

HIGHLAND BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN: PROGRESS UPDATE (MARCH 2016)

Project Proposals:	Suggested Partners:	Progress (Feb 16):	Next Steps:
1. Promote Land Management for Wildlife			
<p>1. Organise a series of training events for land managers and agents to raise awareness of good practice and Direct Payments, SRDP, and low costs/no cost options, building on existing work (such as the Cairngorms National Park Authority's Land-Based Business Training Programme) and utilising new initiatives like the Advisory Service and Scottish Rural Network. This could provide local demonstration sites and case studies, distribute guidance and codes of good practice, and encourage more monitoring and dissemination of results.</p>	<p>Lead Partners: HEF Supporting Partners: SGRPID, SNH, FCS, CNPA, THC, NFUS, CC, SCF, SLE, RAFTS, RSPB, TfL, SRC, L, JHI, ICF, GWCT, BASC, BBCT, SWT, LBGs</p>	<p>SRC & Cairngorms NPA are organising some training.</p>	
<p>2. Investigate the possibility of using the Monitor Farms Programme or a similar approach to help a farm and/or crofting township improve its management for biodiversity and other ecosystem services, making the most of grants and demonstrating the social, economic and environmental results to land managers, agents and agency staff.</p>	<p>Lead Partners: HEF Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>Not a priority.</p>
<p>3. Explore the Greening element of the Direct Payments to confirm that it is delivering the anticipated land management for biodiversity, and ensure future CAP reforms continue to include this Greening element and a corresponding payment within future schemes.</p>	<p>Lead Partners: HEF Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>Invite Scottish Government & RPID to feed back progress on Greening to HEF.</p>

Project Proposals:	Suggested Partners:	Progress (Feb 16):	Next Steps:
4. Provide opportunities for wildlife and biodiversity groups to work with estates on citizen science or habitat management projects arising from the Wildlife Estates Scotland initiative.	Lead Partners: Wildlife Estates Scotland Supporting Partners: as above	No progress.	Liaise with WES contact.

2. Develop & Trial the Ecosystem Approach			
1.	Establish an online database of landscape-scale projects in Highland, and facilitate opportunities for knowledge sharing and joint working.	Lead Partner: HEF (Land Use Working Group) Supporting Partners: as above	No progress. Invite Land Use WG to compile database.
2.	Develop a demonstration project to trial the Ecosystem Approach on a Highland catchment, and convey the results to decision makers at Highland, Scottish and European levels, linking with other studies elsewhere in the UK and Europe.	Lead Partners: HEF Supporting Partners: as above	Number of local land management initiatives at catchment scale. Strong interest expressed in Ecosystem Approach trial from several partners. Investigate opportunities with local groups - lack of capacity to pursue at this time.
3. Develop the Atlantic Hazelwoods Project in West Highland			
1.	Raise awareness and improve the management of hazel woods in Highland through the Atlantic Hazelwoods Project. Forestry Commission Scotland has identified a number of woods that could be a starter for this project.	Lead Partner: Atlantic Hazel Action Group Supporting Partners: SNH, FCS, SCF, SLE, P, BLS, THC, CALL	No progress, Group hampered by lack of organisation to lead on funding bid. FES has started to pursue this project at Kinloch and Ardintoul. Finding suitable oak seed is a problem. Encourage Group to apply for Environmental Co-operation Action Fund for facilitator to develop project & secure funding for land management.
4. The Lonesome Pine (& other species)			
1.	Identify isolated patches of trees across Highland - this could involve a citizen science element, linking in with existing projects such as iSpot.	Lead Partners: FCS Supporting Partners: HBRG, LBGs, TfL, OU iSpot, SNH, SLE, JMT, NTS, RSPB	FCS working with HAG on similar project that could be rolled out to include Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland data is available and needs to be analysed at community level. Approach Woodland Trust / Trees for Life as possible lead partner.

2. Agree ways to protect and expand isolated patches of trees, with the ambition of creating connecting corridors for wildlife.	Lead Partners: FCS Supporting Partners: as above	No progress.	FES already incorporating native woodlands in to habitat plans on the National Forest Estate.
3. Deliver a trial project, enabling volunteers to work with local nurseries to collect seed and grow on / plant out local provenance trees to enhance regeneration.	Lead Partners: Trees for Life Supporting Partners: as above	Several local projects underway e.g. Caithness Biodiversity Group Juniper Project, FCS Rogart Primary School, CALLP Assynt Tree Nursery, Trees for Life Nursery, Highland Aspen Group growing aspen from root cuttings, Alba Nursery growing aspen from Highland origin seed (working with Coille Alba to plant locally), RSPB starting tree nursery at Abernethy.	No capacity for new project but lot of action locally & great scope for linking between projects across Highland.
5. Riparian Woodland & Woodland Biodiversity			
1. Identify where new riparian woodland and native woodland would be of the greatest value to wildlife through a Highland-wide strategic framework for native woodland establishment, integrated into commercial woodland establishment, utilising GIS based techniques.	Lead Partner: FCS Supporting Partners: RAFTS, SNH, THC, SEPA, Forestry Industry	FES achieving desired expansion across the North Highland Forest District through Land Management Plans - could be used as a best practice example. Work also undertaken in Spey catchment using BEETLE, Forest strategy for the Spey river catchment is under review.	FCS to progress using work in North Highland Forest District & Badenoch & Strathspey as best practice.
2. Work with land managers to ensure these areas are prioritised when plantations are restructured and new native woodlands planted.	Lead Partner: FCS Supporting Partners: as above	As above	As above

<p>3. Encourage planting of trees and replacement of lost trees in between fields and in urban areas. Ensure dead standing trees are left for their biodiversity value and that saplings come from appropriate sources. Restore river floodplain and alder woods.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: FCS Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>6. Develop Natural Treelines</p>			
<p>1. Identify potential sites and establish transitional woodlands through woodland expansion up hills and onto bogs.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: FCS Supporting Partners: SNH, TfL, NTS, CNPA, JMT, WT, HB, RSPB, THC</p>	<p>Several partner-led projects underway on mountain sites (e.g. SNH at Beinn Eighe, Creag Meagaidh, Craigellachie & Inshriach NNRs, TfL at Dundreggan, FCS at Glen Affric, and Wild Land Ltd, SNH, RSPB & FCS through 'Cairngorms Connect'). FES is now developing a national strategy for tree-line and montane woodland for the National Forest Estate.</p>	<p>Lot of work undertaken to develop natural treelines on hills, FCS to identify potential sites on bogs. Highland needs to provide advice and influence change within deer management plans to achieve woodland expansion in to the sub-alpine zone.</p>
<p>2. Demonstrate the value & management requirements of transitional woodlands on bogs through a trial project.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: FCS Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>7. Peatland Restoration</p>			

<p>1. Identify sites elsewhere in Highland that would be suitable for drain blocking and tree removal, and draw together a funding bid. This work would be influenced by the outcome of the National Peatland Action Plan consultation. Recently commissioned research identified some priority areas e.g. Monadhliaths.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: SNH Supporting Partners: RSPB, FCS, CNPA, CE, TfL, LBGs</p>	<p>Several partner-led projects underway e.g. Flows to the Future, Cairngorms Peatland Restoration Project, SNH Peatland Action has been awarded another year's funding. ECAF project application being worked up for Monadhliaths & Wild Land planning restoration work on North Sutherland estates. FES: peatland survey of Glen Affric and Kinloch Hills/Kyle farm completed. FES undertaking extensive work in North Highland.</p>	<p>Drain blocking is eligible for SRDP funding. This work ties in strongly with the National Peatland Plan.</p>
<p>2. Undertake a volunteer project to remove regenerated conifer saplings from protected peatland areas.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: Peatlands Partnership Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>Volunteer training weekend run by TFL/FES in Glen Affric, Nov 2015.</p>	<p>Peatlands Partnership, FCS & RSPB to work on funding application & provide sites for volunteers.</p>
<p>8. Survey In-bye Land Adjacent to Peatlands</p>			
<p>1. Conduct a survey of in-bye land adjacent to the peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland to ascertain its value for wildlife, identify future management requirements and recommend ways of helping farmers and crofters to continue to manage this land for wildlife.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: SNH, RSPB Supporting Partners: Other Peatlands Partnership Members</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	
<p>9. Highland PAW Group</p>			

1.	Establish a Highland Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) Group to address local concerns and help with early communication, information sharing, awareness raising and publicity management.	Lead Partner: Police Scotland, SNH Supporting Partners: RSPB, SLE, other HEF partners	Highland PAW Group established, initial meeting held Sep 15.	Highland PAW to be launched at March HEF meeting.
10. Wildfire Awareness Raising				
1.	Work with gamekeepers, crofters and other land managers through local liaison groups to raise awareness of whether or not burning is needed, appropriate muirburning practices, wildfires and the likely impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems. Promote the Muirburn Code through case studies & demonstration sites, and encourage joint working to tackle wildfires.	Lead Partner: Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Supporting Partners: SNH, PS, ADMGs, SGA, NHC, SLE, CC, SCF, other HEF partners	No progress, although SRUC held training in muirburn management on Skye in 2013.	
11. Marine Litter Project				
1.	Raise awareness of litter and its devastating impact on marine wildlife through promoting national campaigns; working with the fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries to reduce impacts; supporting regular beach cleans; and improving recycling and waste collection facilities at harbours and ports.	Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: Crown Estate, MFP, MCS, KIMO, marine industries	No progress but strong interest expressed at Sept 15 HEF meeting. Marine Litter Policy included in the pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan.	Litter could form part of a future Highland Marine Project, specification to be drafted March 2016 (see 27.1).
12. Improve Protection for Seabed Habitats				
1.	Contribute to discussions on inshore fisheries management measures within the Marine Protected Areas to help protect fragile seabed habitats.	Lead Partner: HEF partners Supporting Partners: THC, SNH, MS, MFP, local communities, fishing groups	Ongoing	Ongoing

2.	Monitor and assess the implications of climate change on coastal lagoons and encourage / promote managed retreat of saltmarsh habitats to help deal with rising sea levels.	Lead Partner: HEF partners Supporting Partners: as above	No progress - RSPB site at Nigg is the only managed coastal retreat site in Highland at present.	Not a priority at this time.
13. Forward Planning for Aquaculture				
1.	Contribute to the consultations on the Highland Aquaculture Strategy (consultation launched June 2015). HEF members could focus on this issue at a future meeting and add their voice to the discussions.	Lead Partner: HEF partners Supporting Partners: THC	Sep HEF meeting had a marine focus.	Policy guidance for aquaculture will be revised in line with the emerging review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.
14. Species Reintroductions				
1.	Contribute to discussions on where reintroductions could take place and if they will be allowed, or if beaver will just be left to colonise naturally from the Tay catchment and the official release site in Argyll.	Lead Partner: SNH Supporting Partners: RAFTS, SEPA, SLE, TfL, SWT, CNPA, RSPB, other HEF partners	SWT & Royal Zoological Society have issued a position statement but no Government decision as yet on beaver reintroduction.	Awaiting Government decision on beaver reintroduction.
2.	Encourage research into the reintroduction of other species e.g. lynx.	Lead Partner: SNH Supporting Partners: as above	No progress.	Not a priority at this time.
15. Manage Road Verges for Wildlife				

<p>1. Liaise with and train Council, BEAR Scotland and contractors' staff in appropriate verge management for wildlife, and raise awareness of the benefits of 'untidy' verges in the countryside amongst the general public.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: TS, BEAR, LBGs, P, BBCT</p>	<p>Has been done in the past but not in the last two years. Caithness project ongoing but hasn't been adopted elsewhere, although Badenoch & Strathspey have reduced their verge cuttings. A no-cut regime is not an option outside Caithness & Sutherland due to rate of vegetation growth.</p>	<p>Lack of capacity & demand for training, not a priority at this time. (Wildlife friendly verge cutting regime depends on THC & others quantifying the length of verges, identifying how much is cut annually & determining an appropriate cutting regime.)</p>
<p>2. Identify the best verges throughout Highland, monitor the impact of the new cutting regime on the vegetation, and feed the results back to Roads Staff within the Council and BEAR Scotland.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>Unlikely to be undertaken due to lack of resources to do this directly or co-ordinate volunteers.</p>
<p>3. Raise awareness of the wildlife benefit of hedges and encourage better management through cutting once every three years, encouraging the growth of mature trees within hedges, replanting and filling in gaps and cutting in late autumn. Encourage the creation of wood piles rather than shredding whole trees when felled close to roads.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>Undertaken locally e.g. FES delivering at Camore and with Primary Schools, plans to extend this to Sibster, Newton Hill and perhaps some conservation grazing sites.</p>	<p>Could be taken forward to some extent through THC Forestry Team.</p>
<p>16. Wildflower Creation & Management</p>			

<p>1. Run a training course for Council grounds staff and community groups wishing to create and manage wildflower meadows, perhaps linking in with land management courses and a demonstration site. Council Rangers would be ideally placed to deliver this project.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: UHI, SNH, NTS, BBCT, FL, SS, P</p>	<p>FES delivering meadows at Sibster & working with SRUC to identify sites where this could be delivered in conjunction with conservation grazing. Caithness Biodiversity Group, Merkinch LNR & THC Rangers have run training courses & CBG is working up a project for small blue butterfly.</p>	<p>Limited capacity to run courses in foreseeable future but training could form part of local projects.</p>
<p>1. Ensure that the new Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP2) and Area Local Development Plans provide a strong steer for ecological issues and maximise opportunities for maintaining biodiversity through development.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: SNH, RSPB, SWT, BBCT, LBGs, other HEF partners, developers</p>	<p>Discussions underway with Council planners to update policies.</p>	<p>Need to focus on delivery of the agreed policies - lack of capacity to progress unless additional resources made available through THC restructuring.</p>
<p>2. Make sure that the principles contained within the Supplementary Guidance are included in the development briefs, and develop green networks within the larger settlements and in the A96 corridor and Inner Moray Firth through the planning process.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>Discussions underway with Council planners.</p>	<p>Need to focus on delivery of the agreed policies - lack of capacity to progress unless additional resources made available through THC restructuring. Access Officer could help deliver.</p>
<p>3. Identify a mechanism for biodiversity offsetting in Highland. If a suitable mechanism can be agreed, identify potential sites and habitat improvements, and undertake a Highland pilot project.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>No progress, although forestry compensatory planting shows it can be done.</p>	<p>No capacity to deliver this unless additional resources made available through THC restructuring.</p>

4. Provide a mentoring service for a short time to allow Council planning officers and members to build confidence in their responses by e.g. attending roost visits with a bat worker.	Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: as above	No progress due to lack of staff time.	No capacity to deliver this unless additional resources made available through THC restructuring.
18. Maximise the Wildlife Value of SuDS Ponds.			
1. Employ an officer through the graduate internship programme within The Highland Council to assess SuDS ponds in the A96 corridor as part of the Green Network, create local best practice guidance, and see how future ponds in developments can be designed and sited to maximise their benefit to wildlife and residents.	Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: SNH, SEPA	SuDS Officer in post, project progressing well. SuDS Conference took place Nov 15, final report due late Spring & project extended to June 2016.	Planning Informative & Good Practice Guidance to be produced by June. Implementation depends on additional resources being made available through THC restructuring.
19. Secure Greater Biodiversity Input to Renewable Installations			
1. Employ a Golden Eagle Officer to survey and monitor eagle populations, work with land managers and help raise awareness of eagle issues in the Monadhliaths.	Lead Partner: SSE Supporting Partners: NR	Golden Eagle Officer in post, project progressing apace, first meeting of Advisory Group Nov 15.	Ties in to 17.3 biodiversity offsetting.
2. As further windfarm applications go through the planning process, encourage other developers to contribute to this work and establish similar projects elsewhere in Highland.	Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: SNH, RSPB, RSG, DIGG, Estates & developers	Council planners encouraging applicants to contribute to related works, awaiting planning decisions. SSE funding bee meadows at Sibster (FES site, Caithness) & feeds into developers HMPs for e.g. peatland restoration & native woodland planting.	Secure funding from other windfarms & employ awareness & education officer to compliment the current Monadhliaths work.

<p>3. Bring together monitoring data from offshore developments in a single database (ideally with the Oil Industry data) to give a big picture of ecological changes in the North Sea.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: Moray Firth Partnership Supporting Partners: Renewable & Oil Industry Sector</p>	<p>No progress due to staffing changes within MFP.</p>	<p>Invite MFP to undertake this work once new Manager appointed.</p>
<p>20. Local Biodiversity Action Plan Updates & Delivery</p>			
<p>1. Help Local Biodiversity Groups to identify current local priorities, and work up projects which address them through holding LBAP workshops with key local partners and individuals. The outcome would be short, action-focused LBAP updates which will help prioritise local biodiversity work over the next five years.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: THC, SNH, LBGs, other HEF partners</p>	<p>Caithness, Sutherland & Skye & Lochalsh Groups have carried out reviews of their LBAPs & Easter Ross Group is hoping to carry out this work this Spring if funding can be secured. Lochaber & W Ross Groups also keen to review their LBAPs.</p>	<p>Invite Local Biodiversity Groups to identify local priorities for future work, with input from the wider community.</p>
<p>2. Help local groups to secure funding and deliver these projects through a Highland-wide Community Biodiversity Development Officer. Mentoring project leaders could be one way to address the lack of capacity.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>No capacity to deliver this at this time.</p>
<p>21. Improve Volunteering Information</p>			
<p>1. Improve linkages between volunteering groups and opportunities, bringing together groups with suggestions for local projects, and making opportunities and contacts more visible to the public as well as improving the links with health and social enterprises.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: THC, SNH, TCV, RAFTS, FCS, RSPB, NTS, TfL, TSI, HTSI</p>	<p>2015 Biodiversity Conference focused on environmental volunteering, group formed to discuss how to improve linkages. The Volunteering sub-group has met twice, and agreed a Strategy.</p>	<p>The next meeting of the Volunteering Sub Group is planned in Autumn 2016.</p>

22. Highland Green Gyms			
1.	Encourage volunteering projects such as Green and Blue Gyms, linking biodiversity and health, with input from the Local Biodiversity Groups and Council Rangers and funding from the Landfill Communities Fund.	Lead Partner: The Conservation Volunteers Supporting Partners: THC, LBGs, TfL, BBCT	Local Green Gyms established in six Highland communities in 2015. TCV to apply for Landfill funding for continuation of Highland Green Gyms.
23. Urban Biodiversity Project			
1.	Identify local brownfield sites that are good for wildlife, as well as public buildings where nest boxes for swifts, bats etc. could be put. Educate public officers as to the benefits of such actions. This project could be carried out by volunteers from the Local Biodiversity Groups, with support from The Highland Council officers.	Lead Partner: Local Biodiversity Groups Supporting Partners: THC, SWT, other HEF partners	No progress. Invite Local Biodiversity Groups to undertake if they wish.
24. Wildlife Gardening Project			
1.	Develop links with local allotment and gardening groups, and provide advice on gardening for wildlife.	Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: LBGs, P, BBCT, THC, SNH, RSPB, other HEF partners, Gardening Groups, Garden Centres & Nurseries	No progress. No capacity to undertake this project at this time but could be taken forward if additional resources become available to THC via restructuring.
2.	Run a pan-Highland Wildlife Gardening Project with events, competitions & garden visits, funded by HEF partners & led by the Local Biodiversity Groups.	Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: as above	No progress. THC Rangers & FES have some involvement in Eco-Schools. Not a priority at this time. FES in good position to expand existing work through its 'Nectar Plant' projects with schools.
25. Nature Connections			

1.	Run a nature project for all ages to help communities to learn from their elderly members.	Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: LBGs, THC, SNH, WES, SGA, OU iSpot	Some good local examples in North Highland e.g. Rogart & Garve Primary Schools, Newtonhill Croft.	Not a priority at this time.
2.	Run a Biodiversity and the Arts project to investigate how nature influences the arts (art, music, prose etc)	Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: as above	Artwork on the banks of the River Ness is going some way towards this. Old sculpture trail at Skelbo Forest is a good example site.	Not a priority at this time.
26. Eco Schools Co-ordinator				
1.	Employ a dedicated volunteer or member of staff to work closely with Teachers and Rangers, helping Schools to re-engage with the Eco Schools Programme and other green initiatives such as the John Muir Award, and to access resources and support for wildlife-related work as they need it.	Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: SNH, RSPB, JMT, WES, SGA, NFUS, CC, other HEF Partners	No progress.	Invite THC Care & Learning Service to provide this resource if funding can be secured.
2.	Encourage links between schools and farms, crofts and estates to help children learn from practical people who work the land.	Lead Partner: THC Supporting Partners: as above	No progress, undertaken to some extent by FES North District (Rural Skills and Crofter Schools Project), also at Glachbeg & by the Royal Highland Education Trust.	Invite THC Care & Learning Service to provide this resource if funding can be found.
27. Marine Heritage Project				

<p>1. Secure funding for and run a second marine awareness raising project, focusing on Highland's coastal heritage and traditional links with the sea. The project could include opportunities for children to appreciate marine biodiversity through boat trips, drop-down cameras or even links with research trawlers.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: THC, SNH, MCS, SEPA, MFP, RAFTS, CE, JMT, HBRG, Field Clubs, Museums, Fishing Groups</p>	<p>Significant support expressed for Heritage Project at Sept HEF & Marine Project Group meetings, project to be discussed at Seashore Project Wrap-Up conference. Rowantree Consultants working on a Highland Marine Heritage Project specification and identifying potential sources of funding.</p>	<p>HEF to identify a lead partner and draw together a funding package for a 3 year Marine Heritage Project.</p>
<p>28. Highland Rhododendron Project</p>			
<p>1. Facilitate action to take forward a landscape-scale Rhododendron clearance in the four priority areas identified by the last project, instigate action on road and railway verges, investigate options for Rhododendron removal from gardens, facilitate different models for surveillance of 'cleared' areas (to stop recolonization), and secure public support for Rhododendron removal.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum partners</p>	<p>No progress on management action within the 4 Priority Zones identified by the Highland Rhododendron Project.</p>	<p>Lack of direction & guidance nationally and a lack of funding within the SRDP to deliver management on the ground means that this project has ultimately failed.</p>
<p>2. Continue to map the occurrences of <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>, as well as actions undertaken to control it, and ensure all partners have access to this data to help them prioritise future works.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum partners</p>	<p>All Rhododendron & priority sites identified in Highland but insufficient funding to deliver control works on scale required.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>29. Highland Invasive Non-Native Species Projects</p>			
<p>1. Run a project to train volunteers and survey urban areas for invasive non-native species, and improve opportunities for land managers to report invasive non-native species on their land. This would inform future co-ordinated control programmes.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum Supporting Partners: RAFTS, TCV, NTS, THC, SNH, HBRG, LBGs</p>	<p>No progress but this may form part of RAFTS project application currently being worked up.</p>	<p>If RAFTS funding bid successful, project to start in 2017.</p>

2.	Control / eradicate problem species such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and Salmonberry, particularly in urban areas and along road verges and streams where these species escape from gardens.	Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum Supporting Partners: as above	Some local control taking place e.g. by Fishery Boards & Scottish Mink Initiative.	As above.
3.	Raise awareness of Japanese knotweed and how to eradicate it in a project specifically targeted at crofters and householders.	Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum Supporting Partners: as above	No progress, information is available but not specifically targeted to crofters & householders.	Not a priority at this time.
4.	Replicate the TCV Apprenticeship Programme, which proved a very effective way of co-ordinating INNS projects on the Cromarty Firth, on other Highland catchments.	Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum Supporting Partners: as above	No progress.	No funding / capacity to take forward at this time.
30. Rapid Response Pathway				
1.	Identify and agree clear rapid response pathways for new species that may start to colonise, as well as raise awareness amongst the general public.	Lead Partner: Highland Invasive Species Forum Partners	No progress.	Awaiting a national approach.
31. Specialist Species Advice				
1.	Re-form the specialist group (STAG) to identify area-based citizen science projects that the Local Groups could carry out, and make the linkages with the national priority species lead partners. The group could also identify the gaps in our current knowledge and work up projects and funding bids to fill them.	Lead Partner: HEF Supporting Partners: THC, SNH, RSPB, HBRG, BBCT, OU iSpot	Review of Scottish Biodiversity List not yet available but information on the 2008 Local Lists to be circulated in March.	No capacity to reform Group at this time.
32. Highland Biological Database Project				

<p>1. Once the national situation is clearer, secure funding for and run a project to create a Highland data management and biological volunteer co-ordination hub, building on the existing Highland Biological Database Project.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: HBRG Supporting Partners: SNH, THC, HEF partners</p>	<p>Positive developments on the national situation and productive discussions with potential partners locally (Argyll & Bute, Western Isles & UHI).</p>	<p>If negotiations continue successfully, apply for funding to set up a managing body to run the Data Hub.</p>
<p>33. Data Collection</p>			
<p>1. Employ a volunteer or student within The Highland Council Development & Infrastructure Department to look into data collection from new developments and establish a protocol to ensure records are passed on to the National Biodiversity Network.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC, HEF Supporting Partners: SNH, HBRG</p>	<p>No progress.</p>	<p>No funding / capacity to take forward at this time.</p>
<p>2. Lobby Scottish Government to produce a Pollinator Strategy, encourage the collection of more data on pollinator populations and feed this into management strategies and funding programmes.</p>	<p>Lead Partner: THC, HEF Supporting Partners: as above</p>	<p>SNH is consulting on a Pollinator Strategy, deadline for comments is 14 March 2016.</p>	