

SWIMMING INCURSION PATHWAYS - HOW FAR CAN INVASIVE NON-NATIVE PREDATORS SWIM?

Different species have different swimming strengths and this is important information to consider when determining the risk from potential sources based on their proximity to the island. This applies to proximity of other islands and passing/moored vessels.

Table: maximum known swimming distances for common invasive non-native species (INNS) in the UK.

Species Swimming distance (maximum)

Species	Swimming distance (maximum)
Brown rat	4000m
Black rat	750m
Mouse	500m
Stoat	3k
Mink	4k

Factors that can affect swimming distances include strong currents, wave conditions and water temperature but these impacts are difficult to assess so it is safest to assume that maximum swimming distances could apply. It is only islands that are several kilometres off-shore where we can categorically say that INNS will not be capable of swimming there.

Here are some examples to illustrate risk levels/likelihood of INNS reaching an island by swimming:

- At 50m all species can easily swim to an island and will do so frequently.
- At 500m black rat will invade but the frequency of incursions may be low. A brown rat could, in many circumstances, be expected to reach the island every year. Stoats could easily swim this distance.
- If the distance is near the currently known record for the species, they can be expected to invade but may not.
- If the distance is twice the currently known record, reinvasion by swimming may not occur but we do not consider it impossible.

N.B. As research continues in this area, swimming capabilities are often revised upwards.

