



River Avon at Gunville Cottage
David Rawlings

Why is the River Avon so special?

The river and its tributaries form the largest chalk river system in England. This has been shaped by human use over time and the resulting complex network of drainage ditches and water meadows allows the river to support a unique variety and abundance of wildlife not found in other English rivers. Rare and threatened animal and plant species found on the river include Atlantic salmon, brown trout, lamprey, Desmoulin's whorl snail, otters, water voles and water crowfoot. The river is of international importance and has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

**If you want to get involved,
or need more information
or advice contact the Source
to Sea Project Manager on
(01380) 725670, email
sourcetosea@wiltshirewildlife.org**

Front cover photo: Volunteer removing
balsam, NFNNPP

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from the Environment Agency



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write to us at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Elm Tree
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contact us on
(01380) 725670**

Defending our native wildlife against invasive species

River Avon



Source to Sea



**Hampshire & Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust**
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.



The Source to Sea Project

The spread of invasive non-native plants along the River Avon and its tributaries threatens the future survival of our native wild plants and animals.

The Environment Agency, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Dorset Wildlife Trust have formed the Source to Sea Project to remove problem species from the entire length of the Hampshire Avon. We will target plants such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed and work to respond to new pests such as killer shrimp.

The project covers the whole of the River Avon catchment from its headwaters in the Vale of Pewsey, down through Salisbury into Hampshire, to where it flows into the sea at Christchurch.

What are invasive non-native species?

Plants and animals (such as signal crayfish and American mink) that have been introduced to a place where they do not naturally occur are known as non-native species. A few of these are 'invasive' and can rapidly multiply and threaten natural habitats. The problem is particularly severe along rivers, which can provide pathways for infestations.

Why are they a problem?

Invasive non-native species upset nature's balance. They can smother or kill native wildlife, spread disease, cause serious bank erosion, increase flood risk and provide a risk to human health and safety. Once problem plants gain a hold on our river banks and wetlands they will take over, spreading at astonishing speed. When native plants disappear the whole food chain of the river system starts to break down. Without effective control now, this could lead to a permanent loss of native wildlife and plant species.



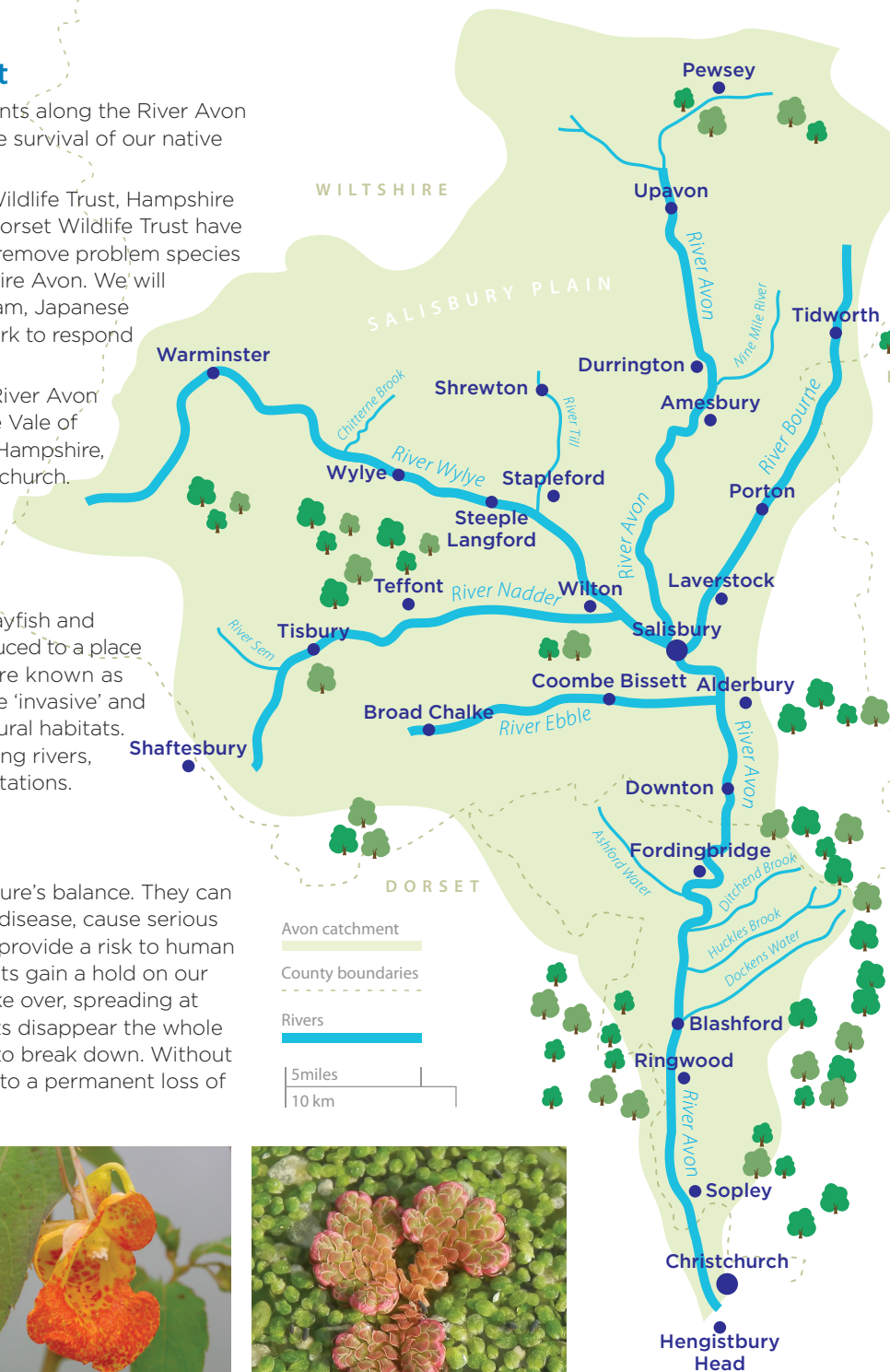
American skunk cabbage
NNSS



Orange balsam
Rob Large WWT



Water fern
Sam Stork WWT



We need your help

If you enjoy spending time walking or fishing by the river

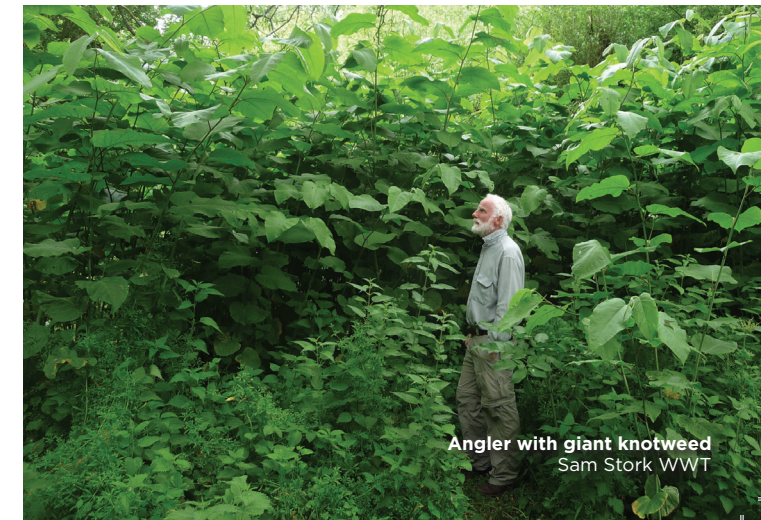
Please join our volunteer groups out on the river throughout the summer to pull up Himalayan balsam. You can also assist us with surveying to discover lesser known species such as American skunk cabbage.

If you are an angler

Please keep an eye out for unfamiliar plants and animals. If you think something doesn't look quite right please report it to the Environment Agency emergency hotline 0800 80 70 60 (also found on your rod license). Many of these plants and animals are moved and spread unwittingly so be sure to check, clean and thoroughly dry all your equipment. This is especially important if you are fishing at different locations in a short space of time.

If you are a landowner

More than 100 landowners on the River Avon help us by granting access to their land, taking action to control problem species or simply providing tea and biscuits for hard working volunteers. We are asking all landowners on the river to be aware of the plants and animals on your land and let us know if you think there is anything of concern, especially if it is near or on the river. We can help with identification and advice on control.



Angler with giant knotweed
Sam Stork WWT