

**EA VOLUNTEERS TACKLE INVASIVE SPECIES
(and have lots of fun at the same time....)**

On 9 July a team of nine volunteers from the EA offices in Bristol spent one of their 'environment days' on the Wellow Brook near Bath. The main objective was to pull up as much as possible of the invasive species Himalayan Balsam before it sets seed.



This plant damages the banks of watercourses leaving them vulnerable to accelerated erosion. Several tons of the plant were pulled and stacked on the bank to rot down, and a lot of rubbish was removed, which is a huge contribution towards keeping this habitat in as good shape as possible. It was hard work but the team enjoyed a perfect day's weather and appreciated the joy of just being in the water in such a beautiful and peaceful spot.

As well as concentrating on the job in hand there was time to appreciate what else the Brook could offer: kingfishers, damselflies, close observation

of the entrance to an otter holt, and a multiplicity of invertebrates - freshwater shrimp, nymphs of upwing flies, stoneflies, plus a bit of background on the geology and historical significance of the valley where William Smith gave birth to modern geology. Those of us who try to look after the Brook long-term are enormously grateful to all the volunteers and also to the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, who



arranged and organised the event. There is no doubt that the effort will pay dividends in terms of improved habitat, nor that everyone enjoyed their day. A genuine win-win - let's do it again next year!

Avon and Tributaries Angling Association
(Maurice Tennenhaus and Fred Scourse)

