



AQUA – Biosecurity Accreditation Award

Introduction

The AQUA biosecurity accreditation scheme is a free regional pilot trial, run by the Bristol Zoological Society (in conjunction with South West Water and the Animal and Plant Health Agency), through RAPID LIFE, which is a 3-year EU LIFE project designed to help reduce the spread of invasive species within the UK.

Aims

The aim of the scheme is to work with individual water bodies, which are open to anglers and other waterway users, to help them increase their biosecurity efforts to combat the threat of invasive species such as fish, invertebrate and plant species that have a negative effect on our native species. Invasive species cost the UK over 1.8 billion pounds annually. Participants will have the opportunity to gain their AQUA accreditation award and be recognised as a centre that is actively conserving their site to maximise native aquatic diversity. There are 3 levels of the award, bronze, silver and gold so there is the opportunity to gain a bronze level of accreditation and work towards the silver and gold levels. After an initial pilot scheme, the aim is to roll out this programme nationally so that this biosecurity accreditation AQUA award - will become as well recognised as the Red Tractor sign. Recreational water-way users will, in time, come to recognise the symbol on websites and at recreational water sites and therefore know that the site is maximising its conservation efforts to ensure that their native species are preserved and the negative impacts of invasive species minimised. This will make it a more attractive site to visit and enjoy.

Site Manager:

- Display a free of charge Check, Clean, Dry sign and invasive species ID sheets at your site.
- Appoint a key contact, as the liaison, 'site-guardian', who will inform us of any invasive species on the site and any new invasions. We can then respond rapidly to new invasions.
- Add information to the website / Facebook page, newsletter, informing your members about the risks of invasive species and how they can personally help to reduce their spread.
- Monitor your site regularly for invasive species.
- Promote awareness raising events such as invasive species week.

Members:

- **Check, Clean & Dry** your equipment after using it. Hot water and sunlight are best!
- Report any unusual species that you see on the bankside, in the water, or in your nets to the bailiffs, site guardian or angling association and take a photo and send it to jnightingale@bristolzoo.org.uk