

# Non-Native News

The quarterly newsletter of invasive non-native species issues

## How are you reducing the risk of spread?



By the nature of our work, we have the potential to be at serious risk of spreading invasive species, parasites and diseases.

There are a variety of ways that staff can adopt working practices that reduce the risk of spread. We don't yet have the evidence we need to advise us on the most appropriate disinfectants for general use. Virkon S is widely adopted to reduce the risk of spreading fish diseases, but it has limited impact against the killer shrimp unless immersed for at least 2 mins and only has label approval for use against viruses, fungi and bacteria.

Some guidance on biosecurity will be appearing in Operational Instructions and at [O:\Invasive Species National Resources\Biosecurity](#). Guidance is also available on the at [GB non-native species secretariat](#) and the '[Check, Clean, Dry](#)' campaign.

We are avoiding giving staff highly prescriptive advice at this stage. Instead, we are explaining the risk and encouraging those of you who are most closely involved in these pathways of potential spread to identify and share your own risk reduction measures. Each biosecurity measure we include within the tasks we do will

contribute to reducing the risk overall. This will eventually form the basis of 'good practice' guidelines.

The Invasive Species Action Group (ISAG) provides governance of non-native species issues in the Agency. ISAG has identified the top priority biosecurity issues to the Agency to be monitoring, particularly using nets, operational maintenance duties and capital works.

## Japanese knotweed biocontrol released across England and Wales.



The second phase of the release of the knotweed biocontrol psyllid bug, *Aphalara itadori*, took place in May.

The first release, in Spring 2010, took place at a secret location in Surrey. This study replicated the host-specificity tests performed under quarantine. Fera, the licensing body, reviewed the results and approved the second phase of releases, which should establish the psyllid bug into the wild. 20,000 psyllids were released at each secret location in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cornwall, Swansea and Manchester.

It will take years for the psyllids to build their numbers and disperse across GB. At present, it would be an offence under WCA 1981 to spread the psyllid in the wild, unless licensed to do so by Fera. Once Defra class it as 'ordinarily resident' we will be able to move it to areas where knotweed is a particular problem.

## Managing invasive species to deliver the Water Framework Directive in England.

We have secured over £5million of investment to spend on invasive species management over the next four years. This will help us deliver good ecological status to waterbodies across England.

The money has been provided by Defra (which is why funding is restricted to England). We have prioritised the spend for the money we were able to secure as follows:

- Local Action Groups - £2.3million
- Biocontrol R&D - £ 1million
- Public awareness campaigns - £850k
- Rapid responses - £700k
- Pathway Action Plans - £60k

With the exception of the rapid response funding, the money will be retained by Defra and project managed on our behalf. Rapid response funding has been prioritised for the management of water primrose, topmouth gudgeon and killer shrimp.

Topmouth gudgeon control has migrated from NW Region to the National Fish Lab at Bampton. Any funding requirement for water primrose management should be sent to [Trevor Renals](#), if not already done so.

Pathway action planning will initially concentrate on freshwater species originating from the Ponto-Caspian region. Some of these species, such as zebra mussel, killer shrimp and bloody red mysid have already arrived in GB. Other species have spread into Western Europe via the canal systems and have yet to spread into the UK. By identifying pathways of spread and targeting them with public awareness programmes we hope to delay the arrival and spread of these species for as long as possible.

If you are part of an LAG and wish to have the opportunity to bid for funding, contact [Trevor Renals](#)

## How big are your mussels?



(reproduced with kind permission of USGS)

Many of you will be familiar with zebra mussels, *Dreissena polymorpha*. One of the Ponto-Caspian invasives we are hoping to keep out of GB is its big cousin, Quagga mussel *Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*.

Quagga mussel is more invasive, often replacing large populations of zebra mussel within a few years. It has a greater economic cost because of increased biofouling of water intakes and discharges. It can also invade some habitats not favoured by zebra mussel.

Monitoring staff have already been asked to check zebra mussel beds when screening for killer shrimp. Guidance on telling these mussels apart are available from the [USGS website](#). If you think you may have found Quagga mussel, contact [Trevor Renals](#).

## Forthcoming events

21 Sept, London Zoo, RPS [Keeping up to date with non-native species](#)

If you need help with a technical query concerning invasive species, or any other ecology or conservation issue, email [ConsEcoHelp](mailto:consecohelp@environment-agency.gov.uk). ([consecohelp@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:consecohelp@environment-agency.gov.uk)).

### For more information contact:

**Trevor Renals**  
Senior Technical Advisor, Invasive species  
Conservation & Ecology Technical Services  
National Operations  
Ext: 01208 265033, Int: 7-24-5033