

Civic Offices, Limerick Road,  
Nenagh, County Tipperary



James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and  
Christopher O'Sullivan T.D., Minister of State with Special responsibility for Nature, Heritage, and  
Biodiversity.

Custom House,  
Dublin 1,  
D01 W6X0.

15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**Re: Water Forum Recommendations and Advice to address the management of IAS in Ireland**

Dear Ministers Browne and O'Sullivan,

In 2023, the Water Forum submitted policy recommendations and advice on the management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Ireland to Minister O'Brien and Minister Noonan, and to officials of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). These policy recommendations were based on research commissioned by the Water Forum. Some progress has been made since then, the European Union Invasive Alien Species Regulations 2024 have been signed into Irish law, and a Shared Island IAS Forum has been established. The Forum is, however, now bringing to your attention that many of the remaining policy recommendations are still to be addressed. Insufficient management of IAS leaves Ireland at significant risk of non-compliance with EU and national law and at risk of incurring greater damage and costs resulting from failure to deal promptly and adequately with the threat of existing and new invasive alien species.

The National Biodiversity Action Plan published in 2024 includes an action that reflects the Forum's main recommendation, **the establishment of a suitably resourced, single lead division with overall responsibility for the management of IAS in Ireland**, working under the aegis of the NPWS. The Forum believes that without such a body the national IAS legislation published in 2024 cannot be adequately implemented as there is no authorised and dedicated unit to develop, implement, enforce, and monitor IAS Management Plans. This single lead division would ensure coherent engagement across various Government Departments, sectors, and agencies. This body needs to be set up as a matter of urgency and fully resourced to do its work.

The Forum also recommended that a **National Invasive Alien Species Biosecurity Strategy** be developed, which is also included as an action in the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2024. To date this action has not been progressed and the Forum is of the view it should be addressed as a priority. This Strategy should outline the roadmap to managing IAS, along with identifying key roles and responsibilities. It should include National Guidelines and Biosecurity Protocols to ensure the best

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possible biosecurity practice. To support implementation and enforcement, adequate funding and staffing resources are essential along with the development and rollout of comprehensive training programmes. To ensure full execution of a National Biosecurity Strategy, training for all Government Departments, agencies and responsible stakeholders is essential, as is the development of a national awareness campaign for the wider public.

Invasive Alien Species in aquatic ecosystems are often a hidden problem. The Water Forum's research highlights the significant financial and ecosystem burden posed by inaction to control the entry of new and management of established Invasive Alien Species. Any costs for the development and implementation of a National IAS Biosecurity Strategy will be significantly less than the cost of inaction.

The Forum is now advising you to take the necessary steps to establish a suitably resourced, single lead division within the National Parks and Wildlife Service with overall responsibility for the management of IAS in Ireland and to prepare and implement a National Invasive Alien Species Biosecurity Strategy so that every effort is taken to protect ecosystems and minimise future costs from IAS.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our advice in greater detail and are available to do so at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Matt Crowe  
Chair

cc:

*Niall Ó'Donnchú, Assistant Secretary, Heritage Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Fintan Toweey, Assistant Secretary, Water Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

- [Letter-to-Minister-OBrien-regarding-Invasive-Alien-Species-Management\\_April\\_2023.pdf](#)
- [Water-Forum-Invasive-Alien-Species-Policy-Brief.pdf](#)
- [Water-Forum-Submission-to-NPWS-Strategy-Statement-13122022.pdf](#)
- [Lucy-et-al.-Invasive-Alien-Species-Report\\_Policy-Recommendations-for-their-Management.pdf](#)