



# Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 55  
(June 2016)

Photo: Mallard at Strumpshaw Fen © Darren Oddy

## Welcome to our June e-bulletin

We had a great time last week at the Little Ouse Wildlife Recording Festival. Lots of people got involved in the free walks and workshops on offer. A special mention has to go to those hardy souls who helped to record wildlife along the Little Ouse at the Bioblitz last weekend. It was a little soggy to say the least! If you feel like you missed out, check out **EVENTS** to read about some more (hopefully drier!) bioblitzes and workshops on offer in July.

There has been another suspected outbreak of crayfish plague on the River Wensum, this time at Sculthorpe. The Environment Agency is awaiting the results from specimens sent off for analysis but this warning has been issued to all river users: <http://tinyurl.com/h7wkznu>

In other news, events at the peregrine platform on Norwich Cathedral have taken a dramatic turn (see **Local NEWS**), the arrival of high numbers of diamondback moths causes concern (see **National NEWS**) and you still have time to nominate someone for an NBN award (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](mailto: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!

**Natural Environment Team**  
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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-BulletinJun2016.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

### **Spaniel sniffs out great-crested newts so the NDR can progress**

Rocky the spaniel is taking leaps and bounds into new territory as one the first of the breed trained to root out great-crested newts <http://tinyurl.com/hboot28>

### **Peregrine chicks removed from Norwich Cathedral**

After the Norwich female was chased off by the interloper from Bath, the male peregrine raised the four chicks singlehandedly. However the first chick to fledge was found dead shortly afterwards <http://tinyurl.com/zgl59gu>. The last chick to fledge was killed by the new female knocking her out of the nest. Following a barrage of attacks from the newcomer the remaining two chicks were taken into care by the Hawk and Owl Trust <http://tinyurl.com/j3v5yk4>. Signs of courtship have been seen between the male and the new female <http://tinyurl.com/jmvqtrp>.

### **Scheme to reintroduce lynx to Thetford Forest is dropped**

The Lynx UK Trust has announced it has dropped the Thetford scheme, although it is pushing ahead with reintroduction plans at sites in Aberdeenshire and Northumberland <http://tinyurl.com/z7quoxa>

### **Dramatic rise in rat population poses a threat to nesting birds at Blakeney**

The National Trust, which manages the site, revealed the mild weather is behind a boom in rodents which wiped out breeding on the site in 2000 <http://tinyurl.com/h2wsmzc>

### **Insect hotel and renovated herb garden - the volunteer conservationists working at South Walsham garden**

'Women In Wellies' – a new conservation group for women has been set up at Fairhaven Gardens, South Walsham <http://tinyurl.com/ztpptps>

### **Norfolk-born cuckoo Stanley has made his last migration**

He has served his species with distinction, making a contribution to science that will inform future generations of researchers <http://tinyurl.com/zm7x28q>

### **Appeal to buy a Norfolk meadow nears its target**

A charity which introduces families to flowers, wildlife and trees needs just £500 to buy its first fairy meadow <http://tinyurl.com/h7zmwe5>

### **Listen to beautiful dawn chorus on Halvergate marshes**

A fledgling project, part of a major initiative to protect and promote the Broads, is recording life in the area to immerse listeners in its environment from the comfort of their own homes <http://tinyurl.com/z8hdaf2>

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## National NEWS

### **Rise of border fences hampers wildlife movements**

A growth of border fences in Central and Eastern Europe in recent years is a "major threat" to wildlife, according to a new study <http://tinyurl.com/z5gs67j>

### **How churchyards could be England's Noah's arks**

The parish churchyards of England could soon be under the spotlight like never before from scientists and conservationists amid hopes they could prove to be a collective 'Noah's Ark' of vanishing species of plant and tree <http://tinyurl.com/jzvts24>

### **Sir David Attenborough: giraffes are facing 'silent extinction'**

Giraffes are facing a 'silent extinction' with just 90,000 animals still roaming the African plains, far fewer than the endangered African Elephant <http://tinyurl.com/z8u8dpt>

### **'Biblical' moth influx threatens to devastate crops**

Scientists have learned that cabbage and cauliflower crops could potentially be "devastated" by a species of moth arriving from continental Europe <http://tinyurl.com/hapxe8p>

### **Gardeners fuelling bee decline by using weedkillers and pesticides**

A study has shown that bees collect the majority of their pollen from plants other than crops, even in areas dominated by farmland <http://tinyurl.com/jqaw4ss>

### **Fish prefer to eat plastic over food – and it is killing them, study suggests**

The effects on aquatic ecosystems could be profound, experts warn <http://tinyurl.com/j396lqf>

### **Environmental activists: 2015 was deadliest year for people fighting to protect the planet**

A report by Global Witness said killings jumped by almost 60 per cent <http://tinyurl.com/zvk5fxa>

### **Sea sponge the size of a minivan discovered in ocean depths off Hawaii**

Deep sea scientists exploring the remote waters between Hawaii and Midway atoll have found a gigantic sea sponge that could be the oldest animal on earth <http://tinyurl.com/jdz2jqz>

### **More National news here:**

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Jun2016NationalNews>

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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 introductory 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](mailto: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/>

### **Nominate someone for an NBN award**

Nominations for the 2016 NBN UK awards to celebrate biological recording and information sharing are now open. Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/hgwxxbh>

## BBC asks viewers to help with a nationwide butterfly survey

The corporation is asking amateur butterfly spotters across the country to use their cameras and smartphones to document the arrival of the painted lady butterfly, as part of a major new programme <http://tinyurl.com/gt5y4tv>

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## 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](http://www.wild-walks.org)).

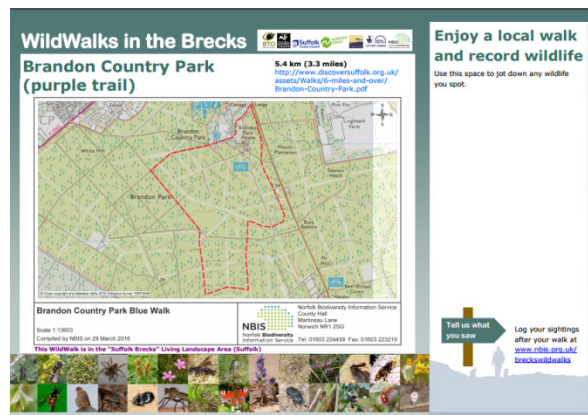
There are a good variety of walks on offer to encourage you to explore the local countryside or urban green space, with a range of distances and formats from circular strolls to longer distance trails. And you can even create your own.

Our WildWalk of the Month is... **Brandon Country Park Purple Trail!**

Enjoy a walk through a working commercial forest. Look out for great-spotted woodpeckers, roe deer and grey squirrels among the trees, and dragonflies by the lake. Various types of fungi can often be seen near dead wood and lichens can show how clean the air is. 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](http://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

### Arctic Tern makes longest ever migration – equal to flying twice around the planet

A tiny bird flies 59,650 miles from its breeding grounds in the Farne Islands to Antarctica and back again, clocking the longest migration ever recorded <http://tinyurl.com/hdb7lfv>

### Siberian bird spotted on Norfolk coast

A bird that lives most of the year in Siberia and winters in south east Asia or Australia has been spotted in north Norfolk <http://tinyurl.com/j69jrwi>

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## EVENTS

### Go Wild for Scarning Water Meadows, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, 11.00 – 16.00, Scarning Water Meadows

Fun packed wildlife day run by Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Guided walks, pond dipping, minibeast hunting, crafts and more. Get involved in their Bioblitz, as they try and find over 200 animal and plant species on the site. Free event, no need to book and suitable for all ages <http://tinyurl.com/jq292u1>

### Wildlife Gardening Open Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 10.00 – 17.00, 7 Station Road, Kimberley, NR18 9HB

A day for anyone interested in how to help all creatures great and small in the garden. Expert advice, displays and information. Call in any time, no need to book. Not suitable for small children or dogs <http://tinyurl.com/zmgndqt>

### Farm and Wildlife Day, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2016, 7.00 – 18.00, Abbey Farm, Fritcham

Circular and guided walks, bring a picnic, refreshments available 10am – 5pm in aid of 'Little Discoverers', a local group supporting children with motor learning difficulties and delayed development. Also moth identification and sale of organic produce.

All walks free of charge, no need to book unless bringing a large group <http://tinyurl.com/h97ng3o>

**Putting Wildlife on the Map – a Churchyard Bioblitz, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, St. Margaret's, Church Road, Thorpe Market, NR11 8AJ**

The word 'bio' means life and 'blitz' to do something quickly. Put these words together and help Norfolk Wildlife Trust as they try and record as many different animals and plants in six hours in the beautiful churchyard of St Margaret's. There will be a chance to go on a guided walk, listen to a talk, have a go at a churchyard quiz and you can help the experts with their hunt for animals and plants.

This event is free, no need to book. Small charge for refreshments [www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk)

**Fenland Aquatic Plants Training Workshop, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 10.00 – 15.30, Haddenham**

Delivered by the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership, this workshop is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the often-overlooked ditches in the Fen landscape and learn first-hand from an experienced local botanist how to identify the wonderful plants in the area. Free event, but booking is essential <http://tinyurl.com/z7yp9z5>

**High Lodge Bioblitz, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, High Lodge, Thetford Forest IP27 0AF**

Join us to find as much wildlife as we can! Guided walks, kids activity packs and prizes, wild walks, bug hunting, mammal trapping, family fun. Free to attend. Book ahead for the guided walks, or just turn up to join in the fun!

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/brecksbioblitz>

**Dragonflies of the Brecks: Thompson Common, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 10.00 – 15.00, Wretham Village Hall & Thompson Common**

Full day workshop and field visit with Adrian Parr (Suffolk 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 Thompson Common.

Thompson Common is one of the best places in the Brecks and Norfolk to see dragonflies and damselflies and this month is probably the best time to visit and see high numbers of species, with a possibility of the very rare Scarce Emerald Damselfly.

Free event but booking essential. More info and book here: <http://tinyurl.com/hpq7gyn>

**Brecks Typical Plants, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 18.00 – 21.00, Ramparts Field Picnic Site, Icklingham**

Led by Alex Prendergast (Natural England/Breckland Flora Group), this will be an evening learning about how to identify and record common but typical Breckland plants that are found within and are characteristic of the Brecks. As you will be visiting such a special site(s) you will have the opportunity to learn about and record any rare Breckland plants the group finds.

Free event but booking essential. More info and book at: <http://tinyurl.com/j9tlm3c>

**Brandon Country Park Bioblitz, 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> 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>

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## AND FINALLY..

**Spice gull: seabird turns orange after falling into vat of curry** <http://tinyurl.com/hwxdlam>

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