



Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Newsletter



**Norfolk
Non-native
Species
Initiative**

Since the NNNSI was launched in September 2008, we have managed to make a good amount of progress towards the strategic control of invasive species in Norfolk. However, there is still a lot to do and we must maintain the current level of activity if we are really going to get on top of the problem. The EC Water Framework Directive (WFD) has provided a further incentive for us to manage these

species proactively. With the provision of additional funding, the Initiative is now in a position to help achieve the Directive's targets relating to invasive species in our region (see 'News from Norfolk' for more details).

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News from Norfolk

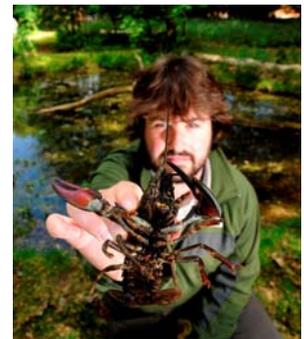
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UPDATE FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR

It has been a very hectic, and productive, few months for the Initiative. We have had lots of activities going on across Norfolk to raise awareness of invasive species and also plenty of action to control them too.



Since my last update, we have:

- Secured funding from Defra through the Environment Agency to help control and eradicate invasive aquatic and riparian plants and contribute towards WFD targets.
- Produced the first draft of the Status Report and Action Plan, which has been distributed to the Initiative's Steering Group for comment.
- Continued to update the Norfolk Non-native Species Database and mapped the distribution of the Initiative's six priority species (with support from NBIS), meaning that we now have a more accurate picture of where the species are than ever before.
- Engaged with members of the public at a variety of events such as Wild about the Wensum and the Royal Norfolk Show, making them aware of the impacts of invasive species and the actions they can take to help prevent their spread.
- Held an interactive display, featuring live examples of aquatic invasive species such as signal crayfish and parrot's feather, in the centre of Norwich to mark International Day for Biodiversity on 22nd May 2009 (more details in the 'News from Norfolk' section).
- Held the first county-wide 'Day of Action' to control invasive alien plants on 5th July 2009 (more details in the 'News from Norfolk' section).

Mike Sutton-Croft

Co-ordinator, Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative

NEWS FROM NORFOLK

Initiative secures funding through contributions towards Water Framework Directive targets

The presence of invasive non-native species can prevent waterways and water bodies from reaching the “Good Ecological Status” required by the Water Framework Directive.



As a part of its programme to help meet the Directive’s targets, the Environment Agency has provided the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative with additional funding to control and eradicate invasive species from the county’s waterbodies, meaning that we can considerably ‘step up’ our current activities in this area. This funding will also mean that the Initiative can continue beyond September 2009, the date when the project’s original funding is exhausted.

Some examples of projects the funding will be used to deliver include:

- Intensive control of giant hogweed along a 21km stretch of the River Yare.
- Eradication of floating pennywort from the River Waveney.
- Development of an invasive species “Black List” and horizon scanning methodology for Norfolk.

For more information about the Water Framework Directive, please visit:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/water/wfd/>

Norfolk holds Day of Action against invasive species

On Sunday 5th July 2009, invasive plant species were removed from some the worst affected areas in Norfolk, as more than 40 volunteers took part in the Initiative’s county-wide Day of Action. Activities organised by the Initiative’s partner organisations were held at a variety of locations.



Three of the events focussed on Himalayan balsam, which was introduced to Britain in 1839 and can be highly invasive, particularly in wet areas. This plant was removed through hand-pulling by volunteers at Hellesdon Meadow in Norwich, Swannington Upgate Common and the RSPBs reserves at Strumpshaw and Rockland.

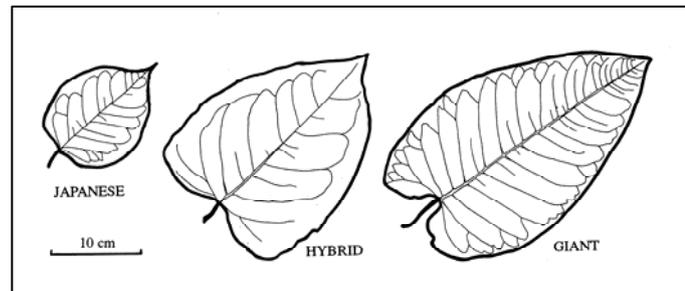
Meanwhile, the National Trust led a day of rhododendron clearance at Sheringham Park. Despite thousands of visitors being drawn to the Park every year to see its impressive display of rhododendrons, the National Trust are making concerted effort to keep the wooded areas clear of the plant (where it can swamp native vegetation and significantly reduce the diversity of the plant community).

Many thanks to everyone who took part in the Day or helped to organise one of the activities!

If you were unable to come along on the 5th July, but would still like to 'do your bit' to help us reduce the impacts of invasive species in Norfolk, then why not come along to the Broads Authority's day of rhododendron clearance at Fritton Lakes Country Park on Saturday 5th September? Contact Holly Berwick for more details (E-mail: Holly.Berwick@nwl.co.uk)

Knotweed - The Giant and the Hybrid

If Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is bad, then surely giant knotweed (*F. sachalinensis*) must be worse? Thankfully, it does not seem to be. Both taller (to 3 metres) and larger in leaf (to 40 cm. long) than Japanese Knotweed,



the giant knotweed was also introduced into British gardens during the 19th century. Beckett & Bull's *Flora of Norfolk* (1999) records it growing in 22 tetrads (2 x 2 km squares) outside gardens compared with over ten times that number for Japanese Knotweed. It does, however, also form impenetrable thickets so it could only be a matter of time before it raises concern.

A curious feature of the spread of Japanese knotweed throughout Britain is that all plants appear to have originated from a male-sterile clone, so without the production of pollen, it never sets seed. If you do find a large knotweed with seed it will almost certainly be the hybrid knotweed (*F. x bohemica*) which arises when pollen from the giant knotweed (which is occasionally male-fertile) fertilises Japanese knotweed. Hybrid knotweed has been recorded from many places in Britain but it is quite similar to Japanese knotweed and may well be under-recorded; its occurrence in Norfolk appears to be restricted to gardens. It can be distinguished by the generally larger leaves with a heart-shaped base (see illustrations) and is probably as rampant. It is likely that virtually all hybrid knotweed plants in Britain have originated as deliberate horticultural crosses but the work of Dr. John Bailey and his colleagues at the University of Leicester has shown that in at least two stations, one in Norfolk, it has originated naturally where male-fertile giant knotweed and Japanese knotweed are growing together.

A proportion of hybrid knotweed plants are male-fertile and there is some conservation concern that pollen from such plants could fertilise Japanese knotweed (thus back-crossing) to generate viable seeds which might produce fully fertile plants with the potential for much more effective dispersal than at present. Seed produced by such crosses in cultivation can germinate in the UK if climatic conditions are right.

I should be pleased to hear from anyone who suspects that they have found either giant or hybrid knotweed growing outside gardens in Norfolk and will pass on all records to the appropriate County Recorder, NBIS and the NNNSI.

Tony Leech
(E-mail: leech@dialstart.net)

Aliens invade central Norwich!

This year's International Day for Biodiversity (22 May) focussed on invasive alien species. To mark the day, events were held across Britain and the rest of the world to raise awareness of these species and the massive threat that they pose to biodiversity worldwide.

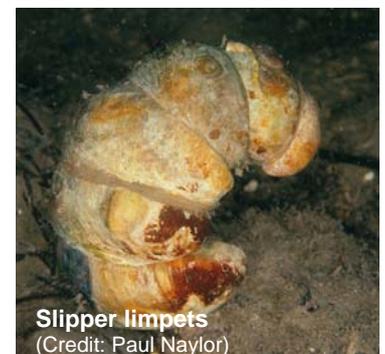
The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative marked the day with an interactive display at the Forum in Norwich, including a scale model of an 'alien' spaceship. The display also included live examples of some of the most damaging invasive species in the county, including signal crayfish, floating pennywort, Japanese knotweed and Australian swamp stonecrop. Set against the stunning glass and steel backdrop of The Forum, the display received a large amount of public interest and a steady stream of curious visitors. The exhibition was organised in collaboration with the British Wild Flower Plants, which promotes the use of native garden plants.



If you want to find out about the other events that happened across Britain to mark the International Day for Biodiversity, please visit:
http://www.nonnativespecies.org/00_Events/

Coastal Wildlife Survey to provide information on slipper limpet distribution

The invasive non-native slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata* has been featured in the NWT's Natural Connections project's latest wildlife survey. The limpet has been reported to be spreading into Norfolk waters, and we need to accurately identify the current distribution of the species to judge the scale of the problem. Once the limpet becomes established in an area, eradication is extremely difficult to achieve. The other species featured in the survey are all natives, and are: grayling butterfly; harbour porpoise; yellow horned-poppo; and sea-holly.



If you should happen to see any of these five species, please add your sighting online at www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections/surveys or telephone 01603 598333 for survey leaflet.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Consultation held on the possible release of a biocontrol agent for Japanese knotweed

A public consultation into the proposed release of a biocontrol agent for Japanese knotweed was launched on 23 July 2009. The favoured agent has been identified as the sap-sucking psyllid *Aphalara itadori*. Dr Dick Shaw, Principal Scientist at Cabi, has led the research. Those of you who attended the Initiative's Stakeholders' Forum in February will remember Dick's fascinating talk on biological control, a summary of which can be found on the Initiative's webpage. Dick's research and the previous successes of biocontrol elsewhere make it clear that, in many circumstances, biocontrol offers the most sustainable, cost effective and environmentally sound option to control invasive non-native plants.



The closing date of the consultation is **Monday 19 October 2009**.

To find out more, please visit:

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/japanese-knotweed/index.htm

EU moves closer towards European Strategy on Invasive Non-native Species

It is estimated that invasive alien species currently cost the EU at least 12.7 billion Euros a year, with the expansion of global trade leading to novel species being introduced at an ever increasing rate. At a meeting of the EU Environmental Council on 25 June 2009, the problem of invasive alien species was discussed, with the need for a dedicated EU Strategy once again being highlighted. Better co-ordination and co-operation at all levels and across a wide range of interests was considered to be essential to fully address the problem. Other key points for action that were identified include the development of a mechanism for more comprehensive risk assessment of alien species, effective control of the pathways of introduction (proportional to risk) and the development of a comprehensive EU inventory drawing on existing initiatives as a basis for information sharing and an early warning system.



A Strategy could be prepared by as early as 2010.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/108747.pdf

Invasive species included as a UK Biodiversity Indicator

In April 2009, the UK Biodiversity Partnership published assessments of 18 indicators used to measure the overall status of biodiversity in the UK. For the first time, this included an indicator focussed on the impacts of invasive species. The indicator shows that from 1960 to 2008, 49 of the most concerning invasive non-native species have continued to spread in the UK.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/Biyp_2009.pdf

Invasive ladybird could affect over 1,000 native species

An exhibit at the Royal Society's Summer Exhibition has highlighted the threat posed by the invasive harlequin ladybird in the UK. The insect, which predates other ladybirds and the eggs and larvae of butterflies, has the potential to adversely affect over 1,000 of our native species. Despite only being introduced to the UK in 2004, the ladybird is now extremely widespread. Indeed, the harlequin ladybird has been described as one of the fastest spreading invasive species in Europe and the most invasive ladybird on Earth.



For more information, please visit:

http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news/news_archive/2009_news_item_28.html

UPCOMING EVENTS

5 September 2009: Come to the Broads Authority's **Rhododendron clearance day** at Fritton Lakes Country Park and help us to remove the invasive *Rhododendron ponticum* from the wooded areas surrounding the lake. The plant has formed dense thickets of vegetation which overhang the water, out-competing the native vegetation which would normally be found in that habitat. For more information, please contact Holly Berwick (E-mail: Holly.Berwick@nwl.co.uk)

1 October 2009: It is a very special year for the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, which is celebrating 10 years of the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan. At this year's **Annual Biodiversity Forum**, the Partnership will reflect on some of its successes over the last decade, and also look towards the future of the Partnership and biodiversity conservation in Norfolk. If you are interested in attending, then please contact Scott Perkin for more details (E-mail: Scott.Perkin@norfolk.gov.uk)

3 October 2009: The Non-native Species Initiative will have a stand at **Wild about Norfolk**, featuring our display boards and other material along with live specimens of some of the county's worst invaders. The event is being held at Acle High School, 10.00am and 4.00pm on Saturday 3rd October. For more information, please visit: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/events/details.asp?id=tcm:9-165973>

If you would like to contribute to the next NNNSI newsletter, then please contact Mike Sutton-Croft, Co-ordinator of the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative. Tel: 01603 228977; E-mail: michael.sutton-croft@norfolk.gov.uk

The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative was launched in 2008 to promote the prevention, monitoring and control of invasive, alien species. It seeks to do this by:

- *Collating and monitoring data on the distribution and spread of non-native species in the county;*
- *Developing action plans to address the species of most urgent concern;*
- *Facilitating control and eradication projects at high priority sites; and*
- *Promoting awareness of the risks and impacts associated with non-native species.*

The Initiative has been established under the umbrella of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership and works through a stakeholders' forum comprised of representatives from over 20 organisations. It is financially supported by the Broads Authority, Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Norfolk County Council and the Water Management Alliance.