

Dan Hoare, Broads Authority

Controlling Aquatic Invasive Species

The Broads is the UK's only wetland National Park, situated in the lowland counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, in the east of England. The Broads is home to a mosaic of lake, river, fen, wet woodland and grazing marsh habitats, popular with visitors and tourists for its tranquil waterways and natural beauty.

It has become increasingly evident in the Broads that the presence of invasive non-native species, particularly aquatic plants, has a strong potential to negatively impact upon native biodiversity, recreational enjoyment and flood management. The UK has a large domestic horticultural trade in exotic and non-native plants, with non-native aquatic species being popular in garden ponds. Unfortunately, in the temperate climate of the UK, invasive non-native species such as Floating Pennywort (*Ranunculoides*), Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) and Australian Swamp Stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*) have now become established in the wild. The primary objectives have been to set up a way of effectively preventing new species establishing themselves, as well as developing appropriate and co-ordinated control measures to eradicate known invasive species outbreaks.

As no single statutory organisation is responsible in the UK for controlling outbreaks of aquatic plants, a partnership approach has been adopted to strategically prevent, control and eradicate priority invasive non-native species in and around the Broads. A Stakeholders Forum for the county of Norfolk was established with over 20 organisations represented. Regular meetings and knowledge sharing events are held, with a dedicated co-ordinator employed to ensure continued funding is found and control projects are delivered.

Through the partnership approach to tackling the threats of non-native invasive species, the following actions have been enabled:-

- Collation of monitoring data on the distribution and spread of non-native species in the county;
- Development of action plans to address the species of most urgent concern;
- Facilitation of control and eradication projects at high priority sites; and
- Promotion and awareness raising of the risks and impacts associated with non-native species.

The main lesson learned from this approach is to maintain good communication between partners on specific projects. Stakeholders may share high-level strategic aims, but translating these aims into practical and effective control work on the ground is often a challenge. Increasing the public's knowledge of the risks posed by non-native invasive species is also crucial in tackling the inadvertent spread of species to new areas and introduction of new species.

The recommendation would be to have one eye open to new species colonising Lake Chapala and have in place a mechanism to control if the species is of high risk to the current status of the lakes values

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