

Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain: key messages from Wildlife and Countryside Link

This report details our preliminary assessment of the success of the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain (the 'GB Strategy'), drawn from the experience of the main environmental NGOs who have engaged with the strategy over the past four years. We hope that this paper is informative and helpful in identifying key areas to progress, and where more effective partnerships working with the NGO community can be achieved. We will be building on these views as 2013 unfolds and look forward to formally engaging with the review of the GB Strategy later this year, and engaging with Defra and others as new European legislation is unveiled.

Issues with invasive non-native species (INNS) are increasing in number and severity. The Ash Dieback epidemic (*Chalara fraxinea*) is an example of the dangers associated with INNS, which not only affect national biodiversity but also the functionality of our most important ecosystems. For example, the degradation of river banks by the Signal claw crayfish and Chinese mitten crab, which causes the banks to collapse. Furthermore, while growth in open trade increases and climate change continues, so does our vulnerability to existing and future INNS. We need to be ready with increased protection equal to the increased risk.

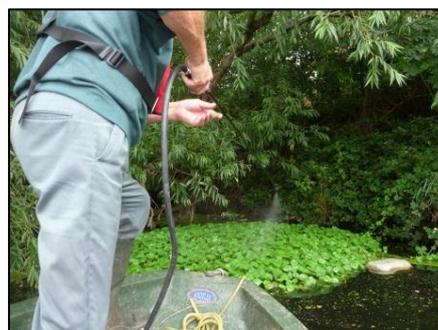


Figure 1. Glyphosate spraying of Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) (Yorkshire Pennywort Forum)

Key messages

1. NGOs play a significant role in controlling INNS

The NGO community plays a vital role in managing invaded landscapes (both on and off their land holdings), eradicating and reporting species, and engaging the public on INNS, as well as running local projects and contributing towards policy development. If the NGO community's work is supported by a strategic delivery plan they will save money and resources.

2. The GB Strategy and Secretariat have been very successful so far...

The 2008 Strategy and Secretariat were definitely needed, and have moved us a considerable way in the right direction. Particular successes include: an informative new website; initial risk assessments and invasive species action plans; new data portals; and Local Action Groups. The Secretariat delivers exceptionally good value for money and provides a much needed central hub of information about INNS. Furthermore, it has helped provide leadership and technical support to the EU Commission, detailing the broader action necessary, right across the EU, to further protect the UK from the impacts of INNS.

3. ... But the GB strategy must now be reviewed to ensure continued effectiveness

Reviewing the GB strategy as soon as possible will allow us to initiate improvements that will save valuable resources for the public, the UK Government and NGOs. INNS disrupt ecosystems, negatively affecting ecosystem services, and cost the UK £1.7 billion per annum in containment and control. Reviewing the GB Strategy will put it on the front foot for the arrival of the EU Alien Species

Directive, scheduled to appear later in 2013. Alongside this, we are preparing actions for the second cycle of river basin management plans, where INNS management is a significant issue.

4. To build on the success to date, we now urgently need a strategic delivery plan

A strategic delivery plan, with effective legislation, is needed to protect us from species now present in Great Britain and those most likely to be damaging in the long and short term. Current approaches to the management of existing INNS, and the prevention of arrival and spread of new organisms, are far from adequate. A successful plan needs to provide:

- effective horizon scanning and an increased emphasis on preventative measures;
- a reinvigorated communications strategy in which the NGO community can invest and share;
- simplified national action plans that clearly link to and guide delivery at local levels, providing clarity on the ultimate goal for each invasive species;
- clear policy direction from the INNS Programme Board, that focuses on implementing the GB Strategy in order to deliver our *Biodiversity 2020* target on INNS, and thus to help halt biodiversity loss.

This position paper is supported by the following 15 organisations:

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation,
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- British Ecological Society
- Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
- Friends of the Earth
- The Mammal Society
- Marine Conservation Society
- National Trust
- Plantlife
- RSPB
- Salmon and Trout Association
- The Rivers Trust
- The Wildlife Trusts
- The Woodland Trust
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

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