

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref OAQ(4) 0203(NR)

Jocelyn Davies AM
National Assembly for Wales
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5th November 2014

Dear Jocelyn Davies,

In Plenary on 22 October you asked whether I would publish the details of the progress made since 2008 by the Wales Invasive Non-Native Species working group. You also asked if Natural Resources Wales would routinely publish their prosecution rates in relation to Japanese knotweed. I agreed to look in detail to see what I could provide and what Natural Resources Wales may be able to provide.

The Wales Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) working group has made significant progress in providing advice and support on all aspects of INNS in Wales, not just specifically for Japanese knotweed.

As a part of the work the Welsh Government published "The Control of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) in Construction and Landscape Contracts" in 2011. This document provides guidance on the selection and development of a strategy for the control of Japanese knotweed. A project board has been established to consider the Natural Control of Japanese knotweed and the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI), is undertaking scientific research into the sap-sucking psyllid, *Aphalara itadori*, on behalf of the project board. This project is currently in its fourth year of release out of five. As with any classical bio-control agent, the goal is not eradication but control. A two-year trial at Swansea University is underway to examine the physio-chemical control of knotweed. These knotweed field trials are the largest of their kind ever undertaken in Europe or North America and should provide additional information to aid the management of this weed.

Progress has also been made with the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain. The Strategy provides the framework by which Government and its partners deliver invasive alien species policy. Strategic approaches to assessing the risk of and implementing action to address the impacts of many invasive alien species have been developed. These include Carpet Sea Squirt (Holyhead marina), "Killer Shrimp" (Cardiff Bay and Eglwys Nunydd), Rhododendron (Snowdonia), Topmouth Gudgeon (Millennium Coastal Path, Llanelli), Himalayan Balsam (Abersoch), African Clawed Toad (Vale of Glamorgan).

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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The GB Strategy will be reviewed later this year after considering the views of stakeholders and the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulations which are due to come into force on 1 January 2015. The GB Strategy operates on the basis of three key principles: prevention, eradication and control.

In relation to Natural Resources Wales, as you correctly state, there have been no prosecutions to date in respect of Japanese knotweed. Prosecutions under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 ("the Act") depend on the provision of evidence that Japanese knotweed is present as a result of human intervention rather than by natural means. In practice this evidence is extremely difficult to find and in the vast majority of cases it is unlikely that legal action can be taken. Natural Resources Wales generally look to the Police to progress prosecutions under this Act but will seek knotweed prosecutions where there is an additional environmental offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
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