



## Biodiversity News in Norfolk No 21 (December 2012)

[A Robin in a frosty bush by the Grand union canal](#) © Copyright [Chris Reynolds](#) and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

## Merry Christmas from the e-bulletin team

Only 5 days to go until the big day, but just enough time for the final e-bulletin of the year. It has been another very busy year for all of us at NBP, NBIS, NNNSI and NCC. Here are some of our highlights:

- The establishment of a Local Nature Partnership for Norfolk and Suffolk - Wild Anglia
- Gerry Barnes received an MBE for services to Forestry and the Community
- Killer whale sightings off the Norfolk coast
- UEA nature trail opened
- Peters Diamond Jubilee Community wood planted in Lingwood
- RINSE (Reducing the Impact of Non-native Species in Europe), a European-funded project, commences
- NBIS involved in several Defra pilot projects: Bio-offsetting; Making Earth Observation Work for UK Biodiversity Conservation; Structured species surveillance
- Successful grant from Defra for work on 9 Norfolk chalk rivers (SURF/Coast Partnership)
- A bumper year for bee orchids
- Another proud year for the Annual Biodiversity Awards (run by NBP)
- National Planning Policy Framework released
- Another successful series of Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society workshops
- Launch of the very successful Big Norwich Bat project
- 100 years of Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Blakeney point nature reserve
- The launch of the "Important Arable Plant Areas in Norfolk" report
- Several very successful bioblitzes across the county, involving many conservation organisations and volunteers.

One or two lows of the year included the killer shrimp and ash dieback bio-security alerts, the Grasslands Trust closing down, and a number of bird declines.

On the whole it was a very successful year for all in the conservation sector. And there are plenty of highlights in this month's e-bulletin and of course much festive cheer.

Merry christmas

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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-bulletinDecember2012.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

### **Protecting the region's coast and countryside is key to boosting tourism industry**

Protecting coast and countryside is the natural way to boost the region's economic growth, according to Wild Anglia.

Wild Anglia, a local nature partnership (LNP) set up by Defra earlier in the year, has begun work on a strategy to ensure that the natural environment is taken into account in decision-making at all levels in Norfolk and Suffolk:

[http://www.edp24.co.uk/business/insight/protecting\\_the\\_region\\_s\\_coast\\_and\\_countryside\\_is\\_key\\_to\\_boosting\\_tourism\\_industry\\_1\\_1738812](http://www.edp24.co.uk/business/insight/protecting_the_region_s_coast_and_countryside_is_key_to_boosting_tourism_industry_1_1738812)

### **Norfolk still way ahead of national average for Local Sites in Positive Conservation Management**

Defra has recently released the official national statistics for 2011-12 for Local Sites in Positive Conservation Management (otherwise known as Single Data list 160, previously NI197). Norfolk, with a total of 61%, is again far ahead of the national average of 45% of sites in positive conservation management. The full national assessment from Defra can

be read here: <http://data.defra.gov.uk/env/doc/Local%20sites%20data%20fiche%20for%20website-nov2012v2.pdf>

NBIS collated the Norfolk assessment of local sites, which fed into the national assessment, and there are several useful links below presenting these results. This information will be of particular interest to our district council colleagues, for your various reporting/performance targets -

The full Norfolk results, broken down by district:

[http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SDL160\\_2011-12\\_district\\_summary.pdf](http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SDL160_2011-12_district_summary.pdf)

These results represented spatially as a map of local sites:

[http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SDL160\\_2011-12\\_Results\\_Map.pdf](http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SDL160_2011-12_Results_Map.pdf)

Graphs showing the county and district trends since we first started reporting this information:

[http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/PCM\\_Trends\\_2012.pdf](http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/PCM_Trends_2012.pdf)

### **Norfolk Wildlife Trust bitterly disappointed as Cromer shoal chalk beds fail to make Marine Conservation Zone shortlist**

A beautiful but fragile marine environment off the north Norfolk coast will remain at risk if a government proposal goes ahead, bitterly disappointed wildlife experts have warned: <http://t.co/2X5nfvBq>

### **West Norfolk farmer pipped at post for national conservation prize**

West Norfolk farmer Ed Cross was runner-up in the latest national farm conservation award.

The tenant farmer on the Sandringham estate was one of the four finalists in the final of the Silver Lapwing Award, presented at the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust's farm at Loddington, Leicestershire.

Mr Cross, who welcomes more than 2,000 visitors each year to Abbey Farm, Flitcham, was praised for his outstanding contribution to building better understanding of food, farming and wildlife. He has provided a bird hide by scrapes and pools, which is another popular feature for visitors as more than 180 species have been recorded on the farm: <http://t.co/wMiwZfe9>

## **Congratulations to all the winners of CPRE Norfolk Awards:**

[http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/cpre\\_norfolk\\_awards\\_winners\\_revealed\\_1\\_1705107](http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/cpre_norfolk_awards_winners_revealed_1_1705107)

Award winner Jim Wheeler (our County Moth Recorder), has a short article on his Norfolk Moths website, the winner of one of the awards: <http://www.norfolkmoths.co.uk/index.php?news=yes&idx=1354116097>

**Wash and brush up for the Norwich Cathedral Peregrine platform - ready for when the occupants return:** <http://bit.ly/UoxF13>

**In case you missed it here is a summary of the Countryfile feature on the Blakeney Point seals:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006t0bv>

## **Deer may be culled in ash chalara fight**

Deer may need to be culled in East Anglia to stop them from hampering efforts to regenerate trees threatened by chalara ash dieback disease: <http://t.co/HcreCxyP>

## **The Broads Authority is hosting a new post of Broadland Catchment Approach Officer.**

More information can be found below and by following this link:

<http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/authority/vacancies/current-vacancies/broads-authority-catchment-approach-officer.html>

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## **National NEWS**

**Seemingly tougher southern migration for BTO Cuckoos this year - 6 have made it to central Africa, including our Norfolk tagged Cuckoo Chris, he is currently in the Congo:**

<http://www.bto.org/science/migration/tracking-studies/cuckoo-tracking>

## **Butterfly Survival Blueprint Unveiled**

For the first time, the report by Butterfly Conservation provides concrete evidence that projects aimed at conserving butterflies and moths at a landscape-scale have enabled threatened species to flourish after decades of decline:

<http://butterfly-conservation.org/48-3164/butterfly-survival-blueprint-unveiled.html>

## **Last Christmas? Partridges and turtle doves face risk of extinction in UK**

Birds in popular carol The Twelve Days of Christmas are disappearing from the countryside at alarming rates, scientists say: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2012/dec/06/christmas-partridges-turtle-doves-face-extinction?intcmp=122>

## **Honey bees' genetic code unlocked**

It could, they suggest, offer an insight into problems like Colony Collapse Disorder: <http://bbc.in/X4mOdM>

## **News from Defra - 31 Marine Conservation Zones are set for consultation:**

<http://ow.ly/g40hX>

## **Extinct oil beetle discovery takes species numbers from fab four to famous five**

A beetle hotspot on the South Devon coast has re-written the record books for the second time in six years with the discovery of an oil beetle which was last seen in 1906 and thought to have been extinct for over one hundred years:

<http://t.co/ZmQvRqEU>

**Natural England - Higher Level Stewardship reaches major landmark as 10,000th agreement begins:** <http://t.co/fiX8FNhB>

## **New licensing regime announced to help safeguard native bees**

Natural England has announced changes to the regulations affecting the use of imported non-native bumblebees for commercial pollination. The changes – which will be implemented from 1 January 2013 - are designed to help safeguard the health of native bumble bees and honey bees and will see a tightening of the licensing regulations:

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about\\_us/news/2012/171212d.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2012/171212d.aspx)

**FWAG reunited**

A new national FWAG (Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group) Association has been launched. For more than four decades FWAG was unrivalled for being a dedicated provider of environmental and conservation advice to farmers. Its loss in 2011 when the organisation entered into administration was a huge blow and regarded as a detrimental step for those wishing to integrate environmental measures while keeping farming profitable. The launch of the new association is the result of discussions between a number of locally based independent groups formed by ex-FWAG staff and volunteers who have continued to deliver environmental management advice to farmers in a number of local areas in England. The result of these discussions is that a new FWAG Association has been formed, which will offer comprehensive advice to farmers across 65% of the country's land area but will expand over a period of time:

[http://www.gwct.org.uk/about\\_us/news/3973.asp](http://www.gwct.org.uk/about_us/news/3973.asp)

**More National news here:**

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#December2012NationalNews>

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## GETTING INVOLVED

### **Review of the future of the Environment Agency and Natural England**

Defra has published a discussion paper setting out a broad range of possible reforms to the current delivery arrangements, ranging from keeping the structural arrangements of the agencies as they are to having the work of

Environment Agency and Natural England carried out by a single organisation. Views and supporting evidence are

requested by 4 February 2013. Preliminary conclusions will be published in the spring.

The review documents, including the forms you need to send in your response, can be found at

[www.defra.gov.uk/review-ea-ne/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/review-ea-ne/)

**If you need inspiration to inspire kids about nature, read this: Is the future in safe hands? by Findlay Wilde:** <http://nblo.gs/FNDaJ>

**If you get a moment the Broad's Authority be really grateful if you could fill in this survey about invasive species:** [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/broads\\_invasive\\_species\\_survey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/broads_invasive_species_survey)

### **Check out the Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail:**

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Environment/ParksAndOpenSpaces/WoodlandsHeathsAndMarshes/MouseholdHeathTrail/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Fera/Defra would like your assessment of the Phytophthora Programme.**

The Survey should only take 10-15 minutes to complete. It will close at midnight on 31 December 2012.

Start answering this survey: <http://survey.fera.defra.gov.uk/phytophthoraProgramme/survey-main.cfm?test=0&survey=215>

### **Take part in the Broads' Authority Broads Barn Owl project - locating and mapping**

**Barn Owl roosts:** <http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/BBGBarnOwlRecords2012.docx>

### **An invitation to join the Ecosystems Knowledge Network**

Ecosystems Knowledge Network <http://ekn.defra.gov.uk/> is a resource for anyone wanting to share knowledge or learn about the practical benefits of an ecosystems approach to both people and nature. On the website you will find resources that explain an ecosystems approach and show what it means in practice. Network coordinators would like to welcome more health professionals to the network to share knowledge on health and the natural environment. Join the network here: <http://ekn.defra.gov.uk/about/participate/>

### **What's red, brown and white all over?**

Santa Robin! This remarkable bird has been spotted through the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Abnormal Plumage Survey: <http://bto-enews.org/NXI-15AJ8-2A3BWYJFC1/cr.aspx>. The charity is calling for more householders to look out for strange-looking birds in their gardens this winter. In total, over 1,500 birds across more than 35 species – ranging from Blue Tit and Chaffinch to Buzzard and Coot – have already been recorded in the nation's gardens

To take part in the Abnormal Plumage Survey, visit [www.bto.org/gbw](http://www.bto.org/gbw) or telephone 01842-750050 for a paper recording form.

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## SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

**The grey seals have done it!** More than 1000 pups born so far and 100 more than the total for last winter... and the season's not over yet! These figures courtesy of the Norfolk Coast National Trust (5th December)

**A giant sunfish** - rarely seen in the North Sea because it prefers warmer water - is washed up on Overstrand beach: <http://bbc.in/WYumia>

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## EVENTS

**Don't miss the 2013 NFBR conference, 18-19 April, speakers to be announced but focus is on local wildlife recording:** <http://www.nfbr.org.uk/wiki/images/7/78/NFBR2013Announcement.pdf>

**Conference on "New Zealand Pygmyweed: Tackling the Challenge" - 20 March 2013**

Places are limited and booking is essential, please contact Catherine Chatters, New Forest Non-Native Plants Officer at [CatherineC@hwt.org.uk](mailto:CatherineC@hwt.org.uk) or telephone 023 8042 4205:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/news/index.cfm?id=104>

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## AND FINALLY..

**New project aims to upload a honey bee's brain into a flying insectobot by 2015.**

A new project has been announced in which scientists at the Universities of Sheffield and Sussex are hoping to create the first accurate computer simulation of a honey bee brain — and then upload it into an autonomous flying robot.

<http://io9.com/5948202/new-project-aims-to-upload-a-honey-bees-brain-into-a-flying-insectobot-by-2015>

**100 years ago: Britain welcomes grey squirrel colonists (Originally published in the Manchester Guardian on 11 December 1912):** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/dec/09/grey-squirrel-welcome-1912-archive>

..."at any rate it is to be hoped that no one will shoot at or trap a grey squirrel under the impression that they are doing a service to science; we should learn no more than we know from a specimen." - oops!!!

**And finally....merry christmas....**

**What we thought was a lovely idea for a christmas card and mildly amusing (for us record centre folk anyway!)** The Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre christmas card:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/BristolBRCCard5.jpg>

**How to buy a 'green' Christmas tree**

[http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2012/dec/05/how-buy-green-christmas-tree?CMP=twf\\_fd](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2012/dec/05/how-buy-green-christmas-tree?CMP=twf_fd)



Christmas lights on the A148

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