

Great Britain Strategy for Managing Floating Pennywort

An all-sector approach to the strategic management of the invasive non-native aquatic plant, floating pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*

Objective: We will coordinate our resources to ensure the best strategic management of floating pennywort, thus minimising its impact on watercourses and the communities associated with them.

Background

Floating pennywort is an aquatic invasive non-native plant that forms dense floating mats of weed across waterbodies. Dense floating pennywort growth degrades ecology, restricts or prevents recreational activities such as navigation and angling and potentially increases flood risk. Floating pennywort was first introduced as an ornamental pond plant in the 1990's, but rapidly spread into the wild and is still spreading. It is likely that, unless effective management is undertaken, this plant will spread across most of the country, and climate change is anticipated to favour its growth and spread.

What can we do?

There is already a lot of effort spent managing floating pennywort, but much of this effort lacks the coordination, duration and resources necessary to really deliver effective action. We need a coordinated strategic approach, drawing on a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental sectors, to really achieve success. This is the purpose of this strategy.

What are the benefits of a shared strategic approach?

Floating pennywort does not respect boundaries and unless control is coordinated across the various bodies with ownership, duties and interests in a waterbody, the management will ultimately fail. The various bodies that are currently undertaking floating pennywort management bring different strengths to the partnership; government bodies tend to be good at large-scale mechanical removal projects, whereas charities and volunteer groups often excel at regular small-scale control. Together, we create a highly effective resource. A strategic approach will allow us to agree a desired management outcome for a waterbody, and our respective contribution towards achieving it. No single organisation has a duty to manage floating pennywort, so a partnership approach is our best option.

Who is responsible for managing floating pennywort?

Responsibility for managing floating pennywort ultimately rests with the landowner. In the large majority of cases, landowners that have floating pennywort in their watercourses won't have introduced it themselves. Landowners should be fully engaged in any activity that necessitates access to their land. Landowners are also

encouraged to support the control programme, such as by facilitating the safe disposal of weed.

How does the strategy work?

A **GB FP Strategy Group** comprises the main national partnership organisations. Its role is to:

- Facilitate local partnerships;
- Share good practice;
- Agree management targets and action plans with local groups;
- Seek and share funding and other resources;
- Organise national communications and awareness raising.

A summary of the organisations currently contributing to the GB Strategy Group is provided in Annex 1.

How will the strategy be delivered?

At a local level, **Catchment Action Groups (CAGs)** create and deliver **Floating Pennywort Catchment Management Plans (FPCMPs)**, based on a national template provided by the Strategy Group. CAGs will consist of a partnership of the relevant local stakeholders and can be led by any of the stakeholder members. The role of the CAG is to:

- Produce and agree a plan, defining the roles of the respective group members;
- Ensure robust health and safety standards, and clarity on
- Promote strict biosecurity and share best practice management techniques;
- Ensure full landowner engagement and permission, wherever possible;
- Coordinate control and review progress against management objectives;
- Monitor for potential new infestations, or possible sources to the existing infestation, and take rapid action to eradicate;
- Participate and contribute towards communications and awareness raising programmes;
- Promote this Strategy and local Catchment Plans with relevant Catchment Partnerships.

The management objectives for FPCMPs will vary, depending on the catchment, the level of stakeholder engagement and the extent of the infestation. In catchments in which floating pennywort is abundant and distributed widely, a management objective of 'reduce and contain' is the most realistic target, however, if the partnership proves particularly effective and eradication is feasible, the management objective can be revised to a more ambitious target.

An absence of floating pennywort does not preclude a management plan! The most effective and cost-beneficial form of management is prevention through good biosecurity, and rapid response eradication of any infestation before it becomes established. Non-governmental organisations of interest groups, such as anglers, swimmers, paddlers and boat users, are ideally placed to promote good biosecurity

and intervene quickly, should floating pennywort, or any other damaging organism, start to establish.

How do I establish a Catchment Action Group?

Most CAGs will start organically, from a few stakeholders already engaged in floating pennywort or biosecurity measures. The CAG should use resources on the NNSS website, then agree leadership and roles, and contact the GB FP Strategy Group via any of the respective members. The national group can then provide supporting materials to the CAG and assist with finding suitable local stakeholders from key partner organisations, if they have yet to be identified locally.

Health and Safety

It is essential that each project has clarity on which organisation is the lead partner for health and safety issues. Working in or near water is a high risk activity, especially when it includes manual lifting and hauling. It is essential that risk assessments for the activity in question, and the sites visited, are carried out and communicated with all those engaged in the project, and that those participating in the activity are covered by appropriate insurance. No one should partake in an activity for which they are not trained, equipped and insured for.

Biosecurity

Invasive non-native species are primarily spread by people, and it is essential that strict biosecurity is undertaken to ensure that activities don't result in further spread. Everyone partaking in the activity must follow strict 'check-clean-dry' procedures for all their clothing and equipment, and should have completed the e-learning modules on the [NNSS website](#). Weed must be disposed of in a manner that prevents the further spread of floating pennywort, and other associated organisms, to new sites.

Funding

The strategy will coordinate existing investment in floating pennywort management. More effective action will reduce cost, making resources available to other waterbodies that currently lack effective action. By coordinating resources into a GB FP strategy we hope that supporting members will be in a stronger position to bid for funding from their respective funding bodies.

Implementation date for the strategy

It is intended that the strategy will be launched during September 2020

Annex 1: Organisations currently contributing towards the GB FP Strategy Group:

- The Angling Trust
- British Canoeing
- British Rowing
- Wildlife & Countryside Link

- Association of Rivers Trusts
- Association of Drainage Authorities
- Canal & River Trust
- Environment Agency
- Defra
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Natural Resources Wales
- Non-Native Species Secretariat
- South West Water representative for the water industry
- Outdoor Swimming Society
- NFU

Future organisations to engage with

- BSBI
- CLA
- Sports and Recreation Alliance
- River Care
- CEH
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust representative for Wildlife Trusts