF was interested to see how the Humber Nature Forum worked as similar forums do not currently exist in China. He is currently visiting the UK to prepare for a 12-month visiting academic placement with IECS at the University of Hull, beginning in September 2017. He alerted attendees to

- World Oceans Week which is an annual event in Xiamen, China. It includes a conference; workshops; exhibitions and other activities
- NGOs are developing rapidly in China and are always looking for expert advice and support.

Anyone wishing further information on these or wishes to offer support should contact DB who will pass on messages to QF.

5.10 NFU

JC was keen to stress that NFU is continuing with its 'day job' despite a huge amount of resources going into the development and advocacy of policy post Brexit. NFU are stressing the importance of trade and labour for agribusiness during the negotiations. They are also calling for new agricultural policy which must be linked to productivity, international competition and allow production to be reactive to change. Failure to provide appropriate policy risks loss of environmental good. NFU is keen not to export environmental risk through agricultural change to other countries.

5.11 Humber Nature Partnership TE

TE reminded attendees that:

- we are awaiting two important green papers from government, one on the environment and one on agriculture. These would both provide 50 year plans and set the agenda for domestic policy.
- The wader tagging project from last year secured the HNP award for best project of the year for the Humber Wader Ringing Group
- Hull City of Culture is ongoing and we should be considering how to incorporate elements of natural heritage which is sadly missing from the main agenda. The next theme to begin is floods and water.
- There is a joint meeting of the Humber Environment Managers Network (which HNF attendees are welcome to attend on the morning of 7th June. The keynote speaker is yet to be announced and there will be 3 presentations from industry on how they manage industrial land to benefit wildlife.

5.12 Humber Nature Partnership DC

DC gave a brief overview of wider HNP work including:

- Working with industry on habitat improvement. Woodland work is continuing on power station and oil refinery land
- South Humber Gateway work has been ongoing for 10 years. Some mitigation for this scheme will be delivered via the Marine Energy Park. NE Lincs have secured £4m for purchase of land and habitat creation. Funds came from EU funding via the Humber LEP and the New Growth Deal via Greater Lincolnshire LEP.
- The time of year means HNP will begin to get calls from industry regarding great crested newts and nesting birds. To assist in developing wider understanding of how to deal with Species of European Importance (such as great crested newts, water voles etc.) HNP organised a successful training day on Wildlife Law. 18 people attended and gave favourable feedback. The course will be run again in the future

5.13 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

AG noted

- the beginning of a YWT/NEIFCA project, seeking to develop our understanding of the estuary as a nursery for sea bass. Sea Bass will be caught and tagged. Any fishermen catching a tagged fish will be requested to photograph the fish and tag and return the tag details to one of the project partners.
- That we may be underestimating recreational disturbance at those sites around the estuary with easy access.
- Able's unfarmed mitigation land on the north bank became a haven for hunting birds of prey. This attracted large numbers of wildlife watchers which in turn caused problems because of a lack of suitable parking. Thus narrow country roads were regularly blocked from access by wide farm machinery.
- There is a push to develop an Energy Park on the site of the old Hedon Airfield. As currently permanent grassland, this site is well used by large numbers of curlew. This highlights the importance of flat grassland around the estuary which is in increasingly short supply. Would a survey of the current resource be appropriate?
- The YWT Outer Humber Project has finished its grant aided period, though will continue. Two evaluation reports were produced for the project a) an ecological assessment and b) a review of routes to market of saltmarsh lamb which is currently achieving a small increase in margins.
- A visit to the proposed Skeffling realignment might be useful and interesting to assess the site before works begin

Action

This will be considered as a possible location for the next HNF outdoor meeting which is due to take place on 27th July.

- The visitor centre proposed for Spurn was originally refused planning permission. Changes were made and it was resubmitted. This time it was granted permission with a series of conditions. Building will commence later this year. The discontent from a section of the local community has made the project extremely challenging.

6. AOB and date of next meeting

No AOB items were put forward from the HNF.

Time and date	Presentation	Location
Wednesday 7 th June 2017	Joint HNF/Environment Managers meeting	Time and location TBC
Wednesday 27 th July 2017	HNF Site visit	Time and location TBC
Wednesday 21 st September 2017	HNF Meeting	Time and location TBC

Notes produced by
Kevin Bayes 24 March 2017