From: Dominic Woodfield - Bioscan [dominicwoodfield@bioscanuk.com]
Sent: 09 October 2012 16:41
To: 'Tom Tew'; 'Heslop, Anna'; 'Mason, Elizabeth @ London HH'
Cc: 'Bexs Benmayor'; jarrett, andy; smith, catherine; mccutcheon, brian; stoddart, carly; pullin, mark; hall, martin; samantha.dawes@rspb.org.uk; osweeney@blueyonder.co.uk; 'Hanna, Sean (NE)'; dave.burges@rspb.org.uk; rob.cameron@naturalengland.org.uk; 'Debbie Salmon'; greg.hitchcock@kentwildlife.org.uk; stephen.neal@landsecurities.com; andrew.dodd@rspb.org.uk; acbh@btinternet.com
Subject: Habitat condition assessment criteria

As promised, herewith my thoughts on the draft habitat condition assessment criteria:

1. Habitats.

   So much detail is lost into these Phase 1/FEP categories that I would query their worth for the purpose of assessing nightingale habitat quality. For example, there is no qualification of the T08 woodland into coppiced and non-coppiced stands, nor any allowance for age structure etc, all of which will be integral to assessing their value/potential value to nightingales. The same applies to dense (how dense?) and scattered (how scattered?) scrub. Taking Table 3.1, it is not hard to think of an example of a stand that would fulfil all the listed criteria, and still be of no use for nightingales. A 'high-forest' type mature closed-canopy woodland could tick all of these 'boxes' yet be completely unused by the species. More worryingly, given the proposed application of these criteria to the LH site, some criteria could actually count against habitats that are in reality of high value for the species (e.g. standing and fallen dead trees of over 20cm diameter – not sure the nightingales are that bothered by this one...).

2. Major Limiting factors Concerning Nightingale Habitats.

   The only comment on this table really is that I would query whether nightingales preferentially select "nutrient rich soils". The very nature of damp soils in the riparian environments where they are often found is likely to be (naturally) nutrient rich, but that is not the same as their being a determining factor for presence/absence. Indeed on the drier sites I know that support nightingales, I believe high nutrient status may be a detractor. In such circumstances I believe it may actually militate against the development of habitat structures optimal for nightingale as it fosters the development of 'grassier' field layers, rather than the bare shaded ground favoured by the species. The case example would be a post-industrial site where the scrub takes a hold and develops the dense canopy with impenetrable edge and 'hollow' interior. In these instances I think the thin, nutrient poor soils or relict hard-standing retards the development of any real field layer and both creates and helps to maintains the largely bare ground underneath these dense stands. This is why I have serious reservations about the prospects for successful nightingale habitat creation by simply planting a load of whips on (dry) former arable land. Yes you will get something after a few years that looks like it could support the species, but I suspect it would be a disappointment. Better results are likely to be received on an ex-arable site by removing the topsoil down to the (let's say, as we're in Kent, chalk) to replicate the conditions found in former quarries, or in the compacted ground and former hard standings of post-industrial sites.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Best regards

Dominic Woodfield MIEEM CEnv
Director

Bioscan (UK) Ltd
The Old Parlour
Little Baldon Farm

Oxford
OX44 9PU

T: +44 (0)1865 341321
F: +44 (0)1865 343674
www.bioscanuk.com

This email (and any attachment) is confidential and is intended for the use of the addressee(s) only. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you must not copy, distribute, take any action in reliance on it or disclose it to anyone. Any confidentiality is not waived or lost by reason of mistaken delivery. If you have received this e-mail in error please notify the sender immediately by using the e-mail address or telephone +44 (0) 1865 341321 and permanently delete the original and any copy or print out of this e-mail. Whilst we try to ensure that messages and attachments are virus-free, we cannot accept responsibility where this is not the case. No responsibility is accepted by Bioscan (UK) Ltd for personal e-mails or those unconnected with our business.

Please consider the environment before printing this email

From: tom.tew@hotmail.co.uk [mailto:tom.tew@hotmail.co.uk] **On Behalf Of** Tom Tew
Sent: 08 October 2012 15:16
To: Dominic Woodfield - Bioscan; Heslop, Anna; Mason, Elizabeth @ London HH
Cc: Bexs Benmayor; jarrett, andy; smith, catherine; mccutcheon, brian; carly.stoddart@medway.gov.uk; mark.pullin@medway.gov.uk; hall, martin; samantha.dawes@rspb.org.uk; osweeney@blueyonder.co.uk; Hanna, Sean (NE); dave.burges@rspb.org.uk; rob.cameron@naturalengland.org.uk; Debbie Salmon; greg.hitchcock@kentwildlife.org.uk; stephen.neal@landsecurities.com; andrew.dodd@rspb.org.uk; acbh@btinternet.com
Subject: Lodge Hill: Technical Workshop

Hi everyone

With apologies for the slight delay - please find attached a revised draft of the Lodge Hill technical workshop notes. A few comments:

1. Your emails and notes were all extremely helpful - you will see that I have incorporated many of them - thank you.
2. There was clear disagreement over the use of the word 'all' in the phrase 'all offset site conditions required by nightingales' in section 5 - some remembered it, some definitely didn't. I have decided for the notes to exclude it because, as you will see from the attachment, we are coming up with lots and lots of potential criteria for assessing habitat quality for nightingales and perhaps no site will meet 'all'. We might need to debate whether there are some 'key' conditions that we do think must be met (see 3 below). In any case, the question I think I asked at the workshop - 'will it work if all conditions are met?' is different and much less helpful to the question I should have asked - 'do all conditions need to be met for it to work?'. Sorry for that.
3. I have amended the text on the local experts' views on nightingale populations - this was badly worded in the notes.
4. There has been a mini-row over what was said about the geographical location of the receptor sites - 'close to Lodge Hill', 'within Kent', 'within Medway', or 'not to be constrained by administrative boundaries'. As I recall the discussion, there was the (usual and legitimate) difference of views between national and local perspectives and no consensus was reached - I have left the wording that (to my mind) sets preferred options for local delivery but does not preclude a wider search.
5. I have clarified the position on temporary habitat loss - the notes here were plain

wrong, and I am grateful for comments - my apologies again. I hope the revised wording captures the actual discussion. Again, there is a further important debate on whether temporary loss is ever acceptable, and under what circumstances - but we did not go far down that route in the workshop.

I hope this version is OK for everyone - I certainly don't want to encourage more editing (!) but if there remain bits of this that you find completely untrue or unacceptable then do get back to me.

Secondly, the BTO are revising the main report, taking on board the workshop comments, but are still waiting for figure-reproduction permissions - so that should follow next week and will be sent to all.

As will a short paper on the 'criteria for site selection' which is noted in the minutes and which everyone wished to comment on - I would be grateful if you could get comments to me within one week of receiving the paper (i.e. if receive on 15th, then comments by 22nd). In that paper we will try to structure a quick questionnaire to help you explore both which criteria are key (or necessary) and also what level of certainty we have in our assessment.

Finally, please find attached a draft paper that EBL & BTO have written on habitat condition criteria to help inform our assessment of the Lodge Hill site. We didn't promise to forward this round but if you are able to spare the time we would welcome any comments on this paper either asap (next day or two) before we visit Lodge Hill, or indeed thereafter to inform our post-visit analysis.

Thanking you again for all your contributions,

best wishes to all
Tom

PS Catherine - I am not at all certain this email list covers all workshop attendees - would you be so kind as to check for me and forward it on to anyone I have missed? Thanks.

Dr T E Tew FRSA FBS MIEEM
Chief Executive
The Environment Bank