

Title INVASIVE NON NATIVE SPECIES IN WALES

Background/Progress

An up to date copy of the NNS action plan is now available on the website at <http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/content/uploads/documents/SG%20Meetings/TaskFinish/2009%20January%20Action%20Audit%20INNS.pdf>.

New Invasive Non Native Species in Wales

The following invasive non-native species have recently been identified as having newly arrived in Wales:

Didemnum vexillum has been found in Holyhead harbour marina. There is uncertainty about the potential spread and impact if left unchecked, but a rapid qualitative risk assessment revealed a high likelihood that Dv would spread from Holyhead Marina. The establishment in other habitats around the UK would put virtually all conservation and fishery areas in Wales at risk. The most likely vector is recreational vessels. The potential impacts are very significant. Where it has occurred outside Wales, it is known to have adversely affected a number of conservation sites and fisheries, in particular mussel fisheries. If left unchecked there are potentially significant legal and financial implications.

It has been decided to take action to contain the species during 2009 followed by eradication during 2010. In parallel to this work, actions to increase awareness and survey for any other populations of *Didemnum vexillum* will be taken at a GB level through the Non-Native Secretariat, based in FERA York. We would like the Steering Group to assist the Non-Native Secretariat with these aims within Wales.

Plan/Proposals

Although the Action Plan is becoming increasingly comprehensive some key items remain challenging. The next stage of development will be to identify synergies between existing projects, identify and attempt to fill gaps. Feedback from WBP members would be appreciated.

Action Requested

- a) To approve continued development of the NNS Action Plan with annual reporting to WBP SG in this or similar format.
- b) To consider the current plans and offer any assistance or suggestions.
- c) To agree to assist the Non-Native Secretariat to raise awareness of *Didemnum vexillum* issues and presence within Wales.

Bill Somerfield