

National Invasive Species Database

<http://invasivespecies.biodiversityireland.ie>

What is it?

A centralised database containing up-to-date information on the distribution of invasive species in Ireland. The database has been developed as a resource to assist recording, monitoring and surveillance programmes, and provides the infrastructure for development of an early warning system for invasive species.

What are invasive species?

Invasive species are species that have been introduced to areas outside their natural range, and whose establishment and spread threaten native ecosystem function and services. Invasive species are one of the major drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide, and can add very significant economic costs to resource management where they become established.

Rationale for the database

A systemic weakness of an effective invasive species strategy in Ireland was the absence of a centralised source of information on the status and distribution of invasive species in Ireland. To address this weakness the National Biodiversity Data Centre, working in collaboration with the Invasive Species Ireland initiative, established a database to centrally maintain and manage records of invasive species.

Progress to date

The National Invasive Species Database contains, to date, 16,721 records of 65 of the 86 priority invasive species in Ireland. A list of priority species has been agreed based on two sources; first those species which have been identified as being of highest risk from a risk assessment undertaken by Invasive Species Ireland in 2007, and second, some of the most problematic plants.

What is a risk assessment?

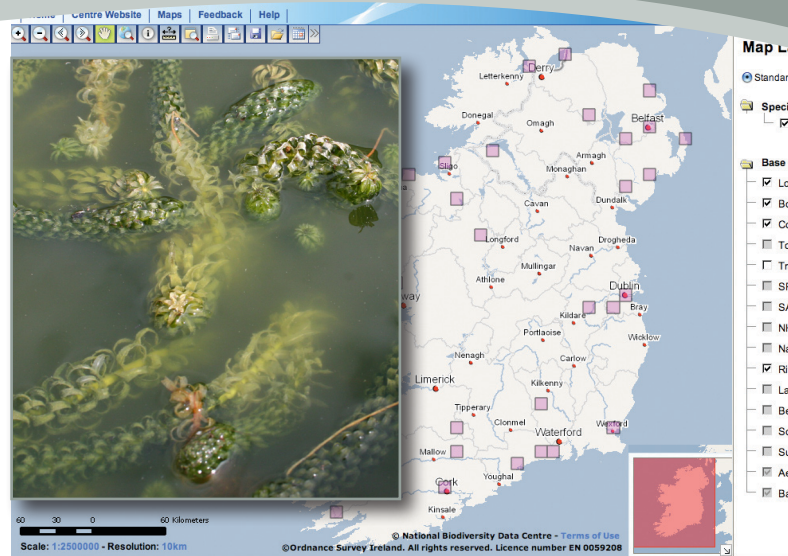
A risk assessment is a formal assessment of the extent to which potential and established non-native species are likely to pose a threat to native populations and ecosystems and which are likely to respond positively to management interventions. Invasive Species Ireland has undertaken risk assessment for 385 established and 171 potential invaders and from this identified those of highest risk.

How can you help?

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is interested in receiving records of any invasive species. Of particular interest to the Data Centre are records of eight of the most pernicious aquatic invasive species, and a special recording initiative is currently underway to gain a better understanding of their distribution. Data can be submitted on-line at <http://invasivespecies.biodiversityireland.ie>

International collaboration

Effective action on invasive species requires working at the international level. The National Biodiversity Data Centre is participating in NOBANIS, the European Network on Invasive Alien Species. www.nobanis.org/default.asp



Future developments

A successful invasive species strategy is built around having an early warning and rapid response system. The National Invasive Species Database provides the data management infrastructure upon which an early warning system can be developed. The National Biodiversity Data Centre will work with its partners and volunteer recorders to make optimal use of the system towards achieving this objective.

For further information

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The National Invasive Species Database:
<http://invasivespecies.biodiversityireland.ie/>
Invasive Species Ireland: www.invasivespeciesireland.com

Further reading

Stokes, K., O'Neill, K. & McDonald, R.A. (2006) *Invasive species in Ireland*. Report to Environment & Heritage Service and National Parks & Wildlife Service by Quercus, Queens University. Environment & Heritage Service, Belfast and National Parks & Wildlife Service, Dublin.

Partners

The National Invasive Species Database is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Heritage Council. The initiative is a collaborative venture with Invasive Species Ireland, an all-Ireland initiative to implement an invasive species strategy for the island. The aquatic invasive species recording initiative is run in collaboration with the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) in Northern Ireland.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre works in partnership with Invasive Species Ireland to implement the recommendation of the Invasive Species in Ireland (2006) report. It has a dedicated website: www.invasivespeciesireland.com