



Photo: Fly agaric fungi

Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 59 (October 2016)

Welcome to our October e-bulletin

October has been a busy month for Norfolk, with some of our red squirrels being relocated to establish a new colony and our first snorkel trail being established! Visit **Local NEWS** to find out more.

In **National NEWS**, the UK's chatty fish are being recorded to help establish whether noise pollution in our seas is damaging breeding success; whilst in **International NEWS**, Hawaiian bees are put onto the endangered list.

Now that we're heading into autumn, why not try out one of our WildWalks and see if you can spot anything? To find out more and print off this month's WildWalk route map and description, check out **WildWalk of the Month!** This is the perfect time to spot interesting fungi, why not join us for one of our free workshops and find out how to identify the fungi of the Brecks? Check out **EVENTS**.

The National Bee Unit has confirmed the sighting of a large Asian hornets' nest in Gloucestershire, steps have been taken to destroy the nest and any others in the area <http://tinyurl.com/zmbf3sq>. The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than a bee. However, they do pose a risk to honey bees and other native bee species. For more information on the Asian hornet visit <http://tinyurl.com/jo2km4x>, for information on how to identify an Asian hornet visit <http://tinyurl.com/j9xnbv6>, and to submit any sightings of the hornet visit <http://tinyurl.com/hzuzcn5>.

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 2016!

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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-BulletinOct2016.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

Concerning drop in butterfly numbers due to a wet springtime, says expert

A wet springtime causing grass to grow faster than usual is the reason butterfly numbers in Norfolk plummeted this year, according to Norfolk's butterfly county recorder, Andy Brazil. The majority of butterfly species studies as part of the 'Big Butterfly Count' showed population declines, with some numbers lower than the year that the count began <http://tinyurl.com/huxx6sa>

Victorian sewage pipe becomes the centrepiece for snorkel trail

The first snorkel trail in the North Sea has been established, starting off Sheringham coast and traveling along a stretch of unused Victorian pipe. Divers Rob Spray and Dawn Watson unearthed the iron pipework off Sheringham earlier this year and decided it would make an ideal snorkel site for holidaymakers and explorers <http://tinyurl.com/gmj5315>

North Norfolk-bred baby squirrels set for cross-country adventure in the hope of establishing a new wild colony

Two red squirrel kittens born in a captive breeding programme at Pensthorpe Natural Park, near Fakenham earlier this year are setting out bright-eyed and bushy-tailed on an adventure to the Welsh valleys. Ten Norfolk-bred kittens in total will be transported in specially-made squirrel boxes to the Ogwen Valley, near Bangor <http://tinyurl.com/zmeyqgg>

Fin whale washes up on Norfolk beach

Experts have added this to a number of investigations, as mass whale strandings have happened this year. Six sperm whales washed up on beaches around The Wash in January with no cause found, these six were amongst more than a dozen to die in the southern North Sea, with more washing ashore in Germany and the Netherlands <http://tinyurl.com/gocvaak> More about the fin whale <http://tinyurl.com/hz4y667> <http://tinyurl.com/gmdn4sh>

Rare Felbrigg trees could save country's woodlands

Seeds from the rare beech tree in Norfolk are being saved to ensure the survival of the country's woodlands, and will be stored in sub-zero temperatures in the Kew Gardens' Millennium Seed Bank in Sussex <http://tinyurl.com/hysemzn>

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National NEWS

UK's 'chatty' fish to be recorded

The seas around Britain may be getting so noisy that fish species like cod and haddock now have some difficulty communicating, thus hampering their ability to breed. This new study intends to understand the impacts of noise on some UK fish species <http://tinyurl.com/jdrph9d>

Eel migration study tells 'romantic' tale

Scientists are a step closer to solving the mystery of one of the great animal migrations. Each autumn, eels leave European rivers to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to breed once and then perish <http://tinyurl.com/zrfqmno>

Toad numbers fall by two-thirds in 30 years

The common toad is in decline across most of the UK and needs better protection, say conservationists. Data from toad patrols shows that the toad populations have fallen by more than two-thirds since the 1980's <http://tinyurl.com/zvte2o5>

Mice sing like the Clangers to attract mates, scientists discover

It was previously thought that these songs were either the result of a mechanism similar to that of a tea kettle, or of the resonance caused by the vibration of the vocal cords; but a study found that when mice 'sing', they use a mechanism similar to that seen in the engines of supersonic jets <http://tinyurl.com/jxxu38v>

Bird tracking could provide an early warning for avian flue

Monitoring birds on their long distance migrations may provide an early warning for flu outbreaks, there is growing evidence that wild birds move the disease around the worlds as they fly thousands of miles to their winter homes <http://tinyurl.com/j3shq7n>

Britain's native daffodils threatened by garden centre hybrids

The native British strain of daffodil is becoming a rarity even in the wild because of crosspollination with larger, hardier varieties planted nearby <http://tinyurl.com/zuceoqv>

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International NEWS

Global warming could kill off 'good bacteria', exposing an 'Achilles heel' in the ecosystem

Rising temperatures may be too much for bacteria that form a mutually beneficial relationship with many animals, wreaking havoc in the food chain by simply killing off 'good bacteria' in the stomachs of insects and other animals <http://tinyurl.com/hpeke2v>

Hawaiian bees are put on US endangered species list

Seven species of yellow-faced bee native to Hawaii have become the first bees to be added to the US federal list of endangered and threatened species. Conservationists say the bees face extinction through habitat loss, wildfires and the introduction of non-native insects and plants <http://tinyurl.com/zxseubm>

Synthetic rhino horn to be ready in two years

The man behind attempts to develop a synthetic rhino horn has stated that he hopes to have a "bio-identical" product ready to market in the next two years in a bid to stem the rhino-poaching crisis <http://tinyurl.com/hkwykyx>

Call for action to protect the 'lungs' of the sea

Over 100 scientists from 28 countries have called for global action to protect seagrass meadows. Seagrasses are flowering plants that form dense underwater beds in shallow water, these plants provide shelter and food for a large range of animals including fish, marine mammals and birds <http://tinyurl.com/zujwb58>

Divers plunging 1,000ft to uncover the secrets of the deep sea

We have better maps of Mars than of our own seabeds with just 0.05% of our ocean floor mapped in detail, but a new deep-ocean survey aims to address that, and raise awareness on 'the beating heart' of our planet <http://tinyurl.com/z9czm75>

More news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Oct2016NationalNews>

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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

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>

Capturing our Coast 'Spermwatch'

This autumn a nationwide campaign to survey UK beaches for signs of lugworm reproduction has been launched. Anyone can get involved by searching their local beach for lugworm sperm puddles. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/hg5yelh>

Ready. Steady. Grow!

Last year, I Dig Trees enabled OVO and TCV to inspire and educate thousands of people about the benefits that planting trees would bring to their communities and communal green spaces. 158,000 trees were planted! This fantastic partnership programme is a great opportunity for any community group or volunteer that would like to join in and feel good by either planting trees or nominating a local community group. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/j4o4ck8>

What does Thetford Forest mean to you?

The Forestry Commission would like to know what makes Thetford Forest special to you. Where do you go? What do you do? What is important to you? To take part in the survey visit <http://map-me.org/sites/thetford>

Could you help keep baby hedgehogs warm this winter?

Staff and volunteers at the RSPCA's Norfolk wildlife hospital are caring for more than 70 hoglets after many of the mammals had suffered dehydration during this month's heat spell. Staff are appealing for face flannels, which are the ideal size to tuck in the hedgehogs and keep them cosy. They are also requesting unwanted towels to help care for the 23 common seal pups currently being looked after at East Winch. Donations can be left in the yellow bins at the entrance to the site, off Station Road. Collections are also being taken by Tesco stores at Hardwick, Gaywood and Downham Market. If you see a hoglet alone during winter months and are concerned, you can find out more <http://tinyurl.com/z3nswzy>

Rare Arable Flowers App

Arable wildflowers represent an important part of our cultural heritage, and the connection between these plants and traditional agriculture goes back many centuries. They also fulfil important functions, e.g. by providing food for farmland birds and for pollinating insects. However, while such wildflowers have once made our countryside colourful, many of them have substantially declined during the 20th century, due to the replacement of traditional farming methods by modern

methods. The smartphone app Arable Flowers helps you identify and record rare plant species, as well as offer advice on how to look after these threatened species, find out more information <http://www.brc.ac.uk/app/rare-arable-flowers-app>

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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).

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 WildWalk of the Month is...**Knettishall Heath!**

The open landscape of Knettishall Heath was created about four thousand years ago when our bronze age ancestors cleared the forest for cultivation and grazing livestock. Since then the land has been used for sheep and rabbit grazing. Find the official route description [here](#) and the recording sheet and route map to print off [here](#).

Knettishall



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

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

Thresher shark gains protection

Known for its long 'whip-like' tail, the threatened Thresher shark is among a number of marine species given extra protection at the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites). This species has seen huge population falls over the past decade due to the demands of the shark fin trade <http://tinyurl.com/j6v6cgy>

China's 'extinct' dolphin may have returned to the Yangtze river

An expedition team claims to have spotted the baiji in a stretch of Asia's longest river near the city of Wuhu in the Anhui province <http://tinyurl.com/jdaxll7>

A new-for-Britain bee has been discovered at Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park

First found by David Notton, the bee is using bee nest boxes provided by the Land Trust site, which is managed by volunteers. The species (*Hopillitis adunca*) is commonly found in continental Europe and does not pose a threat to other British pollinators <http://tinyurl.com/jmdox85>

Peru investigates the death of 10,000 water frogs

Peru's environmental agency is investigating the death of 10,000 Titicaca water frogs whose bodies have been found in a river south of the country; the Titicaca frog is an endangered species found only in a freshwater lake shared by Peru and Bolivia <http://tinyurl.com/jq3vj4l>

'Flying ivory' hornbill gains extra protection

An Asian bird species under threat for its ivory like helmet has gained extra protection at the Cites conference in Johannesburg. Numbers of the helmeted hornbill have plummeted in recent years as demand soared for the so-called "red ivory" that makes up its bill <http://tinyurl.com/gn5o878>

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EVENTS

Fungi Foray, 4th November 2016, 10:00-15:00, East Wretham Heath

Fungi foray with Alex Prendergast (Natural England). Timings currently provisional. This event is for those with some experience of recording fungi and will involve an informal format. This is not a tutored event, although excellent experience will be on hand to help you. More details to follow. For more information and to book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/h9ab9md>

Fungi Foray, 14th November 2016, 10:00-15:00, Weeting Heath

Fungi foray with Alex Prendergast (Natural England). Timings currently provisional. This event is for those with some experience of recording fungi and will involve an informal format. This is not a tutored event, although excellent experience will be on hand to help you. More details to follow. For more information and to book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/hahztn9>

Fungi of the Brecks: Grass and Heaths, 20th November 2016, 10:00-16:00, Mundford Village Hall

A free full day workshop, with field visit, on grass/heathland Fungi in the Brecks, tutored by Tony Leech (Norfolk County Recorder for Fungi). The day will start with a morning classroom session at Mundford Village Hall, followed by an afternoon of searching for and recording fungi in the field at Cranwich Heath. Both sessions will include focus on the importance of fieldcraft for ID, photography and preservation of specimens. For more information and to book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ha3xrao>

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AND FINALLY..

This month's animal antics from around the globe <http://tinyurl.com/juyo566>

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