

BDM AND IAS

WHAT ARE HUNTERS DOING TO COMBAT IAS?

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Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are often referred to as species of non-native animals or plants, which cause serious negative consequences for their new environment. However, it is important to remember that not all Alien Species are invasive and a significant number of Alien Species contribute to our wellbeing, not least the humble potato.

Estimates show that 10-15% of alien species are invasive in Europe (European Union, 2014). IAS are also ranked as the second cause of biodiversity loss and species extinction, after habitat destruction (Genovesi and Shine, 2004). Further, they cost the EU an estimated 12 billion euros per year (European Union, 2014). Because of this serious issue, IAS are, since 2003, prioritised as a new millennium challenge in Europe for biodiversity conservation.

2003 – THE EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

A strategy was adopted by the Bern Convention¹ which “promotes the development and implementation of co-ordinated measures and co-operative efforts throughout Europe to prevent or minimise adverse impacts of invasive alien species (IAS) on Europe’s biodiversity, as well as their consequences for the economy and human health and well-being” (Genovesi and Shine, 2004).

2013 – THE EUROPEAN CODE OF CONDUCT ON HUNTING AND IAS

This document was developed, with FACE’s help, by the Bern Convention and presents 7 Principles that hunters and hunting associations should follow to get involved in IAS reduction and prevention (Genovesi *et al.*, 2013):

1. Prevent releases of new invasive alien game species;
2. Prevent introductions and spread of invasive alien plants for game food and shelter;
3. Restock with alien species only if non-invasive or previously introduced in ancient historic times;
4. Select sources for restocking from populations with appropriate genetic and disease management;
5. Practice animal-aided hunting which minimises the risks of impacting native species;
6. Consider eradication and control as essential management tools to tackle IAS and support their implementation also when targeting game species;
7. Collaborate on monitoring and surveillance programmes on IAS.

¹ The Bern Convention (or the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) was adopted in 2004 by the Council of Europe to protect the natural heritage of Europe and some states in Africa. More information at: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/home>

2014 – THE REGULATION ON THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

This EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species ([1143/2014](#)) came into force on 1 January 2015. It established the first “Union list” of 37 species consisting of 23 animals and 14 plants, and recently came into law following the recent publication (in July 2016) of Commission Implementing Regulation ([2016/1141](#)). This legally obliges all member states to manage the 37 IAS on the list². Specifically, EU Member States will be required to take measures for early detection and rapid eradication of these species, and to manage species that are already widely spread in the territory of some Member States. The List will be frequently updated.

2015 – FACE BIODIVERSITY MANIFESTO (BDM) REPORTING

FACE set up the [Biodiversity Manifesto](#) in 2010 and published the first report in 2015, which shows the active involvement of European hunters in biodiversity conservation (via the presentation of 181 conservation projects). In the BDM, 18 hunters’ projects are directly related to IAS management. These projects include:

- Surveillance of raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) in North-European countries (e.g. see [here](#));
- Trapping American mink (*Neovison vison*) to protect European water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) in North Wales and South West England or red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus hibernicus*) in Ireland;
- Management of grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) to encourage the development of the native red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) in Northern Ireland and North Wales;
- Managing Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) in North Wales;
- Measuring the impact of invasive brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) on the native Irish hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) in Ireland.

Note: Many more projects combat IAS as part of a suit of management actions to improve biodiversity.

IAS CONTROL REPRESENTS A BIG CHALLENGE IN EUROPE IN WHICH HUNTERS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE BY MONITORING, EARLY DETECTION, RAPID RESPONSE, SURVEILLANCE, MANAGEMENT AND RAISING AWARENESS. IN MOST CASES, THEY ACT VOLUNTARILY; HOWEVER, SOME PROJECTS ARE FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED BY DIVERSE ORGANISMS.

² [The species on the list can be seen here.](#)



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