

BLACK SLUICE

INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD



Environment Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 3rd March 2021 at 2pm

Virtual Meeting

(Front Cover: Kirton Marsh Pumping Station)



Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board

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Our Ref: DW/JB/B10

Your Ref:

Date: 24th February 2021

To all Members of the Environment Committee and Invited Guests

Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of the Environment Committee will be held remotely on Wednesday, 3rd March 2021 at 2:00pm at which your attendance is requested.

Due to COVID-19, this meeting will be held remotely in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Ian Warsap
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. Recording the meeting.
2. To welcome guests and receive apologies for absence.
3. Declarations of interest.
4. To receive and, if correct, sign the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15th May 2019 (**pages 1 - 12**)
5. Matters arising.
6. To review the Environment Committee's Terms of Reference (**pages 13 & 14**)
7. To review the 'new' draft Biodiversity Action Plan (Policy No. 11) (**under separate cover**)
8. To receive a report on Environmental Work completed in 2020/21 and recommendations for proposed works for 2021/22 (**pages 15 - 22**)
9. To receive the 2019 (**pages 23 - 25**) & 2020 Black Sluice IDB Barn Owl Box Reports (**pages 26 - 31**)
10. To receive a written report on the 2019 (**pages 32 & 33**) & 2020 butterfly records from Windmill Lodge Butterfly Conservation and Wildlife Area, Amber Hill (**page 34**)
11. To receive a verbal presentation from the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP), Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) and The South Lincs Fenlands Partnership (SLFP)
12. To receive the ADA Technical Note – The Environmental Bill (**pages 35 - 38**)
13. To receive the Minutes from the ADA Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee held on 20th November 2019 (**pages 39 - 45**)
14. Any Other Business.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Environment Committee

held at the offices of the Board on
15th May 2019 at 2:05pm

Members

Chairman - * Mr P Holmes

Mr W Ash	Mr J Atkinson
* Mr V Barker	* Mr K C Casswell
* Mr R Leggott	* Mr P Robinson
Cllr C Rylott	Mr R Welberry
* Mr J R Wray	

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr I Warsap (Chief Executive)
Mr P Nicholson (Operations Manager)
Mr C Duku (GIS & Environmental Technician)
Ms T Smalley (Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust)
Ms S Baker (Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership)
Mr I Nixon (Inspired Ecology)
Mr A Scurrah-Price (Inspired Ecology)

The Chairman welcomed Ms T Smalley, Ms S Baker, Mr I Nixon, Mr A Scurrah-Price and Mr C Duku.

1434 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Agenda Item 1**

Apologies were received from Mr W Ash, Mr R Welberry and Mr J Atkinson.

1435 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Agenda Item 2**

There were no declarations of interest.

1436 **MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - Agenda Item 3**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Environment Committee held on the 27th June 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were considered. It was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record with the following amendment:

- Minute 1309 (a) – ‘intension’ should be ‘intention’ as follows:
‘The Chief Executive reported that because of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust intention to purchase...’

1437 MATTERS ARISING - Agenda Item 4

(a) WILDFLOWER ON THE RISEGATE BANK - Minute 1311(kk)

Mr V Barker noted that the Board felt they had not been successful with the seeding, but he has recently noted various blocks of wild flower on the north side as planned, progress has been made. The Chief Executive and Operations Manager explained that they will monitor it over the growing season and determine what future course of action to take.

He further noted, in reference to the RiseGate bank, that Leslie Heckton? is no longer in a position to be able to maintain the area for them, and so Mr V Barker felt it should be maintained by the Board. A letter of best wishes will be sent from the Board.

(b) INVASIVE SPECIES - Minute 1311 (j)

Mr R Leggott suggested the encouragement of planting of wild flowers to try and compete with the 'yellow flower'. The Chairman felt that the yellow flower is too dominant at the moment and so the invasive species of yellow flower needs to be controlled first.

1438 TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - Agenda Item 5

The Chairman presented the Environment Committee Terms of Reference, with the only one amendment, inviting opinions of the committee.

All AGREED that the Environment Committee Terms of Reference be recommended to the Board for approval.

1439 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORK COMPLETED IN 2018/19 AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSED WORKS FOR 2019/20 - Agenda Item 6

The Chief Executive presented this agenda item.

Completed Works 2018/19

(a) Owl Boxes

Photos of the owl boxes were presented on screen, whilst it was also noted that kestrels are also able to nest in this type of box. He further noted that the Board has been approached by the BBC regarding the possibility of covert filming of the barn owls and kestrels nesting at Holland Fen.

(b) Early Flailing Works

Opinions and questions were invited.

(c) Water Vole Monitoring Surveys

Opinions and questions were invited. This will be further introduced at agenda item 11.

(d) Control of Mink

Opinions and questions were invited. This will be further introduced at agenda item 10.

(e) Environmental surveys of larger hedge rows in our bushing programme

Opinions and questions were invited.

(f) South Forty Foot Drain Environmental Works associated with the de-silting works

The Chief Executive explained that works have been completed up to the A52 and the order for the recommencement of de-bushing works for the following 3km north of the A52 has been received. This work should commence approximately October 2019.

(g) RSPB Water Abstraction for Frampton Marsh

Opinions and questions were invited.

(h) Big Boston Clean Up

The Chief Executive noted that the workforce is involved with this.

(i) Operation Fly Swat

It was noted that the Board is a partner within the Operation Fly Swat Team.

The Chief Executive further noted that the Lincolnshire Police Crime Commissioner has acknowledged this and has suggested that law could state that fly tipping offenders should receive penalty points on the associated driving licence.

(j) Invasive Species

The Chief Executive re-introduced the topic of 'yellow flower' and displayed photos of it taken only the day prior to the meeting, showing that there is no correlation as to where it grows.

He explained that Mr J Atkinson has asked for the following to be introduced, Mr J Atkinson has been doing his own trials around the eradication of yellow flower for the past three years. He has flailed annually during May whilst it is in flower and it has completely eradicated the problem whilst also allowing the natural vegetation to grow.

The Chief Executive noted that the growth of natural vegetation on the banks is of importance to the Board because once the yellow flower has died off, it leaves no other vegetation, reducing the banks stability and increasing the chance of bank slips.

Mr J Atkinson, through the Chief Executive, also wanted to report that he has trialled some more areas where he has only cut once during the previous May, which has removed 95% of the yellow flower.

The Operations Manager explained that he has been in contact with the Environment Agency and has received a reluctant response for the Board to do any work towards the control of the flower on their South Forty Foot Banks. He noted that once an agreement is in place, the South Forty Foot can be used as a trial area, however, it will not be in place in time for trials this year.

Three control sites have already been identified, one of those being Dunsby Fen. The control is looking to be completed next week. The control will involve one cut annually in May for three years and monitoring what benefits or affects this has. Dependent on the results of the trial areas will depend on the method taken going forward.

Mr P Robinson noted that it seems to have been successful near the cricket ground on the North Forty Foot. He felt that the emphasis needs to be around cutting at the correct time of year before it seeds.

The Chairman acknowledged that previously he had dismissed this problem as being an issue in areas where rape was being grown. However, he now recognises that it is a catchment wide problem that needs addressing.

Mr R Leggott questioned if a corresponding survey of damage to wildlife due to the cut had been completed? It was noted that it is not a natural nesting site for birds anyway, with Mr I Nixon clarifying that the earlier the cut is completed the better. It was clarified that a walkover survey by the machine operator will be completed before any flailing is completed.

Mr K Casswell raised his concern that if the trials are successful, then the Board will have many km of bank to cut at that time of year, questioning if that will be the only cut the bank will have? It was discussed that the drains would be prioritised.

Mr I Nixon questioned whether any other drainage boards in the area were addressing the issue of yellow flower? The Operations Manager made reference to a report completed by Lindsey Marsh in 2016 following an eight-year trial. Mechanical cutting and spraying were investigated, with variable results and no additional work being carried out.

(k) Bat Boxes and Surveys

Opinions and questions were invited.

(l) Environmental Scheme - Eel Passability at Boards 'Category A' Pumping Stations

Opinions and questions were invited.

(m) Environmental Scheme - Bird Survey

Opinions and questions were invited. This will be further introduced at agenda item 12.

(n) Grass Snake Nesting Sites

Photos of grass snake nesting boxes, erected in winter 2018 were displayed on screen. Reference was made to the photo on the front cover of the agenda, it being noted that that snake was just outside the catchment.

(o) Wild Flower Meadow

The Chief Executive made reference to the piece of land owned by the Board alongside the North Forty Foot at Cooks Lock, which is a wildflower meadow during the summer, displaying photos on screen.

Ms T Smalley suggested the consideration of having it surveyed to see if it meets local wildlife site status.

(p) Bug Hotel

Photos of the two bug hotels constructed at the site of the office were displayed on screen.

(q) Badger Setts

The Chief Executive noted that the workforce continually obtains the relevant licenses within Natural England. He further noted a situation last year in which the police attended a site where the Board were working alongside badger setts and everything was in accordance with how it should be. The Board use straw filled bags pushed down the sett holes, carry out the operational work, and then remove the bags.

Ms T Smalley noted that the Environment Agency are trialling piling around the setts.

(r) Pollution Incidents

The Chief Executive displayed photos on screen of an incident whereby a lorry, full of chemicals, had run off the road into a dyke within the Board's catchment. The pollution was reported to the Environment Agency and the Board's machinery and personnel assisted at the site.

(s) Eel Passage Research

Opinions and questions were invited.

(t) Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP)

This will be further introduced at agenda item 10.

Proposed Works and Environmental Involvement in 2019/20

(u) Bourne North Fen (Tongue End) Ponds

It was noted that there are no costs associated with this for this year.

(v) Water Vole Surveys

Opinions and questions were invited. This will be further introduced at agenda item 11.

(w) Winter Bushing and Cleansing

There is a small budget required for this for the likes of damming and the removal of fish.

(x) Summer Cutting and Vegetation Clearance

It was noted that where birds' nests are found, five metres either side of the nest will be left un-cut to reduce disturbance.

(y) Owl Boxes

Opinions and questions were invited.

(z) Recording by Machine Drivers

Opinions and questions were invited.

(aa) High Profile Watercourse Assets

Opinions and questions were invited.

(bb) Water Levels

The main river water levels are not controlled by the Board.

(cc) Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

This is a small budget for the implementation of identification training for employees.

(dd) Fens for the Future / South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership

Ms T Smalley explained that Fens for the Future covers the whole natural area of the fens which is a knowledge sharing partnership between those wanting to create natural habitat, compared to the South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership which focuses on a smaller area around Willow Tree Fen and Baston Fen to secure corridors for wildlife, working with the minerals industry and local community projects.

(ee) Operation Fly Swat Partner

It was noted that the cost of this has increased, however, it would cost the Board far more in fly tipping removal if we were not a partner.

It was established that this is with Boston Borough Council. Mr V Barker questioned the area that is covered by this scheme, he will make enquiries to find out.

(ff) Big Boston Clean up

Opinions and questions were invited.

(gg) Sand Martin Nesting Site

This work unfortunately did not get completed last year, so it is proposed to complete this year. Photos of example sand martin nesting sites were displayed on screen.

(hh) Grass Snake Nesting Sites

This budget is for two more grass snake nesting sites, made up from natural materials.

(ii) Wildflower Meadow

This budget is for the maintenance of the wildflower meadow.

(jj) Water Framework Directive (WFD)

It is of great importance to keep in line with WFD constraints and compliance.

(kk) The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership (WNNMP)

The project manager will be leaving, but the programme will continue. The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust also co-fund this.

(ll) Gulf Wedged Clam (Rangia)

The area around Swineshead Bridge is the only identified place in the UK that has this particular clam. The Board's concern is that if the pumps weren't running, then the clams could get inside the pump valves and cease them up.

(mm) Operation Galileo

Involvement with this will continue.

(nn) Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP)

This will be further introduced at agenda item 10. The Lincolnshire Wildlife Fund also fund this.

(oo) Pollinators

Two of the Board's workforce attended training on pollinator's this year.

(pp) Changes to Eel Passage Regs Process (ChERP)

With having 34 pumping stations, this has quite a large impact on the Board.

(qq) Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

This is due for review this year, and Helen Scarborough will be employed to help with this.

The committee AGREED the budgetary figures included within the agenda report.

1440 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON BARN OWL NESTING BOXES FOR 2018/19 - Agenda Item 7

The Chairman introduced this agenda item, noting that he has spoken to Mr A Ball prior to the meeting in order to get an up to date review. He explained that Lincolnshire has not had a very good year regarding the breeding of barn owls due to the lack of voles. It was clarified that barn owls eat short tail voles rather than water voles.

The Chairman also noted that he has expressed his concern for the number of jack-daws resident in the barn owl boxes, however, Mr A Ball explained to him that a healthy barn owl would remove them.

He further added that Mr A Ball wanted to pass on his thanks for the work the Board do for the barn owls.

1441 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE 2018 BUTTERFLY RECORDS FROM WINDMILL LODGE BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE AREA, AMBER HILL - Agenda Item 8

Opinions and questions were invited.

The Chairman noted that there is another butterfly conservation area within the catchment that he may approach for another report.

1442 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL PRESENTATION BY THE LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST (LWT) - Agenda Item 9

Ms T Smalley, head of conservation at Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) gave an informative presentation, explaining that the trust hosts the partnership and hold the funds. Through these partnerships, the trust has built up a relationship with Black Sluice IDB and the trust is also involved in the ADA Environment Committee.

The trust is also one of the key partners in the South Lincolnshire Water Partnership. As part of the partnership, it is hoped to influence Water Resource East (WRE), focusing on the water resource challenges in the east of England - by 2030, this area will not have enough water storage to meet public demand. It is therefore being investigated if South Lincolnshire can be one of the areas that delivers towards water storage.

Ms T Smalley referred to the 25-year environment plan issued by the government which, for the first time, has recognised that society is having a negative impact on the environment to the extent that it no longer refers to 'conserving and protecting' the environment, but instead refers to 'recovering' nature. She added that she feels it is not industries to blame, but it is society that has to make the choice to help the environment.

She commended drainage boards for all they are now doing to help the environment, with the Chief Executive noting that he feels they are moving in the right direction.

Mr R Leggott raised the point that he has served on the Board for many years and cannot remember there always being an environment committee or budget, demonstrating how approaches have changed over time.

1443 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL PRESENTATION BY THE GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE NATURE PARTNERSHIP (GLNP) - Agenda Item 10

Ms S Baker, Senior Policy Officer for the GLNP, explained that it is a partnership of 49 organisations who are interested in achieving more for nature. She gave an informative presentation based on three main factors; the pollinator project, local wildlife sites and water vole conservations.

Pollinator Project

A few years ago, GLNP received some funding from DEFRA to support wild pollinators on farmland. Over the last few years, the GLNP have been working with farms around this. This is now looking to be expanded further to other farms, with Ms S Baker noting that if any of the committee knows of anybody that would be interested in the catchment to let her know. It was clarified that there is no desired geographical location, with factors such as game cover enhancement and enhancement of existing features. The Chief Executive noted the Board's area in Bourne which is predominately reed and wet woodland could be of interest.

Local Wildlife Sites

There is already a strong established network in the catchment, however there are a lot of opportunities within the catchment. The Chief Executive noted that he was surprised at how many riparian and board-maintained watercourses were designated, that he was unaware of. Ms T Smalley added that a prioritised list of drains to be surveyed for local wildlife status will be produced.

Water Vole Conservations

Over the last couple of years, some of the IDBs had reported that they were recording fewer water voles and concerned about the number of mink. It is felt that a national strategy needs to be formed for the control of mink, however, Lincolnshire have been working on mink control for around 15 years.

Newer technology has been introduced to the monitoring of these species such as remote monitoring of traps, which potentially makes it more workable for individuals. The Operations Manager noted that this was a restriction that the Board encountered, regarding the cost and time involved in the workforce checking traps daily. Mr P Robinson noted that physical monitoring of mink traps can indeed disturb the animals and so remote monitoring may overcome this.

Ms S Baker added that if Lincolnshire trial this remote technology and strategically monitor these species then more accurate data and correlations can be identified. The areas for these pilot studies have yet to be identified, if anybody would like to suggest a particular area.

The Chief Executive noted an area in the northern part of the catchment where mink have been observed.

The Chairman questioned if the dry summer has effected the population of water voles? He noted a riparian drain on his farm, which always has water voles in it, it was dry for an extended period last year and there were no water voles seen. Mr I Nixon noted that water voles don't actually need to be within water, they will nest above ground. It was also clarified that the presence of otters tends to drive mink away.

1444 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL PRESENTATION BY INSPIRED ECOLOGY - Agenda Item 11

Mr I Nixon explained that the business 'Scarborough Nixon Associates' is no longer as Mr I Nixon's previous business partner, Ms H Scarborough, is no longer a part of it, hence the change to Inspired Ecology which consists of Mr I Nixon and Mr A Scurrah-Price.

Mr A Scurrah-Price gave an informative presentation on the general ecology, characteristics and statistical evidence of water voles. He also noted that just because trends show that numbers of water voles have decreased, that may not necessarily be the case, in light of false absences for instance. There are various indicators to suggest that there are water voles in the area. Mr A Scurrah-Price next explained to the committee the general ecology, characteristics and statistical evidence around otters. The Chief Executive noted that the Board have constructed an otter holt. He further referred to two otters that have recently been knocked down on the road at Holland Fen.

Mr V Barker left the meeting.

Mr I Nixon continued that he proposes completing some water vole surveys on the South Forty Foot Drain, concentrating on either side of the de-silting works. This will also give an idea of what effect the de-silting work is having on the water voles. Further work at Holland Fen was also proposed in addition to the continuation of water vole monitoring at Great Hale. Bat boxes could also be checked alongside the work.

The Chairman noted that Inspired Ecology are welcome to take a look at the watercourse he referred to earlier in reference to water voles.

1445 TO RECEIVE THE TONGUE END & WYBERTON MARSH 2019 BIRD SURVEY REPORTS - Agenda Item 12

Mr I Nixon gave a report on the bird surveys carried out at Tongue End and Wyberton Marsh.

Tongue End

He reported that nesting marsh harriers were found and that they raised at least one chick, two chicks is the 'normal' number of chicks for these birds. There were also other good sightings including a cuckoo and common terns. The common terns were feeding regularly, they will be nesting somewhere else, but not sure where. It was also clarified that they would nest on shingle rafts.

Wyberton Marsh

Mr I Nixon noted that Wyberton Marsh is a well varied habitat, however, there was nothing too startling found at the site.

The Chairman referred to the written report within the agenda, noting the frequent reference to agricultural practices on the decline in nesting birds, further noting that there is no reference to other influencing factors such as predators.

It was noted that Frampton Marsh is not that far from the site, with birds possibly being there that would previously have been found at Frampton Marsh.

Reference was made to a nesting kestrel, with Mr I Nixon explaining that if the surveyor doesn't physically see the kestrel then he can't say that there is one there.

The Chairman thanked Inspired Ecology for the work they carry out for the Board.

1446 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF CONSERVATION COVENANTS IN THE FORTHCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL BILL - Agenda Item 13

The Chief Executive presented this agenda item, explaining there will likely be somebody from Lincolnshire ADA Environment Committee attending.

1447 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES FROM THE ADA LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: - Agenda Item 14

The Chief Executive noted that one of the Board's appointed members, Cllr P Skinner, has been elected the Lincolnshire ADA Environment Committee Chairman. He further noted whether he should therefore be involved in this committee? Further noting that a vacant position has become available due to the previous councillor not re-standing for election.

1448 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Agenda Item 15

(a) BOSTON BELLE - 30 MAY 2019 - ANTONS GOWT PLANT COLLECTION

Ms T Smalley invited the committee on the Boston Belle on the 30th May 2019, free of charge. The trip is going upstream of Boston to carry out a plant collection at Antons Gowt as part of the lottery funded project with the Natural History museum. Please email Ms T Smalley should anybody wish to attend.

The Chairman thanked the guests for their attendance and contributions at the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:24.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 3rd MARCH 2021

AGENDA ITEM 06

TERMS OF REFERENCE: ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1. **GENERAL**

The Committee shall have TEN members who will be appointed by the Board, five members from each of the Works Committee.

The Membership shall include:

- Chairman of the Board
- Vice Chairman of the Board

The Committee Chairman shall be appointed by the Committee at the triennial general meeting meeting being the first meeting following an election.

2. **MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee shall meet at least once in every 12-month period and a quorum shall be five members.

No one other than the Committee members shall be entitled to attend Committee Meetings, but any other persons may attend meetings if invited by the Committee.

3. **POWERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee has the authority to utilise a budgetary amount as agreed by the Board at the beginning of each financial year on Environmental Projects and Works.

4. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

The responsibilities of the Committee shall be:

1. To monitor the Board's performance in relation to the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan and Government's Environmental Targets.
2. To promote best practice through employee training and awareness.
3. To inform the public of the Board's commitment to Environmental issues.
4. To promote initiatives, within watercourses maintained by the Board under statutory powers, that result in a meaningful environmental gain.

5. REPORTING

Minutes of meetings of the Committee shall be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

The Committee shall review its terms of reference after every triennial general meeting and its own effectiveness and recommend any necessary changes to the Board.

REVIEWED BY THE COMMITTEE: 03 MARCH 2021

APPROVED BY THE BOARD:

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 3rd MARCH 2021

AGENDA ITEM 08

REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS

Completed Works in 2020/21

1. Owl Boxes

Repairs were completed where required and all boxes fixed to pumping station buildings were internally cleared, cleaned and suitably 're-dressed'. Three old non-repairable boxes at Kirton Marsh, South Kyme and Swaton pumping stations are to be replaced and the 3 boxes have been ordered.

The completed 2019 & 2020 Barn Owl Box Reports are included in Agenda Item 09.

2. Early Flailing Works

Early season bank flailing on our high profile watercourses (approximately 67km) is to be completed along with the early health and safety bank top cuts on the main river highland carriers for the Environment Agency (EA) through our Public Sector Co-Operation Agreement (PSCA). Our pumping station grounds maintenance cuts are to commence in March this year.

3. Water Vole Monitoring Surveys

Scarborough Nixon Associates (SNA) and now Inspired Ecology have carried out monitoring surveys for water vole evidence on the pre-agreed watercourses.

4. Control of Mink

The Board have continued to liaise with agricultural landowners with regards to the correct setting up and inspection frequencies of the Boards traps and the dispatching of mink throughout the year.

5. Environmental Surveys of Larger Hedge Rows in our Bushing Programme

Surveys were carried out by the Boards officers on any significant hedgerows that were felt could offer a form of environmental enhancement prior to any bushing works. No environmental enhancements or protected species were identified during the 2020/21 surveys or works. The extensive bushing works undertaken on the raised banks of the South Forty Foot Drain were pre-walked/inspected on a daily basis prior to each day's work. No active nests were located therefore all works have been completed.

6. South Forty Foot Drain Environmental Works Associated with the De-Silting Works

The next 3km section, downstream of the A52, of preparation works have been completed and it is anticipated that subject to funding being available the desilting of this next section will be completed this financial year. As in 2018 various environmental considerations are to be undertaken throughout the works which will assist in various levels of protection/enhancement: -

- Suspending the works for protective species (Spined Loach) habitat identification.
- Inspection of bushing for nesting birds.
- Completion of works before a predicted Elver run.
- Identification of land for new/enhanced wetland scrapes as mitigation following tree/bush removal works.
- Daily monitoring of dissolved oxygen, water and air temperatures with agreed guideline to suspend works at pre-agreed trigger levels.
- To record and photograph the process of suction cutting and pumping into open lagoons.
- To continually assess the impact upon aquatic vegetation.
- To create reports and advise on impacts and evidence that will offer data for future works of this nature.
- Offer advice on further mitigation.
- Liaison with a DIDSON fish survey team.
- Monitor the works and maintain vigilance for any potential ecological impacts and potential impacts on protected species (badgers, nesting birds, water vole, otter, kingfisher nesting etc.).
- Monitor the works and assess silt movements etc. within the channel.
- Assess impacts on riparian vegetation and banksides.
- Assess spreading and levelling of dried out silt lagoons.

7. RSPB Water Abstraction for Frampton Marsh

Permission has again been granted by the EA and the Board for the RSPB to abstract 500,000m³ of water per annum from the Wyberton Marsh pump drain to assist with water management levels in the nearby Frampton Marsh Nature Reserve.

8. Big Boston Clean Up

The Board's workforce were once again involved with the Big Boston Clean Up.

9. Operation Fly Swat

The Board remains a partner within the Operation Fly Swat team and contributes towards its running costs, which in turn offers financial benefits to the Board in relation to the amount the Board previously spent on fly tipping clearance, collection and disposal.

10. Invasive Species

Invasive species identification guides produced by the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) for Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, New Zealand Pigmyweed and Floating Pennywort are handed out to the operational workforce at each year's pre-cutting brief.

The continuous spread of Wild Yellow Flowering Brassica Rapa, a non-native species growing on Board maintained and Riparian banks has been brought to our attention and addressed at Board level. Continuous flailing trials over a 3 year period on selected areas are being undertaken. 2021/22 will be the third year and the results will be published on completion.

11. Bat Boxes and Surveys

Bat boxes erected on all pumping stations are being carefully monitored for occupancy, to date we have no confirmed sightings of occupancy.

12. Environmental Schemes

(a) Eel Passability at the Boards 'Category A' Pumping Stations

As previously reported the eleven pumping stations in the initial EA Category A classification (Chain Bridge, Black Hole Drove, Cooks Lock, Donington Wykes, Donington North Ings, Gosberton, Great Hale, Holland Fen, South Kyme, Swineshead and Wyberton Marsh) have all been assessed by the EA consultants resulting in detailed Eel passage mitigation and proposals being produced. These have all been evaluated with costs ranging from Donington Wykes £300k to Black Hole Drove £3.4m.

The original 5 year exemption period expired in February 2021 and Eel screen exemption notices have now been received and these are issued in line with EA National eel screening advice to ensure consistency during the development period of the new approach to regulation, and are therefore all dated to expire on 22 February 2022.

13. Grass Snake Nesting Sites

Five nesting/hibernation sites have been constructed adjacent to pumping stations that historically had weed screen debris (reeds, weed etc.) dumped in the general area.

14. Wild Flower Meadow

The established area alongside the North Forty Foot Drain north of Cooks Lock Pumping Station totalling approximately 2,000m² is being managed as a Wildflower Meadow.

15. Bug Hotel

The Bug Hotel(s) have been constructed to the side of our Swineshead office/depot near the pond. All materials being sourced from within the depot.

16. Badger Setts

From a conveyancing point of view Badger setts within banks continue to be a problem, especially so in raised main river banks where high fluvial flows could wash through the setts resulting in bank failures and breaches.

We continue to follow Natural England guidelines when working adjacent to Badger setts with all our site based employees maintaining Natural England licenses to work within the proximity of Badgers.

17. Pollution Incidents

The Board have attended site(s) where potential pollution incidents could have a detrimental effect on water quality and/or the general environment in order to reduce any potential pollution/contamination issues.

We involve the Environment Agency and seek recovery of costs for all resources employed on such sites.

18. Eel Passage Research

The Board contributed £500 towards the research currently being undertaken by the Environment Agency, Hull International Fisheries Institute (HIFI) and Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to minimise any impact of pumping stations on fish and eel populations and find cost effective solutions for compliance with eel legislation.

Our (and others) contributions helped in demonstrating our support for this research, and has enabled them to obtain additional funding from the Environment Agency and a grant from the European Marine Fisheries Fund to continue the research this year.

The status of the eel is critical. The aim is to reduce the impact of pumping stations in ways that are affordable and resources are targeted where they have the most benefit. The aim of this research is to assess the current impact of pumping stations, make recommendations for operational changes, develop and assess solutions for eel protection as pumping stations are refurbished or replaced. This will inform guidance for FCRM and IDB engineers currently in preparation.

19. Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP)

As in previous years the Board (as do all Lincolnshire IDB's) continued with our Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the GLNP at an annual cost of £258.

The Lincolnshire Environment Records Centre (LERC) data is included within our SLA, this enables us to check the ecological data from within and around our catchment. The complete LERC data collection holds over 5 million sightings.

Proposed Works and Environmental Involvement in 2021/22

1. Water Vole Surveys

Committee approval is requested to continue to employ Inspired Ecology to undertake further surveys for water vole evidence at the monitoring sites and on relevant sites prior to desilting and any significant capital works. In addition, post desilting surveys will be carried out following the works where water vole activity has been found to confirm whether or not our works have had any effect on these populations. Environmental mitigation works may be required should results give evidence of disturbance. Estimates at c£3,000.

2. Winter Bushing and Cleansing

Bushing works will commence in November along with the cleansing works, all bushes will be chipped onsite, all excavated silt will be deposited on adjacent fields, left to dry then spread and levelled across the adjacent land.

Where required water levels will be lowered by damming lengths of the water course and the water over-pumped, if fish are evident they will be carefully removed whilst the water is being lowered and transferred over the dams.

We have our own bushing budget outside of the Environment budget, fish relocation whilst cleansing is budgeted at £3,000.

3. Summer Cutting and Vegetation Clearance

Following review the Boards summer cutting programme will change this year. An alternate maintenance programme is being developed and flailmowing will commence early April, the banks being cut every 4 weeks. Early flailmowing is necessary to prevent ground nesting birds. As with the high priority sites these watercourses can then be maintained at an earlier stage than previously. Therefore the main summer cutting programme will not commence until 2nd August, the mechanical flails will go out a few days after the excavators using the weed cutting baskets. The workforce will be presented with a 'Summer Cutting Brief' which will cover channel management in relation to balancing the benefits of flood risk management, agriculture and the biodiversity values.

Where birds' nests are encountered a minimum 10m length of bank will be left un-cut (5m each side of the nest).

4. Owl Boxes

Approval is sought for a budget of c£2,500 for repairing/replacing existing boxes during 2021/22.

5. Recording by Machine Drivers

The eight machine drivers will continue to record sightings on the Tom-Tom units; environmental sightings such as badger or fox holes in banks, water vole, mink and other specialist environmental sighting will be recorded.

All sighting information is passed onto the GLNP and in turn to the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC).

Budget request of £1,500 for Tom-Tom repairs/updates.

6. High Profile Watercourse Banks

Early season flailing of Wyberton Marsh Drain, Washdyke Lane, NFF (Cooks Lock to Punchbowl Lane) and New Hammond Beck (Chain Bridge to Tesco) will continue to be carried out.

Other notable watercourses that have enhanced maintenance are Endeavour Park (12/4&5), Kirton Drainside North (5/30), Frampton Towns Drain from London Road to weir (5/1), Gosberton Risegate Eau (22/14), Bicker Eau through the village (4/67), and the Drain alongside the IDEA park at Donington (2/26).

Budget request for c£1,500 for environmental flailing.

A total of c67Km of high profile watercourse banks (generally our larger watercourses) have been identified that require additional late summer inspections to determine whether a second flail and/or cut is required.

7. Water Levels

Water levels will continue to be controlled via the Boards 34 pumping station and/or the gravity channels associated with them.

The South Forty Foot Drain (SFF) water levels were raised to their summer levels by the EA in late March and will be lowered back to winter levels in November, this obviously affects the gravity flows from the catchments into the SFF. Water levels within the catchments will be held back where requested, this will help to enhance the biodiversity associated with the watercourses.

8. Invasive Non- Native Species (INNS)

The identification and eradication of INNS is important for the protection of our native species. INNS are expanding their population and geographical area, often to the detriment of native species. Early identification of INNS is critical in the control of their spread, we propose to implement identification training for our workforce (budget c£1,000) to help achieve early identification and assist with removal.

INNS locations will be reported to the GLNP to help determine population trends and distribution.

9. Fens for the Future/South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership

The Fens for the Future Vision is to see sustainable wetlands restored, re-created and reconnected across the Fens for the benefit of people, our natural and historic heritage and the rural economy.

Sustainable wetlands will help reduce storm effects, make available clean water and retain peat land soils so helping mitigate the effects of climate change, while at the same time offering a haven for wildlife, protecting our historic heritage and providing exciting areas for people to visit. Recreational access and tourism increases with more people taking exercise in the countryside. The diversity of the local economy widens and opportunities for employment in local communities are created.

The Fens remain nationally important for modern productive farming. The provision for wildlife in the farmed landscape increases significantly with the uptake of environmentally friendly farming practices and sensitive ditch and drain management, thus creating a network of wildlife habitats extending throughout Fenland. The variety and abundance of farmland wildlife increases and iconic Fenland species thrive.

We will continue to undertake sensitive watercourse maintenance by cutting alternative banks on an annual basis wherever this is the most practicable practice.

10. Operation Fly Swat Partner

Approval is sought to continue being a partner with this scheme into 2021/22, costs are to remain the same, using monies from the Environment budget .

The c£3,300 partner contribution far outweighs the collection, removal and tipping fees the Board would have to find if carried out this work ourselves.

11. Big Boston Clean-Up

Approval is sought to offer manual/vehicular assistance with the annual Big Boston Clean-Up organised by Boston Borough Council c£600 – (4 men 2 days + vehicle £2,750)

12. Grass Snake Nesting Sites

Fence off areas at pumping station sites to create Grass Snake nesting/hibernation sites, create heaps of vegetation from the weed from the watercourse, reeds, leaves, grass etc. (budget £700 i.e. 2 x £350 per site).

13. Wildflower Meadow

To continue to maintain and develop the wildflower meadow area at Cooks Lock Pumping Station and also investigate other suitable areas around pumping stations. (budget £500).

14. Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Discussions take place with the WFD Officers to regularly review the following: -

- What actions do we undertake within our maintenance regime that can affect the water quality within our catchments?
- What levels of water quality information do the EA hold?
- What longer term plans can we start to jointly investigate to further enhance our catchments working within the WFD guidelines?
- What records do the WFD hold on the EA main rivers?
- What funding is there available to assist with future enhancements works?

15. The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership (WNNMP)

Being a partner (£400 per annum) we have a statutory duty under the UK Habitats Regulations to report on progress against the management actions on an annual basis, and the information is presented in the Action Plan.

We report on subjects such as land drainage, shoreline management (if applicable), coastal oil spills, water framework directives, chemical weed control, non-native invasive species and water abstraction.

The recently published and first volume of 'Wild Seas' – the quarterly e-newsletter for The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership is attached to the back of this report.

'Wild Seas' aims to give a quick overview of the most recent work of The WNNMP.

16. Gulf Wedged Clam (Rangia)

The comments below have been received from Emma Holden, Environmental Monitoring Officer, Analysis and Reporting (Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area)

From our surveying thus far we believe Rangia is only currently present in the South Forty Foot Drain (SFFD) from the Skerth Drain confluence to the Black Sluice Lock where the SFFD joins the River Haven. We have surveyed locations in the neighbouring rivers/drains as well as looking in a few locations in the Welland and Nene but have not seen any evidence that Rangia are currently anywhere else.

We had a meeting to discuss the possibility of using BioBullets to eradicate Rangia within the SFFD and are awaiting a response to costs involved with setting up a trial to see if BioBullets would be successful in doing this. It was also highlighted that extra monitoring may be needed around the country to ensure Rangia is not present elsewhere, as if Rangia is present in other areas then it may not be plausible to spend money on eradication in the SFFD. If this monitoring can be done and does demonstrate Rangia is only known to be in the SFFD then it would be likely that eradication using BioBullets would take place, presuming BioBullets are successful in the trial lab tests and obviously taking into account costs (both monetary and environmental).

17. GLNP

After holding the same charges since 2015 the GLNP have requested a 3% increase this coming financial year, this increases our SLA to £265.23. The Chief Executive has confirmed acceptance of this increase.

Annual Check of Black Sluice IDB nest boxes –2019

Boxes checked by Alan Ball and/or Bob Sheppard and dates shown

Wildlife
Conservation
Partnership



Box	IPMR	Grid Ref	Location	Type	Date		Con
3290		TF154188	Richardson's Borrow Pit, Twenty	Pole		Not checked	
3291		TF173211	Gandy's Borrow Pit, Twenty	Pole		Not checked	
3292		TF138195	Cook's Borrow Pit, Bourne N.Fen	Pole		Not checked	
1365	DYF	TF152227	Dyke Fen Pump	Pump	26/05 14/07	BARN OWL – 5 eggs, adult fem = GV99535, m=r/GV45664 4 chicks ringed GV99927-30	
1366	RSI	TF167251	West Pinchbeck (Black Hole Dr)	Pump	29/05	Jackdaw – 2 chicks EY86757-58	
1367	RSI	TF166257	Haconby Fen Pump	Pump	14/07	Jackdaw - fledged	
1368	RSI	TF166266	West Pinchbeck (Starlode Drove)	Pump	29/05	Jackdaw – 1 chick EY87640 – adult = r/EL60432 KESTREL – in top – 5 eggs (5 ringed 21/06 EY87918-22)	
1369	RSJ	TF165271	Dunsby Fen Pump	Pump	30/05	Jackdaw	
1370	RSJ	TF164275	Rippingale Fen Pump	Pump	30/05	TAWNY OWL – 1 chick GV99550	
1371	BFF	TF162284	Dowsby Fen Pump	Pump	30/05	Jackdaw – 3 chicks EY87673-75	
1293	BFF	TF162284	Dowsby Fen pole	Mk 7	30/05	Jackdaw	
1372	DOF	TF167294	Gosberton Pump	Pump	30/05	Jackdaw	
1373	RSQ	TF164318	Neslam Fen Pump	Pump	30/05	Jackdaw – 3 chicks EY87676-78	
1374	RSV	TF168331	Quadring Fen Pump	Pump	29/05	Jackdaw – dead chick	

1375	RSV	TF168333	Billingborough Fen Pump	Pump	30/05	Jackdaw	
1376	RSG	TF170346	Horbling Fen Pump	Pump	30/05	Not used	
1377	RST	TF174364	Swaton Fen Pump	Pump	22/05	Jackdaw – 3 chicks EA13466-68	
1378	RST	TF176370	Donington Ing Pump	Pump	29/05	Jackdaw - fledged	
1379	RST	TF177375	Helpringham Fen Pump	Pump	22/05 17/07	BARN OWL – 6 eggs, female = GV99524 3 chicks ringed GV99937-39	
1380	RSH	TF186397	Bicker Fen Pump	Pump	29/05	BARN OWL – 3 of 5 chicks GV99543-45, fem = GV99546	
1381	RSU	TF206425	Great Hale Pump	Pump		n/c	
1383	HKF	TF185466	Heckington Pump	Pump	27/05	KESTREL – in top – 4 eggs (failed 22/06)	
1384	SKF	TF207469	South Kyme Pump	Pump	27/05	Jackdaws – 5 chicks EA13486-90	
1385	EWV	TF159484	Ewerby Pump	Pump	27/05	KESTREL – in top – 5 eggs (4 ringed 22/06 EY87948-51)	
1386	SKG	TF194507	Damford Grounds Pump	Pump	22/06	BARN OWL – 4 chicks GR95491-94 KESTREL – in top – 2 chicks (+1 u/h egg) EY87946-47	
2802	BSG	TF236477	Gill Bridge (Barry Hall)	Pole	06/06	BARN OWL – 6 eggs (5 chicks 30/07 GV99973-71)	
2803	BSH	TF205529	Hart's Grounds (Andrew Means)	Pole	06/06	Jackdaw - fledged	
2804	BSM	TF204484	Maryland (Pocklington Bros)	Pole	06/06	Jackdaw - fledged	
3169	KSK	TF341370	Kirton Skeldyke	Pole	01/06	Jackdaw – 4 chicks EY87801-04	
3165	BFK	TF340359	Kirton Bucklegate	Pole	07/07	BARN OWL – 1 of 3 fledged chicks ringed GV99780	
3170	KME	TF281388	Kirton Meeres - Pick's Barn	Pole	01/06	Barn Owl – roosting pair, male = GV23001 (roost still 30/07)	

2969	BST	TF248464	Holland Fen (Two Hundred Fm)	Pole	06/06	BARN OWL – 2 tiny chicks + 1 egg (failed 05/07) KESTREL – in top – failed on eggs	
2971		TF199521	Chapel House (ex Bridge House)	Pole		Not checked	
2973	PAH	TF192484	South Kyme (Pattingden House)	Pole	27/05	BARN OWL – 3 eggs, fem=r/GV64014, m=r/GV74406 Failed 22/07	
1387	WYB	TF359400	Wyberton Marsh Pump	Pump	01/07	KESTREL – failed on 2 eggs, adult = ret/EY93428	
1388	KIR	TF343350	Kirton Marsh Pump	Pump	01/07	Jackdaw fledged, Stock Dove in topo	

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 3rd MARCH 2021

AGENDA ITEM 09

BARN OWL REPORT 2020

Report from Alan Ball:

2020 was the poorest Barn Owl breeding year on record, largely as a result of the prolonged cold weather 'Beast from the East' which actually killed probably more than 50% of our adult population and left those that survived in poor condition. Vole numbers were also at a low, so owls were not able to recover to breeding condition. The low vole numbers also affected Kestrel productivity leading many Kestrel pairs to lay part clutches and/or subsequently fail.

Knowing it was a very poor year, along with various Covid19 restrictions, meant that quite early on I decided that I would not carry out much monitoring during the year. The few sites I did check were concentrated in the Sleaford to Bourne area, so was able to at least check more Black Sluice IDB boxes than other drainage boards. As your scheme is the longest running scheme, I was very keen to get at least some data from these boxes.

Although things were all doom and gloom in 2020 both for owls as well as the Corona virus pandemic, some predictions indicate that 2021 may be a well above average year. We'll have to wait and see; especially as more cold weather may hit us in early March.

Year: 2020/2021 1/11-31/1 **BSIDB Owl Boxes**

Rake out bedding and replenish with fresh bark. Rake out top box and leave gravel. Replenish if needed.

STATION	Date	Box number	General condition	Repair work/parts needed?	Date replaced
ALLAN HOUSE		N/A			
BICKER EAU		N/A			
BICKER FEN	13.1.21	1380	good		
CHAIN BRIDGE		N/A			
WYBERTON MARSH	26.1.21	1387	good		
KIRTON MARSH		1388			new box on order
EWERBY	26.1.21	1385	good		
HECKINGTON	26.1.21	1383	good		
GREAT HALE	11.1.21	1381	good		
COOKS LOCK		N/A			
DAMFORD		1386	not checked		
SOUTH KYME		1384			new box on order
TRINITY COLLEGE	11.1.21	1382	good		2019
HELPRINGHAM	26.1.21	1379	good		
SWATON		1377			new box on order
HORBLING	11.1.21	1376	good		2017
BILLINGBOROUGH	12.1.21	1375	good		

STATION		Box number		Repair work/parts needed?	Date replaced
SEMPRINGHAM	12.1.21	1373	good		2018
DOWSBY FEN		N/A			
GOSBERTON	12.1.21	1372	good		
DOWSBY LODGE	12.1.21	1371	good		2018
RIPPINGALE	12.1.21	1370	needs repair	door missing	2019
DUNSBY	12.1.21	1369	good		
PINCHBECK		1368	not checked		
HACCONBY	12.1.21	1367	fair		
TWENTY		N/A			
DYKE FEN	12.1.21	1365	good		2019
QUADRING	27.1.21	1374	good		2017
DONINGTON N. I.	11.1.21	1378	good		
MALLARD HURN		N/A			
DONINGTON WYKES		N/A			
HOLLAND FEN		N/A			
SWINESHEAD		N/A			
BLACK HOLE		1366	not checked		2018

Annual Check of Black Sluice IDB nest boxes –2020

Boxes checked by Alan Ball on dates shown (much reduced monitoring in 2020 due to COVID-19)

Wildlife
Conservation
Partnership



Box	IPMR	Grid Ref	Location	Type	Date		Con
3290		TF154188	Richardson's Borrow Pit, Twenty	Pole		Not checked	
3291		TF173211	Gandy's Borrow Pit, Twenty	Pole		Not checked	
3292		TF138195	Cook's Borrow Pit, Bourne N.Fen	Pole		Not checked	
1365	DYF	TF152227	Dyke Fen Pump	Pump	20/06	Barn Owl – roosting – male r/GV45664	
1366	RSI	TF167251	West Pinchbeck (Black Hole Dr)	Pump	01/06	Jackdaw – 2 chicks EA13579-80	
1367	RSI	TF166257	Haconby Fen Pump	Pump	01/06	Jackdaw – 3 chicks EA13576-78	
1368	RSI	TF166266	West Pinchbeck (Starlode Drove)	Pump	29/05	Top – KESTREL – 4 eggs (3 chicks 20/06 EA13847-49) Box – Jackdaw – 2 chicks EA13538-39	
1369	RSJ	TF165271	Dunsby Fen Pump	Pump	26/05	Jackdaws top and box 5 chicks EA13551-55	
1370	RSJ	TF164275	Rippingale Fen Pump	Pump			
1371	BFF	TF162284	Dowsby Fen Pump	Pump			
1293	BFF	TF162284	Dowsby Fen pole	Mk 7			
1372	DOF	TF167294	Gosberton Pump	Pump			
1373	RSQ	TF164318	Neslam Fen Pump	Pump			
1374	RSV	TF168331	Quadring Fen Pump	Pump			

1375	RSV	TF168333	Billingborough Fen Pump	Pump	08/06	Empty – not used	
1376	RSG	TF170346	Horbling Fen Pump	Pump	26/05	Top - KESTREL – 2 eggs abandoned Box – Jackdaws – 2 chicks	
1377	RST	TF174364	Swaton Fen Pump	Pump	01/06	Jackdaw – 1 chick EA13574	
1378	RST	TF176370	Donington Ing Pump	Pump			
1379	RST	TF177375	Helpringham Fen Pump	Pump	01/06	Jackdaw – nests – box cleared	
1380	RSH	TF186397	Bicker Fen Pump	Pump			
1381	RSU	TF206425	Great Hale Pump	Pump			
1383	HKF	TF185466	Heckington Pump	Pump	29/05	BARN OWL – 2 eggs & 2 chicks (1 chick 06/07 GY13275) Top – Jackdaw – 1 chick EA13526	
1384	SKF	TF207469	South Kyme Pump	Pump	29/05	Jackdaw – 3 chicks EA13527-29	
1385	EWV	TF159484	Ewerby Pump	Pump	06/07	Feral Pigeon and Jackdaws - fledged	
1386	SKG	TF194507	Damford Grounds Pump	Pump	06/07	Stock Dove adult EA13675	
2802	BSG	TF236477	Gill Bridge (Barry Hall)	Pole	20/07	Top – KESTREL – fledged Box – Barn Owl - roost	
2803	BSH	TF205529	Hart's Grounds (Andrew Means)	Pole	04/06	Top – KESTREL – 3 eggs abandoned Box – Jackdaw – 2 chicks EA13809-10	
2804	BSM	TF204484	Maryland (Pocklington Bros)	Pole			
3169	KSK	TF341370	Kirton Skeldyke	Pole			
3165	BFK	TF340359	Kirton Bucklegate	Pole			

3170	KME	TF281388	Kirton Meeres - Pick's Barn	Pole	15/05	Roosting Barn Owl – male r/GV23001	
2969	BST	TF248464	Holland Fen (Two Hundred Fm)	Pole	06/07	Not used	
2971		TF199521	Chapel House (ex Bridge House)	Pole			
2973	PAH	TF192484	South Kyme (Pattingden House)	Pole	06/07	Top – KESTREL – 4 eggs – failed Box – Stock Dove adult EA13676	
1387	WYB	TF359400	Wyberton Marsh Pump	Pump			
1388	KIR	TF343350	Kirton Marsh Pump	Pump			

Barn Owl male retrapped at Kirton Meeres on 15/05/2020 had been ringed there as the breeding male on 01/06/2019

Barn Owl male retrapped at Dyke Fen on 15/05/2010 was the breeding male there on 26/05/2019
– it had been ringed as a chick on Dunsby Fen 4 km north on 23/07/2016

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 3rd MARCH 2021

AGENDA ITEM 10

AMBER HILL BUTTERFLY GARDEN 2019 SUMMARY

For your records, we are pleased to submit this summary of the butterfly activity at our specialist Amber Hill Butterfly Garden in 2019.

After the hot summer of 2018, during which many butterflies performed very well, we more or less expected a crash in overall numbers as is so often the case after these population explosions. The season started very early, with a spring like February that was not carried on. In fact, as the summer progressed the weather was very much against butterflies, and wildlife in general, with rain being the main culprit. We are sure you do not need informing that June was the wettest on record, September wettest since 2000, and November produced extensive national flooding, with autumn being classed as the wettest ever. We have no control over the weather but we did our best to retain the specialist habitat types that the butterflies need for their survival.

On the whole butterflies fared reasonably well and most people will remember this year as being one of those special Painted Lady years, whereupon this well documented migrant butterfly arrives in the UK in bewildering numbers – tens of thousands. It certainly helped lift the spirits in this damp season.

The other well-known migrant species, the Red Admiral, did very well too, with 2019 eventually being given the honour of their best year here at Windmill Lodge.

The Silver-washed Fritillary continues to spread throughout the county, with a female recorded in the garden this year. Hopefully she had mated and laid eggs on the violets carefully planted under trees as the butterfly requires. It is only a matter of time.

The highlight species of last year – Brown Argus and Common Blue – did ok, especially the latter, but nothing like last year, which was expected following a population explosion of such magnitude.

Brimstone and Large Skipper are in very worrying numbers and we will do our best to rectify their decline, once we establish the reasons. It is not just our garden, but the region in general.

We are still awaiting the specialist ecological surveys for our garden, we will try and follow this up this year with the relevant organisations.

We thank you for your continued recognition and support for our efforts.

The following colour coded list details the individual species status for 2019. Green denotes doing well, orange is no noticeable change, and red are the worrying ones. Note that the first four species on this list are the day flying moths, which accompany the butterflies.

Phil and Ros Bowler.

Individual Species Status 2019

Six-spot Burnet	Its best year ever.
Mint Moth	At last an improvement. Still low numbers though.
Pale Straw Pearl	Its second subsequent worst ever year.
Silver Y	A poor year compared to Red Admiral and Painted Lady, the other migrants. We have of course no control over the number of migrant butterflies and moths.
Small Skipper	Remains much scarcer than the Essex Skipper.
Essex Skipper	Slightly down on last year.
Large Skipper	STATE OF EMERGENCY. Priority help needed.
Brimstone	The last two years have recorded alarmingly low numbers. Caterpillar predation suspected.
Large White	Lower numbers this year.
Small White	An ok year, but its lowest numbers since 2012.
Green-veined White	Following its best year to date, massive expected drop.
Orange Tip	Holding its own: average numbers.
Small Copper	Another good year, although a disappointing third brood.
Brown Argus	Much lower numbers than expected, following its boom year, and compared to Common Blue.
Common Blue	Almost as good as last year. Excellent performance.
Holly Blue	Holding its own.
Silver-washed Fritillary	Only one noted this year but a female.
Red Admiral	Its best year ever.
Painted Lady	A special Painted Lady year, though not as prolific here as 2003/2009.
Small Tortoiseshell	Slight improvement. Nationally down in numbers.
Peacock	Much better but still way off its former numbers.
Comma	Its best year since 2013.
Wall Brown	Disappointingly still no return. Only recorded at coastal sites in recent years.
Speckled Wood	Following its best ever year, expectedly down but ok.
Gatekeeper	Second best year.
Meadow Brown	Major resurgence, its second best year.
Ringlet	Surprisingly down.
Small Heath	Disappointingly no sightings. Very rare in the region.

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 3rd MARCH 2021

AGENDA ITEM 10

AMBER HILL BUTTERFLY GARDEN 2020 SUMMARY

Here follows our annual report to you concerning the summary of the butterfly numbers seen at our garden site during the 2020 season. Ironically, considering the much greater time spent in the garden due to stay at home and lockdown, we saw very little of special significance. This is not though a worry, as butterfly populations do vary greatly from year to year, and many species suffered from the excessively wet winter and early spring. At least the additional garden time meant that we could spend more time on general garden maintenance and upkeep.

As usual, our butterflies mirrored the activity in nearby habitats and nature reserves. This is always a good sign that we are doing the right thing. We were particularly pleased that Black Sluice was still able to maintain the dyke bank as before, because this year the wild flowers growing on it were an absolutely stunning display. Many people passing by remarked on it. Our meadow strip at the top of the dyke bank did particularly well this year – Six-spot Burnet, Essex Skipper, Common Blue, and our flagship the Brown Argus are all meadow butterflies that did particularly well once again. The Small Heath is another meadow species that has been in very low numbers since 2001, but this year there was sign of a comeback on our meadow. Fingers crossed, as this is a BAPS species. Talking of which, we have seen Long-eared Bats this year as well as the more usual Pippistrelle. Bird numbers and varieties have been excellent, especially the Kingfisher along our stretch of dyke. All eleven nest boxes located around the woodland garden were inhabited, and included Long-tailed Tits in two of the boxes.

Other butterfly species that did very well this year are the Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Gatekeeper, and Ringlet, with the Speckled Wood (a woodland species) having its second ever best year here. So both main habitat types – meadow and woodland – are performing very well.

The weather redeemed itself after the record breaking wet winter months, with record breaking sunshine and temperatures during March, April, and May. This led to very early emergences of most species, which in turn had the knock-on effect of a noticeable early end to the season in August, with only a few hangers on in September and October.

The project remains highly successful as a conservation exercise and we continue to receive acknowledgements from the wildlife trust and Butterfly Conservation. If conditions allow, we would be only too pleased to give yourselves another presentation. Please pass these records on to anyone else within or outside of your organisation who you feel would be interested.

Thank you for your continued support.

Phil and Ros Bowler.



Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

TECHNICAL NOTE

28th May 2020

The Environment Bill Challenges and Opportunities

Sofi Lloyd

Please note: The Environment Bill may still be subject to change and amendment as it passes through Parliament so the following note is based on its current draft position.

Introduction

The 25-year environment plan, published in January 2018 defined the 4 areas of environmental conservation that the UK Government deemed a priority; air quality, waste and resource efficiency, water and biodiversity. It was clear from these priorities areas that the delivery of this strategy was sure to impact the land drainage sector significantly. The finer detail on what will be required of IDBs as a Public Authority is only now being set out, through the developing Environment Bill. The Government's commitment to delivering the targets set against these 4 priority areas is strong and is set to become legally binding with the enactment of the Bill later in 2020.

Some aspects of the Environment Bill which have direct impact on IDB's are already quite well understood and reported such as the provision to allow an IDB district to be expanded or new districts to be created. Similarly, the changes to the way land is valued and therefore drainage rates and special levy are calculated are also recognized and will be welcomed. However there are some developing elements, some more subtle or indirect within the Environment Bill which are likely to have an impact on the day-to-day operations of an IDB and some which could provide opportunity for the sector. ADA has reviewed the Bill in full, in its current draft form, and presents below a brief summary of these elements.

Biodiversity Assessment and Reporting

Part 6 of the Environment Bill sets out the processes which will combine to help the Government meet their legally binding targets around biodiversity. Clause 93 strengthens the duty set out by section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to cover the enhancement, as well as the conservation, of biodiversity, and requires public authorities to actively carry out strategic assessments of the actions they can take to enhance and conserve biodiversity. Clause 94 details the requirement for public authorities to produce a report on the actions taken to comply with the new duty and it should be expected that some of this data will need to be quantitative. The first report must be for a period of no longer than 3 years but subsequent reports can be for a period of up to 5 years. In practice, it is likely that the completion of the Biodiversity Action Plan template, as

revised and updated by the ADA biodiversity working group, will adequately demonstrate that an IDB has made this assessment and has identified the conservation and enhancement actions it plans to take. The biodiversity metrics which are also in development with the same ADA biodiversity working group and is hoped will be rolled out in 2021 are being designed with requirement for quantitative data in mind also. The initial biodiversity reports are expected to be produced within 1 year of the enforcement of the clause, rather than the Enactment of the Bill, and we don't yet have sight of either date. However, as the assessments and reports produced by IDB's are required to incorporate the priorities set out by the Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which are not yet up and running, the due date for these initial outputs may not be for some time, perhaps years yet. IDB's should use the interim period to fully engage with the Biodiversity Action Planning and metrics process so that they are ahead of the game and familiar with collecting, analyzing and reporting this type of data.

Nature Recovery Networks

The development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) as required within clause 95 of the Bill is reminiscent of the local Biodiversity Action Plans of past times. The LNRS, to be prepared mainly by Local Authorities will establish which habitats and species are deemed to be a priority for conservation in that area and where there are opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. An IDB as a Public Authority will be expected to align its own individual Biodiversity Action Plan with these priorities. It is not yet defined when these LNRS are expected to be published so it is likely that the initial BAP's developed by IDBs will not be able to take those priorities into account. However is expected that a LNRS areas will largely mirror those of Local Authorities and national parks etc. so having a broad understanding of their current or historic habitat and species priorities, where published, is likely to get IDB's close to the target.

Biodiversity Net Gain, Credits & Metrics

Clauses 90-92 appear to be an attempt to bring together the concepts of biodiversity offsetting, biodiversity net gain and biodiversity valuation and set some nationally consistent parameters to encourage and enable their practical application. Biodiversity net gain is to be made mandatory for new developments under clause 90 and these net gain sites are to be listed on a register and must be maintained for 30 years as set out under clause 91. This should help to address the lack of management of compensatory biodiversity areas and features over recent years following development which have frustrated many. It may even provide some opportunity for IDB's in offering long-term maintenance contracts for relevant net-gain sites which are linked to IDB interests and operations, perhaps even SUDS, but this needs to be explored further to identify opportunities and constraints.

Clause 92 sets out the plans for the development of a biodiversity credit purchase system. It suggests that developers will be able to pay a determined sum to fund biodiversity enhancement, most probably off-site if (it is assumed) it is deemed not be possible to achieve a net gain position within the development. The Bill sets out a restricted range of activities on which the Government can spend monies received in this regard, namely only for biodiversity net gain projects such as habitat enhancement or land purchase for conservation areas. This



may present another opportunity for public authorities in terms of a potential pot of money held centrally or locally which could be drawn from to fund activities which enhance biodiversity in the local area and perhaps within IDB assets.

To underpin this biodiversity credit and net gain system, a robust set of metrics are required in order to consistently apply a biodiversity value to a wide range of habitats. This beginnings of this valuation system is set out in schedule 7A. Firstly it is deemed that the biodiversity created by a development must have a value 10% greater (or more) than that of the on-site biodiversity prior to the development. Secondly, it makes provisions for the development of “the” Biodiversity Metric as a means of valuing habitats as a proxy of biodiversity. Whilst it is not explicitly stated in the Bill, this metric is likely to be the Biodiversity Metric 2.0, developed by DEFRA, which is already available for use and testing in its beta format and is due for formal release in December 2020. The metric is complex and is not intended to replace formal ecological expertise, but rather to be a tool used by them, consistently across the UK’s planning system. In broad terms, the metric calculates biodiversity units using the size of a parcel of habitat, i.e. its area or linear length, and its quality. Again, opportunities could present itself to IDB’s if the value of certain types of habitat managed by IDBs could be determined. Knowing and understanding the difference between the current and potential biodiversity value of any IDB-managed habitat can assist with identifying enhancement actions needed and could also create a funding-ready net-gain project available and attractive for support by developers or their biodiversity credits.

Conservation covenants

Part 7 of the Bill, clause 102, sets out how land owners will be able to enter into a voluntary but legally binding agreement, paid or otherwise, to assign a particular piece of land to be managed for conservation and the public good, by a responsible body. The default term for such covenants is indefinite, in order to secure the purpose and condition of the land through successive ownership but can be negotiated. Leasehold land is also eligible if more than 7 years of the term remain.

At this stage it is unclear whether an IDB could apply to act as a responsible body. The detail suggests that such a body must demonstrate that at least some of its main purpose or function relate to conservation and it could be reasonably determined that an IDB fulfils this criteria. Could there be opportunities here for IDBs to secure land for the long term without purchase to be set aside for multifunctional wetland habitat creation and temporary flood water storage? The concept certainly appears on face value to fit the criteria in terms of furthering conservation and for public benefit. We await the finer detail but perhaps in anticipation, some thought could be given to the usefulness of the provision to IDB’s.

Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to manage environmental governance

A new public body, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) is to be established to strengthen environmental accountability and to monitor the progress towards the Governments environmental improvement targets such as those set out in the 25 year Environment Plan. IDB’s as public authorities will be expected to co-operate with the OEP and provide the environmental data it requests and as set out in the Environment Bill. The body will have scrutiny and advice functions as well as complaints and enforcement mechanisms relating to

the failure of public bodies to comply with Environmental law. The scope and extent of these mechanisms are set out in detail in the Environment Bill part 1 chapter 2.

Abstraction

There are changes due to be made to abstraction licensing through the Enactment of the Bill. The 2 main changes detailed in clause 80 involve the ability for the EA, from 2028, to remove the consistently unused headroom from a license i.e. revising the license to reflect what has historically been used in actuality, and the ability to revoke a license if it is deemed that the revision is necessary to protect the environment. Importantly, no liability for compensation will be made in future for either revision or revocation. This in practical terms will mean that food producers and manufacturers will have to adapt to become more resilient to changes in water provision. Anticipated responses to these changes are wide-ranging. Some landowners may look to secure a more reliable water source to help sustain their irrigation needs for example, through the creation of on-farm water storage or adapt their business to be less reliant on water. IDB's should be considering whether they have any contributions they could potentially make to land-owners and businesses to adapt to these changes in the future through their infrastructure, networks and expertise and consider the impacts of permanently reduced abstraction needs in environmentally vulnerable areas.

Collaborative water resource planning

Part 5, clause 75 of the bill requires that statutory water resource management planning should no longer be undertaken individually by, for example, water companies, but that it should be undertaken collaboratively with all stakeholders reliant on the provision of water. We have already seen good progress in this regard with the establishment of regional water resource partnerships such as WRE. The plans produced so far by WRE have IDB's very much at their heart and many of the proposed solutions rely on the support of IDB's, their assets and capabilities. IDB's should actively engage with their local water resource planning partnership in order to put forward their case and contributions to the development of this catchment approach to water resource management.

Conclusion

The above may be useful in helping IDB's get ahead of the game with the challenges and opportunities presented by the Environment Bill. It is not expected that major changes will be made to the Bill in its current form, as it has to date passed through its second reading in the commons unopposed. However with the current pandemic in mind, there are many uncertainties at this time.

Association of Drainage Authorities Lincolnshire Branch Environment Committee Minutes 20.11.2019



Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

Present:

Paul Skinner (PSk)	Committee Chairman Black Sluice IDB and Witham 4 th IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)
Chris Manning (CM)	Committee Vice Chairman Water Management Consortium (<i>Environmental Officer</i>)
Jane Picking (JP)	Committee Secretary Welland & Deepings IDB (<i>Secretary</i>)
Sarah Baker (SB)	Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
Peter Beckenham (PB)	Middle Level Commissioners IDB (<i>Conservation Officer</i>)
Richard Chadd (RC)	Environment Agency (<i>Biologist</i>)
David Hutchinson (DH)	Environment Agency
Fiona Scott (FS)	Witham & Humber IDBs (<i>Environment Technician</i>)
Huw Sharman (HS)	Witham 4 th IDB (<i>Engineer</i>)
Tammy Smalley (TS)	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (<i>Head of Conservation</i>)
Brian Tidswell (BT)	Welland & Deepings IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)
Ian Warsap (IW)	Black Sluice IDB (<i>CEO</i>)
Nicholas Watts (NW)	Welland & Deepings IDB (<i>Board Member</i>)

1.	Apologies for absence	Alison Briggs, Shire Group of IDBs Nicola Craven, Lincolnshire Rivers Trust Karen Daft (KD), Welland & Deepings IDB Christopher Duku, Black Sluice IDB Amanda Jenkins (AJ), Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Steve Moncaster, Water Resources East Richard Thompson, George Thompson (Farms) Ltd	
2.	Chairman's announcements and welcome	Introductions took place and PSk welcomed attendees to the meeting.	
3.	To approve the minutes of the last meeting held 20 th March 2019	Minutes approved and signed by PSk as a true record.	
4.	Matters arising and actions	NW advised his paper is still in the process of being rewritten.	NW



Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

			ACTION
5.	Feedback on summer workshop “How to improve pollinators on IDB-managed banks and assets”	<p>This year’s summer workshop, “How to improve pollinators on IDB-managed banks and assets”, was held at Willow Tree Fen on the 11th July. Eighteen people had attended which was a good turn-out. Those who came along agreed that the day had proved to be very interesting.</p> <p>Brief details are outlined below:</p> <p>In the morning, a presentation was given by AJ, based on trials carried out by Caroline Tero and her team at the EA, to improve habitat for pollinators on EA-managed banks and assets. Many IDBs have expressed an interest in establishing a similar project and creating pollinator strips along pumping stations.</p> <p>A presentation on seed mixes and how to establish them for pollinators was then given by Henry Louth and George Wallis of Boston Seeds (https://www.bostonseeds.com/). Those attending received packets of seed mixes from Boston Seeds for trialling.</p> <p>After lunch, the party travelled to Welland & Deepings IDB’s Pode Hole site. KD explained that a joint proposal with Middle Level Commissioners and York Consortium DBs had been submitted to Defra to take part in their Environmental & Land Management Scheme Trials (ELMS). The basis of this bid was to encourage/improve pollinators on various strips of land owned by IDBs.</p> <p>Progress report on IDBs and pollinator sites given at this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welland & Deepings IDB: NW advised that he and KD are working with AJ. • Black Sluice IDB: IW reported that one of his Board’s employees had identified a possible location of grass margins for each of his Board’s 34 pumping stations. • Witham 4th IDB: HS advised that a soil mound at this Board’s Hobhole site would more than likely be used as a pollinator site. <p>Thanks were expressed to AJ and JP for organising the workshop.</p>	



Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

			ACTION
6.	"Operation Water Vole"	<p>CM advised that he had been working with FS and SB to produce a report/paper called "Operation Water Vole".</p> <p>CM gave an excellent presentation on their findings. In brief:</p> <p>Water voles have disappeared from 70% of known sites in the seven years between national surveys in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A further 30% decline was reported between 2006 and 2015.</p> <p>The water vole was shown as virtually absent in Lincolnshire in 2006 when the Water Vole Conservation Handbook was published.</p> <p>The American mink, an invasive non-native species (INNS), is widely blamed for the decline of water voles. Water birds can also suffer decline from mink predation during the breeding season.</p> <p>Discussions then took place regarding Board's water vole monitoring methods and delivering mink control.</p>	
7.	Water Vole Survey and Handling Training Course	<p>JP reported that the Water Vole Survey and Handling Training Course with Derek Gow, planned to take place on the 20th June and cancelled because of the emergency procedures in place, has been rearranged to 18th June 2020.</p> <p>Further details will be sent out to IDBs in the new year.</p>	JP



Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

			ACTION
8.	GLNP Update	<p>SB reported on the following:</p> <p><u>Staffing changes</u></p> <p>GLNP manager, Fran Smith, has announced she will leave her role on 31st March 2020. Fran has been managing the Partnership on a part-time basis since April 2018 and will further reduce her working days to two days a week for her remaining time.</p> <p>The GLNP's Steering Group will be discussing options for Fran's replacement and an announcement will be made in due course.</p> <p><u>LERC Search – one year on</u></p> <p>LERC Search completed its first full year of operation on 31st October and a total of 173 users have requested data through the system over the last 12 months.</p> <p>Since it launched, 509 data searches have been undertaken – 436 of which were done using LERC Search. This compares with the 12 months prior to its launch, during which time 465 searches were undertaken – 246 using the previous online request form.</p> <p>The Team is working on a monitoring report to evaluate the success of the new system after its first year.</p> <p><u>Position Statements</u></p> <p>Position statements for the GLNP's health and tourism workstreams were agreed at the annual Forum in November.</p>	

Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

			ACTION
		<p>The documents enable the Team to undertake advocacy work and put together consultation responses on behalf of the Partnership.</p> <p>Work is now ongoing to achieve sign up from individual Partner organisations so that the documents represent a formal GLNP position.</p> <p><u>Nature Strategy beyond 2020</u></p> <p>Planning is now underway to develop a new nature strategy for Greater Lincolnshire to supersede the current year Biodiversity Action Plan which comes to an end this year.</p> <p>The GLNP Steering Group has set up a task and finish group to help guide the process and assist the team in the development of the new document.</p> <p>A workshop is being planned for March 2020 to which all Partners will be invited to attend and have their say on what the strategy should include and ensure it can be effectively delivered. Their input is crucial to the process.</p>	
9.	Witham Partnership & EA Update	<p>NC sent apologies for being unable to attend. DH provided updates for Witham Partnership and EA.</p> <p>A small working group has been established to consider new approaches to mink control in an effort to conserve Lincolnshire's water vole population. The group, formed out of the Rivers and Wetlands BAP Habitat Group is looking at submitting grant bids to test the new technology and understand how well it works in rural Lincolnshire before looking at how it could be scaled up across the area. The pilot will also help to provide a better understanding of water vole and mink populations as well as potential impacts on other species such as kingfisher and moorhen. Attempts are also being made to raise awareness at a national level of the need for a coordinated approach towards mink eradication.</p>	

Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

			ACTION
		<p>The Witham Partnership have been awarded their first Heritage Lottery Fund Grant. The project, 'Reconnecting the Witham' will give the people of Grantham the opportunity to learn more about the Witham and the wildlife that lives there. As well as this project, a rock ramp fish pass in Queen Elizabeth Park is being built, together with some habitat improvements alongside Dysart Park in Grantham.</p> <p>As well as the above, with the aid of volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Branston Bird and Bat Box trail has been created – installing 15 nest/roost boxes around the village. • hundreds of invasive Himalayan Balsam plants along Nettleham Beck in Sudbrooke and Riseholme have been 'bashed'. 	
10.	"Regional Water Management Plan" South Lincs Water Partnership	<p>Unfortunately, Steve Moncaster, had had to send his apologies due to a last-minute business issue.</p> <p>JP to invite Steve Moncaster again to speak in 2020.</p> <p>TS reported that Andy Gee is the new chairman of SLWP; he has been seconded from LCC for three days a week.</p> <p>IW, who sits on the SLWP committee, mentioned that seven sites are being considered in and around the BSIDB and W&DIDB areas. The size of the reservoir is likely to be similar to Grafton Water.</p>	JP
11.	Fish & Eel Regulations	CM reported that progress is being made, albeit slowly, as this is a complex legal process.	
12.	IDB updates on any environmental issues	JP reported that the Welland & Deepings IDB'S joint bid with Middle Level Commissioners and York Consortium DBs submitted to Defra to take part in their Environmental & Land Management Scheme Trials (ELMS) had been unsuccessful. However, plans to plant pollinator strips are still going ahead.	



Wellington House, Manby Park, Manby, Louth, LN11 8UU

			ACTION
13.	Update on remaining groups	<p><u>Fens for the Future</u></p> <p>National Peat Strategy. TS advised that Defra and Natural England have set up five peat pilots in England, one of which is in the East Anglian fens. This project will work with IDBs to look at water flows on and around the fens. It will also bring in long-term sustainability of peat management opportunities which will assist with the creation of the Lowland Agricultural Peat Taskforce.</p> <p><u>ADA Technical Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA's Health & Safety Questionnaire will be rolled out to IDBs. • Biodiversity Action Plans will need to be reviewed and updated by 2020 – currently awaiting guidance. Subjects for consideration are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollinators Linear reed fringe Wetland habitat Water vole Eels/migratory fish Barn owl Farmland birds Inns Local wildlife sites/partnership working or similar 	
14.	AOB	<p>TS mentioned that LWT is the Catchment Based Approach host for the River Ancholme this year.</p> <p>Meeting dates/venues for 2020 are to be confirmed.</p>	

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 4:20 p.m.

Chairman



Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board

Biodiversity Action Plan

2021-2026

1. Statement

This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been prepared by the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board in accordance with the commitment in the Implementation Plan of the Defra Internal Drainage Board Review of 2007 for internal drainage boards (IDBs) to produce their own Biodiversity Action Plans. It demonstrates the Board's commitment to fulfilling its duty as a public body to conserve and enhance biodiversity under various legislation and policy including, but not limited to, the Environment Bill (Act) 2020, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the 25 Year Environment Plan and Water Framework Directive.

Importantly, it reflects the Board's aspiration to maximise the support it provides to biodiversity, particularly priority UK species and habitats, and the wider environment in general through its day-to-day activities, by setting clear objectives, actions and targets.

The Board has adopted this Biodiversity Action Plan as one of its policies and is committed to its implementation. It will review the plan periodically and update it as appropriate.

3rd March 2021

.....
Keith Casswell

Chairman of the Board

Paul Holmes

Environment Committee Chairman

This Biodiversity Action Plan is a public statement by the Board of its biodiversity objectives and the methods by which it intends to achieve them.

We would welcome appropriate involvement in the delivery of the Plan from interested organisations, companies, and individuals.

You can contact us about this Biodiversity Action Plan by writing to the following address:

Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board

Station Road

Swineshead

Boston

Lincolnshire

PE20 3PW

Or via email: mailbox@blacksluiceidb.gov.uk

Further information is available on the Board's website: www.blacksluiceidb.gov.uk

Contents

1. Statement	2
2. Introduction	5
2.1 What is Biodiversity and why is it important?	5
2.2 Legislative Background	5
2.3 Policy & Strategic Background	6
2.4 Purpose	6
2.5 Vision	7
2.6 Aims	7
3. The IDB BAP Process	8
3.1 The Biodiversity Audit	8
3.2 Objectives, Targets and Actions	8
3.3 Monitoring and Reporting	8
4. The Biodiversity Audit	9
4.1 The Black Sluice Internal Drainage District Overview	9
4.2 Map of Audit Area (Drainage District)	10
4.3 Geology	11
4.4 Landscape Character	11
4.5 Landscape Designations	11
4.6 Sites and Monuments	11
4.7 Tree Preservation Orders	11
4.8 Statutory Nature Conservation Sites	12
4.8.1 Internationally Designated Sites	12
4.8.2 Nationally Designated Sites	12
4.8.3 Local Nature Reserves	12
4.8.4 Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites	13
4.9 Habitat Audit Summary	14
4.10 Species Audit Summary	15
4.11 Invasive Non-native Species Summary	16
4.12 Water Level Management Plans	17
5. Habitat and Species Action Plans	18
5.1 Introduction	18
5.2 Habitat Action Plans	18
5.2.1 Hedgerows	18
5.2.1.1 National and Local Targets	18
5.2.1.2 IDB Objectives	18
5.2.1.3 IDB Actions	19
5.2.2 Reedbeds and Drainage Ditches	19
5.2.2.1 National and Local Targets	19
5.2.2.2 IDB Objectives	20
5.2.2.3 IDB Actions	20
5.2.3 Wet Woodland	21
5.2.3.1 National and Local Targets	21
5.2.3.2 IDB Objectives	22
5.2.3.3 IDB Actions	22
5.3 Species Action Plans	23
5.3.1 Bank & Reed nesting Birds	23
5.3.1.1 National and Local Targets	23
5.3.1.2 IDB Objectives	23
5.3.1.3 IDB Actions	23
5.3.2 Bats	24
5.3.2.1 National and Local Targets	24
5.3.2.2 IDB Objectives	24
5.3.2.3 IDB Actions	24
5.3.3 Water Vole	25
5.3.3.1 National and Local Targets	25
5.3.3.2 IDB Objectives	25
5.3.3.3 IDB Actions	25

5.3.4	Kingfisher	26
5.3.4.1	National and Local Targets	26
5.3.4.2	IDB Objectives	26
5.3.4.3	IDB Actions	27
5.3.5	Barn Owl	27
5.3.5.1	National and Local Targets	27
5.3.5.2	IDB Objectives	27
5.3.5.3	IDB Actions	28
5.3.6	Eel	28
5.3.6.1	National and Local Targets	28
5.3.6.2	IDB Objectives	28
5.3.6.3	IDB Actions	29
5.3.7	Otter	29
5.3.7.1	National and Local Targets	29
5.3.7.2	IDB Objectives	29
5.3.7.3	IDB Actions	30
5.3.8	Grass Snake	30
5.3.8.1	National and Local Targets	30
5.3.8.2	IDB Objectives	31
5.3.8.3	IDB Actions	31
6.	Procedural Action Plan	32
6.1	Introduction	32
6.2	Objectives and Targets	32
6.3	IDB Actions	32
7.	Implementation	34
8.	Monitoring	34
9.	Reporting	34
10.	Appendices	36
10.1	Appendix 1	36
10.2	Appendix 2	36
10.3	Appendix 3	36
10.4	Appendix 4	36

2. Introduction

2.1 What is Biodiversity and why is it important?

Biodiversity can be defined simply as “the variety of life” and encompasses the whole spectrum of living organisms, including plants, birds, mammals and insects. It includes both common and rare species, as well as the genetic diversity within species. Biodiversity also refers to the habitats and ecosystems that support these species.

Biodiversity is part of our natural capital, a vital resource providing:

- Supply of ecosystem services including water, nutrients, climate change mitigation, flood mitigation, carbon storage and pollination;
- Life resources including food, medicine, energy and raw materials;
- Improved health and well-being;
- Landscape and cultural distinctiveness;
- Direct economic benefits from biodiversity resources and ‘added value’ through local economic activity and tourism;
- Educational, recreational and amenity resources.

This Biodiversity Action Plan is part of a much larger biodiversity framework that encompasses international, national and local levels of legislation and policy and which also include ecosystem services and climate change.

2.2 Legislative Background

When carrying out its functions, an IDB must pay particular regard to the effect on the environment. Some environmental legislation relates specifically to maintaining or restoring the condition of protected sites or protecting certain species, but there are also statutory duties for IDBs to conserve and enhance biodiversity in and alongside the watercourses they manage and the wider landscape.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on IDBs to conserve biodiversity. The Environment Bill (Act) 2020, when enacted, extends this duty on IDBs to also enhance biodiversity and report periodically on its actions. Therefore, as a public authority, every IDB must consider what action it can take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England.

Below is a list of key environmental legislation (by no means an exhaustive list) relevant to the work of IDBs:

- The Environment Bill (Act) 2020
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009
- Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 40)

- The Environmental Impact Assessment (Land Drainage Improvement Works) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
- Land Drainage Act 1994
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975

2.3 Policy & Strategic Background

In 1992 at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit, the UK signed the Convention on Biological Diversity which pledged its commitment to contribute towards halting the worldwide loss of habitats and species and their genetic resources. At the 2010 biodiversity summit in Nagoya, Japan, the UK re-affirmed this commitment and the “Biodiversity 2020” white paper was developed setting out how those commitments would be put into action.

The 2010 report by Sir John Lawton “Making Space for Nature” set out that ecological networks were required in order to halt and reverse the declines seen in many threatened species and habitats. The report succinctly made clear that these ecological networks needed to be bigger, more frequent, better in quality, and more joined up in order to be successful in their ambitions.

The concept of Nature Recovery Networks featured in the Government’s Biodiversity 2020 strategy (2011) and 25 Year Environment Plan (2018). The Environment Bill (Act) 2020 and the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) expands this concept by also take into account the value of the ecological services provided by non-priority species and habitats such as the carbon sequestration of wetlands, the flood alleviation of tree-planting in the uplands and the wellbeing benefits brought about by green space. As such, this BAP presents the actions planned by the IDB to support both priority and non-priority species.

International reports such as by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) have found that climate change in particular is considered to be one of the biggest threats to our biodiversity now, and in the future. Supporting the continuity, connectivity and quality of habitat through management, restoration and expansion may help even the less mobile species to adapt more easily to climate change. This BAP presents the actions the IDB can take to support climate resilience for biodiversity.

2.4 Purpose

This BAP has been produced to demonstrate how the IDB fulfils its legal obligations to conserve and enhance biodiversity and sets out targets and actions that contribute to local, national and international strategies and policies.

While the IDB has a statutory duty to have regard for the environment whilst carrying out their functions, for example on or within drainage assets such as watercourses and their banks, the IDB

has also to give consideration to how they can contribute to the enhancement of the wider environment.

It is not within the scope of this document to set out the IDBs' objectives and actions in relation to wider environmental topics, such as reducing carbon emissions or reducing waste. However, strategies to address such topics may be mentioned in connection to the enhancement of habitats and species, such as peatland restoration and carbon sequestration.

The opportunity to work together to support and enhance biodiversity in partnership with other organisations is sought wherever possible, as the IDB recognises the additional value working in such ways can bring to the overall objectives.

The intention is that biodiversity is fully integrated into the Board's activities, policies and procedures such as annual maintenance programmes, capital works projects, training and communications.

2.5 Vision

Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board's vision is:

To maintain a catchment where thriving wildlife is an integral part of delivering efficient and effective water-level management.

2.6 Aims

The aims of this BAP are:

- To ensure that opportunities for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are fully considered throughout the IDB's operations;
- To enable more effective monitoring and reporting of progress and outcomes;
- To ensure that Priority species and habitats receive effective action within defined targets within the drainage district;
- To identify targets and appropriate actions for other habitats and species of local importance within the drainage district. This includes invasive non- native species (INNS);
- To contribute to local environmental partnerships such as the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GLNP) to ensure that programmes and priorities for biodiversity conservation are aligned and maintained in the long term;
- To raise awareness within the IDB and locally of the need for biodiversity conservation, and to communicate with the local and wider community what actions the IDB are undertaking to support biodiversity.

3. The IDB BAP Process

3.1 The Biodiversity Audit

The Black Sluice IDB has conducted a biodiversity audit of its drainage district (Figure 1) and identified those habitats and species that would benefit from particular management or actions by the IDB.

This BAP focuses on nationally important priority habitats and species, that is to say those that have been deemed of 'principal importance' in England under the NERC Act 2006. However, those that are not priority species or habitats, but may be locally significant for a variety of reasons have also been considered. Invasive non-native species have also been included.

The information gathered, which is presented in later sections, has been used to develop this IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.2 Objectives, Targets and Actions

For each relevant habitat and species, conservation objectives have been identified. The action plan then details individual actions required to achieve the objectives, and associated monitoring and reporting of progress and impact.

In order for this BAP to be as effective as possible the targets and actions have been devised to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-limited).

Procedural targets and actions have also been considered allowing the Board to measure the way in which it considers and incorporates biodiversity across the whole range of its operations. These may involve changes to administrative, management and operating procedures.

3.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring is the on-going process of regularly collecting and analysing relevant information to make sure the actions within the Plan are positively contributing towards the targets and to capture any additional benefit achieved. The Plan sets out how and when this monitoring will take place for example, to regularly review the progress of actions against the plan at Board meetings throughout the life of the plan.

The frequency and type of information reported is also defined by the Plan and includes the publication of progress reports in the public domain via the IDB's website and in accordance with the duty set out in the Environment (Bill) Act 2020.

The overall plan will be updated at least every 5 years but as this is a dynamic document it may change more frequently. For example, in the light of routine monitoring, changes may be necessary to ensure an objective can be met.

4. The Biodiversity Audit

4.1 The Black Sluice Internal Drainage District Overview

The drainage district covers an area of approximately 61,000 ha and contains 760km of IDB maintained watercourse along with 148 km of main river.

It is located in the Lincolnshire Fens generally south-west of Boston. The Board's area extends from Chapel Hill in the north, to Wilsford in the west, to Bourne then Spalding in the south back to Boston in the east. The Board's boundaries are defined by either main river, Witham and Kyme Eau to the north and Glen and Bourne Eau to the south. High contour line to the western boundary and differing catchments in adjacent Drainage Board areas to the east, the Board has 8km of boundary fronting the River Haven and Wash on the east coast below Boston. The South Forty Foot Drain, a major high consequence watercourse, effectively runs through the centre of the area, south from Guthram Gowt, north and then east into Boston and out into the River Haven and North Sea via the Wash.

The following outlines the key details of the District:

- Total area of the drainage district: 61,000 ha
- Upper Catchment area draining to the Lower Catchment: 20,000 ha
- Area of agricultural land: 43,887 ha
- Area of other (non-agricultural) land: 3,325 ha

Assets for which the Board has operational responsibility:

- Water level control structures: 6 No.
- Watercourses (maintained): 760 km
- Raised embankments: 148 km
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): 33 No.
- Pumping Stations: 34 No. with 63 pumps
- Culverts/Bridges: 2,655 No.

4.2 Map of Audit Area (Drainage District)

The area covered by the drainage district of the IDB is shown below in Figure 1.

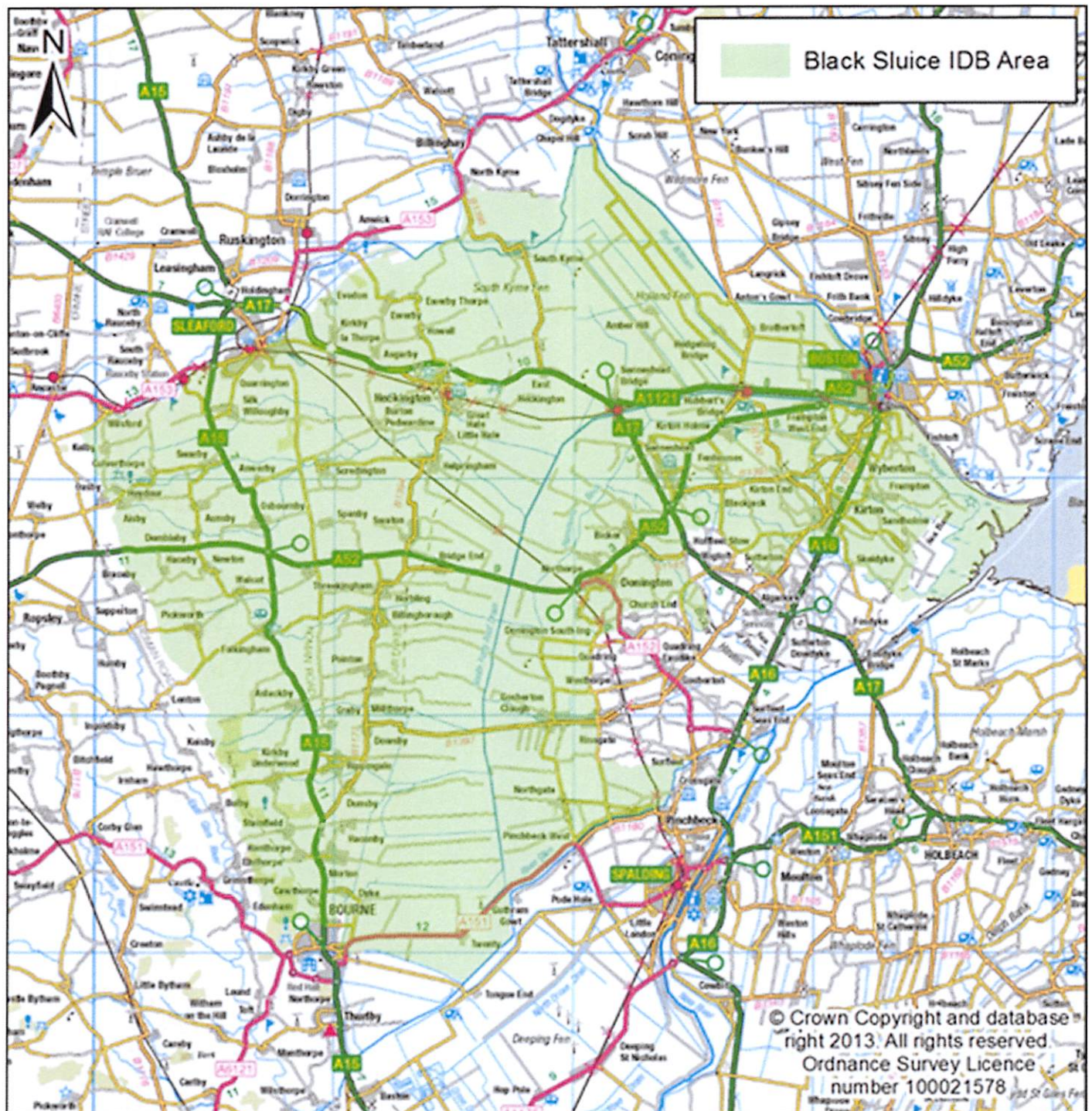


Figure 1. Black Sluice Internal Drainage District.

4.3 Geology

The majority of the Board's area has drift geology of fenland alluvium. In the west there are small areas of fen peat, gravel, clay and limestone.

4.4 Landscape Character

Natural England has divided the whole of England into a number of National Character Areas (NCA) based on characteristic landforms, wildlife and land use. For each NCA, there is a prepared profile that characterises the wildlife and natural features, identifies the influences that act upon those features and sets objectives for nature conservation.

The majority of the Board's area lies within The Fens NCA. The part which lies between Sleaford and Heckington then south to between Swaton and Osbournby lies within the Southern Lincolnshire Edge NCA, and the very small part which lies north of Bourne to roughly the east-west line of the A52 is within the Kesteven Uplands NCA.

4.5 Landscape Designations

There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the Board's catchment area.

4.6 Sites and Monuments

Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) are not directly related to Biodiversity matters. Information held by the Board and other sources has not therefore been collated. SAMs are only relevant where they occur adjacent to the Board's watercourses and they would be referred to on a site by site basis as appropriate.

SAMs are listed by English Heritage, who together with Lincolnshire County Council's Historic Environment Record is consulted during Environmental Impact Assessment for all new schemes.

4.7 Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are not directly related to Biodiversity matters since they are made on individual trees, groups or woods for landscape and visual amenity reasons. Information held by the Board and other sources has not therefore been collated. TPOs are only relevant where they occur adjacent to the Board's watercourses and they would be referred to on a site by site basis as appropriate.

TPOs are made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999. TPOs are administered by Local Authorities. It is hoped to enter TPOs on the Board's Geographic Information System in the future; liaison on trees potentially protected by TPOs is undertaken during the EIA process.

4.8 Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

4.8.1 Internationally Designated Sites

The following internationally-designated conservation sites, relevant to the water level management* and/or maintenance activities of the IDB, are found within or adjacent to the drainage district.

Table 1. Internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the IDB boundary

Site name	Designation	Features Relevant to IDB
The Wash	In two places to the south-east of Kirton and Frampton, the Board's area lies adjacent to The Wash, which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection area (SPA) and Ramsar site.	Breeding and wintering birds

*Further information regarding Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs) are given later in the document.

Sources of information and map can be found in [Annex 1](#)

4.8.2 Nationally Designated Sites

The following nationally-designated conservation sites, relevant to water level management and/or maintenance activities of the IDB, are found within the drainage district. Sources of information and a map can be found in [Annex 2](#).

Table 2. Nationally designated sites within or adjacent to the drainage district

Site name	Designation	Component of an International Site	Associated WLMP?*	Features Relevant to IDB
The Wash	SSSI, NNR	Yes	Yes	Breeding and wintering birds
Horbling Fen TF 154353	SSSI	No	Yes	Geological site where the Board have a WLMP agreed with Natural England

4.8.3 Local Nature Reserves

The following Local Nature Reserves are relevant to the activities of the IDB are found within the drainage district. Sources of information and a map are listed in [Annex 3](#).

Table 3. Local Nature Reserves within the drainage district

Site name	Associated WLMP?*	Features Relevant to IDB
??	??	??

4.8.4 Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites

A number of sites have been identified locally as being important for wildlife. Whilst these designations do not have statutory status, the sites are important for their contribution to biodiversity and planning policy requires that they are given consideration by the LPA in forming any decision. The following relevant Local Wildlife Sites are to be found within or bordering the drainage district. Sources of data can be found in [Annex 4](#).

Table 4. Non-Statutory sites within the drainage district

Site name	Designation	Features Relevant to IDB
??	??	??

- ****info to follow from the GLNP****

4.9 Habitat Audit Summary

This habitat audit summary lists the UK priority habitats that occur within the drainage district and are identified as likely to be influenced by the Board's activities. Also listed are habitats deemed to be of local importance and/or featured in local nature strategies that occur in the drainage district. Finally, brief notes are included on the potential for the IDB to maintain, restore or expand its important habitats. (A list of relevant Priority habitats can be found at <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-habitats/>).

Table 5. Habitat Audit Summary

National Priority Habitat	National Status & Extent	Local Priority Habitat	Local Status and Extent	Habitat of Importance for IDB	Extent, status and Location of Habitat of Importance within drainage district	IDB Potential for Maintaining, Restoring or Expanding Habitat (high/medium/low)
Hedgerows	Common habitat 402,000km of "managed" hedgerows but declining	Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows	70% loss between 1984 and 1990.	Hedgerows	Not known- dominant feature within the drainage district, with many watercourses bounded, at least on one side, by hedge lines. Most of these are species-poor and are either unmanaged or heavily managed.	High – planting and maintenance
Reedbeds	Trend unknown	Fens and wet reedbeds	Stable	Watercourses, ponds and wetlands	Isolated open water bodies with extensive reed margins on some watercourses, ponds and wetland fens.	High - Potential to expand reedbed habitat by extending existing margins along watercourses and Board owned ponds and wetlands
Wet Woodlands	Trend unknown	Wet Woodlands	Stable	Wet Woodlands	Marginal to isolated open water bodies and some larger waterlogged areas	Medium – the Board owns three small wet woodland sites. No real potential to expand habitat by extending woodland areas
N/A	Unknown	Watercourses	Stable	Watercourses	Throughout	High - Maintain vegetated fringes where risks allow, install vegetated ledges when re-profiling banks.

4.10 Species Audit Summary

This species audit summary will include priority and other species including INNS that occur within the drainage district and are identified as likely to be influenced by the Board's activities. Also listed are species deemed to be of local importance and/or identified by local nature strategies. Finally, brief notes are included on the potential for the IDB to improve the status of the species in the drainage district. (A list of relevant Priority species can be found at <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-species/>).

Table 6. Species Audit Summary

Common & scientific name	National Status	Local Status	Location of Species of Importance within drainage district	IDB Potential for Maintaining or Increasing Species Population or Range
Bank and reed nesting birds such as :- Reed Bunting, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Bearded Tit, Cuckoo	S41 species		Throughout the remote fenland catchments	Manage banks so as to maintain and extend areas of adjacent rank grassland, alternate bank cuts where possible to leave established reed margins
Bats			Channels, Pumping Station buildings and Pumping Station suction bays	Bat boxes positioned on all Pumping Station buildings
Water Vole	S41 species, Listed in WCA 1981 Long term decline		Identified throughout the Board's area with the exception of smaller headwaters	Appropriate management of watercourses & predator control
Kingfisher	Amber listed species in the 'Birds of Conservation Concern' Schedule 1 WCA 1981 Formerly declining along linear waterways until the mid-1980s, since recovered.		Identified throughout the Board's area	Monitor & maintain current nest site and install artificial nest sites at suitable pumping station locations

Barn Owl			Likely to be breeding throughout the Board's area, using habitats not always associated with watercourses. Owl boxes at 30+ locations in the Board's area at present	Annually maintain existing Barn Owl boxes, continuous replacement plan.
Eel			Probably throughout the Board's area	Maintain gravity flows at Pumping stations, remove all unnecessary obstructions from watercourses
Otter			Increased sightings throughout the catchment	Construct an Otter holt and maintain in good order
Grass Snake			Channels and their banks, including drying out weed rakings.	Maintenance of habitat and provision of refugia/egg laying piles at suitable pumping station sites

4.11 Invasive Non-native Species Summary

The IDB has identified the following high risk aquatic and riparian invasive non-native species within the drainage district that are identified as likely to be influenced by, or impact upon the Board's activities.

Table 7: High risk aquatic invasive non-native species summary

Common & scientific name	Location within IDB if known	Year first recorded	Local status / Extent within drainage district	IDB potential for controlling species population or range
Floating Pennywort				IDB management plan and control measures, and partnership working.
Parrots Feather				IDB management plan and control measures, and partnership working.
Water Primrose				IDB management plan and control measures, and partnership working

Japanese Knotweed				IDB management plan and control measures, and partnership working
Giant Hogweed				IDB management plan and control measures, and partnership working
Himalayan Balsam				IDB management plan and control measures, and partnership working

4.12 Water Level Management Plans

Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs) provide a means by which the water level requirements for a range of activities in a particular area, including agriculture, flood defense and conservation, can be balanced and integrated. Guidance for the production of WLMPs by the operating authorities for sites of conservation interest was produced by MAFF/ Defra in 1992, 1999 and 2004. This guidance concentrated on SSSIs, especially those of international importance (SPA or SAC sites).

Where IDBs are the operating authority for sites, they may or may not actively manage the water levels.

The table below provides further details of the Water Level Management Plans for which the IDB has some involvement within their drainage district.

Table 8: Water Level management plans in operation within the drainage district

Site Name & Designation	Reason for WLMP (state main species or habitat)	WLMP lead and other key [partners]	Favorable/ unfavorable condition (related to water level management)	Active Management by IDB	WLMP Last Updated
Horbling Fen		BSIDB/NE			

5. Habitat and Species Action Plans

5.1 Introduction

Action plans comprise the objectives, targets and actions that the IDB has identified for each habitat and species to be included within the BAP. The following sections contain action plans for each of the habitats and species that have been prioritised by the IDB.

5.2 Habitat Action Plans

5.2.1 Hedgerows

5.2.1.1 National and Local Targets

Table 9. Hedgerows - National and Local Targets

National Targets	Local Targets
UK BAP the latest national target was achieve favorable management of 25% of ancient and species rich hedges by 2000 and 50 % by 2005; halt net loss of species rich hedges by 2000 and all losses of hedgerows which are ancient and species rich by 2005; maintain overall numbers of hedgerow trees within each County or District at least at current levels to ensure a balanced age structure.	To halt the loss of hedgerows & achieve favorable management of all hedgerows & plant new hedgerows, particularly to help landscape connectivity.

5.2.1.2 IDB Objectives

Table 10. Hedgerows – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	Ensure no net loss of hedges as a result of IDB activities
2	Increase extent of hedgerows within IDB

5.2.1.3 IDB Actions

Table 11. Hedgerows – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	1a	Ensure that compensation planting takes place if any hedges are removed. To provide enhancement by being a wider species mix.	Length in m of hedges removed and hedges planted	Ongoing	IDB Ops	Landowners
1	1b	Prevent damage to existing hedges (does not preclude management to allow watercourse maintenance, including coppicing).	Intact hedgerow in m this year compared to last	Ongoing	IDB Ops	Landowner
2	2a	Identify location and plant 0.5 km hedgerow over 5 years.	Length of new hedgerow (m) each year	April 2025	Ecologist	Landowner

5.2.2 Reedbeds and Drainage Ditches

5.2.2.1 National and Local Targets

Table 12. Reedbeds and Drainage Ditches – National and Local Targets

National Targets	Local Targets
N/A other than WFD	N/A other than WFD

5.2.2.2 IDB Objectives

Table 13. Reedbeds and Drainage Ditches – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	To enhance and maintain as a minimum the biodiversity already present within ditches
2	To increase the biodiversity within drainage ditches while maintaining drainage standards

5.2.2.3 IDB Actions

Table 14. Reedbeds and Drainage Ditches – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	1a	Maintain the existing marginal fringes of vegetation of at least 15cm wide (approx.)* along at least one side of all drainage ditches where flood risk allows. *Width of vegetation fringe is dependent upon flood risk category and drainage ditch width. Where a wider channel allows a wider fringe then establish, where flood risk prevents, act accordingly. Use drainage channel biodiversity manual as a guide.	Length of marginal fringe extent in m maintained each year where flood risk allows.	Ongoing	Ops Lead	Ecologist
2	2a	Identify ditches suitable to allow a continuous marginal fringe of vegetation at least 15cm wide (approx.) or more along at least one side of the ditch.* In areas identified, plant with suitable plugs, install coir rolls or allow colonization naturally.	Establishment/colonisation of new marginal vegetation in m each year	31/12/2025	Ops Lead	Ecologist
2	2b	Identify ditches which are too narrow for a continuous vegetation fringe to be installed, but where occasional patches of vegetation fringes	Length of occasional marginal vegetation patches established in m	31/12/2025	Ops Lead	Ecologist

		can be encouraged. Plant with suitable plugs, install coir rolls or allow colonization naturally.				
2	2c	Install marginal plant ledges during bank re-profiling and plant with sedge plugs or coir rolls	Length in m of plant ledge created each year	Ongoing	Ops Lead	Ecologist
1	1b	Alternate bank side cutting each year where risk allows. Mowing to take place between August and April to avoid bird nesting season. 20cm or more from toe of bank to be left unmown on ditches where risk and ditch profile allows.	Increased extent of uncut ditch bank	Ongoing	Ops lead	Ecologist
2	2d	Remove bank-side cuttings where possible (with conveyor) to encourage sward diversity. Survey to identify diversity baseline and diversity following cuttings removal.	Survey highlights increased sward diversity after 5 years.	Ongoing	Ops Lead	n/a
2	2e	Establish a pollen-rich sward following bank re-profiling	Floristic species present in bank sward.	Ongoing	Ops Lead	Ecologist

5.2.3 Wet Woodland

5.2.3.1 National and Local Targets

Table 15. Wet Woodland – National and Local Targets

National Targets	Local Targets
A UK BAP Priority Habitat, large areas of wet woodland are especially scarce in Lincolnshire.	Wet woodland within the Board's area typically occur as small stands at sites where there are open water, reedbed and fen habitats. The Board own three small Wet Woodland site in the Borne Fen, our target is to maintain these to preserve the sites.

5.2.3.2 IDB Objectives

Table 16. Wet Woodland – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	To improve the management of our wet woodland sites with the Board's area
2	To operate long term management plans to the three sites.

5.2.3.3 IDB Actions

Table 17. Wet Woodland – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Identify and map the extent and condition of wet woodland within the catchment	Number of areas and area size. GIS layer	31/12/2025	Ops Lead	Ecologist
		Ensure the maintenance programmes cause no harm to existing wet woodland	No net loss	On going	Ops Lead	n/a
		Monitor wet woodland and manage it effectively to prevent the area drying out.	No net loss	On going	Ops Lead	n/a

5.3 Species Action Plans

5.3.1 Bank & Reed nesting Birds

5.3.1.1 National and Local Targets

Table 18. Bank and Reed Nesting Birds – National and Local Targets

National Targets	Local Targets
UK BAP Priority Species	All likely to be breeding throughout the catchment, especially in the remote and heavily reeded fens. Maintenance technique's and programme timing to be taken into consideration.

5.3.1.2 IDB Objectives

Table 19. Bank and Reed Nesting Birds – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	Maintenance and improvement of habitat.

5.3.1.3 IDB Actions

Table 20. Bank and Reed Nesting Birds – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Investigate methods for monitoring and recording various species throughout the catchments	Records, GIS layers	On going	Ops Lead	Ecologist

5.3.2 Bats

5.3.2.1 National and Local Targets

Table 21. Bats - National and Local Targets

National	Local

5.3.2.2 IDB Objectives

Table 22. Bats - IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	To maintain and improve current habitat
2	
3	

5.3.2.3 IDB Actions

Table 23. Bats – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Investigate methods for monitoring/survey works at select pumping station sites				

5.3.3 Water Vole

5.3.3.1 National and Local Targets

Table 24. Water Vole – National and Local Targets

National	Local
UK BAP targets = Maintain the current range & achieve an increase in range (both across 10km ² areas)	Maintain and increase current range

5.3.3.2 IDB Objectives

Table 25. Water Vole – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	Maintain current water vole extent
2	Increase water vole extent
3	Better understand water vole population, movement and extent

5.3.3.3 IDB Actions

Table 26. Water Vole – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Control mink	Number of mink caught	Annually	Ops Lead	n/a

		Work with GLNP on mink task group to monitor county water vole and mink populations.	GLNPs annual reports indicating number and results of surveys. Extent of water vole population	Annually	Ops Lead	Ecologist/GLNP
		Continue yearly recording by operational staff	Number and location records collected and submitted to local biodiversity records office	Annually	Ops Lead	n/a

5.3.4 Kingfisher

5.3.4.1 National and Local Targets

Table 27. Kingfisher – National and Local Targets

National	Local

5.3.4.2 IDB Objectives

Table 28. Kingfisher – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	Maintain potentially suitable kingfisher habitat, particularly breeding habitat

5.3.4.3 IDB Actions

Table 29. Kingfisher – IDB Actions.

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Maintain and avoid disturbance to potential nest sites by retaining earth cliffs and avoiding close working	Number and extent of earth cliffs in m each year. Work schedules detail exclusion zone around known nest sites in the breeding season	On going	Ops Lead	n/a
		During replacement of pumping station create artificial kingfisher hole	New Kingfisher nesting hole to be present, GIS layer	On going	Ops Lead	n/a

5.3.5 Barn Owl

5.3.5.1 National and Local Targets

Table 30. Barn Owl – National and Local Targets

National	Local
	The Barn Owl is a regular sight in Lincolnshire and widely associated with well-maintained IDB watercourses

5.3.5.2 IDB Objectives

Table 31. Barn Owl – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	To maintain and where possible increase the range and population of Barn owl within the Board's area

5.3.5.3 IDB Actions

Table 32. Barn Owl – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		To increase nesting opportunities on land managed by the Board	GIS Layer	Annually	Ops Lead	Hawk & Owl trust
		Maintain and renew nesting boxes at Pumping stations and pole sights	Annual reports	Annually	Ops Lead	Hawk & Owl Trust
		Monitor the use of the boxes, ring and record fledglings	Annual reports	Annually	Ops Lead	Hawk & Owl Trust

5.3.6 Eel

5.3.6.1 National and Local Targets

Table 33. Eel – National and Local Targets

National	Local
Critically endangered	There is a legal requirement to position Eel passes at locations where their passage is impeded or likely to be impeded. Eel Regulation compliance for 'Pumping Station Passability' is ongoing in partnership with the EA.

5.3.6.2 IDB Objectives

Table 34. Eel – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	To maintain and where possible increase the habitat range and population of Eels within the Board's area.

2 To remove any unnecessary watercourse restriction that could impede eel passage.

5.3.6.3 IDB Actions

Table 35. Eel – IDB Actions.

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Maintain the current range of eels within the Board's area through effective watercourse management	Annual reports	Annually	Ops Lead	Ecologist
		Install and maintain suitably approved Eel passes where necessary	GIS layer	Annually	Ops Lead	Ecologist/EA

5.3.7 Otter

5.3.7.1 National and Local Targets

Table 36. Otter – National and Local Targets

National	Local
UK BAP Priority Species	Becoming more increasingly common within the Board's area.

5.3.7.2 IDB Objectives

Table 37. Otter – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	

2	
3	

5.3.7.3 IDB Actions

Table 38. Otter – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Maintain habitat suitable for otter within the Board's area	Annual maintenance works			
		Record sighting by the Board's workforce	GIS layer	Ongoing	Ops Lead	n/a
		Construct an Otter holt and maintain	Annual maintenance/inspection	Ongoing	Ops Lead	n/a

5.3.8 Grass Snake

5.3.8.1 National and Local Targets

Table 39. Grass Snake – National and Local Targets

National	Local
UK BAP Priority Species	Suffered from decline in habitat availability due to agricultural intensification but believed to be widespread throughout the remote Fens and increasing in number

5.3.8.2 IDB Objectives

Table 40. Grass Snake – IDB Objectives

IDB Objectives	
1	To maintain and where possible increase the range and population of Grass Snake within the Board's area

5.3.8.3 IDB Actions

Table 41. Grass Snake – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
		Create egg laying/hibernation stations throughout the Board's area	GIS layer, annual maintenance	Ongoing	Ops Lead	n/a

6 Procedural Action Plan

6.1 Introduction

A number of procedural targets and actions have been established to better integrate biodiversity considerations into IDB practices and procedures.

6.2 Objectives and Targets

Table 42. Procedural Action Plan – Objectives and Targets

IDB Objectives	
1	To improve all IDB employees knowledge of biodiversity support through training
2	To improve IDB practitioners knowledgeable about specific local biodiversity through training
3	To maintain no net loss of open watercourse through consenting

6.3 IDB Actions

Table 43. Procedural Action Plan – IDB Actions

Action Plan						
Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	1a	Ensure all staff including contractors have received high-level biodiversity training within 6 months from the start date of this Plan, or as part of their induction, and refresher training provided every 3 years.	Numbers of staff and trained	Ongoing	Ecologist	
2	2a	Produce a manual of best practice within 6 months from the date of this plan.	Publication of manual on website	Date insert	Ecologist	NE/ WT

2	2b	Develop and deliver 12 habitat and species specific toolbox talks, to be delivered 1 per month per year	Delivery of 12 toolbox talks	Ongoing	Ecologist	WT
3	3a	Respond to applications for culverts with alternatives to maintain open watercourses. Approve no new culvert applications.	Extent of open watercourses maintained.	Ongoing	Clerk	LA's

7 Implementation

The actions within the BAP will be executed via the following means:

- 1) The actions which can be delivered through adaptations or inclusions to general maintenance programmes will be identified and integrated accordingly / into the IDB's best practice manual. From this, monthly maintenance schedules will be drawn up and completed activities communicated via returned job cards or similar.
- 2) Actions which require independent and additional execution such as bat and bird box erection and surveys or training will be identified, resources planned and engaged and / or planned in to the relevant resources' work schedules.
- 3) Actions which can be executed through capital works programmes will be integrated into the relevant project plans.
- 4) Actions which can be delivered through collaboration with partners will be formally agreed in writing with such partners with responsibilities, timescales and reporting requirements defined.
- 5) Actions which can be delivered through developer or consented works will be identified and integrated into project plans.

8 Monitoring

Appropriate indicators have been set for each of the IDB's biodiversity actions. Indicators have been chosen which provide the IDB with ways of measuring both the current status of biodiversity and also ways of measuring achievements in delivering biodiversity objectives and targets. The individual action plans set out the indicators and measurables which will be used to assess progress and execution against the plan. The IDB will routinely monitor biodiversity actions using the indicators and measurables and will review actions and indicators at least annually.

The overall plan will be updated at least every 5 years but is a dynamic document so may change more frequently for example in the light of monitoring outcomes.

9 Reporting

The Board is responsible for ensuring that progress against the Plans' targets are routinely reported, at least annually, at Board meetings to allow the Board to discuss and review BAP activity and to modify the BAP and actions to meet the objectives where necessary.

Annual summary progress reports will detail which actions have been progressed according to the plan, any new opportunities identified, risks and issues affecting the objectives or actions, and the contribution actions have made towards achieving the objectives. Recommendations will be made in the light of the monitoring outcomes.

Making this information available to a wider audience is important in increasing the understanding of the importance of the Boards' actions regarding biodiversity and inspiring people about biodiversity. As such, the IDB will make the summary reports available externally in the following ways:

- In the public domain via the IDB's website;

- Provided to conservation partners to assist with further local biodiversity conservation planning;
- Provided to local authorities in order to contribute towards their legislative biodiversity reporting requirements including the NERC 2006 Act, Habitats Directive, Environment Bill and the Local Nature Recovery Strategies;
- The Local Biological Records Centre.



10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1

10.2 Appendix 2

10.3 Appendix 3

10.4 Appendix 4

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