

Invasive Non-Native Plants in the Stour Valley

Spring/Summer 2015 Newsletter



Keeping invasive non-native species at bay.....the importance of good biosecurity!

Introduction:

At the start of this year we have been working with Norfolk Non-Native Species Initiative (NNNSI) to develop a biosecurity plan for the River Stour catchment. In addition Matt Holden our River Stour Project Officer has been continuing his work with landowners, land managers and community groups to instigate practical control of giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam in the Valley. The Stour Valley Invasive Non-Native Species Local Action Group (SV INNS LAG) is also gaining steam and two meetings, one in September 2014 and a second in March this year, have taken place since the last newsletter.



Parrot's feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum* identified in a pond at Monks Eleigh in 2014. This is the first record of this NNIP in the Stour catchment and demonstrates the need to remain vigilant in stopping the future introduction and spread of other invasive species to the area.

This newsletter goes out to all those on our NNIP contacts list as well as to other interest groups and individuals. It provides stakeholders with an update of what we have been up to with regards to tackling the spread of NNIP and what our plans are for the future.

Activities to date:

The recent focus of the project has been on the development of a Biosecurity and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Control Action Plan for the River Stour catchment. This has been developed in conjunction with NNNSI, who are working on similar plans across Norfolk and Suffolk. The plan has highlighted the need to not only continue with the great control work that has been taking place in the Valley but also to implement measures to prevent the spread of new INNS such as the fearsomely named killer shrimp, into the catchment

Since summer 2014 we have:

- **Held the second SV INNS LAG meeting in September 2014.** This was a well-attended meeting with representatives from the Environment Agency, Suffolk and Essex Wildlife Trusts' and Suffolk Biological Records Centre along with other important stakeholders. It was a valuable opportunity to obtain information on what species and sites we should go about targeting control effort.
- **Developed a River Stour Biosecurity and INNS Control Action Plan.** This focuses on identifying the high risk species that could invade the Stour catchment, the pathways for invasion and provides an action plan for 2015-2019 on both reducing the risk of invasion from new INNS and tackling the existing INNS that pose a threat to our native biodiversity. The plan is now available online at: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
- **Held the third SV INNS LAG meeting in April 2015.** The purpose of this meeting was to consult stakeholders in the Valley on the draft Biosecurity and Control Action Plan. It was another extremely useful meeting attended by a wide range of partners, many of which have agreed to contribute to the actions in the new biosecurity plan.
- **Continued with our battle against the source of Himalayan balsam on the River Box.** The first day of control took place at Primrose Wood, just upstream of Boxford in May. It appears that balsam on the site has declined since our first pulls in 2013 which is brilliant. In 2014 it took us nearly two days to pull all the

balsam at the site. This year it took just one day. Either we are getting more efficient or the balsam is reducing in number!

- **Commenced our giant hogweed control on the River Brett.** One day of spray work has already been conducted by Neil Catchpole and the monitoring of last year's control is underway. Whilst it is evident that in some areas the hogweed has declined significantly, in others there are hordes of young plants sprouting up in the areas where their parent plant once used to stand. It really has highlighted the invasive capability of this plant and the need for a long term control strategy to eliminate the established seed bank.
- **Continued tackling giant hogweed on the rivers Glem and Stour.** We are extremely grateful for the 15 landowners who have continued to support this collaborative giant hogweed control project in 2015. The aim of this project has been to target the source of giant hogweed in the Stour catchment and control work started on the River Glem on the 3rd of June.



Contacteur Paul Sims (Native Landscapes) spraying off giant hogweed on the banks of the River Stour in 2014. Control will continue this year.

Our Plans for the future:

This summer we will be finishing off the giant hogweed control programmes on the Brett and Stour, monitoring the floating pennywort pond at Great Waldingfield (fingers crossed it has gone for good!) and taking on balsam for a final day on the River Box. The LAG will be meeting again in autumn with the focus of continuing discussions on the delivery of the actions outlined in the Biosecurity and INNS Control Action Plan. This plan will help guide the action taken by both ourselves and hopefully other stakeholders to tackle INNS in the Valley from 2015 - 2019. If you wish to learn more about the plan and/or attend the next LAG meeting then please contact us for further details.

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you that from the 31st of July 2015 Matt Holden will be finishing as River Stour Project Officer with the DVSVP. He is off travelling on a world trip and is hopeful he will witness some of our NNIP in their native surroundings! We will be recruiting a new project officer to take forward Matt's work asap.

Dates for your diary:

- **Himalayan balsam control work party on the 17th June 2015, 10am - 3pm, River Box.** Contact us for more details.
- **Invasive non-native species in the Stour Valley LAG fourth meeting, 14:00 - 16:00, 25th November 2015, The Granary, Sudbury, CO10 2AN.** Join us to learn more about the importance of biosecurity in the Stour Valley and the delivery of the Biosecurity and Control Action Plan. Contact us for more details.

Plan a Himalayan balsam pull for your community!

If you know of this plant in your area and would be interested in getting stuck in and doing your bit for the environment then an easy, social and rewarding task is a Himalayan balsam pull. Whether you are a parish council, a community group or even an individual with a few friends, if you would be interested in planning a pull for 2015 or 2016 then please contact our River Stour Project Officer who will assist in setting it up.

Further information:

For more info on NNIP in the Stour Valley please visit our website: <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/>

If you have any further queries, would like to report any NNIP species that you have seen or are interested in having a discussion or site visit to discuss NNIP on your land then please do not hesitate to get in contact with us at Dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 01394 445225