



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 37 (July 2014)

Photo: All of the winners at the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership Community Biodiversity Awards © Keiron Tovell

Welcome to our July e-bulletin

Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership held their annual Community Biodiversity Awards on the evening of the 22nd July. This year the event was kindly sponsored by the East of England Co-op. The event was a great success. The sun shone, and guests enjoyed good food and live music from Rum Kelter before the presentations themselves.

A list of the winners is available on the NBP website <http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/news/?id=66>. Also, see Local NEWS for more information on one of the winners.

NBIS were at Whitlingham Country Park at the start of July for the Great Bug Hunt. Unfortunately the weather didn't play ball, but a number of hardy souls braved the showers and a good number of species were recorded including moths, small mammals and fungi. See Local NEWS for more information. A similar event is being held at Dinosaur Adventure on the 2nd and 3rd of August. NBIS will be there on the 2nd collating the records collected - see EVENTS for further details.

The big species news of the month has been the sighting of several Scarce Tortoiseshell butterflies in Norfolk (see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS). This is a new species for Norfolk and has only once been seen in Britain before so is very exciting! It's also very good timing as the Big Butterfly Count runs from the 19th July - 10th August (see NationalNEWS and GETTING INVOLVED). Will any Scarce Tortoiseshells be counted?!

Finally, if you're out and about and own a smartphone, please consider trying out the RINSE App - and then let them know what you think of it (see GETTING INVOLVED).

Have a great August!

SPECIES OF THE MONTH

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted records of Bee orchid. **Please submit any more sightings of Bee Orchid here:** <http://nbis.org.uk/BeeOrchid>



Our Species of the Month for August is the **European Otter (*Lutra lutra*)**. Once a rarity, the otter is now recovering well and there are lots of places in Norfolk where they can be spotted all year round. Being mainly nocturnal, dawn and dusk are the best times to see them (so you might need to get up early!)

One of Britain's largest mammals, otters are brown with a cream patch on their chin and underbelly. Males can be up to 1.2m long and weigh up to 10kg, while females are slightly smaller.

As they can be quite elusive, otters are often best recorded from field signs. Their footprints are about 6cm wide and they have 5 webbed toes (though often only 4 will show up in the footprint). Otter spraints (droppings) are highly variable but can usually be identified by their smell which is sweet, musty and fishy. They are often left on logs or stones or under bridges and act as territorial markers.



Otters can sometimes be confused with a closely related species, the mink. Mink are smaller than otters, black in colour with a pointed muzzle. They are generally bolder than otters and often seen out in the day. Their footprints are much smaller (approx 2.5cm across) and mink scats smell horrible!

For more information and to record the Otter click here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/Otter>

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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-BulletinJuly2014.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

Norfolk Bat Survey honoured for inspiring the county

The Norfolk Bat Survey was honoured at the annual Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership Community Biodiversity Awards in recognition of the huge number of people they've inspired to participate in the survey over the past two years <http://tinyurl.com/ngqngqu>

Sad news as a second Norwich Cathedral peregrine chick is found dead

The second chick is thought to have died when it collided with a wall <http://tinyurl.com/ossfuyc>
However the webcam showing the action at the top of the cathedral has been a massive success this year, with almost 4 million views <http://tinyurl.com/pr4arlo>

Whitlingham Great Bug Hunt

Well done to everyone who braved the rain and showers to come along to the Great Whitlingham Bug Hunt at

the start of July. Despite the weather we're currently up to a total of 249 species recorded on the day, with a few more lists of records still to come in http://www.nbis.org.uk/WhitlinghamBugHunt_ResultsMap

Eels are making a comeback to the region

Officials say that 'exceptional' numbers of elvers have been recorded at the St Germans Pumping Station, near King's Lynn <http://tinyurl.com/on4ulv5>

Did you hear about the great romance between the seal and the wind turbine?

<http://tinyurl.com/q35h5rn>

£200,000 'thirsty' plant scheme to stop flooding in Taverham

<http://tinyurl.com/p4gdjxt>

We should be looking forward to a bumper harvest in Norfolk

<http://tinyurl.com/ockfprf>

Latest edition of Earth Heritage is out

Includes an article about the Mousehold Heath Earth Heritage Trail

http://www.earthheritage.org.uk/ehpdf/EH42_7-14f.pdf

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National NEWS

Biological Records Centre is 50 years old

BRC, which is part of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, pioneered citizen science and links researchers with the voluntary recording community, enabling them to understand large-scale biological processes by relating changes in species distributions to environmental change

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-28059960>, <http://tinyurl.com/nwmr5p4>

The Big Butterfly Count begins

Running from the 19th July - 10th August, and with David Attenborough supporting it, this year's Big Butterfly Count is again asking the public to become scientists to help assess the health of the British countryside.

<http://tinyurl.com/qjr53l5>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-28319856> (also see GETTING INVOLVED).

There are also high hopes of the Scarce Tortoiseshell being spotted during the count, with a number of the migrants seen in the east of the country in July (see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS for more details).

<http://tinyurl.com/p57kasb>

The latest RINSE newsletter is now available

The RINSE project aims to reduce the impact of non-native species in Europe. You can read the latest from the project here:

<http://www.rinse-europe.eu/assets/files/edition5.pdf>

Early signs of autumn 'already appearing in natural world'

<http://tinyurl.com/plwyfv/>

Buddleia: The plant that dominates Britain's railways

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-28196221>

UK researchers offer 'ghost ponds' a new lease of life

<http://www.trust.org/item/20140728212220-wrzma/>

The NBN Annual Report is now out

<http://tinyurl.com/oalpw15>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#July2014NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

NBIS needs YOU!

NBIS are continuing to develop their Multi-taxon species monitoring initiative known as the Norfolk Species Surveillance Network (NSSN), launched in 2013.

They are expanding this network of reference sites and the recording on them, hence needing as many of you as possible to volunteer to monitor species change across Norfolk. They are looking for individuals or local parish/conservation groups to get involved. No previous experience of the methodology is necessary, just a passion for wildlife.

Each volunteer/group will adopt an important local site for wildlife, either from our list of sites or a site of their own, if they have landowner permission. Volunteers will be expected to visit the site several times throughout the year and record as many or as few species groups as they can. Some species groups are typically under recorded and NBIS would like to target these.

They will provide equipment, support and training in the methods.

Develop your ID skills with wildlife identification training days for specific species groups, running throughout the summer to boost your skills and confidence.

To sign up to the initiative, please click here: [Sign up to Volunteer for the Norfolk Species Surveillance Network](#)

Or visit our website: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/SpeciesSurveillanceNetwork>



National Hedgehog Survey 2014 -2015.

As many people are now aware, Britain's hedgehogs are struggling to survive in the 21st Century with increased habitat fragmentation, agricultural intensification, increased traffic volume and climate change being just some of their problems! A key part of designing a conservation strategy for the species is to get a better understanding of the current UK population.

To this purpose, the National Hedgehog Survey is being conducted by University of Reading and Nottingham Trent University, in collaboration with British Hedgehog Preservation Society and People's Trust for Endangered Species.

They are looking for volunteer recorders in Norfolk, who once registered will be able to collect the necessary equipment from the Regional Co-ordinator Ed Stocker (Norfolk County Council Ecologist) at County Hall, Norwich.

To register as a volunteer and / or to ask any questions regarding the survey, please contact the survey coordinator, Emily Thomas by emailing hedgehogsurvey@ptes.org. When contacting them, please ensure that you include your postcode as this will be used to identify the survey square closest to you. Thank you.

For more information please see <http://ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/countryside-2/national-hedgehog-survey/>

You can also record any Norfolk hedgehog sightings at <http://nbis.org.uk/hedgehog>

Norfolk Bat Survey Is Back

Following last year's success, Norfolk Bat Survey is back! And so far this year, volunteers have collected over 100,000 bat recordings! The survey is very easy to get involved in and doesn't require any prior experience. And the results will be emailed out to you as soon as they've been analysed, so you can find out which bat species have been flying around in your area. You can sign up for a 1km square and reserve equipment online at <http://www.batsurvey.org/>

The Big Butterfly Count

This year's survey runs from the 19th July - 10th August <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>

Norfolk Trails' Treasure Photo Competition

What do you treasure when you're out exploring the Norfolk Trails? Share it on one of Norfolk Trails' social media channels and you could be a winner. The competition runs from 23rd July - 30th September 2014

http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Leisure_and_culture/Norfolk_Trails/NCC151847

Help Evaluate the RINSE App - That's Invasive

<http://www.rinse-europe.eu/news/view/evaluate-the-rinse-app-that-s-invasive>

Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society ID Workshops - some places still available!

Species identification workshops include Grasshoppers & Crickets, Bugs & Beetles and Fungi on Wood. For more information, see their website: <http://www.nnns.org.uk/content/workshops>

Urban Invaders Survey

The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative has launched a new 'Urban Invaders' survey, asking people to record six species of invasive plant found in urban areas. You can record these species online at:

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

Bird brains: Public asked to look out for clever rooks

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-28018869>

New app turns roadkill into British wildlife protection

<http://tinyurl.com/o6e2rlc>

Keep a look out for Banded-winged whitefly

<http://tinyurl.com/nhcrq2v>

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Scarce Tortoiseshells spotted in Norfolk

This species was added to the Norfolk butterfly list in the middle of July this year after individuals turned up in Costessey, Burgh Castle and Wells. There were also individuals present at Minsmere in Suffolk, Lincolnshire and Kent. This butterfly usually ranges from Russia to China, but had been spreading westwards into Eastern Europe. There had only been a single British record of this species previously!

The butterfly is much larger and plainer looking than our native Small Tortoiseshell, and its defining feature is its yellow legs (it is also known as the Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell).

Please look out for them and let us know of any Norfolk sightings on our website at

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

Bird watchers flock to Norfolk to see the Great Knot

People travelled from across Britain and Europe to get a glimpse of the bird at Breydon Water. The Great Knot has only been seen in Britain three times since 1989 and it's thought that to end up in Norfolk this individual got its migration route drastically wrong

<http://tinyurl.com/np4h29q>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-28328938>

Silver Washed Fritillaries at Holt Country Park

This species is known to occur at Holt Country Park, but it seems to be expanding its range. Look out for it in deciduous woodlands, and let us know if you spot it.

<http://butterfly-conservation.org/48-6303/seen-at-holt-country-park.html>

Two New Moths for Norfolk

<https://www.facebook.com/norfolkmoths/posts/792235274144690>

Little tern pairs at Winterton Dunes rise by a third

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-28123237>

Netsmen haul in monster sea trout from Relief Channel in King's Lynn

<http://tinyurl.com/ohwk77v>

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EVENTS

Bioblitz at Dinosaur Adventure, Lenwade, 2nd August - 3rd August 2014.

Back for a third year, come and enjoy a weekend of activities centred on the wildlife that calls Dinosaur Adventure home. NBIS will be there on Saturday 2nd August to collect together all of the records of wildlife from around the park. Come and help us record as many different species as possible!

<http://www.dinosauradventure.co.uk/general-information/events.php>

The Wonder of Birds, Norwich Castle Museum, 24th May - 14th September 2014.

New exhibition open at Norwich Castle Museum, combining art and natural history to explore the cultural impact of birds on humanity. <http://tinyurl.com/lvk25e5>

Norwich Bat Group Events 2014

See the website for more information.

<http://www.norwichbatgroup.co.uk/events/>

Norfolk Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes Events.

Free wildlife events run by Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

<http://tinyurl.com/nvnx9uu>

Events at Sculthorpe Moor Community Nature Reserve.

<http://hawkandowl.org/locations/sculthorpe-moor-community-nature-reserve/>

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AND FINALLY..

Beware of the River Avon crocodile: <http://tinyurl.com/lb65rok>

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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>

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