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View from the Chair

At the 2001 NSCG AGM in Oxford, Howard Mendel proposed that a joint Working Group be established to consider the ramifications of a NSCG/BCG merger – such a group to include the Chairmen and Secretaries and to report back to the NSCG Membership at the NSCG AGM 2001. This was seconded by Helen Fothergill. Kate Andrew said that the chairs and secretaries should ask for volunteers and that this group report back to the next AGM.

With this remit, the chairs and secretaries met with the volunteer discussion group at The Natural History Museum, South Kensington on 26th July 2001. The meeting was chaired by Rob Huxley, with myself, Darren Mann, Simon Moore, Susan Cooke and Donna Young from NSCG committee and David Carter, Steve Thompson, Jo Hatton, and Nick Gordon from BCG committee (with Susan Cooke reporting back to GCG committee).

At this meeting, we discussed the benefits and drawbacks of merging NSCG with BCG and / or GCG. The decision of this meeting was to publish a 'straw-poll' to the BCG and the NSCG memberships in order to gauge the views of both memberships on the subject. GCG was informed of the outcome and will continue to be informed of future developments.

Broadly similar questionnaires were sent out to both memberships, although the wording of the two surveys was slightly different after NSCG committee input. The clear result of both straw polls showed a majority (in NSCG 67%, out of a 50% return rate from the membership) to exploring further a merger with BCG to form a new group (without GCG at present).

The chairs and secretaries have met and discussed by email and have worked out the exact wording of Annual General Meeting proposals to be put to both Annual General Meetings this year.

The proposals are:-

- **PROPOSAL 1.** To merge Biological Curators Group and Natural Sciences Conservation Group to form a single organisation.
- **PROPOSAL 2.** Subject to both organisations voting in favour of the proposal to merge (above), the chairmen of the respective groups are directed to set up a joint committee to write a constitution for the combined organisation and recommend the mechanism for merging; to be presented to the Annual General Meetings in 2003 at a joint meeting (NSCG / BCG).

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Please, if you have strong views on the subject, then write a letter to the membership for publication in The Newsletter and come to the AGM in Norwich to vote in April! The Newsletter is your vehicle to disseminate your views and whatever the form of the new society, your views as conservators will continue to be represented and valued both within the new association and in NCCR. I look forward to seeing you at the Norwich Conference!

Paul A. Brown, 12th February 2002

