Recording Invasive Species Counts (RISC project)

Background

Funded by Defra, the aims of the RISC project are to encourage interest in invasive non-native species, and to involve the public in recording some of them.

- Useful data on distributions and ecology of the chosen species will be generated.

- This web-based project with online recording launched on 22 March 2010.

- RISC is being run by the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, National Biodiversity Network, Anglia Ruskin University and GB Non-native Species Secretariat.

- Ten animal and plant species have been chosen, and RISC will run in association with the national recording schemes for the species. Recorders will be asked to upload a photo of their sighting, and these will be checked and verified by the recording schemes.

- The species were selected based on criteria such as invasiveness, ease of identification and usefulness of data to the recording scheme.

RISC website – www.nonnativespecies.org/recording

The following information is available on the website –

- Information and images for the ten species – including species fact sheets
- Online recording forms
- Links to many other surveys for non-native species
**Muntjac deer** *Muntiacus reevesi*
*Habitat:* Woodland, scrub, gardens.
*Impacts:* Feeds on plant shoots and ground flora.

**Zebra mussel** *Dreissena polymorpha*
*Habitat:* Rivers, canals, lakes.
*Impacts:* Alters ecosystems & outcompetes native species, including mussels. Colonies can block water pipes & affect lock gates.

**Chinese mitten crab** *Eriocheir sinensis*
*Habitat:* Tidal streams, rivers, estuaries.
*Impacts:* Effects native species including crayfish. Damage to riverbanks by burrowing.

**Citrus longhorn beetle** *Anoplophora chinensis*
*Habitat:* Deciduous trees and shrubs, especially maples.
*Impacts:* Extremely damaging to a wide range of broadleaved trees and shrubs. A serious threat to horticulture, forestry and native trees.

**American bullfrog** *Lithobates catesbeianus*
*Habitat:* Ponds and lakes.
*Impacts:* Voracious predator of a wide range of species. Negative impact on native amphibians. Can be a vector for the chytrid fungus which causes serious disease in some amphibians.

**Floating pennywort** *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*
*Habitat:* Ponds, ditches, canals.

**Water fern** *Azolla filiculoides*
*Habitat:* Ponds, ditches, canals.
*Impacts:* Out-competes native species. Forms dense cover on water surface, blocking out light and causing deoxygenation.

**Creeping water-primrose** *Ludwigia peploides*
*Habitat:* Still or slow-flowing water.
*Impacts:* Outcompetes native species. Clogs up waterways.

**American skunk-cabbage** *Lysichiton americanus*
*Habitat:* Wet woodland, streamsides, pond margins.
*Impacts:* Can be invasive, but impacts unknown.

**Tree-of-heaven** *Ailanthus altissima*
*Habitat:* Roadsides, disturbed ground.
*Impacts:* Outcompetes native species.

---

Images used with the kind permission of Anastasija Zaiko (Zebra mussel), Stephan Gollasch (Mitten crab), Pavlos Andriopoulus (Tree-of-heaven) and NNSS (all other images)