

Wales Invasive Non-native Species Group Newsletter

ISSUE 1
JANUARY 2019

Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) are plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms which have been introduced to parts of the world where they would not be naturally found. They have the ability to spread causing damage to the environment, the economy, our health and the way we live. INNS are the second greatest threat after habitat loss and fragmentation. INNS have been estimated to cost the UK economy at least £1.8 billion annually, they mainly affect farming and horticultural sectors but can affect transport, construction, recreation, aquaculture and utilities.

The **WBP Invasive Non-native Species Group** provides a source of expertise on INNS in Wales. The group was established in 2008 and includes a wide range of partners from Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, the environmental third sector and other public and private sector organisations.

Find out more about the group on our dedicate webpage on the [WBP website](#).

HOT TOPICS

Controlling Asian Hornets



Figure 1: Asian hornet © The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

The impact on bees and other pollinating insects posed by the Asian hornet is potentially serious. An [Asian Hornet Contingency Plan for England and Wales](#) is in place, detailing the steps to be taken in the event of an outbreak.

To date, there have been 13 confirmed sightings of the [Asian hornet in England](#). Nine of these sightings occurred in 2018; an individual hornet in Lancashire (April), one in Hull, three in Cornwall, two in Hampshire, one in Surrey (all September) and the most recent in Kent (October). Since the first Asian hornet discovered in the UK, the contingency plan has been successful in destroying six nests (2016 one in Gloucestershire, 2017 one in Devon, 2018 two in Cornwall and two in Hampshire).

The National Bee Unit's response is

dependent on early detection so they can act swiftly. Their main tracking technique is triangulation of lines of sight bearings for hornets returning to a nest after collecting honey bees at apiaries, taking sugar or protein bait left at stations or foraging on ivy. This year, [Exeter University](#) used electronic radio tagging to help locate a nest in Hampshire.

Usually around September, the number of hornets increases as the nest reaches maturity. This makes them easier to spot due to increased activity but there is limited time to find and destroy the nest before it produces new queens. It is critical that any suspected sightings are reported as soon as possible on the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app or by e-mailing alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk, preferably with a picture of the hornet and the location.

Controlling Asian Hornets cont.



Figure 2: Asian hornet control © The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

No Asian hornets have been seen in the UK since 14th October. The risk of an active Asian hornet nest being found in the UK is now negligible as Asian hornets are not active during the colder winter months. There continues to be a risk of accidental transport of an Asian hornet queen.

Kathleen Carroll,
Welsh Government

LEGISLATION & POLICY

In early 2018 Welsh Government and Defra undertook a joint public consultation seeking views on a regime to enforce the **EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation** in England and Wales. It is intended The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 will be introduced in March to establish sanctions to cover the restrictions laid out in the EU Regulation. Government will work with the England and Wales Regulators to produce guidance to provide clarity on offences which may be taken through the civil route and those which may affect criminal proceedings. The [existing FAQ](#) for UK Stakeholders on the requirements relating to the EU IAS Regulation will be amended to reflect the new legislation.

UK wide management plans for species such as American skunk cabbage and Floating pennywort are under development to meet the requirement for effective management measures for widely spread IAS of Union concern. The management plans will be consulted on in due course.

LATEST NEWS

New Invasive Non-native Species Portal in Wales

The [National Biodiversity Network Atlas Wales](#) has released the [Invasive Non-native Species \(INNS\) Portal](#).

The INNS Portal includes over 300 terrestrial, freshwater and marine [species of interest to Wales](#) and allows species occurrences and distribution to be searched for and downloaded individually or collectively by [list](#). Species include those listed under EU and national legislation and those of policy and practical interest, including those identified as **Wales Priority Invasive Non-native Species for Action** by the Group. For help using the new portal see the [INNS Portal User Guide](#).

To keep the data on NBN Atlas robust and up-to-date, we need your help in **recording sightings** of invasive species. The free to download [iRecord](#) App and the [LERC Wales App](#) makes recording sightings by phone very easy. Recording using either app will contribute to a better understanding of where invasive species are, how they spread and their impact. Please note, the Plantracker, Aquainvade and Sealife Apps have recently been withdrawn as GB funds are no longer available to support them.

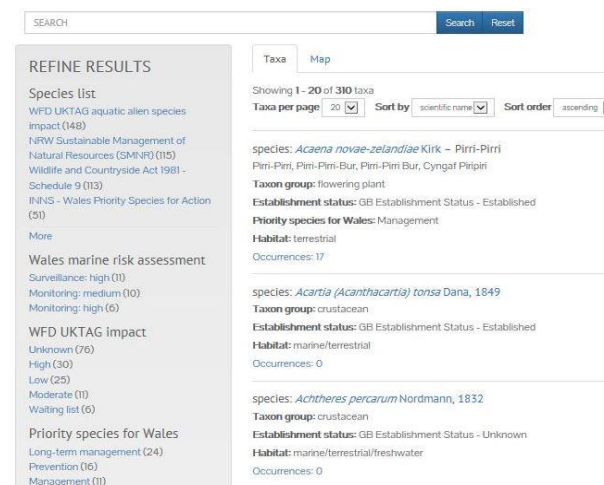


Figure 3: NBN Atlas Wales INNS Portal

Wales Priority Invasive Non-native Species for Action in Wales

The group maintains a list of recommended priority species for prevention (not in Wales but likely to arrive); priority management (where populations levels are low to limit widespread establishment); and long-term management (INNS established in Wales where management is beneficial). View the list on the [WBP website](#).

PARTNER PROJECTS: STITCH IN TIME

Are we faced with the same old problem with Himalayan Balsam in 2019?

The [Stitch in Time](#) Project, funded by Welsh Government and run by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has been delivering a catchment scale approach to control Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and Rhododendron in the Gwaun valley in North Pembrokeshire.

Balsam control has been a great success, with Gwaun source sites now entering a monitoring and maintenance (rather than active control) phase, whilst the sites along the main river are showing really good progress in a short time. So, are we faced with the same old problem when the project ends in March 2019?

Balsam control is underway on approx. 9 hectares in the catchment varying in habitat types. The pictures below were taken in the Afon Gwaun and show a great example of how quickly the problem can be *stitched in time*.



Figure 4: Himalayan balsam at Afon Gwaun in August 2017 © Matthew Tebbutt

From March 2018 the site was visited twice a month. By the time July arrived there was the odd rogue plant.

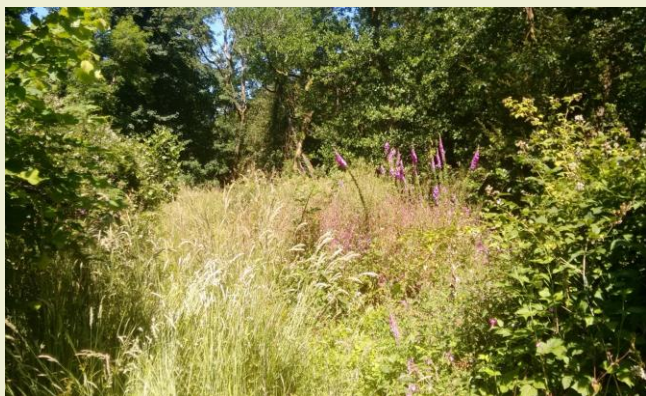


Figure 5: Afon Gwaun, the same site in July 2018 © Matthew Tebbutt

The aim of exhausting successive generations in one seasons works, however this can only be achieved with commitment. Revisiting for control work within two weeks is ideal; four is the maximum. As the landowner in this case was not open to volunteers the work was undertaken by PCNPA staff and contractors – a justifiable cost, as in 2019 the number of visits will drop to perhaps four over the season. In 2020, this will drop further to two or three, and so on.

The site is a snapshot of the success the project has experienced across the whole catchment. Controlling balsam produced a consistent cost for two or three seasons but then drops as sites enter a monitoring and maintenance phase. Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron control costs reduced by at least half following the first treatment and continue to do so as above ground growth is kept in check.

What is the exit strategy for the project? We have applied for resources to protect the gains made and to extend the approach to new catchments. However, funding outcomes notwithstanding, we are still interested in this question – how can treated drainage basins and wider catchments be kept free of invasive species with little or no public resources?

Volunteers, so crucial during the project, again come to the rescue. Volunteer groups have adopted strategic sites in the Gwaun which they will monitor and if necessary manage using training and skills acquired as part of the project. Landowners, too, are more aware of the problem and are more open to undertaking control as the situation is more manageable.

The Stitch in Time project has successfully demonstrated that taking a systematic approach – for a water-based catchment from starting up stream and working down – helps focus resources to maximum effect and reduce costs, as it limits potential for re-infestation, **so the situation in 2019 is new**. Regional coordination could follow on from specific catchment projects to ensure that the new does not revert to the old.

Matthew Tebbutt, *Stitch in Time Project Co-ordinator*,
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

EVENTS

13th to 19th May 2019

Invasive Species Week

The fifth Invasive Species Week will be taking place throughout the week beginning 13th May 2019. Each day will raise awareness of INNS through focusing on a different environment, and the impacts of INNS.

The week is co-ordinated by the GB Non-native Species Secretariat. Find out more about Invasive Species Week including ideas for events and ways to get involved on the [GB Non-native Species website](#).



1st to 9th June 2019

Wales Nature Week

Annual week of wildlife-themed events taking place across Wales.

Visit the [WBP website](#) for more information.

5th - 6th Feb 2019

GB Non-native Species Secretariat Local Action Groups Workshop

Field Studies Council Preston Montford, Shrewsbury.

Bringing together Local Action Group volunteers and staff from across GB to exchange best practice and discuss common issues. An opportunity for the NNSS, and other invited speakers, to update LAGs on national level initiatives that may be of interest, relevant changes in legislation and a forum for LAGs to communicate directly with higher-level decision makers.

For more information and to request a registration form please contact Linda.Raine@apha.gsi.gov.uk or visit the [GB Non-native Species website](#).

CONTACT US



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