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Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 64 (May 2017)

Welcome to our May e-bulletin!

As we welcome back the summer, it's time to dust off those walking boots and get outdoors! Why not go to one of the many events being held this month? See **EVENTS** for more information!

In **Local NEWS**, a new swift tower has been installed at Whitlingham to help stop declines; whilst in **National NEWS**, conservationists in the Cairngorms are using new survey methods to aid moth conservation.

We are excited to introduce 'Norfolk's Most Wanted' a project aimed at recording Norfolk's most rare and under-recorded species! Check out **Norfolk's Most Wanted** for more information and this month's species.

There are a number of ways to get involved in recording this month, check out **GETTING INVOLVED** for details.

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-BulletinMay2017.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 sighting of majestic white-tailed eagle at Buckenham Marshes

The UK's largest bird of prey was photographed while in flight over the reserve near the village of Buckenham. During the early 20th century the white-tailed eagle became extinct in the UK; the present population was recently reintroduced <http://tinyurl.com/yadu5frr>

New tower to reduce swift population declines

Conservationists are hoping the construction of a special nesting tower at Whitlingham Country Park will halt the rapid decline of the vulnerable species. The number of breeding swifts in the UK has almost halved between 1995 and 2015, placing the bird on the amber list of Birds of Conservation Concern <http://tinyurl.com/y9z95d27>

Porpoise found dead on Snettisham Beach

Porpoises are common in the North Sea and sometimes venture into the Wash, but the cause of this unusual stranding is unknown <http://tinyurl.com/yd48tpzu>

Two peregrine chicks at Norwich Cathedral have been unsuccessful

Two of the three peregrine chicks in the nesting box have passed following a series of events. The cathedral platform was first set up by the Hawk and Owl Trust in 2011. An average of four chicks have hatched on the platform each year with a 50% survival rate <http://tinyurl.com/ydgpgyae>

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National NEWS

'Fake females' to aid rare moth work in the Cairngorms

Conservationists will coat pieces of rubber with the scent of the female Kentish glory moth; a species found only in Scotland despite its name. The fast flight of the species makes them difficult to identify; to aid this, scientists are hoping to lure males to the 'fake females' in order to monitor them <http://tinyurl.com/l9rxsxa>

Miscanthus crop acts as a refuge for brown hare, scientists report

Elephant grass, planted as a biomass crop, may be a valuable habitat for the brown hare. Small areas of the crop surrounded by mixed farmland is said to offer a high quality habitat for brown hares; however, large swathes of Miscanthus were found to be inhospitable <http://tinyurl.com/ko5nruu>

The Great British Bee Count

Up to 15,000 people have taken part in the 2016 Great British Bee Count, with over 380,000 bees recorded so far. The UK has lost around 13 species of bee since the 1900s, with a further 35 considered under threat of extinction. The project aims to gain vital information about bees to better inform decision makers <http://tinyurl.com/ydyt2qss>

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International NEWS

Albatrosses counted from space

Satellite imagery has been used to gauge the population of Northern Royal albatrosses. This endangered bird nests almost exclusively on rocky sea-stacks close to New Zealand's Chatham islands. The audit, led by experts at the British Antarctic Survey, represents the first time any species on Earth has had its entire global population assessed from orbit <http://tinyurl.com/lde4fn5>

Female dragonflies fake sudden death to avoid males, study finds

The moorland hawker dragonfly (*Aeshna juncea*) is vulnerable to male harassment when laying its eggs because unlike other dragonfly species, it isn't guarded by its male mate. Females were observed dropping out of the sky and lying motionless on the floor until their suitors flew away as a decoy technique <http://tinyurl.com/y848znmc>

Baby humpback whales 'whisper' to mums to avoid predators

The humpback whale is known for its loud haunting songs that can be heard many miles away; however, new recordings show mothers and calves 'whispering' to each other. Scientists believe that by calling softly to each other, the calf and mother are less likely to be overheard and preyed on by killer whales <http://tinyurl.com/m9p5slh>

Researchers discover endangered bamboo coral in Balearic Islands

The colony was found at a depth of over 400 meters and contains an impressive density of this species of gorgonian, which is critically endangered with extinction in the Mediterranean. Bamboo coral populations have declined by more than 80% in the Mediterranean; the forest found is one of the largest groups of bamboo coral in this area, with dozens of species depending on it <http://tinyurl.com/y8dfgnjy>

More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#May2017NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

The Great British Bee Count

Evidence suggests that bees have declined in occurrence and diversity; more data is still needed about pollinators to assess the extent of decline. This is especially true of some species of bumble and solitary bees which are among the most vulnerable. By recording any bees you see this summer, you'll be helping us build a better picture of how bees across the UK are doing. For more information and to take part visit <https://www.foe.co.uk/bee-count>

The Norfolk Bat Survey is back!

Back for its fifth 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/>

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@tlp.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>

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Norfolk's Most Wanted

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

This month's species is the....**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 snails live 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.

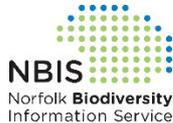
Please report any sightings to nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

Further information can be found here:

Freshwater Habitats Trust Rare Species Surveying Guide:

<http://tinyurl.com/yd63xcfe>

Buglife species management plan: <http://tinyurl.com/ycg5jetx>



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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

New Moths For Norfolk!

We are lucky in Norfolk to have an extremely active moth group called the Norfolk Moth Survey (<https://www.norfolkmoths.co.uk/index.php>). Norfolk has 672 species of macro-moth and 1128 species of micro-moth recorded since Victorian times. The county itself has a number of crucial habitats that are important for moths such as the Broads, Fens, Breckland and coastal dunes and marshes.

Last year saw 12 new moth species for Norfolk, including one species that was new for the UK! New species include the Pine Cone Tortrix (*Gravitar mata margarotana*); Southern Dwarf (*Elachista stabilella*); Beautiful marbled (*Eublemma purpurina*) and the Herb Emerald Moth (*Microlaxia herbaria*), a species new to the UK.



Image: ©Beautiful marbled, Dave Hipperson

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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!

Grasses (Watercolours or Graphite) 3rd June 2017, 9:30-15:00, Garboldisham Village Hall

Pinelines (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.

The Secret Life of a Norfolk eel, Thursday 8th June 2017, 19:30, Church of St Andrew the Apostle

Free film screening and illustrated talk, discover some of the still hidden life cycle of a once very familiar animal. Tea and coffee is provided. For more information and to book visit www.norfolkrivertrust.org/eels-project

The Last of the Great Eastern Eel Catchers, Friday 9th June 2017, 19:30, Blakeney Village Hall

Free film screening and illustrated talk; includes the first chance to hear newly recorded interviews with some of the last of Norfolk's eel catchers. Tea and coffee provided. For more information and to book visit

www.norfolkrivertrust.org/eels-project

Wild about The Rosary, Saturday 10th June 2017, 10:00-16:00, Rosary Cemetery

Join Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Friends of the Rosary as they discover the wildlife associated with the Rosary Cemetery through a series of free guided walks and displays. There will be a chance to meet the experts and go on lots of different walks from butterflies to bees, wildflowers to trees! To find out more visit the What's On section at <http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk>

Norfolk Flora Group and Lowestoft Field Club, Sunday 11th June 2017, 10:30, Billingford

Norfolk Flora Group and Lowestoft Field Club will be holding a joint meeting in Billingford Common and Mellis Common; suitable for beginners, early improvers and anyone who prefers to use English names! Contact jo.parmenter@tjp.uk.com for further information.

Enigmatic mystery tour part 1, Saturday 17th June 2017, 9:30-13:00, Holt

Free minibus tour of eel habitats in the south of the Glaven Valley. Visit some of the best wildlife sites in Norfolk to see the habitat improvement works carried out by the project. Booking essential, For more information and to book visit www.norfolkrivertrust.org/eels-project

Enigmatic mystery tour part 2, Saturday 17th June 2017, 14:00-17:30, Blakeney

Free minibus tour of eel habitats in the north of the Glaven Valley. Visit some of the best wildlife sites in Norfolk to see the habitat improvement works carried out by the project. Booking essential, For more information and to book visit www.norfolkrivertrust.org/eels-project

The making of an Eel-friendly River, Friday 23rd June 2017, 19:30, Blakeney Village Hall

Free film screening and illustrated talk, looking at how the Glaven Eel Project has transformed the Glaven into a safe haven for eels. Tea and coffee provided. Booking essential, For more information and to book visit

www.norfolkrivertrust.org/eels-project

Revealing the Heritage of the Brecks Conference, Saturday 24th June 2017, 10:00-16:00, The Carnegie Room, Cage Lane

Since 2014, the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme has delivered a wide range of projects focussed on the rich natural and historic environment of the Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks. As the project enters its final months, a free one-day conference to celebrate the numerous heritage projects undertaken by volunteers as part of the scheme. A free buffet lunch, tea and coffee are also provided. For more information and to book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/y9ut9hwy>

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AND FINALLY..

Piggyback riders: An image collection of hitchhiking animals <http://tinyurl.com/quve7m5>

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