



THREE SHIRES LTD
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Himalayan Balsam Report

Ashton Park, Trowbridge,

BA14 6DQ

Three Shires Reference number **HISQ24-5848**

Himalayan Balsam Survey

HB survey undertaken by Natalie Roberts on
22/09/2025 for Three Shires Ltd.



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Himalayan Balsam Survey

Site Overview

The site is located to the south of Trowbridge, currently comprising of mostly agricultural land. The River Biss runs from the south-west corner of the site up to the north, flowing in to Biss Meadow Country Park and beyond.

The site itself is dominated by large open fields of arable grassland, along with watercourses, hedgerows and dense tree/scrub margins around the field edges and dry grassed over drainage ditches.

The survey was undertaken on Monday 22nd September 2025, weather conditions remained dry and visibility conditions were good throughout the entirety of the survey.

Ground works are due to commence on site next year.

Purpose of Survey

To assess the river margins for the presence of Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Himalayan Balsam had previously been referenced to within an ecology report, undertaken by Aspect Ecology Ltd (Appendix 6.1a - Baseline Ecological Appraisal). Three Shires were instructed by Barnaby Harris to carry out an inspection, to determine the extent of Himalayan Balsam along the river margins, prior to development commencing.

Findings

The survey was undertaken by Natalie Roberts (PCA Approved Invasive Weed Surveyor) on 22nd September and concluded that no visible surface growth of Himalayan Balsam was present along the River Biss or the smaller brook running along the north-eastern boundary of site.

Himalayan Balsam tends to thrive in damp river corridors and can form dense stands, due to the release of viable seed flowing downstream and colonising. No evidence of previous years surface growth was recorded during the site inspection either.

Please note, Three Shires only visually assessed for growth along the River Biss embankments and the small brook near the north-eastern boundary. No evidence of Himalayan Balsam was recorded.

Please refer to the site photographs.





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Site Photographs



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



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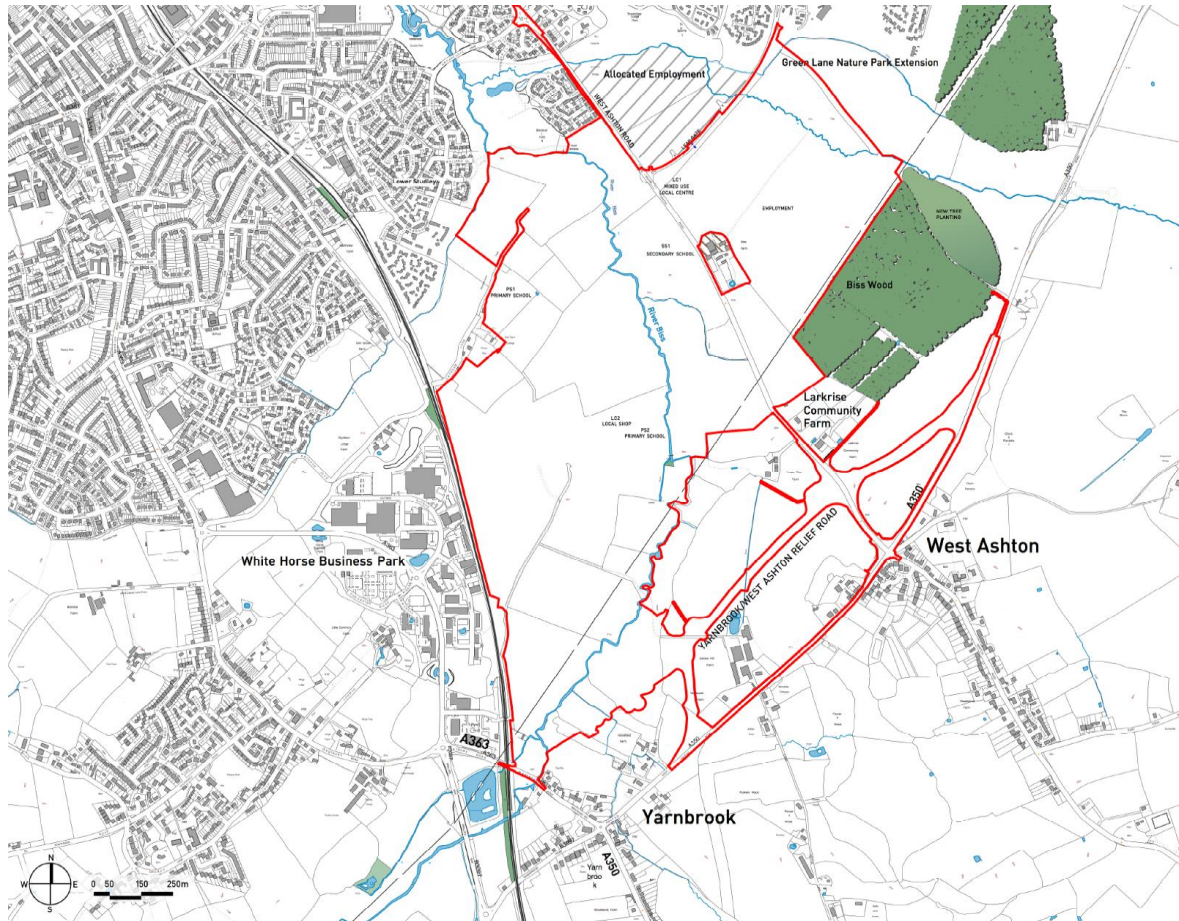
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Site Drawings:



Further information regarding Himalayan Balsam is provided at the end of this report for your perusal.

If you require any additional information, or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Natalie Roberts
C.S.J.K Invasive Species Surveyor
E: nroberts@threeshires.com
Three Shires Ltd



Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

Species identification

Height: 2.0 – 3.0 meters

Stem: Himalayan balsam stem is smooth and hollow, typically displaying a green or reddish colouration. It is characterized by nodes or joints along its length, which give it a segmented appearance. The stem grows erect, supporting the plant's leaves, flowers, and seed pods. While sturdy overall, the stem may become somewhat fragile, especially near the top where it branches out to accommodate the plant's foliage and reproductive structures.

Leaf: The leaves of Himalayan balsam are arranged oppositely along the stem, occurring in pairs with one leaf positioned directly opposite another. They are generally lanceolate or elongated in shape, featuring a pointed tip and serrated edges. These leaves are relatively large, typically measuring between 5 - 15cm in length, and have a smooth texture with a glossy appearance, particularly on the upper surface. They are predominantly medium to dark green in colour, with a lighter underside, and may exhibit reddish veins or stems. Prominent veins run from the central midrib to the edges of the leaf, forming a distinct network throughout the leaf blade.

Flower: The flower of Himalayan balsam is large, showy, and trumpet-shaped, consisting of five petals arranged in a radial symmetry. The petals are usually pink, purple, or white in colour, often with darker markings or spots towards the centre of the flower. Each flower has a spurred base, which contains nectar and serves to attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The flower is typically borne on a long, slender stalk that arises from the leaf axils along the stem. Himalayan balsam flowers bloom in late summer to early autumn, creating a striking display of colour in the landscape. Overall, the flower of Himalayan balsam is a visually striking feature of the plant and is an important adaptation for attracting pollinators.

Seed: The seeds of Himalayan balsam are small, oval-shaped, and typically dark brown or black in colour. They are contained within elongated seed pods, which develop from the flowers after pollination. Each seed pod can contain approximately 2,000 seeds, arranged in rows within the pod. When ripe, the seed pods split open explosively along their length, scattering the seeds several meters away from the parent plant. The seeds themselves are smooth and shiny, with a hard outer coat that helps protect them during dispersal and germination. Additionally, the seeds have the ability to form a persistent seed bank in the soil, where they can remain viable for several years.

Ecology

Habitat description: Himalayan balsam is prevalent across various habitats in the UK, notably thriving in riparian areas, such as riverbanks, stream sides and canal banks, where the soil is rich in nutrients



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and moisture levels are consistently high. It also flourishes in wetland environments like marshes, fens, and damp woodlands, adapting well to conditions of periodic flooding and fluctuating water levels. Himalayan balsam frequently colonizes disturbed sites along roadsides, railway tracks, and urban areas, where the soil has been recently disturbed and exposed. Additionally, it can be found at woodland edges and clearings, taking advantage of the transition between open spaces and shaded habitats. Despite its less common occurrence in gardens and urban areas.

Reproduction & Life Cycle: Himalayan balsam follows a reproductive and life cycle that begins with prolific seed production, typically ranging from 800 to 2,500 seeds per plant. These seeds are contained within elongated seed pods, which develop from the flowers after pollination. Germination occurs in early spring, facilitated by moist soil and warmth, although some seeds may remain dormant in the soil, forming a persistent seed bank. The plant undergoes rapid vegetative growth, reaching heights of up to 2 to 3 meters within a single growing season. By mid-summer, Himalayan balsam begins flowering, with large, showy flowers attracting pollinators such as bees and butterflies. As the flowers are pollinated, they develop into seed pods, which mature and explosively eject seeds several meters away. Despite its annual life cycle, the plant's ability to produce numerous seeds and form a persistent seed bank allows it to reestablish populations in subsequent years.

Impact

Himalayan balsam poses several significant challenges for people in the UK. Its highly invasive nature threatens native ecosystems by outcompeting indigenous plant species, disrupting habitats, and altering ecological dynamics. The plant's shallow root system contributes to soil erosion along riverbanks and watercourses, increasing the risk of sedimentation and habitat degradation. This invasion not only impacts biodiversity and ecosystem health but also interferes with agricultural activities, reducing crop yields and causing economic losses for farmers. Himalayan balsam hinders riverbank management efforts, impeding navigation, recreational access, and flood management. Despite efforts to control its spread, the plant's prolific seed production and resilience make effective management a continuous challenge, requiring coordinated strategies and resources. Overall, addressing the problems posed by Himalayan balsam requires comprehensive management approaches to mitigate its ecological, economic, and social impacts in the UK.

Legislation

1. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: Himalayan balsam is both an IAS (Invasive Alien Species) and listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This legislation prohibits its intentional planting in the wild to prevent its spread. act as a species that is "not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state." It is an offence to plant or cause Himalayan balsam to grow in the wild without a license.
2. Environmental Protection Act 1990: Regulates the disposal of controlled waste, including invasive plant species like Himalayan balsam. It prohibits the introduction of non-native species into the wild.



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3. Housing Act 2004: Requires sellers and landlords to disclose the presence of Himalayan balsam on their property. Failure to do so can lead to legal consequences.
4. Infrastructure Act 2015 (UK): Provides powers for organizations such as government bodies and environmental agencies to enter land and carry out eradication work, particularly for species like Giant Hogweed.
5. The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (UK): This law enforces the UK's post-Brexit approach to dealing with invasive species. It outlines rules on the handling, sale, import, and release of species listed as invasive in the UK. Follows similar principles to EU Regulation 1143/2014, with surveillance, control measures, and management plans.

Non-native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain: Provides a framework for addressing the impacts of non-native invasive species, including Himalayan balsam. It emphasizes prevention, early detection, rapid response, and control measures.

Property Care Association (PCA) Code of Practice: The PCA has developed guidelines for the management and treatment of Himalayan balsam, outlining best practices for its control and eradication.

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Guidelines: RICS provides guidelines for surveyors and property professionals on assessing and managing Himalayan balsam in property transactions.

Biosecurity measures

When treating or excavating Himalayan balsam, strict biosecurity is vital to prevent its spread. Establish clear boundaries, clean equipment thoroughly, dispose of plant material properly, and decontaminate vehicles leaving the site. Monitor for regrowth and train personnel in biosecurity protocols to minimize the risk of spreading this non-native invasive plant and protect native ecosystems. This plant would have to go to a licensed landfill and be classed as 'controlled' waste.



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