

Welcome to Issue 5 of Non-native Species News: Spring 2021

We hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. While our team is working from home, the best way to contact us is via email at nnss@apha.gov.uk.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. Please find more information and resources on non-native species online at www.nonnativespecies.org. For updates on our awareness raising campaigns, follow [@CheckCleanDryGB](https://twitter.com/CheckCleanDryGB) and [@InvasiveSp](https://twitter.com/InvasiveSp). An accessible [HTML version of this newsletter \(external link\)](#) is also available. All links in this newsletter are external.

News

Local Action Group workshop

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown the 12th annual Local Action Group workshop was held online on the 26th and 27th January. While we weren't able to meet in person we were pleased to see so many attending and to hear some inspiring updates on LAG work over the past year. The proceedings will be published on the [Local Action Group section of the website](#) shortly.

Invasive Species Week 2021 (24-30 May 2021)

Invasive Species Week 2021 is fast approaching. This year we are planning events and activities that people can take part in online or socially distanced. Each day will be themed around a different topic, [visit the website](#) to find out more.

If you or your organisation would like to take part, we have a few suggestions below but we'd love to hear your ideas too!

- Hold an online webinar or training session. We'll be hosting our own during the week but would love to publicise yours on our website, contact us with details of your plans. If you're a zoom novice we can give you some tips on running a talk or workshop online.
- Create displays at outdoor sites. If you manage or work at a site that's popular with walkers, you could create a display or even an invasive species treasure hunt.
- Support on social media. You can find us on Twitter at [@InvasiveSp](https://twitter.com/InvasiveSp) where we'll be posting throughout the week, but if you'd like to create your own content we'll be sharing a resource pack soon to make this easier.
- Write a blog. Let people know how invasive species affect your organisation, field, or local area, and how they can help to prevent this.

- Share information and awareness raising materials with your networks. We'll send out links to these soon, and would love to help you share your own with other organisations if you have something you think others would find useful.

Pathway work

A working group has begun to develop a pathway action plan for horticulture. Pathway actions plans for angling, recreational boating and zoos can be found on our [website](#).

UK City Nature Challenge 2021

City Nature Challenge is a global citizen science project to collect information about local wildlife. 400+ cities will be participating in the international Challenge weekend on April 30th – May 3rd. To take part, download the iNaturalist app and use it to upload photos of any wildlife seen from your windows, gardens and during your daily outdoor exercise. Find out more on the [Natural History Consortium website](#).

Non-native species jobs

[Environmental Project Officer - British Canoeing](#). Deadline for applications is the 20th April.

[2 x Environment Officer – The Angling Trust](#). Deadline for applications is the 20th April.

[Invasive Species Officer – South West Lakes Trust](#). Deadline for applications is the 22nd April.

Updates from non-native species projects

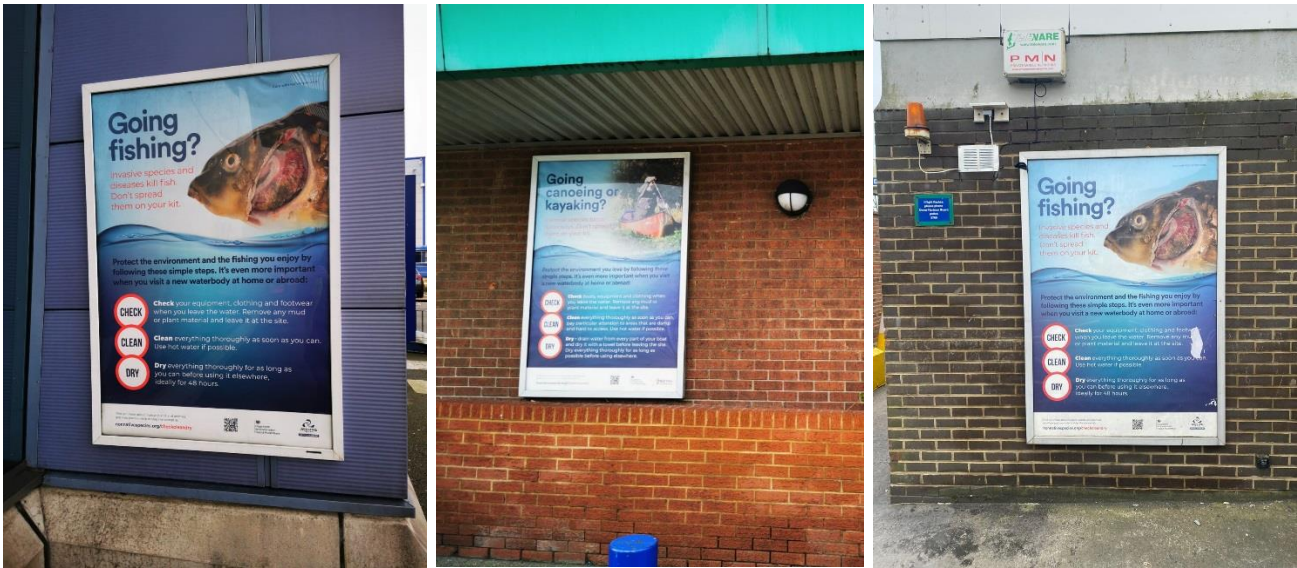
Aquatic Biosecurity Partnership – a five year project to improve aquatic biosecurity

Invasive non-native species (INNS) cost water companies at least £7.5 million per annum, a figure expected to rise as increasing numbers of invasive species arrive in the country.

In order to limit future costs, maintain services and help protect the environment, nine water companies have invested £120k per annum for five years from 2020-2025, to tackle aquatic invasive species in England through an enhanced aquatic biosecurity programme. This work is building on a previous project which took place from 2017-2020, read the [End of Project report \(PDF\)](#).

The NNSS is leading on delivery of the work programme, overseen by a partnership steering group of water companies and key *Check Clean Dry* partners who are contributing to the project

through their time and the activities of their organisation. Covid-19 and the lockdown have delayed some planned activities from taking place in the first year of the project, but highlights have included a six month *Check Clean Dry* border biosecurity campaign with posters displayed at key ports and adverts in relevant magazines, websites and social media; the launch of the updated *Be Plant Wise* campaign; and the development of new *Check Clean Dry* materials including a biosecurity guide for paddling events.



Check Clean Dry materials in place at Dover Port

Find out more about the [Aquatic Biosecurity Partnership](#).

OATA and its members are Plant Wise

Tracey King, Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association (OATA)

As we begin pond season, traditionally one of the busiest times of year for our industry, OATA and its members will once again be staunch supporters of 'Be Plant Wise' which relaunched last year.

We were delighted to be part of the 'Be Plant Wise' working group and we are proud of the effective working relationships that OATA has with government bodies such as the GB NNSS and Fish Health Inspectorate.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary this year, OATA has a long history on being proactive in relation to INNS, introducing a City and Guilds accredited training programme on INNS for our industry. In the early 2000s and sometime ahead of the official ban, OATA instigated an initiative requesting our industry to remove from sale aquatic plant species such as *Ludwigia grandiflora*, *L. peploides*, *Crassula helmsii*, *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* and *Myriophyllum aquaticum*.

OATA's care sheets have long borne the 'No Release' message and bear the 'Be Plant Wise' logo, similar to many of our members who also carry the 'Be Plant Wise' logo on their plant labels and the 'No Release' message on their products. In addition, we annually promote GB NNSS Invasive Species Week on our website and social media channels.

One of our latest initiatives has been to advise our members that certain snails and mussels (sold for ponds), and which are native in all, or parts of the UK, should only be sourced from UK sources and not imported, due to our concerns on potential hitchhikers. These species are *Planorbis corneus/Planorbanus corneus* (Ramshorn snail), *Anodonta cygnea* (Swan mussel), *Lymnaea stagnalis* (Great pond snail), *Viviparus* (River snail/Trapdoor snail) and *Unio pictor/Unio pictorium pictorum* (Painter's mussel).

So, as we enter pond season, OATA and its members will once again be supporting the 'Be Plant Wise' campaign. Find out more on the [Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association \(OATA\)](#).

Vital biosecurity work is successful across the south west

South West Lakes Trust

South West Lakes and South West Water have recently been awarded an accreditation for excellence in biosecurity at many of their lakes through the AQUA (Aquatic Quality Award) Biosecurity Accreditation Pilot Scheme. Part of the EU LIFE funded RAPID (Reducing and Preventing INNS Dispersal) LIFE project, AQUA is designed to help prevent the spread of invasive non-native species.

South West Lakes and South West Water are working in partnership to promote biosecurity by engaging with stakeholders to raise awareness of the impacts of invasive non-native species (INNS). Through this partnership project, 19 of the lakes have achieved the AQUA's bronze level of accreditation and four lakes (Squabmoor Reservoir, Roadford Lake and both Longham Lakes) have achieved the silver level. These awards provide recognition of the commitment to conserve the lakes to maximise native aquatic diversity by preventing the spread of INNS. A further eight sites are currently undergoing the accreditation process.

Kate Hills, South West Water's Biosecurity and Invasives Manager, said: "*We were keen to take part in this South West pilot scheme. Reservoirs and lakes are important for water storage and so much more, including biodiversity and recreational activities.*"

"Invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and Australian swamp stonecrop are of interest to water companies because they have the potential to cause structural damage to water features such as weirs, choke waterways and disrupt native ecosystems. They also create health and safety issues for maintenance and recreation."

“Biosecurity is a huge challenge for the water industry. Encouraging awareness and partnership working is the only way to tackle invasive non-native species and working together on the AQUA accreditation scheme is promoting this.”

Through this pilot accreditation scheme *Check Clean Dry* signs have been installed at all sites, providing biosecurity advice for coarse and game anglers, watersports participants and other visitors. Reporting and recording procedures for INNS records are also in operation, through which visitors to the lakes can share their sightings with South West Lakes’ Invasive Species Officer Nicola Morris, who maintains a database of records for each site.

In addition, Nicola has successfully recruited 53 fantastic volunteer Site Guardians, who monitor 31 lakes across the region. Dedicated groups of volunteers, aged from 13 to 84, complete surveys at the lakes and report their findings at least every three months, having completed e-learning packages through the Non-Native Species Secretariat. For example, Exeter University student Jasmine Toy carries out regular INNS mapping at College and Argal Lakes as part of her MSc degree. This invaluable team ensures that a range of species are monitored at the lakes, from birds to reptiles.



Volunteer Site Guardians carrying out surveys

Over the past two years, South West Lakes and South West Water have hosted various workshops and events which highlight the importance of biosecurity and the impacts of INNS, and will be holding a series of events for the forthcoming Invasive Species Week 2021 (24 – 30 May).

Nicola Morris, Invasive Species Officer at South West Lakes, said, *“We are delighted to have achieved these accreditations at the lakes. This demonstrates our commitment to protecting the lakes through biosecurity and also how vital Site Guardians are to the success of the organisation in managing INNS at the lakes. We are continuing to work hard to provide the highest standards of protection to the habitats and native plants and animals we are fortunate to have at the lakes.”*

The AQUA steering group includes South West Water, South West Lakes, The Animal and Plant Health Agency and Bristol Zoological Society, who are part of the South West pilot scheme. The Angling Trust and Yorkshire Water formed the external validation panel for the South West pilot scheme. All parties are keen to develop the scheme. Find out more about invasive non-native species and biosecurity at [South West Lakes' sites](#) and the [RAPID LIFE project](#).

Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) Project Update

Tara Daniels, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

Funded by the Welsh Government's ENRaW (Enabling Natural Resources & Well-being in Wales) scheme and Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water), the WaREN project seeks to unify Wales in its approach to tackling INNS. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, phase 1 of WaREN project was amended and extended until end February 2021. To date, the project has listed priority INNS, identified key stakeholders, interviewed and mapped Local Action Groups (LAG) across Wales and has produced a scoping report on what will be required in the future. It will also be running workshops with funding bodies to help ensure grants for INNS projects are readily available in the future.

The project has also secured Welsh Government SMS (Sustainable Management Scheme) funding for WaREN Phase 2, which will expand and build on the collaborative network identified so far through implementing a pan-Wales INNS Framework. It will also develop and implement strategic tools to improve decision-making, communication and co-ordination for addressing INNS. This will include online toolkits, training programmes, surgeries, a knowledge sharing forum and information on funding opportunities. It will also develop an INNS prevention and biosecurity strategy for Wales and explore with Welsh Government and others the potential to develop INNS management as an integral element of sustainable land management outcomes for farm businesses through future sustainable farming schemes.

WaREN Phase 2 will begin in April 2021 and run until April 2023. If you are involved in INNS work in Wales and have not yet been contacted by the project, please contact [Project Officer Tara Daniels](#).

Quick links

[Invasive Species & Biosecurity Network Update Newsletter \(PDF\)](#) Environment Agency.

[End of project layman's report \(PDF\)](#) from the RAPID LIFE Project.

[Island Restoration News: Gough and Henderson \(PDF\)](#) RSPB and Birdlife International.