

Cornwall Invasive Species Forum meeting Bude, 26th April 2019

Meeting minutes

Present - Peter McGregor, Nicola Morris, Rhiann Mtichell-Holland, Kate Hills, Simon Hocking, Gareth Cann, Simon Browning, Emma Weller, Kai Cursons, Laura Guy-Wilkinson, Josh Conibear, Rhys Parry, Tim Bird, Josephine Diamond, Hannah Hughes, Shona McCombie, Luke Holland.

Apologies – Paul Diamond

10:30 Introduction – Nicola Morris (CINNG)

- More regular meetings needed to move forum forward

10:40 Long term management of invasive species – Simon Hocking (National Trust)

- Experiences and lessons learned from a long-term multi-species control project

- Discussed the West Cornwall Invasive Species Project, Land Outdoors & Nature (LON) – a targeted, long-term management control programme which aims to recover/improve and bring SSSIs and priority habitats into favourable conditions to recreate 25,000 ha of new priority habitats
- West Cornwall is at the front line for changes occurring due to climate change (e.g. lack of frost) having impacts on the evolution / growth rate / spread of invasive species
- Local volunteers are key to the National Trust's work, full-time volunteers are a valuable resource
- Countryside Stewardship 2020 agreements – more prescriptive / treatment focused, resulting in an improved outcome
- Discusses some of the problematic invasive species, such as Piggyback plant (*Tolmiea menziesii*), and Paterson's curse (*Echium plantagineum*) – not all non-native but still causing problems.

Plans:

- Map invasive species **accessibly** – “Collector” app – GIS. Create invasive species layer, essential for eradication. Will take time but useful tool for going forward
- Double treatments / long-term treatments
- Lessons. Catchment approach essential
- Need extra support; there has been a lot of public kickback due to perception of “pretty plants”. More exposure is needed through the press, not enough people are familiar with the plants or the impacts they're having.

Key Points:

- Booking contractors early
- Horizon scanning whole property
- Sooner rather than later – resources needed/coming

Comments/questions:

Kate Hills (South West Water): Is it a national approach?

Simon Hocking: Probably not unfortunately.

Kate: Do you work with landowners outside of area?

Simon: Yes but need more people to commit resources. We need to do more across Cornwall; escape to the countryside is the concern. More commitment is key.

Josephine Diamond (Diamond Ecology/Ecological Services Ltd): How much can planting native species supersede the effects of invasive non-natives?

Nicola Morris: If the INNS forms a mono culture – habitat restoration needed. Once INNS is established it will dominate unless controlled and native species planted/encouraged. Some work with certain species but not with others.

Simon: INNS often outcompete natives but seem to be working together.

11:15 Management workshop – Nicola Morris

- **How can we effectively move control work forward to ensure progress on common INNS?**
- **Would a database of projects be helpful and how should this be managed?**
- **Would you use a volunteer network where volunteers could move between projects to increase manual help across county?**

Workshop discussions:

Notes from table with Emma Weller (Bleujen Ecology), Tim Bird (Cormac), Gareth Cann (Cormac), Rhys Parry (Cormac), Peter McGregor (CINNG):

Management

- Cornwall Council about to publish its Invasive Plant Policy – Tim will share with Forum.
- Cormac happy to share mapping information, but need access to / compatibility with other systems.
- Mapping needs a catchment, not site, approach.
- Management at catchment scale needs landowner involvement (and financial contribution?).
- Role of EA in awareness raising and stick of Infrastructure Act?
- Management needs a concerted and joined-up approach but is limited by resources.
- HLS agreement varies widely in detail on treatment of INNS.
- Unclear how specific CS agreements will be wrt INNS.

Notes from table with Kate Hills (South West Water), Laura-Guy Wilkinson (ERCCIS), Josephine Diamond (Diamond Ecology/Ecological Services Ltd):

Management

1. Effective control

- Beyond site basis - towards catchment area
- Regular meetings, sharing projects
- Share best practice
- Need long term management and funding
- More research on control / restoration

2. Database useful?

- Yes – need database
- ERCCIS to host / manage
- Map areas and projects

3. Mobile volunteers useful?

- Yes, great
- Who would fund?

Notes from table with Hannah Hughes (CINNG), Kairan Cursons (CINNG/Cornwall College), Shona McCombie (Westcountry Rivers Trust), Nicola Morris (CINNG), Rhiann Mitchell-Holland (CINNG):

Management/moving forward

- Work together to book contractors in different areas but within the same timescale
- Work with adjacent landowners
- Reluctant to put hand in pocket - attribute a financial value to the species as an incentive to change people's perception/opinion - Japanese knotweed affects the value of property
- New legislation may enforce action
- Put together a suitable statement outlining our responsibilities and the issues
- Map on invasive species page could help to share ideas and information:
 - Highlight areas of concern / priority areas
 - High profile organisations don't always have trouble getting volunteers, small volunteer groups are struggling to get the volunteers (unheard of/not well-known) – provides networking opportunities and option to be part of a bigger network
 - Could delegate / distribute volunteer groups to priority areas; this can be decided through the database

11:30 An investigation into marine pathways in Cornwall – Kai Cursons (CINNG/Cornwall College)

- Discusses his volunteer project – global shipping accounts for the transportation of an estimated 7000 species via ballast water per day, the majority of these hardy species survive the rough journey. Biofouling is another major cause of INNS spread/pathway
- Using the 'Spoke-hub distribution paradigm', vessel types, routes, strength of vector, distance of journey from hubs, and number of connections were identified
- A map and database of 31 port authorities (species and records) was created – marine recreational traffic
- Next steps:
 - Use traffic database to identify pathway strength – 3 million individual journeys
 - Research the influence of smaller vessels without AIS
 - Identify risks (pathway risks can then be assessed once identified)

Nicola: We're hoping to find funders to help with this model.

11:45 Refreshments

12:10 Biosecurity in Practice – Nicola Morris

- **Do you currently use biosecurity and if so what facilities do you use?**
- **Which pathways are you most concerned about?**
- **Can we work together to provide effective biosecurity facilities at strategic locations?**

Workshop discussions

Notes from table with Emma Weller (Bleujen Ecology), Tim Bird (Cormac), Gareth Cann (Cormac), Rhys Parry (Cormac), Peter McGregor (CINNG):

Biosecurity

- 1) Practice:
Cormac Tree Diseases Team have washdown kit including Propeller (arboricultural disinfectant).
But Operatives/ Consultants / Contractors do not. Needs joining up.
Cormac producing biosecurity policy for Cornwall Council.
Key is any policy needs support (including resources and time allowed) from management.
- 2) Facilities:
If there were to be a washdown at Bude Canal, it would need to be easy to access and use by the public.
How to ensure take-up of any facility?
- 3) Pathways:
Site management and survey teams of concern because of distance travelled / number of sites visited and nature of material transported between sites (unintentionally).
- 4) Strategic locations:
Possibly known *Phytophthora* areas

Notes from table with Kate Hills (South West Water), Laura-Guy Wilkinson (ERCCIS), Josephine Diamond (Diamond Ecology/Ecological Services Ltd):

Biosecurity

1. Biosecurity practise

- Done on different levels by many (or not at all)
- Some kit
- Some knowledge – differ widely
- Knowing problematic species
- Photo ID of what don't know

2. Pathways of concern

- Terrestrial as consultant of ecology
- Aquatic
- Both
- Recognise marine problem

3. Improving biosecurity facilities at key locations

- Use same RIMP and develop kit
- Identify key places
- Improve best practice and share
- More research

Notes from table with Hannah Hughes (CINNG), Kairan Cursons (CINNG/Cornwall College), Shona McCombie (Westcountry Rivers Trust), Nicola Morris (CINNG), Rhiann Mitchell-Holland (CINNG):

1. Biosecurity

- Everybody dealing with INNS follow strict biosecurity regulations, kits and process should include disinfectant, buckets, cabin for hanging clothes, hoof picks, spray, brush, hose down
- Different biosecurity facilities on different sites – CCD signs, posters, full wash down facilities, (wash in, wash out)
- Dog walkers need targeting – risk awareness – highlight potential risks to dogs as well as environment.

2. Pathways

- Anglers/fishing – not doing enough. Fly fishermen seem more aware of biosecurity, but overall, not enough biosecurity checks
- More meetings need to be held between anglers and CINNG/local action groups – knowledge sharing
- Eradication methods – hot water system in certain sites (45 degrees so no burns risk) more effective than disinfectant.

3. Facilities in strategic locations

- Joint/collaborative talks targeting all user groups, standardising new/same check, clean dry (logos and materials) so everybody's using the same biosecurity practice
- Contact Secretariat (GB NNSS) to request materials – saves on postage and sharing of resources, can then be distributed to the required priority locations (CCD banners, posters, stickers, leaflets etc.) to those who have ordered them
- Training, so they can acquire the knowledge we have and pass it on

12:30 Zebra mussel project – Hannah Hughes (CINNG)

- An update on South West Water's project to control freshwater invasive zebra mussels at Bude Canal

- Zebra mussels abundance increase and presence/impacts in Bude – the only place in Cornwall that has zebra mussels – impact on amenity value
- Raise awareness – leaflets given to members of public on zebra mussels
- Manual survey – 16 points, three samples taken at each point (three-minute hand search)
- Results: positive response from public, keen to collaborate but little current awareness
- Zebra mussels found distributed 600-820m of canal – highlights need for control:
 - BioBullets may be used to regulate the population – no negative impacts on other species
 - Uptake of biosecurity measures and raise awareness
 - Further surveys to establish population density
 - Introduce biosecurity protocols
 - Work closely with stakeholder groups

Comments/questions:

Nicola: Shell quality differs, might be to do with water quality. Flow/current in the Canal is strong and may be having an effect on ZM shells & colonisation - nitrates in flow of water

Tim Bird (Cormac Ltd): What's the control method?

Nicola: Hand removal, however this is too much of an issue. Whilst it seems like they're not too much of a problem in this environment, we don't yet know how they'd behave in a different environment/climate. The BioBullet is the proposed eradication method

12:40 CISF moving forward

- **How can we drive CISF forward and make better use of knowledge and resources?**
- **Are you interested in the formation of sub groups and a committee?**

- CISF webpage on CINNG website - <http://www.cinng.org.uk/cornwall-invasive-species-forum/>. CISF password for forum webpage: **CISF2016**
- CINNG/CISF recording page/group page on ORKS website <http://www.cinng.org.uk/submit-a-sighting/> or <https://ercis.org.uk/SINNGSubmitRecords> – a great recording resource, go through the recording group via ORKS, if a member you will have access to the summary/maps of all the records for projects/further work and be able to add records
- Laura-Guy Wilkinson (ERCCIS) able to add multiple datasets from spread sheets
- Simon Hocking to look at local events such as Royal Cornwall Show where we can target more home/landowners as well as stakeholders
- Development of terms of reference – committee? Funding source?
- Seek external funding – South West Water have provided in the past, can ask National Trust, Duchy, Cormac - local nature partnerships in Devon also offer funding for DISI
- New Countryside Stewardship (Natural England) – funding should be more available – Simon will ask their organisation
- Funding and volunteer work – Shona McCombie, Simon Hocking, Tim Bird and Kate Hills
- More websites, website management –Simon Hocking
- Next meeting should focus on who's doing what and how
- RIMPS – need to assess to see if we agree with species and priority areas

(notes from more general discussion, not restricted to table)

Higher profile

- Via RCS? Piggyback existing stands with common message?
- Standardize messages and have on website
- Need Terms of Reference?
- Via key landowners (Simon re NT, Tim re Cormac/CC, Joshua re Duchy)
- Check Natural England buy-in via CS agreements

Need a committee?

Focus for next meeting – RIMPS?

13:00 Morning session closing remarks followed by lunch and networking opportunity

- Invasive species week: 12th -18th May – any activity suggestions let us know so we can publicise it
- SWISF – if you would like to be added to the South West Invasive Species Forum mailing list please contact Rhiann Mitchell-Holland: rhiann@cinng.org.uk
- New forum members: Emma Weller (Bleujen Ecology), Hannah Hughes (CINNG)

14:00 Field visit – Gareth Cann (Cormac)

- A walk along Bude canal to find out how INNS are being managed.