

# Invasive Species Alert

## INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

### Coypu



Yellow/orange front teeth, webbed feet, white muzzle (Shutterstock) Up to 1m long (Eamonn Brennan)

**Invasive species alert for:** *Myocastor coypus*

**Common name(s):** Coypu, Nutria

#### Why the concern?

- Coypu are herbivores and impact negatively on aquatic vegetation, including rare and threatened species.
- Coypu are thought to impact on aquatic birds by decreasing nest habitat.
- Coypu burrows undermine the banks of rivers and dykes causing instability.
- It is a pest of agriculture areas feeding on a variety of crops including root crops.
- Coypu have also been shown to carry a number of diseases of importance to humans and domestic animals.
- Since the first verified sighting in 2010, Coypu have been seen and reported from 7 locations. Just one animal was seen in 6 of the sites but a population of 10 animals was removed from Cork City in 2016. Sighting of a Coypu in Cork City in 2017 raises concern of further spread.

**What does it look like?** Large semi-aquatic rodent that may be confused with otter. Following characteristics can help with identification:

- Large rodent up to 1 meter in head to tail length
- It can weigh 5-9kg
- Dark fur often with lighter ends and has a white muzzle, a long cylindrical tail and small ears.
- Distinctive features include **large bright orange-yellow incisor (front) teeth** that are usually visible. It has webbed hind feet.

#### Where might I see it?

Coypu are generally found near permanent water, particularly reed beds and swamp/marsh. Also found in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and brackish marsh in coastal areas.

#### What should I do?

- Report any suspected sightings with a photograph if possible.
- If you own one, do not allow it to reproduce, escape or release it to the wild. Please rehome or euthanize if no longer wanted.



Report sightings to [danny.okeeffe@ahg.gov.ie](mailto:danny.okeeffe@ahg.gov.ie) or  
<http://records.biodiversityireland.ie>  
For more information: <http://species.biodiversityireland.ie>



Report Sightings

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