



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 44
(Apr-May 2015)

Photo: Swallowtail butterfly caterpillar © Andrea Kelly

Welcome to our April-May e-bulletin

Well, we've just enjoyed a fabulous weekend for Norfolk, with the Radio 1 Big Weekend in Norwich and the Canaries getting promoted to the Premier League. And this time of year is pretty exciting for wildlife too! The wild flowers and grasses are in full bloom (anyone sneezing yet?!), our summer migrant birds are back from their travels (including Chris the cuckoo – see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS) and the first swallowtail butterflies have been spotted in The Broads.

Despite some chilly nights early on, the Norfolk Bat Survey is now back in full swing, with the NBIS detector almost fully booked out until late July. There are available weeks after that however, and other detectors held around the county, so there is still a chance to sign up (see GETTING INVOLVED)

This week we are saying a sad goodbye to our two Environment Team interns, Matt and Alice. They have been a brilliant help to the team and have worked extremely hard. Thank you to both of them! It was Matt who started up the Biodiversity Blog – make sure you have a read: <http://norfolkbiodiversity.wordpress.com/>

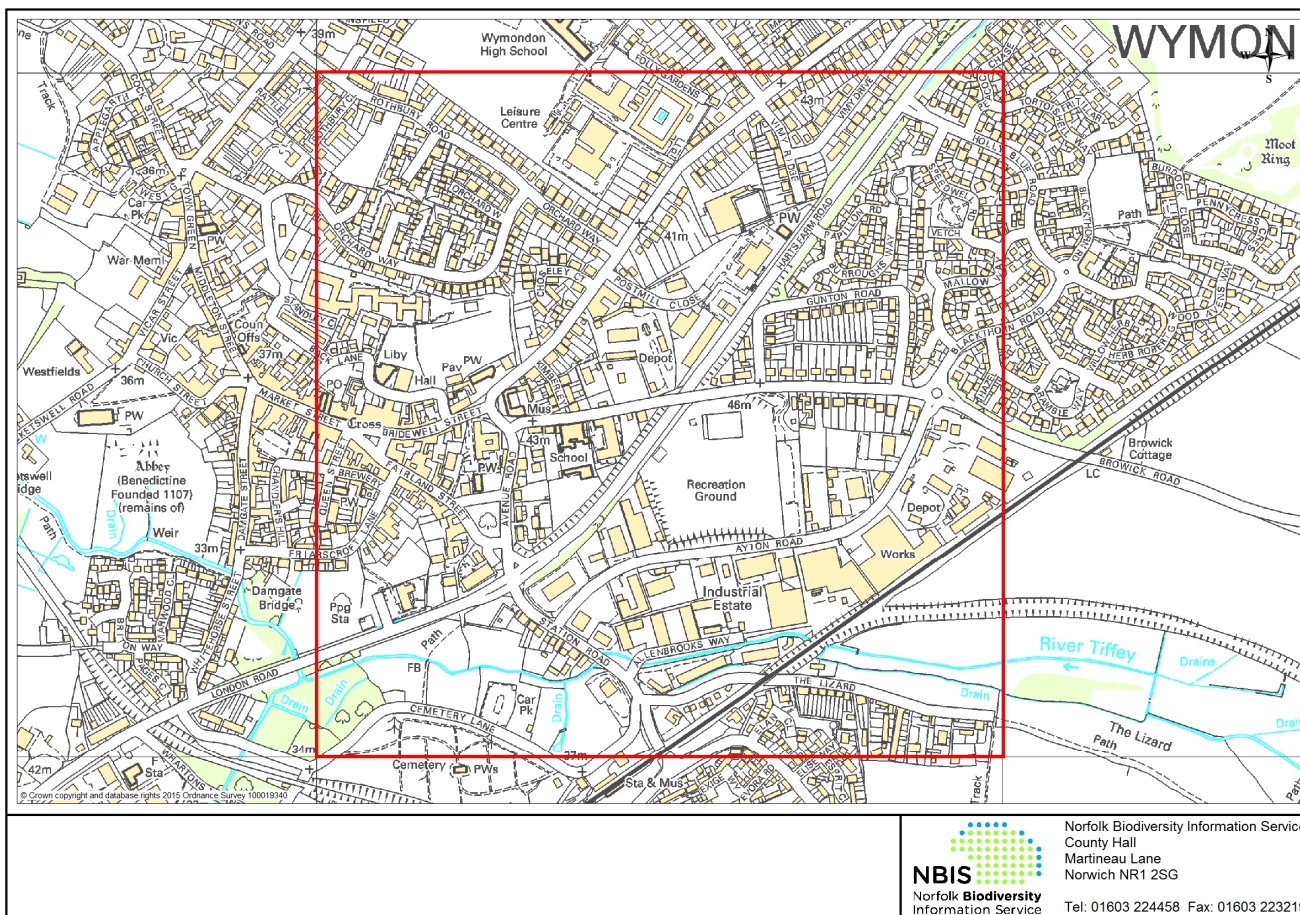
GRID SQUARE OF THE MONTH

Many thanks to all of you who have submitted records of our Species of the Month over the last couple of years. We are trying something new for 2015 – grid square of the month. Each month we will highlight a 1km grid square somewhere in Norfolk, and ask you to help record as many species as possible from within that grid square. At the end of the year we will see which grid square has the highest number of records submitted. **Of course you can still submit records from other areas of Norfolk as usual on our All Species survey:**

<http://nbis.org.uk/AllSpeciesSurvey>

Thanks to all of you who submitted records for our Grid Square of the Month from the March e-bulletin. We've received over 270 records for grid square TG1807!

For June, our Grid Square of the Month is **TG1101** in **Wymondham**.



This square includes Wymondham town centre as well as Tolls Meadow Local Nature Reserve and County Wildlife (in the bottom left of the square). Tolls Meadow is described as a 'species rich wet meadow and woodland' site, so there should be plenty to spot! If you're living in, working in or visiting this grid square, keep an eye open for wildlife and let us know what you spot.

You can submit your records at <http://nbis.org.uk/TG1101>

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 within the grid square!

Remember, trespassing is a crime, so only go to areas accessible to the public.

**Biodiversity and Countryside Team
Community and Environmental Services,
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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-BulletinAprMay2015.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

Stone curlew secrets to be revealed after live streaming nest camera set up

Nature lovers will be able to get a long-awaited glimpse of this iconic species thanks to the 'Wings over the Brecks' project after it set up a nest camera to record the bird's activities <http://tinyurl.com/og9j5mv>

The birds are back! Winged visitors return to Norfolk and Suffolk from Africa

They arrived back a few weeks later than expected due to easterly and northerly winds <http://tinyurl.com/psmrjbg>

Bats need your help as numbers decline

<http://tinyurl.com/nzb7o92>

River Guardians will oversee long-term future of Norfolk's chalk rivers

<http://tinyurl.com/pkadp2v>

More chicks for the Norwich Cathedral peregrines, plus, watching the watchers

Four peregrine chicks hatched on the platform at the Cathedral <http://tinyurl.com/nco76mw>, although the youngest sadly died <http://tinyurl.com/nm2bq9y>. And just who are the people who record their story? <http://tinyurl.com/ptnrx4r>

Rewards for info to catch Guist marsh harrier egg thief

The eggs were taken from a reedbed near Guist which is managed by the Hawk and Owl Trust. The EDP offered a £1000 reward for information leading to the conviction of those responsible <http://tinyurl.com/q9sns75>. This has since been doubled to £2000 <http://tinyurl.com/q8o4prc>

Bill Oddie pays a visit to bird and wildlife fair at Mannington

<http://tinyurl.com/q3nqfan>

Relocation project for more than 100,000 fish in the Norfolk Broads as algae kills thousands

<http://tinyurl.com/peypo32>

Birdwatcher captures rare footage of humpback whale off the north Norfolk coast

<http://tinyurl.com/nj3y3yc>

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National NEWS

Bees may become addicted to nicotine-like pesticides, study finds

Bees have a preference for sugar solutions laced with the pesticides, scientists say, as a separate landmark field trial shows neonicotinoids harm bee populations <http://tinyurl.com/m2kphrt>

England's water voles in desperate decline.

The invasive American mink is wiping out the species once abundant in English waterways, analysis by the Canal and River Trust shows <http://tinyurl.com/pdan2lw>

Opal citizen science project expands across the UK

A massive citizen science project, involving more than 850,000 volunteers, has expanded its reach to include projects across the entire UK <http://tinyurl.com/l7vg5yt>

British conservation groups oppose review of EU wildlife laws

Changes to EU birds and habitat directives 'single biggest threat' to biodiversity and species, say groups as they launch their campaign to block the move <http://tinyurl.com/qhxqt4o>

'Squirrel Nutkin' fights back in battle against grey rivals

Red squirrels return to Windermere in the Lake District after a 16-year absence as they fight back in an ongoing war against greys <http://tinyurl.com/kgpvzd9>

Italians react with fury to olive trees being cut down calling officials 'assassins'

<http://tinyurl.com/og733jm>

UK among worst in wildlife league

<http://tinyurl.com/l5965ez>

Birdfeeding favours exotic birds

<http://tinyurl.com/ojttd93>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#AprMay2015NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

NBIS needs YOU!

NBIS are continuing to develop their Multi-taxon species monitoring initiative known as the Norfolk Species Surveillance Network (NSSN), launched in 2013.

They are expanding this network of reference sites and the recording on them, hence needing as many of you as possible to volunteer to monitor species change across Norfolk. They are looking for individuals or local parish/conservation groups to get involved. No previous experience of the methodology is necessary, just a passion for wildlife.

Each volunteer/group will adopt an important local site for wildlife, either from our list of sites or a site of their own, if they have landowner permission. Volunteers will be expected to visit the site several times throughout the year and record as many or as few species groups as they can. Some species groups are typically under recorded and NBIS would like to target these.

They will provide equipment, support and training in the methods.

Develop your ID skills with wildlife identification training days for specific species groups, running throughout the summer to boost your skills and confidence.

To sign up to the initiative, please click here: [Sign up to Volunteer for the Norfolk Species Surveillance Network](#)

Or visit our website: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/SpeciesSurveillanceNetwork>



Sign up now for the Norfolk Bat Survey

The Norfolk Bat Survey (www.batsurvey.org) returns this year for its third year running, with plans to be even bigger and better. The survey, which uses automated bat detectors to record the presence and activity of bats, needs the help of volunteers willing to put out detectors.

Over the past two years the project was able to survey 786 1-km squares (about 15% of Norfolk), and received over 600,000 high-quality recordings of bats, making this one of the largest projects of its type in the world. The aim is to increase survey coverage to 25% of Norfolk and add to existing knowledge in neighbouring Suffolk. With your help, we can do this.

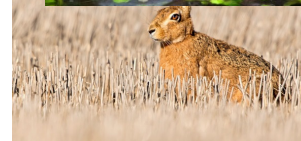
Last year there were more people wanting to take part in some parts of the county than there were detectors to support, so you need to be quick in expressing interest, and reserving your 1-km square to survey. You can do this via www.batsurvey.org/sign-up. After selecting a 1-km square (or squares if interested in covering more than one square), you will be given a web link to a site where you can reserve a detector to use from the most convenient Bat Monitoring Centre to you. If in Suffolk, you can sign up through our Projects in Suffolk page www.batsurvey.org/projects-in-suffolk/. Please note that this survey requires three different points, ideally at least 200-metres apart, to be surveyed on consecutive nights within a 1-km square.

Spring Into Action to Help Norfolk's Wildlife – a Norfolk Wildlife Trust Survey

Whether you are taking your dog for a walk, exploring Norfolk's beautiful countryside, pottering in your garden, taking the children to school or on your way to work, Norfolk Wildlife Trust would like you to keep your eyes peeled this spring for three Norfolk residents.

- Common frog
- Barn owl
- Brown hare

Images: Barn Owl © Barry Madden, Common Frog © Neville Yardy, Brown Hare © Mark Ollett



You don't have to be an expert to make a valuable contribution to local knowledge of Norfolk's wildlife. Recording wildlife is an easy way to get involved in wildlife conservation; it is a way of helping us to monitor wildlife within the county, helping us to gain an understanding of an animal's distribution. Every wildlife record counts and will be of value to us. Your sightings can help us identify areas which are especially important for wildlife in your local area and help us identify species in decline or under threat.

So, spring into action and help Norfolk's wildlife by telling us where and when you see common frogs, barn owls and hares in Norfolk this spring.

There are four ways to take part in this survey and submit your wildlife sighting:

- Submit your sightings online by visiting www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
- Email your wildlife sightings to wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
- Telephone your wildlife sighting to Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Information Service – 01603 598333.
- Pick up a recording card from one of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's visitor centres.

Remember, every wildlife record counts. Keep your eyes peeled and let us know where you see common frogs, brown hares and barn owls in Norfolk during April, May and June 2015.

Do you have a nestbox in your garden? Take part in the BTO's Nest Box Challenge!

<http://tinyurl.com/ozwzbfm>

Britain is stalked by cannibal invaders - can you help stop the harlequin ladybird?

Play a part in documenting its progress: <http://tinyurl.com/owc9f4u>

Rabbit and hare records sought

Biologists are calling on the public to report sightings of rabbits and hares as part of a conservation effort

<http://tinyurl.com/qxqur8y>

At University? University Moth Challenge is for you!

<http://tinyurl.com/ocamtg>

County Wildlife Site of the Month

County Wildlife Sites are often little-known sites of importance to wildlife. While not protected by law they are taken into account during the planning process. Some of them are privately owned and do not allow public access. However there are many which you can go and visit.

The County Wildlife Site for this month is... **Marham Fen!**

Hidden away not far from RAF Marham, this large 60ha site is mainly wooded, but also contains pockets of chalk & neutral grassland and fen, scrub and ponds. These ponds are thought to be pingos, caused by glacial activity during the last ice age. The extensive coppice woodland is dominated by ash, with willow in the wetter areas. Some of the coppice stools appear to be very old. The wetter areas of grassland are species rich and typical of pingo communities. Drier areas are often rabbit grazed or trampled, and species such as fairy flax, common milkwort and rough hawkbit can be found. The site supports a huge diversity of species, including the scarce emerald damselfly, grizzled and dingy skipper butterflies and several nationally rare moths. Marham Fen is owned by the Marham Pools Trust, and during the 18th Century it was used to provide resources for the poor of the parish. This meant it escaped cultivation. It is now leased by Anglian Water who abstract drinking water from the aquifer to supply King's Lynn.

Careful management has been carried out by Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of Anglian Water since the early 1990s. The site cannot be grazed due to the risk of contaminating the abstracted water, so it is cut and raked annually by staff and volunteers to avoid the nutrient levels of the soil becoming too high.



Read more about the site here: <http://tinyurl.com/pdrmsxb>
The site can be accessed from Hoggs Drove, off The Street, Marham.

If you visit Marham Fen, NBIS would love to know what species you spot there – let us know at <http://www.nbis.org.uk/AllSpeciesSurvey>

Photo: Scarce Emerald Damselfly © [Hugh Venables](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#).

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Four years after being satellite tagged, Chris the cuckoo is back in East Anglia

Chris is the only one of the tagged cuckoos to provide continuous data for so many years. Follow his progress here: <http://tinyurl.com/bwb3l5r>

Rare citril finch spotted near Holkham beach

Dozens of bird enthusiasts flocked to North Norfolk to see it <http://tinyurl.com/nmqmp8w>

North sea cod stocks bounce back, analysis shows

<http://tinyurl.com/k9su9jr>

Pretty in pink, a new springtail to the United Kingdom

<http://tinyurl.com/og8cvr8>

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EVENTS

The Beautiful Burial Ground: Simple ways to create a haven for wildlife, for heritage – 10th June, Horstead

Run jointly by Caring for God's Acre and Norfolk Wildlife Trust, this one-day conference is aimed at those interested in managing or already managing churchyards and burial grounds. There will be a range of speakers and workshops relating to managing churchyards for wildlife and heritage. Find out more and book at

<http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/index.php/events/conferences.html>

Royal Norfolk Show – 1st and 2nd July, Norfolk Showground

While the Biodiversity Team won't be attending the Royal Norfolk Show this year, our colleagues in Norfolk Trails, along with a number of other wildlife and conservation organisations, will be there so make sure you go and say hello!

<http://tinyurl.com/p4qc5tp>

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AND FINALLY..

Kermit the Frog – alive and well? <http://tinyurl.com/mtuwduz>

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Your comments about this bulletin are appreciated - please complete our survey at:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/e-bulletin-survey>

Webpages: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/> ; www.norfolkbiodiversity.org; www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorfolkBiodiversityInformationService ; www.facebook.com/NorfolkInvasives

Twitter: [http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkBIS](https://www.twitter.com/NorfolkBIS); [http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkNNSI](https://www.twitter.com/NorfolkNNSI)

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