Proceedings of the 15th Non-native Species Local Action Group Workshop

Held on 30 – 31 January 2024

At Preston Montford Field Studies Centre, Shrewsbury

Programme

On 30 and 31 January 2024 the GB Non-native Species Secretariat organised the 15th Local Action Group Workshop, funded by Defra. The workshop was held at the Field Studies Centre, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury. We had 47 attendees.

Day 1

Welcome (Niall Moore, NNSS)

SESSION 1

Defra update (Gaby Wyer, Defra)

LAG coordinator update (Ben Francis, APHA)

LAGS: A vision for the future (Trevor Renals, Environment Agency)

BREAKOUT SESSION A: LAGS FUTURE VISION

Feedback

UPDATES

Non-native Species Inspectorate updates (Emma Brand, APHA)

AQUA (Neil Green, Bristol Zoo)

CRISEP project update (Charles Hughes, Canal & River Trust)

Floating Pennywort on the river Weaver (Jake Crone, British Canoeing and Ian Doyle, Angling Trust)

Group marine biosecurity plan (Lisa Reilly, Peel Ports)

Close

Day 2

UPDATES

The mess that is Myriophyllum (Mark Spencer, London Invasive Species Initiative)

The work being carried out by South West Lakes Trust (Laura Dee, SWLT)

SESSION 2

Coypu, muskrat and an update on the East Anglian mink project
(Simon Baker, Waterlife Recovery Trust)

The living lab for invasive species management project
(Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz, Coventry University)

Network Rail (Sammy Graves, South Cumbria Rivers Trust)

BREAKOUT SESSION B: DEVELOPING GOOD PRACTICE

Group 1. Management
Group 2. Collecting useful data
Group 3. Working with stakeholders

Feedback

UPDATES

Update on comms and awareness raising (Lucy Cornwell, GB NNSS)

Progress with CABI's invasive plant biocontrol projects (Suzy Wood, CABI)

INNS Mapper launch (Alex Green, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust / YISF)

How drought has impacted on INNS (Kate Hills, South West Water)

Tackling invasive species in Wiltshire's rivers (Oonagh French, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust)

The Sheffield rivers invasive species management project (Chris Lucas, River Stewardship Company / Riverlution)

Closing comments

Breakout session A: LAGs future vision

LAGs discussed the following questions:
1. **How can LAGs best be used to achieve strategic control across the country?**
2. **How can neighbouring LAGs work together better on a local/regional basis?**
3. **In an ideal world, how would LAGs be funded?**
4. **If a large number of volunteers was available to you e.g. through social prescribing.**
5. **How do we get a more comprehensive network of LAGs?**

- LAG funding should come from government and private sector
- Funding is needed for staff time for running LAGs, overheads, transport, training for volunteers, biosecurity, awareness raising, research
- LNR funding could be useful but BNG funding is less deliverable for LAGs
- need national consensus to use one map to log management activity (e.g. INNS mapper)
- Defra INNS fund is too small
- Regional coordination is important, some thought it may be useful to divide groups differently (e.g. smaller regions, climate zones)
- Regional coordinators would be useful if funds were unlimited
- ISAPs / single species management strategies (similar to the floating pennywort strategy) would be useful
- RIMPs were not very useful in practice
- A stick is needed to encourage landowners to carry out INNS control
- LAGs would need further support (e.g. funding for regional coordinators) to take on further volunteers e.g. through social prescribing as this would create more admin work, volunteers of this kind may have additional needs, volunteers are less useful than contractors, and INNS are often in areas volunteers can't access.
- Gaps in LAG coverage should be identified at a catchment scale

Breakout session B: developing good practice

Group 1: Management

LAGs discussed the following questions:

As a group, review the list below of species currently managed by LAGs.
1. **Do you manage any other species?**
2. **Which are the most important species to develop good practice guidance for?**
3. **Do you have any experience of managing these species (particularly less common species) that you could share with the group and work with the LAG coordinator to write up as a good practice case study?**
4. **What species or techniques should we prioritise for research or development (excluding biological control)**
   a. **What do you think would be most successful, quickest, cost effective?**
   b. **How can LAGs/researchers better connect to achieve this?**

Species managed by LAGs. Species in red were added during the workshop:

Scientific name	Common name	Group	Priority for good practice guidance	Priority for research
Acaena novae-zelandiae	Piri Piri Burr	Plant		
Ailanthus altissima	Tree of heaven	Plant		
Azolla filiculoides	Water Fern	Plant		
Crassula helmsii	Australian swamp stonecrop	Plant	Yes	
Crocidura russula	Greater White Toothed Shrew	Vertebrate		
Crocosmia crocosmiiflora	Montbretia	Plant		
Dikerogammarus haemobaphes	Daemon Shrimp	Invertebrate	Yes	
Dikerogammarus villosus	Killer Shrimp	Invertebrate	Yes	
Dreissena bugensis	Quagga Mussel	Invertebrate		
Dreissena polymorpha	Zebra Mussel	Invertebrate		
Eriocheir sinensis	Chinese Mitten Crab	Invertebrate	Yes	Yes
Fallopia japonica	Japanese Knotweed	Plant		
Gaultheria shallon	Gaultheria	Plant		
Heracleum mantegazzianum	Giant Hogweed	Plant		
Hydrocotyle ranunculoides	Floating Pennywort	Plant		
Ichthyosaura alpestris	Alpine newt	Vertebrate		
Impatiens capensis	Orange Balsam	Plant		

Impatiens glandulifera	Himalayan Balsam	Plant	Yes	
Lagarosiphon major	Curly waterweed	Plant		
Ludwigia grandiflora	Water Primrose	Plant		
Lysichiton americanus	American Skunk Cabbage	Plant		
Magallana gigas	Pacific Oyster	Invertebrate		
Mimulus guttatus	Monkey Flower	Plant		
Muntiacus reevesi	Muntjac Deer	Vertebrate		
Mustela vison	American Mink	Vertebrate		
Myriophyllum aquaticum	Parrots Feather	Plant		
Pacifastacus leniusculus	Signal Crayfish	Invertebrate		Yes
Persicaria wallichii	Himalayan knotweed	Plant		
Petasites albus	White Butterbur	Plant		
Reynoutria sachalinensis	Giant knotweed	Plant		
Rhododendron luteum	Yellow Azalea	Plant		
Rhododendron ponticum	Rhododendron	Plant		
Rubus armeniacus	Giant Himalayan Bramble	Plant		
Sander lucioperca	Zander	Vertebrate		
Sarracenia purpurea	Pitcher Plant	Plant		
Sciurus carolinensis	Grey Squirrel	Vertebrate		
Symphoricarpos albus	Invasive Snowberry	Plant		
Thaumetopoea processionea	Oak Processionary Moth	Invertebrate		Yes
Vespa velutina	Asian Hornet	Invertebrate		Yes
	Bamboo sp	Plant		
	Cotoneaster sp	Plant		
	Duckweed sp	Plant		
	Invasive Bluebell sp	Plant		
	IPS bark beetle sp	Invertebrate		
	Laurel sp	Plant		

Other priorities for developing good practice guidance:
- national priorities
- non-widespread species that targeted eradication could focus on
- those that spread easily (e.g. *Crassula*, Himalayan balsam)
- aquatic species

Techniques to prioritise for research or development:
- eDNA
- nitrochemicals

- habitat restoration post management
- management methods for use on riverbanks
- better survey methodology

Other ways for LAGs / researchers to connect:
- through regional coordinators
- at LAG workshops
- develop a platform to link LAGs to researchers / experts
- by contacting local universities directly

Group 2: Collecting useful data

LAGs were asked:

1. **What data do you collect as part of your LAG's work? For example:**
   a. **Volunteer data**
   b. **Landowner information**
   c. **No./distribution of plants in a catchment or site**
   d. **What management has taken place**
2. **For the types of data above, how do you record/manage the data you collect?**
3. **How do you display/report your data? For example:**
   - **Reports**
   - **Stats**
   - **Graphs/figures**
   - **GIS (e.g. ARC Story Map)**
4. **Where could LAGs share data so that it can be seen by and help other groups?**
5. **Please see the draft template for capturing good practice case studies on collecting useful data. Are there any improvements you would suggest?**

Feedback included:

- The NNSS LAG website is not as useful as it could be for LAGs. There is old information (out of data facts, figures, documents, presentations, etc). Not very helpful in finding out what other LAGs are doing.
- While LAGs are often asked to provide their data (e.g. on volunteer hours etc) they rarely get to see the results or how they're used fed back to them. Need to improve feedback to LAGs.
- LAGs would benefit from advice on what data collection software to use, for example ArcGIS, Survey 123, Q fields (?), else. While in an ideal world everyone would use the same system that is rarely possible and contractors often want to use their own systems.

- Training in the use of mapping tools for INNS would be useful. Note that there are tutorials available for INNS mapper.
- Types of data collected or potentially collected include:
  - Volunteer information and EDI data – privacy issues means this can be difficult to keep. These data are useful because funders often seek a specific balance of people.
  - Point, area, treatment, chemical application data.
  - Negative records.
  - Photo data, including georeferenced images.
  - Numbers of volunteers, volunteer hours, numbers of events, etc.
- It can be useful for data recording to link to KPIs.
- A barrier to sharing is what is the incentive to share, particularly if there is a potential risk to some organisations, e.g. private businesses.
- Some don't use INNSmapper because they can't record the native species at risk from non-native species, which they can do in iRecord.
- Feeding back data to those who provided it is important.
- LAGs weren't clear what the point of the good practice template was. It might be useful to provide an completed example for illustration.

Group 3: Working with stakeholders

LAGs discussed the following questions:

1. **Who are the main stakeholders you work with as a LAG?**
2. **Are there any stakeholders/partners in your area that you don't currently work with that you would like to?**
   - **Are they currently a barrier or detriment to the work of your LAG?**
3. **Do you have an example of a difficult stakeholder that you tried to involve? If so, were you successful?**
4. **What messaging have you used to encourage stakeholders/partners to be involved in your work that are new to the project? Was it successful?**
5. **Are there any organisations/groups which you need support in engaging?**
6. **Please see the draft template for capturing good practice case studies on working with stakeholders. Are there any improvements you would suggest?**

LAGs work with a wide range of stakeholders. Issues they face include:

- landowners not allowing access or eradication on their land e.g. NFU, Network Rail, National Trust, local Nature Partnership, Canal & River Trust
- SSSIs unwilling to display biosecurity materials / signs on their sites
- having to put in a lot of work to reestablish contacts after changes in post

LAGs require support in engaging the following:

- National Highways / Highways England
- Network Rail
- National Trust
- Local councils
- Association of local government ecologists (local authorities)
- planning ecologists (for BNG)

Ways that LAGs engage volunteers:
- forum meetings / stakeholder strategy groups
- newsletters / sharing good news, including on other projects.
- highlight INNS week to show wider work.
- produce a steering group report with figures, stats etc.
- add information on projects to LAG section of NNSS website.
- include updates in NNSS newsletter to promote project work.

Ways that LAGs engage difficult partners:

- use an intermediary organisation.
- try to meet in person (ideally onsite)
- provide them with clear easy instructions on management
- have volunteers get in touch e.g. with local mayor
- ask for forgiveness not permission..!
- persistence
- give talks
- provide food
- be ready for opportunities e.g. staff leaving / changeover
- collaborate with others who have other connections (e.g. litter picking groups)
- give training days
- promote prevention over cure

Requests for the LAG coordinator:

- LAG map
  - o develop another map showing area LAG work actually covers
  - o add data and projects to LAG map and keep this up to date
- help LAGs access funding
- help match LAGs with other groups with a similar focus for joint funding bids
- A case study of a prosecution under IAS legislation would be useful for LAGs, e.g. (public park hogweed burns, knotweed not declared)

FEEDBACK

Attendees: 47

Returned number of feedback forms: 20

Are you directly involved in a local action project on non-native species?

Yes: 15   No: 5

Do you think the workshop was a worthwhile exercise? If yes please state which parts were most useful and if no, please suggest improvements.

Yes: 20   No: 0

Learning about the amount of volunteer hours across the UK was incredible.

Networking and having the time for informal chats with other LAG's on their projects was good.

Very useful, particularly post covid when updates on research / management / enforcement are not happening.

Sharing best practice.

LAG updates/presentations most useful.

Discussion groups are always useful, I particularly appreciated the one about working with Stakeholders.

Good to hear updates from Defra, NNSS and CABI.

Workshop sessions very useful.

Perhaps have more LAG based resources for us to distribute?

The breakout sessions were of mixed use. They broke up the format, but the presentations were a better use of time.

Interesting to be involved in creation of forms / information platforms etc.

Liked Mark Spencer's talk, so information on new emerging species that are on sale would be useful.

More potential teamwork activity / practical.

As the LAG's Workshop grows, would you like to see a change of venue?

Yes: 8   No: 7   No opinion: 5

Suggestions for a venue/area:

Yorkshire

Move around different areas of the country.

Central

North West

Birmingham

More North

Midlands

What activities would you like the LAG Coordinator to focus more / less time on?

Help with funding.

Help introduce LAG's that are relatively close and have similar issues.

Building opportunities for LAG's.

Focus more time on helping to persuade grant aiding organisations to provide funding to pay for LAG project officers' salaries and overheads. Also highlighting the need for long term funding.

Look at uniformity of data and data sharing.

Best practice methods for control / eradication shared between LAG's.

Showcasing the value of the LAG's.

More coordination of LAG's. We would like to know what LAG's are doing nationally and locally to plan work strategically and share knowledge. A LAG's newsletter would be helpful.

More resources and maps.

Establish a relationship with network rail at a national level. INNS should be (legally) incorporated at a strategic level.

Compliance and enforcement (acting as the stick for organisations not implementing or supporting implementation of required action).

Could you revisit the LAG's section of the website and add more resources please?

Volunteering procurement.

Engaging universities on connecting research and practitioners.

Developing regional coordinators to gather local information and feed up into a national picture to help identify the need for species action plans, regional events, priority issues etc.

Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the NNSS website, in particular the LAG's section?

No comments.

Any other comments: None

Attended by:

Angling Trust

Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

Avon Invasive Weeds Forum

British Canoeing

CABI

Canal & River Trust (CRISEP Project)

Coventry University

Defra

Eden Rivers Trust

Environment Agency

GB NNSI

GB NNSS

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust / New Forest Non-Native Plants Project

Isle of Wight LAG

Keep Britain Tidy

London Invasive Species Initiative

Mersey Rivers Trust

Mersey Rivers Trust/ BEACON

North Wales Wildlife Trust

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Peel Ports

River Stewardship Company / Riverlution

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

South Cumbria Rivers Trust

South West Lakes Trust

South West Water

Tees Rivers Trust

Waterlife Recovery Trust

Welsh Government

West Cumbria Rivers Trust

Wildlife & Countryside Link

Wildlife Trust BCN/ UBOCP LAG

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust / YISF