



Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Newsletter



**Norfolk
Non-native
Species
Initiative**

It's been a little while since the last NNNSI Newsletter, but not because we have been resting on our laurels! It has in fact been a very busy summer for the NNNSI with loads going on. Please do read on to get a flavour of some of the highlights. Thanks again to everyone for their continuing support of the Initiative, and we look forward to working with you all to make 2011 even better!

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UPDATE FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR

Time to catch up on everything that has been neglected over the busy summer season..... Despite doing my best to plan all practical projects well in advance of the flurry of summer activity it has still been a very hectic period!

Since my last update, we have:

- Removed the only known infestation of the highly invasive water primrose *Ludwigia grandiflora* from Norfolk;
- Worked with NBIS to make the records held on the Norfolk Non-native Species Database available on the NBN Gateway;
- Organised the 'Non-native species Action Weekend' which saw more than 50 volunteers working to remove invasive plants from some of the worst affected sites in Norfolk;
- Run a workshop for 6th Formers, highlighting the impacts of invasive alien species and giving students an opportunity to see some species 'in the flesh';
- Bid for and won additional funding for the management of invasive alien species within the Broads through the Broads SDF;
- Used funding from Natural England and Defra to deliver a variety of projects, including a catchment wide survey of Himalayan balsam on the River Wensum SAC, the eradication of Japanese knotweed from the River Wensum SAC, control of giant hogweed on the River Yare and the control of floating pennywort on the River Waveney;
- Run a training session for Norfolk Wildlife Trust field staff on invasive species identification and methods of control.



Mike Sutton-Croft

Co-ordinator, Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative



NEWS FROM NORFOLK

'Broad Sweep' project to launch in summer 2011

The NNNSI has successfully bid for funding from the Broads Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) to launch an exciting new project – 'Broad Sweep'. The project has a number of objectives, including improving the availability and quality of information on the distribution and status of invasive alien species (IAS) within and adjacent to the Broads. This will involve a 'citizen science' survey of key invasive species, which will be run in conjunction with the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS). The survey will launch in June 2011, and will run until the end of 2012, encouraging residents and visitors in the Broads to report their sightings of key invasive alien species.



Other activities will include the organisation of a number of community action days during 2011 and 2012. These action days will provide opportunities for local communities to become directly involved in control and eradication efforts in their area. It is hoped that following the action days the community will take more 'ownership' of the issue in their area and continue the control and eradication work in future years, leaving a legacy of good practice management of these species in the community.

A voluntary accreditation scheme for garden centres will also be piloted, with centres that do not stock invasive alien plants and agree to display information on the safe disposal of garden waste being rewarded with accreditation. Participating garden centres will receive positive publicity and a certificate confirming their status. Frequent spot checks will be carried out over the course of the project to ensure that the garden centres continue to meet the criteria.

A final aspect of the project will be a sharing of experience between the NNNSI and the New Forest Non-native Plants Project, including the organisation of a joint technical workshop to be held in 2012.

More information on 'Broad Sweep' will be posted shortly on the Non-native Species Initiative webpage: www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies

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Initiative works with BBC to offer a 'Deadly Day Out'

As a part of our activities to raise awareness of invasive alien species, the NNNSI was invited to have a stall at the BBC's 'Deadly Day Out' Roadshow in Norwich on 17th October. The



Roadshow featured live shows from the programmes star presenter, Steve Backshall, a climbing wall and offered children the opportunity to come face to face with some of the weird and wonderful wildlife featured on the TV programme.

The NNNSI stall was in the partners' area, which was shared with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and British Dragonfly Society. Well over 1000 people passed through the partners' area, with some visitors queuing for up to an hour to get inside! At the NNNSI stall, children were able to make their own white-clawed crayfish to take home, while parents could learn more about the plants to avoid putting in their garden. All the visitors were also intrigued to view real (although no longer living....) examples of some of the worst invasive animals we have in Norfolk, including American mink and muntjac deer.



To find out more about Live n' Deadly please visit:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/livendeadly/>

Floating pennywort project on track to deliver eradication

One of the Initiative's flagship projects during 2010 has been the control of floating pennywort on the River Waveney. Although the plant only appeared in the river in 2007, just downstream of the waste-water treatment works at Diss, it spread rapidly and by 2009 the infested area stretched for 12km. This led the NNNSI, Environment Agency (EA) and Broads Authority (BA) to launch a joint project to eradicate the plant from the river before it irreversibly took hold. Considerable effort was invested by volunteers and staff from all the involved organisations during the summer and autumn of 2009, but it was clear that a more concerted effort needed to be made in 2010 if the spread of the plant was going to be reversed.



Using funding provided by Defra the NNNSI was able to bring in a contractor, Paul Sims, to support the removal effort in 2010. Paul Sims and his assistant spent two days a week on the river over the summer and early autumn, surveying the affected stretch of the Waveney and removing infestations by hand. Targeted spraying with glyphosate and Topfilm was used to kill off particularly persistent patches. The Project Steering Group (comprised of representatives from NNNSI, EA, BA and the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership) met with Paul each month to monitor the progress of the project and guide future action.

Following a highly successful year the distribution and abundance of floating pennywort has been much reduced. A similar level of effort is planned for 2011, with more volunteer groups also getting involved. We are hopeful that with this continued effort floating pennywort can be eradicated from the River Waveney by the end of 2012.

The project to eradicate floating pennywort is only one of a number of practical control projects that have been facilitated by the Initiative during 2010. Others include the eradication of *Crassula helmsii* at Filby Broad, a survey of crayfish on the River Nar (to investigate the possibility of using the catchment as an Ark site for the endangered white-clawed crayfish), a catchment wide survey of Himalayan balsam on the River Wensum and the control of parrot's feather at Sutton.

The Annual Report for the Floating pennywort Project will be posted on the NNNSI webpage in the near future:

www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies

Community involved in 'Weekend of Action' to control invasive weeds

On the 17th and 18th July the NNNSI co-ordinated a Non-native Species Action Weekend, giving people the opportunity to come and help us remove invasive weeds from some of Norfolk's worst affected sites.



Volunteers at Sheringham Park
Credit: Kate Dougan

Activities took place across Norfolk and focussed on removing rhododendron and Himalayan balsam, both plants which can easily be identified and removed without the need for specialist training.

The Weekend also generated considerable media interest, being featured on a variety of programmes including Radio 4's 'Farming Today' and in the Eastern Daily Press.

Alien Ant Alert!

Lasius neglectus is a non-native invasive species which arrived in Britain in 2009. It is thought to originate from an area of Asia Minor or Turkey and has spread across Europe steadily for the last thirty years. In 2009 it was found at Hidcote Manor, nr. Chipping Campden in Gloucester and is now well established at this site. This ant looks like our common garden ant, *Lasius niger*, but its social organisation and behaviour is very different. It is a polygynous species with many queens and forms super-colonies, unlike our indigenous *Lasius* species with single queens and individual nests.



Lasius neglectus

Lasius neglectus can withstand low temperatures so is well adapted to survive in Britain. On the continent it has been shown to be a threat to indigenous ant species and also to have an impact on other arthropods. Our own *Lasius niger* is likely to be severely impacted because they inhabit similar habitats. It can also become a menace by invading buildings and getting into electrical systems, which is how it was discovered at Hidcote Manor. Its spread is likely to be slower because the queens do not have a mating flight; they mate in the nest. However, this species probably arrived in pot plants, trees or soil from Europe. It could happen again and it could arrive in Norfolk sooner, rather than later.

Please be on the lookout for any unusual ant activity such as:

- hundreds of small brown ants climbing trees in urban or semi-urban areas
- hundreds of small brown ants getting into electrical equipment.

Send details to: Doreen Wells, County Ant Recorder.
Email: wells_doreen@hotmail.com

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Killer shrimp discovered in Cambridgeshire

Dikerogammarus villosus, the 'Killer Shrimp', was found at Grafham Water, Cambridgeshire on 3rd September 2010. This was the first record of this species in Great Britain, but the species has now been discovered at two further sites in Wales. As a voracious predator it kills a range of native species, including young fish, and can significantly alter ecosystems. This shrimp originates from the Ponto-Caspian Region of Eastern Europe.



To find out more, and for guidance on identifying the shrimp, please visit:
<http://bit.ly/acEfqY>

No current threat posed by eagle owls

Richard Benyon, the Natural Environment Minister, recently announced that no action will be taken to control the population of eagle owls present in the UK. The eagle owl, which is Europe's largest owl, is widely kept in captivity and it has been suggested that the most likely source of the current population in the wild is from captive birds escaping into the wild. The decision has been welcomed by the RSPB and others, who had opposed any



action to control the bird until more evidence was available as to its negative impacts on native biodiversity.

To find out more, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/hfw52z>

New report into the economic cost of non-native species published

The financial cost of invasive non-native species on the British economy has been unveiled in a new report.

The report, entitled 'The Economic Cost of Invasive Non-Native Species to the British Economy', suggests that invasive species cost £1.7 billion every year.



The research was carried out by international scientific organisation CABI for the Scottish Government, Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government and it breaks down the effect on each country as follows:

- £1.3 billion per annum to the English economy,
- £245 million to the Scottish economy
- £125 million to the Welsh economy.

It indicates that the economic cost of INNS can be wide ranging and can result in the loss of crops, ecosystems and livelihoods. The cost to the agriculture and horticulture sector alone is estimated to be £1 billion across Britain.

To find out more, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/hJqi4s>

UPCOMING EVENTS

15-16 February 2011: The **Robson Meeting** is an annual conference focussing on the ecology and control of aquatic weeds, including a lot of information on the control of invasive aquatic weeds such as *Crassula helmsii*. This year the conference is being held at The Dolphin Hotel in St Ives, Cambs.

For more details please visit:

<http://www.robsonmeeting.org/>

23 March 2011: IEEM's Spring conference, titled '**Invasive Species: New Natives in a Changing Climate?**', will include talks on a variety of issues relating to invasive alien species, including the upcoming European Invasive Species Strategy and the issues for Local Authorities relating to invasive species.

For more details please visit:

<http://www.ieem.net/ieemspringconference2011.asp>

10 July 2011: The National Trust have organised a day of **rhododendron clearance** at **Sheringham Park**, and everyone is invited to come along and help out! The day will begin at 10.00 and should be finished by 16.00, but if you can't stay for the whole day then feel free to just pop down for as long as you can spare.

For directions to Sheringham Park, please visit:

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-sheringhampark>

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, Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Norfolk County Council and the Water Management Alliance.