

Environmental Bulletin No. 1 of 2017

Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) and Recreational River Users

Introduction

The Thames estuary has become home to many invasive non native species to the detriment of the local ecology and is causing economic harm by damage to infrastructure and vessels. The river is also a potential entry point for new invasive species from other rivers and ports in the UK and further afield. Taking simple actions to prevent accidentally introducing them to the Thames is key to stopping further detrimental impacts.

March 27 – April 2 2017 is [#InvasivesWeek](#). The PLA are supporting the initiative and encouraging you to [#GetINNSolved](#) and stop the spread of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS).

What are Invasive Non Native Species?

Invasive non native species are a problem for the River Thames, its tributaries and nearby land. INNS are those not naturally occurring in specific regions in the UK that have been introduced by the actions of humans and rapidly spread, out-competing native species.

Why are Invasive Non Native Species a problem?

Invasive plants and animals can harm native wildlife and cause economic damage to boating, fishing and aquaculture by fouling hard surfaces such as hulls and pontoons (e.g. zebra mussels and Pacific oysters). They can clog up boat engines and props, restrict water flow (e.g. water primrose or Himalayan balsam) and damage structures, pontoons and river banks (e.g. Chinese mitten crabs who burrow into soft banks). It is an offence to spread INNS under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Biosecurity

Recreational boating may unintentionally spread INNS. Biosecurity (good hygiene practice) is crucial to prevent the introduction of new invasive non native species and to prevent the spread of INNS that are already present. For the aquatic environment the advice is to **Check – Clean – Dry**:

- **Check** equipment and clothing for living organisms, remove and dispose of safely.
- **Clean** When leaving an anchorage, wash off both the anchor and chain before stowing.

When recovering watercraft, drain water from every part and from all equipment.

Clean equipment, footwear and clothes thoroughly, if possible by immersing in 45°C water for 15 mins or hot pressure wash for at least a minute. Contain wash water and dispose safely.

- **Dry** all equipment and clothing for at least 48 hours before using elsewhere.

What can I do?

- Get into the habit of **Check – Clean - Dry**
- Become aware of the Invasive Non Native Species in the Thames (see pla.co.uk/Environment/Guidance-on-Invasive-Non-Native-Species)
- Coming Soon – *Paddling on the Tideway* contains INNS Guidance



Where do I find further information?

GBNNS Guidance www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/index.cfm

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