



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 42 (Feb 2015)

Photo: Starling murmuration © Lizzy Oddy

Welcome to our February e-bulletin

It's been a busy few weeks for the Team. We are all settling into our new office in County Hall (and enjoying the improved view!). Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership are gearing up for their annual forum, to be held in March and focussing on the topic of Landscapes and Species – Managing for both in Norfolk (see EVENTS for more info).

Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service and Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative were at the Time and Tide museum for Wild Wednesday in half term, along with other wildlife organisations. A stuffed mink and a variety of pickled crayfish helped us explain the importance of recognising and recording non-native species.

There has been much excitement in Norwich city centre over the past month, with the appearance of a spectacular starling murmuration causing shoppers to stop and stare. See SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS to read more. And we've also heard that the peregrines are back on the nesting platform at Norwich cathedral (see Local NEWS). We're looking forward to following their fortunes again over the coming months!

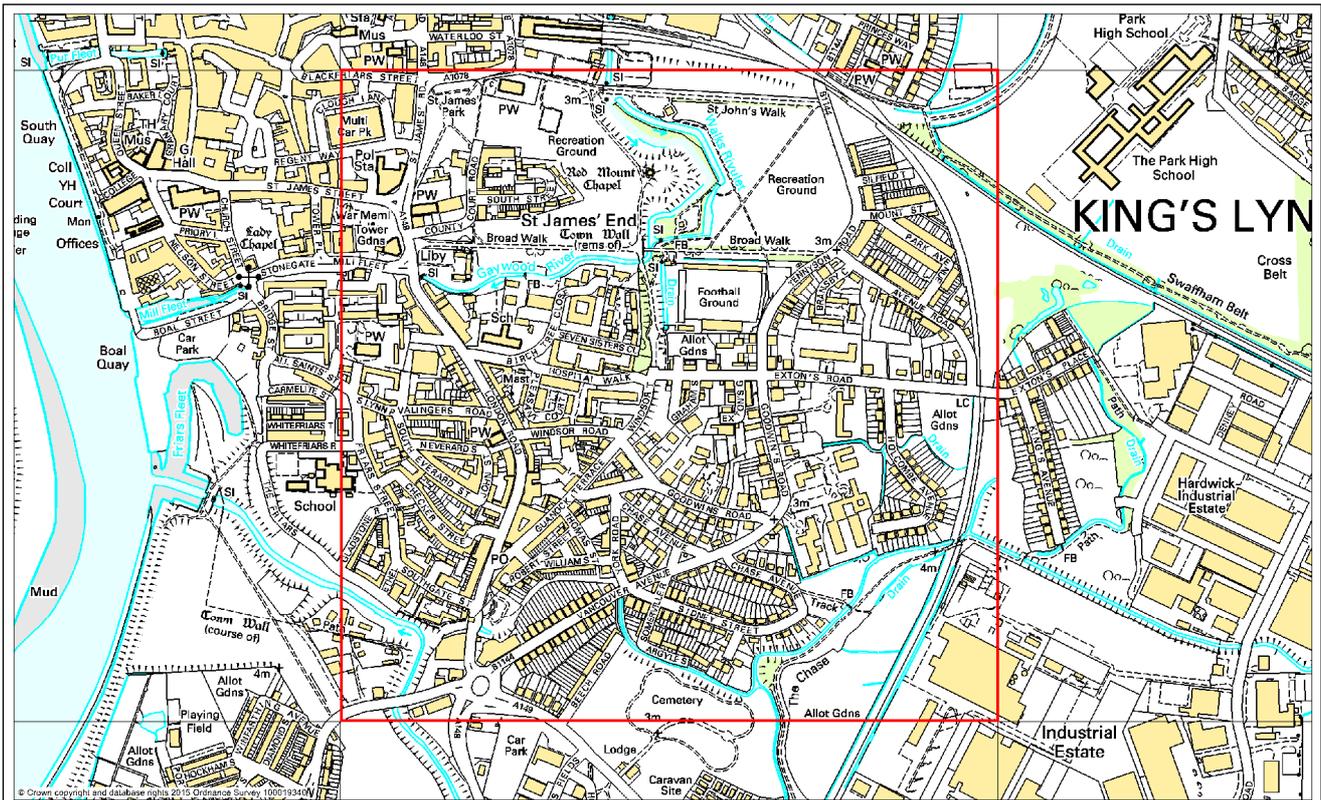
And finally, don't forget to check out the Biodiversity Blog if you've not yet had a read:
<http://norfolkbiodiversity.wordpress.com/>

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>

For March, our Grid Square of the Month is **TF6219 in King's Lynn.**




 Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service
 County Hall
 Martineau Lane
 Norwich NR1 2SG
 Tel: 01603 224458 Fax: 01603 223219

This square includes most of The Walks and also some of the urban streets in King's Lynn. 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/TF6219>

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,
Norfolk County Council
nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

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-BulletinFeb2015.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

Love is in the air, wild peregrine falcons back together at Norwich Cathedral

The nesting platform at Norwich Cathedral is once again set to become the centre of attention <http://tinyurl.com/ls94e28>

Norwich Fringe Project volunteers working hard to maintain beauty spots

For a quarter of a century they have been working on the fringes of our fine city, protecting beauty spots for the enjoyment of all <http://tinyurl.com/pwdj2gb>

Prehistoric rhino jawbone discovered in West Runton

A rhino's jawbone, dating back more than 700,000 years, has been discovered near a Norfolk beach <http://tinyurl.com/n5fawq7>

Caution urged on Norfolk seal pup 'cannibal' death theory

A report suggesting cannibalism could be behind the deaths of dozens of seal pups should be treated with caution, the National Trust has said <http://tinyurl.com/lvknmkd>

Big Farmland Bird Count brings surprising early results

Some "remarkable" results have been recorded in the first days of a week-long study to assess the fortunes of the nation's most rapidly-declining farmland birds <http://tinyurl.com/qbj78js>

Public urged to have say on improvements to Norfolk's Marriott's Way

People are being asked for their views on how a 26-mile footpath, loved by cyclists and walkers, can be improved over the next decade <http://tinyurl.com/puqu4w3>

South Walsham land could become home for cranes thanks to generous NWT donor

<http://tinyurl.com/pfr6vpj>

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National NEWS

Professor Oliver Rackham, historical ecologist, 1939-2015

Professor Oliver Rackham, who has died aged 75, was among Britain's preeminent environmental historians <http://tinyurl.com/nn3txfp>

How butterflies are harbingers of hope in war-torn Iraq

A conservation group dedicated to preserving biodiversity offers a hope of fledgling renewal for this war-shattered land <http://tinyurl.com/q8kax6g>

Dozens of British insects put on Red List over extinction fears

35 of 283 leaf beetle species found in the UK have been assessed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable to extinction <http://tinyurl.com/la2mxuy>

To save endangered species, make them pay

Giving poor people an economic reason to preserve the wildlife around them can work across the world, while conservation crackdowns often go awry <http://tinyurl.com/lp5fb63>

'Plant sentinels' on the lookout for pests and diseases that threaten species native to Britain

Plants susceptible to invading beetles, fungi, bacteria and viruses are being grown near ports as part of an 'early warning' system <http://tinyurl.com/nxsy99g>

Plant species named after Sir David Attenborough

February was a good month for Sir David, who had both a Welsh wildflower <http://tinyurl.com/pvon4oj> and an entire plant genus named after him <http://tinyurl.com/kco8uf9>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Feb2015NationalNews>

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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>



Stop the Aliens Campaign

The Norfolk Rivers Trust has launched a Crowdfunding campaign to raise £1000 to buy traps and equipment to capture and eradicate non-native species in our chalk rivers. Pledging money can earn rewards! See their Crowdfunder page for more details: <http://tinyurl.com/qdefxg8>

Put up a nest box to help wild birds

National Nest Box Week ran from the 14th-21st February. But that doesn't mean you've missed your chance to put a nest box up in your garden. They can be put up at any time of year, and you can find more info here: <http://tinyurl.com/nzq3nk5>

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... **Spout Hills, Holt!**

Known locally as Spouts Common, this oasis of wildlife is found close to the bustling centre of Holt. Designated a County Wildlife Site for its fen meadows and grassland, the site has a spring feeding into a small stream which in turn flows into the River Glaven. Registered as common land, in the 19th century Spout Hills was the site of Holt town's water supply! You can access Spout Hills from the Norwich-Fakenham Road. For more details see <http://tinyurl.com/nl2376o> and <http://tinyurl.com/nj9of4o>.

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

Photo: See Southern Marsh Orchids at Spout Hills in summer © [Keith Edkins](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#) via <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/839854>.

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Spectacular starling murmuration in Norwich

Evening shoppers and commuters have been stopped in their tracks in Norwich city centre this month, as a large flock of starlings swept and swirled across the skies before retiring to their city centre roost. The murmuration was filmed from St Stephens Street Car Park <http://tinyurl.com/opchcf> and even made it into the national press <http://tinyurl.com/ndmftd3>. Read more about the Norwich starlings at <http://tinyurl.com/n2dmffs>.

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EVENTS

Norfolk Biodiversity Forum, 11th March 2015, 9.30am-4pm, Abbey Conference Centre Norwich

Organised by the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, this years' forum will focus on Landscape and Species – Managing for both in Norfolk. There is a £10 booking fee, which includes lunch and all refreshments. The agenda and booking form are available at <http://tinyurl.com/prrk829>

Spring Fling, 31st March 2015, 9.30am-3.30pm, Royal Norfolk Showground

A fun-filled educational day out in the Easter holidays, aimed at 4-14 year olds and their parents. The Biodiversity and Countryside Team from Norfolk County Council will have a stand so make sure you come and see us! More info at <http://tinyurl.com/l9o4xyr>.

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AND FINALLY..

Owl attacks joggers and steals their hats: <http://tinyurl.com/ofdj9t9>

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

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

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