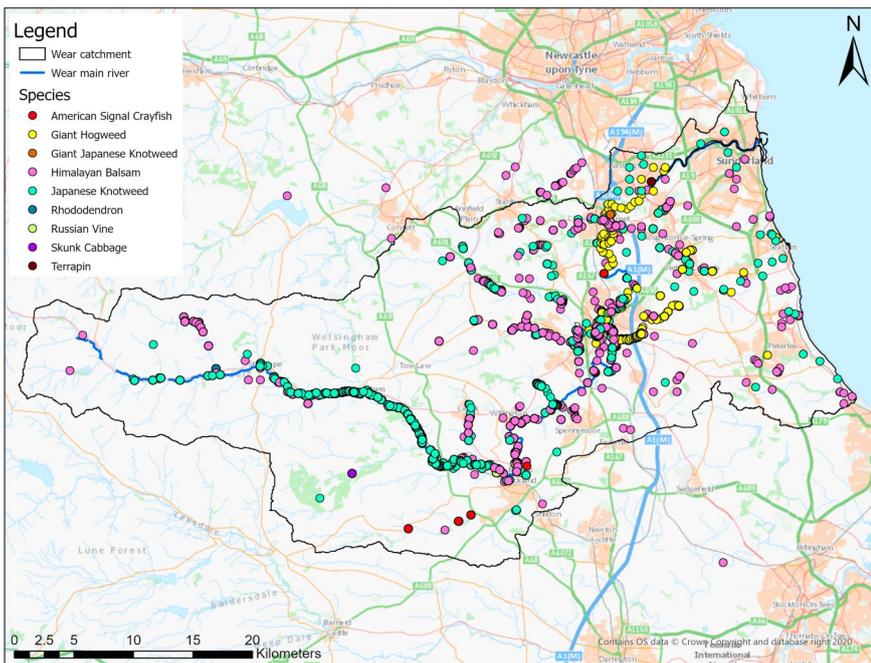


WINNS—Wear Invasive Non-Native Species



WINNS Project

Wear Rivers Trust is working to tackle three of the worst invasive non-native species (INNS) in the Wear catchment: Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed. These have been increasing in the area for many years following their introduction to the UK in the 19th Century. All three species grow in large clusters which smother native vegetation and leave riverbanks vulnerable to erosion during winter dieback.

Japanese Knotweed

This species spreads rapidly via rhizomes or plant fragments. It can be very difficult and costly to eradicate as plants must be treated with herbicide for several years to ensure it has truly died off.

Key ID features:

- Tall - up to 2.5m
- Bamboo-like stem with purple flecks
- Zig-zag stem with alternating leaves
- Dark brown rhizomes with white shoots
- Spikes of small white flowers in summer
- Dead, woody stems in winter



Himalayan Balsam

Himalayan balsam is a highly successful invasive species due to its explosive seed capsules which mean each plant can shoot 700-800 seeds up to 7 metres into the surrounding area. Its short root system means this species can be effectively managed by hand-pulling plants, however this must be done before it sets seed (usually mid-late Summer) and the plant must be crushed to prevent it taking root again.

Key ID features:

- Trumpet shape flower with wide pink petals
- Hollow, fleshy stem with joints at regular intervals
- Stem is green-red early in the year, turning pink-red in summer
- Leaves are thin and oval-shaped with a toothed edge



Giant Hogweed

This species can be very difficult to eradicate as each plant can hold tens of thousands of seeds which can survive in the soil for several years.

CAUTION MUST BE TAKEN TO AVOID CONTACT WITH GIANT HOGWEED as this species produces a sap which reacts with light and can cause severe blistering on exposed skin which can then remain sensitive for several years.

Key ID features:

- Very tall - up to 5m
- Sharply divided leaves up to 3m wide
- Stems are 5-10cm in diameter, green with purple blotches, and usually have sharp bristles
- Umbrella-shaped flower head with white (or pinkish) flowers
- Similar to native Hogweed but distinguished by its much larger size



Biosecurity

Invasive species can be easily spread on our clothing, footwear and equipment. We can all play a part in slowing the spread of INNS by following the simple protocol of **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY**.

- **CHECK** clothing, footwear and equipment for mud, seeds etc before leaving site.
- **CLEAN** everything thoroughly in hot water, making sure to include damp or hard to reach areas.
- **DRY** everything for as long as possible - certain species can survive in damp conditions for up to 2 weeks.

Getting Involved

If you spot any of these species, you can inform us by emailing the address shown below. Please include the date the plant was spotted, a description of the location or a photo or grid reference, if possible.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life and are vital to the work we do to tackle INNS presence in the Wear catchment. They assist in many aspects of the project, depending on preference and experience:

- Performing walkover surveys to monitor the spread of INNS
- Assisting on task days focused on treating patches of INNS
- Becoming trained pesticide operators
- Providing expert knowledge

If you would like to find out more about our WINNS project or how you can get involved, please visit our website or contact us via the following details:

Website: www.wear-rivers-trust.org.uk

Email: admin@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk



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