

# Non-native Species News

Issue 11, Spring 2024



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## Welcome to Issue 11

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. All links in this newsletter are external and an accessible HTML version is available on [our website](#).

## News

### Asian hornet update

So far in 2024 there have been four credible reports of lone Asian hornets:

- On the 19<sup>th</sup> January in Hastings, East Sussex ([view more information](#))
- On the 8<sup>th</sup> March in Kent ([view more information](#))
- On the 20<sup>th</sup> March in Preston, Lancashire at a warehouse with regular trucks arriving from France. A bee inspector attended, set traps and is monitoring the location with support from the local beekeeper.
- On the 21<sup>st</sup> March in Romford, East London. A dead Asian hornet was found. The specimen was collected by an NBU inspector and sent to the lab at Fera Science Ltd for official confirmation.

More information and information on previous sightings can be found on the [website of the National Bee Unit](#). We would be grateful for your support in helping to raise awareness and encourage reporting of any further sightings. Alert posters and ID sheets are available to help, please see the [Asian hornet alert page](#) for details. Any suspected sightings should ideally be reporting via the Asian hornet watch app or the online reporting form. For more details on identification and reporting please visit the [Asian hornet alert page](#).

### Local Action Group workshop

The fifteenth Local Action Group workshop took place from the 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January at the Preston Montford Field Studies Centre near Shrewsbury. [Find out more](#) and view the proceedings.

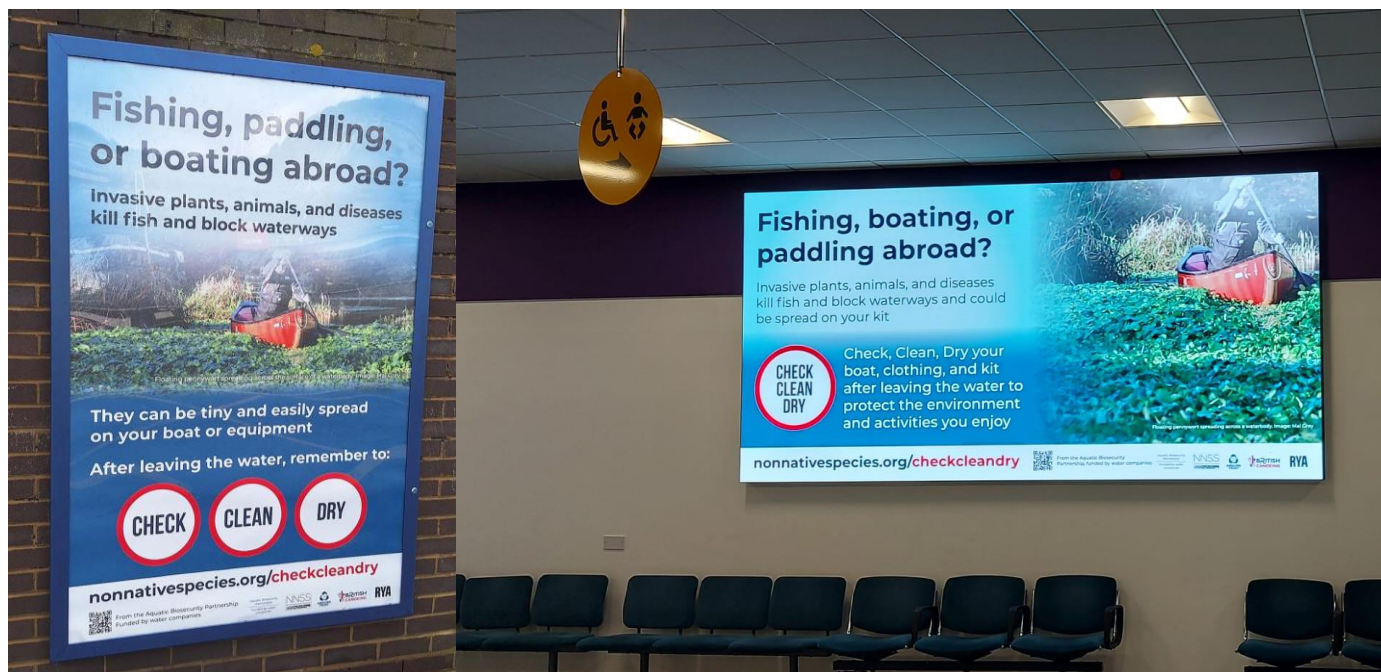


*Attendees at the workshop*

## Communications

## Check Clean Dry border biosecurity campaign

The 2024 annual Check Clean Dry border biosecurity campaign began in March, funded by the Aquatic Biosecurity Partnership. Posters will be displayed throughout spring and summer at key ports with links to mainland Europe, and adverts will be displayed in specialist angling and boating magazines.



### Check Clean Dry materials in place at Dover Port and the Port of Tyne

Please help to spread the word to recreational water users travelling abroad this summer, text and [landscape](#) and [square social media graphics](#) are available to help.

New Check Clean Dry materials are available for Stand Up Paddleboarders, view a [leaflet](#), [poster](#) and [webpage](#).

*Check Clean Dry poster for Stand Up Paddleboarders (right)*



## Non-native species training

The GB INNS Training Coordination Group was established last year to help improve access to, and uptake of, training relating to invasive non-native species and biosecurity. The group has carried out a review to identify relevant training that is currently available. If you provide or use training which is not included in the [table of training](#), please contact [nns@apha.gov.uk](mailto:nns@apha.gov.uk) with details.

## Be Plant Wise

This spring we are reminding gardeners to 'know what you grow' to prevent the spread of invasive non-native plants. Please help us to promote the campaign, [draft posts for social media](#) and [landscape](#) and [square](#) graphics are available.

## Update from APHA Local Action Group Coordinator

Ben Francis, Animal and Plant Health Agency

Over the last 17 months since I started this role, I have met with over 80 Local Action Groups and related organisations to learn about their work, the challenges they face and how I can help to support them. Please find some useful findings from my first year (2023) of meeting with LAGs:

### Scale of working

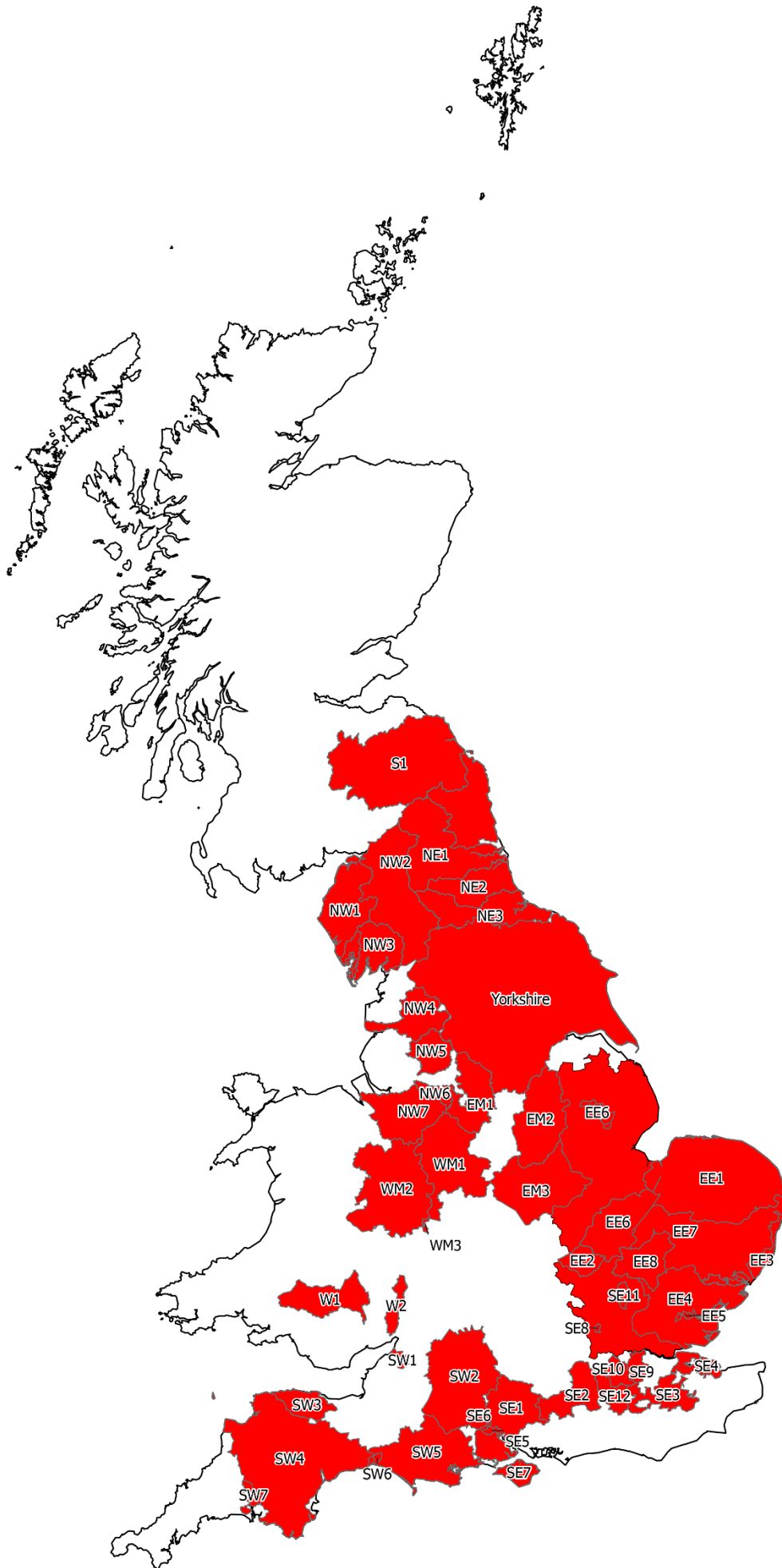
Of the groups I have met, most work on a catchment scale, county scale or small-scale local area:

Area of LAG working	Number of LAGs
Catchment	23
County	17
AONB or National Park Boundary	7
Small Scale Local Area	6
Regional	5
National	3

### Lead organisation

Most LAGs (56) are led by an existing organisation such as a wildlife/rivers trust charity or a local authority, but a small number (5) are independent volunteer groups. The types of group, or lead organisation of the different groups are as follows:

Area of LAG working	Number of LAGs
Wildlife Trust	14
Rivers Trust	13
Local Authority	11
Local Charity	7
AONB or National Park Authority	6
Volunteer Group	5
National Governing Body	2
Zoo	1
Government lead	1
National Charity	1



Code	LAG Name
S1	Tweed Invasive Species Project
NE1	Tyne Rivers Trust and Naturally Native Project
NE2	Wear Rivers Trust and Naturally Native Project
NE3	Tees Rivers Trust and Naturally Native Project
NW1	West Cumbria Rivers Trust
NW2	Northern Red Squirrels and associated groups (Cumbria and Northumbria)
NW3	South Cumbria Rivers Trust
NW4	Ribble Rivers Trust
NW5	Irwell Catchment Partnership
NW6	BEACON and Bolin Valley Partnership
NW7	Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Yorkshire	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust; Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust; Yorkshire Derwent Catchment Partnership; Colne and Calder Rivers Trust; River Holme Connections; North Yorkshire Crayfish Forum; East Yorkshire INNS Group; Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum
WM1	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
WM2	Shropshire Invasive Non Native Species Initiative
WM3	Bewdley Civic Society
EM1	Peak District National Park Authority
EM2	Nottinghamshire Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative
EM3	Leicestershire Invasive Non Native Species Initiative
EE1	Norfolk Non Native Species Initiative
EE2	Upper & Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership
EE3	Suffolk Coast and Dedham Vale AONBs
EE4	Essex Wildlife Trust
EE5	Chelmer Canal Trust
EE6	Keep Britain Tidy Pennywort Alert Project
EE7	Waterlife Recovery East (Mink Control Area)
EE8	Cam Valley Forum
W1	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
W2	Wye Valley AONB Authority
SE1	Test and Itchen Invasive Species Project
SE2	Surrey Wildlife Trust (Wey Landscape Partnership) and National Trust Floating Pennywort Project
SE3	Medway Countryside Partnership
SE4	Medway Swale Estuary Partnership
SE5	Blackwater Conservation Group
SE6	New Forest Non Native Plants Project
SE7	Natural Enterprise
SE8	Community Connections Project
SE9	Quaggy Waterways Action Group; Three Rivers Clean Up
SE10	South East Rivers Trust London Catchments and Wandie INNS Group
SE11	River Beane Restoration Group
SE12	Surrey Wildlife Trust (Mole Catchment Partnership) and Mole Floating Pennywort Group
SW1	Avon Invasive Weeds Forum
SW2	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
SW3	Exmoor Non Native Invasive Species
SW4	Devon Invasive Species Initiative
SW5	Dorset Wildlife Trust
SW6	River Char Project
SW7	Tamar Valley AONB

## Species managed by LAGs

LAGs manage 29 invasive non-native species (24 plants, 2 vertebrates and 3 invertebrates). The species most commonly managed by LAGs is Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Species Managed by LAGs	Number of LAGs
Himalayan Balsam ( <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> )	49
Giant Hogweed ( <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i> )	23
Japanese Knotweed ( <i>Reynoutria japonica</i> syn. <i>Fallopia japonica</i> )	21
Floating Pennywort ( <i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i> )	11
Signal Crayfish ( <i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i> )	11
American Mink ( <i>Mustela vison</i> )	9
American Skunk Cabbage ( <i>Lysichiton americanus</i> )	7
Swamp Stonecrop or New Zealand pigmyweed ( <i>Crassula Helmsii</i> )	7
Rhododendron ( <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> )	4
Water Fern ( <i>Azolla</i> )	4
Piri Piri Burr ( <i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i> )	3
Water Primrose ( <i>Ludwigia grandiflora</i> )	2
Chinese Mitten Crab ( <i>Eriocheir sinensis</i> )	2
Parrots Feather ( <i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i> )	2

In addition, LAGs also work on Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), Invasive Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Pacific Oyster (*Magallana gigas*), Cotoneaster, Giant Himalayan Bramble (*Rubus armeniacus*), Monkey Flower (*Mimulus guttatus*), Invasive Bluebell, Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*), Gaultheria (*Gaultheria shallon*), Yellow Azalea (*Rhododendron luteum*), Bamboo, Montbretia (*Crocsmia crocosmiiflora*), Orange Balsam (*Impatiens capensis*), White Butterbur (*Petasites albus*), and Daemon Shrimp (*Dikerogammarus Haemobaphes*).

## Volunteer hours

19 groups provided a record of their volunteer hours for the year of 2022. **Across the 19 groups, volunteers worked on 16 invasive species for a total of 17,466.25 hours** in 2022. The most common species which contributed to volunteer time by far were Himalayan Balsam (7565.15 hours) and Giant Hogweed (4081.1 hours).

Species Managed by LAGs	Total Volunteer Hours	Maximum Volunteer Hours	Minimum Volunteer Hours	Mean per Group
Himalayan Balsam	7565.15	2005	4	630.35
Giant Hogweed	4081.1	3048	13	816.22
Floating Pennywort	822	692	130	411
Signal Crayfish	344	344	344	344
Japanese Knotweed	169.5	161.5	8	84.75
Invasive Snowberry	138	138	138	138
Rhododendron	95	95	95	95
Pacific Oyster	67	67	67	67
Cotoneaster	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5

American Skunk Cabbage	36	36	36	36
Giant Himalayan Bramble	30	30	30	30
Invasive Bluebell	30	30	30	30
Water Primrose	20	20	20	20
Pitcher Plant	15	15	15	15
Gaultheria	13	13	13	13
Yellow Azalea	1	1	1	1
<b>Total; Max; Min; Mean</b>	<b>13468.25</b>	<b>3048</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>708.8552632</b>

It has been good to meet a number of Local Action Groups this year, especially to hear their feedback at the Local Action Group Workshop in Shropshire in January. Based on this feedback, over the next few months I will be:

- supporting the establishment of four new LAGs in Sussex, Cannock Chase, Cumbria and London.
- supporting regional LAG coordination by hosting further regional meetings, the next will be held in the West Midlands in partnership with the Canal & River Trust on 23 April. I have delivered 2 regional INNS meetings in the East Midlands (hosted in partnership with Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council and Trent Rivers Trust) and North West (hosted in partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority) with 50 attendees from over 30 organisations represented across the two meetings.
- reviewing and updating the LAG section of the NNSS website.
- gathering further data to demonstrate the impact of LAGs and producing an infographic for Invasive Species Week.
- producing a map showing the area covered by LAGs in Great Britain.
- working with Network Rail to try and gain more support for LAGs in different areas.
- supporting 12 LAGs who have been funded through the Defra Local Action Group Invasive Species Management Fund.
- looking into potential sources of funding for 2024/25 and beyond that could benefit LAGs.
- working with Coventry University to launch the Living Labs project working with Local Action Groups.
- supporting work to improve aquatic biosecurity through the AQUA scheme and Aquatic Biosecurity Partnership.

I really value input and feedback from LAGs, if you are part of a LAG or similar organisation please contact me at: [ben.francis@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ben.francis@apha.gov.uk) particularly:

- if you would like to attend the West Midlands LAG meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April
- if you are interested in hosting a regional meeting in the East of England, South East or South of England
- with any feedback on the LAG section of the NNSS website
- if you have any feedback on the LAG map
- if there is anything else I can assist with.

## Updates from non-native species projects

### Scottish Invasive Species Initiative – a new approach to giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed control

Jane Hamilton, Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative has been tackling invasive species in river catchments across the north of Scotland since 2018. Invasive plants are tackled strategically, starting at the uppermost source and working steadily downstream to prevent reinfestation and move towards eradication.

As we reach the lower catchments we often encounter sites with significant infestations of giant hogweed or Japanese knotweed – often both. Due to their sheer scale, these infestations can be incredibly challenging to tackle. Traditional control methods (via knapsack sprayer or stem injectors) would require significant inputs of time and resources and we would be limited to the outskirts of the stands, requiring a few years to reach the middle.



*Drone survey photos show the extensive stands of Japanese knotweed dominating a riparian woodland in the Spey catchment*

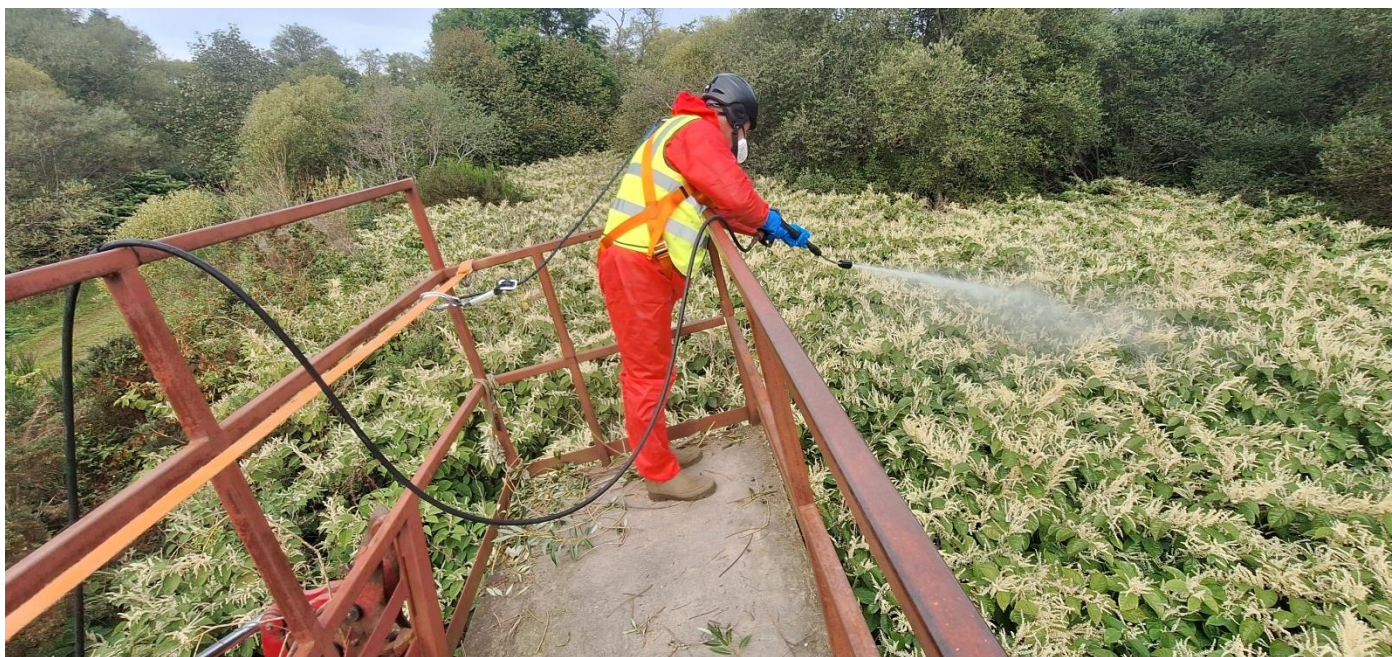
In 2023 a new method of chemical application was trialled, allowing us to make rapid progress on badly infested sites in the Spey, Findhorn and Lossie catchments. A motorised power sprayer was used to spray herbicide (the standard glyphosate and water mixture; Roundup ProVantage at 2% concentration) onto the vast stands of giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed. The pressurised sprayer had a capacity of 400 litres, a 50-metre hose and a lance that could spray up to 10 metres; at times a tractor mounted cage was used to lift the lance operator, giving them the



advantage of height. A team of three was able to operate the equipment safely and manage a fine level of control.

Using this method, operators were able to cover significantly more ground than is possible using standard control methods. It is difficult to give exact figures as spraying on foot is so variable, but we would estimate that we were able to cover 10-15 times more ground than one person with a backpack sprayer could manage in the same time period.

This method proved to be an effective and efficient way to break the back of these vast and inaccessible infestations. Initial results have been promising and we look forward to seeing the full effects this coming year.



*A team member operates the pressurised lance from a tractor mounted cage, enabling him to spray over the top of a large Japanese knotweed stand*



*Follow up visits in the weeks after treatment found promising results – the Japanese knotweed stands died off after one round of treatment*

Find out more about this work and SISI:

- view a [blog with more information](#)
- email [sisi@nature.scot](mailto:sisi@nature.scot)
- website: <https://www.invasivespecies.scot/>

## Floating Pennywort Volunteer Days on the Lee Navigation

Pippa Rowlandson, British Canoeing

The Angling Trust & British Canoeing are working in partnership managing floating pennywort on the River Lee Navigation. We run regular volunteering events on the River Lee which are extremely inclusive for any ability.

We teach our volunteers to work from the bank or paddle in the canoes from the Canal & River Trust base at Enfield Lock. Volunteers learn to identify, report and safely dispose of floating pennywort and how to stop the spread by Check Clean and Dry. It's a fun and rewarding way to volunteer.

Here are photos from one of our events, showing the flexible use of canoes in small creeks on the Lee where it's harder for the bigger boats to access the floating pennywort and working in collaboration with the canal boat and Canal & River Trust volunteers to help remove the plant mass.





Upcoming volunteering dates include:

- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April – Stonebridge Lock
- Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May – Enfield Lock

To find out how to get involved with these or other environmental volunteering opportunities on the Lee Navigation, please contact:

- [pippa.rowlandson@con.britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:pippa.rowlandson@con.britishcanoeing.org.uk)
- [Andrew.chadwick@anglingtrust.net](mailto:Andrew.chadwick@anglingtrust.net)

## North Wales Wildlife Trust updates

Carl Williams, North Wales Wildlife Trust

The [WaREN toolkit](#) aims to support volunteer action and help you tackle invasive species in Wales. This toolkit should include all the resources you need, including information on best practice management, project planning, biosecurity, and awareness-raising.

A user friendly 'go to' [INNS Pocket ID Guide](#) was designed to be included within our biosecurity dry bag packs with accompanying hoof pick, scrubbing brush and biosecurity user guide. To date, we've handed out over 900 kits to volunteers and event attendees (including customised paddler kits), encouraging people from all across North Wales to practice biosecurity.

The Upper & Middle Dee Invasive Management project obtained the use of x3 equipment hubs to support trained LAG groups managing INNS on the Dee - located at Llangollen, Corwen and Bala.

Looking forwards, our Preventing Aliens Taking Hold (PATH) and Limestone Grassland Restoration projects are exploring the use of audio guided walks to raise awareness of natural heritage and indirectly the INNS that threaten it. By having a positive impact on how people value natural heritage, we hope to in turn empower them protect it and enhance it, by contributing to INNS control.

More recently, a Biosecurity Washdown Station has been developed to allow paddlers to washdown their equipment before and after use on the River Dee. Located in Llangollen, the automated Washdown Station uses jets of water to clean off any seeds or plant fragments from boats, paddles and clothing. The water and any plant material are then funneled into a chambered septic tank where they cannot grow nor spread along the River. Paddlers are encouraged to use the system before entering the river and then again when leaving, ensuring no INNS are brought to site or taken away at the end of the day.



*Image: Biosecurity Washdown Station (photo: Charlie Richards)*

For further details please contact [carl.williams@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:carl.williams@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk).

## Raising awareness of invasive non-native species and biosecurity

Kate Hills, South West Water

If you are talking about Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) you should also be discussing biosecurity and be talking to a lot of different people and organisations. South West Water is hosting community events around the region to talk about the water business. The INNS Team has taken advantage of these opportunities, to support other colleagues, and talk about INNS and the biosecurity measures that can be taken to prevent the introduction of new or spreading of existing INNS.

Our displays attract attention and include American signal crayfish carapaces, Zebra mussel shells, Asian hornet corpses and hedgehog skins – all tell different stories about what INNS are and the impacts they can have. The feedback is very positive – people understanding how a range of extraordinary INNS can impact on water companies and what we are doing to reduce the risks of INNS on our duties providing clean water, dealing with waste water, carrying out conservation and providing access and recreation at reservoirs. Marcus Brown, our Invasives and Awareness Officer, has been in post a year now and does a fantastic job supporting these events and delivering specific training to SWW staff and groups. However, we need more support in the Team

and will shortly be advertising for an Invasive Fish and Aquatic Biosecurity Officer (see the article in the last issue on invasive fish). See below to get more details.



### *South West Water INNS displays*

We are also planning for Invasive Species Week in May with South West Lakes Trust and will be hosting the annual South West Invasive Species Forum (SWISF) at the Canalside Conference Centre, near Bridgewater. We will be reviewing the South West Regional Invasive Management Plan and have a range of guest speakers including Ben Francis talking about Local Action Groups (LAGs) and LAGs in the SW that received funding from the new LAG grant. We hope that stalwart and new attendees will join us – it's a well-attended event, a fantastic venue and there's a free lunch.

For more details about the Invasive Fish and Aquatic Biosecurity Officer and the SWISF on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – please get in touch [khills@southwestwater.co.uk](mailto:khills@southwestwater.co.uk)

### **Local Action Group survey**

Katharina Denhen-Schmutz, University of Coventry

Local Action Groups (LAGs) and any other volunteer groups involved in the management of invasive species are asked to take part in a survey collecting and summarising evidence of the efforts and contributions coming from these groups.

The survey builds on and uses in large parts the same questions from surveys conducted in 2018 across GB and in Wales by the Wales Resilient Ecological Network (WaREN) project in 2023. Using the same questions enables us to monitor how invasive species management is progressing as well as to identify evolving issues.

The survey is run by Coventry University, the North Wales Wildlife Trust and the University of Stirling. The team added a few new questions which are related to a new project currently being developed on 'living labs for invasive species management'. The aim of this project is to build a partnership between researchers and LAGs across the country to collaboratively explore and test best management practices for invasive species. The survey offers the opportunity for LAGs and other groups to express their interest to participate in this project. Survey results will be shared with all respondents and all LAGs at the next stakeholder forum and LAGs workshop.

To participate in the survey please follow this link:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/coventry/local-action-group-survey>

## Contact the NNS

Contact us at: [nns@apha.gov.uk](mailto:nns@apha.gov.uk). For more information please visit [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org) where you can find:

- [The Non-native Species Information Portal \(NNSIP\)](#) with detailed factsheets for over 300 non-native species and distribution data for over 3000 species
- [‘What can I do?’](#): links to our [Be Plant Wise](#) and [Check Clean Dry](#) campaigns, [training](#), and other guidance
- A gallery of [non-native species images](#) for education and awareness raising
- [ID sheets](#) for over 60 non-native species
- [Non-native species legislation](#)
- Information on [Local Action Groups](#)
- [Biosecurity resources](#)
- And much more!

You can also follow our awareness raising campaigns on X (Twitter) [@CheckCleanDryGB](#) and [@InvasiveSp](#).

