



Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative – landscape scale management delivered locally

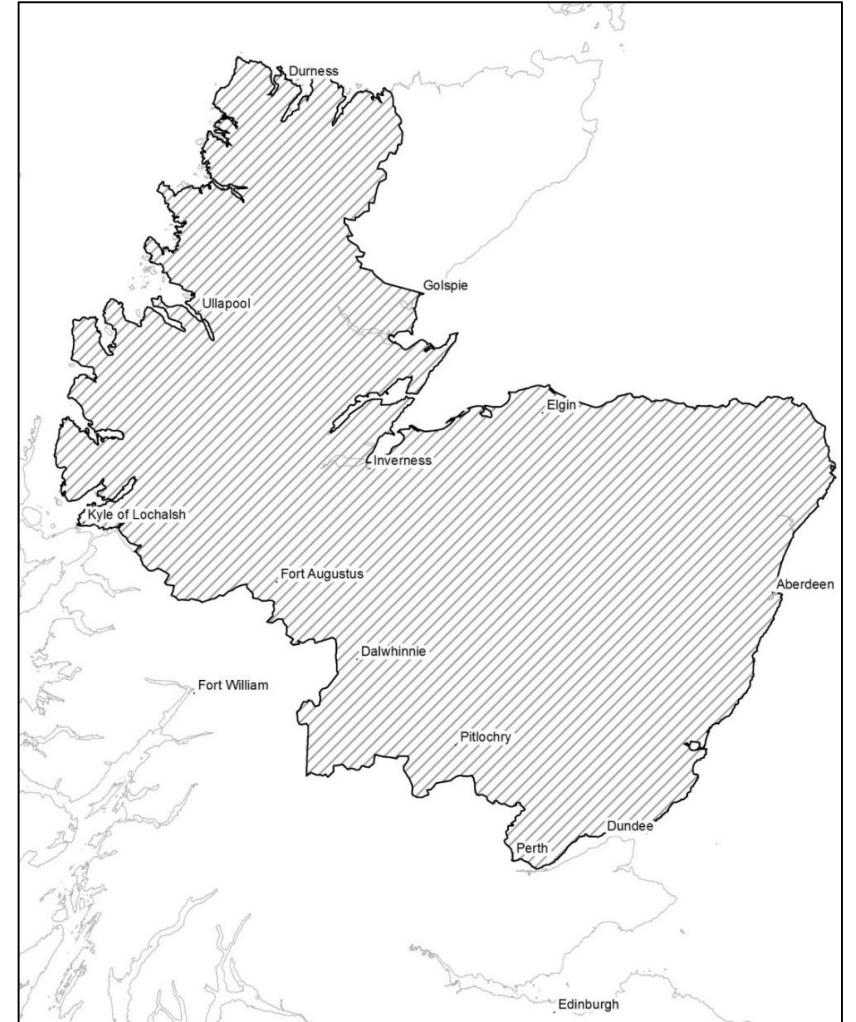
Callum Sinclair (NatureScot)

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative - Project Manager



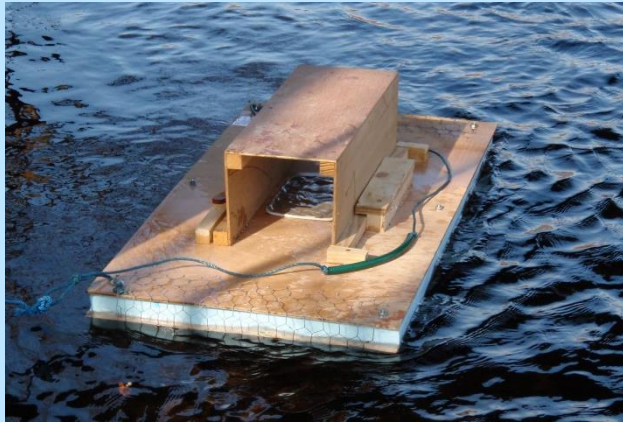
Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

- 5 year project (2018 - 2023)
- Working at a local level with partners and volunteers to establish community-based strategic **invasive non-native species** management across 29,500km² of mainland Scotland
- Engaging people with their local river environment
- Largest invasive species control project in British Isles



Project activities -

American mink control



Invasive plant control



Education & awareness



Scale of invasive plant control activity (2018 – 2022)

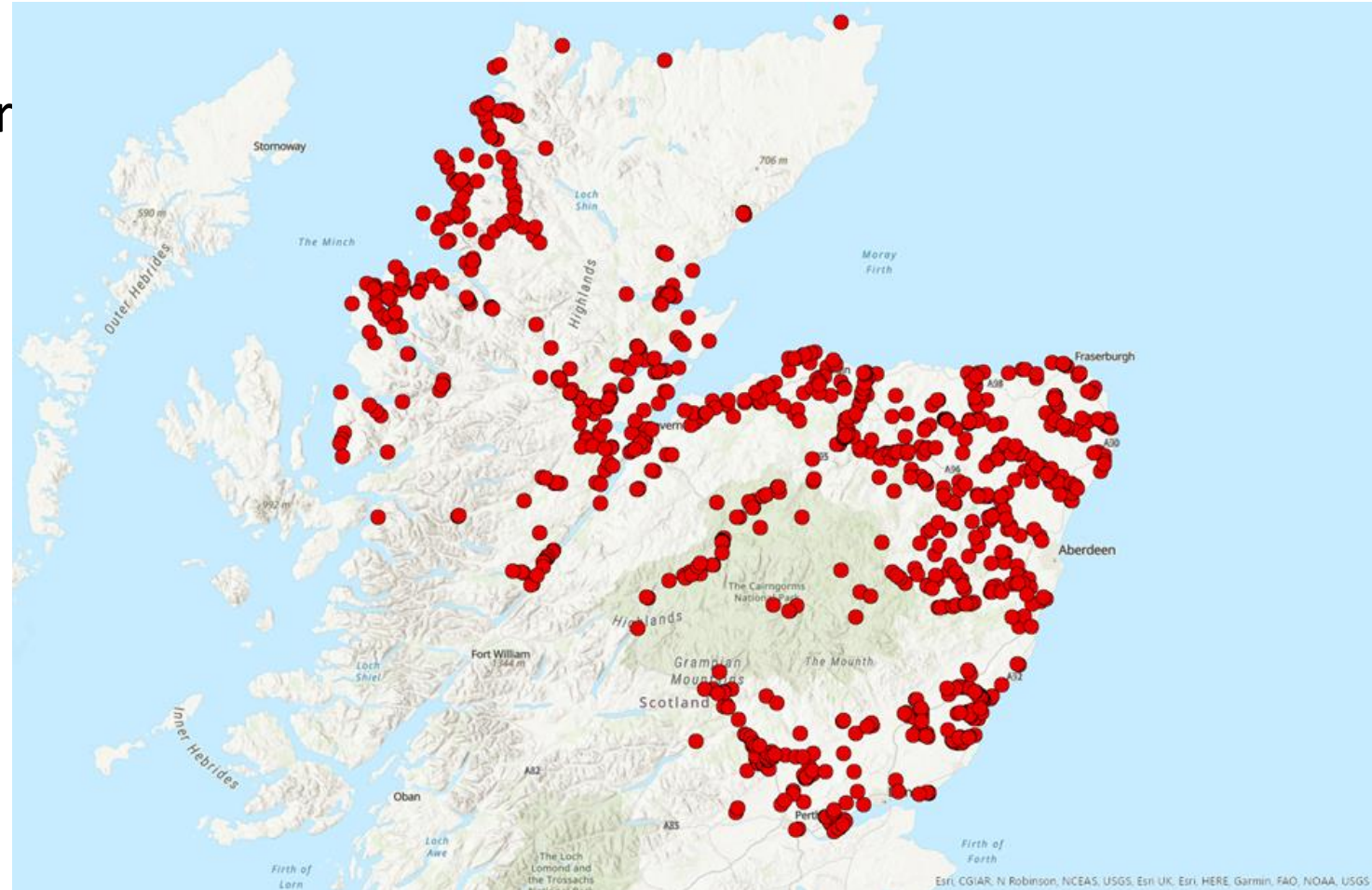
- Control programme is extensive –
 - Circa 400 individual sites under management (many with multiple species)
 - Up to 468 volunteers per year (average 272/year)
 - 2,936km managed for giant hogweed (average 734km/year)
 - 213,898k Japanese knotweed stems injected
 - 645 volunteer days pulling Himalayan balsam
- All sites have records of –
 - method of control,
 - time taken to undertake control,
 - chemical volumes used.
- Monitored sites have records of plant abundance
- Range of specific site studies at –

<https://www.invasivespecies.scot/case-studies>



Mink control activity (2018 – 2022)

- 43 river catchments
- 673 mink rafts and traps operational
- Average of 323 volunteers active/year providing 86,660 hours to project
- 557 mink despatched



People power: volunteer contributions – 2018/2022

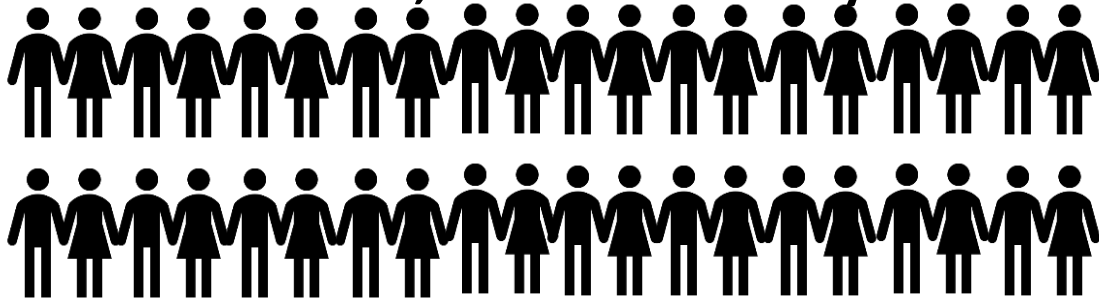
Mink Control



86,660 volunteer hours

107,618 volunteer hours

15,374 volunteer days

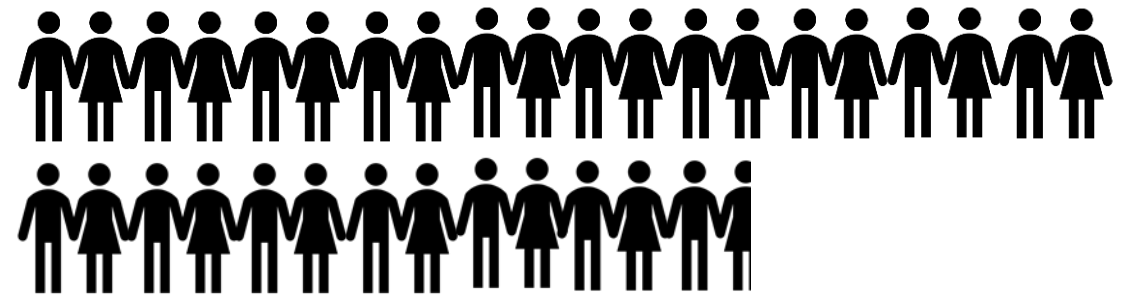


Plant Control



20,958 volunteer hours

Equivalent to ~73 staff years +



Scottish Invasive Species Initiative



Learning training and outreach -

- **158 (and counting!)** volunteers gained pesticide application / first aid qualifications
- **367** school, college and other groups learnt about invasive species
- **200** events, talks and walks delivered to 5,561 people
- Invasive species films made by **5** primary school classes
<https://www.invasivespecies.scot/schools-film-project>



A sustainable future?



Key to success – People, communities, volunteers



Scottish Invasive Species Initiative



Biosecurity plan preparation

- Biosecurity management plans consider prevention, detection and control of non-native species in an area.
- Set out the actions and responsibilities of partners on invasive species issues.
- Identify and highlight species of highest prevention or control priority, risk of introduction and impact if established.
- Prepared x11 new plans (originals in 2012).
- www.invasivespecies.scot/river-biosecurity-plans





Alien Detectives

- Free, online materials for schools and groups or individuals as part of home / class learning
 - www.invasivespecies.scot/alien-detectives

People power

15,324 volunteer days – equivalent to

73 full time people

working on the project



Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

2018 – 2022

www.invasivespecies.scot

Controlling invasive non-native plants



272

Volunteers undertaking
plant control
(average/year)

645

Himalayan balsam pulling days



213,898

Japanese knotweed stems
injected (equivalent)



734km

River length managed
for Giant hogweed
(average/year)



2,944

Volunteer days
controlling plants



557

Mink captured



323

Mink volunteers
(average/year)



12,380

Volunteer days
monitoring rafts & traps



562

Volunteer monitored
mink rafts & traps (average/year)



Stopping mink in their tracks

5

Invasive non-native species
films made by Primary Schools



Learning & training

52

Events attended



158

Volunteers gained
formal qualifications

11

Biosecurity plans written



200

walks & talks
delivered to
5,561 people



8,307

school & college students
learned about invasive
species in **367** sessions



'Alien Detectives' education
resources used with **68** school groups

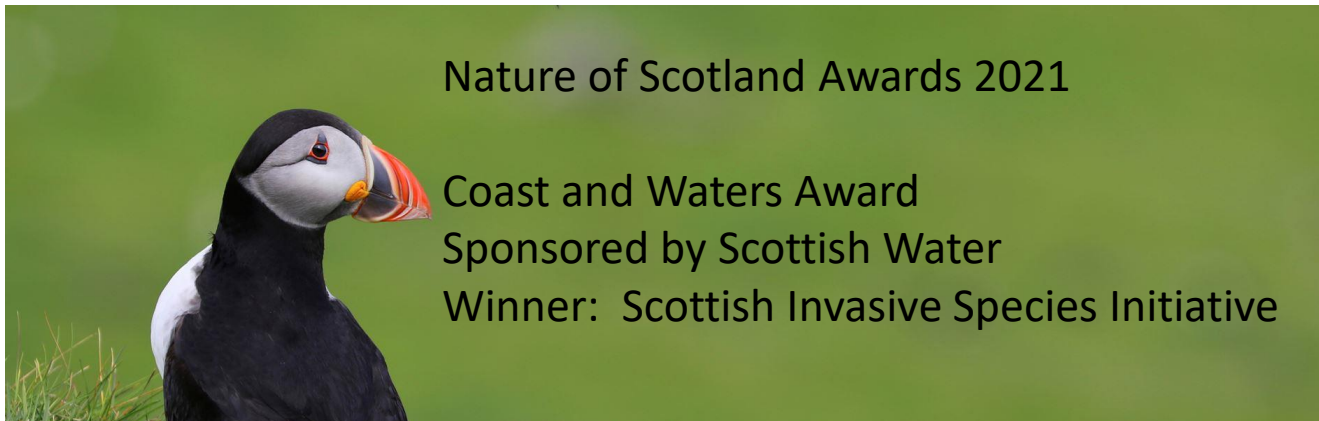
Scottish Invasive Species Initiative



Our partners & funders

- National Lottery Heritage Fund (£1.59M), NatureScot (£500k), in-kind support (£1.25M) – total value = £3.34M
- 10 Fishery trusts/boards (local delivery partners) and the University of Aberdeen





So what next?

- Programme ends September 2023
- Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund approved a £2M award to –
 - Continue programme to end March 2026 with enhanced project team
 - Maintain and protect gains and progress made to date
 - Move plant control “downstream” to new areas
 - Current plant control locations now in manageable position with land managers assuming future responsibility in many areas
 - Maintain and expand mink control programme



Some personal thanks.....

- **Project partners** – all of them – for getting the job done in sometimes difficult circumstances
- **Project team** – all the project staff have been (most of the time) a joy to work with
- **Project volunteers** – all of them. Without these people – some of who are here today – we could have achieved little. A huge thank you to everyone who has given time to us.
- Let's do even more..... Let's do even better.....
- www.invasivespecies.scot
- sisi@nature.scot

