

Field work for the project began in Ireland and Northern Ireland during February 2011. Initial surveys were undertaken to determine the range, spread and highest extent of the invasive plant species on each of the rivers in each catchment. As surveying progressed, a set of **survey protocols** were established to allow the efficient monitoring of the **distribution and abundance** of invasive plants throughout the course of the CIRB project, and beyond.

A range of information was collected during surveying including abundance of the target invasive plant species, the width of the riparian zones, the altitude, a photo log and information on land use, livestock, priority habitats and any additional invasive species (i.e. those not specifically targeted by this project). As surveying progresses, a post-control evaluation will be included in routine surveying to determine the success of control throughout the course of the project and across the entire project area.

### **Surveying (February – July 2011)**

In the **Dee/Glyde catchment**, the majority of the surveying work on the upper tributaries was carried out by the IFI team at the beginning of the year. The QUB team spent a couple of weeks (May/June) surveying the lower reaches of both rivers and mapping the invasive plant species on these more heavily infested parts of the catchment.

In the **Newry catchment**, a major proportion of the distribution of the invasive plant species was found on the Newry Canal and Newry River. These two areas have been completely mapped which enabled the rapid implementation of control methods in key areas. The majority of the tributaries on the Clanrye River, which is one of the largest in the catchment, have been checked for the presence of the invasive species. The distribution on the Clanrye River was limited to a few small patches which received targeted control and will be monitored over the coming years. In addition, a large proportion of the Bessbrook and Camlough Rivers have been surveyed, and the spread of the invasive species mapped. Surveying was also undertaken on the third major river system of the catchment, the Cushier River, which was mapped to the village of Clare.

The **Faughan catchment** has been mapped from the upper tributaries and along the main river to Drumahoe, with only the lower reaches to be mapped in the coming field season (2012).

### **Spraying (May – October 2011)**

The **Dee/Glyde catchment** has been entirely sprayed for Giant Hogweed (2 treatments) during June and July. This plant's distribution covers approximately 0.5 km of the River Glyde and 8 km of the River Dee. Japanese Knotweed was also completely treated during September on the Dee catchment, including a large infestation in the Castlebellingham Estate, and various other small patches throughout the lower stretches of the rivers. No Himalayan Balsam has been recorded in this catchment to date.

In the **Newry catchment**, Giant Hogweed has been sprayed from Bessbrook (starting at the the viaduct) downstream, and on the Newry Canal and River from Carnbane Industrial Estate. Approximately 6.5 km of river has been treated during this field season, leaving about 1.25 km that was not covered due to time constraints. Himalayan Balsam was treated on the Cushier River in August starting at Clare Glen and working downstream, covering about 4 km of river. Approximately 3.5 km of the river, as well as parts of the canal, were not sprayed this field season. Japanese

Knotweed, which is distributed around Newry, Bessbrook and Camlough, was entirely sprayed in the Newry catchment in September.

The **Faughan catchment** has had good coverage. Giant Hogweed is limited on this catchment to a few sparsely distributed individuals, which were sprayed when encountered. Himalayan Balsam was sprayed from its highest extent to 15 km downstream of this point during August. Japanese Knotweed was treated during August, September and October from its highest extent upstream to 20 km downstream of this point. Approximately 10 km of the lower stretches of this river were not covered this field season.

The treatment of Japanese Knotweed on the Faughan catchment was hindered by the severe flooding (mid-October) which made field work unsafe. These untreated areas have been prioritised for the coming years to ensure they are fully treated, with some heavily infested areas scheduled to be sprayed twice.