

Draft: Biosecurity Guidance for Wild Trout Trust Conservation Officers

By practicing good biosecurity, WTT COs are working to minimise the risk of spread of non-native species, plant and animal pests, as well as their parasites and diseases, when working in the field.

Levels of biosecurity

The GB Non-Native Species Secretariat recognises three levels of biosecurity based upon the risk posed by an activity being conducted and the area in which it is taking place. These are:

1. Basic Level

All visits to any field sites. This includes visual inspections carried out from the bank (without entering the water) during Advisory Visits.

2. Medium level

Visits to aquatic ecosystems with known invasive non-native species e.g. killer & demon shrimp, swamp stonecrop, *Azolla* etc.

Handling of plants for example in removal operations (e.g. Japanese knotweed / Himalayan balsam) during restoration work.

Handling of animals (e.g. signal crayfish) during invertebrate assessments for Advisory Visits

3. High level

Surveying/sampling in aquatic situations involving many sites in different parts of the catchment/country.

Visiting areas with ongoing/recent disease outbreaks – e.g. known chytrid infection or outbreak of crayfish plague

WTT COs assume the ‘worst case scenario’ and, to counter any unknown risks, adhere to the following biosecurity guidelines

1. Plan visits so that the most risky site is the last of the day i.e. up a gradient of potential risk.
2. Arrive at the site with clean vehicle and footwear*; see 7.
3. Keep access to a minimum. If practical don't take vehicles onto riparian land and keep to established tracks. Try to park vehicles on hard-standing, avoiding livestock areas where possible.
4. Clean & disinfect* footwear before vacating the site, if practically possible; otherwise, at a designated site at the end of the day (usually a CO's home).
5. If a vehicle has entered a riparian area, ensure tyres and wheel arches are adequately cleaned and disinfected (removing any accumulated mud before vacating the site if practically possible); otherwise, as for 4.



6. Disinfect* clothing and hands if amphibians, fish or invertebrates are handled. Avoid contact with dead or dying specimens.
7. Between visits, follow the Check, Clean, Dry protocol for all clothing and equipment. When drying between visits is impractical, then use Virkon (following Bradbeer et al 2020) or immersion in hot water (45°C) for 15 minutes (following Anderson et al 2015).

It is extremely rare that WTT COs undertake field work involving many sites in different parts of the catchment/country within a limited time frame. Hence equipment and clothing should have been checked, cleaned, disinfected / immersed / dried in between visits. For the purposes of an Advisory Visit to a site with potentially infectious material (e.g. known chytrid infection or crayfish plague), COs should avoid entering the water.

*WTT Use Virkon tablets to routinely disinfect clothing and equipment in the field, following the manufacturer's recommendations for use.

References – both of these papers are freely available to download by clicking the link

[Anderson et al. \(2015\) Invaders in hot water: a simple decontamination method to prevent the accidental spread of aquatic invasive non-native species. Biological Invasions 17, 2287-2297](#)

[Bradbeer et al \(2020\) The effectiveness of disinfectant and steam exposure treatments to prevent the spread of the highly invasive killer shrimp, *Dikerogammarus villosus*. Scientific Reports 10; Article 1919.](#)

J. Grey

Updated: April 2022