

Wildlife and Countryside Link response to the UK ban on the sale of five aquatic invasive non-native species

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together 40 voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic and marine environment and biodiversity. Taken together our members have the support of over 8 million people in the UK and manage over 750,000 hectares of land.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) pose a major and on-going threat to our native flora and fauna. A coalition of Link members, formed to progress action on INNS, has prepared the following statement in response to the ban on sale of five aquatic INNS: water fern; parrot's feather; floating pennywort; water primrose and Australian swamp stonecrop, as announced by Westminster Government yesterday:

This is an important step towards tackling the growing threat posed by INNS. The legislation that enables Government to ban the sale of INNS was established in 2006. We are delighted that this is now being enacted, but disappointed that sale of these five species will be allowed for another year. The recent and on-going attempt to contain Ash Dieback is a potent reminder that we must act faster when a threat from INNS has been identified. Given the high ecological and economic impact of INNS, particularly those five included in the ban, we need action to be more effective and to happen quickly.

This ban on sale relates to only five water plants. This is a tiny fraction of the tens of thousands of water plants on sale in the UK so that the impact on the trade should be low. After a decade of discussion with trade representatives, this ban is of no surprise, indeed the more innovative traders are already be stocking alternative water plants.

We recommend that customers look for and buy non-invasive plants instead of the five water plants being banned from sale. This will help prevent problems in their own ponds and gardens, as well as help safeguard our wildlife and countryside. The general public can also help by reporting these species if they see them in the wild. This can be done using new phone apps including the plant tracker app available at <http://planttracker.naturelocator.org/add> or the iSpot app from <http://www.ispot.org.uk/> or by recording them through the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat website <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/index.cfm?sectionid>.

This response is supported by the following 10 organisations:

Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
The Mammal Society
The National Trust
Plantlife
RSPB

Salmon and Trout Association
The Rivers Trust
The Wildlife Trusts
The Woodland Trust
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

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