



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Local Action Group Coordinator Update

Ben Francis – Local Action Group Coordinator
Animal and Plant Health Agency

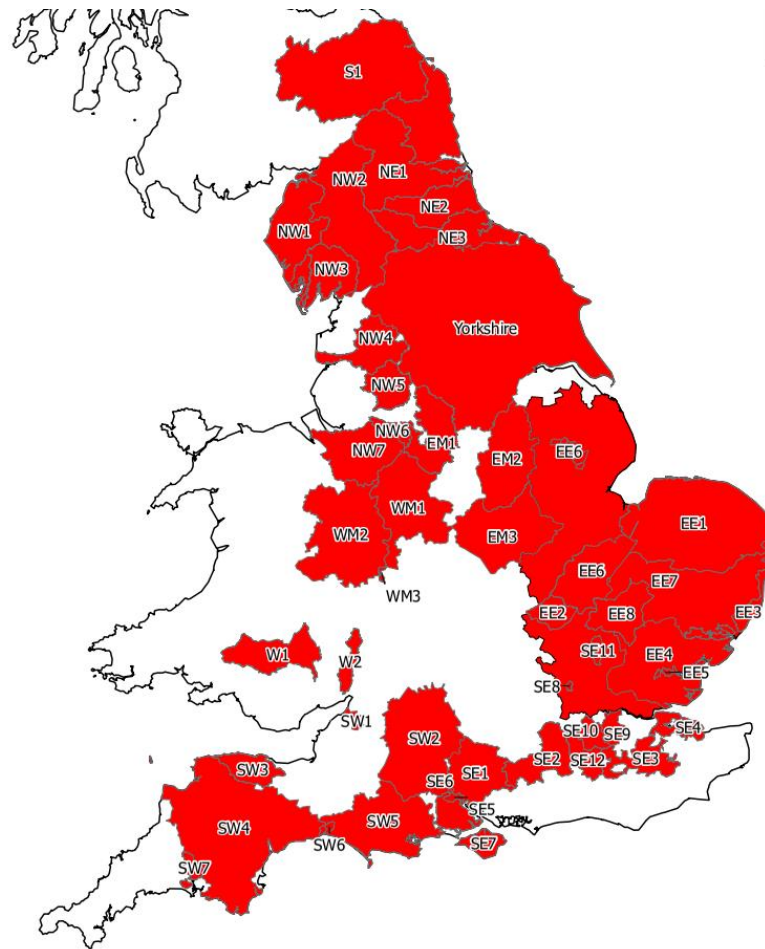
Introduction

- Ben Francis
- Joined APHA as Local Action Group Coordinator in November 2022
- Support Local Action Groups Around England (Scotland and Wales)
- 3 years working in INNS
- Previous experience in volunteering and participation working in Higher Education and at National Governing Bodies

LAGs in England

- Met with 59 LAGs in England – even more in Wales and Scotland!
- Other organisations, groups and authorities working on INNS
 - Set up new LAGs in more areas

LAGs in England



Area LAGs cover

| Area of LAG working | Number of LAGs |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Catchment | 23 |
| County | 17 |
| AONB or National Park Boundary | 7 |
| Small Scale Local Area | 6 |
| Regional | 5 |
| National Governing Bodies | 3 |

Lead Organisation of LAGs

| Area of LAG working | Number of LAGs |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Wildlife Trust | 14 |
| Rivers Trust | 13 |
| Local Authority | 11 |
| Local Charity | 7 |
| AONB or National Park Authority | 6 |
| Volunteer Group | 5 |
| National Governing Body | 2 |
| Zoo | 1 |
| Government lead | 1 |
| National Charity | 1 |

Species managed by LAGs

| Species Managed by LAGs | Number of LAGs |
|--|----------------|
| Himalayan Balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>) | 49 |
| Giant Hogweed (<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>) | 23 |
| Japanese Knotweed (<i>Reynoutria japonica</i> syn. <i>Fallopia japonica</i>) | 21 |
| Floating Pennywort (<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>) | 11 |
| Signal Crayfish (<i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i>) | 11 |
| American Mink (<i>Mustela vison</i>) | 9 |
| American Skunk Cabbage (<i>Lysichiton americanus</i>) | 7 |
| Swamp Stonecrop or New Zealand pigmyweed (<i>Crassula Helmsii</i>) | 7 |
| Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>) | 4 |
| Water Fern (<i>Azolla</i>) | 4 |
| Piri Piri Burr (<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>) | 3 |
| Water Primrose (<i>Ludwigia grandiflora</i>) | 2 |
| Chinese Mitten Crab (<i>Eriocheir sinensis</i>) | 2 |
| Parrots Feather (<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>) | 2 |
| Grey Squirrel (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>) | 1 |
| Invasive Snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>) | 1 |
| Pacific Oyster (<i>Magallana gigas</i>) | 1 |
| Cotoneaster | 1 |
| Giant Himalayan Bramble (<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>) | 1 |
| Monkey Flower (<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>) | 1 |
| Invasive Bluebell | 1 |
| Pitcher Plant (<i>Sarracenia purpurea</i>) | 1 |
| Gaultheria (<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>) | 1 |
| Yellow Azalea (<i>Rhododendron luteum</i>) | 1 |
| Bamboo | 1 |
| Montbretia (<i>Crocsmia crocosmiiflora</i>) | 1 |
| Orange Balsam (<i>Impatiens capensis</i>) | 1 |
| White Butterbur (<i>Petasites albus</i>) | 1 |
| Daemon Shrimp | 1 |

Main challenges faced by LAGs and additional support needed

1. **Sharing of good practice management guidance** (e.g. groups in need of management guidance for new species in their area, new guidance needed as projects change/evolve over time) – 31
2. **Further funding** (most projects are fixed term funding, and need longer term funding to keep going/ensure effects are long lasting) – 30
3. **Bringing partners and stakeholders together/more collaborative working** (e.g. bringing stakeholders into the management to ensure effective delivery) – 23
4. **Education and public awareness** (e.g. raising awareness of the public about the threat of INNS and importance of biosecurity) – 15
5. **Volunteers** (e.g. recruitment, retention and guidance to deliver to volunteer groups) – 15
6. **Landowners** (e.g. more support needed from, more guidance to deliver guidance to, information about who owns land) – 7
7. **Information on new species, horizon scanning** – 7
8. **NNS to keep providing materials to use/distribute** (e.g. leaflets, ID guides, posters) – 6
9. **More time to record/map information on INNS**, information needed from more partners on INNS on their land (e.g. INNS mapper and local records) – 5
10. **Latest research/academic information** (e.g. new updated guidance on how to manage species) – 4
11. **Information/support on Biocontrol** – 3
12. **Equipment** (e.g. more equipment is needed for volunteer groups to deliver management) – 2

Progress from the last workshop



Gather sources of funding and share with LAGs

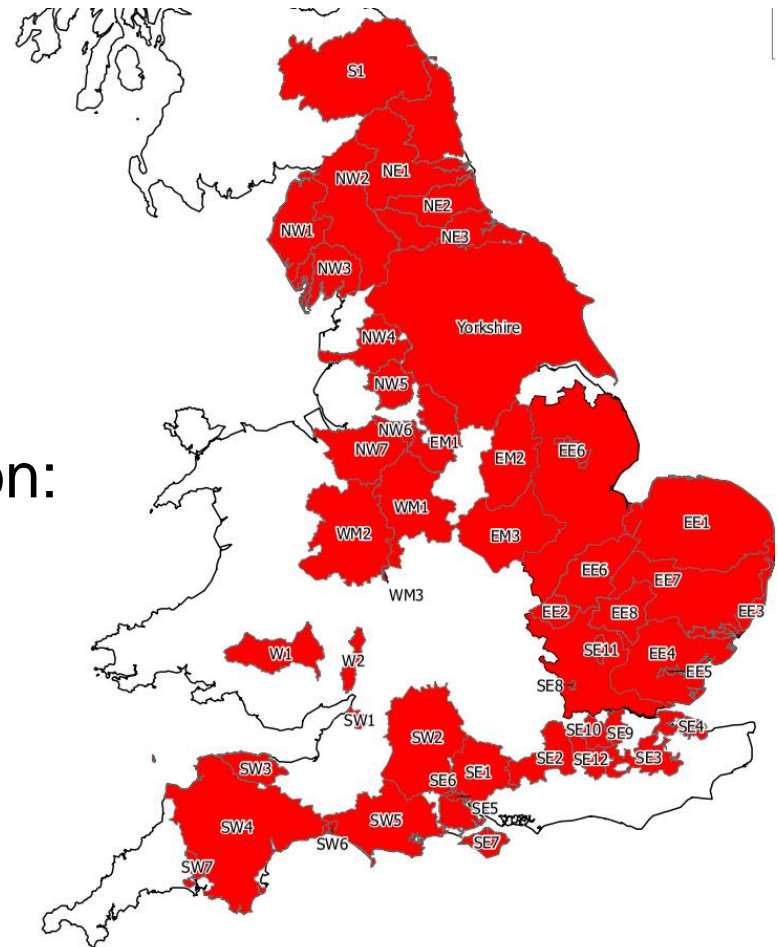
- Defra fund – point of contact for LAGs through this process
 - 12 groups funded
- Connecting with water companies to share information on funding available
- Establishing a list of suitable funding for LAGs which will circulate

Act as central stable contact

- Supporting new groups and organisations trying to set up LAGs (e.g. Cannock Chase, Sussex Ouse)
- Answer queries where I can
- Connecting groups based on project / area
- Available for email, phone, teams call. Happy to help!

Develop a LAG map

- Done! (For England)
- Let me know your feedback
- Will keep updating
- Please share any information on:
 - New groups
 - Scotland
 - Wales



Develop templates for case studies

- Will be available in the breakout session tomorrow
- Let me know your feedback and how to improve these
- Can be uploaded to the NNSS website when suitable

Share SISI method of recording useful information

- Met with Callum Sinclair in May 2023
- Circulated their method of recording volunteer data
- Also learned about their volunteer landowner agreements

Gather data on volunteer effort across GB

- Received 2022 data for 19 groups – thank you!
- Working with WaREN to expand the annual WaREN survey to all GB – will include volunteer information in this survey

Communicate with stakeholders on behalf of LAGs

- Funders
 - Working with Defra and water companies – will be a priority for 2024
- Universities
 - Regional Groups
 - BES Conference
- Defra
 - Defra LAG fund
 - EA, NE, FE and other agencies
- Network Rail
 - Established some contacts now thanks to LAGs!
- 2024:
 - Internal drainage boards, Landowners, Highways, Waste services

Connect LAGs based on area and/or project type

- Established connections between groups based on project type
 - Shared documentation where available
- Established regional groups in:
 - East Midlands
 - North West
 - West Midlands (April)
 - South/South East (later in 2024)
- Support groups in other regions
 - (North East, Yorkshire, South West)

Promote the good work of LAGs

- Funders: Defra / Water Companies (priority for 2024)
- INNS week
- NNSS Newsletter

*Biosecurity

- Visited 65 priority sites for priority INNS
 - 3 priority INNS (Quagga Mussel, Killer Shrimp, Chinese Mystery Snail)
 - 6 regions (Thames Valley, Lee Valley, Anglian, Norfolk, South Wales, Southampton)
 - Working with landowners and stakeholders to improve biosecurity at priority sites
- Supported the AQUA accreditation scheme
- Promote Check Clean Dry and other biosecurity guidance to LAGs

How I will continue to support the Local Action Groups

- Sharing good practice and guidance
 - Creating networks between LAGs
 - Developing new resources – e.g. templates LAGs can contribute to
- Support with funding – including looking for potential sources for strategic bids, and working towards a coordinated bid on LAGs behalf
- Biosecurity Support
- Promotion of LAGs good work – including addressing issues raised by LAGs (e.g. talking to large stakeholders on behalf of LAGs, producing an info sheet on LAGs and the importance of their work for funders)
- Let me know! Have a chat at the workshop