



Minutes of Autumn Meeting:

10 November 2016, at Network Rail Offices, St Vincent Street, Glasgow

Attending: Brian Beck (BB), Susie Coyle (SC), Scott Donaldson, Roger Downie (RD), Carolyn Drane, John Fowbert, Len Howcutt, Ewan Kane, Helen Lundie, Rennie Mason (RM), Erik Paterson (EP), John Sweeney (JS), Richard Weddle (RW), Ashleigh Wylie.

Apologies: Dave Chatterton, Dave Garner, Pete Minting, Salma Rahman.

Matters Arising from Last Meeting

As part of the validation exercise concerning the historical herpetofauna records of JA Gibson, discussed at the Spring meeting, Richard Weddle passed a file of scanned information on to John Sweeney. JS has offered to review this information to separate out any controversial records from those likely to be "safe" based on modern knowledge. Those records thought likely to be dubious will then be investigated further.

Reports

East Kilbride Surveys

Erik Paterson provided a brief summary of his amphibian survey work in the East Kilbride area in Spring 2016. Following this Erik, appealed for assistance with these surveys next spring, offering to provide training in survey methods to any volunteers with no/limited experience.

Reptiles at Whitelee Wind Farm

Rennie Mason spoke about reptiles seen within the Whitelee wind farm in 2016, including 2 records of adder (one unfortunately killed by a bicycle). RM also mentioned that common lizard is widespread throughout the site. Following on from observations of lizards here basking close to rotating wind turbines, RD and EP discussed Whitelee as a potential site for a study of the possible effect that habituation to the turbines may have on anti-predator responses.

Amphibians in Drains (AiD) Project

John Sweeney reported on the Amphibians in Drains (AiD) project. One visit to Baggie Minne Pond (Carmyle), a known problem site, was undertaken in March 2016. Over fifty newts were rescued from drains in the vicinity of the pond, with similar numbers of palmate and smooth newts.

The AiD report, summarising the work done since 2013, is in preparation.

Cleddans and Cochno Surveys

Brian Beck who normally reports on his amphibian surveys at Cleddans and Cochno (West Dunbartonshire), explained that only a limited amount of survey work was possible this Spring because of restricted access due to a police investigation.

At this point, RD described how staff and students at University of Glasgow are developing a site for allotments close to BB's Cochno survey area. Roger suggested that some of these staff/students might be keen to assist with Brian's amphibian surveys in this area.

Froglife

RD informed the meeting that Froglife they have appointed Alastair Lemmon as an apprentice to the Scottish Dragonfinder project officer. Alastair has been in touch with CARG through BB to find out more about the group. The Scottish Dragonfinder project is doing work across Scotland and there may be future opportunities for CARG involvement with work in our area.

Frankfield Loch Amphibian Tunnels

RD reported the results of two sets of monitoring work at the amphibian road tunnel crossings at Frankfield Loch. These tunnels were installed under the road by the developer of the new housing there, as a planning condition designed to mitigate amphibian mortality due to traffic, while the animals are moving to and from the adjacent Frankfield Loch. The effectiveness of the tunnels has been reduced recently for a number of reasons, including being blocked by rubbish; the drift fencing being set alight by vandals; and subsidence of the road itself.

At this point, it was suggested by BB that Network Rail might be willing to deploy a number of staff to help restore the tunnels as a community project. Brian asked EP if he could, on behalf of CARG, liaise between Network Rail and North Lanarkshire Council to try to progress this.

Action: Erik to make contact with NLC to make them aware of the possibility of help from Network Rail.

New Publication finds Common Toad Populations in Severe Decline

RD drew the meeting's attention to a recent study which has used toad patrol data from Switzerland and the UK, going back over 30 years, to infer a severe decline in common toad populations in both countries. The paper can be downloaded [here](#).

Planning Ahead

Help Requests

Several members appealed for help with ongoing projects next year.

- EP: East Kilbride amphibian surveys
- RM: Herpetile recording at Whitelee Wind Farm
- JS: Amphibians in Drains visits to Kilmardinny Loch, Bearsden.

Pond Enhancement Opportunities

EP asked members to think about any ponds where clearing up rubbish or habitat management activities could benefit local amphibian populations. BB suggested that in addition to CARG members, Network Rail staff could also be deployed to enhance sites, where the work could be considered a community project.

A.O.B.

Local Records Centre

RW appealed for herptile records for the CARG area to be sent to the local records centre (the Glasgow Museum Biological Records Centre). Richard reminded the meeting that a simple excel spreadsheet is available (and on the CARG website) to make this easy.

Froglife: Glasgow Green Pathways Project

RD informed the meeting that Froglife have secured new funding has been found for this local community project and that work will be resuming once a project worker has been appointed.

CARG Treasurer and Membership Secretary Role

SC informed the meeting that she is leaving the area to work in Ireland and that consequently, is no longer able to take up these roles within the group. Susie is however, keen to remain involved with the group from afar.

Following an appeal for a volunteer replacement(s) and a short discussion on what these roles involve, RD offered to fill both positions. Roger asked JS if he would continue as a co-signatory for the bank account and John was happy to do so.

Minutes prepared by John Sweeney