

Towards a volunteer species surveillance network for Norfolk

Why?

Recent species audit work in Norfolk has shown that despite the wealth of data collected it is difficult to determine trends in status and abundance of species.

Large datasets such as moths and birds can be statistical analysed to give good information on trends but for other groups this is not possible even at site level.

Partners demand information on change in species and habitats often as part of funding agreements.

Good species monitoring data can help inform management of sites for conservation.

How?

- A network of 60 reference sites across 3 main habitat types:
Lowland dry acid grassland/lowland heathland
Lowland calcareous grassland
Arable field margins
- Groups of volunteers surveying a small group of sites near to where they live.
- Training and support given by NBIS and County Recorders.
- Data recorded and verified online using Indicia and iRecord.
- Data analysed using 'guilds' developed by UEA during the Breckland Biodiversity Audit to give information on site condition.
- Data made available via the NBN Gateway.

Surveys

Multi-taxa recording will take place at each of the reference sites covering:

Fungi
Lichens
Bryophytes
Vascular Plants
Beetles
Hymenoptera
Butterflies & Day-flying Moths
Bats

Standardised methodologies have been developed – using existing National Schemes where possible. Structure and management of the site will be recorded

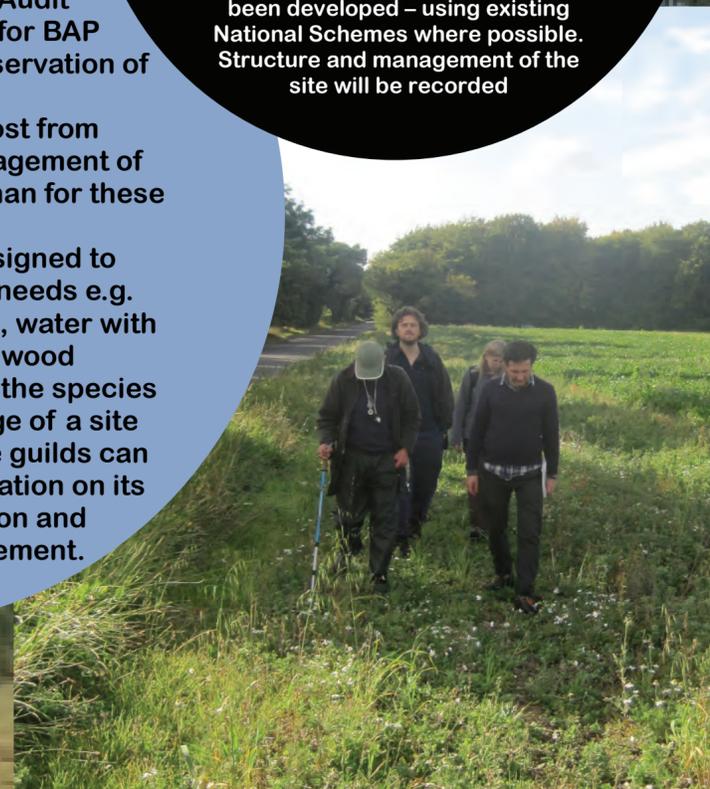
From habitats to guilds

The Breckland Biodiversity Audit showed that managing sites for BAP habitat was not delivering conservation of key species.

Rare species have been lost from Breckland as a result of management of heather on the heaths rather than for these key species.

Species have now been assigned to 'guilds' determined by their needs e.g. disturbed ground with grazing, water with dead wood

Analysis of the species assemblage of a site using these guilds can give information on its condition and management.



Photographs:
Calcareous grassland © Andrina Walmsley
Field margin © John Bingham
Corn marigold © R MacMullen
Nebria livida © Andrew Whitehouse
Surveying arable margin © Norfolk County Council

The Big Norwich Bat Project – volunteer monitoring in action

In 2012 a small group of volunteers ran a bat survey in Norwich and the surrounding area. Members of the public were asked to volunteer their gardens via an online map. Calls were recorded using SM2BAT+ recorders and identified using SonoBat and iBatsID. Over 150 sites were surveyed between May and September.

11 species of bat were recorded with up to 7 at some sites:

- Common pipistrelle
- Soprano pipistrelle
- Nathusius pipistrelle
- Noctule
- Daubenton's
- Natterer's
- Brandt's
- Serotine
- Leislars's
- Barbastelle
- Brown Long-eared

This methodology will be used during this work.

