

Finding Opportunities to Improve Monitoring Activities

Impact Report

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report forms part of the reporting stage of the project 'Finding Opportunities to Improve Monitoring Activities' which aimed to realise the potential of integrating and aligning monitoring activity in a specific area by facilitating better collaboration between relevant organisations.
- 1.2 The report seeks to measure whether the project has had impact in the pilot area of the Hampshire Avon catchment over the six months since a workshop was held to provide opportunities for collaboration. This report follows on from the Interim Project Report which can be accessed on the [UKEOF website](#).

2. Project Objectives

- 2.1 Objective A, to establish which monitoring activity is occurring in the catchment and Objective B, to host a workshop to provide the opportunity for collaborative working, have been successfully completed.
- 2.2 This report contributes towards the completion of Objective C: Produce a report and best practice guide to ensure impact of work.

3. Summary of Progress

- 3.1 Attendees of a workshop to identify potential collaboration in the Hampshire Avon catchment were contacted six months later by telephone to discuss whether there had been any impacts on their monitoring activities as a result of the project, or if there were any plans to put more collaborative working into place. The follow-up also aimed to find out whether there were any recognised barriers to collaborative working. The summaries of the follow-up telephone discussions with each organisation can be found in Annex 2.
- 3.2 In general, attendees were very positive about the workshop and the majority of organisations have already or intend to follow up on at least one item discussed at the workshop. There were several comments about the opportunity to meet new contacts and some attendees stated that the workshop had made them more aware of the different types of possible collaboration and more open to these in the future.
- 3.3 It was noted by some organisations that six months was not enough time to implement changes, particularly in terms of the Environment Agency (EA) who have spent much of the six months since the workshop in emergency response to flooding. Some organisations (e.g. British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)) highlighted that the types of collaboration they expected to see would be in the long-term, through developing contacts.
- 3.4 The key issues that were discussed during the telephone interviews with workshop attendees are detailed in the sections below.

4. Collaborations Realised

Collaborations have been put in place by organisations as a result of this project, and several potential collaborations were identified. There have been three collaboration themes throughout this project: resource sharing, knowledge exchange and data synthesis and the discussions during the interviews focused on these three areas. The information in the boxes below demonstrates where actual or potential collaborations have been identified as a direct result of the project.

4.1 Resource Sharing

4.1.1 Sharing Equipment

It was acknowledged that sharing equipment could lead to financial savings, and some organisations are already sharing equipment, or have started to as a result of the workshop. However, some organisations are concerned over issues of loss and damage, and for others eg EA, there is limited scope as their equipment is in use 100% of the time.

Collaboration realised...

- Discussions over sharing temperature loggers between Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust (WCSRT) and Queen Mary University London (QMUL)

4.1.2 Sharing Volunteers

Where organisations use volunteers, there was appetite for sharing. It was noted by the EA that as paid staff are used in the geographic area of monitoring that was represented at the workshop, this type of sharing was less relevant for them.

Collaboration realised...

- Potential to share volunteers between Plantlife and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) identified

4.1.3 Sharing Meeting Rooms/Laboratory Space

Sharing resources was identified as a potential financial saving and organisations were interested in opportunities where they are convenient. It was noted by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) that they prefer to have the freedom to use their own equipment as they wish, as opposed to relying on another organisation and as a result are currently building new laboratory space, as opposed to looking to share.

Collaboration realised...

- Potential identified for EA laboratory space to be used by WWT for invertebrate identification.
- Potential identified to share meeting rooms between Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and Natural England (NE)

4.1.4 Sharing Sites

It was noted at the workshop that finding details of land owners and requesting permission to visit sites can be time-consuming and not always successful. The idea of sharing sites, or visits to sites was welcomed by most organisations. It was less of a concern for BTO where it was noted that their surveys tend to be from public rights of way, so land access is not an issue.

Collaboration realised...

- Potential identified for Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) to carry out macrophyte monitoring at a Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) site.

4.2 Knowledge Exchange

4.2.1 Sharing contacts

The sharing of contacts and networking opportunities that this project has provided is one of the clearest benefits, and every organisation noted this. This was mainly at a local level, with local organisations feeling the most benefit. The speed collaboration event at the workshop was particularly well received, as organisations were given the opportunity to speak to other organisations that they may not have done otherwise.

Collaboration realised...

- Wessex Water (WW) has gained new contacts, particularly from terrestrial organisations which will prove useful when a current staff member who has good networks leaves WW
- HBIC met the EA Catchment Coordinator at the workshop, and were able to pass on details of a contact in relation to fish records which led to time-savings
- The EA Catchment Coordinator was invited to the Demonstration Test Catchment Stakeholder meetings which will be useful to his catchment coordinator work.
- It was a good opportunity for the EA Catchment Coordinator to make links

4.2.2 Sharing information and news

Organisations commented that this project, and in particular the workshop, provided a good forum for information and news sharing. Several of the organisations thought that repeating the event on a regular basis could be of value, with 86% of organisations stating that some type of continuous forum would be beneficial. However some noted that this may work better with a different focus each time, or in a different geographical area. Holding the workshop in a different catchment or different defined area (e.g. county) were suggested, as well as considering national monitoring schemes. Two organisations did not feel there would be benefit in repeating the workshop. Plantlife felt that the workshop was too local and did not have enough of a national focus. NE thought the work could be delivered as part of the Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust (WCSRT) catchment coordinator work.

Collaboration realised...

- The workshop was a good way of raising the profile of organisations eg BSBI and HIWWT and for HBIC to raise awareness of Living Record for data exchange.
- Information sharing about Horizon 2020 between The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and Wessex BESS , which may lead to the potential for Wessex Bess submitting an application.
- The workshop provided a useful forum for discussions between WWT and EA over the development of strategic sites.
- WWT circulated information in a newsletter having spoken with the EA catchment coordinator at the workshop about the River Basin Planning Consultation.
- Potential for collaboration between WWT and HIWWT over expanding river monitoring sites in the New Forest - WWT attended a meeting about this as a result of the workshop.
- Potential for HIWWT to recommend riverfly monitoring to fishing clubs and organisations on their side of the county boundary for WWT.
- Potential for closer working between HIWWT and NE to be more aware of what is happening with site assessments
- Discussion was had between Forestry Commission (FC) and CEH regarding the potential links between the Countryside Survey and the National Forest Inventory.
- The workshop provided BTO with a useful opportunity to talk to organisations about LivingMap.

4.2.3 **Sharing expertise and good practice**

This project has enabled organisations to share good practice, skills and expertise.

Collaboration realised...

- Discussions between HBIC and NE to understand the strategic monitoring that NE is working on with the records centres.
- Potential for collaboration over training protocols, Plantlife can use lessons learnt from BTO when changing methodology for more robust data collection
- GWCT and the EA liaised over the EA's River Basin Management Plan.
- Potential for HIWWT to use lessons learned and recommendations from other organisations as they develop lab space for water quality testing.
- BTO and NE discussed the potential for volunteers to collect additional information.
- Potential for collaboration over statistical analysis between WW and QMUL

4.3 **Data Synthesis**

4.3.1 **Signposting**

The need for clearer signposting of data was raised at the workshop, and it was particularly valuable to have HBIC in attendance to raise awareness of the work of the records centres

Collaboration realised...

- HBIC is now able to signpost to the EA for electrofishing data for the river.

4.3.2 **Open data**

It was agreed at the workshop that collaborating to promote open data would be advantageous. There were some instances where organisations have resolved data access issues, but these would have occurred regardless of this project, eg HIWWT.

Collaboration realised...

- Discussions at the workshop led WCSRT to look at security of data on their website and they have subsequently made their water temperature data openly available on their website.

4.3.3 **Data Sharing**

Data sharing was discussed at the workshop, and several of the organisations have considered this since eg HIWWT. This was one of the strongest collaborative areas in the Hampshire Avon catchment before the workshop was held, as demonstrated by the questionnaire results.

Collaboration realised...

- Potential collaboration between BSBI and NE to share data to supplement BSBI's new national distribution atlas.
- EA will share macrophyte data with BSBI to help supplement their own data

5. Barriers to collaboration

Barriers to collaboration being explored in the first place were the most commonly identified from discussions held at the workshop.

Resource Sharing

- Equipment can be used 100% of the time by one organisation
- Site sharing can be difficult between local and national organisations
- Insurance issues have been raised in collaborating over volunteers (eg between HIWWT and WWT)
- Organisations such as FC run their operations using private companies, putting limits on resource sharing

Knowledge Exchange

- Contacts go quickly out of date
- Difficult to collaborate between local and national schemes
- Too many networking workshops can be tiring

Data Synthesis

- It can be difficult to enter data collected on a national scale to local records centres
- Data collected through specific projects do not always lend themselves well to general use
- Some landowners may not be happy for data collected on their land to be shared
- Some organisations may not allow another organisation to hold their raw data

6. Discussion

6.1 A number of benefits have already been realised from this workshop, and several collaborations are under development. The main benefits of this project were clearly at a local scale, with most organisations collaborating through knowledge exchange. Organisations felt that they were better connected to others working in the catchment after the workshop, highlighting the value of the project.

6.2 The Hampshire Avon catchment is already considered to be well connected, and as such some of the discussions and collaborations realised through this project may have happened anyway. However, the workshop acted as a catalyst to these discussions enabling more efficient working. There is the potential for more joined up working and several organisations stated that they are more open to different types of collaboration over monitoring as a result of this project.

6.3 57% of organisations commented that they thought there would be the potential for time savings as a result of the contacts made at the workshop, due to information being accessed quicker and links made faster. The opportunity to meet people face to face and build trust with others was a factor highlighted as enabling these savings.

6.4 No specific financial savings were noted, although 36% of organisations thought there might be the potential for future financial savings through the collaborations discussed at the workshop. For example financial savings could be made if resource sharing is successful. Some organisations commented that although money may not necessarily be saved, the collaborations

discussed would make work more effective and so provide better value for money. One attendee noted that more effective working through collaboration could lead to being allocated more funding.

- 6.5 Whilst some benefits have already been realised, there is more work that could be done to help improve collaborations over monitoring. The networks and contacts made through the workshop will likely be of some benefit in the future, but to reach the full potential of this project, some ongoing facilitation may be needed.
- 6.6 Some attendees suggested that there needs to be a role to lead the work in order for organisations to collaborate. However, there was no clear drive from any organisation to take on a lead role going forwards, and it was commented that having an external facilitator had been particularly useful as it gave all the attending organisations a focus without bias. Several of the participants mentioned the EA catchment coordinator and the newly employed catchment coordinator at the WCSRT. It was felt that these roles would be key to collaboration in the future, and could potentially take on some of the role, although monitoring may not be the specific focus.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 The key issues identified in this report will be drawn into a reference pack, and distributed to relevant staff, such as the EA catchment coordinators.
- 7.2 The results of this project will be presented to the UKEOF Management Group in September 2014. They will be invited to consider the next steps for Management Group organisations, and how to apply the lessons learnt from this project to their own organisations to realise efficiencies in monitoring activities. The Management Group will also be invited to set next steps for this pilot project, for instance whether any further impact monitoring should take place.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 It is clear from the number of benefits identified since the workshop, that there was most value in the knowledge exchange aspect of collaboration. This is likely to be because this type of collaboration is more immediate, whereas the benefits from resource sharing and data synthesis may take several months to realise.
- 8.2 Benefits were felt at a local scale, rather than a national scale. As the catchment was already considered to be well-connected, the project likely provided a catalyst to local collaboration and benefits. It should be considered whether the impact and value of this type of project would be greater in a catchment or area that is less well-connected to begin with.
- 8.3 Realising the benefits of collaborative working over monitoring is a long-term exercise and it may take time to find out the true impact of this project. To maximise the value of the project, further review or facilitation may be required.

ANNEX 1: Workshop Attendees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
David Noble	British Trust for Ornithology
Martin Rand	BSBI
Colin Mackechnie	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Alex Hayden	Environment Agency
Stella Huntington	Environment Agency
Leanne Sargeant	Environment Agency
Russell Spencer	Environment Agency
Rich Walmsley	Environment Agency
Alan Brewer	Forestry Commission
Nick Sotherton	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
Andrew Hoodless	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
Debbie Whitfield	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Lizzy Peat	Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
Deborah Procter	JNCC
Dianne Matthews	Natural England
Andrew Thompson	Natural England
Andy Nisbet (Chair)	Natural England
Sue Southway	Plantlife
Iwan Jones	Queen Mary University London / Wessex BESS / Demonstration Test Catchment
Sophie Isaacs	UK Environmental Observation Framework
Helen Beadman	UK Environmental Observation Framework
Jon Bass	Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust
Andy House	Wessex Water
Ben Fitch	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

ANNEX 2: Results from telephone interviews

Martin Rand (MR), BSBI

The workshop gave MR a better understanding of who was doing what in the catchment and was a useful forum to meet relevant people working in the catchment.

The conversations over site visits were of particular interest to BSBI who would be keen to share bookings to visit sites. Through the workshop, MR was able to discuss the possibility of BSBI doing macrophyte monitoring sessions at a GWCT site, a collaboration which came directly from the workshop. The workshop provided other contacts with potentially useful data, such as Natural England although there is some difficulty in releasing records which is ongoing. Natural England also found BSBI's threatened plants monitoring of interest, and this is an ongoing action, to provide details of populations, sites and condition assessments. Data that is shared with BSBI will be used to supplement the new national distribution atlas.

The workshop gave MR a good opportunity to follow up on discussions that had already been had with various attendees. For instance, it was useful to follow up with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust regarding some potential mis-identification for non-natives monitoring. It was also interesting to talk to Wessex Water over potential access to places on the river.

Resource sharing was not felt to have been developed as a result of the workshop, beyond what was already happening, for instance sharing volunteers with the Source to Sea Project.

The idea of an equipment inventory would be quite useful, especially if people could be easily trained up on basic water quality monitoring. There is already some collaboration over training, for instance with the Wildlife Trust. While this did not come from the workshop, the workshop was a good opportunity to raise awareness of it.

It was thought that the types of collaboration discussed at the workshop are unlikely to lead to money and time savings, but will introduce BSBI into new forms of monitoring which increase value.

MR felt that a continuous forum would be beneficial to help keep the momentum of collaboration going, as well as keeping people in touch. A different theme every year might help keep it relevant and interesting.

David Noble (DN), BTO

It was acknowledged that not a lot has happened in terms of follow on since the workshop in October. The advantages that will be derived from the workshop are seen by DN as being more long-term. For example it is very useful to be aware of what exists and who to contact when planning future work. The workshop was useful as a way of making new contacts and to be updated on relevant monitoring and research initiatives.

Resource sharing would not provide much value to BTO in terms of sharing equipment. There are, however, potential plans for volunteers to collect data additional to birds, for example water samples for eDNA analysis for great crested newt. This came from JNCC (connected to ARC), but did not come through the workshop. The workshop was a good opportunity to speak to Andrew Thompson, who DN has now met a few times. There was useful discussion on the potential for volunteers from particular sectors to collect additional information and on the limitations and barriers to that.

The data access discussions have been considered by DN. BTO do always provide data to landowners if requested for their land. Data requests from a wide range of parties are normally fulfilled (often via collaborations), but there are issues with allowing other organisations to hold their raw data. BTO is working to make consolidated data more freely available, and mechanisms to streamline access and collaborations are being considered further.

There was discussion with Plantlife at the workshop over managing volunteers, but DN is not aware of any direct follow-up with BTO volunteer scheme organisers. Access to land is less of a concern for BTO and sharing site visits is of less relevance as the majority of BTO's surveys are not intrusive and can be done from public rights of way. It is nevertheless an ongoing issue (requiring additional work) for a small number of sites on many BTO surveys.

DN is not aware of anything collaborative that's happened since in terms of training but the BTO would be open to joint training initiatives. Most current training focuses on bird ID and upcoming surveys.

It is anticipated that the types of collaborations discussed at the workshop would lead to time and money savings, but not major amounts. For example, sharing training could lead to minor savings, such as sharing the expenses of venue hire. In terms of volunteers collecting additional information, this is unlikely to save BTO money, but may save JNCC money which is valuable in the long-term in the context of the BTO-JNCC Partnership.

There is value in a continuous forum, although perhaps not annual. A rolling programme hosted by different organisations could be beneficial. It would be good to have involvement from other BTO staff members, for instance, it may have been useful for someone who works with training to have attended the workshop. Although DN attended, he has been very busy since which has limited the follow up. It was useful to have a defined geographical region to focus the workshop, but BTO generally work more nationally so the catchment level was perhaps a bit less relevant.

It was useful to talk to some attendees at the workshop about LivingMap – an online system with structured and more open elements which is still being built at BTO for recording multiple taxa, to be rolled across Wildlife Trust Living Landscape schemes (although different Wildlife Trusts are taking it up to different extents).

It has only been six months since the workshop, so the types of benefits from these collaborations are more likely to be seen in the longer term. Overall, the BTO sees value in multi-taxa initiatives (having previously hosted a workshop on this) and is keen to help take this initiative forward.

Colin MacKechnie (CM), CEH

CM attended the workshop to represent air quality monitoring that CEH carries out in the Hampshire Avon catchment. It was felt that there was not much interest from the other organisations in collaborating over air quality monitoring. There was some interest on more general aspects of CEH's monitoring and on the Horizon 2020 work programmes. As a result, there was no significant follow-on for CEH. The main reason for this was a lack of relevance to the workshop, due to organisations and areas of environmental monitoring represented by the other attendees. It was suggested that perhaps due to the need to show impact quickly, whilst air quality data may have been useful to some of the organisations, the priority would have been collaborating with the other organisations which would have shown a quicker return.

Despite this, as a participant CM was impressed at the workshop which he felt was dynamic and used good methods to get attendees talking. It may have been more useful to have someone representing biodiversity from CEH at the workshop.

It was suggested by CM that there should be a CPD national standard training course for monitoring developed, so citizen science have a certificate, and whether this should be a role for UKEOF to coordinate.

It was felt that there would be benefit in repeating the workshop as a continuous forum in other areas.

Alex Hayden (AH), EA

It was noted that the Environment Agency have been very busy with flooding issues since last October, which may have affected some of the follow-up from the workshop.

The workshop provided a good opportunity to discuss data sharing with other organisations. For example, EA will share macrophyte data with BSBI to help supplement their own information.

AH explained the role of the EA internal catchment coordinator (Russell Spencer) and the WCSRT catchment coordinator post. It is anticipated that RS will liaise and signpost back to WCSRT who will coordinate with external organisations. This is how collaboration in the future for the Hampshire Avon will work, although there will continue to be simple data sharing collaborations, for example EA already shares data with Wessex Water, Natural England and the Demonstration Test Catchment project.

The workshop was very useful for Russell Spencer, in his role of catchment coordinator as it was a good opportunity for him to meet everyone and look for opportunities to collaborate. It was not so useful for Stella Huntington as the sampling and collection leader, but it was useful for Alex Hayden, to meet other people monitoring in the catchment, as it is useful to use other organisation's data to understand what is happening in a particular river.

Resource sharing can be difficult for Environment Agency as they already use their equipment 100% of the time, and they use paid staff to carry out the surveys. If there was to be collaboration over using volunteers, this decision would need to be made at a higher level within the Defra network as it would require an overhaul of the monitoring system.

There is already collaboration over training with the Riverfly Monitoring, the EA set standards for data collection.

With regards to data access, the EA already freely gives data away to anyone that asks unless there is a contentious site or issue, or other people's data. Compatibility of data can be an issue – if someone wants to use EA data they need to understand the reasons for why it was collected in the first place.

The types of collaboration discussed may not save the EA money but they will help EA be more effective with the money that they have, and will get more out of the resources they have. The same would be true for time-savings.

AH thought there would be value in having a continuous forum, as it provides the opportunity to step back from daily work and look at the bigger picture. Whilst some of it might be covered by the catchment coordinator's work, they are focusing on WFD work and rivers, and a wider forum might help link to the more terrestrial organisations. It is quite an inspirational session to be able to celebrate successes and understand what is going on in the catchment.

The interim report that was sent out was useful, as the SW river basin liaison panel asked questions about collaboration, and AH was able to forward the report to the EA officer, to show the level of collaboration that is already happening.

It was noted that it was really important to have an external facilitator (UKEOF) to organise the workshop. It meant that all organisations were focused, whereas if it had been EA led, it would have likely been WFD focused.

Alan Brewer (AB), Forestry Commission

The workshop was useful to be able to talk to Colin Mackechnie from CEH regarding the CEH's countryside survey, and the potential links to the National Forest Inventory.

It was also useful to meet Nick Sotherton from GWCT. Although AB has not had a chance to follow this up since the workshop, the links made will be ongoing.

The speed collaboration was a helpful exercise to share contacts, but it was suggested that the time was too short with any one person to establish more than an acquaintance. There was a comment regarding national vs local working. AB found that there was more common ground with the other organisations that worked nationally. However it was felt that the local organisations would have benefited from finding out more about the National Forest Inventory. It was felt that the representation at the workshop was quite heavily towards freshwater, so there were not many there who were interested in forestry and woodland.

It is not likely that any sharing resources will have happened since the workshop as the NFI field operation is run by private companies and is a specific and skilled operation. Other organisations may find the GIS software that FC have developed of use. FC already shares details of sites with other organisations, although this was not a result of the workshop. This will have saved time for other organisations.

It was thought that a continuous forum might be of value on a wider scale, for the national organisations.

Nick Sotherton (NS), GWCT

The workshop provided a good opportunity to find out what was going on in the catchment. In particular, it was useful to talk to David Noble where it was agreed that it would be useful for the CEOs of BTO and GWCT to meet. It was useful to liaise with Russell Spencer over the EA's River Basin Management plan, in order to provide help with the consultation. Other aspects of the discussion with Russell were useful, for instance GWCT have had a European LIFE bid approved for the valley and it is hoped that the contact with Russell will be useful in helping GWCT achieve targets associated with this bid.

Equipment sharing is not a relevant collaboration as GWCT do not have much in the way of equipment requirements. Volunteer sharing is a possibility, depending on how the objectives will be achieved for the LIFE bid that has just come through. This is the same for sharing site visits.

GWCT is happy to collaborate over training, and this was offered to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust at the workshop.

There was lots of discussion at the workshop about GWCT sharing their woodcock data.

NS felt that the collaborations discussed at the workshop would lead to time and money savings, as this type of collaboration can only be beneficial, through better links and networks and the ability to trust people from other organisations.

It was felt that a forum on an annual basis would be of value and could replace a forum that used to exist which brought together farmers and those carrying out monitoring.

Debbie Whitfield (DW), Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

The workshop was a useful opportunity for DW to meet Ben Fitch from WWT. There were discussions over working together, and although HIWWT do not have funding to deliver any riverfly monitoring, they could recommend it to fishing clubs and organisations on their side of the county boundary.

The workshop was a good opportunity to meet Iwan Jones as he has done lots of work on indicator species and water quality on different types of river. HIWWT are interested in developing lab space to do more water quality testing but need guidance on what to look for. Iwan may be helpful for this to share his toolkit for reference.

DW spoke to Andrew Thompson from NE at the workshop and discussed whether they could be paid to do condition assessments on their sites. This requires further discussion. There was also discussions over generally working more closely with NE to be more aware of what is happening with site assessments, for example for the IPENS project.

The workshop was useful to find out more about the different catchment coordinator roles. An issue was raised with boundaries for monitoring, as HIWWT tends to work closely with different catchments and at a county level, so it was useful to find out more about the Hampshire Avon coordinators.

DW found the workshop useful in terms of meeting people and finding out what is happening in the catchment. There are lots of forums, and it is sometimes difficult to know which ones to go to, and who is best placed within the organisation to go to ensure there is no duplication of effort.

Since the workshop, there has been no increase in sharing equipment. HIWWT already lend equipment to volunteer groups. HIWWT are currently developing lab space but will be looking to acquire its own equipment so the organisation has the freedom to use it as they wish. DW acknowledged that an equipment inventory could be a useful tool.

There has been no increase in sharing volunteers and staff as this already happens anyway, although the workshop was a good way of raising Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's profile. Collaboration over training also already happens, for instance joint training with Forestry Commission.

HIWWT has not looked at collaboration over site visits since the workshop. It can be a big effort to organise survey work for the organisation, so asking other organisations as well can just add to that effort, although it may happen on an ad-hoc basis, but would be difficult to plan in advance.

Data access has been sorted in Hampshire, independent of the workshop. HIWWT does not have a problem accessing data but this may be due to good partnership links, for example with the records centre. It may be difficult to access data if the request was not coming from HIWWT.

DW thought that there were potential time savings to be had through collaboration, through the links made to other organisations which would save time, as it is clearer to know who to go for different things.

It was agreed that a continuous forum could be beneficial, but every year was too often, perhaps every two years would be better, with a wider attendance. The catchment level of the forum was useful for HIWWT because everything else is county based, so it is useful to think along the lines of

the catchment, although perhaps someone else from HIWWT, working in the New Forest, would be better placed to go.

Lizzy Peat (LP), Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

LP found the workshop useful to speak to a number of different people monitoring within the Hampshire Avon catchment to assess whether HBIC receives data from those organisations.

The workshop was a useful way of meeting new and relevant people within the Hampshire Avon catchment. For example, LP met Russell Spencer who has proved a useful contact to pass on to someone else for fish records, which has led to time-savings. The workshop was a useful forum for finding out about other potentially useful tools such as the ability to download Forestry Commission compartments which may be useful for survey work. It was also useful to meet Andrew Thompson, who works with a national focus at Natural England to understand the strategic monitoring that Natural England has put in agreement with record centres.

Issues of data sharing were raised, for example some organisations will not share data to ensure they maintain a good relationship with the landowners whose land the data was collected from.

Some discussion was had over sharing meeting rooms with Natural England, although this has not been followed up. LP thought the idea of an inventory was potentially good, as there is lots of good equipment around but it just needs better signposting. LP suggested that the Wildlife Trusts might be best placed to coordinate this.

The discussion at the workshop on data signposting made it clearer that the EA does have data about electrofishing for the whole river, and HBIC is now able to signpost to EA.

Although not a direct result of the workshop, HBIC are looking to put flow diagrams in place at the start of every data access agreement to clarify the way that data should flow.

There was some feeling that holding a similar workshop on a county level may have been more beneficial for HBIC but this would only be useful if it was useful to other organisations as well.

There was a feeling that the types of collaboration discussed in the workshop would lead to time savings as the new networks might reduce the amount of chasing needed to get organisations to send in their records to HBIC, for example by using Living Record.

Dianne Matthews (DM), Natural England

NE already collaborate with several of the organisations who provide and/or share their data with NE, (both govt. agencies and NGOs) so there was not a lot of follow-on activity from the workshop.

The workshop did make DM think more about collaboration ideas, any collaboration would need a driver. If an organisation wanted something from another organisation, DM thinks they need to be proactive in making contact and asking for it in the first instance. If there was a central database for information, NE can see the benefit for other organisations. However, there would be issues with ownership and maintenance of the database and may also be issues with access and sensitive data.

NE do not often share site visits, but may do where supporting projects, for example joint farmland bird project and agri-environment schemes visits, joint EA and NE visits to River SSSI landowners.

Whilst NE do not necessarily share visits with external organisations, they might share the data from the visit. Further consideration of this could be of benefit.

The nature of DM's role meant that she knew most of the people there already. It was a good opportunity to catch up with some of the attendees, but for many they meet on a regular basis anyway.

It was thought that the types of collaboration discussed at the workshop could lead to time and money savings, but NE already tends to use data from other organisations both Agencies and NGOs. Time savings through potential equipment and site visit sharing is something that is not really relevant to Natural England.

It was felt that the WCSRT catchment coordinator could fulfil the role of there being a forum into the future, and there are already likely to be a few workshops planned for this. It was noted that attendees can get tired of these kind of events.

Sue Southway (SS), Plantlife

SS has been busy since the workshop with organising Plantlife's Wild Flower count, which has reduced time to follow up on collaboration from the workshop.

The workshop was useful to meet David Noble at BTO, as Plantlife are going into partnership with BSBI, CEH and JNCC and are changing the protocol and methodology to allow for the collection of more robust data, but looking at habitats. BTO did the same thing with their protocols so it was useful to learn their recommendations for this process. It was also useful to talk to Ben Fitch at the workshop regarding collaborating over volunteers.

There is some difficulty with data sharing in that the wildflowers count is a national survey, and this can cause some complications for entering the data into local records centres.

The workshop made SS think there was the possibility to share equipment with other people. Plantlife already occasionally borrow equipment, for example microscopes from GWCT. However, Plantlife do not use a lot of equipment so it is not a big issue. An inventory for equipment could be useful, although Plantlife would not necessarily use it but it would be good to know it was there if necessary.

SS felt that collaboration over sharing staff, volunteers and training could be useful but there has been no specific activity to do this since the workshop, and is something that will be considered. There has been no sharing of staff and volunteers, although this probably could be beneficial. SS felt that the sharing of experts for training purposes was highlighted at the workshop.

Sharing site visits was not such an issue as the Wild Flowers Count is not specifically in the catchment area.

In general, the workshop gave SS a broader understanding of what is happening in the catchment and there is a possibility for there to be time or money saving, through better links, sharing training, and information exchange.

SS was unsure whether there would be any benefit to having a continuous forum for monitoring in the Hampshire Avon catchment as the focus for Plantlife tends to be national or international.

Iwan Jones (IJ), QMUL

The workshop was useful to be able to meet Colin Mackechnie at CEH, where they discussed the Horizon2020. Colin sent through details about Horizon2020 after the workshop. Having looked

through the details, IJ noted that there is a call on ecosystem services and as a consequence of realising this, started talking to James Bullock in CEH, who is also involved in the Wessex BESS project. He has engaged with a consortium on behalf of Wessex Bess to see if there is potential for an application to Horizon 2020 on that basis. The workshop gave this work a kick-start.

The workshop was also useful to be able to meet and discuss things with Russell Spencer, who as a result has been invited to the DTC stakeholder group meeting in May.

IJ has been considering issues surrounding dissemination of data since the workshop. No progress has been made with this but disseminating data to the website is being considered. Data storage is an issue, and data from specific projects do not lend themselves very well for general use. The workshop has helped raised issues of data, particularly that lots of data is held in different places that is not synthesised.

IJ has been working collaboratively through the projects he is working on, for example the macronutrient cycling programme, Wessex BESS and DTC. For these projects, there has been an effort to coordinate sites so that different activities are happening at the same sites. This has helped to link the projects more coherently so that data can be shared. This was happening before the workshop, but IJ is now starting to think about how to spread this kind of collaboration and plans to talk to the new WCSRT catchment coordinator. IJ has also been talking to Wessex Water and EA about coordinating sample collection, to ensure that information can be passed to each other and duplication avoided.

IJ has considered equipment sharing since the workshop, for example there have been discussions with Jon Bass about sharing temperature loggers. IJ is quite open about sharing equipment as long as it is under agreed conditions. An equipment inventory could be beneficial to know what equipment is already being deployed. For example the DTC has lots of sensors and monitors which are already in place collecting information. It would be useful for this information to be shared so that the data they are collecting can be shared.

Staff training is not something that has been collaborated over, and whilst it is a possibility it would depend on time and funding.

The workshop has made IJ more aware of ideas for collaboration, for example, more aware of what going on, who to collaborate with and in what ways.

IJ felt that the types of collaboration discussed at the workshop will save time in terms of acquiring information for certain projects. For example, for upscaling to catchment level in the DTC, knowing where to get information to verify upscaling is helpful and has the potential to save both time and to receive more money through funding as a result.

It was felt that a continuous forum may be beneficial, although there is an annual stakeholders group meeting for the DTC already. However a forum may be beneficial with a specific data purpose and monitoring/equipment sharing angle. There is some concern over whether there would be enough change each year, and the success depends on how engaged attendees are.

Jon Bass (JB), WCSRT

The workshop provided a useful forum to increase connections in monitoring in the Hampshire Avon. There were discussions over JB giving a talk to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust but the organisation of this is ongoing. Useful contacts were also swapped for the National Farmers Union.

Discussion at the workshop around data access led to WCSRT discussing security and access to water temperature data internally, which led to WCSRT arranging for their water temperature data to be openly available through their website. Before this, there was no data available through the website.

JB found the workshop beneficial to find out what is happening in the catchment. WCSRT have recently (in March) employed a new catchment coordinator. There is a strong link between this work and the work carried out by Russell Spencer within the Environment Agency. There was an overlap between organisations who attended the workshop and in this partnership, but there were also some broader terrestrial organisations present at the workshop which was useful.

The main aim of this catchment initiative is to secure restoration of the river in terms of quality, looking at Water Framework Directive and conservation targets, such as SSSI conditions. This is not an easy task due to funding constraints and using voluntary bodies such as WCSRT is a way to progress this.

The practicalities of equipment sharing were raised and it was felt that this kind of collaboration is not sufficiently convenient in practise to carry it forward, in most cases, as it would be difficult to keep track. An equipment inventory would likely be too difficult to maintain and there would be issues over the quality of equipment and ensuring that it is not misused.

Collaboration through training was already happening, for example the Rivers Trust has recently run some workshops on GIS training which were open to several organisations. Data sharing was also already happening, and WCSRT has good links to the EA data centre and Natural England information is becoming more accessible on the internet, although the rate of change means that it can be difficult to keep up.

There were no specific reasons to think that the collaboration discussed at the workshop would lead to any time or money savings and it was suggested that the case-study may work better in another catchment which is not already well connected. It was acknowledged that there were potential time savings to be had through the contacts made at the workshop but these can go out of date quickly as people move on from jobs.

The idea of having a continuous forum might work if it was part of another meeting rather than looking only at monitoring. The new coordinator for WCSRT will consider this aspect and be making links between the organisations, although will not be looking to set up anything large specifically for monitoring. If another organisation were to take over this role, it would be worth liaising with the WCSRT and EA catchment coordinators.

Andy House (AH), Wessex Water

The general feeling from AH was that the speed collaboration session held during the workshop was an excellent way of networking and useful to find out the work of other people monitoring in the catchment.

Several actions from this session were noted and many are still ongoing. It was a useful exercise to make new contacts, for example AH found out more about the work undertaken by Iwan Jones at the workshop and there is potential in the future for collaboration over statistical analysis.

The workshop provided a good opportunity to talk to people working on non-river monitoring regarding AMP cycle investigations. In this way the workshop has helped provide terrestrial contacts which will be useful when a staff member from Wessex Water, who currently has a good network of contacts leaves.

It was noted that Wessex Water already collaborates well with the EA, CEH, NE and QMUL. For example, Wessex Water paid for a plant training session which the EA, NE and Wildlife Trusts also attended.

The workshop made Wessex Water more open to the idea of collaborating in the future. With regards to equipment sharing, although Wessex Water would be open to this idea, for example with DO loggers, there would be concerns about sharing more expensive equipment such as electric fishing equipment due to the risk of damaged or lost equipment. While Wessex Water would be interested in being part of an equipment inventory there would be concerns about how to ensure responsibility was taken by those borrowing equipment. However, it was noted that a centralised database for site visits would be of use, where landowners were listed, to allow for coordinating surveys between organisations.

Wessex Water already shares data with CEH, QMUL, NE and EA, although there have been some issues with obtaining landowner data due to data protection.

No time or financial saving was anticipated but the value of the workshop was clear from a better understanding of what is happening in the catchment. As a result, it was felt that there would be a benefit to having a continuous forum for monitoring in the Hampshire Avon.

Ben Fitch (BF), Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

There was discussion at the workshop over the potential to use Environment Agency lab space for invert ID work. Although nothing has been put into place yet, WWT is now in a place to be able to progress this.

The workshop provided a useful forum to meet with staff from EA who WWT has been working with, for instance over developing strategic sites in collaboration with EA. Whilst discussions with the EA would have happened regarding this anyway, the workshop proved a useful occasion to forward these discussions.

Following discussions with Russell Spencer at the workshop, BF circulated details in a newsletter about the River Basin Planning Consultation that had been discussed with Russell. Although BF knew Russell before the workshop, it again provided a good forum to further discussions with RS.

There were good discussions with Nick Sotherton from GWCT at the workshop. There is the potential for GWCT to deliver some electric fishing surveys or to deliver training, or to share equipment. This was circulated to the team at WWT and is something that may develop in time.

The workshop was useful to speak to Debbie Whitfield at HIWWT. BF learnt that another HIWWT staff member was potentially developing invert monitoring in East Hampshire, and as a result BF attended a meeting in Blashford to discuss working to expand river monitoring sites in the New Forest. This will hopefully be developed further, although there are issues regarding insurance and volunteers to overcome.

The workshop was a good forum to talk to Dianne Matthews at NE regarding issues with giant hogweed at a couple of sites.

There was some interest between Plantlife and WWT about sharing volunteers. Nothing has been taken forwards yet, but will be considered in the future.

Following discussions at the workshop, BF has spoken to Jon Bass who subsequently agreed to give a presentation at the beginning of 2015 for the river monitoring scheme at the annual meeting.

BF mentioned the catchment coordinator roles at EA and WCSRT. There is the possibility that a website will be hosted to have everything directed through for the catchment.

Sharing volunteers, staff and equipment is something that WWT does, for instance with Dorset Wildlife Trust, but this has not specifically come from the workshop. WWT also shares site visits through the Source to Sea programme.

There is a data-sharing agreement already in place between EA and Source to Sea. There have been issues with sharing landownership details with volunteers for the strategic river monitoring sites.

BF thought that there would be the potential to save time and money through collaboration, this can already been seen with the Source to Sea project, where they do not have the time or money to renew the survey every year but using volunteers keeps the records updated.

BF felt that there would be value in repeating the workshop as an on-going forum. It was felt that it was useful on a local level, and while there are people already working in partnership they do not necessarily have a specific focus, so sharing monitoring resources over an entire catchment would be a good.