



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 39
(Oct 2014)

Photo: Fly Agaric (© Adele Southall)

Welcome to our October e-bulletin

Welcome to this somewhat bumper edition of the e-bulletin. There was no September edition due to Lizzy being off enjoying some slightly more exotic wildlife viewing in sunny South Africa!

September was a particularly busy month for the Norfolk Non-Native Species Initiative (NNNSI) who hosted a major European conference here in Norwich. Called 'Bridging the Gap: Working together to tackle invasive non-native species in Europe', the event brought to a close the work of the RINSE project and looked ahead to a new initiative - SEFINS. The event was a great success. You can view the presentations from the RINSE closing conference here: <http://www.rinse-europe.eu/conference> and those from the SEFINS opening conference here: <http://www.rinse-europe.eu/cluster-event>.

The Norfolk Trails team, with whom we share an office, ran a photographic competition over the summer. Entitled 'Norfolk Trails' Treasures', the competition attracted lots of entrants, all submitting photos that showed what they treasured while out exploring the Norfolk Trails. Read more about the competition and view the winning photos here: <http://tinyurl.com/mjcf2jy>. There will be a prize-giving at the Forum at 11am on Sunday 2nd November and the winning photos and some of the other favourites will be on display at the Forum from 2nd-7th November.

NBIS have secured funding from the Government's Release of Data Fund via the NBN to be able to digitise otherwise inaccessible data (see <http://tinyurl.com/mlt62xa>). They have been able to employ two of their long term volunteers, Nicola Dixon and Hannah Nutt, to work on this project.

Finally, the Biodiversity Team now has a new blog. You can find it at <http://norfolkbiodiversity.wordpress.com/>. Do have a read and let us know what you think.

SPECIES OF THE MONTH

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted records of Wasps. **Please submit any more sightings of Wasps here:** <http://nbis.org.uk/Wasp>

Our Species of the Month for November is the **Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)** .



After becoming extinct in the UK due to persecution and habitat loss by the late 19th century, these birds have been a huge conservation success story, with over 100 females nesting in Norfolk each year. The best places to see them are close to wetlands, where they usually nest - the Fens, the Broads and the Norfolk coast. However they can also be seen further inland and will sometimes breed in arable fields. They can be seen all year round.

The largest of the UK harriers, they can be recognised by their gliding flight with their broad wings held in a V-shape and by their lack of a white rump. Males are a reddish brown colour with grey wings and black wingtips. Females are chocolate brown and lighter in colour on the top of their head, chin and shoulders.

Marsh harriers are territorial. They nest on the ground, often in reedbeds and feed on small mammals and birds.

For more information and to submit your marsh harrier sightings click here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/MarshHarrier>

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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-BulletinOct2014.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

Breaking New Ground is launched

A major new Landscape Partnership project - 'Breaking New Ground' - has launched. Focussing on the Brecks of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Biodiversity and Countryside team are involved in a number of projects within it.

<http://www.breakingnewground.org.uk/>

Easton and Otley College celebrates the many reasons to be Wild About Norfolk

Around 1500 visitors enjoyed wildlife themed activities, games and demonstrations at the day in October. NBIS were there with an autumn- themed display and helping kids make their own leaf identification charts. NNSI were showing off some invasive species and giving advice on how to remove and avoid them.

<http://tinyurl.com/o4b5ymn>

Destructive mussels could soon be in the Broads

With the discovery of the invasive Quagga Mussel in a reservoir near Heathrow airport (see National NEWS) there are fears that the species may find its way into the Norfolk Broads.

<http://tinyurl.com/m5tmhwr>

Chinese Mitten crabs in the Glaven

This is thought to be the first record of the species in a Norfolk river outside of The Wash.

<http://tinyurl.com/l64hurh>

£30,000 boost to help toads' habitat in Norfolk

A landfill fund is helping to improve the lie of the land for the rare natterjack toad.

<http://tinyurl.com/kgb3a6o>

Local sites in positive conservation management - 2013-14 Norfolk figures released

Local authorities should take note of the below figures for the government biodiversity indicator Single Data List (SDL) 160; especially as government guidance only published on 13th October 2014 states that public authorities can use this indicator to measure their commitment to the "biodiversity duty"

<http://tinyurl.com/nam4hyd>, part of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

(<http://tinyurl.com/phb32vy>) - more details about this guidance here <http://tinyurl.com/pgzxawl>.

On behalf of Norfolk County Council, NBIS undertakes the analysis of this indicator (with assistance from Norfolk Wildlife Trust) and reports the findings directly to Defra, as required under the SDL. The 2013/14 figures (for the period of 5 years up to March 31st 2014) have recently been reported on and can be viewed for Norfolk and by district in the PDF download SDL-160 2013-14 district summary here: <http://tinyurl.com/o8p952h>. A map of sites in and NOT in PCM for the whole of Norfolk can be downloaded here: <http://tinyurl.com/k6kquz2>. A PDF showing the changes in PCM over time is available to download here: <http://tinyurl.com/pfa3rgg>.

Any questions please email NBIS on nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

Tree bumblebee numbers are buzzing according to new UEA research

Researchers think they've worked out how the Tree Bumblebee is bucking the trend of bee declines.

<http://tinyurl.com/kcjovgx>

Norton Subcourse quarry takes part in pioneering conservation project

<http://tinyurl.com/p68u33f>

North Norfolk welcomes its newest river - providing habitat for wild trout at the Bayfield Estate

<http://tinyurl.com/kde4q67> Read more about the project here: <http://tinyurl.com/m4gfwgh>

Hunstanton Cliffs named in the top 10 for people's favourite UK geology sites

<http://tinyurl.com/ov4383h>

Bid for new coast path from Hopton to Sea Palling

<http://tinyurl.com/ox8vj44>

Volunteers get stuck in with a river cleanup

<http://tinyurl.com/lwyhhv3>

25,000 fish dead in Norfolk and Suffolk Broads

<http://tinyurl.com/l8sunnl>

[[TOP](#)]

National NEWS

Reality check in race to curb extinction

The plight of the world's most endangered species is getting worse as only five of global 56 targets are seeing sufficient progress: <http://tinyurl.com/lxbn7q2>. Scientists have warned that global biodiversity targets won't be met by 2020 and that world leaders are failing in their pledge to halt wildlife decline: <http://tinyurl.com/oywmzk5>

Quagga Mussel found in a reservoir near Heathrow Airport

It has been described by scientists as the greatest single threat to Britain's wildlife of any alien species, due to the fact that it breeds prolifically and is incredibly difficult to remove: <http://tinyurl.com/mghc8no>.

There are fears that the quagga mussel might have already been joined by other invasive species:

<http://tinyurl.com/n45xcex>

2014 Wildlife Photographer of the Year

<http://tinyurl.com/mre5bet>

Natural solutions for tackling health inequalities: conference report

<http://tinyurl.com/lxzta66>

Conservationists call for ban on 'Tree of hell' that threatens to damage native plants

Conservationists want an outright ban, but garden centres are reluctant to drop the fast grower

<http://tinyurl.com/on8rohv>

New viruses 'killing amphibians' in Spain

Researchers fear the virus strains have already spread to other countries

<http://tinyurl.com/m6b6l2m>

Treating data deficit disorder

<http://tinyurl.com/mawnhog>

Wildlife licences: can't shoot robins, but Egyptian Geese are game

<http://tinyurl.com/le7jt3t>

Illegal foragers are stripping UK forests of fungi

<http://tinyurl.com/m4m8psd>

Garlic injection could tackle tree diseases

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-29522647>

Can cities save our wild bees?

<http://tinyurl.com/lgwaxlm>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Oct2014NationalNews>

[\[TOP\]](#)

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 email: nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

Or visit our website: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/SpeciesSurveillanceNetwork>



Scientists call on public to help solve the mystery of starlings' aerial displays

Do starlings flock together to keep warm, for safety or to share roosting tips? A Society of Biology murmuration survey hopes to find the answer and help stem their decline

<http://tinyurl.com/qb4ypup>

Is there a spider in da house?

Spider app launched by ecologists: <http://tinyurl.com/nkg3s7p>

Submit your records to the CATlas

The Mammal Society is working to develop an atlas of domestic and feral cats across the UK and they need your help: <http://mammal.org.uk/catlas>

Observatree

A collaborative project aiming to monitor the health of and identify pest and disease threats to UK trees. Find out how you can help at <http://www.observatree.org.uk/>

Seasonal tips for spiny visitors

It is a time when many of you are active in the garden. Simple, satisfying jobs such as turning the compost heap, raking up leaves or a spot of pruning. Local hedgehogs are preparing to hibernate and so any help you can give them will be invaluable. Here are three easy ways you can help them this weekend...

<http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/pages/seasonal-tips.html>

[\[TOP\]](#)

SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

The Big Butterfly Count results are out

The survey ran from the 19th July to the 10th August and over 43,500 counts were completed! See a summary of the results here: <http://bigbutterflycount.org/2014mainresults>

Hedgehogs inky paw prints point to sparse distribution

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/29208304>

New Red Data List for vascular plants in England

<http://www.bsbi.org.uk/england.html>

Fungal rarities for Norfolk

Two rare fungi species have recently been confirmed for Earlham Cemetery in Norwich - the sessile earthstar and *Hypomyces papulasporae*.

In addition, a fungus spotted at the Whitlingham Bioblitz back in July has been confirmed as *Gloeophyllum abietinum*. This is only the fourth British record of the species!

[\[TOP\]](#)

EVENTS

Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Gaywood Valley Living Landscape, 10am-1pm every Monday

Free weekly activities in the Gaywood Valley, based from Reffley Community Centre.

<http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/all-news/2014-09-23-free-weekly-activities-in-the>

The Hawk and Owl Trust - Sculthorpe Moor Community Nature Reserve

Upcoming events: <http://hawkandowl.org/locations/sculthorpe-moor-community-nature-reserve/>

[\[TOP\]](#)

AND FINALLY..

Google Streetview gives glimpse of the world of Jane Goodall's chimpanzees : <http://tinyurl.com/lyhleks>

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