

Wales Invasive Non-native Species Group Newsletter

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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

New approach to tackling Invasive Non-native Species in Wales



“The **Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN)** project will help foster the collaborative approach that we know is needed to tackle **invasive non-native species (INNS)**.”

“The Welsh Government has contributed towards a number of INNS initiatives including North Wales Wildlife Trust’s **Our River Wellbeing Project**, in which local volunteers are clearing invasive species from over 120km annually of the river Dee catchment.

“They have protected species and habitats, improved water quality and restored access to green spaces. The WaREN project will help us to replicate that kind of success across the whole of Wales.”

Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths

An innovative approach to dealing with the impacts of invasive non-native species has been launched in Wales.

Funded by the Welsh Government’s new Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing grant, the **Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN)** is devising a new pan Wales framework that will help public and private bodies and community groups to work together to tackle the significant impacts of INNS.

In its first development phase, WaREN aims to:

- Develop a ‘pan Wales INNS framework for collaboration’, a sustainable collaborative strategic, prioritised and joined up way to tackling INNS

- Scope a toolkit to provide information and guidance to support work on the ground and to enable funders to make evidence based decisions
- Produce a sustainable funding mechanism with identified funding streams and opportunities

A WaREN project board has been established with membership including Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, Welsh Water, Wales Biodiversity Partnership and the Our River Wellbeing Project (Dee INNS), along with the GB Non-native Species Secretariat and land managers as special advisors. Strategic steer is provided by the WBP INNS Group.

New INNS approach cont.

Nigel Ajax-Lewis MBE, Head of Biodiversity and Policy for the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales and speaking on behalf of the WaREN Project Board, said:

“With INNS being amongst the top three drivers for Welsh wildlife decline along with climate change and habitat fragmentation, it is hugely important that we all work together to tackle the problem in the most efficient and cost-effective way”

How to get involved? We are keen to engage with organisations, businesses and community groups with an interest in INNS. WaREN will be holding a series of regional and topical workshops. Please get in touch to register your interest by contacting us at:

walesbiodiversitypartnership@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Read the Summer 2019 issue of the GB Non-native Species Newsletter [here](#).

LEGISLATION & POLICY

Consultation on management measures for widely spread Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in England and Wales

Defra and Welsh Government are seeking views on management measures for 14 widely spread Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in England and Wales. For widely spread species of Union concern, the EU IAS Regulation requires effective management measures to be put in place, so that the species' impact on biodiversity, the related ecosystem services and, where applicable, on human health or the economy are minimised. Management measures consist of lethal or non-lethal, physical, chemical or biological actions aimed at eradication, population control and containment of a population of species of Union concern.

[Consultation link](#).

Consultation closing date: **12 September 2019**

LATEST NEWS

OATA launches new invasive species and biosecurity training module

The Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association has launched a new [online e-learning training module](#) aimed at retailers, pond and aquarium consultants, as well as fishkeepers and pond owners. The course examines what invasive species are, the serious problems they cause, how they affect the industry/keepers/owners, what actions can facilitate their spread and the preventative measures OATA advises people to adopt. It also looks at basic fish and plant anatomy to help people identify banned species that might be mislabelled, to ensure they are not inadvertently offered for sale. It will help those working in the industry to inspire confidence in their customers when they talk about choosing plants and fish for their pond and aquariums.

Non-native Species Stakeholder Forum

Representatives from a wide range of sectors gathered for the 16th Non-native Species Stakeholder Forum on the 18th June in Edinburgh. Presentations and proceedings are available on the [GB NNSS website](#).

Asian hornet identified in south Hampshire



Figure 1: Asian hornet © Jean Haxaire

The National Bee Unit has confirmed a sighting of an individual, female Asian hornet in New Milton, Hampshire after it was reported by a member of the public. Monitoring is underway to detect any other Asian hornets in the vicinity. Read more on the [government website](#).

If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet you can report this using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch' or by using the [online report form](#). Please include a photograph. [Identification guides and more information are available](#) and if you keep bees you should keep up to date with the latest situation and advice on our [GOV.UK rolling news story](#).

PARTNER PROJECTS: NATIONAL TRUST AT DINEFWR

Case study of the use of weevils to combat the spread of Azolla

In February 2016 staff at the National Trust's Dinefwr Park in Carmarthenshire noted the pond plant covering a duck pond, on an adjoining piece of land to the SSSI/NNR, was looking particularly red and vibrant. A check of the mill pond that lay within the SSSI/NNR also revealed that same flowering plant present. The culprit was identified as *Azolla Filiculodites* or the water fairy fern as it is more widely known. Originally recorded in the UK in 1883 it has spread rapidly across England during the last 50 years and is now popping up in Northern Ireland, Scotland as well as Wales. *Azolla* continued to be sold in garden centres until it was made illegal to do so in 2014, as an amendment to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. *Azolla* however, continues to expand its UK coverage. Unchecked, the plant can have a devastating impact on freshwater habitats flora and fauna by reducing water quality and quantity, reducing light levels in the waterways and choking whole pond systems.

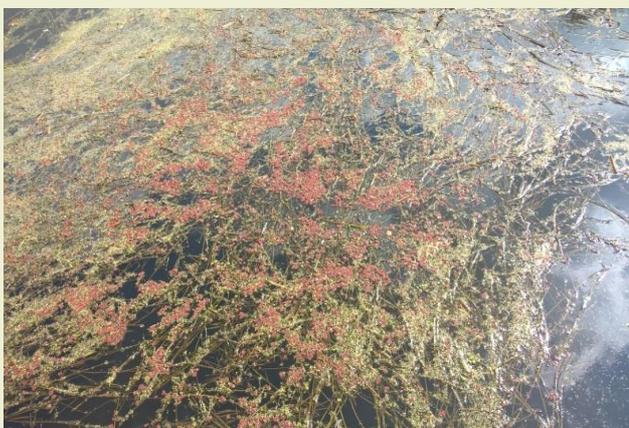


Figure 2: Azolla carpet © National Trust

The extent of *Azolla* on the duck pond at Dinefwr, and its rapid colonisation of the mill pond in 2016, meant that the ducks were effectively walking on dry land as the depth of the fern was around 30cm thick in places. Research had led staff to believe they had two options: a combination of mechanical extraction and herbicide, or a recently introduced biological control method involving insects. The former was not favoured due to the risk associated with the use of chemicals, and control through mechanical means would have meant the plant spreading further as the weed matt was broken up and dispersed.



Figure 3: Azolla © CABI

Staff at the National Trust decided to choose the lesser of two weevils!! The Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) had been exploring the use of the North American weevil known as *Stenopelmus rufinasus* and had recently acquired and tested the weevil out on sites across the UK. Initially, there were concerns about the weevil becoming a future problem. However, it was made clear that the species was plant specific and trials showed that the weevil was solely reliant on *Azolla* and once the site was cleared would move on to other *Azolla* outbreaks or die off from lack of food.

In June and July 2016, the weevils arrived at Dinefwr Park in 14 packs of 500, no bigger than 2mm each. Delivering them into the ponds was straight forward and by the winter of 2017 the ponds were clear of *Azolla* completely.

Fears remained though that the *Azolla* spores would lie dormant or the previous source of the weed could create future problems, however a solution was now available. In 2019, the problem had returned to the Mill Pond at Dinefwr and even worse, it had got down into two of the 9 ecologically sensitive Oxbows on the tow floodplain that are also managed by the National Trust. In June 2019, staff at Dinefwr awaited delivery of another 16 packs of *Azolla*'s nemesis and it is hoped an equally successful reduction of this ecologically destructive plant will be seen by the end of 2019.



Figure 4: Azolla weevil © CABI
Dai Hart, National Trust

EVENTS

Invasive species training events

28th August 2019

Identification of Invasive Alien Plants

Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew

A CIEEM training event to develop skills in the identification of approximately 40 species of invasive non-native plants listed on Sch.9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, using the extensive collection of plants in the glasshouses and gardens at Kew. Visit the [CIEEM website](#) for more information.

21st November 2019

Invasive Non-native Species Awareness Training

Crymlyn Bog National Nature Reserve, Port Tennant, SA1 7BG

Learn about the main issues of Invasive non-native species in the UK and globally, including ID, control methods, legislation, recording and campaigns. Some prior knowledge of ecology would be useful. £50 per person. For further details and to book on contact Jo Mullett, Knotweed Control, 07790 505232

Invasive Species Week

A big thank you and well done to everyone involved in Invasive Species Week 2019!



CONTACT US



www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Invasive-Non-Native-Species-Group



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