



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 43
(Mar 2015)

Photo: New to science – *Geastrum britannicum* at Cockley Cley © Jonathan Revett

Welcome to our March e-bulletin

I really can't believe it's almost April – where is 2015 going?! We've certainly had plenty on to keep us busy. The Norfolk Biodiversity Forum organised by the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership was very well attended, and heard from some excellent speakers on the topic of Landscapes and Species – Managing for Both in Norfolk.

We also said goodbye to one of our colleagues. Mike Sutton-Croft had headed up the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative and left at the end of February to take up a post at the Animal and Plant Health Agency in York. We wish him all the best in his new role!

We were very happy to hear that the Norwich Cathedral peregrines have started laying eggs again this year (see Local NEWS). Continuing the avian theme, there has been a plea from conservationists to stop feeding bread to ducks (see National NEWS). It is harming their health and the environment and there are many better alternatives.

There is plenty to get involved with over the next few months, in particular the Norfolk Bat Survey, back for its third year, and a new citizen science survey from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (see GETTING INVOLVED). Plus, some very exciting news of a species new to science found in Norfolk (see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS).

And finally, don't forget to check out the Biodiversity Blog if you've not yet had a read:

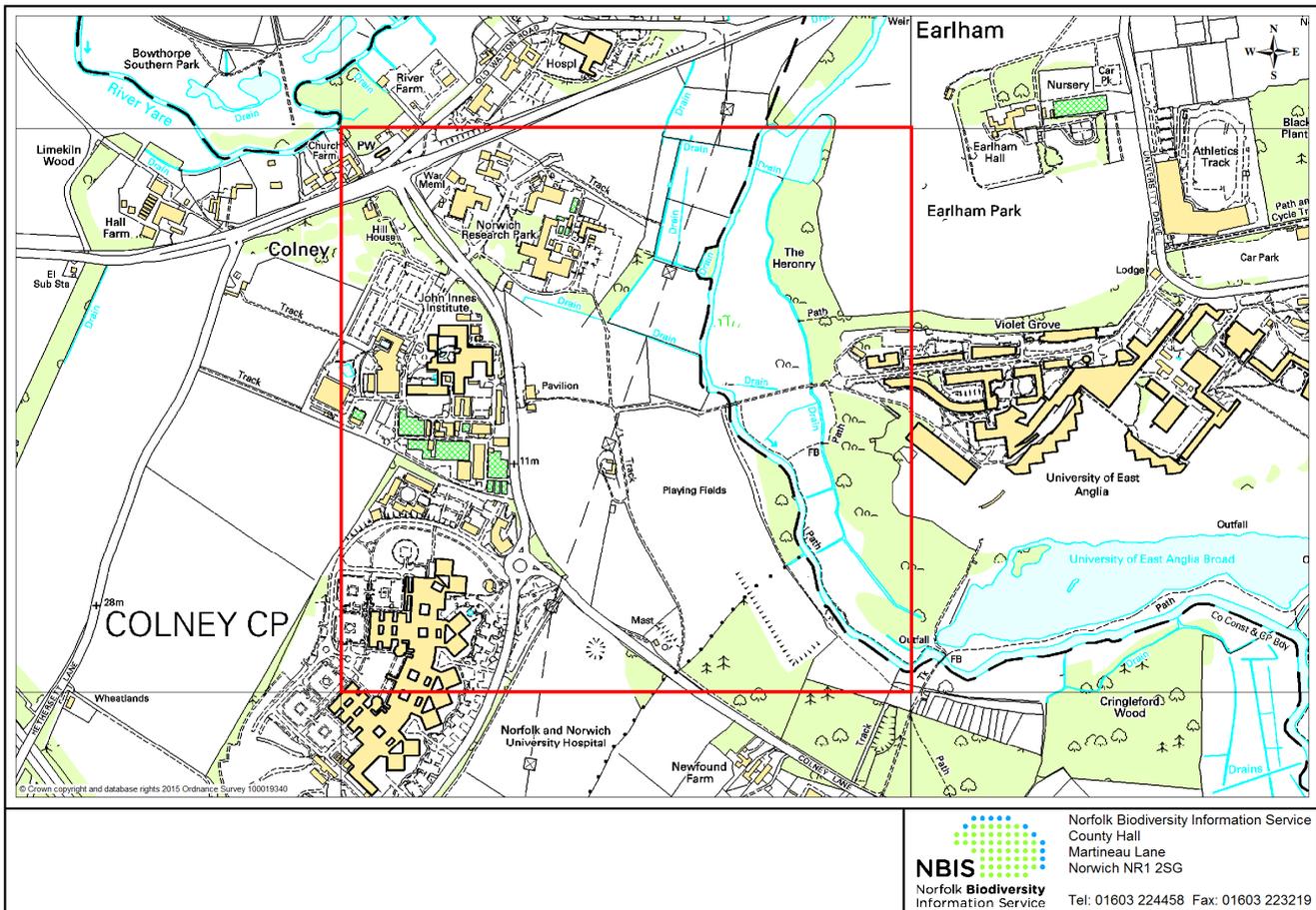
<http://norfolkbiodiversity.wordpress.com/>

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 **TG1807 in Norwich**.



This square includes part of Earham Park and the River Yare, UEA Playing Fields and woods, the John Innes Centre and part of the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. 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/TG1807>

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-BulletinMar2015.pdf> You can also download past e-bulletins as a pdf here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/newsletterse-bulletins>

[top]

[Local NEWS](#)
[National NEWS](#)
[GETTING INVOLVED](#)
[SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS](#)

[EVENTS](#) [AND FINALLY](#)

Local NEWS

Och aye the moo – Highland cattle arrive on Wiveton Down

Hairy horned help has arrived to ensure the future of a Norfolk beauty spot <http://tinyurl.com/o6ygrok>

Second and third eggs laid by Norwich Cathedral peregrines

<http://tinyurl.com/pvccnsj>

Wild brown trout seen on stretch of Little Ouse for the first time since restoration project

Work to restore a stretch of river which had become a poor habitat has begun to bear fruit after a species of fish returned for the first time in decades <http://tinyurl.com/nujwqf5>

Breckland stone curlew ‘winning 30-year survival fight’

A bird that was on the road to extinction in its native habitat in the Brecklands of Norfolk and Suffolk is thriving after 30 years of care <http://tinyurl.com/pm5m3gp>

Project aims to teach people about the River Glaven’s secretive inhabitants - eels

It was once a central part of the region’s economy and culture, travels more than 3700 miles to spawn and can live for up to 50 years <http://tinyurl.com/o7rhzpx>

West Norfolk River Babingley project will bring back river wildlife

Hundreds of species of wildlife could soon be returning to the River Babingley near Fritcham, following the completion of a four-week restoration project to improve habitats <http://tinyurl.com/o97rpk6>

The lynx effect – wild cats could be released into Thetford Forest

Thetford Forest has been earmarked as one of three spots in the UK where lynx could be released into the wild, in the most ambitious “rewilding” scheme the country has ever seen <http://tinyurl.com/q26qbdc>

White-tailed sea eagle excitement

A white-tailed sea eagle was spotted on a reserve in Suffolk <http://tinyurl.com/nofrv2s>, travelled north towards the Broads <http://tinyurl.com/powd5h2> and was then photographed in North Norfolk <http://tinyurl.com/o59l9zw>

Environment Agency rescues 230,000 fish from Hickling Broad in two days

<http://tinyurl.com/o96hx9l>

Norfolk Mink Project Annual Newsletter

<http://tinyurl.com/qgs4qjv>

[[TOP](#)]

National NEWS

Seaside snail most misidentified creature in the world

Rough periwinkles found commonly around the UK coast has been described as a new species or sub-species over 100 times <http://tinyurl.com/p2alwp3>

Don’t feed the ducks bread, say conservationists

The six million loaves of bread we feed to ducks each year are damaging their health and polluting waterways <http://tinyurl.com/nmhqq22>

Conservationist saves 550 rare caterpillars of the Small Blue butterfly

A conservationist has painstakingly hand-rescued more than 500 rare caterpillars from a Devon quarry after the site was scheduled for redevelopment <http://tinyurl.com/qykdnq9>

UK’s first big hedgehog sanctuary

The first large-scale hedgehog sanctuary in the UK has been opened in Solihull in the West Midlands <http://tinyurl.com/lwu6kho>

Tiger-tagging app aims to boost surveillance

A new iPad app is asking users to ‘tag’ tigers, to help researchers with counting and tracking the animals

<http://tinyurl.com/ogwjrze>

BTO Garden Birdwatch Annual results

2014 was a better year for garden birds than for garden birdwatchers <http://tinyurl.com/nc78kuz>

UK trees lose out to Estonia in the European Tree of the Year poll

<http://tinyurl.com/nhfxaz3>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Mar2015NationalNews>

[\[TOP\]](#)

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>



Sign up now for the Norfolk Bat Survey

The Norfolk Bat Survey (www.batsurvey.org) returns this year for its third year running, with plans to be even bigger and better. The survey, which uses automated bat detectors to record the presence and activity of bats, needs the help of volunteers willing to put out detectors.

Over the past two years the project was able to survey 786 1-km squares (about 15% of Norfolk), and received over 600,000 high-quality recordings of bats, making this one of the largest projects of its type in the world. The aim is to increase survey coverage to 25% of Norfolk and add to existing knowledge in neighbouring Suffolk. With your help, we can do this.

Last year there were more people wanting to take part in some parts of the county than there were detectors to support, so you need to be quick in expressing interest, and reserving your 1-km square to survey. You can do this via www.batsurvey.org/sign-up. After selecting a 1-km square (or squares if interested in covering more than one square), you will be given a web link to a site where you can reserve a detector to use from the most convenient Bat Monitoring Centre to you. If in Suffolk, you can sign up through our Projects in Suffolk page www.batsurvey.org/projects-in-suffolk/. Please note that this survey requires three different points, ideally at least 200-metres apart, to be surveyed on consecutive nights within a 1-km square.

Spring Into Action to Help Norfolk's Wildlife – a Norfolk Wildlife Trust Survey

Whether you are taking your dog for a walk, exploring Norfolk's beautiful countryside, pottering in your garden, taking the children to school or on your way to work, Norfolk Wildlife Trust would like you to keep your eyes peeled this spring for three Norfolk residents.

- Common frog
- Barn owl
- Brown hare

Images: Barn Owl © Barry Madden, Common Frog © Neville Yardy, Brown Hare © Mark Ollett



You don't have to be an expert to make a valuable contribution to local knowledge of Norfolk's wildlife. Recording wildlife is an easy way to get involved in wildlife conservation; it is a way of helping us to monitor wildlife within the county, helping us to gain an understanding of an animal's distribution. Every wildlife record counts and will be of value to us. Your sightings can help us identify areas which are especially important for wildlife in your local area and help us identify species in decline or under threat.

So, spring into action and help Norfolk's wildlife by telling us where and when you see common frogs, barn owls and hares in Norfolk this spring.

There are four ways to take part in this survey and submit your wildlife sighting:

- Submit your sightings online by visiting www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
- Email your wildlife sightings to wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
- Telephone your wildlife sighting to Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Wildlife Information Service – 01603 598333.
- Pick up a recording card from one of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's visitor centres.

Remember, every wildlife record counts. Keep your eyes peeled and let us know where you see common frogs, brown hares and barn owls in Norfolk during April, May and June 2015.

Nominations are open for the 2015 Community Biodiversity Awards

Do you know a Norfolk wildlife hero who deserves some recognition? See the award categories and find out how to nominate them here: <http://tinyurl.com/oq85ba2>

BTO House Martin Survey

We need to find out more about house martins and why they are declining. Help the BTO and request a square to survey here: <http://tinyurl.com/qjlx4a6>

Non-native Species Survey

The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative is currently working with the Environment Agency to put together Biosecurity Plans for the eastern catchments in Norfolk and Suffolk. These plans will make recommendations to improve the management of invasive species already existing within the catchments, as well as analysing the potential pathways of introduction for new invasive species. To help make these plans as useful as possible we need the most up to date and accurate data on the distribution of freshwater invasive species and further information about activities being carried out within the catchments.

For us to get this information we need water users and stakeholders within the catchments to complete a brief online survey to help us identify where our efforts should be focussed for the greatest benefit in each catchment.

I wondered if it would be possible to send the survey out to any of your contacts you think would take the time to complete this survey? As we need as many responses as possible! You can access the survey here: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/biosecurity>

The deadline for the survey is the 12th of April. If you have any problems filling in the survey, or require any further information, please contact Lottie Hill (lottie.hill@norfolk.gov.uk)

Norfolk trails Website user Survey

Have you ever used the Norfolk Trails Website? The team have been working hard to improve it and they are in need of your feedback! You can find the survey here: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NorfolkTrailsWebsite>

Get Voting

No, not for the General Election quite yet, but you can cast your vote for what should be Britain's first national bird (<http://tinyurl.com/o4acoyb>), and the UK's favourite wildflower (<http://tinyurl.com/luyu3cn>)

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... **Tyrrel's Wood & New Plantation!**

This large woodland site between Long Stratton and Pulham Market is divided into two sections by Pulham Market Big Wood SSSI. Situated on sandy soil, oak, ash and birch are common, while black poplar occurs occasionally. While the ground flora is dominated by brambles, other species to look out for include herb Robert, wood avens, ground ivy and enchanter's nightshade. The site is owned by the Woodland Trust, who describe it on their website as 'a popular wood, quiet and off the beaten track' <http://tinyurl.com/nu7yhfp>.

If you visit Tyrrel's Wood & New Plantation, NBIS would love to know what species you spot there – let us know at <http://www.nbis.org.uk/AllSpeciesSurvey>

Photo: Footpath in Tyrrel's Wood © [Linden Parker](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#).

[\[TOP\]](#)

SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Earthstar new to science found in Norfolk

In 2000, Jonathan Revett collected an earthstar under pine trees at Cockley Cley. Although it resembled the rare Rayed Earthstar (*Geastrum quadrifidum*) it was sufficiently different for Jonathan to send specimens to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and to an expert in The Netherlands. The opinion was that it was a known variant but when Kew submitted three of their Rayed Earthstar specimens for DNA sequencing last year they received a surprise; all three were identical but different from any other Rayed Earthstars! Further investigation showed that they were also significantly different (from the Rayed Earthstar) in appearance and spore size, and that a further six specimens had been 'hidden' under other names.

In 2015, the new species was described under the name *Geastrum britannicum*. Jonathan's specimen was designated the type specimen, and a specimen collected by Trevor Dove at Surlingham was designated a paratype (examined with the original description). It was first collected (but not recognised) in 1994 near Abergavenny, where two more sites have been found. To date, five specimens from different sites have been collected in Norfolk and a further three in Hampshire <http://tinyurl.com/ot5uscm>

Otters return to Thetford expected to spark flood of tourism to the town

After a winter break, otters are back in Thetford. <http://tinyurl.com/qgtms5o>

[\[TOP\]](#)

EVENTS

The Beautiful Burial Ground: Simple ways to create a haven for wildlife, for heritage – 10th June, Horstead

Run jointly by Caring for God's Acre and Norfolk Wildlife Trust, this one-day conference is aimed at those interested in managing or already managing churchyards and burial grounds. There will be a range of speakers and workshops relating to managing churchyards for wildlife and heritage. Find out more and book at

<http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/index.php/events/conferences.html>

Wild About the Wensum – 25th April, 10am-5pm, Pensthorpe Nature Reserve

Lots of exciting family activities running throughout the day based around conservation in the Wensum Valley.

<http://www.pensthorpe.com/events/2014/11/wild-about-wensum-2015/>

[\[TOP\]](#)

AND FINALLY..

I know it was in every newspaper, but just one more time - The Woodpecker and the Weasel:

<http://tinyurl.com/pwyqkn>

If you wish to be removed from this mailing list, please email us: nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

Your comments about this bulletin are appreciated - please complete our survey at:

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

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorfolkBiodiversityInformationService ; www.facebook.com/NorfolkInvasives

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkBIS>; <http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkNNSI>

Please consider the environment before printing this email