Non Native Invasive Species in the Cromarty Firth region

Catchment scale management and beyond...
Fishery Management Scotland

District Salmon Fishery Boards
Statutory bodies with management and law enforcement responsibility funded by local tax raising power.

Fishery Trusts
Charitable bodies with wider catchment management and education aims.
River Catchments in the Cromarty Firth District.
Cromarty Firth Biosecurity Plan

- Produced as one of 20 Biosecurity Plans through the Fishery Trust network
- Links to Cromarty Firth Fishery Management Plan and WFD delivery
Plan objectives

- Prevent introduction and spread of Invasive Non Native Species within the Cromarty Firth Fisheries District
- Establish Framework for detection and surveillance of INNS, linked to a protocol to ensure a rapid management response
- Develop coordinated control and eradication of INNS
Aim

- Map the distribution and extent of alien invasive plant species in the Cromarty Firth region
- Raise public and landowner awareness
- Coordinate control works so that action starts at the upstream end of distribution
- Create links with voluntary sector
Target INNS
Method

- Survey starts at mouth and works upstream until past human habitation, usually out of woodland onto open hill.
- 250M Survey reaches matching existing SFCC habitat survey reaches
- DAFOR or None recorded for each species
- Separate table for each bank, wider rivers both banks walked
- Combination of map and GPS
- Agreed as standard method by SEPA, RAFTS & SFCC
Recording

- Himalayan balsam, Japanese knot weed, Rhododendron, and Giant Hogweed recorded for each bank
- Also recorded sycamore, larch and other common exotics such as cone flower and snowberry
- Any more unusual exotics photographed and GPS plot. SNH helped with ID
Spraying

- Fishery Board staff trained
- Spraying of Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Rhododendron regrowth
- Positive results after initial spraying season
Restoration
Moving beyond the catchment scale
Awareness Raising

- Tailored to Highland region and target groups e.g. Anglers, Garden centres, Field clubs, Canoe clubs, Contractors
- High Priority species highlighted
- High Priority potential species introductions highlighted
- Collate ID, control and recording info in one concise pack
- Downloadable in PDF form
INNS Information packs aim to:

- Promote the issues arising from the spread of INNS
- Promote the risks associated with spreading INNS from/to other areas of UK
- Promote good biosecurity
- Promote GBNNSS ‘Check, Clean, Dry’ campaign
- Promote the ‘Pond Alert’ and ‘Be Plant Wise’ campaigns
- Promote reporting and recording INNS
North Highland Mink Project

Scottish Mink Initiative
• More than 40 rafts and traps in action

• Approx 28 rafts and equipment deployed around the Conon catchment alone

• Primarily Ghillies, Keepers and Bailiffs trapping

• Recruiting new volunteers through display in local environment charity shop, libraries, Game Fairs and Shops.
Coastal tracking tunnels

- Around Cromarty Firth
- At mouth of small burns entering the Firth
- Checked weekly
Catchment scale management of INNS

Key points...

- Eradication of some INNS is a realistic aim
- Voluntary sector is a valuable resource
- Awareness raising is key
Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI)

The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative is a priority project in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy’s route map to 2020. The route map sets out the major steps needed to improve the state of nature in Scotland and halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020. It highlights the spread of invasive species as one of the key pressures on biodiversity.
SNH received a grant of £1.59 million from Heritage Lottery Fund for the SISI.

Target species will be managed in selected locations within 29,500 km² area of Northern Scotland.

The project will focus on species associated with rivers and lochs.

Aim is to establish a volunteer network which will help look after local freshwater biodiversity once the project has completed.
Coordinating action over multiple river catchments

SMI area as at February 2015
Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI)

- A partnership project to encourage communities to tackle NNIS in their local area
- Aims to establish a community approach to deal with NNIS in Scotland working with 10 Fishery Trusts and District Salmon Fishery Boards.
- The project team will work with local communities to establish local management of specific priority species such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed & Giant hogweed.
Collaboration with the charity APEX Scotland. This will provide a range of volunteer opportunities for offenders, ex-offenders and those recovering from addiction.

The project will also link in with the John Muir Trust to enable volunteers to work towards their John Muir Award through taking part in project activities.