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Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 65
(June 2017)

Welcome to our June e-bulletin!

As we welcome back the summer, it's time to dust off those walking boots and get outdoors! Why not go out and see what you can record? See **GETTING INVOLVED** and **Norfolk's Most Wanted** for more information!

In **Local NEWS**, an endangered wild flower has shown up at two new sites in Norfolk; whilst in **National NEWS**, smart sensors are being used to monitor bats in a London park. A voyage to the sea floor has returned hundreds of new species to science in **International NEWS** and we look at the new bee species to Norfolk in **SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS**!

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-BulletinJun2017.pdf> You can also download past e-bulletins as a pdf here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/newsletterse-bulletins>

[Local NEWS](#) | [National NEWS](#) | [International NEWS](#) | [GETTING INVOLVED](#)
[Norfolk's Most Wanted](#) | [SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS](#) | [EVENTS](#) | [AND FINALLY](#)

[\[TOP\]](#)

Local NEWS

Endangered wildflower blooming near North Walsham

Naturalists are celebrating the return of the rare Small-flowered catchfly, a type of campion that grows on disturbed ground. Volunteers from the North Walsham Conservation Group have been working along two of the Norfolk Trails long-distance footpaths (Paston Way and Weavers Way) to stop the rare flower from being shaded out by brambles, with great success at two sites this year <http://tinyurl.com/wem2rxv>

From Dartmoor to Breckland – new ponies settle in to manage Cranwich Camp

Sixteen Dartmoor Ponies are settling in to their new homes at Hockwold Heath and Cranwich Camp in Norfolk as part of an ongoing Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) conservation project, part funded by Biffa Award Landfill Communities Fund to restore grassland habitats on the heathland <http://tinyurl.com/y6w3rwz9>

Tern chicks are boosted by new Fairhaven platform

Nine common tern chicks, from four parents have hatched on a new floating breeding platform at Fairhaven Woodland and Water Garden's broad in South Walsham. Following the addition of the new platforms, this season has seen a quadrupled success rate for the terns <http://tinyurl.com/y9fof5rw>

[\[TOP\]](#)

National NEWS

UK dormice in danger of extinction

The number of dormice in the UK has fallen by more than 70% in the last two decades, they are now at risk of extinction according to researchers. Dormice face a range of problems such as climate change and habitat loss; woodland management could play a key part in the future conservation of the species <http://tinyurl.com/yaxdokgc>

Beaver reintroduction 'benefits environment'

The Devon beaver trial showed that the pair of beavers introduced 6 years ago have created 13 ponds. The ponds have trapped an estimated 16 tonnes of carbon, 1 tonne of nitrogen and provide a 'filter' for run-off soil during heavy rains <http://tinyurl.com/y6utxvww>

Using smart sensors to study urban bats

Scientists are studying the urban life of bats using sensors installed in a London park; The sensors pick up the ultrasonic calls of bats and monitor their activity in real-time. The smart sensors have been installed at 15 sites across the park, aiming to find out more about the diversity of bats from the common pipistrelle to the noctule <http://tinyurl.com/y8rax5cy>

[\[TOP\]](#)

International NEWS

Dolphins deployed to save rare species

Mexico's government plans to use trained dolphins to save the world's most endangered marine species, the vaquita porpoise. The dolphins will locate and herd the vaquitas into a marine refuge where the mammals are safe from fishing <http://tinyurl.com/y7ugmcpf>

Cuckoos mimic the sound of musk hogs

The *Neomorphus* ground cuckoos in Central and South America often follow herds of wild peccaries so they can feed on the invertebrates disturbed by the hogs as they plough through the leaf litter. The suspected 'tooth-clacking' mimicry of the cuckoos is thought to deter predators in a habitat where dense forest means that predators rely on sound as much as vision <http://tinyurl.com/y8zq5eny>

Voyage to sea floor returns fascinating finds

After a 31-day voyage from Tasmania to the Coral Sea, the CSIRO research vessel Investigator completed its mission of mapping the seafloor, collecting specimens and trawling for rubbish. More than 1,000 different species were collected, at least a third of which are new to science <http://tinyurl.com/y8bozp54>

Antarctica threatened by insect and plant invasion

Antarctica's pristine ice-white environment is going green and facing an unexpected threat from the common house fly and other invasive insect species. Scientists predict that as temperatures increase in the polar region, invading plants and insects pose a major conservation threat through pathogen exchange with indigenous species <http://tinyurl.com/y9bu2msp>

More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Jun2017NationalNews>

[\[TOP\]](#)

GETTING INVOLVED

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 4th to the 13th 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>

Join the Norfolk Flora Group

Interested in flora recording? Why not improve your skills by joining the Norfolk Flora Group on one of their many events? Events will be held throughout the summer for skills ranging from beginner to more experienced recorders! Contact jo.parmenter@tlf.uk.com for further information.

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! 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/>

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 and Tubular water-dropwort!**

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>

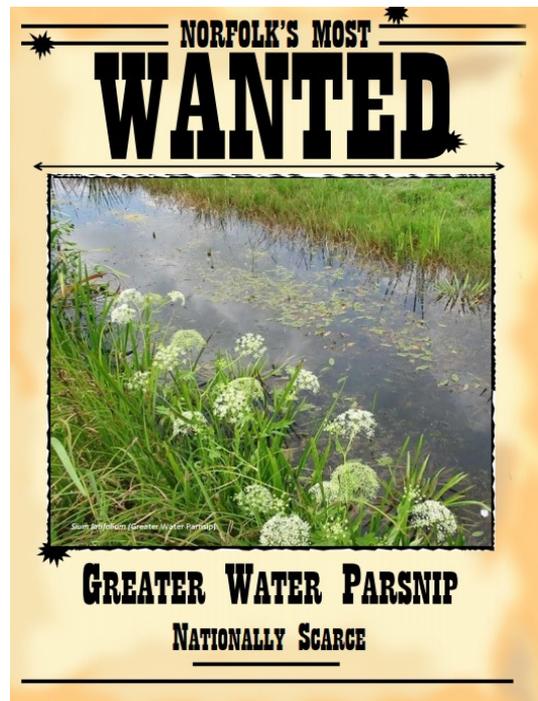
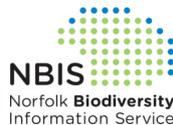
Tubular Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fistulosa*) is a medium-sized

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

Please report any sightings to nbis@norfolk.gov.uk



[TOP]

SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

New Bees For Norfolk!

We are lucky in Norfolk to have over 650 bees, ants and wasp species! The county itself has a number of crucial habitats that are important for bees such as the Broads, Fens and Breckland.

Bombus monticola, the Bilberry bumblebee, is a species that had previously only been found in Norfolk at Scolt Head Island in 2007. Three individual males were found by Ash Murray and Neil Lawton in 2007 but were thought to be vagrants. In June 2017, a queen was found in Dersingham by Allan Drewitt; "This queen may also be a vagrant but is in very good condition" Tim Strudwick comments, suggesting that it may become a new bee species for Norfolk!



Image: *Bombus monticola* ©Allan Drewitt

Hylaeus pictipes, Little Yellow-face Bee

This bee was rediscovered by Jeremy and Vanna Bartlett in their Norwich garden in June 2017. The species had been recorded in Norfolk only once before, by John Bridgman in the 19th Century, also in Norwich. It has probably been present but un-noticed since then due to its size. The newly found bee was confirmed by Tim Strudwick (County Recorder) with further individuals found since.



Image: *Andrena labialis* © Mark Welch

Andrena labialis, Large Meadow Mining Bee.

12 males were seen on white clover at Halvergate in June 2017 by Mark Welch. This is another bee which was recorded during the 19th Century but had not been seen since. This species may well have been present but un-recorded since that time. The bee is readily identifiable by its face markings (pictured on the right).

[TOP]

EVENTS

Brandon Country Park Bioblitz, Tuesday 8th August 2017, 10:30-15:00, Brandon Country Park

On the 8th August the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS) is teaming 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

Tubular Water-dropwort & Greater Water-parsnip Workshop , Thursday 13th July 2017, 14:00-16:00, RSPB Cantley Marshes

A short training session with Broads ecologist Jeremy Halls will aim to provide volunteers with an understanding of the ecology, habitat requirements and identification of the Tubular Water-dropwort and Greater Water-parsnip. The workshop will discuss how to monitor these rare species to teach volunteers how to check sites in East Anglia as part of the national PondNet monitoring project. Contact pcase@freshwaterhabitats.org.uk for more information and to book.

Bird after Bird, Friday 14th & 15th July 2017, 18:00-20:00, Groundwork Gallery King's Lynn

Come and enjoy the opening of Herman de Vries's stony path and then join us to celebrate the opening of the next exhibition 'Bird after Bird'. The exhibition Bird after Bird features 6 artists, each in their different ways entranced by the fragility of birds, exploring them in life and death. Each of the artists has spent countless hours researching, watching, waiting for the right moments to observe, thinking about their relationships with their subjects. For more information visit <https://www.groundworkgallery.com/exhibitions-forthcoming/>

Wild flowers revealed, Sunday 30th July 2017, 11:30-12:30, Marsham and Cawston Heaths

Join Dr. Bob Leaney with the Norfolk Flora Group and NNNS botanists for a midsummer visit to this heathland and woodland complex, formerly a favourite hunting-ground of some of the Victorian botanists. Although some botanical interest was lost when the land was enclosed and afforested, much of value remains. The workshop will look at some of the heathland re-creation work which has been done, and can expect to see Western Gorse, Heath Lousewort, Pill sedge, Bristle-club rush, Heath-grass, Water-purslane and possibly the uncommon Petty Whin. For more information 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 Icení 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!

Pipelines (Watercolour landscape or Colour Pencil botanical detail) 5th 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.

[\[TOP\]](#)

AND FINALLY..

Misunderstood molluscs: five reasons to love slugs <http://tinyurl.com/ybdu2kb8>

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