



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 70 (November 2017)

Mother Seal and Pup at Horsey
© Ben Plummer, November 2017

Welcome to our November e-bulletin!

Winter is here and it's nearly Christmas, so wrap up warm and enjoy Norfolk's wildlife! There is still time to help with important Bug Sorting Workshops at the weekends in Norwich and the Brecks see in **EVENTS**. This month we had a great time at the National Biodiversity Network Conference in Cardiff National Museum meeting fellow Local Environmental Record Centres from around the country.

Pupping season has started on the Norfolk coast. The protection of our grey seals is of international conservation importance and at this time of year they are very vulnerable to disturbance. If you do visit a seal colony this year, please respect the seals!

- Stay a good distance away
- Look out for seals in the dunes and give them a wide berth
- Keep dogs on a lead
- Keep to marked viewing areas and respect the fencing

More information can be found at: <http://friendsofhorseyseals.co.uk/>

In **Local NEWS** how ponies contribute to conservation in the Broads; whilst in **National NEWS** early signs indicate reintroduced red squirrels are doing well in Scottish Highlands. In **International NEWS** new species of Orangutan discovered in Sumatran mountains.

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 before the year ends!

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-BulletinNov2017.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

Bittern numbers have had a slight drop in Norfolk, but record high overall in the UK

The bittern was nearly extinct in the late 1990s, existing mainly in Norfolk and Suffolk. Now due to conservation efforts to restore its wet reed bed habitat it has now had another record year nationally. However there has been a slight drop in Norfolk. <https://tinyurl.com/ybdalksx>

Ponies playing a vital role in conservation management in the Broads National Park

They help in the conservation management by grazing sensitive fenland as they are highly selective. They will remain grazing there throughout the winter months. <https://tinyurl.com/y74wd5ax>

The 'Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers' landscape partnership scheme wins National Lottery support

The new proposal for this scheme has received initial funding from the National Lottery. Its aim is to understand, reveal, celebrate and protect the lost heritage of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers. <https://tinyurl.com/yal4mxr>

Real moving time data infographic of productivity of crops

East Anglia is shown to be the highest in crop productivity in the UK. <https://tinyurl.com/yb2ep7vd>

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National NEWS

UK will back total ban on bee-harming pesticides

Neonicotinoids are the world's most widely used insecticide. The UK now wants a ban of their use outside of greenhouses. The vote is expected in December. <https://tinyurl.com/y9qgg4xm>

Very rare 'strangler' fungus discovered

The Powdercap fungus is a parasitic fungus (*Squamanita paradoxa*), it takes over the body of the host and bursts through. Only recorded in a handful of locations in the UK and 1 of 10 parasitic fungi recorded worldwide.

<https://tinyurl.com/yd56r6qk>

Red squirrels successfully reintroduced to Scottish Highlands

Early results show in the north west Highlands red squirrels have been successfully introduced and have naturally expanded last year. An increase would mean more tree seeds would be buried each autumn in the native forests. <https://tinyurl.com/y9wpymsz>

Pick your winner in major genetics project

Help the Natural History Museum unravel genetic code of species. The nominees are all of interest to scientists, so cast your vote to decide: <https://tinyurl.com/y8x57lm8>

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International NEWS

New species of orangutan is found to be rarest ape on earth

<https://tinyurl.com/y9z9fn7m>

Extra protection for sharks in cross-border conservation

<https://tinyurl.com/y9eb7vc>

Hundreds of sea turtles found dead off the coast of El Salvador

<https://tinyurl.com/8wkr4ko>

More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Nov2017NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

Volunteer in a beautiful environment and gain Woodland Management and Horticultural skills at Holt Hall

Help with conservation work on the grounds or lend a hand in the walled garden. Holt hall is an environmental and outdoor learning centre. The next open gate dates are on the 9th and 10th December. Please contact at 01263 713117, www.holthall.org.uk or holthall@educatorsolutions.org.uk

Hedgehog hibernation

As hedgehogs are hibernating, visit Hedgehog Street for help in supporting hedgehogs in your own garden:
<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>

Help record parasitical mistletoe on oaks

Mistletoe has a wide range of hosts including oaks. Oaks with parasitical mistletoe are still quite rare. Can you help collect the records for Norfolk? If you find any mistletoe, contact NBIS at nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk's Freshwater Study Group Meetings

Are you keen to learn more about freshwater life?

If you are an enthusiastic beginner or have some experience of investigating the wealth of freshwater life in the county, then the Norfolk Freshwater Study Group meetings could be for you. Meetings take place every third Thursday of the month in the study centre at the Wheathen Nature Reserve, Surlingham from 19:00 onwards. The focus is typically on invertebrate samples from ponds, dykes, broads and rivers, though they are happy to be side-tracked by anything aquatic! There is a range of microscopes, equipment, identification guides and a vast store of knowledge available to share and use. These meetings are an ideal opportunity to increase your identification skills and understand more about freshwaters.

If you would like to come along and see what is available, please contact Dan Hoare: daniel.j.hoare@gmail.com

The Brecks Earth Heritage Trail is now open

Want to try a new Trail? Full of prehistoric wildlife with 90 million years of geological history, the Brecks Earth Heritage Trail is one of Britain's great natural areas to explore. Please visit for more information

<http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/earthheritagetrail/> or download the Earth Heritage Trail Map app.

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Record breaking year for Swallowtail Butterfly

This spectacular butterfly, mainly restricted to the Norfolk Broads, has had a significant increase in population this year in a number of locations and its highest number since 2011. Hard work has been put into restoring open fen land. It is thought that great weather conditions have also been an important factor. As the butterflies used to appear in late May to June but now there has been a second brood in late summer, giving them more chance to increase numbers. <https://tinyurl.com/y7upqcle>



Swallowtail Butterfly RSPB Strumpshaw Fen Norfolk
[cc-by-sa/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) - © Janet Richardson - geograph.org.uk/p/599384

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EVENTS

Bug Sorting Workshop No.3

Come along and learn about invertebrate families and help sort specimens into those families - by doing so you will help really important UEA research into management for important invertebrates in the Brecks!

Sign up today to as many dates* as you like, but you would need to book each one separately:

In the Brecks:

Saturday 2nd December 2017 at Oak Lodge and Sunday 3rd December 2017 in Santon Downham. Book here and for more details:

<https://tinyurl.com/yab8dhkx>

In Norwich:

Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th December in Norwich you can book here and for more details:

<https://tinyurl.com/y72uqbv4>

Dragonflies and other wildlife distractions of Madagascar, 19:30, Tuesday 12th December 2017, St. Andrew's Hall, Eaton, NR4 6NW

Illustrated talk by Dr Pam Taylor. With festive refreshments. <http://www.nnns.org.uk/event/list>

Wildlife of the Holkham National Nature Reserve, 19:30, Tuesday 9 January 2018, St. Andrew's Hall, Eaton

Illustrated talk by Andrew Bloomfield, Reserve Warden <http://www.nnns.org.uk/event/list>

Wildlife through the Lens, 19:30, Tuesday 23 January 2018, St. Andrew's Hall, Eaton

Illustrated talk by Peter Mallett <http://www.nnns.org.uk/event/list>

Hanging by a thread - Norfolk's threatened spiders, 19:30, Tuesday, 13 February 2018, St. Andrew's Hall, Eaton

Presidential Address by Dr Helen Smith <http://www.nnns.org.uk/event/list>

Wildlife of Cuba, 19:30, Tuesday, 27 February 2018, St. Andrew's Hall, Eaton

Illustrated talk by Hans Watson <http://www.nnns.org.uk/event/list>

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AND FINALLY..

recently evolved genetic trick discovered in the wild <https://tinyurl.com/y8udg6ak>

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