

Floating pennywort

Floating pennywort is an invasive species of aquatic plant that can spread very quickly and cause serious problems in our rivers. We need your help to keep it under control



Fleshy stalks with shiny kidney shaped, leaves up to 7cm wide

Current status

Floating pennywort is widespread and well established in several areas of England, including parts of the River Thames and its tributaries.

Once present it can grow up to 20 cm a day, quickly establishing dense mats of vegetation that can; out-compete native species, dominate watercourses, obstruct boats, prevent angling, and potentially increase flood risk.



Map of floating pennywort presence in the Middle to Lower Thames

What we have done to manage it

We have been managing the spread of floating pennywort on the tributaries of the Thames for several years as part of our annual maintenance programme.

However ideal growing conditions last year enabled it to quickly spread on the Thames. In response to this, during the autumn of 2017, our Operations Field Teams removed floating pennywort in the Thames from Blakes lock on the River Kennet in Reading to Marsh weir near Henley-on-Thames.

In the first part of 2018 we removed floating pennywort at locations including: Blakes lock, Sonning (Berkshire), Sunbury (Surrey), the Hennerton Backwater (near Shiplake), the Abbey River near Chertsey and the River Wey where it joins the Thames at Weybridge in Surrey.

So far we have successfully removed over 60 tonnes of floating pennywort



Environment Agency Operations Field Team removing floating pennywort from the River Thames at Sonning in 2017

What we are doing next

During the growing season, from early spring and throughout the summer, we will be regularly surveying for and managing floating pennywort in watercourses where it has been sighted or previously removed.

We will also continue to work with our partners and landowners to manage and control floating pennywort where possible.

What you can do to help

We would like you to help us. If you see floating pennywort please report its location by:

- Emailing us: enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk

Not sure if it is floating pennywort?

- Look at the plant tracker website or download the app at www.plantracker.org.uk
- You can also report sightings using the plant tracker app.