

# The region's least wanted

Protecting wetlands is a crucial element in the region's approach to pest management. The recently revised Regional Pest Management Strategy – a joint strategy covering both Tasman District and Nelson City – highlights pest plants and animals the public needs to be vigilant about protecting our environment from.

Tasman Newline the Mag is profiling selected pest plants and animals.

## Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum Salicaria*)

Although purple loosestrife has not yet become naturalised in wetland habitat in the Nelson-Tasman region, Council wants to protect the extensive areas of habitat where this pest plant could easily become established.

The perennial herb, with a woody, four-sided stem and leaves in whorls (spirals), grows up to three metres high. It reproduces prolifically – mature plants can have up to 50 stems emerging from a single rootstock. The magenta coloured flowers with five to seven petals are carried on a long spike, and are produced throughout most of the summer. The woody stems remain standing during the winter, when the plant is readily identified by its brownish colour and spiral-shaped capsule clusters.

Purple Loosestrife can invade a variety of wetland habitats, including marshes, river and stream banks, pond edges, lakes, roadside ditches, and reservoirs. It can out-compete and replace native grasses, sedges and other flowering plants that provide a higher quality food source and habitat for wildlife.



*Purple Loosestrife*