

Invasive Non-Native Species

What is the issue?

- Invasive non-native species are species of animals or plants that come to England from other countries and threaten to damage our species and habitats.
- In England a number of species are a problem, such as Japanese knotweed, signal crayfish and Chinese mitten crabs.
- It is thought that invasive non-native species cost England over one billion pounds per year in controlling their spread and repairing damage they cause.
- Many of the species have been established for a long time e.g. Japanese knotweed has been in England since 1886.
- However, the number of new invasive non-native species is increasing - for example, killer shrimp are very recent.



What locations are affected?

- They appear in all types of water environments, in all areas of England.

Why should this concern me?

▶ Invasive non-native species can be a public health issue

- For instance, the sap of giant hogweed causes blisters.



▶ They can increase erosion of riverbanks and chances of flooding

- Some invasive non-native plants can die back in the winter, leaving riverbanks exposed to greater erosion.
- Some invasive non-native animals burrow into riverbanks and can undermine flood defences. By burrowing and moving sediment downstream in rivers, habitats of native species (used for breeding for instance) can be destroyed.

▶ They can have big impacts on other native wildlife

- They can cause the local extinction of important species to conserve.

▶ Reduce access to water bodies and leisure activities

- Some plant species can end up blocking waterways for boats.
- Others alongside river banks can stop people using them for walking or angling.

What are the future challenges and concerns?

- ▶ **There are many ways that invasive non-native species are introduced to England**
 - The main routes for the introduction of invasive non-native species into freshwater in England are the trade and cultivation of animal and plant species.
 - The main route for saltwater species is through boats or ocean currents.
- ▶ **There are many ways that invasive non-native species spread in England**
 - As well as continual introduction from other countries, the main ways species spread once in England are:
 - Natural spread through water bodies.
 - Human activities – such as gardening, moving boats and clothing contamination.
- ▶ **Climate change is likely to favour the spread of invasive non-native species**
 - As average temperatures rise, other species may migrate northwards from Europe.
 - Current invasive species may also flourish in warmer temperatures, so may become even more of a problem if temperatures rise as a result of climate change.

What can be done about this issue?

- As it is extremely difficult and costly to eradicate established invasive non-native species, it is better to prevent their introduction or eradicate them when they first arrive. Measures we can take include:
 - ▶ **Contain and eradicate invasive populations as they are found**
 - This could be done through organised public activities or the actions of other organisations.
 - ▶ **Prevent the introduction and spread by raising public awareness of the issues and preventative measures.**
 - For example, the national campaigns, “Check, Clean, Dry” and “Be Plantwise”.
 - Limit the plant species sold at garden centres.
 - ▶ **Develop new control methods to reduce the extent and impact of invasive species.** For example, using biological control agents.