Press release: Cooperation the key to tackling pennywort

The Environment Agency has called on Thames river users to keep working together to control floating pennywort. More than 63 tonnes of the invasive water plant has been removed from the Thames over the winter and spring but there is still more to do.

Because of the efforts of the Environment Agency and some local groups, where there were large rafts of the plant in some areas, there are now only a few small traces of regrowth. The Environment Agency continues to monitor and remove new growth of this very invasive and destructive plant. However, the summer is the peak season for floating pennywort growth which can have detrimental impacts on watercourses. Large blooms of the plant affect the oxygen content of rivers, reduce biodiversity, can damage important habitats and potentially increase flood risk.

As part of the annual maintenance programme, the Environment Agency has been managing floating pennywort for several years in locations such as the River Wey and the Foudry Brook. But more help and support is needed from the public and river users if we are to succeed in controlling the spread of this destructive plant.

Daryl Buck, from the Environment Agency, said:

> We actively monitor more than 200km of the River Thames. Our aim is to eradicate floating pennywort from the main River Thames completely, but we can only achieve this with the continued cooperation of key members of the community.
>
> Early intervention is the most efficient way to keep on top of this damaging plant as it can grow up to 20cm per day! We are urging riverside owners to keep an eye on their watercourse and report any new growth to us. We also would like to hear from river users such as anglers, boaters and canoeists who may come across the plant when out and about enjoying the river.
>
> One success story so far has been the work undertaken earlier this year in the Abbey River near Chertsey. Floating pennywort established itself last season in the popular watercourse, causing all kinds of issues for river users like anglers and kayakers as well as landowners.

Ian Penny, secretary of a local angling club, said:

> This non-native plant is very aggressive and plays havoc for fish and plant life. The Environment Agency did an absolutely fantastic

job of totally removing the floating pennywort from over a mile stretch of the river. Everyone who enjoys the river has a responsibility to help the situation by reporting any new sightings via www.planttracker.org.uk.

Richard Atkinson, Policy Officer for British Canoeing, said:

British Canoeing takes its environmental responsibility very seriously and wants all water users to have fun and enjoy the natural environment. Non-native invasive species like pennywort have a significant impact on biodiversity, the environment and paddling.

We will be encouraging our members to report any sightings via the app and by reinforcing the importance of the check, clean, dry procedure after paddling.

People can visit www.planttracker.org.uk or download the Plant Tracker app co-developed by the Environment Agency to enable river users to record sightings of floating pennywort to help concentrate removal efforts where they are most needed.

Floating pennywort was introduced into the UK as an ornamental plant. For more information pond owners are encouraged to go to the plantwise campaign at http://www.nonnativespecies.org/beplantwise/pondowner/index.cfm

Ends

Notes to Editors

Photographs available on request

Floating pennywort is an aggressive invasive non-native species of plant, introduced to this country as an ornamental aquatic plant. It tends to favour slower moving watercourses. It is now widespread in southern and eastern England, including parts of the River Thames and it’s backwaters between Reading and Kingston and the River Wey.
The Environment Agency is under no obligation to remove floating pennywort, however we do have discretion to remove it under our statutory powers. Riparian owners are also not obliged to remove it, unless it can be shown that they planted it, though if it is on their land they do have a duty to take reasonable action to ensure it does not cause damage to neighbouring properties.
What you can do to help
Please continue to help us. If you see floating pennywort in the river Thames or its tributaries please report its location by:

• Emailing us: enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk

Not sure if it is floating pennywort?

• Look at the plant tracker website or download the app at www.planttracker.org.uk
• You can also report sightings using the plant tracker app.
Are you a boater?
• Don’t pass though through clumps of the plant. It can break off and spread downstream or carry it upstream.
• Visually check your craft regularly and, if safe to do so, remove any visible weed, placing it well away from any river or other water body.

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743. Or e-mail us at southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk
Follow us on Twitter at @EnvAgencySE

Press release: Environment Agency confirms Blue Green Algae in three locations across the Lake District

Following hot, dry, weather across Cumbria, the Environment Agency has confirmed reports of Blue Green Algae in three locations across the Lake District.

Ullswater, Coniston and Killington Lake have all tested positive for potentially toxic Blue Green Algae which can have a negative effect on the appearance, quality and use of the water.

Throughout the summer months, the Environment Agency test water samples and confirm if Blue Green Algae has been found. They then inform landowners of the blooms, so they can take the necessary steps to warn the public of any potential dangers. This could may be the local authority, or a private landowner.

Jim Ratcliffe from the Environment Agency says:

> As always, if people see any environmental impacts due to dry weather, such as fish in distress, or Blue Green Algae, please report it to the Environment Agency incident line on 0800 80 70 60 open 24/7, so we can investigate and take appropriate action to protect people and the environment.

> If our sampling confirms Blue Green Algae is present in a lake or river, we inform the landowner, and they are encouraged to take the

necessary steps to inform users of the water, by way of posters, notices or other means.

The Environment Agency continues to work with water companies, businesses and farmers across the country to provide advice, helping to balance the needs of water users and minimise impacts on the environment of any dry weather.

Water bodies affected by Blue Green Algae, or Algal Blooms may be green, blue-green or greenish brown and can produce musty, earthy or grassy odours. Blooms can also cause foaming on the shoreline, which can sometimes be confused with sewage pollution. During a bloom, the water also becomes less clear, blocking sunlight and stopping plants in the water from growing.

Blue Green Algae naturally occurs in inland waters, estuaries and the sea. Blooms can form when their numbers become excessive. Once algal numbers are high, the bloom is likely to persist throughout the season, declining only on the onset of winter conditions.

Bloom and scum forming blue-green algae can produce toxins. Toxin producing blooms are called Harmful Algal Blooms. These toxins can be harmful to wild animals, farm livestock and domestic pets. In humans, they have been known to cause rashes after skin contact and illnesses if swallowed. Not all blue-green algae blooms and scums are toxic, but you can't tell just by looking at them, so it's best to assume they are.

For further information visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/algal-blooms-advice-for-the-public-and-landowners/algal-blooms-advice-for-the-public-and-landowners.

Water is a precious resource and it is always helpful, in terms of future supplies and protecting the environment, for everyone to follow advice on saving water from their water company and use water wisely– especially during a period of dry weather.

Advice on what to look out for, and the effects of blue-green algae, can be found at www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/caringfor/policies/algae.

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Notice: H2O Power Generation Ltd: application made to impound water

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

World news story: Kuwait eMISK opportunities: Invitation to tender

Building on the success of our previous work in Kuwait, the Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Cefas will work jointly to develop an extensive understanding of Kuwait's marine environment, which will improve and energise both national and regional ocean governance to protect the Gulfs' marine ecosystems. This will help sustain regional food and water

security and support sustainable economic growth and diversification.

Utilising marine expertise within Cefas, the project will promote international best practice and address prominent issues including those of marine litter pollution and the protection of critically endangered species and habitats that are located within the Gulf.

To deliver the programme, Cefas will require the support of subcontractors. Details of these opportunities and on how to bid are available the Cefas website.