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## **Combining global climate and regional landscape models to improve prediction of invasion risk**

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1 **Title: Combining global climate and regional landscape models to improve prediction of**  
2 **invasion risk**

3

4 **Running title:** Multi-scale models of invasion risk

5

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14

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16

17 **(A) Abstract**

18

19 **Aim**

20 It is widely acknowledged that species distributions result from a variety of biotic and abiotic  
21 factors operating at different spatial scales. Here, we have aimed to: i) determine the extent to  
22 which global climate niche models can be improved by the addition of fine-scale regional  
23 data; ii) examine climatic and environmental factors influencing the range of 15 invasive  
24 aquatic plant species; and iii) provide a case study for the use of such models in invasion  
25 management on an island.

26 **Location**

27 Global, with a case study of species invasions in Ireland.

28 **Methods**

29 Climate niche models of global extent (including climate only) and regional environmental  
30 niche models (with additional factors such as human influence, land use and soil  
31 characteristics) were generated using MaxEnt for 15 invasive aquatic plants. The  
32 performance of these models within the invaded range of the study species in Ireland was  
33 assessed, and potential hotspots of invasion suitability were determined. Models were  
34 projected forward up to 2080 based on two climate scenarios.

35 **Results**

36 While climate variables are important in defining the global range of species, factors related  
37 to land use and nutrient level were of greater importance in regional projections. Global  
38 climatic models were significantly improved at the island scale by the addition of fine-scale  
39 environmental variables (Area Under the Curve values increased by 0.18 and True Skill  
40 Statistic by 0.36), and projected areas decreased from an average of 86% to 36% of the  
41 island.

42 **Conclusion**

43 Refining climate niche models with regional data on land use, human influence and landscape  
44 may have a substantial impact on predictive capacity, providing greater value for  
45 prioritisation of conservation management at sub-regional or local scales.

46

47 **Keywords:** Aquatic, climate change, freshwater, invasive, macrophyte, MaxEnt.

## 48 (A) Introduction

49 Projections of the future range of invasive species based on climate niche models have  
50 become increasingly prevalent (Thuiller *et al.*, 2005; Jiménez-Valverde *et al.*, 2011). Niche  
51 models are a type of species distribution model that employs correlative techniques to  
52 estimate the environmental niche of species based on species distribution data and maps of  
53 environmental variables. This estimated species niche is then used to infer species occurrence  
54 or habitat suitability. In invasion ecology, niche models are most commonly used to predict  
55 'risk' of invasion based on suitability rather than species occurrence per se. Niche models  
56 have identified likely source regions of 'high risk' invaders (e.g. Thuiller *et al.*, 2005), as well  
57 as 'hotspots' where multiple invasions are most likely to occur (Ibáñez *et al.*, 2009;  
58 O'Donnell *et al.*, 2012) and, conversely, areas where invasive species may decline, creating  
59 potential for restoration of native communities (e.g. Bradley *et al.*, 2009).

60 Species distributions result from a variety of biotic and abiotic factors operating at  
61 different spatial scales (Gaston, 2003). In invasion biology, this is often conceptualised as a  
62 set of abiotic filters (Theohairdes & Dukes, 2007; Milbau *et al.*, 2009). Hence, while climate  
63 limits species distributions at global scales, the prediction of invasion risk on regional scales  
64 is likely to be improved by information on factors such as land use, soil or water nutrient  
65 concentrations, pH and human influence. The relative importance of climate versus other  
66 environmental variables in niche modelling has been investigated for various invasive species  
67 within regions or continents (e.g. Thuiller *et al.*, 2006; Nielsen *et al.*, 2008; Ibanéz *et al.*,  
68 2009; Capinha & Anastácio, 2011; Jarnevich *et al.*, 2011; Compton *et al.*, 2012). Further  
69 studies have shown the importance of topography, habitat, microclimate and water  
70 availability in determining species distributions at smaller spatial scales (e.g. Bossenbroek *et*  
71 *al.*, 2004; Evangelista *et al.*, 2006; Gillingham *et al.*, 2012). However, the optimal method for  
72 selecting predictor variables and their appropriate spatial scales in niche models remains

73 uncertain (Austin & Kimberley, 2011), and is likely to depend on the organism being  
74 modelled (Araújo & Guisan, 2006).

75 The appropriate spatial extent of a study region depends largely on the aims of the study  
76 and the nature of the study species (Elith & Leathwick, 2009). Climate niche models with a  
77 global extent are most likely to be useful for modelling species with broad climatic niches  
78 and high dispersal capacity such as invasive species. Niche models that include climate data  
79 from only either the native or the invaded range of species tend to underestimate potential  
80 niche space (Beaumont *et al.*, 2009; Jiménez-Valverde *et al.*, 2011). For this reason, several  
81 recent authors have used global distribution data to create niche models of invasion risk based  
82 on global climate. However, these models rarely incorporate fine-scale data, for example, on  
83 local nutrient availability, pH or soil characteristics. This is probably due to the lack of  
84 reliable data on such characteristics globally.

85 Another challenge in constructing global niche models may be the considerable  
86 uncertainty regarding the precision of species distribution records in global datasets, hence  
87 larger grid cells may be more appropriate for building global models. Conversely, national  
88 and regional species databases usually have high precision. Here we demonstrate how it may  
89 be useful to combine the outputs of global climate niche models with regional niche models  
90 in order to create integrated models which make better use of all available datasets.

91 We examined the global climatic factors influencing the distribution of 15 invasive  
92 freshwater plants considered 'high risk' in Europe. Aquatic plants are primary components of  
93 freshwater ecosystems and invasive species have the capacity to fundamentally alter  
94 ecosystem functioning. However, to date climate niche models of freshwater ecosystems  
95 have focused mainly on animals (e.g. Liu *et al.*, 2011; Reshetnikov & Ficetola, 2011) and few  
96 studies have used climate niche models to examine the global distributions of invasive  
97 aquatic plants.

98 We provide a simple method for the amalgamation of global climate niche models with  
99 regional data on land use, human influence, soil and water characteristics for the invaded  
100 range, and show how this significantly changes predictive capacity at the regional scale.  
101 Specifically, we aimed to i) determine the extent to which global climate niche models can be  
102 improved by the addition of fine-scale regional data, ii) examine the factors governing the  
103 range of key invasive aquatic plant species, and iii) provide a case study for the use of such  
104 models in invasion management on an island.

105

106 **(A) Methods**

107

108 **(B) Species selection**

109 We modelled the distributions of eight non-native aquatic plants which are currently  
110 established invasives in Ireland (*Azolla filiculoides* Lam., *Crassula helmsii* (Kirk) Cockayne,  
111 *Elodea canadensis* Michx., *Elodea nuttallii* H. St. John, *Lagarosiphon major* (Ridl.) Moss,  
112 *Lemna minuta* (Kunth), *Myriophyllum aquaticum* (Vell.) Verdc and *Nymphoides peltata*  
113 (S.G. Gmel.) Kuntze). These species represent a range of introduction dates from 1836 to  
114 1993. In addition we modelled seven potentially high-risk species which are either not  
115 currently present in Ireland (*Cabomba caroliniana* A. Gray, *Eichhornia crassipes* (Mart.)  
116 Solms, and *Salvinia molesta* D.S. Mitch) or present at less than 5 locations in Ireland (*Egeria*  
117 *densa* Planch., *Hydrilla verticillata* (L.f.) Royle, *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* L.f., *Ludwigia*  
118 *grandiflora* (Michx) Greuter & Burdet). These were chosen based on the European and  
119 Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) lists of high risk species  
120 ([http://www.eppo.int/invasive\\_plants/ias\\_plants.htm](http://www.eppo.int/invasive_plants/ias_plants.htm)). *H. verticillata* is a cryptogenic species  
121 in Europe and its origin and status in Ireland are unclear. The native status of the species in  
122 Ireland has been questioned due to its isolated distribution, distance from its native range,  
123 sub-optimal growth conditions and the occurrence of female plants only (Minchin, 2007).  
124 The decision to include this species reflects this uncertainty.

125

126 **(B) Niche models**

127 Firstly, niche models fitted with global climate data (Climate Niche Models (CNMs)) were  
128 constructed for all species based on global distribution data. Secondly, for all 8 species which  
129 are established in the study region (Ireland), niche models fitted with regional land cover  
130 data, human influence, soil characteristics and climate suitability outputs from global CNMs



131 were constructed using species distributions within Ireland (hereafter regional Environmental  
132 Niche Models (ENMs)). The projected output raster from the global CNM, representing the  
133 climatic suitability of each cell for the target species, was included as an explanatory variable  
134 in regional ENMs.

135 This two-stage integrated modelling approach was adopted for a number of reasons.  
136 Firstly, it was not appropriate to build a climate suitability model based solely on Ireland or  
137 Europe as the potential climatic range of each species was likely to be larger than either  
138 region. Niche models that incorporate global climate data and global species distributions are  
139 likely to be important when projecting species ranges into future climates which are novel to  
140 the study region, but similar to current climates elsewhere. Secondly, reliable fine-scale  
141 regional data were sometimes available only for Ireland (e.g. water nutrient content) or  
142 Europe (e.g. CORINE land cover maps) and were, therefore, best suited to regional scale  
143 modelling. Thirdly, uncertainty regarding the precision of records obtained from global  
144 databases made them unsuitable for regional model building. Our two-stage approach  
145 allowed for the incorporation of global climatic data into regional ENMs. Models were built  
146 using MaxEnt 3.3.3k (Phillips *et al.*, 2010).

147

#### 148 **(B) Global Climate Niche Models (CNMs)**

149 Data on the recorded distribution of each species were downloaded from the Global  
150 Biodiversity Information Facility data portal ([www.gbif.org](http://www.gbif.org)). Records with no location  
151 coordinates were excluded from the dataset; >97% of included records had a precision of  
152 greater than 0.1 decimal degrees. Records prior to 1950 were excluded to match the  
153 timeframe for the 'current' climate data (1950-2000). Species had between 122 and 4,474  
154 records (mean = 1,395). Records from both native and invaded ranges were used to avoid  
155 underestimation of climatic niche space. All species included had invaded ranges outside the

156 island of Ireland, and all species present in Ireland were also invasive in other climatically  
157 similar regions (e.g. the UK). Plant records from Ireland were not included in the global  
158 CNMs as these records would be used in training and testing of subsequent regional models.  
159 Ireland is small and has a narrow range of climatic conditions which were not novel when  
160 compared with global training data. This assumption was validated after model fitting by  
161 examining the multivariate environmental similarity surface (MESS) output from MaxEnt  
162 (following Elith *et al.*, 2010).

163 Standard climatic variables were downloaded from WorldClim at a 2.5° cell resolution  
164 (<http://www.worldclim.org/bioclim>). A total of 8 variables were used, namely annual mean  
165 temperature (Bio1), temperature seasonality (Bio4), maximum temperature of warmest month  
166 (Bio5), minimum temperature of coldest month (Bio6), annual precipitation (Bio12),  
167 precipitation seasonality (Bio15), mean precipitation of wettest quarter (Bio16) and  
168 precipitation of driest quarter (Bio17). These variables were selected based on their relevance  
169 to the ecology of freshwater plants. All other WorldClim variables were excluded in order to  
170 reduce multi-collinearity and subsequent model over-fitting (Jiménez-Valverde *et al.*, 2011).  
171 Terrestrial climate variables will not exactly reflect the conditions of freshwater systems;  
172 however, terrestrial climate data have been shown to be an effective proxy for shallow waters  
173 (e.g. Reshetnikov & Ficetola, 2011).

174 Forecast projections for future climatic scenarios were from the International Panel on  
175 Climate Change (IPCC) 4<sup>th</sup> assessment report (IPCC, 2007), in particular, the Special Report  
176 Emissions Scenarios (SRES) 'A2' ("high energy requirements and emissions") and 'B2'  
177 ("low energy requirements and emissions"). Spatial climate projections were the CSIRO  
178 MK2 global climate model for each scenario for the 2020s (2010 to 2039), 2050s (2050 to  
179 2069) and 2080s (2070 to 2099) and were downloaded from <http://www.ccafsc->  
180 [climate.org/data/](http://www.ccafsc-climate.org/data/).

181 Plant records were split into a 75% model ‘training set’ and a 25% model ‘test set’.  
182 Duplicate records were excluded. A combination of linear, quadratic and product features  
183 was used for estimating the response of each species to each predictor variable. Extrapolation  
184 was not used so climate suitability was not projected where conditions were outside the range  
185 of the training data (i.e. background and presence data).

186 Presence-only modelling techniques are particularly susceptible to recorder-bias (Phillips  
187 *et al.*, 2009; Yackulic *et al.*, 2013), due to the fact that they rely on random background data  
188 points rather than recorded absences. Sample bias can be minimised in MaxEnt by restricting  
189 the selection of background points to represent the environmental conditions that were  
190 sampled (Elith *et al.*, 2011). Here, we used GBIF records of two major aquatic plant families  
191 (Hydrocharitaceae and Menyanthaceae) to account for the distribution of recording effort of  
192 aquatic botanists. These plant families have a cosmopolitan distribution, and contain only  
193 aquatic and semi-aquatic species. Background points ( $n = 10,000$ ) were chosen exclusively  
194 from locations in which these aquatic plant families or the invasive species studied were  
195 recorded, rather than assuming uniform recording effort.

196

## 197 **(B) Regional Environmental Niche Models (ENMs)**

198 Data on species distributions in Ireland were collated from local government agencies, data  
199 providers and botanical societies (see Appendix S1 in Supporting Information). Regional  
200 ENMs were built using Irish data only and within the spatial extent of the island (for those 8  
201 species already established in Ireland). Records with a resolution of  $>100$  m were excluded in  
202 order to match the cell size of the environmental data. As with the global dataset, duplicates  
203 and records pre-1950 were excluded. Species had between 13 and 1,646 records (mean =  
204 262) (data from within Ireland only).

205 Environmental variables were chosen based on ecological relevance to study species, with  
206 both “direct” and “indirect” associations with the distributions of study species (Austin,  
207 2007). Variables included were human impact i.e. propagule transport and disturbance  
208 facilitating establishment (Buchan & Padilla, 2000; Aznar *et al.*, 2003; Leung, 2006; Capers  
209 *et al.*, 2009); land use, including forestry (Buchan & Padilla, 2000) and agriculture (Heegaard  
210 *et al.*, 2001) which affect aquatic species indirectly due to their impact on surface water run-  
211 off and water chemistry; and physicochemical parameters directly influencing plant growth  
212 including pH, nutrient availability, substratum types and amount of standing freshwater  
213 (Heegaard *et al.*, 2001; Capers *et al.*, 2009; Alahuhta *et al.*, 2011).

214 Landscape composition was derived from CORINE Land Cover maps (EEA, 2002).  
215 Specifically, the coverage of arable land, broad-leaved woodland, coniferous plantations,  
216 pasture, urban and standing freshwater was quantified at seven candidate spatial scales (0.5  
217 km, 1.5 km, 2.5 km, 4.5 km, 6.5 km, 10.5 km and 20.5 km) and attributed to the central 0.5  
218 km grid cell around which they had been extracted. These spatial scales were chosen to  
219 represent the scales on which land use and human influence could plausibly influence the  
220 establishment of aquatic plants. The total length of riparian corridor and an index of human  
221 influence, representing a proxy for human-mediated vectors of dispersal, were also quantified  
222 at the same scales. The Human Influence Index was a composite of population density, access  
223 infrastructure (major roads, railways, navigable rivers and coastline) and night-time light  
224 emissions downloaded from the Socio-Economic Data and Applications Centre (Wildlife  
225 Conservation Society & Center for International Earth Science Information Network, 2005).

226 Nutrient concentrations were obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency of  
227 Ireland (EPA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), expressed as  
228 ‘orthophosphate’ (mg/l) measured at river monitoring sites. Data for missing areas were  
229 interpolated between empirical data points using the Kriging function in the Spatial Analyst

230 toolbar for ArcGIS 10.1 (ESRI, California, USA). Soil pH was taken as a proxy of water pH  
231 and downloaded from <http://eussoils.jrc.ec.europa.eu>. Soil type (texture) was expressed as a  
232 categorical variable representing levels of mineral coarseness (Gardi *et al.*, 2008).  
233 Orthophosphate, soil pH and soil texture were expressed at the 0.5 km scale. The projected  
234 output raster from the global CNM for each species, representing the climatic suitability of  
235 each cell for the target species, was also incorporated into the regional ENMs.

236 As with global records, Irish records were biased due to sampling effort. However, the  
237 nature of this bias differed from that of the GBIF records. Aquatic plants have been  
238 systematically recorded throughout Ireland in the vast majority of lakes and rivers (as part of  
239 European Water Framework Directive monitoring). Hence, it was not necessary to use the  
240 recording of other major aquatic plant species as a proxy for aquatic plant recording.  
241 However, it was evident that the volume of recording per unit area for Northern Ireland was  
242 substantially greater than that in the Republic of Ireland. To account for the  
243 disproportionately high density of records in Northern Ireland, a 'bias' layer was constructed  
244 with values of 1 for the Republic of Ireland and 10 for Northern Ireland based on relative  
245 prevalence of records of the most commonly recorded species (*Elodea canadensis*). This bias  
246 layer was included in MaxEnt models (following Elith *et al.*, 2011). Models of invasive  
247 species may also be biased when background data are included from outside the area where  
248 the target species has had the opportunity to colonise (Elith *et al.*, 2010; Jiménez-Valverde *et*  
249 *al.*, 2011). Therefore, background points ( $n=10,000$ ) were randomly selected within the  
250 'invaded range' of each species (based on the minimum convex polygons (MCP) that  
251 included all records).

252 Prior to final model construction, separate models were constructed for each land use  
253 variable and the Human Influence Index to ascertain the optimal spatial scale for each  
254 variable for each species. One variable (e.g. area of arable land) was fitted at all seven

255 candidate spatial scales. The optimal spatial scale for each variable was chosen based on the  
256 maximum Area Under the Curve (AUC) value when only one spatial scale was included  
257 (based on Jackknife AUC results for test data; see Appendix S2). Response features were  
258 limited to linear and quadratic excluding product features as we were not interested in  
259 interactions between scales within variables.

260 The final regional ENMs used linear, quadratic and product features. A 10-fold replicated  
261 cross-validation routine was used for all species. The averaged model across replicates was  
262 used for analysis of variable permutation importance and estimated suitable range. As with  
263 global CNMs, all models were projected up to 2080 under A2 and B2 scenarios. All non-  
264 climate variables were held constant in future scenarios.

265

## 266 **(B) Statistical analyses**

267 The projected 'estimated suitable range' was calculated for each species, model and scenario  
268 based on the percentage of grid cells with an occurrence probability of greater than the 10<sup>th</sup>  
269 percentile training presence threshold (providing a conservative estimate allowing records in  
270 suboptimal habitats). Changes in the estimated suitable range were expressed as the increase  
271 or decrease compared to the total land area of Ireland, rather than percentage increase  
272 compared with the current range (e.g. an expansion of estimated suitable range from 20% to  
273 40% of the island was expressed as an increase of 20%, not 100%).

274 For species currently invasive in Ireland ( $n=8$ ) differences in the estimated suitable range  
275 between species, scenarios and years were examined using a General Linear Model (GLM).  
276 Species, model type (i.e. global CNM or regional ENM) and scenario were fitted as fixed  
277 factors, year as an ordinal factor and all two-way interactions were included. GLM residuals  
278 were checked to ensure they conformed to normality.

279 Similarly, for species currently invasive in Ireland the performance of both model types  
280 (global CNMs and regional ENMs) was evaluated using AUC values (as a threshold  
281 independent metric), sensitivity (proportion of presences which are predicted correctly),  
282 specificity (proportion of absences which are predicted correctly) and True Skill Statistic or  
283 TSS (using the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile training presence as the threshold value). TSS is equal to  
284 sensitivity plus specificity minus one and is a prevalence independent model evaluation  
285 metric (Allouche *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, TSS is the only metric in this study which can be  
286 compared between species. TSS ranges from -1 to +1, where 1 indicates perfect agreement  
287 and values of less than 0 indicate models which perform worse than random. We include  
288 sensitivity and specificity separately from AUC and TSS to clarify the relative importance of  
289 omission and commission errors in model performance (Jiménez-Valverde *et al.*, 2008; Lobo  
290 *et al.*, 2008).

291 While specificity conveys important information about commission errors, it should be  
292 interpreted with caution in studies such as this one, where species are not at equilibrium with  
293 the environment. In particular, in the case of invasive species misleading commission errors  
294 are likely to arise in areas which are potentially suitable for species, but which the species  
295 have not yet colonised. Hence, low specificity (i.e. high commission error) may arise when  
296 models are actually accurately predicting areas of suitability which have not yet been  
297 colonised. This is most likely in the early stages of invasion (Václavík & Meentemeyer,  
298 2012). This will affect AUC values, specificity and TSS which all include commission error.  
299 Here, we have minimised this source of error by selecting pseudo-absences from within a  
300 minimum convex polygon containing currently invaded sites.

301 These evaluation statistics were calculated for global and regional models using the same  
302 testing of sub-sets of Irish data and background points within the invaded range in Ireland.  
303 The presence records (test datasets) and numbers of background points were the same as

304 those used in the 10-fold cross-validation of regional ENMs (such that no model was tested  
305 against the same data set that was used to build the model). In our analyses, we focus on  
306 differences in evaluation metrics between global CNMs and regional ENMs within species  
307 where evaluation metrics were calculated on same datasets (hence equal prevalence). Model  
308 performance of global CNMs and regional ENMs was then compared using a Generalised  
309 Linear Model (GLM), with model type and species as fixed factors. A gamma error  
310 distribution with a log link function was used to account for non-normality of the response  
311 variables.

312 The importance of each predictor variable in global CNMs and regional ENMs was  
313 described using the permutation importance (%). For regional ENMs the permutation  
314 importance values were grouped into ‘Land use and nutrient concentration’ (arable farming,  
315 broad-leaved woodland, coniferous plantations, farming type and water nutrient  
316 concentration), ‘Human Influence Index’, ‘Natural landscapes’ (riparian length, soil pH, soil  
317 type and amount of standing freshwater) and ‘Climate’ (output from global CNMs).

318 The estimated suitability of projections for multiple species was calculated for each grid  
319 cell by summing the number of species for which the projected suitability was greater than  
320 the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile training presence threshold under the high emissions scenario. Suitability  
321 for multiple invasive species was mapped and coloured to identify putative hot- and coldspots  
322 of invasion. Mapping and spatial analysis were conducted in ArcGIS 10. Model evaluation  
323 statistics, GLM and GLMM analyses were conducted in R 2.14.1, using the add-on packages  
324 “PresenceAbsence” (Freeman & Moisen, 2008) and “glmmADMB” (Fournier *et al.*, 2012).  
325 Graphs were generated in Sigma Plot 10 (Systat, 2010).

326



327 **(A) Results**

328

329 **(B) Comparison between global CNMs and regional ENMs**

330

331 Regional ENMs had significantly higher AUC, TSS and specificity values than global CNMs,  
332 whilst the opposite was true for sensitivity values (Table 1). Species which showed an  
333 increase in estimated suitable range over time in global CNMs also increased in regional  
334 ENMs, similarly species which showed a decrease in estimated suitable range over time in  
335 global CNMs also decreased in regional ENMs. Estimates of suitable range were  
336 significantly larger in global CNMs than in regional ENMs (Table 1 and Fig. 1).

337

338 **(B) Factors influencing invasive aquatic plant distributions**

339

340 The permutation importance of variables varied considerably between species for both global  
341 climatic and regional landscape variables. In the global CNMs, annual mean temperature  
342 (Bio1) and minimum temperature of coldest month (Bio6) were the most important variables  
343 (Fig. 2 and Appendix S3). In regional ENMs, land use and nutrient concentration variables  
344 had the greatest overall permutation importance. Climate was generally least important in  
345 regional ENMs (Fig. 3 and Appendix S4). However, climate was the single most important  
346 variable associated with the range of *Azolla filiculoides* (permutation importance = 32%),  
347 although for other species it was less informative (permutation importance 0-7%).

348

349 **(B) Case study: Invasion risk in Ireland**

350 The estimated suitable range for each invasive species in Ireland varied between species ( $F =$   
351  $59.31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Changes in the estimated suitable range differed between species, with  
352 some species showing range expansions under projected climate scenarios and some  
353 declining ( $F = 5.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Fig. 1 and Appendix S5). There was an increase in the  
354 estimated suitable range for aquatic invasive plants under both climate scenarios between  
355 current conditions and projections up to 2080 ( $F = 3.54$ ;  $p = 0.018$ ). Typically, such changes  
356 were greater under scenario A2 or high emissions than B2 or low emissions.

357 Global CNMs projected that under the high emissions scenario the estimated suitable  
358 range would increase moderately for three species already well-established in Ireland (*A.*  
359 *filiculoides* +7%, *Lemna minuta* +7% and *Myriophyllum aquaticum* +12%). The ranges of a  
360 further three species recorded from only one or two sites in Ireland were projected to increase  
361 dramatically under the same scenario (*Egeria densa* +91%, *Hydrilla verticillata* +40% and  
362 *Ludwigia grandiflora* +33%). In contrast, the ranges of two well-established species (*Elodea*  
363 *canadensis* -9%, and *E. nuttallii* -32%), were projected to decrease under this scenario.  
364 Concurrently, there was projected to be little change in three well-established species  
365 (*Crassula helmsii*, *Lemna major* and *Nymphoides peltata*). Current and future climates were  
366 projected to be unsuitable for three 'high risk' invaders (*Cabomba caroliniana*, *Eichhornia*  
367 *crassipes* and *Salvinia molesta*) and indicated that the climate may remain unsuitable for  
368 these species until at least 2080. *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* is present at only a few sites but  
369 projections indicated that climate is currently, and will remain, very suitable.

370 Regional ENMs projected that the estimated suitable range under high emissions would  
371 increase for two of the three species which were also projected to increase using the global  
372 CNM models (*A. filiculoides* +22% and *M. aquaticum* +44%). In addition, the range  
373 decreased for one well-established species (*E. canadensis* -31%) for which declines were

374 projected by global CNMs. Concurrently, regional ENMs projected little change in the  
375 remaining five species (*C. helmsii*, *E. nuttallii*, *L. major*, *L. minuta* and *N. peltata*; Fig. 1).

376

### 377 **(B) Temporal changes in hot- and coldspots of invasion**

378 Projected hotspots of invasion suitability exist currently around major cities and river systems  
379 (Fig. 4). Future projections based on regional ENMs under the high emissions scenario  
380 indicated that the major temporal change will be the increasing suitability of currently  
381 unsuitable locations (Fig. 4 a-d). Approximately 6% of cells were projected to be unsuitable  
382 for any of the 15 invasive species under current conditions, however, this decreased to <1%  
383 by 2080. There was also a decrease in the number of cells projected to have just one species  
384 (from *ca.* 20% to *ca.* 15% by 2080). Predicted changes appear to make areas currently  
385 suboptimal (principally upland and northern areas) increasingly suitable over time. To a  
386 lesser extent, it was projected that the number of cells with 3-4 species may increase by 2080.  
387 Changes in hot- and coldspots of invasion were mainly due to the projected expansion of *A.*  
388 *filiculoides* and *M. aquaticum* concomitant with a decline in *E. canadensis*. Projections only  
389 took account of current invasive species and did not include potential invaders.

390

391 **(A) Discussion**

392 Our results illustrate how global climate niche models can be integrated with regional  
393 environmental niche models to improve the precision of invasive species risk by accounting  
394 for landscape factors which limit species establishment at local scales. Model AUC values  
395 increased by 0.18 and TSS values by 0.36. The estimated suitable range of invasive aquatic  
396 plants in Ireland was reduced by 50% of the total land area when global CNMs were  
397 combined with regional ENMs accounting for land use, nutrient concentration, natural  
398 landscape and human influence. However, global CNMs did show higher sensitivity (average  
399 difference = 0.18) than regional ENMs. Conversely, the specificity of global CNMs was  
400 lower than regional ENMs (average difference = 0.54). The ability of models to correctly  
401 predict presence is of particular concern for invasive species, as failure to identify invaded  
402 locations can cause problems for management and eradication. However, for management  
403 purposes 'estimated suitability maps' with higher sensitivity could easily be achieved using  
404 regional ENMs by changing the presence-absence threshold to achieve the desired sensitivity  
405 level or using the minimum training presence threshold rather than the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile training  
406 presence threshold. These options would increase the estimated suitable area and decrease  
407 model specificity, reducing the risk of under-prediction but increasing the cost of survey and  
408 intervention.

409 True evaluations of model performance are difficult during the invasion process as species  
410 are not at equilibrium, and false-presences may be misleading if they represent areas that  
411 have yet to be colonised (Peterson *et al.*, 2008). In addition, models based on data from  
412 invaded ranges may underestimate suitable range of species, due to the fact that suitable areas  
413 which have not yet been colonised are treated as pseudo-absences in model building. This  
414 effect has been shown to be most evident in the early stages of invasion (Václavík &  
415 Meentemeyer, 2012). Species in this study represent a range of invasion stages, with the

416 earliest species introduced in 1836 and the most recent in 1993. If stage of invasion were a  
417 key factor causing the difference between estimated suitable ranges by global CNMs and  
418 regional ENMs we would expect to see a smaller difference between range estimates of  
419 species which had been introduced earlier than for those introduced more recently. No such  
420 pattern was evident in this study and the two earliest introductions (*Elodea canadensis* and  
421 *Nymphoides peltata*, both introduced in 1836) differed in range estimates between global  
422 CNMs and regional ENMs by 58% and 33% respectively.

423 Alternatively, presences may occur in areas of marginal habitat quality where species  
424 would be unable to reproduce, reach high abundance or survive in the long term. This may  
425 lead to an overestimation of the potential impact of invasive species (Bradley, 2013).

426 Future projections have increased uncertainty due to the unpredictability of species  
427 responses to novel combinations of landscape and climate, and uncertainties associated with  
428 meteorological forecasting. Hence, uncertainties increase with distance into the future.  
429 Moreover, as there are no test datasets available for future time periods it is difficult to  
430 evaluate the accuracy of future projections (Elith & Leathwick, 2009). We recommend that  
431 our models are re-evaluated and revised throughout the lifetime of their projections, for  
432 example by using iterative survey methods (e.g. Stohlgren & Schnase, 2006) or by  
433 incorporating novel data from physiological studies (Kearney & Porter, 2009).

434 Climate was the least important factor associated with the regional distribution of seven  
435 out of eight aquatic invasive species in Ireland. This may be due to the low climatic variation  
436 at regional scales characteristic of temperate maritime islands such as Ireland. The global  
437 ranges of the majority of species examined were most strongly associated with climatic  
438 tolerances set by mean annual temperature and minimum temperature of coldest month. It is  
439 possible that a stronger association with climatic variables would emerge if variables specific

440 to freshwater habitats were used (e.g. max, min and mean water surface temperatures).  
441 However, we are not aware of any such global databases.

442 Climate acts as an initial coarse filter which allows for the establishment of invasive  
443 species regionally, and is a useful tool for assessing risk for species not currently present.  
444 Here, global CNMs allowed us to distinguish between species for which climate suitability  
445 was likely to increase considerably by 2080 (*E. densa*, *H. verticillata* and *L. grandiflora*) and  
446 those for which there was a low risk of widespread establishment (*C. caroliniana*, *E.*  
447 *crassipes* and *S. molesta*). Hence, global CNMs can be used to prioritise species for  
448 preventative action such as legislation on sale and importation. However, in the case of these  
449 latter three species, it remains possible that they will establish in Ireland as a result of  
450 phenotypic adaptation to colder climates or through the introduction or evolution of novel  
451 genotypes (Clements & Ditommaso, 2011; Shaw & Etterson, 2012).

452 At the regional scale, land use, nutrient concentration and natural landscape were the most  
453 important factors associated with species ranges. However, the response of individual species  
454 varied considerably. Similar species-specific responses to landscape have been noted  
455 previously for many invasive terrestrial plants (e.g. Ibáñez *et al.*, 2009; Syphard & Franklin,  
456 2009).

457 Human Influence Index was positively associated with the presence of all species except  
458 *L. major*. Association with human activity has been reported before for invasive species and  
459 aquatic plants (e.g. Buchan & Padilla, 2000; Mack *et al.*, 2000; Aznar *et al.*, 2003; Thuiller *et*  
460 *al.*, 2005; Capers *et al.*, 2009) and probably reflects an increase in propagule pressure and  
461 disturbance facilitating establishment. Risk projections could be improved by including  
462 further data on known vectors e.g. boating and angling (Leung *et al.*, 2006)

463 Present ranges are likely to be restricted by invasion histories. In Ireland, all study species  
464 occupied only a small fraction of the range that was projected to be at risk and substantial  
465 expansion is expected over the next century, even in the absence of climate change.

466 Notably, the range of a high-latitude species (*E. canadensis*) was projected to contract  
467 throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Retreat in range and vigour of some species may provide  
468 opportunities for the restoration of native plant communities (Bradley *et al.*, 2009). Ireland is  
469 predicted to become generally more suitable for colonisation, resulting in fewer coldspots in  
470 upland and northern parts of the island, which is of particular concern for upland oligotrophic  
471 lakes as they currently represent an important refuge for rare native aquatic species  
472 (Heegaard *et al.*, 2001).

473 Despite the potential limitations of ecological niche modelling and the uncertainties  
474 inherent in future projections, the amalgamation of global CNMs and regional ENMs  
475 provides a useful framework for the estimation of invasion risk. In the case of invasive  
476 aquatic plants, this approach improved model performance in terms of AUC, TSS and  
477 specificity and greatly reduced estimates of suitable ranges. Hence, integrated models may  
478 provide more precise information about invasion risk at sub-regional scales and provide  
479 useful information for species management and the prioritisation of resources.

480

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487



488 (A) References

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693

694 **(A) Biosketch**

695

696 Research group: *Quercus* is Northern Ireland's Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation  
697 Science, which uses species distribution modelling as a tool for identifying areas of high  
698 conservation value ([www.quercus.ac.uk](http://www.quercus.ac.uk)).

699

700 Author contributions: All authors contributed to the conceptualisation and development of  
701 this work. Data collation and analysis was conducted by R.K. Advice on analysis was  
702 provided by A.C. and N.R. The manuscript was drafted by R.K. and edited by K.L., C.A.M.  
703 and N.R.

704

705 **Table 1.** Model evaluation metrics and percentage estimated suitable area for  
 706 global Climate Niche Models (CMNs) and regional Environmental Niche Models  
 707 (ENMs) of 8 invasive freshwater plants in Ireland. Generalised linear model  
 708 results show differences between global CNMs and regional ENMs for each  
 709 model evaluation metric.

710

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Mean values (standard error.)</b>		<b>GLM result</b>	
	<b>Global CMNs</b>	<b>Regional ENMs</b>	<b>Wald</b>	<b>p</b>
AUC	0.64 (0.01)	0.82 (0.01)	117.12	<0.001
Sensitivity	0.96 (<0.01)	0.78 (0.30)	9.97	0.002
Specificity	0.07 (<0.01)	0.61 (0.02)	725.75	<0.001
TSS	0.03 (<0.01)	0.39 (0.03)	180.12	<0.001
% estimated suitable area	86.5 (3.0)	35.5 (3.0)	1060.56	<0.001

711

712

713 **Figure legends**

714

715 **Fig. 1** Suitable climate range from global climate niche models (A2 = brown line, B2 = red  
716 line) and suitable environmental niche (from regional environmental niche models including  
717 local landscape data) (A2 scenario = dark blue line, B2 scenario = light blue line) for current  
718 conditions, 2020, 2050 and 2080).

719

720 **Fig. 2** Permutation importance of predictor variables in global climate niche models for 15  
721 invasive species. Boxplot shows 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Dotted lines indicate  
722 mean values.

723

724 **Fig. 3** Permutation importance of predictor variables in environmental niche models for 8  
725 invasive species grouped into descriptive categories. Boxplot shows 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>,  
726 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Dotted lines indicate mean values.

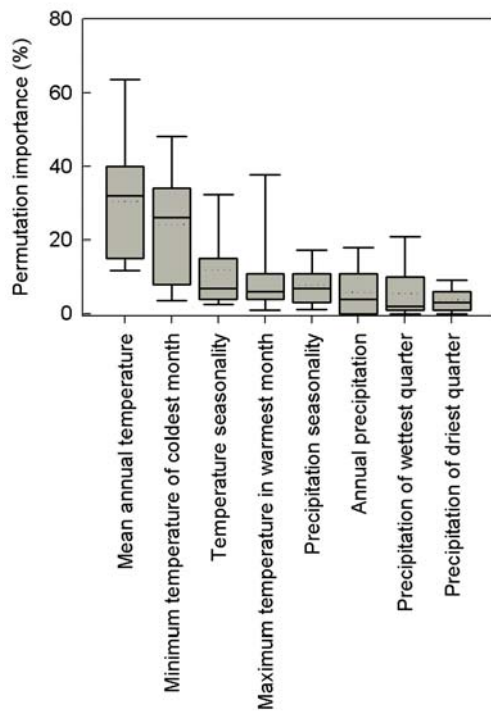
727

728 **Fig. 4** Temporal changes in ‘hot- and coldspots’ of invasions under **a)** current conditions, **b)**  
729 2020, **c)** 2050 and **d)** 2080. Future projections are shown for the A2 or high CO<sub>2</sub> scenario.  
730 Colours indicate the number of invasive species. Histograms show the distributions of  
731 invasive species richness.

732

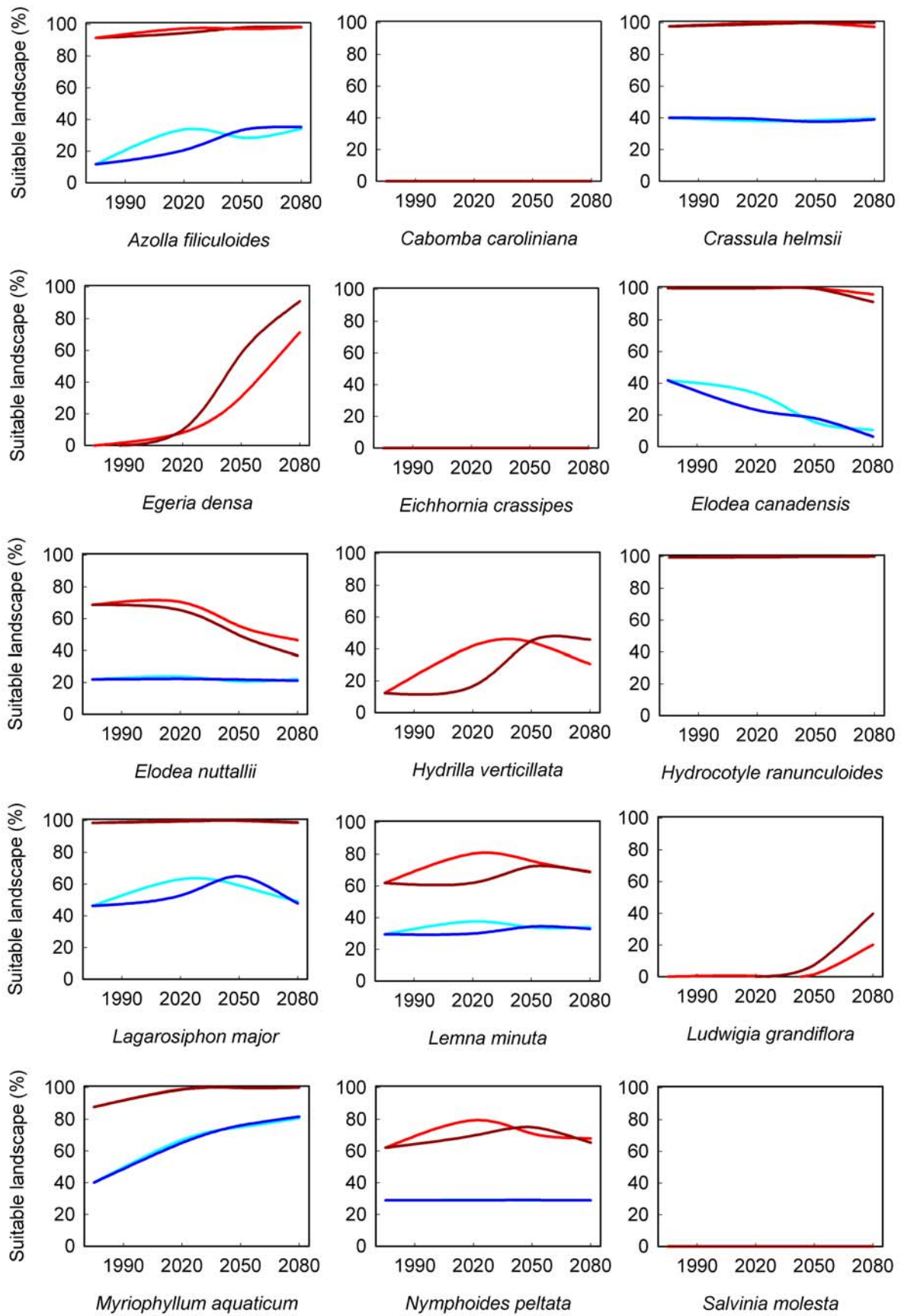


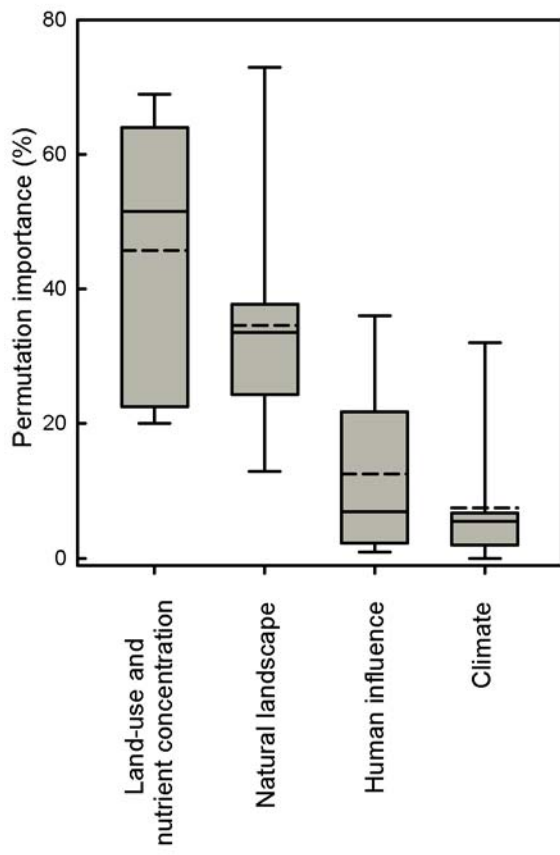
733 Fig 1.



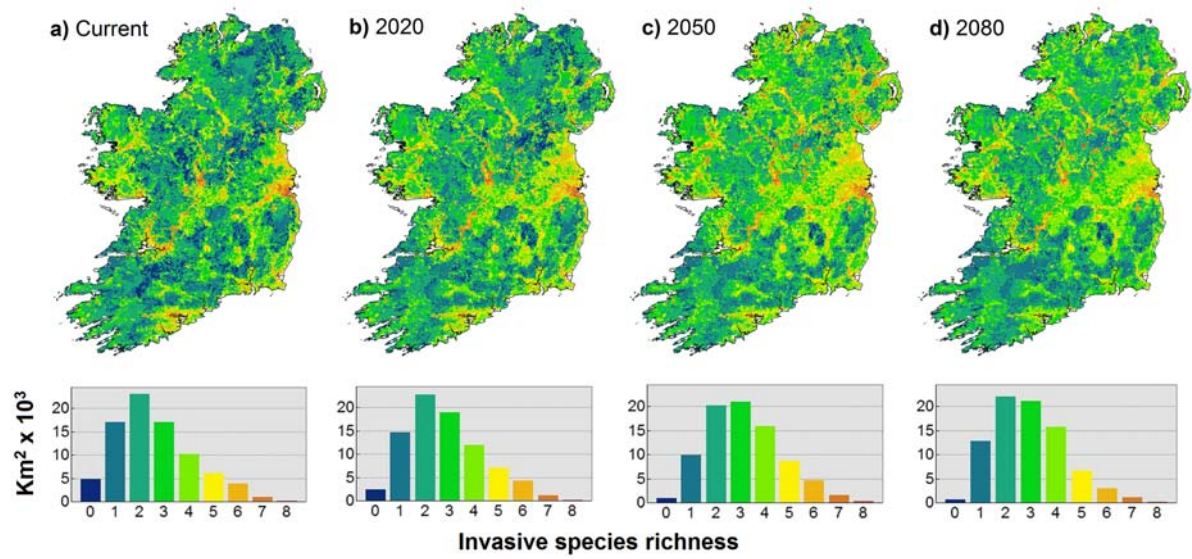
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735





741 Fig. 4



742

## **Supplementary Information – supplied as separate word document**

- Appendix S1** Data agencies by whom data on species distributions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland was contributed.
- Appendix S2** Optimal spatial scales of land use and human influence variables, showing Jackknife AUC value of the model with only that variable at that spatial scale.
- Appendix S3** Permutation importance of climatic variables in global climate niche models.
- Appendix S4** Permutation importance of climate, landscape, human influence index and natural landscapes in Irish species distribution models for 8 invasive aquatic plants already established in Ireland.
- Appendix S5** Projected ‘estimated suitable range’ of each species within Ireland based on regional environmental niche models.
- Appendix S6** Projected ‘estimated suitable range’ of each species within Ireland based on global climate niche models.

## **Appendix S1**

Data agencies by whom data on species distributions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland was contributed.

- Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI)
- Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR)
- Invasive Species Ireland (ISI)
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

## Appendix S2

Optimal spatial scales of land use and human influence variables; showing Jackknife AUC value of the model with only that variable at that spatial scale.

Species	Variable	Spatial scale (km <sup>2</sup> )	Jackknife AUC
<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>	Arable land	10.5	0.550
	Broad leaved woodland	10.5	0.633
	Coniferous woodland	6.5	0.740
	Human impact	4.5	0.727
	Pastural farming	1.5	0.634
	Riparian length	20.5	0.647
	Standing freshwater	1.5	0.682
<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Arable land	1.5	0.614
	Broad leaved woodland	1.5	0.517
	Coniferous woodland	6.5	0.679
	Human impact	20.5	0.552
	Pastural farming	1.5	0.737
	Riparian length	0.5	0.569
	Standing freshwater	4.5	0.562
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	Arable land	10.5	0.623
	Broad leaved woodland	20.5	0.663
	Coniferous woodland	10.5	0.571
	Human impact	20.5	0.581
	Pastural farming	4.5	0.558
	Riparian length	1.5	0.714
	Standing freshwater	2.5	0.707
<i>Elodea nuttallii</i>	Arable land	10.5	0.649
	Broad leaved woodland	10.5	0.625
	Coniferous woodland	6.5	0.656
	Human impact	0.5	0.846
	Pastural farming	0.5	0.664
	Riparian length	0.5	0.787
	Standing freshwater	1.5	0.803
<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	Arable land	0.5	0.557
	Broad leaved woodland	10.5	0.624
	Coniferous woodland	4.5	0.627
	Human impact	20.5	0.624
	Pastural farming	1.5	0.778
	Riparian length	1.5	0.867
	Standing freshwater	1.5	0.819
<i>Lemna minuta</i>	Arable land	10.5	0.527
	Broad leaved woodland	10.5	0.687
	Coniferous woodland	6.5	0.589
	Human impact	4.5	0.692
	Pastural farming	6.5	0.645
	Riparian length	1.5	0.660
	Standing freshwater	4.5	0.673
<i>M. aquaticum</i>	Arable land	4.5	0.636
	Broad leaved woodland	10.5	0.661
	Coniferous woodland	4.5	0.632
	Human impact	1.5	0.770
	Pastural farming	10.5	0.713
	Riparian length	20.5	0.701
	Standing freshwater	20.5	0.560
<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>	Arable land	20.5	0.679
	Broad leaved woodland	10.5	0.703
	Coniferous woodland	20.5	0.624
	Human impact	10.5	0.813
	Pastural farming	1.5	0.711
	Riparian length	0.5	0.707
	Standing freshwater	4.5	0.656

## Appendix S3

Permutation importance of climatic variables in global climate niche models.

Species	N	Mean annual temperature	Temperature seasonality	Maximum temperature (in hottest month)	Minimum temperature (in coldest month)	Annual precipitation	Precipitation seasonality	Maximum precipitation (in wettest month)	Minimum precipitation (in driest month)
<i>A. filiculoides</i>	2,035	15	4	1	56	7	11	0	6
<i>C. caroliniana</i>	260	40	5	10	15	0	10	14	6
<i>C. helmsii</i>	879	21	27	8	14	18	2	5	6
<i>E. densa</i>	570	16	7	57	7	1	4	1	8
<i>E. crassipes</i>	1,261	34	7	19	3	3	21	3	11
<i>E. canadensis</i>	4474	58	4	2	26	6	4	1	0
<i>E. nuttallii</i>	3,070	13	13	11	32	11	0	20	0
<i>H. verticillata</i>	1,935	33	11	4	4	15	11	22	0
<i>H. ranunculoides</i>	449	14	39	1	27	0	15	1	3
<i>L. major</i>	572	10	28	5	24	18	4	10	1
<i>L. minuta</i>	1,839	32	3	4	43	0	12	0	6
<i>L. grandiflora</i>	508	18	6	25	34	4	11	1	2
<i>M. aquaticum</i>	1,139	46	8	7	30	4	2	1	3
<i>N. peltata</i>	1,810	34	15	6	40	0	3	2	1
<i>S. molesta</i>	122	72	2	5	8	0	7	2	4
<b>Mean</b>	<b>1,395</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>



## Appendix S4

Permutation importance of climate, landscape, human influence index and natural landscapes in Irish species distribution models for 8 invasive aquatic plants already established in Ireland.

Species	Climate	Land use and eutrophication					Human influence	Natural landscape			
	Predicted probability from global models	Arable	Broad-leaved woodland	Coniferous plantations	Pastoral farming	Eutrophication Orthophosphate	Human Influence Index	Riparian length	Standing freshwater	Soil Type	Soil pH
<i>A. filiculoides</i>	32	3	2	11	7	4	6	10	20	4	0
<i>C. helmsii</i>	2	24	0	12	11	22	6	4	7	12	1
<i>E. canadensis</i>	7	0	12	3	4	1	1	53	20	0	0
<i>E. nuttallii</i>	5	4	6	3	8	0	36	14	23	0	1
<i>L. major</i>	6	13	1	10	20	17	1	12	4	12	5
<i>L. minuta</i>	2	14	10	25	3	1	8	16	8	13	0
<i>M. aquaticum</i>	6	6	5	29	7	3	21	7	4	12	2
<i>N. peltata</i>	0	22	17	4	1	21	22	5	2	5	1
<b>Mean</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

## Appendix S5

Predicted 'suitable range' within Ireland based on regional environmental niche models.

Species	N	Current recorded range (No. of 500m cells (%))	Current suitable range (%)	B2 'low emmissions'			A2 'high emmissions'		
				Difference in suitable range			Difference in suitable range		
				2020	2050	2080	2020	2050	2080
<i>A. filiculoides</i>	110	116 (0.03)	12	+9	+22	+23	+22	+17	+22
<i>C. helmsii</i>	13	20 (0.01)	40	-1	-3	-1	-2	-2	0
<i>E. canadensis</i>	1,646	1659 (0.50)	42	-19	-24	-35	-8	-26	-31
<i>E. nuttallii</i>	104	112 (0.03)	22	+0	0	-1	+2	-1	0
<i>L. major</i>	77	84 (0.03)	46	+7	+19	+2	+17	+13	+3
<i>L. minuta</i>	98	116 (0.03)	29	+0	+5	+3	+8	+4	+4
<i>M. aquaticum</i>	18	28 (<0.01)	40	+25	+36	+42	+27	+35	+41
<i>N. peltata</i>	29	31 (<0.01)	29	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Mean</b>	262	271 (0.08)	<b>32</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>+7</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>+5</b>	<b>+5</b>