

Gloucestershire Nature Map – topics for discussion at NM Working Group 4th June 2008

The South West Regional Nature Map was launched in its current iteration in 2006. This iteration was agreed by all regional and local partners and covered the whole of the South West region. Gloucestershire in March 2008 launched the Gloucestershire Nature Map. This launch has highlighted a number of areas of concern and the need for discussion with the BioSW NM Working Group. The main issues to address are outlined below, but what should be foremost is maintaining the integrity of Nature Map across the whole of the South West as an effective tool to influence organisations and deliver biodiversity. The issues for consideration are as follows:

1. There is a need to ascertain whether the Gloucestershire NM is intended as a revision of the Gloucestershire element of the Regional NM, and if so should these two maps be integrated and how? There are issues with this as outlined below, but the Working Group will need to decide if the Draft NM Working Guidelines can be used to enable this process to take place. It is essential that compatibility is retained and read across from the regional to county layers of NM.
2. Definition of habitats in the Gloucestershire NM and the Regional NM are different in places. If the two maps are to be integrated these differences need resolution. Of particular consideration -
 - a. Woodland mosaics and woodland/lowland heath mosaics are used in the Gloucestershire NM and not in the Regional NM – all SNAs are designated for a highlighted habitat as outlined in the Rebuilding Biodiversity Methodology. However it should also be noted that all SNAs are considered to be mosaics when it comes to implementation.
 - b. Lowland wet grassland not used on the Regional NM, instead Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh is used. Are these two definitions compatible?
 - c. Gloucestershire NM has an SNA for Possible Future Limestone Grassland. This could be considered an inconsistency as all SNAs include an element of future habitat opportunity. Need to determine how the definition for Limestone Grassland SNAs has been set and how this differs from Possible Future Limestone Grassland and hence how it all fits with the Regional NM.
3. A GIS version of the Gloucestershire NM needs to be made available.
4. A comparison of the Regional NM and Gloucestershire NM needs to be completed to determine if there are significant differences. Have there been any significant additions or deletions of SNAs and where are these? How were these justified and has this been based on the Rebuilding Biodiversity Methodology?
5. Within publicity for the Gloucestershire NM there is no reference to the Regional NM or its development by BioSW. Although it is right that publicity of the map emphasises the Gloucestershire context, it is important that the regional context of NM, is also referenced. This issue needs resolution.
6. The publication of the Gloucestershire NM has highlighted the importance of county-regional dialogue to resolve issues, such as those outlined above, prior to the publication of a revised map. It is hoped that the NM Working Guidelines will facilitate this, but is there a need for further communication of this message?

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