

THE GB CODE OF CONDUCT ON INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES FOR RECREATIONAL ANGLING

2020

Ideas and texts for this code were drawn from the Council of Europe European Code of Conduct on Recreational Angling and Invasive Alien Species and tailored to fit the requirements of Great Britain.

This document is primarily aimed at recreational fisheries.

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are plants, animals and diseases that are introduced by man and which have a negative impact. They are one of our most important environmental threats and they can also cause substantial economic damage and impacts on human health. The total cost to the British economy is estimated at £1.7 billion per annum, with at least £26.5 million per annum spent in Great Britain (GB) managing freshwater INNS alone (Oreska and Aldridge, 2010; Williams et al., 2010).

Adopting preventative measures to avoid unintentional introduction and spread of INNS is widely accepted as the most effective approach to tackle their threat. The EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation and GB INNS Strategy both aim to target pathways of INNS introductions, prioritizing them and putting measures in place to minimize INNS introduction and establishment. In the past, little thought was given to introduction of INNS by recreational fishing. However, with over three million anglers in GB, angling represents a potentially significant pathway for the movement of INNS between different waterways. It is anticipated that through education and awareness raising we will reduce the risk of introduction of INNS by recreational angling as well as ensuring that angling forms part of the solution, acting as the 'eyes and ears', spotting and reporting the spread of INNS as well as participating in their control and eradication.

This code of conduct aims to encourage effective practices to prevent future movement of INNS by angling activity. Angling organisations and institutions hosting angling activity on their waters also have an important role to educate anglers on the impacts of INNS and the importance of biosecurity. The recommendations outlined here aim to increase the engagement of angling organisations in their role in raising awareness of INNS. Many of these recommendations support existing legislation such as the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, and codes, such as the European Fisheries Advisory Commissions (EIFAC) Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries (2007) and the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats European Charter for Recreational Fishing and Biodiversity (2010).

This code consists of three key measures:

- 1) Adopting effective preventative measures to avoid unintentional introduction and spread of INNS (including diseases)**

- 2) Engaging in initiatives to increase anglers' awareness of the threat of INNS and the need for biosecurity**
- 3) Adopting appropriate biosecurity practices for all fisheries, habitat and water body management.**

Detailed suggestions for the implementation of the key measures are outlined below.

1) Adopting effective preventative measures to avoid unintentional introduction and spread of INNS (including diseases)

- All owners/managers should assess their fisheries for the risk of introduction and further spread of INNS and diseases (and identify measures to minimize the risks where these are significant) (see Annex 5 of the PAP document for biosecurity guidance and draft biosecurity plan).
- Information on INNS should be provided to members of staff or Angling Club Committee Members to ensure they understand the risks of INNS, are adequately trained to mitigate these risks, and know what to do and who to report to if they come across INNS in a water body.
- Stocking and re-stocking should only be in accordance with relevant regulation and guidance e.g. in England see [here](#) and measures should be taken to prevent unintentional introduction of INNS along with consignments of fish.
- Introduction of any non-native species to create fisheries should be avoided. Where proposed, they must comply with the EIFAC Code of Practice on Recreational Fisheries (see Annex 1 for link) and relevant local or national regulations.
- Where practical, access and egress for anglers should be limited, preferably to a single spot. This is particularly important where a new INNS has been identified and it is recommended that anglers should log in and out of site confirming they have checked and cleaned their clothing and equipment to allow containment.
- If possible angling equipment such as landing and keep-nets, drogues, boats and boat equipment should be provided at the site and used in preference to personal equipment brought in from off site, especially useful if INNS are identified at a fishery.
- Un-hooking mats and bass bags should be thoroughly cleaned after use.

- Where possible, biosecurity stations/ cleaning facilities should be provided at sites. These should not be connected to the drainage system and should be inspected regularly.
- Ideally all cleaning and inspection operations should be supervised by a volunteer or member of staff.
- Early warning and rapid responses to new INNS should be supported. New INNS should be immediately reported to the relevant authority: EA Fisheries Officers in England, NRW in Wales and SEPA in Scotland.
- Be fully aware of and comply with all relevant laws and regulations relating to INNS and promote the *Check Clean Dry* message.

2) Engaging in initiatives to raise anglers' awareness of the threat of INNS and the need for biosecurity.

- Support awareness raising activities to inform anglers on the issue of INNS, and encourage good biosecurity (e.g. *Check Clean Dry* campaign, Invasive Species Week).
- Provide adequate signage or guidance to all recreational anglers to make them aware of the risk of INNS and provide advice on how to prevent their spread.
- Engage recreational anglers in programmes to remove INNS to increase educational and practical awareness as well as using them as a resource.
- Appoint a biosecurity manager/ champion at the fishery who will have the responsibility of ensuring biosecurity measures are implemented.

3) Adopting appropriate biosecurity practices for all fisheries, habitat and water body management.

Bank side and in-water management undertaken by recreational fisheries could pose a risk of unintentionally spreading or introducing INNS. These activities include dredging or re-profiling banks, managing vegetation, installing or repairing dams, pontoons or jetties, installing and maintaining fishing platforms. Various organisations, angling clubs and individuals undertake valuable conservation activities to restore natural features such as meanders and bank-side vegetation, re-introduce lost native fish species, or other measures to improve water quality. For this reason it is important that when undertaking these activities, the required biosecurity measures to prevent the risk of INNS spreading are implemented.

- A biosecurity plan should be produced for each project (using advice or guidance from the relevant authorities) outlining and mitigating the potential INNS risks posed by suppliers, contractors, equipment and other individuals working on the project.

References.

CBD (2010) <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/default.shtml>

Environment Agency (2018) [A Survey of Freshwater Angling in England Phase 1: Angling activity, Expenditure and Economic Impact](#)

European Commission (2011) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 244 final

Oreska M.P. J and D.C. Aldridge (2010) Estimating the financial costs of freshwater invasive species in Great Britain: a standardized approach to invasive species costing. *Biological Invasions*, 13: 305-319 doi: 10.1007/s10530-010-9807-7

Owen, M. (2014) European Code on Recreational Fishing and Invasive Alien Species, (document T-PVS/Inf (2014) 18). Available [here](#).

Savini, D, Occhipinti-Ambrogi, A, Marchini, A, Tricario, E, Gherardi, F, Olenin, S and Grollasch (2010) The top 27 animal alien species introduced into Europe for aquaculture and related activities. *Applied Ichthyology* 26 (Suppl. 2) 1-7

Williams, F., R. Eschen, A. Harris, D. Djeddour, C. Pratt, R.S. Shaw, S. Varia, J. Lamontagne-Godwin, S.E. Thomas, S.T. Murphy (2010) *The Economic Cost of Invasive Non-Native Species on Great Britain*, CABI: Wallingford

GB Code of Conduct for Angling

Annex 1: Relevant legislation and codes of practice.

Check Clean Dry

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>

EU IAS Regulation

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm

Wildlife and Countryside Act

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69205/wildlife-countryside-act.pdf

EIFAC Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries (2007)

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/pdf/011/i0363e/i0363e00.pdf>