

Welcome to Issue 7 of Non-native Species News: Winter 2021

We hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. While our team is working from home, the best way to contact us is via email at nnss@apha.gov.uk.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. Please find more information and resources on non-native species online at www.nonnativespecies.org. For updates on our awareness raising campaigns, follow [@CheckCleanDryGB](https://twitter.com/CheckCleanDryGB) and [@InvasiveSp](https://twitter.com/InvasiveSp). An accessible HTML version of this newsletter is available on [our website](#). All links in this newsletter are external.

News

Asian hornet

Two Asian hornet nests have been confirmed in 2021, one in the Ascot area of Berkshire, destroyed on the 11th October, and another in Portsmouth, destroyed on the 31st October. More information can be found on the Defra Asian hornet rolling news page. Free awareness raising [posters](#) and [ID sheets](#) are available, [contact us](#) for copies.



Asian hornet, Vespa velutina, hawking outside a beehive. Image: Jean Haxaire.

IPBES review to open shortly

The second order draft of the chapters and the first order draft of the summary for policymakers of the thematic assessment of invasive alien species and their control is planned to be open for external review from 15 December 2021 to 15 February 2022.

This second external review is addressed to Governments and interested and qualified experts, including scientists, decision makers, practitioners and other knowledge holders. To ensure the

highest scientific quality and policy relevance of the assessment, the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel is seeking the widest-possible participation of experts from all relevant disciplines and backgrounds. To ensure consistency with and continuity from the first external review, those who participated in the first review are particularly invited to send comments.

Information on how to register as a reviewer and access the documents will be shared at the beginning of the review period. The Plenary will be invited to consider the summary for policymakers of the invasive alien species assessment for approval and its chapters for acceptance at IPBES 10, currently planned for April/May 2023.

NNSS website update

Throughout the summer we have been working with a contractor to develop a new NNSS website. We held a series of workshops earlier this year to gain feedback on how we should improve this, and what users are looking for from the site. We would welcome further feedback on the draft website to help us refine this before it is launched later this year. If you would like to take part in reviewing the website please [contact us](#).

Pathway work

A working group is developing a pathway action plan for horticulture. Pathway actions plans for angling, recreational boating and zoos can be found on our [website](#).

Local Action Group workshop

The next Local Action Group workshop will be held in early 2022. Please [contact us](#) for more information.

Invasive Species Week 2022

We will be announcing the date for Invasive Species Week 2022 in the next couple of weeks. Please [contact us](#) to be added to the mailing list for updates.

Updates from non-native species projects

New biosecurity facilities in Devon opened by Nick Baker

Kate Hills, South West Water

Nick Baker, television wildlife presenter, opened new biosecurity facilities at Devon's largest lake in August. Installed by South West Water and South West Lakes, in partnership with the Environment Agency and Tecker, the washdown facilities at Roadford are to help protect native wildlife, recreational activities and the water supply from the negative impacts of invasive non-native species.

Roadford lake's upgrade from traditional washdown facilities offers a range of new features including boat and watercraft washdown, angling dip tanks, boot scrapers and even a stand-up paddleboard inflation/deflation point. Visitors are being asked to use the facilities before and after entering the lake to prevent introducing new invasives or spreading them to other areas.

South West Water's Biosecurity and Invasives Manager, Kate Hills, explained: *"Invasive species can affect not only our native wildlife, but also restrict recreational activities, and have a significant impact on the water industry. We are lucky we don't currently have invasives, such as Killer shrimp, Quagga mussels or Floating pennywort. These facilities aim to prevent the introduction of them and to prevent costly, long-term management."*



Nick Baker and Kate Hills with Mark Worsfold (Director of Asset Management, South West Water) and James Platts (CEO of South West Lakes Trust).

Nicola Morris, Head of Environment and Engagement at South West Lakes, which manages the lake, said: *"We are urging recreational visitors to Roadford to use this new facility. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions there has been a huge influx of new visitors to the region and it has never been more timely to take measures to protect wildlife and ensure a safe water supply."*

Nick Baker said: *"Britain has some wonderful wildlife, but invasive species can have such a negative impact. I have opened many events, but I think this is the most important one. It's a very positive spin in a negative narrative. Nice to speak to so many interested and interesting people."*

[Watch Naturalist and TV-broadcaster Nick Baker explaining the wash-down at the opening event](#) and the [ITV news report on the the washdown opening](#).

Paddlers and Anglers unite to control highly invasive Floating Pennywort along the River Wey.

Ben Francis, British Canoeing

Canoe, kayak, paddling and Angling clubs joined forces with environmental groups on the River Wey to help control the invasive non-native plant; Floating Pennywort. For the first time, multiple organisations have come together to facilitate a more strategic approach to the management of invasive species. Together they are helping to halt the spread and minimise the impact of invasive species on wildlife, recreational activity and human health.

On the 25th September, the Angling Trust, British Canoeing and local clubs joined forces with stakeholders to work collaboratively in managing the spread of Floating Pennywort along the River Wey. Together with paddling clubs, angling clubs, National Trust, the Environment Agency and Thames Water, the group plan to collaboratively rid the Wey of Floating Pennywort.



Starting at the furthest point the plant is established upstream - Papercourt Lock, near Woking, the group coordinated their efforts working downstream removing mats of the invasive species from the river course. They will also restore watercourses and recreational spaces impacted by the invasion.

Ben Francis, Environmental Project Officer for British Canoeing said: *“Today was a great example of what can be achieved through different organisations working in partnership together. We have managed to remove large amounts of Floating Pennywort and hope that the Wey Navigation can*

be clear of Floating Pennywort to be enjoyed by all. We aim for this event to be the first of many and hope that it inspires clubs and other users to be part of the battle against invasive species.”



Invasive non-native species presents one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, including fish populations, and their impact continues to grow. They are species that have been introduced by humans outside of their native range and result in significant negative impacts where they are introduced.

Thick, multi-layered mats of floating pennywort block out light, smother native plants and remove important habitats for fish and insects. As the mats of floating pennywort build, they inhibit recreational activity, preventing access for paddlers to enjoy the waterways and present flood risks when they build up around weirs and drains.

Dr Emily Smith from the Angling Trust, said: *“It is great to see first-hand what can be achieved through coordinated action to tackle invasive species. Anglers often lead the way when it comes to conservation, and it is fantastic to see groups from different backgrounds coming together for a united cause. This work supports the national strategy on Floating Pennywort and will help to make a real difference in controlling the spread of this species, reducing the damage it causes to fish and angling, and protect these environments that we all enjoy”.*



This project on the Wey represents just one of a series of partnerships that are being developed across the country. As well as the benefit to the environment, it presents a fantastic opportunity for people to get out and spend some time in their local environment and meet people from their local community. For those that are interested in finding out more or want advice on how to set up their own group please visit the GB NNSS website [Floating Pennywort Strategy page](#).

Brett Scillitoe, a volunteer from Dittons Paddle Boarding Club (DPB) said: *“As the local community paddle boarding club, Dittons Paddle Boarding gets involved with lots of community activities. The Pennywort Clearance Day is one of the activities where we can give back. It was a well planned and executed day. The teams all worked well together and new friends were made. The 10 plus volunteers from DPB all had an enjoyable time and went home tired and satisfied. There is great admiration by us for the Angling and Canoeing Teams in their Drysuits, who did a lot of the heavy lifting onto the bank. We will be back for more.”*

Robin Dix, Woking and District Angling Association said: *“Being able to use various sections of the River Wey and associated streams gives a huge benefit to all who enjoy river fishing. However, floating pennywort encroaches on the amount of water we have to use, this is so difficult to manage as removal can just start new growth due to the nature of the weed.”*

“WDAA have been working with the EA and now the Angling Trust, on ‘safe’ removal of this plant. We had a tremendous turnout at Papercourt Lock to Walsham Meadows to clear the floating pennywort with 60-plus people ranging from canoeists, paddle boarders, open water swimmers and of course WDAA members. We’ve made a big dent but it will need many more days like this if we are to clear our waters on Abbey, Eel Trap and Pigeon House. If you weren’t there at the weekend then please look out for future dates and get involved. This is our chance to showcase the rivers and make them accessible to all.”

Floating pennywort can spread and grow from tiny fragments as small as a ten pence piece and can last an incredible 14 days out of water. Fragments of this small plant could be spread accidentally between water bodies on damp equipment, boats and clothing facilitating their introduction into new waters. It also makes management difficult, with repeated action needed to effectively tackle its growth.



Trevor Renals, Invasive Species Technical Lead, Environment Agency said: *“Floating pennywort is a highly-damaging non-native weed, which impacts the flora and fauna of our rivers and our ability to enjoy recreation such as angling and paddling. It also presents a potential flood risk and could obstruct flood defence assets. No single organisation has a duty to manage floating pennywort, so it is only through collaboration that we can control this plant.*

“It’s fantastic to see people coming together on the River Wey to tackle this problem. We helped to establish and fund this exciting partnership, and hope other groups across the country will be inspired to get together to fight invasive species.”

The next floating pennywort removal day is taking place on Saturday 27th November, on the River Wey Navigation between Papercourt Lock and Newark Lock. [Find out more and register online](#) by the 19th November. Visit the [Floating Pennywort Strategy page](#) to find out more about floating pennywort management and how to get involved in future volunteering opportunities.

Quick links

[New podcast series](#) highlighting CABI’s work on tackling invasive species.

[Update on weed biocontrol projects](#) from CABI.

[Island Restoration Newsletter](#) by RSPB and BirdLife International.