

**Red Grouse Species Action Plan  
Delivery Group meeting**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012**

**7.15 pm**

**Seminar Room, Fulton Hall  
Greenmount Cafre Campus  
Antrim**

Adrian Morrow – Vice Chair	Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust
Dr Adam Smith	Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust
Dr Barry M <sup>c</sup> Mahon	Irish Grey Partridge Conservation Trust
Kieran Buckley	Irish Grey Partridge Conservation Trust
James Hamilton Stubber	
Edward Butler	Ulster Irish Red Setter & Northern Ireland Pointer Club
Damian M <sup>c</sup> Elholm	Glenoo Shoot
Lyll Plant	Chief Executive, Countryside Alliance Ireland
Mark Edgar	Biodiversity Officers Forum
John Griffin	Forest Service
Bob Davidson	NIEA
Larry Toal	NIEA

**1. Apologies**

Tommy Mayne  
Robert M<sup>c</sup> Kergan  
Jim M<sup>c</sup> Adam or we take out Dr here, not worried, just for consistency ☺  
Godfrey M<sup>c</sup> Roberts  
Martin Bradley  
Tom Woods

2. AC welcomed new members and initiated round table introductions

**3. Minutes of meeting for 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012**

LT apologise for the typing error in reference to the Irish Grouse Conservation Trust  
The draft minutes for the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012 were agreed.

**4. Matters arising**

**Future direction of the group**

No comments submitted on this.

**Comment on Ian Glendenning's funding document**

Three positive responses to this document were received.

**Work Programme**

No updates for the work programme were submitted.

**All Ireland species action plan for Red Grouse**

KB and BM<sup>c</sup> M to inform the group at this meeting

## 5. Work Programme

**Key Task 1.7** LT reported that the interdepartmental report on the wildfires in 2011 would inform the Minister in the process of creating a Wildfire Forum. A discussion developed on the impact of blanket bog management on red grouse habitat management.

**Key Task 2.2** LP reported that three cross border groups within the IRGA have produced management plans

**Key Task 3.1** LT mentioned a previously discussed topic in relation to encouraging farmers whose land has contiguous boundaries in suitable habitat to apply to NICMS for grants for habitat management for red grouse. Advice from Godfrey McRoberts suggested that this approach was possible under 'Special Measures' in the previous scheme and that it could be put forward as a proposal for the new scheme as part of the consultation process – 2014 onwards. However the new scheme would not be developed until after the EU commission decides on the future structure of CAP – reporting in 2015. It was agreed that the group would invite GMFR to outline possibilities for the future. It was also agreed that each cluster of farm holdings and associated red grouse interest group would benefit from the services of a facilitator.

**Key Task 5.1** LT listed the number of page visits to the NIEA Red Group SAP Delivery Group web page on the NIEA site from Jan 2012 to Sep 2012.

It was suggested that other relevant web sites should have a link to the NIEA page.

The BASC planned video footage on red grouse habitat management and vermin control in NI was discussed.

It was agreed that the group invite TM to outline the objectives of the video at the next meeting.

**Key Task 6.3** LT reported that Tim Russell (BASC) recommended that local red grouse groups should establish transect counts, 2 per year per site. Measure predator control/habitat management effort and compare for each area.

AS and BM emphasised the importance of annual surveys and how useful it is in gathering data over time. AS recommended the adoption of area wide, large scale transect counts using 'Distance Sampling' techniques. These have worked in Sweden for low density willow grouse populations where local hunters now collect these data. This would improve engagement of local pointing dog enthusiasts with grouse conservation, improve the robustness of population estimates and provide data essential for sustainable hunting decisions.

**Key Task 8.1** LT reported that Tim Russell recommended that the group should have one site visit per year.

Adam Smith suggested that the group visit the Langholm site.

## 6. Progress the Lough Fea Grouse Conservation Trust funding document

It was agreed to hold discussion on this item at the next meeting.

## 7. All Ireland Species Action Plan

Kieran Buckley outlined the background to the development of the all Ireland plan from the establishment of a forum of all interested parties including gun clubs, game clubs, NPWS and BWI. He saw the process as creating a unified group with more leverage to acquire funds. KB emphasised that the cooperation of all concerned would justify the appointment of a facilitator and it was up to the NI delivery group to decide if they want to embrace this process.

AM enquired about the origin 'All Ireland' in the document title?

KB pointed out that this was a mistake and should not have occurred.

AM thanked Kieran Buckley and Barry McMahon for outlining the objectives of the plan and that the NI group should bring their views to the next meeting.

**8. Adam Smith seminar**

Adam Smith delivered a very interesting presentation outlining the findings of Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust research which has informed Red Grouse management and could be fine tuned to address the current needs of Northern Ireland Red Grouse. Grouse population and disease censuses may be of particular value in addition to best practice habitat and predator management. GWCT are happy to develop their input to the BAP group.

The group expressed their appreciation to Adam for his presentation with a round of applause.

**9. AOB**

**10. Date of next meeting**

Feb/Mar 2013