

Environmental Standard Operating Procedure 17

Himalayan Balsam Eradication

Himalayan Balsam forms dense stands which suppress the growth of native British plants. This can leave river banks bare of vegetation in autumn and winter, making them more liable to sediment erosion. It is an offence under Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Part II of Schedule 9, to plant or cause to grow Himalayan Balsam.

Aim

Eradication of Himalayan Balsam from bank-sides, river margin and fen habitats.

Environmental Impact

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Spreading seeds	High	Do not pull or cut once seedpods ripe. Arisings placed on geo-textile mats.
Trampling native vegetation	High	Define access and ensure selective pulling
Disturbance to ground nesting birds	Medium	Pre-survey of area, if removing before end July. See ESOP 14.



Delivery Method

- By **Operation Technicians, Volunteers, Rangers**
- Control (pulling or cutting) should aim to prevent flowering; best carried out before June.
- Multiple pulling sessions spaced 3–6 weeks apart from **May to October** to control re-growth.
- Controlled areas to be revisited for at least 3 years and regrowth monitored.
- Extra care taken near water to avoid seed dispersal.

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Standard Procedure

- Hand-pull all individual plants in an area ensuring whole plant including root system removed.
- Pull or Cut ideally **BEFORE JUNE**
- Cut/Strim all plants in area ensuring plants are cut below lowest node to avoid re-flowering.
- Plants to be piled on biodegradable geotextile mats and left in situ to decay.
- **DO NOT PULL OR CUT** once seedpods are ripe and popping. NB seeds present from July to October.
- Define access to HB stands to avoid trampling of native vegetation;
- Place disposal mats on freshly cleared areas to minimise disturbance of native vegetation;
- Ensure identification training is provided to ensure only Himalayan Balsam is removed.

Consultation Required

- **Broads Authority internal** – Environment Officers, Rangers
- **External** – Ensure landowner permission if not BA land.

Further Information

<http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies/himalayanbalsam.aspx>

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