

# The Invasive Non-Native Species Strategic Communications Plan for Great Britain

## Executive Summary

1. Invasive non-native species are the second biggest cause of biodiversity loss worldwide and cost the UK economy in excess of £2 billion per annum.
2. Levels of public awareness are generally low and the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain (2008) acknowledged that raising awareness was key to tackling the problem and helping deliver the strategy.
3. Recognising this, the GB Programme Board established a Media and Communications Working Group (consisting of government, trade and non-governmental organisation representatives) in March 2008. The main aim of the working group was to develop a draft strategy for the Programme Board to consider.
4. The working group met five times and jointly drafted this document which is divided into three main sections:
  - Stakeholders;
  - the General Public; and
  - Training and Education.
5. The main recommendations of the strategy are:
  - a. Stakeholders
    - i. Concentrate efforts on six key stakeholder groups:
      1. Horticulture trade
      2. Freshwater users
      3. Pet trade
      4. Conservation NGOs

5. Land-owners organisations

6. Construction sector

ii. Use agreed high-level messages with all communications.

iii. Use specific messages for each of the six priority groups.

b. General Public

i. Concentrate effort initially on three main pathways – Horticulture, Angling and Pet trade.

ii. Exploit opportunities elsewhere but with land-owners and marine water users as a second tier of priorities.

iii. Use agreed high-level messages with all communications.

iv. Use 'non-native' as against 'alien'.

v. Use the Non-Native Species Secretariat logo as the overarching brand.

vi. Revamp the secretariat website.

vii. Develop several case studies to help illustrate the issue.

c. Training

i. Carry out an audit of current relevant training in GB

ii. Establish a focussed sub-group to recommend strategic improvements.

iii. Develop information and education packs and identify alternative options for training provision.

iv. Develop merchandising.

v. Develop an interactive section on the Secretariat website.

vi. Examine opportunities to influence each sector through its key partners e.g. via public sector as clients in procuring contracts.

## **i. Introduction**

Invasive non-native species are considered one of the main causes of biodiversity loss and several international agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, require action to tackle the threats they pose. They also have significant economic costs – estimated to be in excess of £2 Billion per annum to the UK economy. The problems caused by invasive species are steadily getting worse as movement of people and goods increases. Climate change is also likely to exacerbate the issue significantly.

An increased understanding of invasive non-native species and the problems they cause is recognised by trade representatives, industry, non-government organisations (NGOs), government and others as key to reducing the threat they pose. However, with the exception of some specialist audiences there is a limited awareness and understanding of the threats posed by invasive non-native species. This is also the case for the general public and many organisations, including many of the diverse arms of the GB Administrations.

### **Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain**

In May 2008, Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government jointly launched the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain. The overarching aim of the GB Strategy is to minimise the risk posed, and reduce the negative impacts caused, by invasive non-native species in Great Britain.

Integral to the vision of GB Framework Strategy is that when it is fully implemented there will be widespread awareness of the risks and adverse impacts associated with invasive non-native species, and greater vigilance against these. It also encourages stakeholders to take action and share the responsibility to promote an informed change of behaviour.

Key Action 9.4 of the GB Strategy required the establishment of a working group to develop a communications and media strategy. To progress this key action (and other key actions within the GB Strategy that relate to communications issues) a working group was established by the GB Programme Board in March 2008. This document is the result of that group's work.

### **Current situation**

Trade bodies, NGOs, local authorities and the government family have, on their own initiative, conceived and delivered valuable awareness raising campaigns, for example the Ornamental and Aquatic Trade Association (OATA) message printed on bags used to sell

fish, the Angling Trust's 'Don't kill a fishery' campaign, Plantlife's 'Pond Alert' and 'plant this instead' guidance, and the government's production of invasive non-native species identification sheets. However, without an overall GB strategy it can be difficult to make the links between these campaigns (which sometimes appear disjointed), opportunities to maximise their impact may not be realised, and some of the valuable experiences learned during the campaigns can be lost. In addition, without a more co-ordinated approach there is a significant risk of duplication of effort as well as the possibility of delivering confusing or mixed messages. By working together to produce a strategic plan for GB to which all partners are signatories, it is envisaged that more co-ordinated, efficient and effective communications can be achieved.

It is widely assumed that awareness and understanding of invasive non-native species issues is low within the general public. This is supported by the results from a Defra commissioned research project into public attitudes and behaviours towards invasive non-native species in England. A summary of the research outcomes can be found in Annex 1. This research will help to inform the implementation of this strategic communications plan and will also provide a baseline by which the success of the document can be measured (in England). Despite this lack of awareness, the research indicated that there was a great appetite for information on non-native species.

Press offices in Defra, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government and associated agencies routinely prompt media coverage of invasive non-native species issues through press releases and articles in publications. Press releases on invasive non-native species tend to be well reported, supporting the research findings that this is an issue in which the public is interested.

In November 2008, the BBC held an invasive species week. An internet page on BBC News which mapped invasive non-native species, received 547 comments and the subject featured in the most visited internet site on the weeks round-up programme "Your News" on BBC News 24. The BBC invasive species week resulted in a four-fold increase in hits to the Non-Native Species Secretariat website with similar increases in other related websites.

## **ii. Purpose of this document**

This document sets out the options for most effectively communicating non-native species issues directly to the general public and to key stakeholder groups; it also outlines how to

help key stakeholders in communicating sector-specific issues to their members or customers. Detailed proposals for communicating with stakeholders and the general public are outlined later in this document.

The intended outcome is a change in behaviour amongst stakeholders and the public, reducing the risks and impacts associated with invasive non-native species.

The overall objectives of this document are:

- To identify the key messages that require wider promulgation in order to increase stakeholder/public engagement in tackling invasive non-native species issues;
- To identify key target audiences (associated with important pathways) on which resources would be optimally spent to reduce the risks;
- To advise on optimal ways of reaching these key target audiences, including the general public and stakeholders.

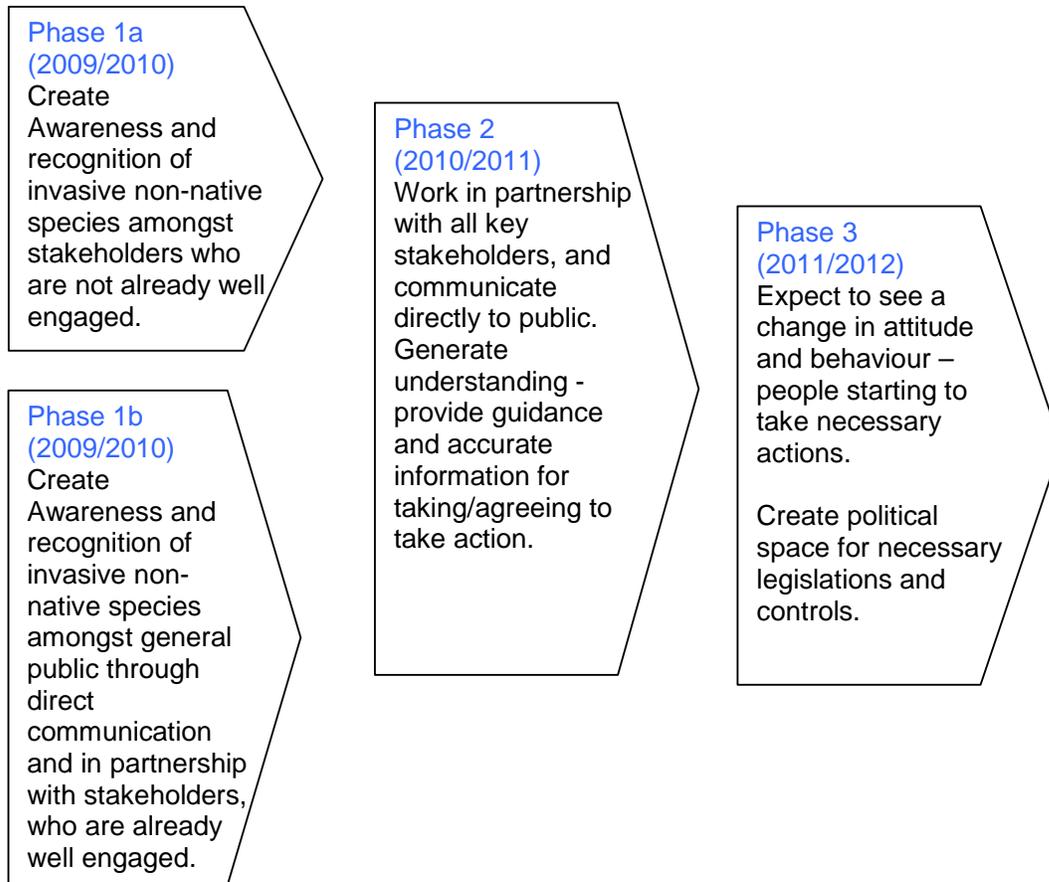
### **iii. Strategic approach**

This document is divided into four parts:

- Section 1 outlines Overarching Communications (including key messages and language);
- Section 2 is focussed on Stakeholder Engagement;
- Section 3 focuses on Public Awareness; and
- Section 4 looks at Training and Education.

Stakeholder organisations are often best placed to communicate with, and influence their members; there are therefore significant links and dependencies between these sections.

By managing the communications approach in the sequential manner outlined below, while being mindful that some stakeholders are already well engaged, we aim to build public and stakeholder understanding and engagement in a structured and methodical way. This should not preclude action to engage specific sectors or reduce the risks associated with pathways ahead of the indicative timescales, but any action should follow this broad sequence to help with behaviour change. It is important that once the issue is raised with target groups, information is readily available for those groups to allow them to engage fully.



**Roles and responsibility**

This document has been drafted by the Media and Communications Working Group (with assistance from Defra’s Communications Directorate). Once agreed, the GB Programme Board will oversee the development and implementation of the plan. The specific activities outlined in the communications plan will be taken forward by the three governments, the Non-Native Species Secretariat, and members of the Media and Communications Working Group.

**Risks and threats**

A preliminary analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was carried out by Defra’s Communications Directorate. This has been expanded into a register of risks and threats to the delivery of this strategic plan and these are outlined in Section 5.

# Section 1 – Overarching Communications

## 1.1 Key Messages and language

A key message that we need to convey is that we all share responsibility for this issue and that the onus is on us all to act to mitigate the problems caused. This is an issue where individuals can make a big difference by their actions and it is therefore a positive point to communicate. Stressing the shared responsibility is key to encouraging people to act responsibly as well as avoiding apportioning blame to those in sectors associated with key pathways.

The definition of invasive non-native species used by government (and in the GB Strategy) has been taken from that provided in the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, it is recognised that a different definition is required when communicating with the public and certain stakeholder groups, so that the issues are more easily understood.

Qualitative research conducted as part of the research into public attitudes towards invasive non-native species in England indicated that, although the definition largely confirmed the respondent's prior understanding, it uses 'difficult' concepts and comes across as overly 'technical'. With this in mind, the participants drafted a new definition of (an) invasive non-native species which has been adopted by the working group. The intention is that this is to be used when communicating with stakeholders and the public:

- **Any non-native animal or plant that has the ability to spread causing damage to the environment, the economy, our health and the way we live.**

The working group used this definition to develop an overarching key message for explaining invasive non-native species issues:

- **Invasive non-native species damage our environment, the economy, our health and the way we live.**

A number of more specific sub-messages can be distilled from this message to include:

- **They threaten our native plants, animals and habitats.**
- **They cost the British economy over £2 billion pounds each year.**
- **They can threaten our health.**

The public awareness survey results also supported views expressed at the 2008 Stakeholder Forum that the term “Alien” should not be used and that “non-native” is preferred by the public as it is better understood.

**Recommendation 1.1** – *That the above definition and key messages are adopted for use in any campaign and for all relevant communications with stakeholders and the general public.*

### **Branding**

At present, the Non-Native Species Secretariat logo acts as a visual identity to support communications work. It is suggested that this continues to be used as branding on communication materials. We will look to develop some brand guidelines to help set a standard for use of the logo.

More detailed messages will be targeted to specific sectors and pathways and are likely to merit their own branding (in a similar way to the “Stop aquatic hitchhikers” campaign in the US).

**Recommendation 1.2** – *That the Non-Native Species Secretariat logo acts as a visual ID to support all relevant communications on the issue of invasive non-native species and that brands are developed to support specific campaigns in due course.*

### **Links with other areas of the Framework Strategy**

Awareness-raising has important connections with other parts of the GB Strategy – in particular to monitoring where the public and certain stakeholder groups could be used as the eyes and ears feeding into the newly-established Non-native Species Information Portal.

**Recommendation 1.3** – *That the newly-established monitoring process is used optimally to help raise awareness among the general public and relevant stakeholder groups.*

## Section 2 – Communicating with Stakeholders

### 2.1 Aim

The aim of this section is to provide an overarching strategic approach to engagement with stakeholders to raise their awareness and understanding of the GB Strategy and work with them to support its delivery. This includes prioritising key stakeholders and the key messages for these groups, as well as recommending options for communicating and engaging with them.

### 2.2 Stakeholder Analysis and Prioritisation

There are a huge number of stakeholders in this area and there is therefore a need to prioritise them. This was achieved by a stakeholder analysis, carried out by the Working Group, whereby individual stakeholder organisations were identified and combined into ‘manageable’ groups. These groups were prioritised based on their influence in relation to achieving the aims of the GB Strategy. For each of these stakeholder groups we identified key issues, desired outcomes and key messages and actions.

Following the stakeholder analysis, six key groups were identified by the working group.

- Gardening/Horticulture
- Water users – including Anglers, boaters and canoeists
- Pet Owners – specifically a) exotic pets and, b) fish
- Conservation NGOs
- The construction industry and development sector
- Landowner organisations

**Recommendation 2.1** *–Initial efforts should be concentrated on the six stakeholder groupings outlined above.*

### 2.3 Stakeholder engagement activities

This stakeholder analysis provided the detail around which stakeholder engagement or interaction should be based. The table in Annex 3 outlines a series of stakeholder engagement activities to support the delivery of the GB Strategy and, in particular in relation

to raising awareness. These are suggested activities that build on the stakeholder analysis table and are based on the Media and Communications Working Group's awareness of existing and potential opportunities and barriers.

## **2.4 Using existing governance and stakeholder engagement structures to best effect**

For the engagement strategy to be most effective, it is critical that it utilises and is clearly aligned to the GB Programme Board's existing governance and engagement structures. The existing structures are listed below with some recommendations about how these structures could be used more effectively to engage with stakeholders to deliver the Strategy.

**GB Stakeholder Forum** – an annual conference of 80-90 stakeholders (NGOs, Government, industry) that provides a key way to engage with key stakeholders on a range of issues across the invasive non-native species agenda.

**Recommendation 2.2** – *Continue to progress the GB Stakeholder Forum as a flagship event for invasive non-native species issues.*

**Recommendation 2.3** – *Encourage a wider range of stakeholders associated with the six key stakeholder groups to attend plus other stakeholders as opportunities allow.*

**Stakeholder Sounding Board (SSB)** – a group of 18 stakeholders (NGOs and industry) set up to provide feedback on proposals at the request of the GB Programme Board. The SSB has been used once to date to feed into the GB Strategy. The assumption is that this group will exist as an electronic-group.

**Recommendation 2.4** – *Develop the Stakeholder Sounding Board to help deliver the GB Strategy.*

**Working Groups** – currently there are two working groups tasked with taking forward specific elements of the Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy:

- Media and Communications Working Group – task and finish group to develop communications and engagement strategy;
- Rapid Response Working Group – task and finish group to establish a protocol for instigating and carrying out rapid responses to non-native species threats.

**Recommendation 2.5** – *The Media and Communications working group continues to meet on a bi-annual basis to monitor and steer the effective delivery of the media and communications strategy.*

**Recommendation 2.6** – *Smaller working groups should be created to take forward specific pieces of communications work (e.g. developing and overseeing/monitoring delivery of the communications or specific training packages for each key pathway).*

**Country Working Groups (England/Scotland/Wales)** – separate Working Groups exist for England, Scotland and Wales. The Groups exist to improve co-ordination of invasive non-native species policy, drive forward delivery of the invasive non-native species agenda and key actions of the GB Strategy. Stakeholder organisations are represented on each Working Group.

**Recommendation 2.7** – *Ensure effective communication between the country working groups and the Media and Communications working group and integrate the Country Working Groups into the delivery of this Strategic Plan.*

**Local Fora** – pilot fora have been set up to provide a focus for tackling invasive non-native species issues at a local level through practical action/management. The Fora provide a key link to engage stakeholders at a local level (e.g. Local Authorities, local land managers).

**Recommendation 2.8** – *Carry out discussion with local fora to gain an understanding of what support is required to increase their effectiveness, and examine how to more effectively use existing fora.*

## Section 3 – Communicating with the General Public

### 3.1 Aim

The aim of this section is to develop key messages, identify key target audiences, and suitable prioritised communication options for the general public.

The following objectives have been amended from those contained in Chapter 9 of the GB Strategy - Building Awareness and Understanding:

- **To generate wider appreciation of the risks that non-native species can pose to our native wildlife and environment.**
- **To secure better understanding of action being taken concerning invasive non-native species and to gain public support for the decision-making process:**
  - so that the public to understand the risks and impacts invasive non-native species pose and the actions government, agencies or other stakeholders may need to take to reduce them.
- **To enable the public at large to assist in the detection and monitoring of invasive non-native species:**
  - to help develop a strong sense of shared responsibility amongst the public and encourage people that individual action will make an impact on the issue overall.
- **To encourage responsible behaviour and strong adherence to regulatory and biosecurity measures affecting those involved in the movement, keeping, use and any release of non-native species:**
  - to help drive behaviour change and understanding how individual actions can have an impact e.g. fly tipping garden waste, releasing unwanted pets.

### 3.2 Key Pathways

Due to the range and impacts of invasive non-native species, there is a need to prioritise audiences. The working group agreed that effort should initially be concentrated on three important pathways for non-native species release. This will help target the right information

to the right audiences, at appropriate points, to enable individuals to take necessary actions (without making the issue complicated or difficult for them).

Key pathways have been selected using information obtained from the 2003 Review of Non-Native Species Policy Review report and those identified by the Working Group. These are:

1. Gardeners
2. Fresh-water users – including Anglers, boaters
3. Pet Owners – specifically those owning exotic pets and fish.

Two further pathways have also been identified where there may be opportunities to engage the public and where there is an opportunity to change behaviour. These are:

- Landowners
- Marine water users.

**Recommendation 3.1** *–Initial efforts should be concentrated on the three pathways outlined above with exploitation of opportunities with land-owners and marine water users as a second priority.*

### **Call to action**

A number of messages for the specific groups (as identified by the pathways) are outlined below. It is proposed that these are developed further as campaigns are progressed (possibly by communications organisations).

The overarching formula for the message is:

Don't release, move or dump unwanted non-natives in the wild

For the following reasons:

It is illegal

They can spread disease

They threaten your sport/hobby etc.

They can threaten our native plants and animals

They can cost you a lot of money if you are liable for their removal

More specifically, this translates to the following for each specific group:

1. Gardeners

- Dispose of garden and pond waste responsibly and never dump them in the wild.  
(see campaigns by OATA, Plantlife “Pond Alert”).
- It is illegal to dump or plant invasive non-native plants in the wild.
- Never dispose of pond plants in any waterway.
- Find out more at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org).

2. Water users – including Anglers, boaters, canoeists etc

- Never release or return invasive non-native species to a water body
- Never move fish between water bodies
  - to protect native fish, plants and other animals
  - to prevent spread of disease
  - to preserve the sport you love.
- Always clean and dry equipment between trips to prevent the spread of invasive species and disease (see campaigns by Angling Trust).
- It is illegal to release non-native fish or move them without a licence.
- Find out more at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org).

3. Pet Owners

- a) Exotic pets (including birds, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians etc.)
- Never release into the wild and keep them in such a way that they can't escape.
  - It is cruel to release non-native species into the wild.
  - It is illegal to release non-native species of pet into the wild.
  - Find out more at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org).

b) Fish

- Never release plants and animals from ponds and aquaria into the wild (see campaign by OATA “Pet fish belong”).
- It is illegal to release non-native species into watercourses.
- Pets can spread disease to native wildlife
- Find out more at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org).

### **3.3 Communication recommendations for phase one (2009/2010)**

Objective - Create awareness and recognition of invasive non-native species amongst general public through direct communication.

Communication options for Phase 1b (page 6) have been identified for each of the key pathways prioritised and costed; these are outlined in Section 3.4 (below).

However, two matters need to be progressed before the pathway specific actions. These are the development of the Non-Native Species Secretariat Website, and the development of a series of case studies on invasive non-native species. More information on these topics is detailed below.

#### **Development of Non-Native Species Secretariat Website**

The Non-Native Species Secretariat website is the focal website providing credible and accurate information on non-native species in Great Britain. The structure of the site is currently quite basic, while the information displayed has evolved as the programme has progressed. The site needs updating to include up-to-date, accurate and interactive information including further species information, I.D. sheets, plus current distributions, video clips of management, current research and management. It should be user-friendly for both specialists and the general public, and able to provide areas within the site for specific campaigns.

The website needs to be targeted at different user groups within the one website, including pages for children with interactive stories and picture stories. The website should also develop a training/teaching resource for use by teachers and others.

Estimated costs - £40k - £50k to develop an interactive section.

Timescale – By end December 2009 (but ongoing)

<p><b>Recommendation 3.2</b> – <i>The Secretariat website should be overhauled, making it more useful, user-friendly, visually attractive and intuitive, and re-launched.</i></p>
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## Case Studies of Invasive Non-Native Species

A series of case studies on individual invasive non-native species would be useful to help explain the issues of invasive non-native species, the problems they cause, and the need for a change in public behaviour. These case studies are not necessarily the most important invasive non-native species in terms of the threat they pose. However, they should help to demonstrate the various facets of the issue and encourage behaviour change. The species below were chosen to illustrate the breadth of species and environments involved and the list includes plants, vertebrates and invertebrates and terrestrial, marine and freshwater examples. The list also builds on the knowledge that the public already have (a recommendation from the survey of public awareness in England) and includes the four most recognised species. The top 4 species recognised by the public are grey squirrel (37% of the 600 polled), Japanese knotweed (19%), signal crayfish (10%) and American mink (10%). [The next highest species in terms of recognition was ruddy duck (2.5%) and Chinese Mitten Crab (2%) while the rest were even lower.]

### Suggested Case Study Species

1. American bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

- Illustrates pet trade pathway
- Link to worldwide amphibian population decline
- Demonstrates disease and environmental (voracious predator) impacts
- Good example of rapid response by Natural England

2. American grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

- Currently has high profile
- Clear link to iconic native species population decline
- Action currently ongoing
- Disease and animal welfare issue

3. Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*)

- Demonstrates both environmental (voracious predator) and economic (bank erosion/flood risk) impacts
- Illustrates ballast water pathway
- Suitable for public reporting (not in many catchments)

4. Citrus longhorn beetle (*Anoplophora chinensis*)

- Example of species that people should look out for
- Suitable for public reporting
- Demonstrates economic impact - forestry pest
- Good illustrator of pathway

5. *Didemnum vexillum* (Sea squirt)

- Demonstrates economic impact - negative impact on aquaculture industry and recreation sector and environmental impacts
- Illustrates hull fouling pathway
- Impacts are very visual

6. Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*)

- Can show economic impact - flooding risks
- Impact on recreational pursuits
- Good illustrator of important pathway
- Very visible when present

7. *Gyrodactylus salaricus* (salmon parasite)

- Demonstrates impact on economic and recreational activity (would devastate salmon fishing industry)
- Demonstrates importance of biosecurity measures (e.g. cleaning equipment)
- Species that isn't present

8. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)

- Currently has high profile
- Is a good example of a species showing economic impact
- Impact on development industry and infrastructure
- Is visible and can impact on many individuals

9. North American signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)

- Currently has high profile (both public and anglers)
- Clear link to native species population decline
- Demonstrates importance of prevention and biosecurity measures as once present is difficult/impossible to eradicate

10. Oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*)

- Demonstrates human health impact and environmental impact
- Control is very visual (e.g. flame throwers etc)

11. *Rhododendron ponticum*

- Demonstrates economic impact (forestry) and environmental impacts (especially on lower plants and ground flora).
- Very visible and well-known plant.
- Detrimental in high-conservation value areas e.g. Snowdonia, Atlantic Oak woods.

12. American mink (*Mustela vison*)

- Currently has high profile with public
- Clear link to native species population decline

Estimated costs - £30k - £50k +

The costs would cover the development and design of the case studies plus an initial print-run for appropriate locations (vet surgeries, ports, airports, marinas, angling/boating shops, garden centres, pet shops, stakeholder events etc.). Further information on these case studies can also be developed as short video clips for the internet.

Timescale – To be launched winter 2009.

**Recommendation 3.3** –*Develop the 12 case studies outlined above and use these to help raise levels of general awareness.*

Once these two matters are progressed, the suggestion is to focus on the three key pathways and other pathways with opportunities identified (communication options are outlined in more detail in Annex 4).

Communication activities will take place when it is most appropriate for each pathway i.e. gardening in spring to summer, angling (while the season starts in January, most activity is in the summer months), pet ownership (before or after Christmas to get the unwanted pet message across).

### 3.4 Budget and timing

To generate a successful awareness campaign amongst the general public about invasive non-native species needs a significant budget – as this topic is currently little known or understood and it is also complicated. The communication plan has been devised by prioritising three key pathways where a better understanding of the issue will help to reduce the risks posed by each pathway. Several measures are proposed for each key pathway which allows a variety of options and costs, which can be selected on a cost/benefit basis. These are outlined below.

There are additional potential sources of funding that should be considered to supplement core funding provided. These include:

#### LIFE+ Information & Communication

LIFE is the EU's financial instrument which supports environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU. The Information and Communication component co-finances projects that implement communication and awareness raising campaigns on environmental, nature protection or biodiversity conservation issues. The maximum co-financing rate is 50%.

### Phase 1

#### Option A –

This option describes the minimum that is considered necessary to effectively communicate the issue with those who visit the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat website and as a base for all communications work following it.

#### Cost/Benefit:

Low cost

#### Risk:

It does not include any proactive engagement with the public to communicate the issue and it would be expected to have negligible input on public awareness (and related threat).

#### Activities:

- Re-launch website
- Develop 12 case studies

Cost £90K approximately

**Option B –**

This option focuses only on one of the key pathways of risk (probably gardening), carrying out all communication measures suggested above.

**Cost/Benefit:**

This option would provide effective communication to gardeners and the landscape sector regarding invasive non-native species (related to gardening).

Data from the Impact Assessment to the EU Communication on Invasive Species (COM (2008) 789 final) indicates that plants make up 51.9% of the species intentionally released to the environment and 24.4% of the species introduced intentionally to a controlled environment.

It would be expected to reduce the threat from this activity.

**Risk:**

The major risk is that it does not aim to communicate with individuals involved in the 2 other main pathways– namely angling and pet ownership - and that while these pathways are responsible for fewer species being released, those that are can have significant detrimental impacts.

Activities: Gardening/Horticulture Pathway: Partnership work, Targeted Posters, Point of sale materials, Popular Gardening Programmes (TV/Radio), and Advertorials in publications.

Cost £250K approximately

**Option C –**

This option focuses on all three pathways of risk, but would carry out only a number of the communications measures that have been identified.

**Cost/Benefit:**

This option would communicate with individuals involved in the three key pathways that have been identified as a risk and there would therefore be a benefit from the reduced threat from

each of these sectors. Another benefit to this option is that it could be extended if more money became available, plus work could continue over the year as opposed to being restricted to part of the year (such as restricted to when people are buying plants).

**Risk:**

A risk to this option is that the communication will not be comprehensive as it does not use all the communications methods identified and will not be as far reaching as possible.

**Activities:**

- Gardening/Horticulture Pathway: Partnership work, Targeted Posters, Point of sale materials;
- Angling: Partnership work, Point of sale materials (including targeted posters);
- Pet Ownership: Partnership work, Point of sale (or release) materials (including targeted posters and information at sites of release e.g. notice boards at ponds).

Cost 450-500K

**Option D –**

This option focuses on all three key pathways of risk, carrying out all communications measures that have been identified for each pathway.

**Cost/Benefit:**

As the three key pathways have been identified as the three main pathways of risk that can be targeted by a media and communications campaign, Option D is likely to be the most comprehensive and successful option in terms of reduced risk.

**Risk:**

It is the most expensive option.

**Activities:**

- Gardening/Horticulture Pathway: Partnership work, Targeted Posters, Point of sale materials, Popular Gardening Programmes (TV/Radio), Advertorials in publications;
- Angling: Partnership work, Point of sale materials (Including targeted posters), Advertorials in publications.
- Pet Ownership: Partnership work, Point of sale (or release) materials (Including

targeted posters and information at sites of release e.g. notice boards at pond), On-line.

Cost 700+K

### **Evaluation of communications activities**

SMART objectives will be agreed around the following indicators:

- Pre and post campaign tracking research for measuring awareness levels
- Monitoring hits to selected pages on the NNS Secretariat website.
- Number of requests for, or downloads of, posters and information packs.
- Monitoring press articles, the TV etc.

Once a decision has been made on which activities to take forward we will also look at ways to evaluate individual activities where possible.

## Section 4 – Training and Education

### 4.1 Aim and objectives

This section aims to address the important issue of training as well as education at primary, secondary and tertiary level.

The overall aim is to:

- Establish a nationwide network of appropriately trained and knowledgeable individuals in key positions.

Objectives include:

- Assisting those that require training to find appropriate tuition.
- Improving the standard of training across GB.
- Encouraging and developing training and education provision, directly and through partnerships, that helps to implement the GB Non-native Species Strategy.

### 4.2 Rationale

The working group considered that training is a key area that needs to be addressed in this strategic communications plan. The group considered that raising the level of awareness and the knowledge base of professionals and interested amateurs and volunteers is key to delivery of certain aspects of the GB Framework Strategy. Currently there is an increasing range of training events occurring to facilitate identification of species, help spread best practice etc. but it is not coordinated across GB or targeted towards the sectors where we could achieve the highest impact on the highest priority species. Training within key sectors is likely to have a larger and more immediate impact than education which is longer term and lower impact.

It is envisaged that several core groups are likely to require training:

- Practitioners
- Policy and decision makers and those who procure services
- Industry / business (e.g. site managers, aquarists, landscapers, etc)
- Groups who have a significant influence on the key sectors identified elsewhere in this document e.g. public sector where they procure contracts and as client can significantly influence construction and development sectors, or the horticultural trade
- Academics

- The general public

### **4.3 Training-related Stakeholders**

The Stakeholder Analysis exercise identified a number of stakeholders who are involved in training relevant to invasive non-native species issues, including:

- Government and its Agencies;
- Conservation NGOs;
- Local Authorities;
- Ecological Consultants;
- Society of Garden Designers;
- Landscape Institute;
- British Association of Landscape Industries;
- Agricultural Colleges;
- Horticultural colleges;
- LANTRA (Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries)
- River and Fisheries Trusts Scotland
- Aquaculture and Fishery Colleges – Sparsholt etc.
- Institute of Fishery Management

### **4.4 Working Group**

The group recommends that a small working group of key training and education providers and recipients and other relevant stakeholders be established to map out the current status of invasive non-native species issues in training and more general curricula and the scope to strengthen both. Depending on appetite by stakeholders, this group's work could develop a range of options which might include an agreed core training syllabus on invasive non-native species for all organisations to follow when developing their own training courses. The working group could also help inform the following:

#### **1) Training and skills workshop**

This would bring together a larger group of interested stakeholders to fully explore the needs of educators and trainers as well as the needs of those receiving the training. This workshop could help in the development of an agreed core training syllabus (if needed) on invasive non-native species as suggested above.

## **2) Education packs**

Develop information and activity packs for teachers/lecturers and students to generate better understanding of what non-native species are and the impact of invasive non-native species on our society and environment. Link to the National curriculum for different subjects.

## **3) Simple packages for training volunteers**

## **4) Merchandising**

Look at options of merchandise for students to help them identify with invasive non-native species and to generate interest and discussion outside the classroom.

## **5) Interactive website section**

Develop an interactive section on the Secretariat website to allow students and other key sectors to visualise the potential impact of a range of invasive non-native species.

Other options could also be explored for their effectiveness in providing training to relevant sectors.

**Recommendation 4.1** – *Carry out an audit of training in GB and store results in a central database.*

**Recommendation 4.2** – *Continue to develop useful training resources (e.g. image gallery, specimens / vouchers, good practice guidance, etc.).*

**Recommendation 4.3** – *Establish a small group of key training stakeholders to help develop comprehensive and strategic training. The group should consider amongst other things:*

- training needs and the development of a GB curriculum*
- a strategy for filling training gaps*
- guidance for good quality training*
- the need for an accreditation mechanism*
- interacting with and providing support for schools and universities*
- identification of highest priority / highest impact training needs and opportunities, and identification of mechanisms to deliver these.*

*- consideration of innovative and creative options for training development in areas of potentially high impact.*

**Recommendation 4.4** – *Training and education provision should relate clearly to the needs of the stakeholder groups identified elsewhere in this paper and prioritise these groups in the first instance.*

## Section 5 – Risks and Threats

There are a number of risks and threats to the delivery of this Media and Communications Strategic Plan. This section outlines these risks and attempts to suggest how these might be mitigated.

Risks to delivery of Media and Communications Strategic Plan	Ways to mitigate risks
<p>Negative press attached to specific control programmes. Possible media campaign led by campaigning organisation.</p>	<p>Understanding of invasive non-native species issues leads to greater support of control programmes. Rationale behind control programmes (including negative impacts of the species) should be well explained. Preparation of FAQ's.</p>
<p>Un-coordinated control project that is off message (e.g. large numbers of species controlled but then re-colonise) results in message being diluted.</p>	<p>Ensure good communication with stakeholders and dissemination of messages specifically in relation to cost/benefit of control programmes.</p>
<p>Press interest given to individuals attacking the concept of action on invasive non-native species i.e. accusations of "racism".</p>	<p>Preparation of FAQ's for Press Offices on specific criticisms. Good communication with stakeholders who may have influence with specific individuals.</p>
<p>Failure of high-profile control programme.</p>	<p>Completion of risk analysis management module prior to start of control programme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some species are 'loved' by the public e.g. Parakeets and grey squirrels – especially</li> </ul>	<p>Though increasing awareness and understanding of invasive non-native</p>

<p>mammals and birds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong animal welfare lobby especially for vertebrates.</li><li>• Opposition to any control, especially lethal control, by sympathetic members of the public.</li><li>• Awareness about biodiversity issues is low amongst consumers so it could be difficult to explain why invasive non-native species are a problem and the connection to it.</li></ul>	<p>species. Use of research findings.</p>
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## **Annex 1 – Findings of research to gauge public awareness, attitude and behaviour towards invasive non-native species in England**

Creative Research carried out a two-stage survey of awareness of and attitudes to non-native species in England in autumn/winter 2008. The work was funded by Defra and overseen by COI, Defra and NNSS.

An initial qualitative phase (using 12 focus groups) was followed up by a face-to face survey of a stratified random sample (n = 600) of the general public. There were specific questions for gardeners and pet owners. A sample of 100 anglers was surveyed using a telephone interview and representatives of trade organisations were consulted prior to a survey (using telephone interviews) of a sample of retailers in the horticulture trade.

The main conclusions of the survey were:

### General public

- Awareness is generally low but the appetite for information is high (people find the topic interesting).
- Awareness of a small sub-set of species is significantly higher than the rest. These are – grey squirrel, Japanese knotweed, signal crayfish and American mink.
- People far prefer the term ‘non-native’ to ‘alien’.
- People tended to think of animals rather than plants when they thought of non-native species.
- Suggested definitions and key messages were too technical and new (public-friendly) definitions and messages were drafted.
- People were surprised at the high economic cost figures.
- Most people supported killing invasive non-native species when they threatened human health or the environment but less so for economic interests.
- People perceived the threat posed by invasive species was less than that due to habitat change, pollution and direct human exploitation and climate change.

### Anglers

- Awareness is significantly higher than for the general public.
- Anglers are more aware of the threat posed by invasive non-native species.
- Many are already adopting appropriate behaviour.
- Many were prepared to alter their behaviour if they were convinced it would be useful.

### Gardeners

- Awareness is generally higher than for non-gardeners.
- Garden centres are the main source of plants, followed by DIY stores (the internet was a relatively unimportant source).
- Plant labels were the main source of information followed by friends and staff in the retail outlets.

### Horticulture trade

- Awareness of the Horticultural Code of Practice was less than 50% and lowest among retailers selling aquatic plants.
- Almost all retailers are willing to display material so long as this is provided by government.

**Annex 2 – Stakeholder Analysis Table for the top six stakeholder groups.**

<b>Priority Group</b>	<b>Specific messages</b>	<b>The Ask</b>	<b>Recommended methods of engagement</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Horticultural Trade	Need them to communicate to horticulturalists/gardeners/landscape gardeners - Require trade to champion our message	- Give your customers information on invasive non-natives.  - Don't sell invasive non-natives.	Meetings with Stakeholders  Revise the Horticultural CoP	
Freshwater	Invasive non-native species can spread fish disease between waterways  Invasive plants can choke your waters  Invasive plants can block river/canal/lake banks	- Clean/dry equipment  - Don't move/release live fish, plants, crayfish  - Report unusual species	Use Angling/boat clubs  Non-native fish poster  ID Inserts into angling magazines	Angling Trust campaign on Don't kill a fishery  Fishing Licence mailing
Pet Trade	Communication of information to members of public  Trade to champion our message	- Help Spread message on release		

Conservation NGOs	<p>Invasive non-native species are the second biggest cause of BDV loss</p> <p>Large neg impact on UK BAP Species</p> <p>Large neg impact on important habitats</p> <p>They cost you money to manage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inform your members of importance</li> <li>- Engage /motivate members to act (NT, BTCV, WT)</li> <li>- Report</li> <li>- Follow Biosecurity guidelines</li> <li>- Dissemination of information to members of public</li> <li>- Don't oppose control</li> </ul>	<p>Direct meetings</p> <p>Inform BAP Process</p>	<p>Provide, expand existing training</p>
Construction Industry and development sector	<p>invasive non-native species cost your members and partners money, they invade land costing large sums to clear up</p>			
Landowning organisations	<p>invasive non-native species cost your members and partners money, invade land, eat crops, predate gamebirds, choke waterways</p> <p>Find advice here – help with Local management Fora</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help control, co-operate and report</li> </ul>	<p>Agricultural shows stands</p> <p>Game Fair stand</p> <p>Farming Press FJ)</p> <p>TV - Countryfile, Landward</p> <p>Radio – Archers, Farming Today</p>	<p>Bee Health campaign</p> <p>Phytophthora campaign</p>

### **Annex 3 – Meetings with major stakeholders of the key pathways.**

Date: Autumn 2009 (see Section 1 of Strategy)

- Gardening/Horticulture and Landscape sector

Horticultural Trade Association, Garden Centre Association, Botanical Society of the British Isles, Royal Horticultural Society, Plantlife

- Angling

Fisheries and Angling Conservation Trust, Association of Rivers Trusts, Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland, Association of Game Fisheries Managers, Association of Salmon Fisheries Boards, British Trout Association, Professional Coarse Fisheries Association, British Waterways, Inland Waterways Association, Water Companies, Water UK, British Canoe Union, Amateur Rowing Association. Fish farms?

- Pet Ownership – specifically a) exotic pets and, b) fish

Pet Care Trust, Ornamental Aquatic Trades Association, Reptile and Exotic Pet Trade Association, RSPCA, SSPCA

Purpose: To get buy-in to invasive non-native species issues and challenges and to discuss what opportunities there are to work collaboratively to help raise public (members') awareness and promote action.

#### **Meetings with key NGOs**

Date: Autumn 2009 (see Section 1 of Strategy)

Purpose: To get buy-in to invasive non-native species issues and challenges and to discuss what opportunities there are to work collaboratively to help raise public (members') awareness and promote action.

- National Trust, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, BASC, Wildlife and Countryside Link, Scottish Environment Link, Wales Environment Link.

### **Stakeholder Forum**

Date: June 2009

- Core stakeholders to attend are from the key pathways, but open to wider stakeholder network.

Purpose: To engage a broad range of key stakeholders to invasive non-native species issues and challenges and encourage collaborative working.

### **Action Planning workshops**

Date: Dec 2009 - Jan 2010

Purpose: To encourage key stakeholder groups to develop action plans or pieces of work for their sector. The purpose of the workshops would be to raise stakeholders' awareness of invasive non-native species, tailored specifically for their sector – how do invasive non-native species impact on their sectors and how might we develop an action plan for viable solutions (e.g. code of practice, good practice guide, training, etc)?

The Horticultural Code of Practice was launched in 2005 and the knotweed CoP in 2006. A Pet Code of Practice is in draft. Section 14ZB (14B in Scotland) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act give the Secretary of State (or Ministers in Scotland) power to approve non-native species Codes of Practice. Launching a set of approved codes together will be more effective than doing so individually.

[Depending on the stakeholders it may be possible to combine these workshops with other events (e.g. workshops at stakeholder conferences/events and the GB Stakeholder Forum).]

### **Conference stands and workshops at key stakeholder conferences/events**

Date: Throughout year

Purpose: Secure workshops in seminars to promote invasive non-native species issues and any guidance/best practice.

Horticulture trade

Angling

Pet trade

Identify key conferences and events over 2009 across key stakeholder groups (above). Develop a conference display/stand.

**NGOs network meetings (Links)**

Date: TBC

- Wildlife and Countryside Link, Scottish Environment Link, Wales Environment Link.

Purpose: Use an existing forum where key NGOs come together to plan joint projects and share information. Use this as an opportunity to raise awareness, secure support and discuss how we might be able to work together to deliver the strategy. The Link networks provide a key way to access NGOs.

**Annex 4 – General Public – proposals for engagement with the three key sectors.**

**Gardening/Horticulture**

- Partnership work

Purpose: Work with groups that have interest in gardening issues to achieve a shared goal

To involve Horticultural Trade Association (HTA), Ornamental and Aquatic Trade Association (OATA), Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), Plantlife, Botanic Gardens and corporate sponsors. Landscape gardeners, construction industry, Landscape Institute, landscape sector .

Cost: Will depend on partners and level of work.

- Point of sale (and point of release) materials (including targeted posters)

Purpose: For display at key locations such as garden centres, garden shows, allotments and on appropriate websites and to provide more information via partnership/sponsorship work through garden centres and large DIY outlets.

Cost: £20k - £25k to develop and design

£10k - £30k + for print depending on the scale of distribution.

- Popular Gardening Programmes (TV/Radio)

Purpose: To reach a key audience that is interested and involved in Gardening.

Look at potential opportunities with shows such as Gardeners' World (BBC1), Gardeners' Question Time (Radio 4), the Beechgrove Garden (BBC1 Scotland), the Beechgrove Potting Shed (BBC Radio Scotland), Guild of Garden Writers.

Cost: Will depend on the shows and activity.

- Advertorials in publications

Purpose: Develop Advertorials (that can include relevant case studies) in specialist interest

gardening publications (e.g. BBC Gardeners World, Organic Gardening Magazine, Amateur Gardening, Horticultural Week).

Cost: Will depend on number of publications and inserts - £50k - £75k +

## **Angling**

- Partnership work

Purpose: Work with groups who have interest in angling and fishery issues to achieve a shared goal.

To involve Angling Trust (AT), Institute of Fisheries Management, River and Fisheries Trust Scotland (RAFTS), River Trusts in England and Wales, Angling Clubs, Professional Coarse Fisheries Association, Association of Stillwater Game Fisheries, Premier Fisheries, CEMEX Angling, Water Company Angling Groups, Water Keepers. Relevant Government agencies – EA, SEPA, NE etc, Corporate Sponsors?

Could include:

- Speakers - a way of attracting anglers to meetings and keeping them interested at exhibitions
- Show stands at angling shows – already, in England, angling groups share stand space with the EA and CEFAS to present a united front to anglers on many issues. NNS could be included in this process easily
- Consultative and Fisheries Meetings provide a cheap pathway for the distribution of information.

Cost: Will depend on partners and level of work.

- Point of sale (and point of release) materials (including targeted posters)

Purpose: Provide more information via partnership/sponsorship work through information at tackle shops, on-line fishing shops (e.g. Angling Direct, Fishing Warehouse, Tackle Shop), on fishing licences and permits, and for angling groups to distribute with memberships/ in newsletters. Boards at fisheries where people are likely to catch, release and move fish.

Cost: Will depend on activity – Est. - £50k - £100k

- On-line

Purpose: Reach anglers who may only buy equipment and source information on-line. Provide information through a different channel. Offer link to GB NNS Secretariat website - where more information will be available.

Develop banners/skyscrapers, identify key partners/sites (e.g. angling forums, on-line angling suppliers).

Cost: Design and sourcing of sites £25k - £50k+

- PR Stories in Relevant Media

Purpose: Present the issue in a measured way with advice on controls and involve the media in developing storylines. This is a low cost pathway to market.

Cost: Will depend on number of publications and inserts - £50k - £75k +

## **Pet Ownership**

- Partnership work

Purpose: Work with groups who have interest in pet ownership issues to achieve a shared goal.

To involve Pet Care Trust, REPTA, Corporate Sponsors.

Cost: Will depend on partners and level of work.

- Point of sale (or release) materials (Including targeted posters and information at sites of release e.g. notice boards at ponds)

Purpose: Provide more information via partnership/sponsorship work to pet owners about invasive non-native species issues. Displayed at pet shops, garden centres, vet surgeries, ponds etc.

Cost: Will depend on activity – Est. - £50k +

- On-line

Purpose: Reach exotic pet owners who may only buy animals and feed on-line. Provide information through a different channel. Offer link to GB NNS Secretariat website - where more information will be available.

Develop banners/skyscrapers, identify key partners/sites (e.g. on-line pet shops and pet insurance websites).

Cost: Design and sourcing of sites £25k - £50k +

## **Annex 5 – Membership of the Media and Communications Working Group.**

The Programme Board thanks the following for their contribution towards the drafting of this plan:

Angela Robinson – Scottish Government (Chair)  
Niall Moore – NNSS (Secretary)  
Olaf Booy – NNSS  
Saleha Carruthers - Defra  
Chris Chiverrell - CIRIA  
Jim Collins – PCT  
Julie Clarke - EA  
Clare Miller - Wildlife and Countryside Link  
Suzanne Cooper – Scottish Environment Link  
Keith Davenport – OATA  
David Gilchrist – HTA  
Mike Heylin – FACT  
Jo Hughes – CCW  
Jo Long - SEPA  
Robin Payne – SNH  
Alison Smith – WAG  
Angela Taylor - Defra  
Mark Tollitt – Defra (Marketing)  
Andrew Walker – Defra  
Paul Walton – Wildlife and Countryside Link  
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