



# Biodiversity News in Norfolk

## No 52 (March 2016)

Photo: Painted Lady butterfly © Darren Oddy. Find out about the Garden Butterfly Survey in GETTING INVOLVED

## Welcome to our March e-bulletin

This time of the year is always busy in the office, as survey season starts (and lots of data searches come in), wildlife events begin to happen, records are sent in, and project deadlines loom.

Norfolk's wildlife is also well and truly awake for spring – it's lovely to hear the birds and see the buds on the trees as the days get longer and the temperature starts creeping up.

Unfortunately NBIS was recently informed that Natural England will be withdrawing its funding from all English Local Environmental Records Centres - read more about this, and reaction to it, in Local NEWS.

On a happier note, the UK's wildlife crime unit has been given a reprieve from closure (see National NEWS) and the Norwich Cathedral peregrines have laid their first eggs of the season (Local NEWS).

There are also plenty of events and opportunities to get involved in this edition – including the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Call for Data and our first WildWalk of the Month (see GETTING INVOLVED). And don't forget to get your nominations in for the 2016 Community Biodiversity Awards (see Local NEWS).

Finally, we are saying goodbye this week to Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership co-ordinator Anne Casey. Unfortunately due to funding cuts the co-ordinator post can no longer be continued, however the Partnership will still be continuing. Many thanks to Anne for all of her hard work over the past two and a half years.

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-BulletinMar2016.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 Community Biodiversity Awards 2016 are open for nominations**

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for their voluntary efforts to improve their local patch for wildlife? If so, why not enter them for a Community Biodiversity Award?

Nominations are welcome from enthusiastic community groups and individuals who are making a difference for wildlife in their local patch – such as town and parish councils, groups, individuals, schools and businesses.

Entries are open to anyone working in a voluntary capacity at a local level to improve their local environment for biodiversity and to widen knowledge of, and participation in, the natural world.

Winners will be celebrated at a wonderful summer Awards Evening and take away a framed certificate.

You can find all the details of this years' categories and how to submit your nomination here:

<http://tinyurl.com/oq85ba2>

### **Natural England withdraw funding from Local Environmental Records Centres**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 Natural England sent an email to all English Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) managers announcing that MoA funding for LERCs will end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Read ALERC's Position Statement regarding this here: <http://tinyurl.com/jy7dylf>. This decision has been criticised by conservationists

<http://tinyurl.com/h9h66rr>

### **Hydroscape**

North Norfolk is one of the project areas in Hydroscape – a four-year, NERC-funded project that aims to determine how stressors and connectivity interact to influence biodiversity and ecosystem function in freshwaters across Britain. NBIS will be involved in this project. Find out more about the project on the Hydroscape website

<http://tinyurl.com/jcivfqj>

### **More than 1000 species found in one day at Brancaster**

It was a quest that ran the length of the country's coastline – to find the site with the greatest array of wildlife

<http://tinyurl.com/hdgr3zf> Wildlife 'firsts' from the UK coastal National Trust survey included Norfolk's only

sighting of a Balearic shearwater <http://tinyurl.com/zxor75s>

### **Norwich Cathedral peregrine falcons set for big screen**

A big screen at Norwich Castle will allow members of the public to keep an eye on all the latest developments from the peregrine's platform <http://tinyurl.com/gp8r9g8> A number of eggs have already been laid...

<http://tinyurl.com/h89483s>; <http://tinyurl.com/za4zwm5>

### **Brecks project to bring back native wildlife gets grant**

Norfolk Wildlife Trust has secured a £43,500 grant to encourage rare Breckland plant and invertebrate species

on Cranwich Camp, near Mundford <http://tinyurl.com/hqv64z7>

### **Marriott's Way Heritage Trail Project**

Norfolk County Council's Environment Team are applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the funding for a project to research, conserve and tell people about the railway and natural heritage of the Marriott's Way long-distance trail. If the bid is successful, there will be opportunities for people to get involved in surveying, recording

and managing the biodiversity of the trail corridor. To find out more and to sign up to an e-newsletter to be kept informed about the progress of the project, click on the following link: <http://wp.me/p4ljA8-oY>

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## National NEWS

### Record fines for UK property developer who destroyed bat roost

Compensation of £10,730 ordered under a law normally deployed against drug dealers and hailed as 'most significant conviction for bat crime ever recorded' <http://tinyurl.com/zfs9slm>

### Facebook wildlife trade prompts fears among environmentalists

Environmentalists say they are worried about the emergence of Facebook as an online marketplace for trade in endangered species <http://tinyurl.com/zgccsym>

### Invasive hedge-eating caterpillar tops UK garden pest poll

East Asian box tree caterpillar, which feeds on box plants, has beaten slugs and snails to become gardeners' top foe, says Royal Horticultural Society <http://tinyurl.com/zt8rhvb>

### Lack of sightings suggest further drop in hedgehog population

Fewer than a third of Britons spotted a hedgehog in their gardens last year <http://tinyurl.com/hjo2zys>

### UK's wildlife crime unit wins late reprieve from closure

Specialist body tackling wildlife crime was set to close at the end of March but has been awarded four years' worth of funding <http://tinyurl.com/zt6gvct>

### Solar farms to create natural habitats for threatened British species

Project by RSPB and clean tech firm Anesco to boost wildlife at solar farms in England and Wales will help species including turtle doves and skylarks <http://tinyurl.com/zzfd328>

### Asian bats show resistance to deadly white-nose syndrome

Researchers have found new clues about the deadly white-nose syndrome, a disease that has wiped out millions of bats in North America <http://tinyurl.com/zd3tjwr>

### Releasing untrained white doves at weddings and funerals will see worrying increase in the wild across the UK

<http://tinyurl.com/zw9do94>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Mar2016NationalNews>

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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.

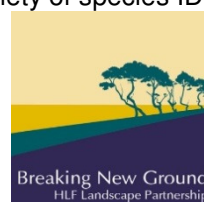
Led by NBIS, this project will establish a network of volunteers recording wildlife throughout the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme area (a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund).

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](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>**



## Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Survey and Call For Data

The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative (NNNSI) is issuing a call for data on freshwater invasive species. These data will help inform freshwater Biosecurity Plans for the western catchments of Norfolk and Suffolk, including sections of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. New records will also be added to the NBIS database.

For more information including a list of priority species and how to submit your records go to <http://tinyurl.com/z9fesyw>

Alongside the call for data, NNNSI are also running a survey on invasive non-native species. If you have 10 minutes to spare, the survey is available at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BiosecuritySurvey](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BiosecuritySurvey)

## Get involved in your local wildlife sites

Norfolk County Wildlife Action is a new two year project run by Norfolk Wildlife Trust and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund to encourage local communities to visit, enjoy and learn about the wildlife on their local sites, encouraging more people to get involved in wildlife surveying.

If you have:

- An enthusiasm for wildlife conservation in Norfolk
  - A basic knowledge of plant identification
  - An interest in learning how to carry out a plant or habitat survey on a county wildlife site or churchyard
- then a role as a volunteer **Community Wildflower Surveyor** may just be what you are looking for.

Volunteers will receive free training, advice and support. More information at <http://tinyurl.com/h4n2msl>.

If you would like to know more or to be kept informed about events and activities being run throughout the project email [wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:wild@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk) or phone 01603 625540 and ask to speak to Gemma Walker.

## Garden Butterfly Survey

The Garden Butterfly Survey allows you to record and report the butterflies that visit your garden over the course of a year. Help Butterfly Conservation learn more about how butterflies are faring in UK gardens

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

## Big Conversation about National Parks

Help shape National Parks for the future by completing this survey <http://tinyurl.com/gp9rzpl>

## Bat Conservation Trust Waterways Survey

Why not try out this survey to monitor the activity of Daubenton's bats along a waterway near you? Find out how to take part at <http://tinyurl.com/gmxmz8>. And if you want to know more about bats and you are in or near Norwich, check out the Norwich Bat Group <http://www.norwichbatgroup.co.uk/>

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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 first WildWalk of the Month is... **West Stow!**

Now, we know that it's in Suffolk, but the Brecks crosses the border and wildlife doesn't respect county boundaries!

Explore West Stow Country Park and take in river, lake, meadow, heathland, woodland and England's first Anglo Saxon village!

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) Records will go to the Suffolk Biological Records Centre.

**WildWalks in the Brecks** will be officially launched at the Big Brecks Fest this weekend, and you can try out the West Stow WildWalk for yourself! (We'll be there on Easter Monday – see EVENTS) See all of the WildWalks in the Brecks here: <http://tinyurl.com/hva4gjc>

*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

### **Pups at Horsey are first grey seal twins recorded in the world**

A DNA test in Norway has confirmed that two wild grey seals born at Horsey Gap are the first twins of their kind to be recorded in the world <http://tinyurl.com/ze9zy3e>

### **Intrepid satellite-tagged cuckoos face treacherous Sahara crossing**

After a summer of plenty in Africa, a team of intrepid cuckoos with a scientific mission must make the treacherous 10,000km trip home to the UK <http://tinyurl.com/gkvdakv>

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## EVENTS

### **Big Brecks Fest, 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, West Stow Anglo Saxon Village**

A family fun day out with a Breckland Theme. Come and find out more about our WildWalks and have a go at our games (we'll be there on Easter Monday)!

<http://tinyurl.com/h3sq8le>

### **Spring Fling, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, 9.30 – 15.30, Royal Norfolk Showground**

Loads of interactive fun for families! The NCC Natural Environment Team will be there, so come and say hi, learn about how you can get more involved in Norfolk's environment and have a go at our games!

<http://springfling.rnaa.org.uk/>

### **Bees of the Brecks – Spring Blossom Loving Bees, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, Lynford Lakes**

A weekend course designed to help you identify, record and conserve bees. The course leader is Steven Falk, one of Britain's leading experts in insect conservation and pollinators. This course focuses on the big spring peak of mining bees, queen bumblebees and nomad bees that are out on spring blossoms.

Free event but booking essential. For more details and to book see <http://tinyurl.com/hdyx2b>

### **Wild About the Wensum, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2016, 10.00 – 17.00, Pensthorpe**

Back for its tenth year, this fun-filled family day is hosted by the Pensthorpe Conservation Trust. Lots of exciting activities running throughout the day based around conservation in the Wensum Valley. NBIS and NNNSI will be there!

<http://www.pensthorpetrust.org.uk/watw/>

### **Bees of the Brecks – Summer Brecks Heath Loving Bees, 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 10.00 – 16.00, Cranwich Heath**

A weekend course designed to help you identify, record and conserve bees. The course leader is Steven Falk, one of Britain's leading experts in insect conservation and pollinators. This course focuses on summer-flying

bees who like sandy Breck heath and forest ride habitats.

Free event but booking essential. For more details and to book see <http://tinyurl.com/zcqe2rq>

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## AND FINALLY..

**Killer mice 'massacre' woodland toys on National trust estate in north Norfolk** <http://tinyurl.com/h9h7zw9>

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