

# New Forest Non-Native Plants Project



Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Volunteers' newsletter

April 2020

## Welcome

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project aims to stop the spread of invasive non-native plants in the New Forest area, particularly along river banks and in wetland habitats. Catherine Chatters and Jo Gore, the New Forest Non-Native Plants Officers are very grateful for all the help given by volunteers, particularly with the control of Himalayan balsam. This newsletter has been produced to provide an update in the light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation.

## Coronavirus

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is inevitably affecting the activities of the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project (NFNNPP). Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust is taking the situation very seriously.

The NFNNPP secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund through the New Forest 'Our Past, Our Future' Landscape Partnership Scheme for Catherine and Jo to continue working on the Project until the end of September 2020. We had hoped to be leading volunteer work parties to pull Himalayan balsam from May 2020 but these have had to be cancelled in the light of Government advice. The situation will be reviewed by the Wildlife Trust at the end of May 2020.

In the meantime Jo has been 'furloughed' from Monday 6 April 2020, so will be unable to contact you or respond to your queries. It is likely that Catherine will also be furloughed from mid April. Thank you for your patience and understanding at this challenging time. If we are able to lead balsam pulls some time this season we will let you know. Obviously any work that we do will be undertaken in the light of the most up-to-date Government advice. The most important thing is that everyone keeps as safe as possible in these difficult and uncertain times.



Jo Gore pulling Himalayan balsam along the Avon Water downstream of Efford on a sunny day in June 2019

# Network Rail

During 2019 Jo made very good progress with the control of Himalayan balsam along the railway embankments in the vicinity of the Lymington River and the Passford Water.

Having established an effective working relationship with a key manager at Network Rail, Jo led a number of balsam pulls with Network Rail staff and helped them to identify balsam more confidently.



The photos on this page were all taken by Jo during balsam pulls with Network Rail last summer along the main line near Brockenhurst and the branch line to Lymington.

Hopefully Jo will be able to lead further balsam pulls on the railway embankments during 2020 but this will, of course, be dependent on the Coronavirus situation and Government advice.

Jo and Catherine held a training session in March 2019 for Network Rail staff and their contractors to raise awareness about invasive non-native plants growing on Network Rail property. Advice was provided on how to recognise plants such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed, control methods and relevant legislation. A meeting was held with Network Rail in February 2020 to review progress during 2019 and to plan further work.



# Invasive Species Week

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project heled to promote Invasive Species Week during May 2019. This national initiative, organised by the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat, aims to raise awareness about invasive non-native species and the problems they cause.

During Invasive Species Week Catherine visited garden centres and spoke to staff and customers to promote 'Be Plant Wise', a government campaign to encourage people to garden responsibly and ensure they don't dump garden waste in the countryside.



Photos above and right show staff at Southern Aquatics in Cadnam and at Everton Water Garden. Photo below shows customers at Romsey World of Water.



Invasive Species Week provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the invasive non-native plants which are now banned from sale.

Catherine also gave a talk at Redcliffe Garden Centre to alert gardeners to the problems caused by invasive non-native plants.

## Awareness-raising events

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, which hosts the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project (NFNPP), is one of the partners in the New Forest 'Our Past, Our Future' Landscape Partnership Scheme. This is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and aims to conserve and restore landscapes and habitats and inspire a new generation to champion the area. In addition to providing resources for practical work, the NLHF provides funding which enables the NFNPP to raise awareness about invasive non-native plants.

Last year the NFNPP hosted awareness-raising sessions for Network Rail staff and contractors, Young Commoners and volunteers to help people recognise invasive non-native plants, understand the problems they can cause and find out how to control them.



The photograph above shows New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer Jo Gore with some of the participants identifying pictures of invasive non-native plants during the training session for Network Rail staff and contractors in March 2019.



The photo above was taken on 6 November 2019 at Testwood Lakes Education Centre during the awareness-raising session for New Forest Non-Native Plants Project volunteers.

Photo on right: three of the Young Commoners at the awareness-raising session held in Lyndhurst on 10 May 2019.



## Awareness –raising events (continued)

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project attended the Wood Fair at Roydon Woods in June last year and had a display at a nature reserve open day at Lymington in September.



Photos show visitors to the NFNNPP displays at the Wood Fair (left) and nature reserve open day at Lymington (below).



## Project shortlisted for CPRE Award

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project was selected as a finalist in the Community and Voluntary category of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England's Hampshire Countryside Awards 2019.

Photograph shows Nigel Atkinson, Lord Lieutenant for Hampshire, presenting a certificate to the Project Officers and volunteers Patsy Baverstock and Brian Matthews at the CPRE Hampshire Countryside Awards ceremony on 17 September 2019.



Photo credit: Jason Allen Photography

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Please note that Jo Gore is currently furloughed so is unable to receive any e-mail messages or 'phone calls. It is likely that Catherine will also be furloughed. Whilst the Project Officers are furloughed their e-mail messages will be monitored occasionally by their Manager, Martin de Retuerto, Director of Projects and Services at HIWWT. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Photo on right: Jo Gore, New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer, & volunteers on a balsam pull along the Lymington River in 2019



Catherine Chatters, New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer, pulling Himalayan balsam, photographed by Ashley Basil.



## Hampshire & Isle of Wight

Wildlife Trust

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project is a partnership project hosted by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and supported by a number of organisations



Our Past, Our Future  
*Working together for the New Forest*



All advice given by HIWWT is done so in good faith and every effort is made to ensure that it is accurate and appropriate however it is the sole responsibility of the landowner to ensure that any actions they take are both legally and contractually compliant. Therefore, HIWWT does not accept responsibility or liability for any losses incurred or arising from the advice we give.

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