

Non-native species policy in the UK and EU

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Legislative background

Convention on Biological Diversity 1992 (Rio Summit)

- European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species (ESIAS) adopted at Bern Convention 2003
- Implemented through EU Council Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats and Species Directive)
- Implemented in the UK through Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (additions through CROW Act)

UK Legislation

- **Offence under WCA to cause certain species to be ‘released into the wild’**
- **Rhododendron not on the list**
- **Very limited!**

Recent changes

- **Defra review of non-native species 2003 leading to legislative proposals**

Proposals

- **Listed species to include those posing a potential threat?**
- **Require action to be taken?**
- **Codes of practice**
- **Non-native species on weeds list?**
- **Ban on sale of certain non-native species?**

Some Questions

- **Will rhododendron be listed?**
- **Will any new legislation be implemented?**
- **What resources will be available?**
- **Will Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland go further?**

Summary of current situation

- **Legislation is poorly drafted, of insufficient breadth and ineffective**
- **Changes need to be resourced to be effective**
- **Advisors to UK government on nature conservation have no policies on control of invasive species**

Further questions

- **Do practitioners need support at a policy level?**
- **Should policy be a bottom up approach?**
- **Would a common policy between all sectors be a stronger one?**
- **Our attitude to ‘non-native’ species given future climate change?**

