



# Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 53  
(April 2016)

Photo: Bluebell wood © Lizzy Oddy

## Welcome to our April e-bulletin

Spring doesn't seem to know whether it's coming or going at the moment, but we've had a very busy month in the office, with lots of preparations afoot for events and workshops over the spring and summer – keep your eyes peeled for these!

You're running out of time to nominate someone for the 2016 Community Biodiversity Awards. Find out how to do this in Local NEWS, where you can also read about the Norfolk ash tree that has resisted ash dieback disease.

Also in this edition, the water vole is thriving in the Cambridgeshire Fens (see National NEWS), the Norfolk Bat Survey is back (see GETTING INVOLVED) and a nationally scarce weevil has been found on a roadside verge in Norfolk (see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS).

Happy reading!

Don't forget, you can submit your wildlife records online at <http://nbis.org.uk/AllSpeciesSurvey> or email them to us at [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

It doesn't have to be a rare or unusual species – recording common and widespread species are just as important. From blackbirds to oak trees, hedgehogs to ladybirds, let's see how many species can be recorded in 2016!

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Please do email us at [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk) if you have any news or events that you would like us to feature in the next or coming issues. And do feel free to forward to anyone you feel would also be interested.

You can download this e-bulletin as a pdf here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/E-BulletinApr2016.pdf> You can also download past e-bulletins as a pdf here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/newsletterse-bulletins>

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## Local NEWS

### **Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards 2016 are open for nominations**

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for their voluntary efforts to improve their local patch for wildlife? If so, why not enter them for a Community Biodiversity Award – you need to do it soon! Nominations are welcome from enthusiastic community groups and individuals who are making a difference for wildlife in their local patch – such as town and parish councils, groups, individuals, schools and businesses. Entries are open to anyone working in a voluntary capacity at a local level to improve their local environment for biodiversity and to widen knowledge of, and participation in, the natural world. Winners will be celebrated at a wonderful summer Awards Evening and take away a framed certificate. You can find all the details of this years' categories and how to submit your nomination here: <http://tinyurl.com/oq85ba2>

### **Conservation efforts to save rare fish species**

Plans to establish a thriving population of Crucian Carp in the county are a step closer <http://tinyurl.com/h5zhv8t>

### **Norfolk ash tree fights off dieback disease giving hope to our woodlands**

The discovery of a mature ash tree in a Norfolk woodland which has fought off the aggressive ash dieback disease has offered new hope for the future of our forests <http://tinyurl.com/h32d3nw>

### **The Norfolk results of the Big Farmland Bird Count are in**

Over 100 species were counted across nearly 63,000ha of land. Lapwings, starlings and linnets were in the top ten most abundant seen in the county, joining 17 other species spotted from the Red List for Birds of Conservation Concern. See details of the national results here <http://tinyurl.com/h8d79of>

### **Dartmoor ponies begin their important new job in the Brecks**

A hardy team of grazing ponies has been set to work preserving a unique East Anglian landscape <http://tinyurl.com/hzw2kzz>

### **New Norfolk trail maps to mark milestone**

The two artworks which feature a multitude of natural wonders and historic monuments have been created to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Norfolk's National Trail <http://tinyurl.com/zz4df6j>

### **New trail in Thetford Forest will help visitors explore its hidden heritage**

The new route would extend west from High Lodge visitor centre and link up various heritage sites, including burial mounds and medieval warren banks <http://tinyurl.com/zsrw2nr>

### **Mammoth tooth found on West Runton beach**

It looks just like an odd shaped stone. But a lump of rock discovered on the north Norfolk coast last month has been identified as the tooth of a creature which last roamed the earth 700,000 years ago – the mammoth <http://tinyurl.com/hyrrz kf>

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## National NEWS

### Water voles thriving in Fenland drains

A water vole survey carried out at five-year intervals over the last 10 years in two Drainage Districts in the Middle Level of the Fens has shown that water voles are continuing to thrive and maintain good populations despite national declines <http://tinyurl.com/h4f6q5k>

### Species rule change considered

A government consultation on whether to change the rules governing how contractors deal with protected species when developing sites has just ended <http://tinyurl.com/zju7luw>

### Asian wasp listed as threat to UK's sweet chestnut trees

Forestry Commission elevates oriental chestnut gall wasp to high-priority tree pest after 2015 outbreaks <http://tinyurl.com/gnbczpk>

### More than 1000 species have been moved due to human impact

Animals and plants are increasingly being 'translocated' from their native areas to survive effects of climate change, poaching and habitat loss, says top conservationist <http://tinyurl.com/hahdxu6>

### Post-mortem on thirteen dead sperm whales finds their stomachs full of plastic

The plastic included a 13-metre long fisherman's net and a 70cm piece of plastic from a car <http://tinyurl.com/h989dpc>

### England's last golden eagle feared dead

Wildlife experts say the bird likely died of natural causes after they fail to spot him at his usual haunts in the Lake District <http://tinyurl.com/gsx3ugx>

### Climate change has helped more UK species than it has harmed, RSPB study finds

They studied the fortunes of 398 plant and animal species since 1970 and found that while 61 species had been harmed by climate change, 91 species had seen a positive impact <http://tinyurl.com/j4h6juu>

### Ducks prefer to be fed 'trendy' kale, charity claims

The Canal and River Trust carried out a Lettuce Taste Test to find out whether ducks "favoured one type of leaf over another" <http://tinyurl.com/jmgebya>

### More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Apr2016NationalNews>

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## GETTING INVOLVED

### Wildlife Recorders of Tomorrow

There's a piece missing... we need your help to build up a picture of The Brecks' wildlife!

The Brecks is an important area for wildlife both in a UK and international context. However, many of the species records come from a few well recorded designated sites, with recording often done on an ad hoc basis making detecting changes over time difficult.

Led by NBIS, this project will establish a network of volunteers recording wildlife throughout the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme area (a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund).

Whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned surveyor, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved, with lots of support and training.

Pop along to an introduction session to find out more about the project. There will also be a variety of species ID courses and photography workshops on offer.

The project will operate at 3 levels:

- Beginner: provide training and encouragement to those new to recording wildlife.
- Species surveillance: help people take the next step into more serious recording of sites. This will allow a number of important sites in the Brecks to be monitored and will also help to ensure sustainable long-term monitoring of sites where work is taking place as part of other Breaking New Ground projects. Data collected will feed into the Norfolk Species Surveillance Network.



- River corridor survey – Little Ouse headwaters to Brandon: A non-native species survey of the Little Ouse river, from its headwaters at Redgrave and Lopham Fens to Brandon.

Whether you are an individual or part of a community group, if you are interested in getting involved, please email [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

More details at <http://tinyurl.com/ppr7mdq>

**To book onto an introductory session to Wildlife Recorders of Tomorrow please go to <http://tinyurl.com/nek3zq7>**

## The Norfolk Bat Survey is back

Bat for its fourth year, the Norfolk Bat Survey aims to build on its previous successes in recording bats across as many 1km squares across the county as possible. Detectors book up quickly, so head to the website now to find out more and avoid disappointment! <http://www.batsurvey.org/norfolk/>

## Nominate someone for an NBN award

Nominations for the 2016 NBN UK awards to celebrate biological recording and information sharing are now open. Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/hgwxxbh>

## Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Survey and Call For Data

The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative (NNSI) is issuing a call for data on freshwater invasive species. These data will help inform freshwater Biosecurity Plans for the western catchments of Norfolk and Suffolk, including sections of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. New records will also be added to the NBIS database.

For more information including a list of priority species and how to submit your records go to <http://tinyurl.com/z9fesyw>

Alongside the call for data, NNSI are also running a survey on invasive non-native species. If you have 10 minutes to spare, the survey is available at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BiosecuritySurvey](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BiosecuritySurvey)

## Become a Little Tern warden

The success of the breeding season of the little tern on the east coast of Norfolk is down to many factors, one of which is the involvement and dedication of the RSPB's volunteer wardens who help to protect them. If you would be interested in becoming a little tern warden more information can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/h5x5flu>

## Swanton Novers Wood bat survey volunteers needed

A new Heritage Lottery Fund supported project has begun run by the Bat Conservation Trust looking at how bat species use woodlands and the effect that long term forestry management is having on them. They are looking for volunteers who would be willing to carry out transect surveys in Swanton Novers Wood each month between May and September, as well as people to help with analysing bat recordings, and to provide support at guided walks, talks and events. Training will be provided. If you are interested in getting involved or would like to find out more, please contact the volunteer co-ordinator Sonia Reveley at [SReveley@bats.org.uk](mailto:SReveley@bats.org.uk).

## BTO Big Garden Beak Watch

Beak deformities in wild birds are unusual, and the BTO are keen to find out more about those being seen in British and Irish gardens. Participate in their survey here: <http://tinyurl.com/l6n23a5>

## WildWalk of the Month

WildWalks are new way to record local wildlife. Enjoy a WildWalk in your local landscape and make a note of the wildlife you spot to upload afterwards to the WildWalks website ([www.wild-walks.org](http://www.wild-walks.org)).

There are a good variety of walks on offer to encourage you to explore the local countryside or urban green space, with a range of distances and formats from circular strolls to longer distance trails. And you can even create your own.

Our WildWalk of the Month is... **Lackford Lakes!**

Another Suffolk Brecks walk, this nature reserve is worth visiting at any time of the year. With ever changing wildlife no two visits are ever the same and there should be plenty to record! Find the official route description [here](#) and the recording sheet and route map to print off [here](#).

Records will be sent to Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service.

Jot down any wildlife you spot on your walk and log your sightings on the WildWalks website when you get home – find the link at [www.nbis.org.uk/breckswildwalks](http://www.nbis.org.uk/breckswildwalks)

The poster for 'WildWalks in the Brecks Lackford' features a map of the 3.2 km (2.0 miles) route around Lackford Lakes. It includes logos for Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and NBIS. Text on the poster includes 'Enjoy a local walk and record wildlife', 'Use this space to jot down any wildlife you spot.', and 'Tell us what you saw! Log your sightings after your walk at www.nbis.org.uk/breckswildwalks'. At the bottom, there is a collage of various wildlife species.

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## SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

### Nationally scarce weevil discovered on A149 Roadside Nature Reserve

County beetle recorder Martin Collier made the discovery of *Trachyphloeus digitalis* on the site last year. This species has not been recorded anywhere else in Norfolk, although it is small and easily overlooked so could be under-recorded. It is associated with open calcareous habitats and has only been recorded from a few southern counties in Great Britain. Martin is concerned that the habitat on the verge is deteriorating due to the invasion of Alexanders. This plant is likely to smother all other vegetation and make the site unsuitable for the rare weevil. Norfolk County Council Ecologist Ed Stocker will be arranging for the control of Alexanders on this verge. Alexanders is an important early pollen source for invertebrates and the plan is not to eradicate it. However where it is having an adverse effect on ecology, such as on this scarce beetle, it will be controlled as best as possible.

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## EVENTS

### Birds, Bats and Breakfast, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 6.00 – 12.00 Whitwell Common, NR10 4RF

Open morning at Whitwell Common. There will be a Dawn Chorus walk followed by a bacon roll (or veggie option) before identifying the moths caught on the Common the previous night and learning about the bats that hunt them. You are welcome to stay on and explore the Common at your leisure.

### Basic Bat Awareness & Bat Scoping BS8596 Training Day, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Suffolk

An assessed, fully certificated full days training specifically designed for those who may encounter bats in their work and who would like to add to their CPD. Also suitable for anyone working towards a Natural England Bat Licence. Run by two highly qualified practitioners, the cost of the day is £135 which includes assessment and certification, lunch, tea/coffee and cake. Please contact Sue Morgan ([suemorgan06@hotmail.com](mailto:suemorgan06@hotmail.com)) for more details.

### Wheatfen Bioblitz and Open Day, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 10.00 Wheatfen Nature Reserve, Surlingham

The Friends of the Ted Ellis Trust working in conjunction with the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society aim to bring together the specialist recorder, interested naturalist and complete novice to showcase Norfolk's wealth of natural history knowledge and the species present at Wheatfen <http://www.nnns.org.uk/event/list>

### Day flying moths of the Brecks and the Dingy Skipper, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016, Mundford Village Hall & Cranwich Camp

Free ID workshop. Details to be finalised shortly.

Free event but booking essential. For more details and to book see <http://tinyurl.com/gt34zcb>

### Bees of the Brecks – Summer Brecks Heath Loving Bees, 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, Cranwich Heath

A weekend course designed to help you identify, record and conserve bees. The course leader is Steven Falk, one of Britain's leading experts in insect conservation and pollinators. This course focuses on summer-flying bees who like sandy Breck heath and forest ride habitats.

Free event but booking essential. For more details and to book see <http://tinyurl.com/zcqeqrq>

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## AND FINALLY..

Can you spot why everyone wants a photo of this unusual tiger? <http://tinyurl.com/hya2nqe>

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