



Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Newsletter



It is incredible to think that three months have passed since the last NNNSI Newsletter, and spring has well and truly sprung! Following the positive feedback we received on the last newsletter, we have retained the same general format, but added a 'Contents' section to allow faster and more straightforward navigation. We hope that you enjoy it!

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UPDATE FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR

The NNNSI continues to gain momentum and I think we can look forward to a productive summer, with lots of activities to raise awareness and take action 'on the ground'. Thank you to everyone for your continued support of the Initiative!



Giant hogweed Credit: Olaf Booy

Since my last update, we have:

- Continued to develop and update the Norfolk Non-native Species Database, which now holds over 1,000 records for the six priority species being addressed by the Initiative.
- Hosted the 3rd Norfolk Non-native Species Stakeholders' Forum, which was attended by over 70 delegates and generated very positive feedback (more details in the 'News from Norfolk' section).
- Produced leaflets and display boards to inform the general public of the impacts of invasive alien species and the work of the Initiative.
- Updated the NNNSI webpage, which now includes a summary of February's Stakeholders' Forum and guidance for the general public on steps that can be taken to prevent the spread of invasive species (www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies).
- Organised an interactive display in the centre of Norwich to mark International Day for Biodiversity on 22nd May 2009 (more details in the 'Upcoming events' section).
- Continued to make arrangements for the county-wide 'Day of Action' on 5th July 2009 (more details in the 'Upcoming events' section).

Please do continue to support the Initiative and remember to submit any new records for inclusion on the Norfolk Non-native Species Database!

Mike Sutton-Croft

Co-ordinator, Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative

NEWS FROM NORFOLK

Crucian carp - a native fish on the brink

The crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*) is a species of freshwater fish that is probably native to south-eastern England, originally spanning from Norfolk to Kent, where it is characteristically found in small, weedy ponds. The exact distribution of crucian carp has been confused by a strong resemblance with the natural-brown variety of the introduced goldfish (*Carassius auratus*).

However, once this confusion was resolved in the 1990s, it was realised that the number of true crucian carp populations was probably very low, and a decline of the species has been reported due to a combination of potential factors; most notably hybridization with goldfish (presumably transferred to field ponds from garden ponds) and with common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), but also changes in pond habitats including silting and drying up events. Consequently, the crucian carp is now recognised as being threatened throughout most of its range in middle and northern Europe, including the UK.



Crucian carp Credit: Carl Sayer

Remarkably, even today, very little hard information exists on crucian carp populations in Norfolk and this has resulted in speculation that "*The species is thought to be almost extinct in Norfolk*" (Environment Agency, 2008). So what of crucian carp in Norfolk? Is the species close to extinction? At least until the 1980s, many of the marl pit ponds of north and east Norfolk contained crucian carp and local fisherman enjoyed catching them, including myself. However, it occurred to me a few years ago that I could not think of a single pond where I could catch one...

With funding from the Norfolk Biodiversity Project Fund, the Environment Agency and Kelling Heath Holiday Park, a research team from University College London, linked with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) in Lowestoft and Bedwell Fisheries Services, have started to survey small potential 'crucian ponds' in North Norfolk. In October 2008/March 2009, 20+ known former (1970s) crucian ponds were sampled, in and around the Glaven valley. We did find crucian carp in a few ponds but the number of "safe" crucian carp ponds (where habitat is good and other carp species are absent) was extremely low. On the other hand, several ponds were found to contain goldfish, common carp and hybrids of crucian carp with both of these species. If anyone has any information on the crucian carp in Norfolk, please contact Carl Sayer using the details given below. This is a beautiful little fish and it would be such shame to lose it...

Carl Sayer
 University College London
 (E-mail: c.sayer@ucl.ac.uk, Tel: 020 7679 0517)

'Wildlife Invaders' survey engages public in alien species recording

Norfolk Wildlife Trust is working in partnership with the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership and the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service to map the distribution of five key non-native species. These are Reeve's muntjac, American mink, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed. The aim is to engage the general public in helping to find out where these species are found in Norfolk and help discover what impact they are having on Norfolk's countryside



The Wildlife Invaders survey has only been running for six weeks but we have already received nearly 100 records! The majority of these relate to sightings of Reeve's muntjac, which have been recorded from all parts of the county. A number of observers have quoted these diminutive deer as being 'daily occurrences' or present in 'vast numbers'.

American mink has been recorded on five occasions from widespread localities. At one site, the observer states that otters have increased in the area and this seems to have coincided with a decrease in mink sightings - a case of natural control? By contrast, six animals were seen together at a mid Norfolk location!

Smaller numbers of records have been received for the three plant species, with giant hogweed appearing to be a cause for concern in parts of north Norfolk. Comments such as 'a garden horror!' and requests for information on how to control the species have been received.

All in all, this is a very encouraging opening phase and we look forward with interest to what will be recorded during the summer.

For further information or a copy of the Freepost survey form, telephone 01603 598333, or visit the website at www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections/surveys/

Barry Madden
Norfolk Wildlife Trust

NNNSI holds 3rd Stakeholders' Forum

On 18 February 2009, over 70 local stakeholders came together with national and regional experts in Norwich to discuss the management of invasive non-native species in Norfolk. The event was organised by the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative and attended by delegates from a wide variety of groups and organisations (including Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust), demonstrating the level of concern amongst stakeholders in the county. Over the course of the day, delegates heard about

action being taken to address the issue at national level, as well as more local activities 'on the ground'.

The day began with Mike Sutton-Croft giving a summary of the progress that has been made by the Initiative since its launch in September 2008. He was followed by Huw Thomas, Head of Non-native Species at Defra, who described the efforts being made by central Government to address the problems caused by these species. Trevor Renals then spoke about the Environment Agency's take on invasive species and the Cornwall Knotweed Forum. Dr Dick Shaw provided an introduction to the potential methods of biological control for invasive non-native plant species and was followed by Prof. Gordon Copp who closed the morning session with a presentation about the risks and impacts of non-native fish introductions to pond ecosystems.

The afternoon was given over to case studies of action being taken locally to manage invasive non-native species. Dan Hoare provided an update on the Broads Authority's project to eradicate floating pennywort from the River Waveney. Dr Carl Sayer, of the River Glaven Conservation Group, then gave a summary of the efforts being made to control invasive alien species at a catchment level in that area. Paul Holley highlighted the species and areas that are particularly problematic for invasive alien species in Norwich, and explained what Norwich City Council are doing to address the problem. Holly Berwick ended the Forum with a summary of the options available for the management of *Crassula helmsii* at Lound Lakes, a site of high biodiversity value which is threatened by the aggressive spread of this species.

To view a more detailed summary of the Forum, please visit:
<http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies/NNSSSF.asp>

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Tax relief introduced for treatment of Japanese knotweed

Since 1st April 2009, the removal of Japanese knotweed has been subject to Land Remediation tax relief. This means that any company that pays to have Japanese knotweed removed from a site may be eligible for a tax super-deduction of 150%, effectively meaning that a company can retrieve 45% of the overall expenditure of an eradication operation through tax relief from the Government. This tax relief is open for developers, property investors and owner-occupiers but not to individuals. To find out more, please visit:
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/budget2008/pn-complete.pdf> (page 18 of 47)

Natural England releases draft policy on Invasive Non-native Species

Natural England has recently released their draft policy on Invasive Non-native Species. This policy is currently available on Natural England's website and stakeholders are encouraged to comment. The release of this policy document represents a significant step forward in the co-ordinated management of these species in England and clarifies the



steps that will be taken by Natural England to support the implementation of the GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy.

Please note that any comments must be returned to Natural England by **1st May 2009**. To view the draft policy, please visit:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/policy/consultations/default.aspx>

Environment Agency holds consultation on Draft River Basin Management Plan

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is here.... The WFD is a European Union Directive that is now part of UK law and currently being turned into practical action by the Environment Agency. It sets a target of achieving at least 'good' ecological and chemical status for all inland and coastal waters. The route that will be taken to achieve this is described in the Draft River Basin Management Plan (Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex are included in the Anglian River Basin District).

The Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Anglian River Basin District includes a variety of actions relating to the management of invasive non-native species.

Consultation runs until **21st June 2009**. To view the plan and make your response, please visit: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd and click on 'Anglian'.

UPCOMING EVENTS

12 May 2009: The GB Non-native Species Secretariat is hosting the **6th GB Stakeholder Forum on Non-native Species** at the Royal York Hotel, York. The programme for the event will be published shortly. For more details or to book a place at the Forum, please visit: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/> (click the link on the right hand side of the page).

22 May 2009: To mark **International Day for Biodiversity** (which this year focuses on invasive alien species), NNNSI is having an interactive display at the Forum in Norwich. The display will form a part of CUE East's 'Norwich and Norfolk Sustainable Living Festival'. It will include a scale model of an 'alien' spaceship along with examples of invasive non-native species. The display will also include a range of interpretive materials aimed at making members of the public more aware of the actions they can take to help stop the spread of these species. Why not take some time off on Friday the 22nd and come and visit us?

23 – 24 June 2009: RPS, in association with CIRIA and CIEF, is holding a **Keeping up with Non-native Species workshop** at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The workshop will provide a summary of issues such as horizon scanning, pathways of introduction and habitat management as well as practical advice on the identification, prevention and control of invasive

non-native species. If you are interested in attending or require further information, then please contact Sue Stewart (StewartS@rpsgroup.com).

5 July 2009: A county-wide **Day of Action** focussing on invasive alien species will be held across Norfolk. Several groups have registered their interest in being involved, already providing a good coverage of activities across much of the county. Details of activities will be posted on the Initiative's webpage closer to the time. If you would like to become involved, either by organising or participating in an activity, please contact Mike Sutton-Croft at michael.sutton-croft@norfolk.gov.uk

If you would like to contribute to the next NNNSI newsletter, then please contact Mike Sutton-Croft, Co-ordinator of the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative. Tel: 01603 228977; E-mail: michael.sutton-croft@norfolk.gov.uk

The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative was launched in 2008 to promote the prevention, monitoring and control of invasive, alien species. It seeks to do this by:

- *Collating and monitoring data on the distribution and spread of non-native species in the county;*
- *Developing action plans to address the species of most urgent concern;*
- *Facilitating control and eradication projects at high priority sites; and*
- *Promoting awareness of the risks and impacts associated with non-native species.*

The Initiative has been established under the umbrella of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership and works through a stakeholders' forum comprised of representatives from over 20 organisations. It is financially supported by the Broads Authority, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Norfolk County Council and the Water Management Alliance.