



Biodiversity News in Norfolk No 31 (Jan 2014)

Photo: Yew Club fungus © Ian Senior

Welcome to our January e-bulletin

We hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year that 2014 has started well for you!

We are all now back in the office after our Christmas breaks and working hard. At least the office isn't too chilly at the moment, thanks to our unseasonably mild weather. How long will it last? And what effect might it be having on our wildlife (see National NEWS)?

In other news, Norfolk has a new County Mammal Recorder. Francis Farrow is taking over the reins from Dave Leech (see Local NEWS). Many thanks to Dave for all of the hard work he's put in as Mammal Recorder over the years.

We've had reports of a couple of new-for-Norfolk fungi discoveries - see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS for more information.

And the Norwich Peregrines are back (see Local NEWS). They've been checking out their newly cleaned and improved platform, complete with non-slip edges so fledging might not be quite so alarming this year! Here's hoping for a successful breeding season - and if you want to volunteer at the peregrine watch point over the summer then do get in touch with the Hawk and Owl Trust (see GETTING INVOLVED).

And finally, a big congratulations to our colleagues Heidi Thompson and Sam Neal who have both been awarded Norfolk County Council 'OSCAs' (Outstanding Contributions Awards) in the Innovation category. Heidi won hers for her contribution to Wild Anglia, while Sam was awarded for the work he's done in setting up online recording on the NBIS website. Well done to both of you!

SPECIES OF THE MONTH

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) records over December

and January. **Please submit any more sightings of robins here:** <http://nbis.org.uk/robin>

Our species of the month for February (just in time for Valentine's Day...) is **Mistletoe (*Viscum album*)**.

This classic evergreen with white berries is most easily seen in the winter months, when trees are bare. The plant has been, and still is to many, a symbol of new life and the approaching spring. Mistletoe forms rounded clumps often high in a tree canopy. Most records in Norfolk are of mistletoe growing on lime trees, but it has also been recorded on poplar, apple, almond, hawthorn, field maple and willow. In 2007 Norfolk Wildlife Trust ran a mistletoe survey to map the distribution of this plant in the county. We now want to re-run this survey and compare the results to those in 2007. So please get out and about, recording this beautiful species in February and report your sightings here:

<http://nbis.org.uk/mistletoe>



Mistletoe © Mike Dawson

Biodiversity and Countryside Team Environment, Transport and Development, 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-bulletinJan2014.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

New County Mammal Recorder

Francis Farrow has taken over the task of Norfolk County Mammal Recorder from Dave Leech. Many thanks to Dave for all of his work in the role over the last few years.

Francis says, "I have been interested in Mammals for a long time. In fact when I was younger I had a passion for collecting natural history items and this included animal skulls. I was once given a Coypu head and to obtain the skull intact required that I boiled it, which I did in a saucepan in my Mother's kitchen. She wasn't too pleased with the smell! I also tackled the odd owl pellet, teasing out the fur, the insect wing cases and the small mammal bones plus I also spent time making plaster casts of animal tracks (no computers or x-boxes then!).

Such was my grounding in the ways of mammals and now it seems that I have come back to the group for in a 'moment of madness' I volunteered at the beginning of the year to fill the vacancy of Mammal Recorder for Norfolk.

I do not claim to be an expert in mammals but I have the naturalists' curiosity and enthusiasm to see the group prosper. If I can help to collate and report on your sightings for the annual Bird & Mammal report and to help with queries I shall be happy to do it. It so happens that the Mammal Society / Biological Records Centre have proposed a National Mammal Atlas for 2016. With this in mind please send all your mammal sightings in as this will help Norfolk to 'lead the way' and become one of the best documented counties.

I look forward to receiving your records for 2013 and the future. Records should be sent to:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8QD or preferably by email to –

francis.farrow@btinternet.com"

The Norwich Peregrines prepare for their next breeding season

The Norwich peregrines are getting ready for their next breeding season, checking out their cleaned and improved platform <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub3bXkfYjvc&feature=youtu.be>

Turtle Dove conservation concerns

It is famed in Christmas songs, but the turtle dove is still a conservation concern
<http://bit.ly/1ewSyQX>

Making the most of Norwich's Hidden Gems

Watchdog calls for creativity to make the most of Norwich's 'hidden gem' churchyards <http://bit.ly/1b7jAxH>

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National NEWS

Mild winter weather makes the news

The UK's mild winter weather and what this means for wildlife has also been making the news: What does our warm winter mean for Britain's wildlife? <http://tinyurl.com/otjns5k>
High temperatures usher in an early spring among Britain's wildlife <http://tinyurl.com/ggct3e8>

New species discoveries

There have been a spate of new species discoveries around the world. From a new crocodile in Africa <http://news.mongabay.com/2014/0107-hance-new-slender-croc.html> to a new river dolphin species in the Amazon <http://tinyurl.com/p3b63uu>; from a new toad species in the Peruvian Andes <http://tinyurl.com/omvou8y> to a new tapir in Brazil and Colombia <http://news.mongabay.com/2013/1216-hance-new-tapir-kabomani.html?>
How much is still out there that we don't yet know about?

The fourth edition of the RINSE newsletter is now available

http://www.rinse-europe.eu/assets/files/edition4_final.pdf

Invasive species: can they be stopped?

http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/23/invasive-species-can-they-be-stopped?CMP=twf_fd

Restoring meadows for flood defence

<http://tinyurl.com/qdpfcwh>

European eels caught in record numbers for third year running

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/14/european-eels-record-third-year>

Citizen science charts pest spread

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-25878202>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Jan2014NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

NBIS are still looking for volunteers to join our species monitoring project. More at

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

Call for Peregrine Volunteers

The Hawk and Owl Trust are looking for volunteers for the peregrine watch point at Norwich Cathedral this year. Drop them an email if you are interested in helping: peregrines@hawkandowl.org

Wild About Bungay

The Wild About Bungay project encourages local people to celebrate and record the flora and fauna that they find in the gardens, meadows, commons, verges, paths and waterways around the town – nothing is too commonplace or mundane to share and celebrate! Anyone can contribute. See the website for details of how to submit your records so they can be uploaded onto Bungay's very own community wildlife blog for all to see and enjoy throughout the year. <http://www.wildaboutbungay.com/>

Call for artwork Inspired By Birds

If you are an artist living in East Anglia and your work is inspired by birds, then you are invited to submit your work for the fourth Norwich Castle Open Art Show 'Inspired By Birds'. <http://bit.ly/IQHw15>

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Hedgehog Day

February 2nd 2014 is Hedgehog Day in Europe. This Tradition dates back to the time of the Roman Empire and rather than a day for raising awareness of the current conservation status of the species. It was an event where people waited to observe the emergence of hedgehogs on the same day each year in order to predict how long winter was set to continue. (Similar to 'Groundhog day in the USA) Early February is not generally a time when we would expect to see hedgehogs emerging from hibernation or actively foraging around the garden, but it is still an important time to remember our prickly friends.

As the daylight hours increase and the first signs of spring begin to appear, it is tempting to get back into the garden and start tidying up fallen leaves, twigs and last years foliage. Please remember that hedgehogs will still be hibernating under piles of leaves, behind the garden shed, beneath hedges and large shrubs. Last Autumn was very mild and many hedgehogs were late going into hibernation. We may have still have cold weather to come so please resist the urge to tidy up!

For more information about what you can do to help hedgehogs or to become a 'Hedgehog Champion' click here <http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>

If you have any ideas for a community or parish scale project to help hedgehogs contact the Norfolk County Council Ecologist edward.stocker@norfolk.gov.uk

Two new fungi for Norfolk

As a member of the Friends of Earlham Cemetery (<http://www.friendsofearlhamcemetery.co.uk/>), Dr Ian Senior has been conducting regular searches for fungi growing in Earlham cemetery over the autumn. So far, 160 species of fungi have been identified there (plus a lot of unidentified species too!). A full listing of species found and identified up to November 2013 can be found on the 'Friends of..' website.

Back in November the Norfolk fungi group came to the cemetery for a joint walk with the Friends group and discovered a fungus called *Sowerbyella radiculata* var *radiculata*. This is the first time that this species has been discovered growing in Norfolk.

Ian discovered a second species himself in November and tentatively identified it as a Yew Club. He contacted Kew asking if they would ID it for him as he realised a Yew Club was a rare species. After a few email exchanges he sent over some photos to their chief UK mycologist and he confirmed that the fungus 'looked good' for the Yew Club but they needed a real sample to confirm. Ian duly sent this to them and has now heard back that it is have indeed Yew Club (*Clavicornia taxophila*). This is a rare but widely distributed fungus but has never been found growing in Norfolk before.

So the cemetery has now been found to be the home of two rare fungal species not recorded before in the county!

Searching for the Snow-Flea

Paul Cobb, county recorder for Snow-flea (*Boreus hyemalis*) is asking people to keep their eyes peeled for the creature. It hadn't been seen in Norfolk since about 1820, though Robin Stevenson managed to find one recently at Holmes Wood! Send any records NBIS and we'll forward them to Paul. Read more about the Snow Flea (which isn't actually a flea at all) here: <http://www.naturespot.org.uk/species/snow-flea>

Butterfly Taxonomy Updated

A new butterfly taxonomy update has been published http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_winter2013_update.php

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EVENTS

Norfolk Rivers Trust River Catchment Community Events:

Join the Norfolk Rivers Trust for a day learning about your local river, the wildlife it supports and how we can work together to solve the threats it faces. Come for the day or just pop in for five minutes.

Sunday 9th February 2014 - North Creake Village Hall (River Burn)

Saturday 22nd February 2014 - Sedgeford Village Hall (River Heacham)

Saturday 8th March 2014 - Snettisham Village Hall (River Ingol)

For more details see: <http://www.norfolkrivertrust.org/2013/11/river-catchment-community-events.html>

A Date with Nature, Stupendous Starlings! 14th, 15th and 16th February. Thetford town centre.

Join the RSPB for an evening to remember as they show you spectacular murmurations of Starlings right in the middle of Thetford town centre! Find out more about these dazzling birds and the wildlife that can be found in Thetford and the Brecks. No need to book, just visit them at their stand between 3pm-6pm.

Alien Invaders, 19th February 2014, 8pm. Bramerton.

Andy Needham will give an illustrated talk on the impact of alien species on the UK, particularly aquatic invaders and abandoned exotic pets. Bramerton Village Hall, East Hill Lane, Bramerton, NR14 7EQ. Free to members, small charge for non-members (£2), donations for refreshments. No booking required.

<http://southyarewildlife.wordpress.com/events/>

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AND FINALLY..

It's been shown that the best way to stop vandals trashing your recording equipment is... being nice to them! <http://methodsblog.wordpress.com/2013/11/28/be-nice-to-vandals-and-they-wont-be-vandals/>

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<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

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