



# Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 58  
(September 2016)

Photo: *Polygonia c-album* on Marriott's Way © Danielle Engelbrecht

## Welcome to our September e-bulletin

It has been a busy month for Norfolk with most of the survey season coming to an end; however, there are still chances to get involved with some projects over autumn, see **GETTING INVOLVED**.

**The National Bee Unit has confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet in the Tetbury area of Gloucestershire – the first time the hornet has been discovered in the UK. 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>.**

In **LOCAL NEWS**, Norfolk has been a host to many uncommon bird species, with some birds stopping off before a long migration south and others taking advantage of our beautiful broads!

With such beautiful weather, why not try out one of our WildWalks? To find out more and print off this month's WildWalk route map and description, check out **WildWalk of the Month!**

We have a busy month of events coming up in October, why not join us for one of our **FREE** workshops? Check out **EVENTS** to find out more.

**Regretfully we announce the cancellation of the 2016 Norfolk Biodiversity Forum due to a lack of interest, a big thank you goes out to all of the speakers who volunteered their time for the event and the delegates that signed up. We will still be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, watch this space!**

**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](mailto: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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## Norfolk County Council

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Please do email us at [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto: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-BulletinSep2016.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

### **Birds stopping off to ‘speed feed’ at Norfolk reserve on their way south**

Migrating birds have been stopping off at west Norfolk nature reserve (WWT Welney Wetland Centre) to ‘speed feed’ before their journeys to south Europe and Africa <http://tinyurl.com/hjz6o5z>

### **Conservation in west Norfolk common benefits visitors and biodiversity**

The Norfolk Wildlife Trust project included tree thinning and the installing of infrastructure to introduce cattle at a common for grazing. Rare species on the site that have flourished since the project include marsh gentians, scarce emerald damselfly, woodlark, oblong-leaved sundew and round-leaved sundew <http://tinyurl.com/j4xmp32>

### **Ospreys take a holiday in Norfolk**

Sightings of Ospreys are quite uncommon in Norfolk, but this summer there have been multiple sightings of a pair in Ranworth and Cockshoot Broad <http://tinyurl.com/zebtaj6>

### **Cromer’s cliff top goats take a well-deserved rest**

The eight Bagot billies were released in Cromer as part of a new habitat management project to help with the control of scrubland. The goats fulfilled their grazing duties and also acted as an added visitor attraction throughout the summer <http://tinyurl.com/h86u2ok>

### **Hickling Broad Estate a new Wildlife Trust property?**

A rare opportunity has emerged to buy part of Norfolk’s most famous wetland landscape, Hickling Broad Estate. This estate is a treasured landscape, including an internationally-important nature reserve <http://tinyurl.com/j7ma9v9>

### **Delight for volunteers as Cremer’s Meadow nature reserve is opened**

Cremer’s Meadow in Brundall received it’s official opening this month having been transformed by a committed group of volunteers. The Friends of Cremer’s Meadow was formed in 2014 after the four-acre site was sold to Brundall Parish Council <http://tinyurl.com/z42o6wl>

### **Red kite back on the wing over Holkham after being saved by conservationists**

Conservationists from the Raptor Trust rescued the kite after it was found dying from an infection <http://tinyurl.com/gw4egey>

### **Porpoise dies after being washed onto the shores of North Denes**

A common porpoise was discovered on the beach, 200 yards from the Coastwatch tower, the mammal is thought to have washed ashore <http://tinyurl.com/gsb3q7g>

### **“Living Maps” and the potential for volunteer habitat surveyors**

NBIS have recently worked in partnership with BTO on a project, funded by Defra, that assessed the potential for and capacity of volunteers to help in the process of ground-truthing or validating "Living Maps" - county habitat

maps produced using satellite imagery. The report is in press, but a summary can be found on page 2 of the habitat focus in the latest BTO news <http://tinyurl.com/grsklvc>

## **A new role for pond management in farmland bird conservation**

New research suggests that managed open canopy farmland ponds help to support farmland birds. “Pond management that generates a mosaic of pond successional stages, including open-canopy, macrophyte-dominated ponds, could help to address the long-term decline of farmland birds. We strongly advocate increased agro-ecological research in this field, combined with greater emphasis on ponds and pond management options in agri-environment schemes.” (Davies *et al.*, 2016). Further information about work with the Norfolk Ponds Project can be found here <http://tinyurl.com/hgg35ld>.

## **Norfolk ‘Bats in Churches’ nights**

Members of the Norfolk Bats in Churches Project, led by Phil Parker, ran a series of 7 bat nights in some of Norfolk’s medieval Churches containing significant bat roosts during late July and early August. This follows on from regular events held over the past 4 years at Cley Church on the north Norfolk coast (an area more usually associated with its rare birds) and occasional events at other churches <http://tinyurl.com/zvl33js>

## **BIDREX project begins**

NBIS is working with UEA in an exciting new project that will look at ensuring that biodiversity data is better used to inform decision making for conservation. For more information, visit <http://www.interregeurope.eu/bid-rex/>.

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## **National NEWS**

### **Tasmanian devils rapidly evolving to resist contagious cancer, study finds**

Findings give hope that the carnivorous marsupials could survive devil facial tumour disease which was predicted to cause an extinction of the species <http://tinyurl.com/gp4axh3>

### **Slow birth rate found in African forest elephants**

African forest elephants have an extremely slow birth rates, this puts them under greater pressure from poaching. The biology of the species is designed for a system where they grow slowly and increase in number slowly. Poaching disrupts this pattern and reduces the populations ability to recover <http://tinyurl.com/gosbbrm>

### **Soaring ocean temperature is reported as ‘greatest hidden challenge of our generation’**

The IUCN report warns that a truly staggering rate of warming is changing the behaviour of marine species, reducing fishing zones and spreading disease <http://tinyurl.com/h5vkpsd>

### **UK to ban fishing from a million square kilometres of ocean**

The UK is to ban commercial fishing from a million square kilometres of ocean around British overseas territories. Four islands in total will have marine protected areas around them <http://tinyurl.com/z5cf3ou>

### **Donana National Park in Spain could become first National Heritage site in EU to be classified as in danger**

The Donana National Park in Spain is a natural paradise, home to the Iberian lynx, Spanish imperial eagles and thousands of other species; but the wetlands could become formally classified as ‘in danger’ unless the Spanish government takes action to stop it from drying out <http://tinyurl.com/hvdyx58>

### **Giraffes are divided into four distinct species, not just one**

The world’s tallest mammal have long been assumed to be one species, but geneticists have now discovered that there are four separate ones. They have been newly separated through genetic studies and named the southern giraffe, the Masai giraffe, the reticulated giraffe and the northern giraffe <http://tinyurl.com/zeyvx47>

### **One in ten UK wildlife species faces extinction, major report shows**

The State of Nature report reveals more than one in ten of the UK’s wildlife species are threatened with extinction and the numbers of the nation’s most endangered creatures have plummeted by two-thirds since 1970 <http://tinyurl.com/hd7bf93>

### **Green spaces worth £2.2bn to public health in England**

Scientists calculated that more than eight million people each week took at least 30 minutes of ‘green exercise’. They hope that the results highlight how encouraging more people to use parks will help reverse the trend of rising obesity levels across the UK <http://tinyurl.com/zkzub82>

**More National news here:**

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Sep2016NationalNews>

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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](mailto: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/hq5yelh>

### 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, visit <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, visit <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](http://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...**Nunnery Lakes!**

This varied site is home to a wide range of wildlife, including several rare or endangered species. There are about 60 species of breeding bird on site including oystercatcher, redshank and curlew. Find the official route description [here](#) and the recording sheet and route map to print off [here](#).

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](http://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

### Giant pandas rebound off endangered list

The official status of the much-loved animal has been changed from 'endangered' to 'vulnerable' after populations reach 1,864 adults. Unfortunately the news is not all good, with eastern gorillas threatened with extinction <http://tinyurl.com/h4zg2oq>

### A tree ant species has been recorded for the first time in Norfolk

The tree ant *Lasius brunneus* has been recorded for the first time in Norfolk. This species was discovered nesting at Foulden Common in August 2016 by Anna Jordan and Doreen Wells, County Ant Recorder. *Lasius brunneus* is a small bicoloured ant (light brown with a dark brown gaster), the workers being 3.2-4.5mm. The nests are usually in dead heartwood of old standing trees, such as oaks or birch, but they are not immediately obvious and can be overlooked. The ants themselves are timid and when the workers do emerge they hug the crevices in the bark for protection. Often the only outward signs of a tree being inhabited are small piles of frass that have been excavated by workers <http://www.nnns.org.uk/>

### Dormice in Britain vulnerable to extinction

Britain's native dormouse has declined by more than a third since 2000 according to a new report, the dormice live mainly in hedgerows and woods, weaving ball-like nests in the undergrowth from bark in the summer and hibernating on or near the ground between October and May <http://tinyurl.com/jlx634m>

### Why have hedgehogs declined?

Hedgehogs have declined by a third in urban areas and three quarters in the countryside since 2000. One of the biggest issues for hedgehog populations is habitat fragmentation, but there are many projects aimed at stopping this decline <http://tinyurl.com/hflssak>

## Rare sighting of a sailfish leaves Cromer fisherman awestruck

The Sailfish, a member of the marlin family, has a characteristic dorsal fin known as a sail, which often stretched the entire length of its back and bill. Sailfish are the fastest in the ocean and can leap out of the water at 68 miles per hour <http://tinyurl.com/hegdkyq>

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## EVENTS

### Birds of the Brecks, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016, 10:00-17:00, BTO Headquarters, Nunnery Lakes

A free full day workshop packed with advice on how to record autumn birds in the Brecks by sight. The day will be mainly led by Steve Piotrowski (Wildlife Consultant and author of Birds of Suffolk) and Su Gough (BTO), and will focus on autumn birds in the Brecks. For more information and to book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/5tdxoy>

### Wymondham words: Philip Hoare, The Sea Inside Us All, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 19:30, Wymondham Baptist Church

Philip Hoare is one of the UK's finest non-fiction writers. Leviathan or The Whale, won the 2009 Samuel Johnson Prize and was followed by his most recent work, the highly praised The Sea Inside. Join Philip for a wide-ranging illustrated talk in which he asks what the sea and its whales mean to us now, and what they have meant in the past.

For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/zlb8ah6>

### Wild About Norfolk, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 10:00-16:00, Easton College

WAN is an annual wildlife and environmental fair showcasing the local groups and national organisations who protect, enhance and restore Norfolk's wildlife and landscape. Each year Wild About Norfolk attracts over 40 exhibitors and between 1,000 to 2,000 visitors. They have a program of walks and talks and offer lots of activities such as badge making, pebble painting, puppet making, pond dipping, face painting, bird box making, quizzes and bat hat making. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/hnhedsb>

### Autumn Trees and Hedgerows, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 10:00-15:00, Kenninghall village

A free full day workshop packed with learning about how to identify the main tree species in autumn, especially those in hedgerows and how they fit into the landscape history context. We will also look at hedgerow autumn food stocks for wildlife (seeds, nuts, berries) and how you can use these features to identify hedgerow species. The day will be led by Gerry Barnes (Senior Research Associate, School of History, UEA) and Martin Sanford (Suffolk County Recorder for Flowering Plants). Exact location will be emailed to those that have signed up, for more information and to book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/zt5dlra>

### Fungi foray, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016, 10:00-17:00, Cranwich camp, Thetford

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/jaurqrg>

### Fungi of the Brecks, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 10:00-16:00, Mundford Village Hall

A free full day workshop and field visit on Woodland 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 Emily's Wood/Lynford Stag. 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/jeo54fa>

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## AND FINALLY..

The funniest wildlife photos of 2016 have been released <http://tinyurl.com/jmbs5z4>

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