

**NEW FOREST NON-NATIVE PLANTS
PROJECT**

**REPORT TO STEERING GROUP
MEETING ON
25 JANUARY 2013**

**Report covering the period
1 September 2012 – 31 December 2012**

**Catherine Chatters
New Forest Non-Native Plants Project Officer
2 January 2013**

<http://www.hwt.org.uk/pages/new-forest-non-native-plants-project.html>

Publicity

Press releases

HIWWT issued the following press releases on behalf of The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project between 1 September – 31 December 2012:-

- ‘Celebrating success in the balsam battle’ dated 2 October 2012 (focusing on the balsam-pulling by volunteers, the bring-and-share supper at Brockenhurst on 27 September 2012 and the film about the Project made by local filmmakers Joe Constable and Sophie van der Meeren)
- ‘A Big Threat from a Pygmy’ dated 27 November 2012 (focussing on the trials to control New Zealand pygmyweed).

Publications and websites

- At the time the previous Steering Group report was prepared (covering the period 1 April – 31 August 2012) the Project Officer was unaware that an article mentioning the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project and featuring Himalayan balsam had appeared in the August 2012 edition of ‘Hampshire The County Magazine’.
- The Lymington Times referred to the work commissioned by the Project on behalf of Lymington and Pennington Town Council in the edition published on 8 September 2012
- The Littlehampton Gazette (3 October 2012) – ‘New Forest saved from Problem Plant’
- The press release titled ‘Celebrating success in the balsam battle’ dated 2 October 2012 was picked up by the Media Trust website (Community Newswire)
- The BBC website had a link to the press release titled ‘Celebrating success in the balsam battle’ dated 2 October 2012
- The Lymington Times published an article titled ‘Pullers celebrate success in battle against balsam’ on 13 October 2012
- The Herald No 261 (25 October – 15 November 2012) article on page 17 titled ‘Success in Balsam Battle’
- The Project Officer thanked volunteers for their help pulling balsam in 2012 in the HIWWT Members’ E-Newsletter which was sent out on 15 November 2012
- On 28 November 2012 The Southern Daily Echo referred to the trials to control New Zealand pygmyweed and the forthcoming conference on 20 March 2013 in the section titled ‘Nature Notes’ on the ‘Green watch’ page
- The trials to control New Zealand pygmyweed and the conference on 20 March 2013 are referred to in the news item titled ‘Out-witting the invader’ in the Winter 2012 edition of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust’s ‘Wildlife’ magazine
- Article in ‘Countryside Matters: The Clinton Devon Estates Review 2012/13’

Radio 4

On Tuesday 2 October 2012 the control of Himalayan balsam by the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project along the Lymington River was highlighted by Andy Byfield (Plantlife) during the Radio 4 ‘Saving Species’ programme at 11am. The programme was repeated at 9pm on Thursday 4 October 2012. The programme (Series 3, Episode 5) was available on the i-player.

Creation of film to promote the Project

During autumn 2012 local film-makers Joe Constable and Sophie van der Meeren finalised their film about the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project and the Source to Sea project. This was launched at the 'thank you' event for the volunteer balsam-pullers at Brockenhurst Village Hall on 27 September 2012.

Liaison with landowners and managers

The following landowners/managers were met between 1 September – 31 December:-

- 8 September 2012 – Peter Knight – Himalayan balsam at Cadnam
- 10 September 2012 – Dean Price – Himalayan balsam & Japanese knotweed on Cadnam River
- 14 September 2012 – Nigel Appleby – Himalayan balsam at Burley
- 14 September 2012 – Mr and Mrs Mortimer – Himalayan balsam at Burley
- 1 October 2012 – Sarah Cockburn – Himalayan balsam at Burley
- 19 October 2012 - Mr and Mrs Powell – New Zealand pygmyweed at Fritham
- 25 October 2012 – Lee Jaycock (Southern Water) – Himalayan balsam on Lymington River
- 6 November 2012 – Sue Wells – Himalayan balsam on Cadnam River
- 30 November 2012 – Mr Jaillor – Himalayan balsam on Cadnam River
- 11 December 2012 – John Anderson (Head Gardener, Exbury Gardens)
- 20 December 2012 – Mr Richard Skinner – Himalayan balsam

Liaison with other Projects

Nothing relevant to report.

Capital works undertaken between 1 September – 31 December 2012

Due to the uncharacteristically wet summer, much of the herbicide treatment originally scheduled for summer 2012 had to be delayed until early autumn.

Control of giant hogweed along the Avon Water in autumn 2012

Between 3-5 September 2012 Kingcombe Aquacare Ltd undertook the second herbicide treatment of 2012 to control giant hogweed plants growing along the banks of the Avon Water. Southern Counties Forestry also completed their second herbicide treatment of giant hogweed during autumn 2012.

Control of bog arum during autumn 2012

Matthew Cheetham (Southern Counties Forestry) undertook the herbicide treatment of the bog arum on the tributary of the Beaulieu River at Ipley.

Control of parrot's feather during autumn 2012

Kingcombe Aquacare undertook the second herbicide treatment of parrot's feather this year on 12 September 2012 at Hinchleslea Bog, the pond at Castle Hill in Burley, the pond at East End and the pond at Bartley.

Control of invasive non-native plants on Pennington Common and Upper Pennington Common in autumn 2012

Matthew Cheetham (Southern Counties Forestry) undertook the herbicide treatment of Japanese knotweed, Himalayan knotweed and bamboo on Pennington Common and Upper Pennington Common on behalf of Lymington and Pennington Town Council.

Control of Japanese knotweed during autumn 2012

Rupert Williams of RT Contractors undertook chemical control of Japanese knotweed at:-

- Open Forest (Crown Land) on bank of Mill Lawn Brook at Burley near Turf Croft Farm
- Forest Lodge and The Yews at East Boldre
- Electricity substation to east of Lymington River Reedbeds SSSI

Matthew Cheetham of Southern Counties undertook chemical control of Japanese knotweed at:-

- Open Forest (Crown Land) in ditch near Home Farm, Bartley
- New Park (Crown Land)
- Pondhead Inclosure (Crown Land)
- Hawkhill Inclosure (Crown Land)
- White's Copse, Burley
- Woodside Farm
- Weaver's Cottage, Emery Down

Japanese Knotweed Ltd undertook chemical control of Japanese knotweed at:-

- Jane Hayward's land by Cadnam River
- The Old Barn by Cadnam River
- Robinsbrook Farm by Cadnam River

Himalayan balsam-pulling by contractor during autumn 2012

During autumn 2012 Ashley Basil (Ashley Basil Horticultural Services) continued to patrol the Lymington River to pull up Himalayan balsam. This repeated control work by a river champion has been one of the main keys to the success of the Project's balsam control along this river.

Himalayan balsam-pulling by volunteers during autumn 2012

A number of additional balsam-pulling volunteer work parties were arranged in autumn 2012 because a) the late season allowed additional pulling to be done before plants were shedding seeds and b) the Project Officer identified additional landowners who welcomed the help offered by volunteers.

The heavy rain which characterised the summer of 2012 continued into the autumn but not deter people from volunteering. The Project Officer is very grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication shown by so many people who helped to pull balsam in 2012.

Volunteer tasks to pull Himalayan balsam in New Forest during autumn 2012

Thursday 13 September 2012, 10am – 3pm

Vicinity of the Cadnam River (Old Romsey Road, Cadnam and on land near Cadnam Lodge). Leader: Catherine Chatters

1 volunteer x 5 hours = 5 hours

Tuesday 9 October 2012, 10am – 3pm

Burley Grange in vicinity of Mill Lawn Brook (tributary of the Lymington River)

Leader: Catherine Chatters

3 volunteers x 5 hours = 15 hours



Despite the rain, people were still keen to volunteer to pull Himalayan balsam into the autumn. This photo shows volunteers at Burley Grange on 9 October during the last work party organised by the Project Officer in 2012.

Balsam-pulling volunteers' evening in September 2012

To acknowledge the tremendous effort by volunteers to control balsam during the particularly wet summer of 2012 the Project Officer organised a bring-and-share supper at Brockenhurst Village Hall on 27 September 2012. This provided an opportunity for the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project Officer and the Source to Sea Field Officer to give presentations about balsam-pulling in the New Forest and the Avon Valley and to help the volunteers understand how their work contributes to control of balsam at the catchment scale. A number of people who attended this event said they very much appreciated finding out about the 'bigger picture' and understanding the wider context.

The evening was also an opportunity for local film makers Joe Constable and Sophie van der Meeren to show the final version of the film that they kindly made to promote the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project and Source to Sea Project. The film can now be viewed via the web. Joe and Sophie provided a DVD of the film for the Project Officer to promote the Project and the film can also be viewed via a link from the HIWWT website (re-launched in early 2013).

Some people who could not attend the balsam-pullers' get-together on 27 September 2012 sent the Project Officer e-mails with very favourable comments, for example:-

“Much regret I can't make that evening. I do congratulate you on the Lymington River balsam state. Having spent endless hours over the past years, cutting and pulling and feeling that we were losing the battle. This year it is hard to find a single plant. Found a few within the fence at the Brockenhurst sewage works last week when having an information visit !? Well done. Regards”

James Venner (member of Brokenhurst Manor Fly Fishing Club)

“Thank you for sending the invite over, and I have passed this on as requested, to those whom have generously given their time to pull balsam on the North Solent NNR. Unfortunately, I have checked my diary, and I can't make the evening, maybe next year though. Perhaps more importantly I would like to thank you for all the time and effort in organising the help on the reserve, when it comes to balsam it has been a good year, it even feels like the balance might be tipping in our favour – we'll have to see how next year turns out!

Kind regards”

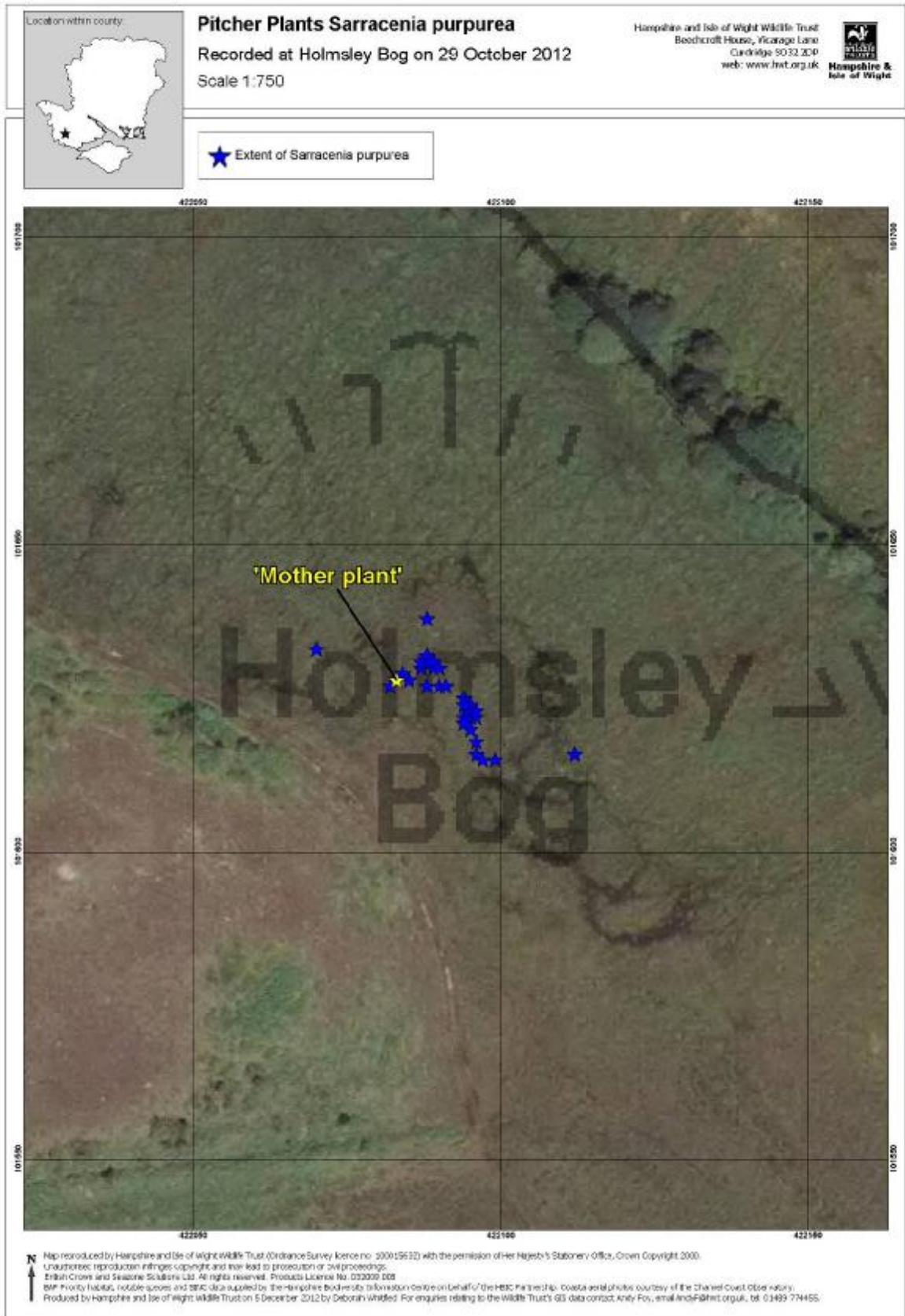
Graham Johnstone (Natural England's Reserve Manager – North Solent NNR)

Practical control of other invasive non-native species by volunteers during autumn/winter 2012

On 29 October 2012 five naturalists helped the Project Officer control the population of the invasive non-native *Sarracenia purpurea* at Holmsley Bog within the New Forest SSSI/SPA/SAC/Ramsar Site. A total of 313 individual plants or clumps of *Sarracenia purpurea* were removed from this ecologically very important site. Many of the clumps were quite challenging to remove, being comprised of a number of plants, rooted amongst *Molinia* tussocks.



Sarracenia purpurea at Holmsley Bog on 29 October 2012



Distribution of *Sarracenia purpurea* at Holmsley Bog on 29 October 2012 prior to the removal of the majority of the plants by the volunteer work party



Seeds of the non-native *Sarracenia purpurea* which has invaded Holmsley Bog



Joint effort was required to remove some of the larger clumps of *Sarracenia purpurea*

On 4 December 2012 a volunteer helped the Project Officer to check the ecologically important wetland habitats at Acres Down (also within the SSSI and internationally designated sites) where *Sarracenia purpurea* was reported to have been planted; a single plant was removed and hopefully the population here has now been eradicated.

Promotional Talks

Although training was provided for NFDC staff in autumn/winter 2012, no other promotional talks were given by the Project Officer during this period.

Promotional Events

The Project Officer did not attend any promotional events during autumn/winter 2012.

Promotion of the Be Plant Wise campaign and Check, Clean, Dry campaigns

The opportunity for the Project to promote these two government campaigns arose at the training event organised by the Project Officer for New Forest District Council staff on 7 November 2012.



The project Officer gave a presentation about 'Be Plant Wise' Dr Ben Rushbrook focussed on 'Check, Clean, Dry' in his presentation about biosecurity.

The 'Be Plant Wise' and 'Check, Clean, Dry' banners were both displayed at this event.



The Be Plant Wise display at the training event for New Forest District Council staff on 7 November 2012

Training provided by the Project Officer

Training for staff from New Forest District Council on Wednesday 7 November 2012

As mentioned in the preceding section, the Project Officer arranged a training event for New Forest District Council staff on 7 November 2012. This was attended by 25 people from NFDC, including grounds maintenance operatives, a tree manager, Street Scene operatives, a land drainage engineer, supervisors and managers.

Presentations by the Project Officer and David Horne of the Environment Agency included advice on responsibilities, legislation, identification and control techniques, in addition to Dr Ben Rushbrook's presentation on the need for biosecurity.



Colin White, New Forest District Council Street Scene Operative, during the training event on 7 December 2012

Volunteer survey, research and other activity

Monitoring of control of parrot's feather during 2012

Sam Hempenstall (a student at Bournemouth University) and Ben Graff (a recent graduate from Plymouth University) continued to undertake monitoring of the parrot's feather herbicide treatment on behalf of the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project during autumn 2012.



Parrot's feather (Photo: GBNNSS, Trevor Renals)

Monitoring of Himalayan balsam along the Beaulieu River

On 20 September 2012 volunteer John Moore helped the Project Officer to monitor the remaining Himalayan balsam plants along the Beaulieu River on Crown Land following volunteer work parties by the Forestry Commission's voluntary rangers and Two Trees Conservation Team in 2012. The balsam population has decreased dramatically here since the population was monitored by volunteers in 2009 and 2010.

During 2009 Himalayan balsam occurred at 31 locations along this part of the Beaulieu River. The majority of these locations surveyed by Simon Kain and Phil Latto contained large numbers of plants "in some cases containing an estimated 3,000 individuals. Six stands were estimated to contain over 1,000 individuals, while some patches were estimated to be hundreds of square metres in size" (Kain & Latto, 2009).

On 11 August 2010 nine sites of Himalayan balsam were recorded by volunteers Tom Fox and Athene Gadsby. Four of these sites contained less than 21 plants. There were two large sites: one containing upwards of 100 plants and the other containing more than 400 plants.

On 20 September 2012 only 198 Himalayan balsam plants were recorded along this section of the Beaulieu River.

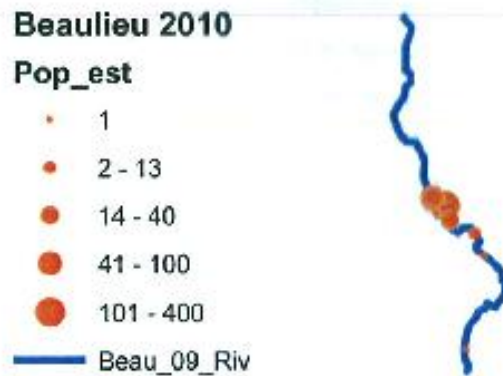


Figure 6 Distribution of Himalayan balsam on the Beaulieu River 2010 between Ipley Manor and the edge of the New Forest. It does not show the river upstream of Ipley Manor although it was surveyed and no Himalayan balsam was found see appendix.

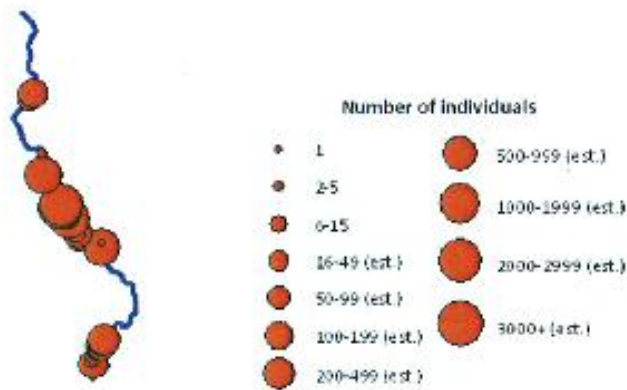


Figure 7 Distribution of Himalayan balsam on the Beaulieu River 2009

Himalayan balsam recorded on Crown Land along the Beaulieu River in 2009 (bottom) and 2010 (top). These maps are taken from the report by Tom Fox and Athene Gadsby titled 'Non-native invasive plant species in the New Forest National Park 2010 report' dated September 2010.



The survey undertaken by volunteer John Moore and the Project Officer on 20 September 2012 revealed a dramatic decrease in the balsam population along the Beaulieu River on Crown Land since monitoring commenced in 2009.

Trials relating to control of New Zealand pygmyweed during autumn/winter 2012

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project planned to commission two treatments of each control method (herbicide, aquatic dye, organic hot foam) during 2012.

Aquatic dye

Following Dr Jonathan Newman's visit on 12 April 2012 to apply blue dye to the selected ponds he agreed to return to the New Forest with the Project Officer on Monday 19 November to undertake further dye treatment. However Dr Newman had to reschedule this to Friday 23 November but then subsequently had to change this date. In the circumstances, Dr Newman met the Project Officer on 14 December 2012 to undertake the second dye treatment. Following heavy rain the water levels in all ponds was very high.

Jonathan used a mix of blue dye and 'black' dye in water-soluble sachets at the ratio of 4 blue : 1 black. Sachets were added to the following ponds:-

Ipley

Hill Top (near the Royal Oak)

Wotton Drinking Pond

Mogshade (plus adjacent ditch)

Waterslade Farm

Abbot's Well.



Dr Jonathan Newman applying aquatic dye in water-soluble sachets to the pond at Ipley on 14 December 2012

Herbicide and hot organic foam

As stated in the previous Steering Group report, the Project Officer had hoped to commission contractors to undertake herbicide treatment during the week beginning 6 August 2012 and to undertake organic hot foam treatment during the week commencing 13 August 2012. However due to the un-seasonally heavy rain, the ponds selected for treatment during August 2012 were far too wet for the trials to be undertaken.



New Zealand pygmyweed
(Photo: Ashley Basil)

In the circumstances, the proposed herbicide and organic hot foam treatments were postponed until September 2012 when it was hoped that the water levels would have dropped sufficiently to enable these treatments to be undertaken.

The hot foam treatment was re-scheduled for the week beginning 10 September and the herbicide treatment was re-scheduled for the week beginning 24 September 2012.

The Project Officer visited the ponds on Tuesday 4 September to assess the water levels. As the water levels were uncharacteristically high for this time of the year the decision was taken to postpone the hot foam treatment and the herbicide treatment until October.

The hot foam treatment was re-scheduled for the week beginning 8 October and the herbicide treatment was re-scheduled for the week beginning 15 October 2012.

The Project Officer visited the ponds on Friday 28 September and as water levels were still high there was no option but to cancel the proposed hot foam and herbicide treatments in 2012.

Hopefully conditions will be more favourable this year to enable the herbicide and hot foam trials to be resumed in 2013.

Organising control work for 2013

Himalayan balsam control by volunteers and contractor in 2013

On 26 November 2012 the Project Officer met representatives of Natural England, Forestry Commission and New Forest National Park Authority to co-ordinate volunteer balsam-pulling work parties during summer 2013.

During autumn 2012 the Project Officer wrote to the majority of landowners to obtain their agreement to work being undertaken by contractor during 2013 and / or to agree dates for volunteer work parties on their land in 2013.

On 12 December 2012 dates for 24 volunteer work parties were submitted to HIWWT for inclusion in the Wildlife Trust members' Events Diary which will cover the period May to early August 2013.

On 9 November 2012 the Project Officer met Ashley Basil (Ashley Basil Horticultural Services) to agree a strategy for control work on the Lymington River catchment during 2013.

Planning giant hogweed control along the Avon Water for 2013

During autumn 2012 the Project Officer wrote to the 41 landowners/managers along the Avon Water to obtain their written agreement to a) allow contractor to undertake herbicide treatment on their land during 2013 or b) continue to do their own control work (herbicide treatment or hand-digging) during 2013. When replying, a number of landowners commented on how successful the work, to date, has been; they have noticed a significant difference. For example one of the landowners sent the Project Officer a Christmas card stating '*Keep up the good work. Things are definitely improving*'.

Training attended by the Project Officer

On 22 and 23 October 2012 the Project Officer attended the First Aid at Work refresher course organised by the British Red Cross in Southampton (and passed).

Reducing the Impact of Non-native Species in Europe (RINSE)



During autumn/winter 2012 the Project Officer has made progress on all three 'work packages' of the Interreg-funded RINSE project:-

WP 1 – targeting and prioritisation

WP2 – training and awareness-raising

WP3 – trials and demonstrations

WP1 – targeting and prioritisation

Dr David Aldridge and colleagues from Cambridge University have been commissioned by RINSE to undertake a ‘horizon-scanning’ exercise.

Dr Aldridge and his two colleagues hosted a one-day workshop at St Catharine’s College in Cambridge on Wednesday 21 November 2012 for representatives of RINSE partner organisations to consider the work already undertaken.

The Project Officer represented HIWWT at this event and appreciated the opportunity to get to know people from other RINSE partner organisations, especially during the meal on the preceding evening.

Useful contacts were made and the Project Officer invited representatives from RINSE partners in Flanders (Belgium) and The Netherlands to give presentations at the conference she is organising to focus on control of New Zealand pygmyweed in March 2013.



The Project Officer (far right) with representatives from RINSE partner organisations during the ‘horizon-scanning’ workshop at St Catharine’s College in Cambridge in November 2012

Since the workshop on 21 November, the Project Officer has continued to liaise with Dr Aldridge’s colleagues during December to help refine the ‘horizon-scanning’ lists.



RINSE partners from France and Flanders during the workshop at Cambridge in November

WP 2 – training and awareness-raising

The training session organised and led by Catherine Chatters for New Forest District Council on 7 November 2012 to raise awareness about invasive non-native plants was partly funded by RINSE.

During autumn 2012, the Project Officer planned further training sessions to raise awareness amongst particular sectors as follows:-

- Training for anglers and fishermen on Tuesday 12 February 2013 at Blashford Study Centre. This half-day training session is being organised as a joint event in liaison with Jo Gore, Source to Sea Field Officer
- Training for land owners/managers and other countryside practitioners to share experience of controlling New Zealand pygmyweed *Crassula helmsii*. This event will be held on Wednesday 20 March 2013 at Brockenhurst Village Hall. It is proving to be very popular and it is likely to be fully booked (maximum 60 delegates/speakers). Speakers include Dr Naomi Ewald (on the trials using herbicide, hot organic foam and aquatic dye); Dr Jonathan

Newman (aquatic dye); Pete Durnell of HCC (salt water), Paul Charlton, RSPB (salt water); Sarah Clarke ECUS; Michael Sutton-Croft (Norfolk County Council); Luc Denys (Flanders) and Johan van Valkenburg (The Netherlands). The event has been advertised on the GBNNSS website.

- Training for horticulturalists / garden centre owners and managers in September 2013. On 11 December 2012 the Project Officer met John Anderson, Head Gardener at Exbury Gardens, to discuss proposals for hosting this event on the Exbury Estate. Provisional date is Wednesday 11 September 2013 (to be confirmed).
- Training for HCC countryside staff in 2013. The Project Officer has liaised with Andy Davidson of HCC regarding training for HCC countryside staff (country park and nature reserve managers) on identification and control of invasive non-native plants. Date to be confirmed.

During autumn/winter 2012 the Project Officer contributed draft text for inclusion in the second RINSE newsletter.

WP 3 – trials and demonstrations

During autumn 2012 the Project Officer started drafting the report focussing on mobilisation of volunteers to control Himalayan balsam across catchments. On 6 December 2012 the Project Officer met colleagues to discuss mapping requirements for the report relating to control of giant hogweed in a fragmented catchment.

Other work

Response to Law Commission review of wildlife law

During autumn 2012 the Project Officer compiled a response to the Law Commission review of wildlife law. The response, dated 8 November 2012, was prepared on behalf of the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project Steering Group and focussed on the Law Commission's provisional proposals for changes to legislation relating to control of invasive non-native species.

Wildlife and Countryside Link

As agreed at the Steering Group meeting on 27 September 2012, the Project Officer attended a meeting organised by Wildlife and Countryside Link in London on 31 October 2012. The purpose of the meeting was for non-government organisations to consider what legislative changes are required at a national and European level to bring about more effective control and eradication on invasive non-native species.

Press releases– see attached sheets

Media coverage – see attached sheets

Report compiled by Catherine Chatters
New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
January 2013

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project is hosted by
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The Project is grateful for funding provided by a partnership of organisations:-



Hampshire & Isle of Wight
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RINSE
Reducing the impact of non-native species in Europe

