

IRELAND'S INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

Recreational Boating and Watercraft Pathway Action Plan 2022 - 2027

Aquatic invasive alien species harm our native wildlife and environment. They also impact on recreational boating by fouling submerged structures and boats, blocking water intakes, increased maintenance costs, impeding and affecting navigations and impacting on recreational access to waterbodies. Once established in waterbodies, it can be very difficult - if not impossible, to control or eradicate aquatic invasive species.

As invasive alien species can be unintentionally transported with recreational boating and watercraft activities, action is needed to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading invasive alien species into and between waterbodies in Ireland by this pathway.

The Recreational Boating and Watercraft Pathway Action Plan 2022-2027 outlines the general policy approach and actions government and those involved with recreational boating in Ireland can undertake.

The **scope** of the Pathway Action Plan is on activities related to recreational boating and watercraft in the freshwater, brackish and marine environments. Recreational boating refers to boats that are designed or adapted for sport or leisure. They can be beach, shoreline, riverbank, crane or slipway launched. This includes yachts, wind surfers, dinghies, inflatable boats (including RIBs), Jet-skis, canoes, kayaks, rowing boats, cruisers, barges and other personal watercraft. It also refers to any equipment or clothing that comes in contact with the water such as trailers and wetsuits etc. It comprises the use of boats privately owned and operated by the owner, hired or used to provide a service such as training and race participation.

The **aim** of this Pathway Action Plan is to reduce the risk of invasive alien species being introduced to Ireland and spread from one waterbody to another within Ireland by recreational boating and watercraft activities.

The **objectives** of the Pathway Action Plan are centred around increasing the level of awareness of invasive alien species issues amongst boaters; on how good biosecurity actions incorporated into boater activities can reduce the risk of introduction and spread of invasive alien species and; on facilitating the uptake of good biosecurity practice by the recreational boating and watercraft community.



Recreational boating biosecurity guidance

This boating biosecurity guidance refers to actions required to prevent or significantly reduce the risk of introduction and spread of invasive species through recreational boating and watercraft activities. Invasive plants and animals harm the environment and wildlife, block

waterways and can damage a boat's engine and propellers. They can be small, lodge in places that make them hard to spot and many are not visible to the naked eye so they can be easily spread on damp boats, equipment, and clothing.

General procedure of the Check Clean Dry aquatic biosecurity protocol

Check, Clean and **thoroughly Dry** boats, equipment and clothing that come into contact with the water before using them again. If everything cannot be dry for at least 48 hours, then **Disinfect**.

Water users should always assume that the waterway contains invasive alien species and act accordingly with their subsequent movements to prevent spread

CHECK

Check boats, equipment, and clothing after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site. Reapply anti-fouling annually.

CLEAN

Clean everything thoroughly as soon as you can paying attention to ropes, bilges, trailers, to the inside of your boat and areas that are damp and hard to access. Use hot water (at least 45°C), steam or a high-pressure spray if you can.

DRY >DISINFECT

Dry-drain water from every part of your boat and trailer before leaving the site. Dry the surfaces of everything and allow to air dry for at least 48 hours - some species can live for many days or weeks in moist conditions.

Disinfect cleaned items if complete drying is not possible. Use disinfectant such as Virkon Aquatic, Virasure or any other proprietary disinfectant product. Areas difficult to dry can be sprayed or wiped down with disinfectant and where an outboard is used, the cooling system should be flushed out. For non-motorised craft such as canoes, kayaks and small sailing boats, where practical a disinfectant should be poured into the interior of the craft.



**DESICCATION
KILLS**

For boats that stay in the water year-round

For boats that stay in the water year-round, lifting out, cleaning and antifouling annually (or as per product recommendation) keeps boat hulls clean, prevents the spread of invasive species and improves fuel efficiency. Apply antifoulant everywhere on the hull, check bow thrusters, intake and outlet pipes and anodes.

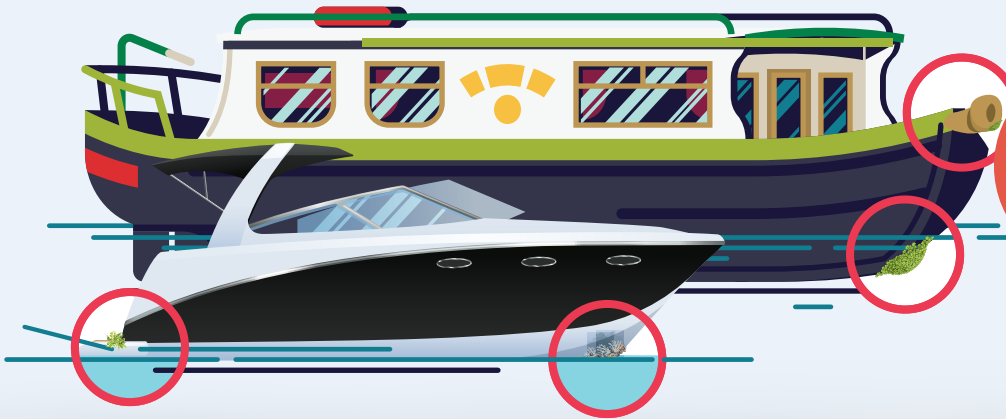
While you are on the water you can reduce your risk of spreading invasive plants and animals by:

- ✓ avoiding patches of floating plants (if possible)
- ✓ removing any plants caught on your boat or props
- ✓ if your boat has an inboard engine, clear weed filters and strainers regularly
- ✓ bag up any plant material to bin later

If you take your boat out of the water to move it somewhere new or move large distances between use and over wintering places, the boat should undergo cleaning before moving to make sure you don't bring any invasive plants or animals with you.



**DESICCATION
KILLS**



Key Actions

19 actions are set out in the pathway action plan under four categories. The complete wording of the key actions and outcomes including the responsible actors, are given in the full pathway action plan.

ACTIONS 1 - 5

Raising awareness

1. Survey of recreational boaters' levels of awareness on invasive species issues and biosecurity.
2. Refinement of the biosecurity messaging and guidelines by the recreational boating community.
3. Implementation of a border biosecurity awareness campaign.
4. Explore how awareness of biosecurity actions could be incorporated into formal processes such as boat qualification licences, certificates of competence, etc.
5. Organisers raise awareness of biosecurity guidelines to participants prior to water sport events.

ACTIONS 6 - 10

On-site measures

6. Inspection checks on recreational boating and water sport equipment/vehicles entering Ireland at prime concern border entry points to ensure they are clean, drained, and to the extent practical are dry.
7. The biosecurity regime of Check Clean Dry should be used as a regular practice by all watercraft users.
8. Sites that contain invasive species of priority concern and where recreational boating occurs, will have signage and facilities where possible, to promote and facilitate very high levels of awareness and biosecurity.
9. Installation of biosecurity awareness signage and provision of biosecurity facilities where possible at marinas and popular water entry/egress areas.
10. Emergency biosecurity response procedures implemented at sites (on a case-by-case basis) when a newly introduced priority concern alert list invasive species has been detected.

ACTIONS 11 - 15

Policy and coordination

11. Ongoing participation in the Aquatic Regional IAS Pathway Action Plan Cooperation Group
12. Coordination of policy response and actions with the Northern Ireland government and other administrations as necessary.
13. Recreational boating and watercraft representative groups will help facilitate and encourage the uptake of good biosecurity practices by boating/watercraft sectors and clubs.
14. Identify if gaps in biosecurity training resources are required and how best to close those gaps.
15. Coordination of actions in this plan with Ireland's Invasive Alien Species Angling Pathway Action Plan where relevant.

ACTIONS 16 - 19

Reporting

16. Log of actions taken to support implementation of the Pathway Action Plan.
17. Reporting of priority concern alert invasive species sightings to the National Biodiversity Data Centre to facilitate early warning and consideration of rapid response measures.
18. Compile and maintain a list or map of sites, waterways or catchments which contain priority concern list invasive to inform risk management and biosecurity response actions.
19. Interim and final review of the Pathway Action Plan.

Decision tree to help identify the biosecurity actions required

This diagram provides a quick reference guide to what biosecurity action must be taken in different scenarios, recognising some activities may be associated with higher biosecurity risk and that the ability to implement biosecurity actions may differ between activities. Use of the term boat in the diagram refers to all recreational watercraft.



* Tip: regular maintenance will reduce the risk of heavy fouling. Other parts of boat/equipment also to be checked and cleaned.

More information

Horizontal Measures

To support implementation of the Key Actions in this Recreational Boating and Watercraft Pathway Action Plan, underlying horizontal measures will need to be addressed.

- A.** Establish an Aquatic Invasive Alien Species and Biosecurity Technical Advisory Group.
- B.** Produce biosecurity measure guidance documents.
- C.** Scope boat movement restrictions.
- D.** Identify a funding mechanism for implementation of the plan.
- E.** Policy and legislation –
 - Introduce robust legislation (if needed) to support implementation of biosecurity measures
 - Government departments/state agencies will adopt invasive species biosecurity plans.
- F.** Address knowledge gaps – specifically the need for systematic surveillance and monitoring.

To read the full version of *Ireland's Invasive Alien Species Recreational Boating and Watercraft Pathway Action Plan 2022 - 2027* and for more information on pathway action plans go to: <https://invasives.ie/biosecurity/pathway-action-plans/>



For more information on the Check Clean Dry biosecurity campaign and to download campaign materials (signage, posters, leaflets etc.) visit: <https://invasives.ie/biosecurity/check-clean-dry/>



Drafting of this Recreational Boating and Watercraft Pathway Action Plan was undertaken by the Recreational Boating and Watercraft Invasive Alien Species Working Group.



An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



The National Parks and Wildlife Service, assisted by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, will coordinate development of the Recreational Boating and Watercraft Pathway Action Plan and monitoring of its implementation.