



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 48 (October 2015)

Photo: Pond restored by the Norfolk Pond Project (before the restoration the pond was just filled with dead leaves) © Carl Sayer

Welcome to our October e-bulletin

Last issue we featured a new project NBIS are leading on called Wildlife Recorders of Tomorrow. This is part of the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme (supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund). The project is going from strength to strength, with lots of people signing up, workshops on species recording and a very successful bioblitz at Brandon Country Park (read about the event here: <http://tinyurl.com/pc6572g> and check out the species totals here: <http://tinyurl.com/p7jdgru>). It's not too late to get involved and there are lots of workshops and events planned. Read more details of this project in GETTING INVOLVED and if you're interested please email nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

Congratulations are in order as our own Martin Horlock has been elected chair of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC- <http://www.alerc.org.uk>). Martin will be in the role for two years.

Martin also made an appearance on Mustard TV news in September, talking about Norfolk's fantastic biodiversity. The TV station along with the EDP picked up on the State of the Environment Report written by NBIS earlier in the year <http://tinyurl.com/q2ltmar>. The report is available on the NBIS website at <http://tinyurl.com/o6g4nwx>

Finally if you're planning some bonfire night festivities, don't forget to check your bonfire for hibernating hedgehogs before lighting it! Preferably build or relocate pyres on the day, and fence off larger bonfires to keep hedgehogs out. More autumn hedgehog tips here: <http://tinyurl.com/qh9msob>

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>

Thanks to all of you who submitted records for our Grid Square of the Month from the August e-bulletin.

Our next Grid Square of the Month is **TL8683** in **Thetford**.



This grid square includes the remains of Thetford Priory (now managed by English Heritage), a stretch of the Little Ouse River and the areas alongside as well as residential areas, the railway station, allotments and part of a recreation ground.

You can submit your records at <http://nbis.org.uk/TL8683>

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-BulletinOct2015.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

Team set challenge to restore seven Norfolk ponds in seven days

UCL will follow the progress of the seven ponds over the next few years and aim to illustrate the benefits to farmland wildlife with before and after studies <http://tinyurl.com/pe3a2ul>

Little terns find success after being forced away from their nest

A colony of little terns was forced to abandon their nests at Winterton this summer, but went on to successfully fledge 90 chicks further up the coast <http://tinyurl.com/pvlx6mw>

Thetford Common is the focus of rare plant revival

Just a three minute stroll from the centre of Thetford, Barnham Cross Common has long been a popular spot not only for joggers and dog walkers but also botanists <http://tinyurl.com/owvma5d>

Wings over the Brecks reveals secret lives of stone curlew, nightjar and goshawk

The secret lives of some of our region's most elusive birds have been revealed in a groundbreaking new wildlife surveillance project <http://tinyurl.com/oue3wyy>

Information plea to help eels and water voles in Weybourne's 'lost' chalk stream

A little 'lost' stream is getting special attention over the next few weeks as scientists try and improve it for wildlife and humans <http://tinyurl.com/qjwyals>

If you go down to the Broads today...watch out for the huge spiders!

They may not be the cutest or cuddliest of creatures – but efforts to save a huge spider from the brink of extinction are in the running for a national honour <http://tinyurl.com/nnwjpuh>

Integrated wetland project on the River Mun reduces phosphates from sewage effluent

A pilot wetland project run by the Norfolk Rivers Trust could help pioneer a sustainable natural method of reducing phosphate levels from sewage plant outflows <http://tinyurl.com/o28d6rp>

Conservation work along the River Nar is a boost for fish

The project along the River Nar, near Pentney, has seen a 175% increase in fish numbers <http://tinyurl.com/ollauxv>

Norfolk Wildlife Trust passes baton on to enthusiast group of Gaywood Valley volunteers

Wildlife experts have passed the baton on to a budding group of volunteers to lead the way in projects to boost natural habitats <http://tinyurl.com/p576k46>

[\[TOP\]](#)

National NEWS

Buff-tailed bumblebee voted Britain's favourite insect

Species scooped more than 40% of the votes, easily beating closest contenders the seven spot ladybird and emperor dragonfly <http://tinyurl.com/ozppj8z>

Dogs help to count tiny harvest mice for UK survey

Sniffer dogs trained to smell out UK's smallest rodent in the wild to monitor declining populations <http://tinyurl.com/qctx7eh>

Invasion of giant palm-sized moths hits Britain

Convolvulus Hawk-moth migrates early from southern Europe to Britain and is already sighted widely across UK with record number expected this year <http://tinyurl.com/qgn4h2p>

NBN Annual Report is published

<http://tinyurl.com/qjncxdc>

Older than the dinosaurs: Lamprey fish return to UK rivers after 200 years

Ancient eel-like fish is reclaiming its former river strongholds as water quality improves <http://tinyurl.com/oqpjkg7>

British anglers on alert for alien salmon species

Unusual specimens spotted in UK waters may be a product of a Russian breeding programme in the Arctic Ocean, says conservationist <http://tinyurl.com/nku9w6h>

Coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish can be killed with vinegar, scientists find

James Cook University researchers have discovered that household vinegar has a 100% kill rate for starfish that prey on coral on the Great Barrier Reef <http://tinyurl.com/pxaww9t>

Garden birds: Feeding brings blackcaps to the UK

Putting out birdfeed in Britain's gardens is shifting the migration of one particular winter visitor, the blackcap, scientists say <http://tinyurl.com/pdu8r3v>

Nearly a third of world's cacti face extinction, says IUCN

Illegal trade is causing a shocking decline in plants that are vital to desert ecosystems, most comprehensive global assessment yet reveals <http://tinyurl.com/nfsqbu4>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Oct2015NationalNews>

[\[TOP\]](#)

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.

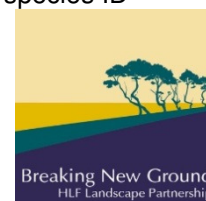
Led by NBIS, this project will establish a network of volunteers recording wildlife throughout the Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership Scheme area (a project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund).

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

More details at <http://tinyurl.com/ppr7mdq>

Volunteers needed to look out for Norfolk seal colony

<http://tinyurl.com/qhtumrz>

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... **Broomscot Common!**

This 11.4 hectare site in Garboldisham has been leased by the Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP) since late 2010. It is linked to the Little Ouse river by a small stream. The common contains a mix of habitats - from wet fen at the north end to dry sandy grassland - much like that you would find in The Brecks.

The common was grazed in the past. A lack of such management before the LOHP took the site on resulted in a decline in some of the habitat quality. This is now being restored and a long-term management plan being established.



Public access to the site has also been improved.

Marshy grassland includes species such as soft rush, false fox-sedge and marsh thistle. The dry grassland areas are being restored to encourage plants such as meadow saxifrage, harebell and heath bedstraw. The gorse and scrub on the common provide ideal nesting habitat for linnets which can be seen (and heard) on the common in spring. An ephemeral pond at the eastern end of the stream is surrounded by scrub which has been home to nesting bullfinches, turtle doves and garden warblers - all nationally threatened birds. Small heath butterflies may be seen between April and September.

You can read more about the work of the LOHP at Broomscot Common at: <http://tinyurl.com/olk2oom>

If you visit Broomscot Common, NBIS would love to know what species you spot there – let us know at <http://www.nbis.org.uk/AllSpeciesSurvey>

Photo: Linnet © Joe Pell and licenced under the [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/) license <http://tinyurl.com/oheybzk>

[\[TOP\]](#)

SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Holly-leaved Naiad – a Norfolk Ponds Project success story!

Back in August, Dr Carl Sayer found 2-3 plants of the very rare Schedule 8 Holly-leaved Naiad (*Najas marina*) in one of the ponds recently restored as part of the Norfolk Ponds Project. The pond was restored in February by scrub and sediment removal. Prior to the restoration it was too shaded to contain any aquatic plants, but now has a rich community of stoneworts and pondweeds. It is thought the plant had dispersed from another nearby pond where it was recorded in 2010. This is only the second record of the plant in Norfolk outside of its Broads stronghold – a sure sign that it is moving and that pond restoration may be helping it to move.

You can follow the Norfolk Ponds Project on Twitter (@norfolkponds) and on Facebook (Norfolk Ponds Project). And read about their #7ponds7days project in Local NEWS.

Holly blue butterfly makes a welcome comeback after years of scarcity

The azure butterfly bounces back from a cyclical decline caused by parasitic wasps with numbers increasing by 151% on last years' annual Big Butterfly count <http://tinyurl.com/nq93nyk>

[\[TOP\]](#)

EVENTS

Lichens of the Brecks – Heathland Lichens, 8 November, 10:30 start, Thetford Warren

Learn about heathland lichens with Peter Lambley, County Recorder for Lichens, Norfolk, as part of the Breaking New Ground Wildlife Recorders of Tomorrow Project. An opportunity to learn more about these fascinating organisms - part fungus, part plant. Find out how to identify and record the lichens found on heathland. This is a taster session and if you're keen to develop your skills, there will be further workshops in 2016. All skill levels are welcome, as training will be provided. All you need is an enthusiasm for conservation and the Brecks!

Booking essential. Email nbis@norfolk.gov.uk See more at <http://tinyurl.com/phzzu2r>

NBN Conference, 19-20 November, Lakeside Conference Centre, York

From global to local – building the NBN partnership. Also includes entry to the ceremony for the UK awards to celebrate biological recording and information sharing on the Thursday night. More information here: <http://tinyurl.com/ojyc584>

Birds of the Brecks, 5 December, 10am-4pm, BTO Offices (The Nunnery) Thetford

A full day workshop packed with advice on how to record birds and other creatures in the Brecks.

The day will be mainly led by Su Gough (British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)) and will focus on winter birds in the Brecks, starting with an introduction to bird recording and followed by an interactive bird ID workshop. Although the focus is on birds we will also have a dragonflies of the Brecks taster session, run by Adrian Parr (Suffolk Dragonfly Recorder) and a mammals of the Brecks introduction session with the opening of our pre-set mammal traps, run by Jennifer Morpeth (Norfolk Wildlife Trust). This will all be followed by a guided walk around the Nunnery Lakes reserve to actively record the birds and other creatures. This event is FREE but BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL. Refreshments provided. To book: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/birds-of-the-brecks-tickets-19272531661>

Programme for the day (subject to change): <http://tinyurl.com/njzz65g> For more information email nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

[\[TOP\]](#)

AND FINALLY..

This might make you despair a little... Denver park closes over risk to visitors trying to take #bearselfies

<http://tinyurl.com/nff9uve>

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