



Bog pimpernel on Whitwell Common, July 2016 ©
Ed Stocker

Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 67 (August 2017)

Welcome to our August e-bulletin!

Summer is coming to an end but that doesn't mean there isn't anything less to do to help your local biodiversity! Do you have a Hedgehog house? See **GET INVOLVED** to participate in a new ground-breaking national census.

In **Local NEWS** the Purple Emperor butterfly has been spotted again in north Norfolk? In **National NEWS** night herons have bread for the first time, and how just a small amount of oil is effecting bird migration in **International NEWS**.

Not enough to hear from us once a month? Follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NorfolkBiodiversityInformationService/>) and Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkBIS>).

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-BulletinAug2017.pdf> You can also download past e-bulletins as a pdf here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/newsletterse-bulletins>

[TOP](#)

[\[TOP\]](#)

Local NEWS

Highland cattle are grazing a trail for wildlife at Whitwell Common

With 20 years in the making two Highland cattle have been sent out to graze on the little known Nature Reserve. They unwittingly help by clearing the encroaching scrub which allows rare plants including orchids to thrive. Whitwell Common is mostly designated as a SSSI. Norfolk County Council ecologist Ed Stocker oversees the management of the reserve <https://tinyurl.com/yagevugg>

Sowerby's Beaked Whale washed up at Tichwell

4.7m long female Sowerby's Whale body was found on the lower beach at Tichwell on 13th July. It is possible it was the same animal seen by fisherman John Thompson floating about 20 miles off Burnham Overy on the 6th July. There are lesions on the rear dorsal area making the animal appear that it has suffered trauma consistent to a ship strike <https://tinyurl.com/y8wxqjco>

Third sighting of elusive Purple emperor butterfly in north Norfolk

Britain's 2nd largest butterfly is rarely seen in Norfolk; the species is usually found in the woodlands of southern England. First spotted in National Trust Sheringham Park and now seen at Beeston Common. One explanation is that they are from a colony in Suffolk. They haven't been seen mostly since the 1970s in Norfolk. <https://tinyurl.com/y8gshhwp>

Great White Egrets breed at Holkham Nature Reserve

Holkham Nature Reserve has welcomed another rare bird to its list of species, after three young Great White Egrets hatched at the reserve this year. After being killed across Europe, they have been making a comeback since the 1990s. The breeding in Norfolk marks the first successful attempt in the county. <https://tinyurl.com/ybppsyyf>

Critically endangered eels seen in River Tud for first time in 40 year

Two small eels were found on a routine fish survey on the Tud, a tributary of Wensum. Global Eel population has dropped by 95% over the past 40 years, barriers have prevented migration upstream, the Environment Agency have been trying to improve this. The status of the European eel is still regarded as 'critical'. <https://tinyurl.com/ybxghohq>

[\[TOP\]](#)

National NEWS

'Incredible': night herons breed for first time in UK

There is an adult pair of Black-Crowned herons and two offspring, which have now fledged from either being born on Westhay Moor or Avalon Marshes. It is thought that climate change and wetland restoration has had an impact. Hopefully the species will become established in the UK. <https://tinyurl.com/ya59yo68>

New species of grass snake identified in England

Originally it was thought that there were three separate species in England. Now the Barred Grass Snake is a separate species to the Common or Eastern Grass Snake. Both are found in lowland areas in southern England are not venomous, and are very rare. The discovery could have implications for grass snake conservation. In the UK the grass snake is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. <https://tinyurl.com/yabn59t8>

Rare butterfly spotted in Scotland for the first time since 1884

The White Letter Hairstreak was discovered in a field in Berwickshire 100m from the English border. This may be because of climate change helping the butterfly migrate north. More than a quarter of Britain's 59 butterfly species are spreading north. This species is endangered, suffering its worst year on record in 2016 and has declined by 72% in a decade. <https://tinyurl.com/y8w24pgo>

'The windscreen phenomenon' - why your car is no longer covered in dead insects

There has been an alarming decline in insects for decades across Europe. Since 2006, beekeepers in Britain have lost about a third of their managed bee colonies each year. Decline has not just been with bees and butterflies, but moths, hoverflies, wasps and beetles are also declining. Loss of flower rich grassland and the use of pesticides are contributing to the trend. Other factors suggested for less insects on windscreens is that the cars are more aerodynamic, declining insect populations may also have been caused by surging traffic <https://tinyurl.com/yaom4pxq>

[\[TOP\]](#)

International NEWS

Exposure to oil sends birds off course

Even small amounts of oil exposure makes it difficult for birds to fly. It is the first time that the effects of low level exposure to crude oil on long distance bird flight patterns have been studied. Homing pigeons were used in a study with the crude oil collected from the Deepwater Horizon spill. The results have shown an obvious flight pattern difference, with longer flights more than doubled length compared to unoiled birds due to veering off path. It was found oiled pigeons failed to regain body mass lost between flights and delayed their journeys for longer.

<https://tinyurl.com/y922r37d>

Chile rejects iron mine to protect penguins

Andes Iron wanted to extract millions of tonnes of iron in the northern Coquimbo region and also build a new port. However the Chilean government rejected it saying the project did not provide sufficient environmental guarantees. The area is home to 80% of the world's Humboldt penguins. <https://tinyurl.com/y9f4f49n>

UK charity helps rescue two orangutans in Borneo from illegal sale

Two baby apes found in tiny cages in Ketapapang, Borneo were found by police. A man was arrested for trafficking of wildlife both directly and by using online social media sites. Orangutans in Borneo have declined by 60% in the last 50 years. Using social media could help tackle this illegal activity. <https://tinyurl.com/ydyhyu5c>

Eat, prey, love: bald eagles adopt baby hawk into their nest in Canada

Amazingly a young tailed hawk has been adopted into a nest of three other bald eagle chicks. The hawk is normally prey to the eagles. The need for food overrides every other instinct and he must have squawked for food and the parents started feeding him! The abundance of food for all the chicks could have also helped reduce the risk of becoming prey. The hawk has been displaying both eagle and hawk behaviour, however if he doesn't learn how to hunt he might have to be retained in a wildlife rehabilitation facility. <https://tinyurl.com/yc8vqrg7>

More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Aug2017NationalNews>

[\[TOP\]](#)

GETTING INVOLVED

National Hedgehog Housing census

Hedgehog Street will run the census from the 15th August to the 31st October 2017. The UK has lost a third of its hedgehogs in 10 years. This census will help us learn from their world and how they live, particularly the impact of hedgehog houses people have created in their garden. After the data will be analysed by scientists at the University of Reading. To take the survey see <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/housingcensus/> and to map your siting's of hedgehogs see <http://bighedgehogmap.org/>

Help Record Parasitical Mistletoe on Oaks

Mistletoe has a wide range of hosts including Oaks. Oaks with parasitical mistletoe are still quite rare. John Cox has gathered records for other areas in the UK, can you help collect the records for Norfolk? If you find any mistletoe, contact NBIS at nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

The Brecks Earth Heritage Trail is now open

Want to try a new Trail? Full of prehistoric wildlife with 90 million years of geological history, the Brecks Earth Heritage Trail is one of Britain's great natural areas to explore. Please visit for more information

<http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/earthheritagetrail/> or download the Earth Heritage Trail Map app.

Help survey the Pine Lines!

The pine lines are the most familiar and iconic feature of the Brecks landscape. Comprising of long straight lines of contorted Scots and Corsican pines, they march across the landscape, silhouetted against the sky. The HLF Breaking New Ground Pine Lines and Pine Connections Project has helped to restore 8.95km of pine lines and plant 4.65km of new pine lines; but your help is needed to survey them! For more information and to help visit

<http://tinyurl.com/zkbwugo>

National Plant Monitoring Scheme

The National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) is a new habitat-based plant monitoring scheme designed by BSBI, CEH, Plantlife and JNCC. The aim is to collect data to provide an annual indication of changes in plant abundance and diversity. Thanks to volunteers, there is a very good understanding of changes in the populations of birds, butterflies and bats. Plants are the foundation of habitats and ecosystems, but currently we do not have a good measure of changes in plant populations across the country. Anyone who is interested in nature can participate! For more information, visit <http://www.npms.org.uk/>

[\[TOP\]](#)

SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

New ant species in Norfolk?

The ant species *Lasius emarginatus* was discovered by Anna Jordan, Joint County Ant Recorder, nesting in the churchyard of the Parish Church of St Peter in Upwell in July 2017. Confirmed by Mike Fox at Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society (BWARS).

This warmth loving ant is bicoloured, with a dark brown head and abdomen, but with a distinct red/brown thorax (alitrunk). This discovery is intriguing as this species was only recognised as a species for mainland Britain in 2008, when it was found in Islington and since then just two other places in North London. Prior to this it was recorded only in continental Europe and in the Channel Islands. As this is the first British record anywhere to the north or east of London it raises the question. Could this species have been in mainland Britain all along, but not recognised?



Lasius emarginatus worker, July 2017,
© Anna Jordan

For more information on this species go to the BWARS website:

<http://www.bwars.com/ant/formicidae/formicinae/lasius-emarginatus> and thanks to Doreen Wells for this piece

[\[TOP\]](#)

EVENTS

Microscopy- Free Workshop, Sunday 3rd September 2017, 10:00-13:00, Holt Hall Study Centre Kelling Rd, Holt NR25 6RT, UK

Drop in when you wish. Followed by Richard Campey of OneStop Nature Shop at Burnham Deepdale will demonstrate a wide range of microscopes and related equipment suitable for amateur naturalists. After there is an optional informal self-help workshop on techniques with the compound (high power) microscope, mainly for people who are interested in fungus. There is no need to book but an email courses@nnns.org.uk to say you are interested would be appreciated.

Open Farm Day, Sunday 10 September 2017, 11:00-15:00, Clinks Care Farm

There will be stalls, vintage cars and many other attractions including farm walks. Entry is £3.00 for adults with free car parking. For further information see <http://clinkscarefarm.org.uk/>

'Unique Reef' Illustrated tour of the North Norfolk chalk reef, Tuesday 10th October 2017, 19:30-21:30, St. Andrew's Hall, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6N

Talk by Rob Spray and Dawn Watson of 'Seasearch East'

NT Workshop - Fungi, Thursday 12th October 2017, 10:30– 15:30, National Trust - Sheringham Park

Learn the basics of mushroom identification with local expert Tony Leech. Mushrooms and toadstools are fascinating and diverse. In this workshop we will investigate the world of fungi and learn how to identify them through field and classroom sessions. Booking essential for information and to book visit

<http://norfolknaturalists.org.uk/wp/events/>

NT Workshop - Fungi, Saturday 14th October 2017, 10:30– 15:30, National Trust - Sheringham Park

Learn the basics of mushroom identification with local expert Tony Leech. Mushrooms and toadstools are fascinating and diverse. In this workshop we will investigate the world of fungi and learn how to identify them through field and classroom sessions. Booking essential for information and to book visit

<http://norfolknaturalists.org.uk/wp/events/>

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 Iceni 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!

Fungi (Watercolour or Colour Pencil), Saturday 14th October 2017, 9:30:15:00, Foulden Village Hall (Booking is essential, please visit <http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/news/breckland-flora-art-workshops-return> for more information and to book.

[\[TOP\]](#)

AND FINALLY..

Do you want a racoon dog as a pet? Think again: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5lzrdf>

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