

Non-Native Species Secretariat Newsletter Issue 5 – June 2013

Species Alerts!

The Quagga Mussel

The Quagga Mussel, *Dreissena bugensis Rostriformis*, is a highly invasive non-native species from the Ponto-Caspian region that is very similar to Zebra Mussel. It can significantly alter whole ecosystems by filtering out large quantities of nutrients and is also a serious biofouling risk; blocking pipes as well as smothering boat hulls and other structures.

Courtesy of Non-Native Species Secretariat



This species has not yet been found in Great Britain. However, based on its spread through Europe, there is a high risk of this

species entering GB soon. It is vital that everyone maintains vigilance for this species. Suspected sightings should be sent, with a photograph to: alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk. Further information can be found at: www.nonnativespecies.org.

EU Developments

EU Developments on Invasive Alien Species Strategy

Brussels: Chocolate, Beer and Directives

When I first mooted the idea of a stint in Brussels in 2011 I thought it would never happen but, with strong support from Defra colleagues, here I was a year later about to start a 3 month secondment with the European Commission. After the initial shock of a new job, new city and no friends I soon got into the swing of things, helped by the friendly attitude of my colleagues at DG Environment and my

fellow national experts from across the UK civil service.

Firstly, I was struck by how small the Commission is – we get the impression of a vast EU bureaucracy, but in fact there really aren't many public servants over there. I was also impressed by how hard-working and committed the officials were to environmental issues - it was not all coffee breaks and champagne! The work included considering lists of invasive species and confirming with individual member states their approach on non-native species. It was detailed and intense but extremely interesting, and my colleagues ensured that I felt part of the team.

So, what is the IAS legislative instrument likely to contain – well, we don't yet know exactly and we are not even sure when we are likely to see it. However, it will probably be adopted by the Commission in early summer and then the hard bargaining will start. In terms of provisions, it is likely to contain a Black list approach (a list of 'invasive alien species (IAS) of EU Concern'), pathways by which IAS are likely to enter various countries and an early warning and information system. There is then likely to be many months (and possibly several years) before all this is agreed between the European Parliament and Council (basically the Member States). There is a long way to go on this process yet!

Niall Moore (Non-Native Species Secretariat)

Legislation update

Ban on sale of five aquatic plants

A ban of the sale of the following five invasive non-native aquatic plants will come into force on 1st April 2014: Floating pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*; Australian swamp stone-crop *Crassula helmsii*; water primrose *Ludwigia peploides*; water fern *Azolla*

filiculoides and parrots feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*.

Government announced this regulation in January 2013 to give industry over a year to adapt their businesses to sourcing alternatives. For further information see: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/news/index.cfm?archive=true> .

INNS Species Focus

Floating Pennywort Invasive Species Action Plan

Floating Pennywort is a highly invasive aquatic plant, originally introduced from the Americas, which can spread up to 20cm a day and costs £100,000s each year to control. It is well established in a few parts of England, but is still uncommon across most of Great Britain and is completely absent in Scotland.

As most river catchments are still free from Floating Pennywort we all need to try to limit its further spread and control it where possible. The Floating Pennywort ISAP will be the first for a species that is well established and for which the response will be more nuanced, i.e: eradicate in priority areas where feasible; control and manage other more well established populations (where eradication is less feasible), and attempt to protect un-invaded areas from invasion.

The first draft of the Floating Pennywort ISAP should be available soon and we will be seeking the views of everyone that can contribute to its successful delivery.

Information & Awareness Raising

British-Irish Council Workshop

The British Irish council (BIC) was established in 1999, as part of the Good Friday Agreement. Its purpose is to promote positive, practical relationships among the people of the

BIC Administrations (which comprise the UK, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Governments, the Northern Ireland Executive, the Governments of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man).

Environment Ministers from the eight BIC Administrations met in September 2012 to discuss, among other things, the management of invasive non-native species. They recognised the potential value of the Administrations working more collaboratively and decided that an 'experts' workshop should be held for officials to explore how collaboration could be improved.

The resulting workshop was held in London at the end of April, with over 30 delegates from all of the Administrations in attendance. It was well received with a number of key outcomes arising that will be taken forward (subject to Ministerial approval) over the following months, including: working collaboratively on biosecurity and communications across Administrations, and improving the strategic coordination of non-native species research.

Chelsea Flower Show

Fera, Defra, Forestry Commission, National Trust and the Horticultural Trades Association were just some of the organisations which sponsored a groundbreaking Show Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2013. The garden, by designer Jo Thompson, was entitled "Stop the Spread". The aim was to inspire the public to play their part in preserving our horticultural heritage, biodiversity and wildlife, by adopting good practices to minimise their chances of unwittingly spreading plant pests and diseases, or invasive non-native species.



Image courtesy of David Crossley, Fera



The garden was well received with queues up to 3 to 4 persons deep at the perimeter at times, and was awarded a silver medal. The garden will now be transferred to a wildlife park in Bristol called 'Wild Place' which will open this summer. For more information see: <http://www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show/2013/Gardens/Garden-directory/The-Fera-Garden--Stop-the-Spread> .

Research

Crayfish

Defra has commissioned Cefas to carry out a 3 year project to develop more effective trapping equipment and methods for non-native crayfish. The ultimate aim is to be able to provide evidence based advice to waterways managers and angling clubs so that they can manage the species to minimise their impacts. The Angling Trust is providing invaluable support to the project by helping to identify trial sites and recruiting volunteers to carry out field work.

As part of this project Natural England has funded some work to explore the potential for male sterilisation techniques to support long-term management of these species.

Overseas Territories

Invasive species in the five Caribbean UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) represent a major threat to biodiversity. The RSPB, with support from Defra, recently undertook an assessment to identify priority islands for restoration by the removal of invasive vertebrates. The study looked at a number of criteria including the presence of threatened species, the presence of colonial waterbirds and the feasibility of invasive species removal. Of the 25 top ranking islands in the UKOTs 17 were identified to be in the Caribbean, many being identified due to threats to reptiles native to these islands, and colonial waterbirds. The key problem species include rats, cats and small Indian mongoose.

The RSPB are working on a new project to build capacity for invasive species management in the Caribbean UKOTs, funded by the European Commission and Defra. The project aims to develop plans for the eradication of rodents on several key sites, undertake eradication and enhance biosecurity on restored islands. This project builds on previous successes such as the implementation of an action plan to manage feral livestock in Montserrat.



Courtesy of Alistair Homer of Montserrat / RSPB: Feral cat carrying a Semipalmated Sandpiper in Montserrat" Island, Caribbean

For more information see: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/film/10802489.aspx> .

Scanning the horizon for invasive non-native species: a consensus approach

On 25 and 26 May the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology hosted a horizon scanning workshop to derive a list of INNS with the potential to arrive and establish in GB within the next 10 years, and to threaten biodiversity. A component of the Defra-funded GB Non-native Species Information Portal project, horizon scanning is a key tool in identifying arrival pathways and informing pathway action plans, surveillance and contingency planning.

Ecologists with expertise in a wide range of taxonomic groups were invited to form subgroups representing freshwater species,

marine species, plants, terrestrial invertebrates and vertebrates. Prior to the workshop each subgroup compiled its own long-list of species, scoring the likelihoods of arrival, establishment and biodiversity impact, to enable their provisional ranking. On day one, the subgroup leaders identified a method for compiling a single list across all environments and taxonomic groups; using the scoring system coupled with expert opinion, based on the best available evidence, to rank the species and achieve consensus. The following day all participants engaged in constructive and dynamic discussion leading to consensus on the final list. We aim to publish the list in a peer-reviewed publication.

INNS Projects

Avon Invasive Weeds Forum

The main objectives of the Avon Invasive Weeds Forum (AIWF) are to survey for INNS and map as many of the watercourses as possible. The project covers the Avon catchment which includes South Gloucestershire, Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset. I surveyed 22km's of the River Frome last year on my own, so I really appreciate having 4 volunteer surveyors ready and waiting for this coming season!

Organising management of the INNS already mapped will also be carried out and will involve relevant council teams, existing conservation groups, utilising corporate environmental leave days and gaining new volunteers. I have managed to raise awareness of the project by, for example, carrying out training sessions for around 100 employees from both South Gloucestershire and Bristol City councils and by attended numerous Parish council meetings.

Recent funding from Defra has been intrinsic to reaching and surpassing the objectives set for the AIWF.



Courtesy of Bristol Zoo: Eastwood Farm April 2013 – 90 raising awareness of INNS amongst school kids.

The biggest motivation in the first 6 months is to see the passion of the local residents in wanting to help and understand the issues. It has been inspiring to see the dedication of local groups and the variation of events that this passion for native flora and fauna initiates. I am now looking forward to the next 18 months to really make a difference in the catchment and leave a lasting legacy of invasive species awareness and control...watch this space! For further information see:

www.facebook.com/avoninvasiveweedsforum
and ngreen@bristolzoo.org.uk .

Neil Green – Bristol Zoo

Events

Future Events

10th Stakeholder, Forum on Non-native Species
18 June 2013, Millennium Stadium, Cardiff.
Agenda to be published on NNSS website shortly.

Meeting on exotic crayfish 19 – 20 June 2013,
France, <http://www.parc-naturel-briere.fr/index.php?id=1119>

International Conference on Marine
Bioinvasions 20 – 22 August 2013, Canada,
jebyers@uga.edu

EPPO/CoE/EEA/IUCN ISSG International
Workshop: How to communicate on pests and



invasive alien plants 8 – 10 October, Portugal,
http://archives.eppo.int/MEETINGS/2013_conferences/communication_pt.htm

2nd International Congress on Biological
Invasions – Biological invasions, Ecological
Safety and Food Security, 23 – 27 October,
China: <http://www.icbi2013.org/web/index.aspx>

For more information on any of these events
see: www.nonnativespecies.org

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**We are looking for contributions for
the next newsletter. If you have any
ideas please email:**

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