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Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 63 (April 2017)

Welcome to our April e-bulletin!

It has been a busy couple of months in Norfolk, with the Norfolk Bat Survey season starting again and a new fungi for Norfolk discovered! Check out **GETTING INVOLVED** and **SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS** for more information!

In **Local NEWS**, the Norwich Peregrine's have laid their first egg and in **National NEWS**, the state of the UK's bird report shows further species being red-listed.

Summer is on its way, why not go on a WildWalk and see what you can spot? To find out more and print off this month's WildWalk route map and description, check out **WildWalk of the Month!**

May is a great month for events with the Train Wood Bioblitz and a Birds of the Brecks workshop coming up, see **EVENTS** for more information!

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. Our data protection policy can be found on our website at <http://www.nbis.org.uk/privacy-policy>.

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 2017!

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Please do email us at 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-BulletinApr2017.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

Annual county recorders evening a success!

Norfolk county recorder's attended the annual joint NBIS and Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society Recorder's Evening to discuss the theme 'New to Norfolk'. Chaired by Tony Irwin (County recorder for Hemiptera and other insects), the evening explored topics such as Bats and Innovation, invasive ants, ancient wooden reefs and new moth species for Norfolk. Patrick Barkham, author of the highly acclaimed 'Badgerlands' and our

Keynote speaker for the evening, presented 'The future of conservation in Norfolk', covering issues such as invasive species and climate change.

Some of the presentations from the evening can be found here:

NBIS update <http://tinyurl.com/lommrnk>

Bats and Innovation <http://tinyurl.com/kxwa7qw>

Chalk Reefs <http://tinyurl.com/n6wzpz5>

Cley's Wooden Reef <http://tinyurl.com/kygm9bg>



Work completed to save rare butterfly in north Norfolk

The wooded areas of East and West Beckham host the perfect plants to support the White admiral butterfly, a BAP priority species. Volunteers cleared invasive bracken to encourage wildflowers and create open space for the butterfly <http://tinyurl.com/kceryf6>

First egg for Norwich Cathedral's peregrines

The first of the season's peregrine falcon eggs have been laid at Norwich Cathedral. A watchpoint at the cathedral attracts more than 30,000 people each year to observe the birds. There is also a live web cam (<http://tinyurl.com/zosdj7a>) where you can view the distinctive red eggs and watch as the chicks progress <http://tinyurl.com/l7vergb>

New breeding platform installed for terns at Fairhaven Woodland and Water Garden

The platform comprises of a pallet and six large fruit juice barrels along with two shelters, so that the chicks can hide from aerial predators <http://tinyurl.com/ka745qn>

Red kite populations on the increase in Norfolk

Recent weeks have seen numerous sightings of the birds of prey, a species with a wingspan of nearly 6ft. Carrion-eating kites were once common, but by the 1930s the species was at risk of extinction; there are now around 3,000 breeding pairs <http://tinyurl.com/ljd5zzy>

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National NEWS

Extinction risk or steep decline for over a quarter of UK bird species

Conservationists call for urgent action to save iconic species such as the puffin, nightingale and curlew, according to a new report on the state of the UK's birds. 15 additional species of bird have been placed on the "red list", a category that indicates a species is in danger of extinction or has experienced significant decline in population or habitat in recent years. The total number of species on the red list is now 67 out of a total of 247 <http://tinyurl.com/n3nxynm>

Top 10 cow parsleys for pollinators

Umbellifer-type flowers have become very fashionable in gardens; however they are also very wildlife friendly, with their small flowers ideal for aphid-eating hoverflies. *Cenolophium denudatum*, *Selinum wallichianum* and *Ammi visnaga* are amongst the top 10 recommended species <http://tinyurl.com/kkz73n4>

Flower-rich habitat boosts survival for bumblebees

Bumblebee queens are a familiar sight at this time of year, seen foraging on spring flowers to build up their energy stores before laying their eggs. According to a new study, access to flower-rich habitats from spring through to summer is key to the survival of successive generations of bees <http://tinyurl.com/zkxdyha>

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International NEWS

Never-before-seen gatherings of hundreds of humpback whales

Humpbacks are not normally considered to be social animals, mostly found alone, in pairs or in small groups that disband quickly. But research crews have spotted 'super-groups' of up to 200 feeding intensively off the coast of South Africa, thousands of kilometres further north from their typical feeding grounds in the polar waters of the Antarctic <http://tinyurl.com/mcca25x>

Earth is home to over 60,000 tree species

There are 60,065 species of trees in the world, according to a comprehensive study of the world's plants. Botanical Gardens Conservation International compiled the list by using data gathered from its network of 500 member organisations. It is hoped that the list will be used as a tool to identify rare and threatened species in need of immediate action to prevent extinction <http://tinyurl.com/l6u9kbe>

Sea otters ahead of dolphins in tool-use

Sea otters may have been using stone tools for thousands of years, according to a new study. Often seen floating on their backs, using rocks to open shellfish for food; genetic studies suggest that their ancestors living millions of years ago showed this behaviour too <http://tinyurl.com/l2dfzqg>

Beetles evolve disguise to look like ants

Rove beetles blend seamlessly into ant societies, with at least 12 parasitic rove beetle evolutions, a phenomenon called convergent evolution. The beetles' entire body shape evolved to resemble the army ants they prey on; pheromones and behaviour of their host ants are copied too <http://tinyurl.com/m9wkb4t>

Coral loss in South China Sea

Scientists are warning a 40% loss of coral at the Dongsha Atoll in the South China Sea, the first coral bleaching event in the last 40 years. Australia's iconic Great Barrier Reef is often studied for coral bleaching; however, other reefs around the world have also been severely affected <http://tinyurl.com/ldnkbmy>

More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Apr2017NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

Help out at Wild about Train Wood!

Get involved in our Bioblitz as Norfolk Wildlife Trust, The Friends of Train Wood, Norfolk County Council and a whole host of wildlife experts try to find over 300 different animals and plants on this fantastic County Wildlife Site! In order to make the event a success we will need lots of help, whether you can be with us all day or part please let us know! Contact gemmaw@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk to get involved!

The Norfolk Bat Survey is back!

Back for its fifth 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/>

Red Admiral Migration Project

This project is focused on investigating the migration of the Red Admiral butterfly with the help of citizen science. With more than 40 portals across Europe, the records can be studied in an unprecedented spatio-temporal resolution. Every record of this species is valuable, submit records to <http://www.nbis.org.uk/>

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).

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...**Nunnery Lakes!**

The headquarters of the BTO incorporates remains of the medieval Nunnery of St George. The 12th Century convent church and a small eighteenth-century manor house were incorporated in to the BTO headquarters in an award-winning restoration project. This varied site is home to a wide range of wildlife, including several rare or endangered species. Find the official route description [here](#) and the recording sheet and route map to print off [here](#).

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

WildWalks in the Brecks has been organised by NBIS working with Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts and British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). All of the WildWalks for the Brecks can be found under The Brecks (for Norfolk) and Suffolk Brecks (for Suffolk) living landscape drop downs.



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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

First for Britain: Australian fungus spotted in Hethersett

The Australian basket fungi (*Ileodictyon gracile*) was discovered by Dr John Alban, who after some searching identified the species as a basket fungi. John contacted NBIS and we passed the enquiry on to Tony Leech (County Fungi Recorder). The record has been confirmed by mycologists in the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew; the species is harmless to our native flora and fauna, but quite how it travelled from Australia to Norfolk is a mystery! <http://tinyurl.com/m2joepj>

Alien ants about to invade Norfolk

It is believed that the ant first arrived in England eight years ago and it has been spotted in six locations so far, including more recently in Cambridge. *Lasius neglectus* looks similar to our common brown garden ant, but it could have a major impact on local insect biodiversity. This species lacks the tiny hairs seen on the antennae of our native species and has a shorter hibernation period, keep an eye out for ants that appear to be unusually active in early spring or late autumn. Any sightings should be reported to wells_doreen@hotmail.com <http://tinyurl.com/khaf86j>

Tardigrades turn into glass to survive complete dehydration

Commonly known as water bears, tardigrades have been recorded surviving the vacuum of space, high doses of radiation and crushing pressure. This water dwelling species can also survive dry environments in a dormant state for up to a decade, reviving within an hour when exposed to water. Water bears rely on proteins unique to them, TDPs (tardigrade-specific disordered proteins) that turn in to a glassy casing that cocoons all dehydration-sensitive materials from harm until rehydration <http://tinyurl.com/luroger>

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EVENTS

Birds of the Brecks (Spring), 20th May 2017, 10:00-16:30, Lackford Lakes

The day will be mainly led by Steve Piotrowski (Wildlife Consultant and author of Birds of Suffolk) and Su Gough (BTO), focusing on spring/summer birds in the Brecks. The day will start with an introduction to bird identification, followed by identification through bird song. There will be a field session within the Lackford Lakes Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve that will last over 2 hours and provide a good chance for birding with two experts on hand, and excellent tutoring on field craft throughout. Although the focus is on birds we will also have a small

mammals of the Brecks introduction session with the opening of our pre-set mammal traps, run by Norfolk Wildlife Trust. For more information and to book visit <http://tinyurl.com/ms7aj8y>

Wild about Train Wood, 27th May 2017, 8:00-16:00, Train Wood

Take part in guided walks, river dipping, minibeast hunting, visit eight wildlife stations and join in with a variety of wildlife activities. Get involved in the bioblitz as Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Friends of Train Wood, Norfolk County Council and a bunch of wildlife experts try to find over 300 different animals and plants on this fantastic County Wildlife Site!

Holt Hall Open Day, 28th May 2017, 10:00-15:00, Holt Hall

Holt Hall will be holding an 'open gate' event, this is a fantastic opportunity for the public to visit the hall and use the grounds! <http://www.holthall.org.uk/>

Breckland Flora Art Workshops

Learn to paint and draw Breckland plants with an expert talk and art workshop! Over the past few years the watercolour workshops with the Icení Botanical Artists have been extremely popular; with colour pencil and graphite tutoring as well as watercolour. Colour pencil drawing and painting materials are provided. Just bring your lunch, a notebook and a mug. No previous experience required!

Wildflowers (Watercolours or Colour Pencil) 13th May 2017, 9:30-15:00, Foulden Village Hall

Grasses (Watercolours or Graphite) 3rd June 2017, 9:30-15:00, Garboldisham Village Hall

Booking is essential, please visit <http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/news/breckland-flora-art-workshops-return> for more information and to book.

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AND FINALLY..

Banham Zoo's tiny white-bellied pygmy marmoset weighs less than a Freddo <http://tinyurl.com/k2mvd7x>

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