

## Biological Control of Floating Aquatic Weeds in Botswana

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The floating fern, *Salvinia molesta*, choked the Kwando-Linyanti-Chobe river systems on the border between Botswana and Namibia in the 1970's. The biological control agent from Brazil, *Cyrtobagous salviniae*, was imported into South Africa from Australia in 1983 and subsequently introduced into the river systems between Botswana and Namibia. It reduced the salvinia to a marginal infestation between 1985-9. Factors such as movement of the weed by large mammals, the complexities of the perennial and annual swamps and the low level of nitrogen in the salvinia influenced the rate at which the weed was brought under control. In 1986 the weed was found at Xini, a small area in the alluvial fan of the Okavango. It was eradicated by innovative land management. In 1988 salvinia was found at Bodumatau, another area of the Okavango, and was controlled by land management and biological control using *C. salviniae*. *Pistia stratiotes* is not a problem weed in Botswana but the biological control agent, *Neohydronomus affinis*, was introduced in 1987 to prevent the possibility of large outbreaks of the weed occurring. To date preventative measures have been effective in stopping *Eichhornia crassipes* entering Botswana from neighbouring countries.

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