



Photo: Hoglet about to get dinner © Ezra Lucas

Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 57 (August 2016)

Welcome to our August e-bulletin

We have had great weather for wildlife recording in Norfolk this month, with new species discovered in Norfolk and the successful breeding of other rare species, check out Local NEWS to read more.

Turnout at our events has been fantastic, with lots of attendees at our Dragonflies of the Brecks event and our Riverside Mammals training event! We have a Bioblitz at Banham Zoo and a Hoverflies of the Brecks training event coming up! To find out more, check out EVENTS.

With such beautiful weather, why not try out one of our WildWalks? To find out more and print off this month's WildWalk route map and description, check out WildWalk of the Month!

In other news, a survey finds that bumblebees have individual personalities (see National NEWS) and you still have time to get involved in the Norfolk Bat Survey (see GETTING INVOLVED).
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

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 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-BulletinJAug2016.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

Little Ouse Headwaters Project celebrates community biodiversity award

A collaborative community effort which has devoted countless hours to the conservation of a unique and historic river valley has been honoured with a biodiversity award <http://tinyurl.com/zyxrlgw>

Hawk and Owl Trust volunteers' vigil helps Norfolk's marsh harriers rear their young

The youngsters, now learning to soar and hunt along the Wensum Valley, will bring a vital boost to our marsh harrier population <http://tinyurl.com/jvery4j>

Bird's eye view of a sparrowhawk's nursery at Sculthorpe Moor

Norfolk-based wildlife cameraman Martin Hayward Smith discovered the birds whilst he was shooting a new wildlife film, he captured the female returning to feed her growing chicks <http://tinyurl.com/znggmyj>

Keeping rings on Blickling Estate's barn owls

With a number of owl boxes set up around the parkland, many owlets have been discovered. Follow their progress here: <http://tinyurl.com/zstepje>

Fossil experts reveal 'possibility' of another mammoth find on north Norfolk coast

Martin Warren, former curator of Cromer Museum, was one of the first on the scene when the West Runton Elephant was unearthed on the beach in December 1990. And he revealed interesting finds have continued to be made along the shore over the quarter of a century which has followed <http://tinyurl.com/jyd8q7y>

Norwich moth-trapper discovers a new species for the UK

A painstaking dedication to catching and studying moths has paid off for a Norfolk lepidopterist who has recorded the UK's first sighting of the Herb Emerald moth, a Mediterranean species <http://tinyurl.com/hrpclx5>

Three rescued seals released back into the wild at Old Hunstanton beach

The team at Hunstanton Sea Life sanctuary have dealt with 52 grey and common seal pups so far this year, but Thursday's release of Star, Sprout and Zelda at Old Hunstanton beach means some space has been freed up in the bustling outdoor recovery pool <http://tinyurl.com/gnqhn2w>

Confirmed breeding of common cranes at Lakenheath Fen

Amongst the country's rarest birds, the common crane (*Grus grus*) have been confirmed to be breeding for what may be the first time in 400 years <http://tinyurl.com/h8nb6gq>

Migrating birds stopping off to 'speed feed' in Norfolk

A flurry of activity at Welney Wetland Centre as migrating birds stock up on food before travelling to southern Europe and Africa <http://tinyurl.com/js3q59h>

Success with 'Ghost ponds' restored by the Norfolk Ponds Project

Just under 90% of Norfolk's ponds have become overgrown in the last 40 years, but the recently restored 'Ghost ponds' in Glaven Headwaters have shown a sudden burst in biodiversity, supporting dragonflies, beetles and birds. The ponds are full of plants such as stoneworts and where ponds that are in close proximity to one another have been restored, huge increases in amphibians (including great crested newt) have been found. This year the NPP plan to restore 5 ponds in the villages of Heydon and Melton Constable. Find out more about this great success story and further work here: <http://www.norfolkfwag.co.uk/norfolk-ponds-project/>

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National NEWS

Shared green spaces in cities are good for communities and biodiversity, say researchers

Research has shown that green urban sites such as allotments, community gardens or cemeteries, can make a major contribution to sustaining urban biodiversity, offering insect-friendly habitats and a launch pad for the encouragement of future generations and nature <http://tinyurl.com/zy86aau>

Clever koalas learn to cross the road safely

Koalas have quickly learned to use wildlife passageways to cross busy roads in Queensland as they move between habitats <http://tinyurl.com/hphzkku>

Survey finds bumblebees have individual personalities

The researchers tracked four bumblebees from birth to death, recording a total of 244 flights covering a distance of more than 110 miles <http://tinyurl.com/jabqb8u>

Biodiversity greater in protected areas, study finds

Scientists show that there are 15% more individual plants and animals and 11% more species inside terrestrial conservation zones <http://tinyurl.com/jjr3eo9>

Racoon, mongoose and cabbage among invasive species banned from the UK

New EU regulation blacklists 37 non-native plant and animal species in a bid to tackle threats to native wildlife and economic losses <http://tinyurl.com/h3oytav>

How millions of trees brought a broken landscape back to life

After 25 years, the decision to site the National Forest amid derelict coal and quarry working has borne spectacular fruit <http://tinyurl.com/gmla4cu>

Birds engage in sleep in flight, but in remarkably small amounts

For the first time, researchers have discovered that frigatebirds can sleep in flight, sleeping less than an hour a day <http://tinyurl.com/hbdk52f>

Life thriving on UK's biggest underwater mountains

Scientists used robotic submersibles to dive more than 2,000m beneath the waves to explore four seamounts off the west coast of Scotland <http://tinyurl.com/zbx6rz3>

Rising seal numbers in Thames estuary hide threat to populations

Scientists conducting annual count of grey common seals warn of potential impact of dredging, a deadly virus and predation between species <http://tinyurl.com/zh4brkz>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Aug2016NationalNews>

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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 Brecks 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

More details at <http://tinyurl.com/ppr7mdg>

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



The Norfolk Bat Survey is back

Back 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!

This is the final month, visit here to get involved: <http://www.batsurvey.org/norfolk/>

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... **Santon Downham!**

Enjoy a walk through fantastic scenery including a beautiful forest that houses four different species of deer and visit the unique Blood Hill Tumulus. 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

New species of Pacific beaked whale confirmed

Scientists have confirmed that a mysterious, unnamed species of beaked whale roams the northern Pacific Ocean, it has yet to be given a formal scientific name <http://tinyurl.com/guvx42w>

Tree-saving campaign focuses on the white-letter hairstreak

The white-letter hairstreak lays its eggs on elm and the caterpillars of this species eat the buds and leaves of the host tree; whilst as adults this species spends much of their time sunning themselves in the treetops. Unsurprisingly abundance has plummeted by 96% since Dutch elm disease struck in the 1970s

<http://tinyurl.com/zxnllbl>

Feeding photos show that there is hope for the turtle dove

Photos show that there are isolated pockets of Norfolk where the turtle dove is still present, suggesting that there may be a way to save the declining species <http://tinyurl.com/zsiwfpa>

Foraging strategies of the endangered Caspian seal revealed in first ever satellite tracking study

Using satellite trackers, scientists tagged and followed 75 Caspian seals for over 11 months as part of a four year study into their behaviour <http://tinyurl.com/gofj6v4>

Dinosaur-surviving mammal, the Hispaniolan solenodon, endangered by stray dogs

Research shows the solenodon evolved more than 70 million years ago, surviving throughout the cretaceous period. Today however, these unique mammals face a barrage of threats including stray dogs, feral cats, invasive mongoose and deforestation <http://tinyurl.com/zh5dmlb>

400-year-old Greenland shark 'longest-living vertebrate'

Greenland sharks are now the longest-living vertebrates known on Earth, according to scientists. Researchers used radiocarbon dating to determine the ages of 28 of the animals, and estimated that one female was about 400 years old <http://tinyurl.com/zvta7ln>

Rare island fox taken off endangered list after record-breaking recovery

A species of island fox endemic to California has been removed from endangered species protection after a rapid recovery that may be the fastest of any mammal that has been placed on the in-danger list <http://tinyurl.com/zsdf68j>

Zebra finch 'heat song' changes hatchling development

A study has found that when the weather is hot, zebra finches in Australia sing to their eggs. These incubation calls can change the chicks development and may help the species acclimatise to rising global temperatures <http://tinyurl.com/gu95wvg>

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EVENTS

Banham Zoo Bioblitz, 10th-11th September 2016, Banham Zoo

Join Banham Zoo for their very first Bioblitz and discover the native nature that calls Banham Zoo home. A Bioblitz is an outdoor, family event, where expert naturalists and members of the public work together to do a fast survey of all forms of life in a natural space! For more information and to book click [here](#).

Glaven Eel Project events

Norfolk Rivers is now delivering a Norfolk Coast Partnership Heritage Lottery Fund project working with eels on the River Glaven. Over the next two and a bit years they aim to find out more about the populations and movements of eels in the Glaven catchment, work to improve their habitat and also deliver some exciting heritage and education work with local schools and communities. Join in with some of the upcoming events and learn more about this declining species and the people that used to catch them!

Film screening and illustrated talk “The Last of The Great Eastern Eel Catchers”, 15th September 2016, 19:30-21:30, Holt

Guided walk “Live streaming of two tribute acts- discovering the River Glaven and its tributaries”, 17th September 2016, 14:00-16:30, Holt Country Park

Guided walk “Roamin’ in the Glaven – a waterside walk”, 17th September 2016, 10:00-12:30, Glandford
Find out more about these events [here](#).

Hoverflies of the Brecks, an Introduction, 25th September 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, Santon Downham

A free full day workshop and field visit with Stuart Paston (Norfolk County Recorder for Hoverflies) and Tony Irwin (Norfolk County Recorder for Other Insects).

The workshop will involve a morning classroom session which will include an introduction to the family and how to identify and record them; this will be followed by an opportunity to put your news skills into practice during a field session around Santon Downham in the afternoon. Depending on timings we will return to the classroom to spend some time looking at the species captured and recorded in the field.

Booking is essential, find out more information and book [here](#).

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AND FINALLY..

Capbaras become the stars of the Olympic golf course <http://tinyurl.com/zo2cegt>

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