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Keiron Tovell

# Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 66  
(July 2017)

## Welcome to our July e-bulletin!

We had a great time at the Community Biodiversity Awards this month, which brought together many inspirational volunteers from across Norfolk to celebrate the county's best environmental and conservation projects. <https://tinyurl.com/y74xdbp3>

See **GET INVOLVED** to find out more about **Norfolk's Most Wanted**, and join in with the race to record Norfolk's rarest and under-recorded species. This month's species are in conjunction with Freshwater Habitat Trusts' PondNet project.

In **Local NEWS**, rare Swallowtail Caterpillars have been stolen from Hickling Broad. In **National NEWS**, the World's largest butterfly count is continuing so see **GET INVOLVED** and are the world's largest carnivores in trouble 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>). We are thrilled to have now reached over 1000 followers on Twitter and growing!

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](mailto: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](mailto: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-BulletinJul2017.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

### Rare caterpillars and plants stolen from Hickling Broad nature reserve

Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Hickling Broad site has been hit with an "appalling" theft! The swallowtail caterpillars were on up to five stolen milk parsley plants. The swallowtail butterfly can only be found in the wild in the Norfolk broads, it's host plant, milk parsley is also scarce. Police are hunting for who's responsible and if anyone has any information please come forward.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9t5g7q3>

### Call to tackle Himalayan invader in Wensum Valley

There is a war on the ever growing Himalayan Balsam in Norfolk. This invasive species, a cousin to the more well-known Japanese Knotweed, can produce 800 seeds and grows 6 feet in one season. Balsam tolerates low light levels and also shades out other vegetation, gradually impoverishing habitats by killing off other plants. The general public can join the fight along with the Community volunteering charity, The Conservation Volunteers, who are tackling it along the valley of the River Wensum. <https://tinyurl.com/ybv8mfli>



© 2017 Himalayan Balsam, Mary Pipes

### New RSPB partnership aims to safeguard future of Scroby Sands wildlife

The RSBP and E-ON (owners of a nearby windfarm), have teamed up to ensure the protection of the wildlife on the Scroby Sands, Great Yarmouth, particularly for the terns and seals.

<https://tinyurl.com/yabpcmhU>

### Ear-ear! Rare Norfolk sightings of long-eared owl caught on camera

An amateur photographer from Norfolk has managed to photograph a long-eared owl on consecutive days this week. The owl is thinly spread throughout the UK and is nocturnal and secretive.

<https://tinyurl.com/ycxnhl8e>

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## National NEWS

### World's largest butterfly survey aims to assess apparent spike in British numbers

Annual Big Butterfly Count urges wildlife lovers to help assess whether the insects are really returning to gardens. <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/> and see **GETTING INVOLVED**.

### Eager beavers experts at recreating wildlife-rich wetlands, study reveals

Scientists studied the work of a group of four re-introduced beavers over a decade in Devon. Should they be reintroduced to the rest of the UK, weighing up the benefits and concerns of different groups of people.

<https://tinyurl.com/y89ylbdw>

### The big and unfriendly giant hogweed

A Victorian garden colossal sensation has become an invasive nuisance. Contact with its toxic sap causes burns and blisters that can take months to heal.

<https://tinyurl.com/yd4xcw5t>

## Lake District awarded Unesco World Heritage status in recognition of its natural beauty

The Lake District is now alongside wonders of the world such as the Grand Canyon, the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal. The committee suggested that the impact of tourism should be monitored and requested improvements be made to conserve the area, which is visited by around 18 million people a year.

<https://tinyurl.com/y7xuru3u>

## Public losing touch with nature, poll suggests

More than a 1/3 of parents admit they could not teach their own children about British wildlife and 7/10 feel they are losing touch with nature.

<https://tinyurl.com/ybmybu8c>

## Call for action to protect Scotland's endangered capercaillie birds

Survey finds Highlands population has halved since 1990s, it is believed that climate change and human activity are the cause. The capercaillie is Scotland's rarest and most treasured birds, placed on the UK's red list of the most endangered birds after a severe population decline from the 1970s.

<https://tinyurl.com/ybgebuhs>

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## International NEWS

### The world is facing a 'biological annihilation' of species, researchers warn

Researchers have found the number of individual animals that once lived alongside humans has now fallen by as much as 50%. They argue that the world cannot wait to address damage to biodiversity and that the window of time for effective action is very short, "probably two or three decades at most".

<https://tinyurl.com/ybx5kqp8>

### Climate change lets invaders beat Alpine plants in mountain race

Alpine plants can migrate up higher in the mountains to get to cooler climates. However invasive species might be moving faster. Would be native species be out competed as the climate warms?

<https://tinyurl.com/y7j2vdbc>

### World's large carnivores being pushed off the map

6 of the world's largest carnivores have lost more than 90% of their historic range. Due to human settlements and farming.

<https://tinyurl.com/ycjfr23h>

### Plan bee: parliament to produce honey to sell in shop and give to dignitaries

In Canberra three bee hives have been in the Parliament's grounds with the latest bee technology. Canberra's centre is ideal for bees because it is relatively free from pollution and has a good range of plants.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9ql4pcu>

### More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Jul2017NationalNews>

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## GETTING INVOLVED

### Monitoring Tubular Water-dropwort (TWD) and Greater Water-parsnip (GWP) in East Anglia

PondNet is a volunteer monitoring network putting in place regular standardised checks for both common and rare freshwater species. The project will make a real difference to how we understand and protect species and habitats. You can get involved with the species TWD and GWP survey, which are also featured in **Norfolk's Most Wanted**. These target wetland plants are both priority species for conservation in England and Wales. The species are being searched in ponds, fens and ditches and other wetland sites.

Visit <http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/pondnet/twd-gwp-2017> for the two different surveys. See **Norfolk's Most Wanted** for more about the TWD and GWP. If you think you are successful contact NBIS for any siting's of **Norfolk's Most Wanted** or complete the PondNet survey forms.

### **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.

### **The Big Butterfly Count**

With last year being the fourth worst year for butterflies since the count began, it's more important to monitor butterfly levels this year. The Big Butterfly Count is from the 14<sup>th</sup> July to 6<sup>th</sup> August, join in with a nationwide survey aimed at helping us assess the health of our environment! Learn more about it and submit your records here: <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>

### **Join in with Wash Week!**

Wash Week is back! This celebratory series of events explores the maritime history, culture, people and wildlife of The Wash and North Norfolk. This summer from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of August Wash Week partners will deliver an exciting series of events including fun filled family activities, guided walks, boat trips, informative talks in historic places around coastal Norfolk and Lincolnshire and much more. Come and immerse yourself in this extraordinary part of the Great British coastline. <http://tinyurl.com/y73snz2e>

### **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 Whale & Dolphin Watch**

Research has shown that there is little awareness in the UK of the tremendous diversity of whales, dolphins and porpoises to be found around our shores. A staggering 29 species of whale and dolphin have been recorded in our waters, more than a quarter of the entire British mammal fauna. It is possible to see a whale in various parts of Britain and, in a number of localities, there are resident populations of a range of dolphin species. Whether you're an experienced recorder or a beginner, your help is needed to record these mammals! Hurry it ends on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017! Visit <http://tinyurl.com/yc6uzba8> for more information.

### **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/>

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## Norfolk's Most Wanted

Join us in the race to gather as many records as possible for Norfolk's rarest and under-recorded species!

This month's species are..... **Greater Water Parsnip, Tubular Water-Dropwort and Pond Mud Snail!**

**Greater Water-parsnip (*Sium latifolium*)** is a large robust upright perennial (up to 200cm) with grooved hollow stems and large umbels of small white flowers. It is found on the outer margins of ponds, rivers, wet meadows and ditches.

Greater Water-parsnip has declined rapidly over the last 200 years, mostly due to the drainage of wetlands and loss of suitably managed habitats. It is classified as Scarce in the UK, due to its still widespread but declining range.

More information: <http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Greater-water-parsnip-handout--ne-comments.pdf>

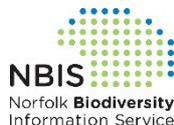
**Tubular Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*)** is a medium sized perennial (up to 80cm tall) with clusters of white flowers held in umbels at the end of long stalks from late June to September. It has hollow stems and leaf stalks. It occurs in ponds but also in a very wide range of other wetland habitats including wet meadows.

Tubular Water-dropwort has declined since 1950s in the UK because of drainage, eutrophication, weed control and conversion from pasture to arable land. It is still relatively widespread in southern England and in places on the coast of Wales. Tubular Water-dropwort is classed as Vulnerable in the UK and it is a Priority Species for conservation in both Wales and England.

More information: [http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Tubular-Water-dropwort\\_v2-Feb15.pdf](http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Tubular-Water-dropwort_v2-Feb15.pdf)

**Pond Mud Snail (*Omphiscola glabra*)** is typically found in sites with very clean water (naturally low nutrients) with few other aquatic animals or plants. Pond mud snail lives in temporary freshwater habitats such as pools, ditches and seepages. They are small, just 12-20mm long, with an elongated brown conical shell. This species has declined significantly over the last 25 years and is now found thinly distributed over the United Kingdom.

Please report any sightings to [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)



NORFOLK'S MOST  
**WANTED**

Greater Water Parsnip

**GREATER WATER PARSNIP**  
NATIONALLY SCARCE

A 'Wanted' poster for the Greater Water Parsnip. At the top, it says 'NORFOLK'S MOST WANTED' in a stylized font. Below this is a photograph of the plant in a pond. At the bottom, it reads 'GREATER WATER PARSNIP' and 'NATIONALLY SCARCE'.

NORFOLK'S MOST  
**WANTED**

Tubular Water-dropwort

**TUBULAR WATER-DROPWORT**  
VULNERABLE, UK BAP PRIORITY SPECIES

A 'Wanted' poster for the Tubular Water-dropwort. At the top, it says 'NORFOLK'S MOST WANTED' in a stylized font. Below this is a photograph of the white flowers. At the bottom, it reads 'TUBULAR WATER-DROPWORT' and 'VULNERABLE, UK BAP PRIORITY SPECIES'.

NORFOLK'S MOST  
**WANTED**

Pond Mud Snail

**POND MUD SNAIL**  
NEAR THREATENED (IUCN), VULNERABLE (RED DATA BOOK 2)

A 'Wanted' poster for the Pond Mud Snail. At the top, it says 'NORFOLK'S MOST WANTED' in a stylized font. Below this is a photograph of the snail on a green leaf. At the bottom, it reads 'POND MUD SNAIL' and 'NEAR THREATENED (IUCN), VULNERABLE (RED DATA BOOK 2)'.

## SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

### The Beetles are Back!

Exciting new beetles have started to establish themselves in Norfolk:

#### **Large Black Longhorn Beetle (*Stictoleptura scutellata*)**

This is a Nationally Scarce species in Britain with a distribution confined mainly to southern counties. Main habitat types are pasture woodland and ancient woodland.

There had been no records for Norfolk (or Suffolk) until one was seen and photographed on fen vegetation at Sutton Fen in July 2016 by Tessa Needham. It was then spotted at How Hill (shown in right image) at the dipping pond on June 2017 by Red O'Hara. Martin Collier (Norfolk Beetle County Recorder) and Martin Rejzek (national longhorn expert) discovered a breeding site on a tall, dead beech trunk, where a few examples were seen flying and ovipositing in the bark in July. See article: <https://tinyurl.com/yabpcmhu>



© 2017 *Stictoleptura scutellata* feeding on the meadowsweet flower, Red O'Hara



© 2017 *Oxythyrea funesta*, Howard Mendel

#### **Spotted Chafer or White-Spotted Rose Beetle (*Oxythyrea funesta*)**

This species is actually quite common in much of Europe and it has recently become well-established in parts of Southern Britain. The adult beetles fly actively in warm weather and are most often seen feeding on flowers; the larvae feed on decaying vegetable matter e.g. compost and rotten tree roots.

The species was first seen by Andy Musgrove at a garden centre on the western outskirts of Norwich in July 2015 and then in July 2016 by Martin Collier at the same site, indicating that a breeding population has become established. The Norfolk population is the most northerly site known at present, although it is perhaps more

likely that these beetles arrived here accidentally with plants rather than by natural dispersal.

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## EVENTS

### **Caddis Flies Workshop, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2017, 10:00-16:00, Holt Hall, NR25 7DU**

Join Tony Irwin to preserve specimens that will be used to introduce the principles and pitfalls of identifying adult caddisflies. It is suitable for those who regularly catch caddis, either through general collecting or by light-trapping. Microscopes will be available but bring your own if preferred. <http://norfolknaturalists.org.uk/wp/>

### **Brandon Country Park Bioblitz, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017, 10:30-15:00, Brandon Country Park**

On the 8th August the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS) is teaming up with the staff of Brandon Country Park to host a Bioblitz in and around the park grounds. SBIS with its close ties to the Suffolk Naturalists' Society has enlisted the support of several county experts to lead wildlife walks and to help identify and record as many different species as possible on the day. The provisional programme will see expertise covering the following taxon groups; plants, butterflies, bees and wasps, fungi, aquatic invertebrates, flies, moths and lichens plus many more. The day is open to all - experts or novices - with the chance for you to have a go at biological recording yourself. Join us on the day to help us record as many species as possible. Further information can be found on <http://www.brandoncountrypark.org.uk/> or <https://www.facebook.com/events/666266980235746/> Start the conversation with #brandonbioblitz

### **National Trust Workshop- Seahorse Wildlife, Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2017, 10:30-15:30, National Trust-Sheringham Park**

The chalk reefs at Sheringham are one of the UK's main marine biodiversity hot-spots. The workshop will start with a classroom session focusing on the crustaceans, molluscs and fish that can be found around the Norfolk coast. Afterwards, we will head down to the shore at low tide for some 'rock pooling'. Booking essential, for more 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 Icen 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!

### **Pinelines (Watercolour landscape or Colour Pencil botanical detail) 5<sup>th</sup> August, 9:30-15:00, Didlington**

Booking is essential, please visit <http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/news/breckland-flora-art-workshops-return> for more information and to book.

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## AND FINALLY...

The tail of the common lizard that's not so common <https://tinyurl.com/ydybwxqc>

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