



Proceedings of the Sixteenth Stakeholder Forum on Non-native Species

The Scotsman Hotel, Edinburgh

18 June 2018



Introduction

The GB Non-native Species Stakeholder Forum was established in 2004 to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to help shape policy and also to hear about key developments in policy and delivery. It is also used as an opportunity to facilitate networking with colleagues working on non-native species issues across GB. The Forum has been held annually since 2004 and is seen as a key element of the GB approach to non-native species. Since 2008 it has been used to facilitate the active involvement of stakeholders in taking forward the GB Strategy.

The morning sessions consisted of talks to update on developments in the past year. The afternoon workshop sessions provided the opportunity for stakeholders to have a wide-ranging discussions.

Overall, 69 attendees from a broad spectrum of organisations attended the Forum.

NOTE: The views summarised in the workshop reports represent the views as they were expressed by our Stakeholders.

PROGRAMME

09:30 Registration and coffee

10:00 Welcome address (Richard Pullen, Defra)

10:15 Update on progress since 2018 Forum (Niall Moore, GBNNSS)

Updates and presentations

10:30 INNS and Islands in Scotland (Paul Walton, RSPB)

10:55 Managing INNS at the Canal & River Trust (Tom King, Canal & River Trust)

11:15 *Refreshment break*

11:35 Plant Alert: a new tool to report potentially invasive garden plants (Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz, Coventry University)

11:55 Awareness of INNS and uptake of biosecurity measures by GB recreational anglers (Emily Smith, Angling Trust)

12:15 Introduction to workshop sessions

12:30 *Lunch*

Workshop session:

- **Workshop 1:** Gathering views on management objectives for widely spread species
- **Workshop 2:** Brainstorming key actions for priority pathways
- **Workshop 3:** Research strategic plan (discussion of draft plan)

15:00 *Refreshment break*

15:20 Open session

15:50 Closing remarks/next steps

16:00 Close

Workshops

Workshop 1: Management of widely spread species

Chair: Stan Whitaker (SNH) and Jenny Park (SNH)

Background

Although the main emphasis of the EU Regulation is on prevention and rapid eradication, it recognises the need to manage the impact of invasive alien species of Union concern that are already established. Article 19 requires Member States to put in place 'management measures' for widely spread species that are cost-effective and proportionate to their impact on biodiversity. 'Management measures' are defined as any lethal or non-lethal physical, chemical or biological actions aimed at the eradication, control or containment of a population; a 'widely spread' species is one which has gone beyond the naturalisation stage and whose population is self-sustaining.

The updated GB Strategy (2015) set a series of ambitious aims and objectives in relation to long-term control of species. Key Action 5.1 calls for us to “develop a decision support system to help prioritise strategic responses for well-established species at a GB, national and/or regional level” and 5.2 to “develop and facilitate key GB level long-term management programmes that are cost-effective, evidence-based and proportionate to the threat level.” Government resources are limited, are unlikely to increase substantially and are likely to be increasingly directed at prevention and rapid response. However, issues related to species that require long-term control continue to grow.

To control INNS most effectively requires strategic, coordinated and sustained action. For long-term INNS control the key is working in partnership, where multiple stakeholders pool expertise, local knowledge, resources and funding over a continuous period of time to deliver against jointly agreed objectives. The objectives for managing INNS in different parts of the country will depend on the stage its invasion is at. When resources are limited it is important that priorities are agreed and understood by all the stakeholders.

The workshop aimed to explore ways to prioritise strategic responses for well-established species at a GB, national and regional level, using widely spread species of Union concern as examples.

Workshop 2: Brainstorming key actions for priority pathways

Chair: Olaf Booy (GB NNSS) and Jo Long (SEPA)

Background

Prioritising invasive non-native species pathways is a requirement of both the EU IAS regulation and the GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy:

- Article 13 of the EU IAS regulation requires Member States to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the pathways of unintentional introduction and spread of invasive alien species of Union concern (at least) in their territory; while,
- Key Action 3.1 of the GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy states that we will develop a robust approach to prioritising pathways based on potential impact of the species introduced and the effectiveness of pathway management.

The UK has recently completed a comprehensive analysis of pathways to identify those that pose the most risk of introducing harmful invasive non-native species (<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1980>).

This identified six priority pathways for initial consideration:

1. Hull fouling
2. Horticulture escapes
3. Contaminants of ornamental plants
4. Ballast water
5. Stowaways on fishing equipment
6. Zoo and botanic garden escapes

The EU IAS regulation requires that Pathway Action Plans are developed for all of these pathways. While good progress has been made on some fronts (for example the [zoo escapes PAP](#)) there are a number of pathways that have not yet been fully addressed (see Table 1 for an NNESS take on progress towards the development of PAPs).

The aim of this workshop was to gather ideas for how to reduce the risk from these pathways.

Questions to consider included:

1. Are there any comments / views on the pathways identified as initial priorities? Are there any specific aspects of these pathways (e.g. specific routes, types of vehicle / import, points of entry) that should be considered particularly high risk or for which there is a particularly good opportunity to reduce risk?
2. How should we take forward PAPs for these pathways where they are not already in progress (refer to Table 1)? What stakeholders / delivery mechanisms should be involved?
3. What key actions can we take to manage these pathways?

Table 1. Six priority pathways and the status of Pathway Action Plans in the UK (colour indicates progress).

| Pathway | Notes | Example species | Relevant PAP activities ¹ | Extent to which pathway is covered by the PAP |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Hull fouling | Includes both freshwater and marine species | Killer shrimp Carpet sea-squirt | Recreational Boating PAP | The recreational boating PAP covers the large majority of the risk from this pathway (marine and freshwater). It does not cover commercial ship hull fouling; however, there is an economic drive to keep these ships free from fouling and IMO standards that apply so they are less of a risk. The PAP is currently focussed on GB, but includes UK organisations. |
| 2. Horticultural escape | Terrestrial and freshwater garden plants that have escaped into the wild | American skunk-cabbage | Be Plant Wise (not part of a formal PAP) | The risk from this pathways is effectively garden escapes, with much impact from these plants in the freshwater environment. Be Plant Wise (established in 2009) aims to tackle this pathway, but is not part of a formal PAP. It is currently focussed only on freshwater species, but plans are in place to include terrestrial. Be Plant Wise is UK wide. |

¹ Colour indicates the status of the PAP activity. Green = good progress. Orange = some issues / lack of coverage.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 3. Contaminants of ornamental plants | Hitchhikers on plants and in soil. | Oak processionary moth New Zealand flatworm | Plant Health inspections (not part of a formal PAP) | Plant Health already carry out inspections of plants (and soil?) from 3 rd countries; however, they are not necessarily on the lookout / responsible for all relevant invasive non-native species. It may be possible for work with Plant Health to cover off this pathway. |
| 4. Ballast water | Primarily marine, but some freshwater species | | Ballast Water Convention (UK) (not part of a formal PAP) | This pathway should be covered by the implementation of the ballast water convention, being led by the MCA. However, this has not yet taken effect in the UK and the extent to which it will reduce risk is not yet clear. |
| 5. Stowaways on fishing equipment | Mainly freshwater, relatively small group of high impact species | Killer Shrimp | Angling PAP | The angling PAP covers this pathway (with the exception of commercial fishing; however, this is not known to be a significant risk). The PAP is currently focussed on GB only. |
| 6. Zoo and botanic garden escapes | Very few high impact species in recent years; however, includes a number of potential species of Union Concern. | Sacred Ibis Finlaysons Squirrel | Zoos PAP Currently only GB | The existing PAP covers zoos and does not include botanic gardens. However, this pathway was prioritised because of the risk of zoo animal escapes; botanic gardens were not identified as a significant risk in either the GB or EU pathway analysis. |

Workshop 3: Research strategic plan (discussion of draft plan)

Chairs: Niall Moore (GB NNSS) and Sarah Webster (Defra)

Background

The review of the GB Strategy in 2014-15 found that research on invasive non-native species was not well coordinated and lacked strategic focus. The re-launched Strategy called for the establishment of a research working group and this first met in 2018. The overall aim of the working group is to develop a strategic plan for INNS evidence across GB and as components of this plan we need to:

- Identify gaps in current knowledge and priorities for evidence provision.
- Identify research, and other evidence, priorities for underpinning delivery of the GB Strategy (and EU IAS Regulation, WFD, MSFD).
- Improve communication with the research community to identify knowledge gaps and opportunities for the future.

This workshop aims to get stakeholder input into the draft strategic plan (see Annex 1) and the general conclusions outlined in points 1 - 3 below.

The research working group has already agreed the following general points:

1. The plan should highlight not only areas where there are currently gaps but also priority areas that need to be maintained – e.g. horizon scanning.
2. There is a general lack of evidence on the economic and wider social science side of INNS including citizen science for biosecurity, monitoring, reporting and control.
3. There is a need to prioritise species e.g. for assessing impacts, rapid response methods and for long-term control.

Annex 1 - GB INNS EVIDENCE STRATEGIC PLAN

DRAFT

Background/Policy background

Invasive non-native species are one of the biggest causes of biodiversity loss worldwide and also cause significant economic costs and some of them impact on human health. The problem is getting worse - in GB 2,000 non-native species are already established and 10-12 new ones are becoming established annually. Policy needs to be underpinned by a strong evidence base, and for invasive non-native species evidence is a key component informing risk assessment, surveillance, detection, monitoring, control and eradication strategies, as well as public awareness activities.

The 2003 non-native species policy review and the UK Biodiversity Research Advisory Group (BRAG 2003) both set out priority areas for NNS research. Since then, considerable progress has been made on some elements of strategic research, notably work on economic impacts and public attitudes. However, these priorities are now woefully out of date and we lack a set of current strategic research priorities for NNS.

To address this need a working group was established, chaired by Defra, with the aim of working towards agreeing a set of key evidence needs.

Scope of the strategy

The geographic scope of the strategic plan is GB but we will aim to coordinate with Northern Irish colleagues where relevant. We will also look to collaborate internationally where relevant.

The strategy covers research, monitoring and surveillance (and expert opinion) and therefore is an evidence strategy. It covers all areas covered by the GB INNS Strategy but does not overlap with plant health.

Objective

To encourage robust, strategic and coherent research activities to support GB non-native species policy and action.

Key evidence gaps/needs

The group agreed the following General points:

The plan should include not only areas where there are currently gaps but also priority areas that need to be maintained – e.g. horizon scanning.

There also seems to be a general lack of evidence on the economic and wider social science side of INNS including citizen science for monitoring, reporting and control.

There is also a need to prioritise species e.g. for assessing impacts, rapid response methods and for long-term control.

Table of specific key evidence needs to support the INNS policy and delivery.

| Heading | What are the evidence gaps? |
|---|--|
| Prevention | |
| Horizon Scanning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuing need but with better join-up with plant health. • Include social and economic impact as well as environmental impact. • Need to include more distant threats – don't just focus on the known-knowns. • Include climate change, changes in management of the environment. |
| Biosecurity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-benefits of Biosecurity. • How to incentivise more biosecure behaviours, including economically. • Where do we need to be most bio-secure – high risk areas and susceptible habitats/areas. • Marine biosecurity including large-scale e.g. energy sector. |
| Pathway Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling the cost-benefits of pathway management measures to guide us developing measures that are proportionate to the risks. |
| Early detection, surveillance, monitoring and rapid response | |
| Early detection, surveillance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of new technologies (inc.eDNA - application, false positives and negatives). • How to best get the public and others to do appropriate surveillance/monitoring. |
| Rapid response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on priority species – list the priority species where we don't have an appropriate response – investigate responses needed. |

| Heading | What are the evidence gaps? |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do we stop a rapid response? • When to trigger a response – how much surveillance needed? |
| Long-term management and restoration | |
| Mitigation, control and eradication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify priority species for long-term management. • Strategic management for intractable species – biological control. |
| Restoration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration following control. |
| Building awareness | |
| Building awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we retain volunteers? • How do we best increase the general level of awareness? |
| Understanding Impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the priority species for which we need more impact information? • Modelling future impacts – all species combined. • Ecosystem resilience. |

Feedback from attendees

69 delegates attended the Forum and 21 feedback forms were returned. All 21 agreed that holding an annual Forum was very worthwhile activity.

Comments about the Forum which worked well:

'Good range of topics'.
"Workshop very interesting".
'The supporting paperwork was good and location and presentations were excellent'.
'A good representation of key stakeholders'.
'This was my first Forum and I found it very informative.'
'Attending the workshop and being able to go into detail about some of the topics was really helpful'.
Excellent Forum, as always, the informal discussions as useful as the formal sessions'.
'Great opportunities to network'.
'Mixture of talks from different organisations was good.'
'Excellent presentations and contributions in the workshop which expanded my knowledge'.

Comments about the Forum which didn't work well:

'Sometimes the workshop lost track of the objective of the session'.
'Workshops are a good idea but they need better facilitation and focus'.
'Enjoyed the talks, not so much the workshop'.
'I liked the workshop discussing real issues but they could have benefited from being facilitated by someone other than directly involved staff'.
'Keep the speakers to time'.
'Give speakers 5 minutes notice to finish on time'.
'Forum should be chaired more tightly – all sessions overran significantly. Each talk should have been absolutely max 20 minutes, the relaxed approach doesn't work and is frustrating for delegates, speakers and venue staff'.

Other comments:

'Send summary from different workshops to all via e-mail after the meeting'.
'Arrange a meeting the night before for networking'.
'2 days would be more useful considering travel'.
'I'd like to be able to participate in more than one workshop session'.
'Circulate who is attending in advance'.

Most suggested locations for the 2018 Forum were:

York
Wales

Secretariat Website

The table below shows the frequency of delegate visits to the website reported on the feedback forms.

| | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Never | | | | | | | | | |
| Rarely | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | | 2 | | 3 |
| Once per month | 10 | 7 | 14 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 11 |
| Once per week | 1 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 6 | | 4 | 8 | 8 |
| Several times per week | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 2 |

The most useful parts of the website included:

Species information (Information Portal, ID Sheets, Image Gallery, Risk Assessments)

Publications and useful links

Biosecurity and Prevention (inc Check Clean Dry, Be Plant Wise)

Legislation and Regulation

The least used parts of the website included:

News / Events

Training

Projects

Suggested improvements to the website included:

'There is so much useful information on there that it can be hard to navigate, consider a revamp'.

'Regular checking to keep the information up to date.'

Suggested information to be added to the website included:

'More marine'.

'Local authority case studies'.

'Pathway Action Plans for consultation'.

'Regional / local contacts'.

NNSS e-learning modules completed are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Module 1: Introduction to invasive non-native species | 5 |
| Module 2a: Introduction to identification and recording | 3 |
| Module 2b: Identification of freshwater plants | 2 |
| Module 2c: Identification of freshwater invertebrates | 2 |
| Module 2d: Identification of riparian plants | 2 |
| Module 3: Biosecurity | 4 |

Suggested improvements to the online training included:

'Find a better way to promote this'.

'Maybe refer to EU Regulation in NNSS'.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our speakers and workshop chairs for their invaluable contributions and Defra for providing the funding for this event. Thanks also to the staff at the Royal Scotsman Hotel, Edinburgh for their professional service and hospitality.