

## Biosecurity Guidance Notes

Taking part in the Testing the Water survey will help us to find unpolluted sites rich in wildlife and provide us with much needed information on the true extent of nutrient pollution in sites which have never been monitored before. But we need to make sure we don't do anything to damage the ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, ditches and canals we visit.



Invasive non-native plants and animals, and the spread of wildlife diseases, are amongst the biggest threats to unpolluted freshwater habitats. There are a couple of simple practices that all wildlife surveyors need to follow to ensure we protect, rather than damage, the sites that we study. Please familiarise yourself and rigorously apply the two protocols below so we can all rest easy.

### **DON'T TRANSFER ORGANISMS BETWEEN FRESHWATER HABITATS IN MUD OR WATER**

#### **STOP** the spread of **PLANTS** and **ANIMALS**

Prevent the spread of non-native species between ponds. Invasive species can threaten and kill our native plants and animals by competing for resources and spreading disease. Examples: plant fragments and/or seeds of species like New Zealand pigmyweed, parrot's feather, floating pennywort, creeping water primrose, Himalayan balsam and water fern and eggs or individuals of animals like killer shrimp and non-native crayfish.

#### Be aware:

- Look at the information sheet on the GB Non-native species secretariat (NNSS) website to help recognise species that pose particular risk <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/>
- If you see these species at your survey site or know they're around, please take extra special care, and follow the check, clean, dry protocol (see next page) between every site you survey.
- Make a note of any invasive species you've seen on your Testing the Water recording form – we will pass this information onto the relevant national recording schemes.

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### **STOP** the spread of **DISEASE**

Protect amphibians from infections caused by fungi like Chytrid, and other pathogens that harm or kill them. Prevent spread of other diseases such as crayfish plague, and those we won't know about until it's too late! The potential for new diseases to arrive and spread in the UK is high if we don't take care. Tiny numbers of pathogens present on materials like damp equipment and boots can often be enough to spread these diseases, so vigilance is necessary.

### **Be aware:**

The main aim is to prevent disease spread. You do not need to enter the water to undertake the Clean Water for Wildlife survey and therefore your contact with waterborne pathogens will be minimised. If you are surveying multiple sites, follow the **check-clean-dry** protocol each time you move to a different area.

### **CHECK – CLEAN – DRY** and stop the spread

- **CHECK** your equipment and clothing for live organisms, plant fragments or seeds, even the difficult to see spots.
- **SCRAPE** wet/dry mud off all footwear and equipment with a stiff brush (a screwdriver may be useful to clean shoe treads).
- **CLEAN** and wash all clothing, equipment and footwear thoroughly.
- **DISINFECT** equipment (e.g. footwear) in bleach solution, 1 part bleach (from a supermarket bottle containing 5% bleach – check the bottle label) to 16 parts water (e.g. for 5 litres of solution; add 300 ml of bleach to just under 5 litres of water).
- **DRY** all clothing and equipment, as some species can survive for days in damp environments. UV from sunlight can help to kill organisms, leave equipment to air dry completely in a sunny location before using at the next site.

### **For more information go to:**

- GB Non-native Species Secretariat:
- Check-clean-dry: [www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry)
- Non-native species factsheets: [www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47)

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