

**Forth & Tay Regional Advisory Group**  
**Ornithology Subgroup**  
**Tuesday 17 November 2015, 10:30 – 14:30**  
**SNH – Battleby, Perth**

**Minutes – issued as Final on 11 January 2016.**

**Present:**

- Ian Davies (Chair) *ID* (MSS)
- Jared Wilson *JW* (MSS)
- Catriona Gall *CG* (SNH)
- Alex Robbins *AR* (SNH)
- Nick Brockie *NB* (SSE – Seagreen)
- Sue King *SK* (King Consulting- Seagreen)
- Sarah Arthur *SA* (ICOL – Inch Cape)
- Murray Grant *MG* (Royal Haskoning – Inch Cape)
- Ewan Walker *EW* (Mainstream – NnG)
- Colin Barton *CB* (Cork Ecology – NnG)
- Phil Bloor *PB* (Pelagica - NnG)

**Phone:**

- Aly McCluskie *AM* (RSPB)

**Apologies:** Erica Knott - *EK* (SNH), Robert Main – *RM* (MSS), Sue O'Brien – *SO'B* (JNCC), Glen Tyler – *GT* (SNH).

**Introductions and Aims**

*ID* (Chair) welcomed everyone to the Third Forth & Tay Regional Advisory Group – Ornithology Subgroup (FTRAG-O) meeting held at SNH offices, Battleby on 17 November 2015.

An Agenda for the meeting had been circulated to the group on 16 November 2015. The main agenda item to be addressed was to agree the questions relating to potential impacts that might require answering by monitoring and identify whether it was the responsibility of the developers to answer those questions, or was the question more appropriately answered strategically.

If time allowed discussions on possible monitoring methods could also take place.

**Minutes from previous meeting**

The final Minutes from the previous meeting had been issued to the FTRAG-O group on 16 November 2015.

There were no corrections or amendments tabled at the meeting.

## Actions from previous meeting

The progress on the Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed.

Action	Response
1. <i>RM</i> – To circulate to FTRAG-O members a list of organisations that will be invited to join SpORRAn.	<b>To be confirmed</b>
2. <i>JW</i> – To circulate the revised Seabird Monitoring discussion document.	<b>Complete</b>
3. <i>PB</i> – To circulate draft tracking studies spread sheet with the draft minutes of this meeting.	A spreadsheet containing all known seabird tracking projects undertaken in the UK was circulated on 25 September 2015 and following comments received, a revised version on 2 November 2015. <b>Complete</b>
4. <i>ID</i> – To contact Liz Masden and request a copy of the forthcoming CRM sensitivity study.	A link to the report was circulated to the group on 6 October 2015. <b>Complete</b>
5. <i>JW</i> – To circulate response from CEH on how population level effects may be determined.	A response from CEH was circulated by JW to the Group on 4 September. <b>Complete</b>
6. <i>CB</i> – To clarify text in Discussion document on whether species not covered by HRA also require attention.	Text has been added but will be expanded. <b>On-going</b>
7. <i>JW</i> was to speak with CEH to find out what monitoring on puffins is being undertaken	<i>JW</i> circulated a response from CEH on tracking studies undertaken on 2 September. <b>Complete</b>
8. <i>ID</i> – To contact collision detection technology companies to obtain better understanding of what methods to detect collisions are available.	<b>On-going</b>
9. <i>CB</i> – To prepare short report on existing collision detection technologies based on SOSS 2012 paper and responses from industry.	<b>On-going</b>
10. <i>SK</i> – collate spreadsheet setting out parameters used in the displacement/barrier effect model, and identify ways in which might progress or refine these parameters.	<i>SK</i> has prepared a spread-sheet and will forward it to <i>EW/CB</i> to be incorporated into the updated discussion document. <b>Complete</b>
11. <i>EW</i> – To prepare brief summary of existing data collected by Developers.	A summary of the existing work undertaken by developers on seabirds has been completed <b>Complete</b>
12. <i>EW</i> – To send out Doodle poll for date of next meeting.	<b>Complete</b>
13. <i>CB/EW</i> – To update the <i>Key Post Consent Monitoring Questions</i> document.	The document has been updated and was circulated to the Group on 2 November. Further revisions to the document are required. <b>On-going</b>
14. <i>RM</i> – To incorporate any changes and circulate the revised ToR	<b>Completed</b>
15. <i>JW</i> – To add text to the document to explain why the dSPA is not being	<b>On-going</b>

Action	Response
considered at this stage.	
16. AM - to advise when colony count data from Fowlsheugh will be made available.	AM confirmed that the count data would be made available within two or three weeks of this meeting. <b>On-going</b>
17. ID/JW – to provide on-going updates to the group on any further gannet tagging being undertaken.	ID/JW advised that gannet tagging studies on the Bass Rock is continuing into at least 2016 and a report is being prepared and will be available shortly. <b>Complete</b>

## General Admin

There was a general discussion about access of documents from both the Forth and Tay and Moray Firth regional advisory group meetings on the MS website. It was agreed that EW would send RM previously finalised meeting documents in order for them to be placed on the website.

## Gannet Tagging Studies on the Bass Rock.

Following Action Point 17 from previous meeting the Group were advised by MSS that the gannet tagging studies being undertaken by Keith Hamer had continued during 2015 and were planned to continue in 2016.

In addition to the tagging studies being undertaken at the Bass Rock additional tagging studies are also being carried out on Ailsa Craig and the Channel Islands. The Group was also informed of a gannet colour ringing project started in 2015 on the Bass Rock by Bob Furness that aimed to calculate survival rates.

It was suggested that it would be useful to know more about both the tagging and colour ringing projects and that Keith Hamer and Bob Furness could be invited to the next meeting to give a presentations of the work that they are doing. SK to contact both Keith Hamer and Bob Furness to arrange.

## Post-consent Monitoring Questions

The revised document titled *Key Post Consent Monitoring Questions in the Forth & Tay* had been circulated to the Group on 2 November 2015.

EW and CB introduced the document that focussed on the key questions that might be answered by monitoring as opposed to how any potential monitoring might be undertaken. The Group discussed the document focussing on the key questions presented in Table 1 in the Appendix.

The Group focussed for a significant part of the meeting on reviewing and commenting on Table 1 of the Appendix. Suggested changes and comments will be considered when preparing the next revision of the Discussion document. It was agreed that any minor comments or edits to the text should be sent to Mainstream by 30 November 2015 and that the document would be updated following the meeting's discussions.

It was recognised that greater clarity was required within the document when identifying which sites would be most appropriate to undertake possible future monitoring. Sites that were recognised to be at greater risk of potential affects

should be those where monitoring efforts should be focussed and that should be made clearer in the document. It was agreed that SK would provide a suitable paragraph to introduce Section 2 of the document.

It was suggested that when describing potential impacts as displacement or barrier greater clarity was required within the document as to whether it was either displacement or barrier or both.

MSS sought clarification as to what was meant by a developer question or a strategic question as described in Table 1 of the Appendix. Following discussions it was agreed that each question identified as a developer question for which monitoring may be required was more likely be addressed by developers at their sites. However, strategic questions were questions that were not necessarily appropriate for developers to lead on and should be considered as broader research as opposed to project specific. Additional text clarifying this distinction, further to the explanation already provided within the document, would be added to the next version of the document.

In general, there was agreement with the questions identified in the discussion documents, although the following was noted (with the Q numbers below relating to the numbering in the text of the document and not in Table 1 which had an erroneous additional Q included – i.e. Q4 in Table 1).

Buchan Ness to Collieston SPA should be removed from consideration from the questions, as AA did not predict impacts at this SPA.

Q2 in terms of responsibility had been identified as developer/strategic? ID suggested developers should lead with investigating feasibility.

Q9 – issues raised on how to define foraging behaviour, with suggestion that it should be related to distances travelled and duration of time spent on wind farm site(s).

Q12 – was suggested this should be made more general, e.g. what percentage of birds in flight are deterred from transiting the wind farm?

Q13 – to be removed as it duplicated Q12.

Q16 – to be removed as it was not considered to relate to issues identified in the AA.

Questions concerning population monitoring and population level impacts (i.e. Q17 - 19) – there was discussion over where the responsibility for leading the work to address these questions should lie but there was no resolution or conclusions reached on this issue.

### **Priorities for Establishing Methods**

NnG informed the meeting that they had spoken with CEH to explore potential methods to identify the effects from displacement or barrier effects, should they occur. A short note produced by CEH summarising these methods was circulated prior to this meeting. It was agreed by those that had read it, that the CEH note was very useful although there were a number of questions raised, which would be collated by Mainstream and forwarded on to CEH. It was agreed that comments on the CEH note were to be submitted to EW within 2 weeks of the meeting, and that any questions would be sent onto CEH and the response circulated. It was

suggested that it would be useful to invite CEH to attend the next meeting to discuss their approach in more detail.

There was a brief discussion on the availability of fishery data and factors that could affect sandeel distribution within the region. It was agreed that ID would speak to colleagues within MS on what information and data there was on the factors controlling sandeel distribution and report back at the next meeting.

The Group recognised that having started earlier, the developers in the Moray Firth are more advanced in establishing monitoring methods than the Firth & Tay and that it would be beneficial for everyone to learn from both Groups. This could help in understanding how similar species and potential impacts common to both regions were being addressed. MSS would send a link to where MFRAG-O meeting notes could be found.

There was limited time available to discuss possible monitoring methods and it was agreed that NnG would prepare a draft pre-construction monitoring paper.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting is planned for January 2016. EW to send out a Doodle poll.

### **Actions carried over**

- 1) *RM* – To circulate to FTRAG-O members a list of organisations that will be invited to join SpORRAn.
- 6) *CB* – To clarify text in Discussion document on whether species not covered by HRA also require attention.
- 8) *ID* – To contact collision detection technology companies to obtain better understanding of what methods to detect collisions are available.
- 9) *CB* – To prepare short report on existing collision detection technologies based on SOSS 2012 paper and responses from industry.
- 13) *CB/EW* – To update the *Key Post Consent Monitoring Questions* document.
- 15) *JW* – To add text to the document to explain why the dSPA is not being considered at this stage.
- 16) *AM* - to advise when colony count data from Fowlsheugh will be made available.

### **Actions**

18. *SK* – To forward to *EW* the spread-sheet setting out parameters used in the displacement/barrier effect model (see AP10 from the previous meeting).
19. *EW* – To send *RM* previously finalised meeting documents in order for them to be placed on the website.
20. *SK* – To contact Keith Hamer and Bob Furness and invite them to the next FTRAG-O meeting to present the work that they are undertaking on gannets at the Bass Rock.
21. *CB* – To update *Seabird Monitoring for Forth and Tay Offshore Wind Farms – Discussion Document*.
22. *ALL* – to send comments and edits on the *Discussion Document* to *CB/EW* by 30 November.
23. *CB* – To expand the text clarifying what are ‘Developer’ and ‘Strategic’ questions.
24. *ALL* – All to provide comments to *EW* on CEH note.
25. *EW* – To discuss with CEH possible attendance at next meeting.
26. *ID* – To talk to Simon Greenstreet and Peter Wright factors controlling sandeel distribution and report back for next meeting.
27. *EW/CB/PB* – to prepare draft Monitoring Paper for meeting after next.
28. *JW* – To send link to MFRAG-O documents.
29. *EW* – To circulate Doodle Poll for next meeting in January.