



Proceedings of the Eighth Stakeholder Forum on Non-native Species

**John McIntyre Centre,
University of Edinburgh**

18 May 2011



Introduction

The GB Non-native Species Stakeholder Forum is designed to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to become actively involved in taking forward the GB Strategy, to celebrate progress made in the past year and to network with colleagues old and new working on non-native species issues across GB.

The morning session of this, the eighth Forum, consisted of a general update on developments in the previous twelve months as well as a number of presentations detailing some specific topics. Three afternoon workshops then explored views and ideas on the EU Strategy, Biosecurity and Research Priorities. These workshops were followed by an open question and answer session where delegates had the opportunity to raise and discuss questions relating to non-native species. Posters were also presented, with topics ranging from the impact of climate change to import licensing.

68 attendees from a broad spectrum of organisations attended the Forum. A list of attendees can be found at the end of these Proceedings.

PROGRAMME

- 10:00 Registration and coffee
- 10:30 Welcome and introduction (Francis Marlow, Defra, NNS Programme Board Chair)
- **Update on progress since last Forum** - Niall Moore and Olaf Booy (GB Non-native Species Secretariat)
- 11:00 Presentations: key projects/issues in 2010/2011
- **Killer Shrimp and the Aquatic Biosecurity Campaign:** Mark Diamond (EA) and Emma Kiddle (Defra)
 - **Scottish Legislation:** Kathryn Fergusson (Scottish Government)
 - **Update on Phytophthora:** Steve Ashby (Fera)
 - **Scottish Mink Initiative:** Hollie Walker (RAFTS)
- 12:30 Introduction to the workshop sessions
- 12:40 Lunch (chance to view posters and displays and to mingle)
- 13:40 Workshop sessions: key work areas proposed for 2011/2012
- 1) **EU Strategy** – Chairs: Jonathan Newman (CEH) and Niall Moore (NNS)
 - 2) **Biosecurity** – Chairs: Steve Hunter (RELU) and Mark Diamond (EA)
 - 3) **Research Priorities** – Chairs: Nick Turner (Defra) and Helen Roy (CEH)
- 15:00 Refreshment break
- 15:30 Open session
- 15:50 Closing remarks/next steps - Francis Marlow (Defra)
- 16:00 Close

Presentations

Abstracts of talks

Update since the last Forum

Niall provided an update on the main developments in the 12 months since the last Forum in London. The highlights included:

- GB Strategy: of 49 Key Actions and 68 tasks we have made the following progress:
 - 25 Complete – (22 last year and 8 the year before)
 - 39 In progress – (39 last year)
- Media and Communications
 - The *Be Plant Wise* campaign, launched in February 2010, continues to be promoted. There was a second ‘push’ in the autumn including attendance at AQUA 2010 and discussions with aquatic plant growers.
 - New Biosecurity campaign – *Check, Clean, Dry*.
- Rapid Responses continue – including those on American bullfrog, Monk parakeet and water primrose.
- Ruddy Duck – the population is now approx. 90, less than 2% of the original.
- Local Action Groups – 2nd LAG workshop in January 2011.
- Legislation
 - Scotland – The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act – passed through all stages in Scottish Parliament.

Killer Shrimp Rapid Response

The invasive shrimp, *Dikerogammarus villosus*, was first reported in the UK at Grafham Water on the 3rd September 2010. It has subsequently been discovered at two sites in South Wales. Studies of its invasion across Western Europe indicate that it has a significant deleterious impact on native invertebrate communities.

Mark gave an overview of the measures that have been taken to help contain this shrimp at its known locations.

Information on biosecurity and identification for *Dikerogammarus villosus* can be found at <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/alerts/index.cfm>

Aquatic Biosecurity Campaign

Following the discovery of the invasive species the 'killer shrimp' (*Dikerogammarus villosus*) at Grafham Water and subsequent locations in Wales in late 2010, Defra worked with colleagues at NNSS, the Environment Agency and Natural England to develop an outline communications campaign as part of the package of response measures to this threat. The campaign, called Check, Clean, Dry, is supported by a communications partnership group involving representatives of key interest groups involved in angling, water sports and nature conservation in the aquatic environment.

'Check, Clean, Dry' launched at the end of March this year and aims to encourage and support water user groups to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading aquatic invasive non-native species, using the killer shrimp and other aquatic invasive non-native species as examples.

Emma provided an overview of the campaign development and achievements so far.

Scottish Legislation

In March 2011 the Scottish Parliament passed the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act that will see Scotland take a new approach to invasive non-native species. The general 'no release' approach is adopted for animals and plants outwith their native range. New powers to prevent keeping and require notification of invasive animals and plants are also introduced. The Scottish Government and certain bodies will also be able to make species control orders that would make it compulsory for control or eradication work to be carried out.

Update on *Phytophthora*

Phytophthora ramorum and *P. kernoviae* are fungus-like pathogens which affect a range of trees, shrubs and other plants. Since the first UK findings in 2002 there has been a coordinated approach to disease control, aimed at containment and eradication whilst evidence was gathered to make a decision on future policy. *Phytophthora* species continue to spread, albeit slowly and mainly in the south and west of the UK. A major development was the finding of *Phytophthora ramorum* in Larch. In April 2009 Defra launched a five year programme, managed by Fera, to try to limit the impact of the two *Phytophthora* species mentioned above. The three main work streams of the programme are research and development, education and awareness raising, and disease control through clearance of host plants in high risk areas.

Scottish Mink Initiative

The largest ever initiative to remove breeding American mink from north Scotland is now underway. Covering 20,000 km², from rural Tayside across Aberdeenshire, Moray, the Cairngorms and the Highlands, the Scottish Mink Initiative is a new partnership between Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS), Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the University of Aberdeen, and 16 other organisations.

Aiming to protect native wildlife, such as water voles, ground nesting birds and economically important populations of salmon and game birds, to help protect local economic stability for the benefit of local communities. The Initiative signals a £920,000 investment in native wildlife conservation, thanks to support from Scottish Natural Heritage through the Species Action Framework, Tubney Charitable Trust, Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Scottish Government and the European Community Cairngorms, Highland, Moray, Rural Aberdeenshire and Rural Tayside Local Action Groups LEADER 2007-2013 Programme.

The success of this initiative relies on community support and involvement, and we hope that by working with homeowners, landowners, river trusts and boards, and local interest groups, we can deliver real, tangible results to benefit local communities now and in the future. We have now appointed four mink control officers and we will be strategically working at a local level to monitor mink movements using mink rafts and establish an alert system, made up of local land owners, fishery trusts, volunteers, and interested others, to prevent further spread of the species.

With its aim to create a 20,000 km² safe haven free from breeding mink, the Scottish Mink Initiative significantly builds on the success of previous mink control projects in the Cairngorms National Park, Highlands and north east Scotland.

The initiative will establish a strategic monitoring and control zone across the north, extending from the mid-Tay to the South Esk, around the east coast to the River Nairn, and across from Dornoch and Cromarty on the east to Ullapool on the west.

Speaker profiles

Niall Moore

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Niall has been the head of the GB Non-native Species Secretariat since it was established in March 2006. The Secretariat is based at Fera (The Food and Environment Research Agency - an executive agency of Defra) in York but the Secretariat reports to the GB Programme Board that co-ordinates policy on non-native species issues for GB. Prior to this post Niall worked at CSL as team leader of the Conservation Management Team that led the Ruddy Duck and Hebridean Mink eradication programmes.

Olaf Booy

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Olaf is Technical Coordinator for the GB Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS). Among other things Olaf coordinates the GB Non-native Species Risk Analysis Mechanism which provides part of the evidence base used to underpin policy decisions. Prior to this post Olaf worked for the European Union 'Giant Alien Project' developing guidance for the management of Giant Hogweed across Europe and as Senior Consultant at the environmental consultancy RPS advising clients on the management of invasive species.

Mark Diamond

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Mark is the Environment and Business Manager (Ecosystems) for the Environment Agency. He is responsible for developing the Agency's approach to tackling non-native species particularly with regards to the Water Framework Directive. He chairs the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group working on the invasive shrimp, *Dikerogammarus villosus*. He is a member of the GB Programme Board.

Emma Kiddle

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Emma works in the Defra Campaigns and Marketing Team and manages communications activity supporting the natural environment policy area including the Be Plant Wise campaign and the new aquatic bio-security campaign Check, Clean, Dry.

Kathryn Fergusson

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Kathryn is based in the Rural and Environment Directorate of the Scottish Government. Kathryn managed the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 through the Parliamentary process.

Steve Ashbysteve.ashby@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Steve Ashby has worked in Plant Health policy in MAFF/Defra/Fera since 1995, specialising in international plant health policy as well as non-native species. He has been involved intermittently with policy on *Phytophthora ramorum* since it was first identified in the UK.

Hollie WalkerHollie@rafts.org.uk

Hollie has recently taken on the role as Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland Scottish Mink Initiative Coordinator. Hollie's role is coordination of the Mink Control project, which includes: creation and delivery of work plans, maintenance of records and grants, management of four regional mink control officers, project reporting and volunteer and partner liaison. Being only a month in post the Initiative is in its early stages. Prior to this post Hollie was the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels north east Project Officer, working towards stopping the decline of red squirrel populations in Scotland north of the Central Lowlands and improving conditions for viable red squirrel populations across Scotland. A key target of the project was to control the non-native invasive American grey squirrel in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. In Hollie's spare time she founded and now chairs the newly formed and first established Scottish Local Mammal Society Group Grampian Mammal Group, as well as sitting on the Scottish Wildlife Trust Aberdeen Group Committee.

Workshop reports

1. EU Strategy

Chairs: Jonathan Newman and Niall Moore

Background

The European Commission is in the process of developing an EU IAS Strategy with a view to bringing it forward in 2012 and probably legislating on the issue. The Commission is now looking to identify the processes that may be needed, the most cost-effective ways to deliver them, how to join up the various components, the balance between EU/MS decision-making and the level of legal compulsion likely to be necessary to ensure a consistent EU-wide baseline of protection against IAS. To do this they have set up three working groups:

- Working Group 1: Prevention
- Working Group 2: Early warning and rapid response
- Working Group 3: Eradication, containment, management and restoration

There has already been an informal consultation exercise with stakeholders from outside government on the work of the first two working groups. This workshop examined the issues covered by Working Group 3.

Aim

To assess the views of stakeholders on what should be included in the EU IAS Strategy on eradication, control, containment and restoration.

Discussion pointers

- How far should the EU regulate in this area?
- How do we identify (EU) priorities for eradication, control, containment and restoration?
- What EU mechanisms (financial and other) can best support control, eradication and restoration?
- Would the concepts of 'Infected Areas' (Animal Health) and 'Protected Zones' (Plant Health) be useful?
- Awareness-raising – how do we best keep the public and/or key stakeholders on side for control or eradication, especially of vertebrates?

Conclusions and key points raised:

There is a need for strategic working between countries with an enhanced communication network.

It was suggested that a co-ordinating structure akin to the GB Secretariat would be useful in each member state.

A central European organising group (perhaps an expert group) was also needed to facilitate action in the EU and member states.

Common EU-wide definitions need to be agreed.

It was generally agreed that a Directive was needed to encourage all member states to cooperate and reach certain minimum standards. However, sensible derogations will be needed to ensure that member states are not forced into inappropriate actions.

Priorities should be set at both the EU and member state level but lists need to be dynamic and flexible in order to be updated with new knowledge.

The EU list should include present and future threats and the member state lists as a subset of the EU list.

Priority sites for action should be set e.g. vulnerable islands or protected sites.

A reporting structure in each member state is necessary.

Mechanisms should include biosecurity enforcement and access rights for eradication or control.

Education and awareness are an important component to change behaviour and attitudes. Awareness-raising must involve demonstrating positive effects.

Dealing with public attitudes to vertebrates requires practical education. Education should include school level and higher education.

Lines of responsibility must be clear.

Codes of practice will be useful in many circumstances.

Long term funding of 5-10 years is needed in many circumstances for control.

Fostering good practice for management (within and between member states) is very important.

Volunteer and basic skills register for Europe and in member states would be useful.

2. Biosecurity

Chairs: Steve Hunter and Mark Diamond

Background

Prevention is key to tackling the problem of invasive non-native species and good biosecurity is an important element in prevention. Good biosecurity helps minimise the risk of spread of plant and animal pests, parasites and diseases as well as non-native species. It is, however, a highly complex and multi-faceted issue and a lot of guidance already exists on some aspects of it.

However, there are also significant gaps both in our knowledge base on good practice as well as in how we can optimally implement it in the field.

Aim

To seek views from stakeholders on the key issues we should prioritise for developing and disseminating biosecurity good practice.

Discussion pointers

- What are the main gaps in current knowledge on good practice?
- Who should be our key target audiences?
- Do we need to devise and/or encourage training of relevant professionals and others on good biosecurity practice? If so, how and whom?
- How do we best disseminate good practice biosecurity messages?
- Are there examples of good practice (GB or wider) that we should look to?

Conclusions and key points raised:

- What are the main gaps in current knowledge on good practice?
- We need more generic pathway-based Biosecurity Risk Assessments.
- We need to do more to reduce escapes and releases of animals; there is a lack of guidance on suitable husbandry and enclosures.
- We need more information on the role of landscaping contractors and what they are planting.
- Do we know enough about species being brought in on packaging?
- Do the waste regulations take enough account of invasive species?
- Who should be our key target audiences?
- Professional groups: Planners, utilities with land, land developers, Network Rail, landscape architects, County Councils, Highways contractors, CIRIA, commercial ecological consultants, grounds maintenance workers.
- There is a need for better general public understanding and knowledge as well as more specific information for specific activities and regulators.
- We need to build biosecurity into the culture of the angling, boating groups etc.
- There needs to be much better understanding of biosecurity issues by importers and other trade interests.
- There needs to be better use of local knowledge by groups undertaking stewardship of their own patches.
- Involve all users including minor ones.

- Do we need to devise and/or encourage training of relevant professionals and others on good biosecurity practice? If so, how and whom?
- We need manufacturers to design better equipment in the first place (particularly in relation to marine equipment) .
- Who do landowners go to for advice? No longer any Government technology and advisory service (often called an agricultural extension service) but mostly commercial and if people have to pay they will stop asking for advice. How do we overcome this technology/advice transfer gap?
- Can we use CAP reform and regulation as a stimulus to action?
 - How do we best disseminate good practice biosecurity messages?
- Produce a form of 'Countryside Code' for species or a pocket guide.
- Better and more obvious displays at ports etc.
- Regional forums are very useful to bring people together and for setting up follow up events.
- Biosecurity training and workshops – cross disciplinary.
- Generic guidance for planners that can be cut and pasted or shared easily.
- Add a biosecurity element into other events.
- Start with general awareness raising, then dissemination of more detailed information, eg by relevant organisations.
- Methods depend on the audience eg Local Authorities must have an economic case, anglers need a relevant case.
- National campaigns need to get to local level.
- Needs kick start funding to cascade knowledge.
- Stress it is for the health of the environment generally.
- Organisms should be prioritised, probably by Government.
- We need to understand what drives different groups of people? How can we facilitate behaviour change in them?
- Get positive messages across.
- Marine environment – big issues internationally then cascade them down to the local level.
- Consider the bigger picture, eg larger habitat or community view.
- Do not always blame the trade or polarise the issues.
- Do not mix messages, eg between Japanese Knotweed and psyllid introduction.

- Need to understand that customers (eg gardeners) are always looking for something new and exotic.
- Use the NNSS website to reinforce biosecurity messages and link through to other key websites.
- Develop a biosecurity plan for an activity around what is already being done.
 - Are there examples of good practice (GB or wider) that we should look to?
 - Agencies should take the lead on identifying and disseminating good practice.
 - Other issues
- Not everyone understands what is meant by the term biosecurity and it differs between USA and UK for example. Here we define it as measures to prevent the introduction and spread of unwanted organisms.
- Are there actions we can take “at the border” to improve our ability to prevent the introduction of unwanted non-native species? Would much tighter controls on imported biological material help? How do we deal with issues of trade?
- How do we deal with the issues of scale at Heathrow? How much control has to be done on site at ports of entry?
- Should we ban the sale of more plants and recommend alternatives?
- There two stages to control – banning imports and then preventing release into the wild.
- Some organisations need zoo licences but there is a lack of consistency on who requires them.
- Blanket ban on import or release to wild – two stages.
- Should enforcement be at the individual or group level?
- Substantial WFD funding coming over 4 years. How can we use it to better communicate and enforce biosecurity?

3. Research Priorities

Chairs: Nick Turner and Helen Roy

Background

The GB Strategy (following on from the BRAG report) aims to encourage a more strategic and coherent research stream to underpin GB invasive non-native species policy and action. There is a large amount of research on non-native species occurring in GB with funding coming from a wide range of sources and including a wide range of research topics. Some of this research is more directly relevant to the GB Strategy than others. Defra is currently taking the lead on an exercise to assess the research needs that are most relevant to implementing the GB Strategy. This aims to give direction to those

who may be intending carrying out research into invasive non-native species on what are currently the priority areas of research for those in government.

Aim

To seek views from stakeholders on the research areas we should prioritise for funding in order to underpin the GB Strategy.

Discussion pointers

What are the key gaps in current research provision that we have?

- For Policy
- For Action
- For more fundamental research
- How do we in government best communicate our needs in terms of research provision?
- How do we best incorporate and prioritise the needs of the practitioners on the ground (e.g. those controlling INNS) in terms of research?

Conclusions and key points raised:

Better understanding of pathways and how to manage them is required.

Research into effective biosecurity measures in different environments and in response to different species.

How to predict when new invasive species will turn up and where they will go in the early stages of invasion? Developing early detection tools.

Need to better understand how future change (e.g. to landscapes, climate change, pathways) may impact upon invasive species.

Research into population dynamics of invasive species (e.g. crayfish) is important to support assessment and management.

Research to support risk analysis (e.g. into entry, establishment, spread and impacts), including research into new invasive species (horizon scanning and sleeper species).

Need research into the true impact on biodiversity / natural habitats / ecosystems of invasive species.

How do you restore a habitat after management to prevent re-invasion?

What makes a habitat susceptible to invasion in GB?

Summary of Panel session

The meeting was opened to the floor for a general Q&A and comments session. The discussion is summarised below:

Jonathan Willet (Highland Council) asked Niall Moore to summarise the main work areas for the Secretariat for the next 6 months. Niall listed the following: Launch of the new Non-native Species Information Portal (NNSIP); the Training Working Group; Local Action Groups; Be Plant Wise and Check Clean Dry campaigns.

Liz Charter (Dept of Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man Government) asked for an update on the Japanese Knotweed Psyllid. Rob Tanner from CABI informed the Forum that the field trials went as predicted and further releases will take place at several new sites in the next few weeks.

Paul Walton (RSPB) praised the Be Plant Wise and Check Clean Dry public awareness campaigns and called for them to be extended and suggested that EU funding should be sought.

John Kelly (Invasive Species Ireland) asked Mark Diamond (EA) which chemicals were tested for killing *Dikerogammarus* (Killer Shrimp). Mark explained that several household cleaning and disinfectant products were tested but even with the most effect (pine disinfectant) it took 40 mins of submersion to kill *Dikerogammarus*. Mark re-iterated that drying for a minimum of 48 hours was also essential.

Feedback from attendees

Forum

68 delegates attended and feedback forms were returned by 28 delegates at or after the Forum. There was unanimous agreement that the holding of the annual Forum is a worthwhile activity (the majority answered 'yes'; other answers included: 'absolutely' and 'very worthwhile'). Others noted that the breakout or discussion sessions were particularly useful as well as a good opportunity to make new contacts and network.

Delegates agreed that the format of presentations and workshops worked well, with the workshop discussion sessions being very popular and some delegates commented that the posters were also very good. Suggestions for improvements to the Forum included the addition of Country updates, coverage of fish species, and one delegate suggested using a twitter # tag next year. It was suggested by two delegates that it would be helpful if discussion papers could be sent in advance of the Forum.

Secretariat and Secretariat Website

Comments on the work of the Secretariat included 'great work and very informative website', 'good work going on as always', 'does a very good job and gets things done', 'big improvements recently' and 'very dynamic and increasingly effective'. 25 out of 28 delegates had visited the Secretariat website. The table below shows the frequency of delegate visits to the website reported in the questionnaire feedback.

Less than once per month	3
Once per month	11
Once per week	8
Several times per week	2

The most useful parts of the website included the news and events, species information, toolbox, legislation and guidance and useful links.

Suggestions for improvements to the website included the addition of links to Scotland's Species Action Framework, best practice management, Scottish legislation and other areas such as Plant Health. It was also suggested that an active researcher directory for GB be added as well as images of impacts, the inclusion of fish species and more ID sheets, especially for species listed in Schedule 9.

GB Mechanism and Strategy

Strengths of the GB Mechanism and Strategy that were highlighted included: coordination between different countries, agencies and NGOs, 'good people in the Secretariat', provision of species leaflets, ID sheets and management options, working groups, 'consistency and strategic overview across GB', 'dissemination of information', 'having a structure and a degree of continuity in personnel'.

Weaknesses and potential improvements suggested were: 'more trade and public involvement e.g. retailers', 'too heavily reliant on voluntary principles',

'enforcement', 'research needs to be more focused and controlled e.g. species specific chemicals for effective control', 'clarity on regional issues e.g. define differences in legislation between areas of GB', lack of 'country level regional strategy actions (SMART)' and 'links with other government departments'.

It was also suggested that the development of European legislation (possibly a Directive) should be supported and the Forum needs more input from non-agency and non-government stakeholders.

Overall, the Forum, the work of the Secretariat and the GB Mechanism in general were extremely well received by delegates.

Acknowledgements

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