

ABSTRACT

***Lagarosiphon major* in Irish Watercourses – Awareness and Control**

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The highly aggressive submerged aquatic plant species *Lagarosiphon major* (Curly waterweed) was recorded from eight sites in Lough Corrib, the second largest lake in Ireland, in 2005. One year later the plant had spread to 24 separate locations throughout the upper and middle lake and was posing problems for amenity exploitation, principally brown trout fishing. Where it established it also seriously impacted on the survival and performance of indigenous plant and animal communities. To date, the distribution of *Lagarosiphon* in Ireland has been limited, although recent records reveal that the plant is expanding its range within the country. In order to control the spread of this invasive plant a programme of actions was undertaken. The first involved the development of a public awareness campaign that included the mass production and distribution of leaflets and calendars. The second focused on developing method to physically control or remove the plant from the lake. In one of the bays in Lough Corrib that is worst affected by *Lagarosiphon* a series of scientifically controlled trials was undertaken in late 2006 and early 2007. Methods trialled included the use of herbicides, mechanical cutting, hand removal using divers, suction dredging and light occlusion using submerged geotextile. The results from these trials and information on the impact of this plant on indigenous biological communities in the lake will be presented.