



Photo: NBP Community Biodiversity Awards © Keiron Tovell

Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 56 (July 2016)

Welcome to our July e-bulletin

We had a great time last week at the Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards. The inspirational efforts of Norfolk's volunteer wildlife heroes were celebrated, honouring the county's best environmental and conservation projects <http://tinyurl.com/zkwwkffr>. We've had a wonderful few weeks of sunshine, this is the perfect time to get involved in the Big Butterfly Count and other events! If you feel like you missed out, check out **EVENTS** to read about some more bioblitzes and workshops on offer in August.

The suspected outbreak of crayfish plague at Sculthorpe Mill (River Wensum) has been confirmed, please follow the warning issued by the Environment Agency: <http://tinyurl.com/h7wkznu>

In other news, the Norfolk Coast has become home to the largest little tern colony in Britain (see **Local NEWS**), the rare leatherback turtle has been spotted off of the Cornish coast (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-BulletinJul2016.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

Norfolk beach provides nesting place for the largest little tern colony in Britain

Chicks are now hatching at many of the 169 nests on the RSPB reserve near Sea Palling. This rare species travels thousands of miles to our shores every summer from west Africa <http://tinyurl.com/hzm6q8z>

Hunstanton Sea Life Sanctuary issues guidance after influx of rescued seal pups

The common seal breeding season is underway, and the sanctuary is already caring for ten casualties. The team at the sanctuary want to avoid unnecessary rescues and potential overload of the sanctuary's rescue and rehab operation; therefore staff have issued guidance which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/z6zdwyr>

Couple spend two decades turning their Stow Bedon garden into a wildflower haven

In total they have sown millions of wildflower seeds, planted 1,500 hedgerows, more than 200 trees, and have restored several ponds. They estimate there are 35 wildflower species in the meadows including common knapweed and meadowsweet, with the meadows attracting newts, dragonflies and around a dozen butterfly species <http://tinyurl.com/h5we2dw>

Airgun victim Alan the heron released back to his Yarmouth Waterways home

The familiar bird, known affectionately as Alan, received months of rehabilitation after suffering two airgun injuries, but was this week making himself at home again on the winding canals <http://tinyurl.com/hd4nvxr>

New play teaches school children in Norfolk and Suffolk about the Brecks

The play specifically focuses on the science aspects of the Brecks, referring to animals like the stone curlew and now extinct woolly mammoths as well as geology and climate in the Brecks <http://tinyurl.com/j63hwbr>

Unwelcome visitor putting down roots on Norfolk Coast

Giant hogweed, a toxic invader that has taken hold in hedges and fields is now making an appearance at the coast, spotted sprouting at West Runton <http://tinyurl.com/gwes2ad>

Little green fingers transform their Watton school garden

A gang of green-fingered youngsters have knuckled down to transform their school's forlorn garden into a thriving wildlife and plant haven <http://tinyurl.com/zqrxqqr>

School children rescue hedgehog stuck in playground fence

Pupils at North Wootton Primary School in King's Lynn found the prickly creature, whose body was completely jammed in the wire gaps of their play area <http://tinyurl.com/z53d7lq>

Dickleburgh Moor to become a community nature reserve

Recently purchased by the Otter Trust, the 50 acres of land will be restored as a water meadow to create a wildlife haven <http://tinyurl.com/j7e8xmd>

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National NEWS

Growth in artificial lawns poses threat to British wildlife, conservationists warn

Growing trend to lay fake lawns instead of real grass causes loss of habitat for wildlife and creates waste that will never biodegrade <http://tinyurl.com/z5ynl2d>

Drones to unleash vaccine-laced pellets in bid to save endangered ferrets

US fish and Wildlife service to target diseased prairie dogs, food for the ferrets, via specially designed drones that shoot pellets in three directions at once <http://tinyurl.com/hfglv5a>

Cuckoos count cost of shortcut home, say scientists

The sounds of the first cuckoo in spring is a familiar one in the British countryside, but the summer visitor is in decline. According to a new study, the cuckoo's migratory habits may be to blame <http://tinyurl.com/z4fhblt>

The original Bramley apple tree in Southwell is dying

Planted more than 200 years ago, the 'mother' of all modern Bramley apples is dying from a fungal infection <http://tinyurl.com/hgaes6o>

Wild birds 'come when called' to help hunt honey

New findings suggest that the famous cooperation between honeyguide birds and human honey hunters in sub-Saharan Africa is a two-way conversation <http://tinyurl.com/z5r87c6>

Leprosy threat to red squirrels prompts new study

Little is known about the leprosy bacteria, which causes swelling and hair loss to the ears, muzzle and feet has spread amongst the species <http://tinyurl.com/gvamx86>

No more rats: New Zealand to exterminate all introduced predators

Possums, stoats and other introduced pests to be killed in 'world-first' extermination programme unveiled by PM <http://tinyurl.com/zg5bw9o>

Rare leatherback turtle spotted off the Cornish coast

The 6ft long turtle was spotted half a mile from the shore between Land's End and Penzance caught in a buoy <http://tinyurl.com/hp6xqnz>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Jul2016NationalNews>

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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 Breaking 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/ppr7mdq>

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! <http://www.batsurvey.org/norfolk/>

The Big Butterfly Count

Join in with a nationwide survey aimed at helping us assess the health of our environment! Launched in 2010, the Big Butterfly Count has become the world's largest survey of butterflies with over 52,000 people taking part last year. The count is taking part until the 7th August, learn more about it and submit your records here:

<http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>

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... **Peddars Way!**

Enjoy a walk through fantastic scenery including a Roman Road, the unique Brecks, low cliffs and extensive sandy beached and dunes. 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

Rare bog butterfly flutters back from the brink

The large heath butterfly has been disappearing from northern England, where it was once common. But after three years of careful captive breeding, scientists from Chester Zoo say they have established a stable wild colony at Heysham Moss <http://tinyurl.com/guklgcw>

Caribbean island's last two rare frogs are reunited

Male and female mountain chicken frogs that were sole survivors of a deadly disease are hoped to begin breeding on Montserrat for the first time since 2009 <http://tinyurl.com/gv5ee5u>

Thousands of Silver Y moths headed for UK shores

Experts predict a strong year for *Autographa gamma* as conditions are perfect and there's a southerly wind. This species is amongst the top 20 being counted for the Big Butterfly Count, with a remarkable migration from the continent to Britain! <http://tinyurl.com/hftym6p>

Giant swimming, venomous centipede discovered by accident in world-first

Scolopendra cataracta, from the Latin word for 'waterfall', has been found in Laos, Thailand by an entomologist George Beccaloni. This species is the world's first known amphibious centipede! <http://tinyurl.com/hgfnt96>

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EVENTS

Brandon Country Park Bioblitz, 29th & 30th July 2016, 10.00 – 15.00, Brandon Country Park

Come and join our race to find as much wildlife as we can! Pond dipping, guided walks, kids activity packs and prizes, wild walks, bug hunting, mammal trapping, family fun! This event is FREE to attend and no booking is necessary <http://www.nbis.org.uk/brecksbioblitz>

Sun Down on Swardeston Common, 5th August 2016, 18.00 – 20.30, Swardeston Common

Join Norfolk Wildlife Trust for a fun filled evening of guided walks, wild craft activities, minibeast hunting, insect home building and much much more! This event is FREE to attend and no booking is necessary! <http://tinyurl.com/j7qdtq>

Dragonflies of the Brecks, 13th August 2016, 10.00 – 15.00, Redgrave and Lopham Fen

Full day workshop and field visit with Pam Taylor (Norfolk County Recorder for Dragonflies & British Dragonfly Society.) The workshop will involve a morning classroom session on how to identify and record dragonflies and damselflies, followed by an opportunity to put your new skills into practice at Redgrave and Lopham Fen National Nature reserve. Redgrave and Lopham Fen is one of the best places in the Brecks and Norfolk to see dragonflies and damselflies, with the possibility of seeing the very rare Scarce Emerald Damselfly. The event is free but booking is essential <http://tinyurl.com/zh3cnrf>

Riverside Mammals: Field Tracks and Signs, 16th August 2016, 16.30 – 20.30, Blo' Norton Village Hall

Led by the Essex Wildlife Trust's Water for Wildlife Officer Darren Tansley, the event will start with an introduction to riverside mammals and their ecology, with some key ID skill training, followed by a field session in the surrounding fens. The event is free but booking is essential <http://tinyurl.com/zsp3ssh>

Wild about the Brecks! 20th August 2016, 10.00 – 18.00, King's House Gardens

Come and celebrate the amazing wildlife and landscape of the Brecks with a range of local organisations. Activities will include pond dipping, minibeast hunts, guided walks and nature trails! All welcome, from experienced to beginners! This event is FREE to attend and no booking is necessary! <http://tinyurl.com/zzjdoh6>

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AND FINALLY..

Ample amphibian: Large toad gets trapped in garden decking <http://tinyurl.com/jfabjmi>

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

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