



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 15 (June 2012)

Capt Photo: © Henry Walker. A conservation headland at R. S Cross and Sons' Abbey Farm, Fitcham, where many rare arable plants thrive through active conservation management. Farm Conservation Ltd (FCL) will be holding a farm walk there on Thursday the 5th July at 6pm. All welcome, booking essential: 01603 814869 or email advice@farmconservation.co.uk

Welcome to our June biodiversity e-bulletin

Well summer seems to have finally started as I write this. Was that not the craziest topsy-turvy start to the season? As I waded through soaking wet grass every morning while walking the dog, I couldn't help but worry how the wildlife was coping with the extreme conditions. We'll have more news on that when NBIS analyses the records from the first half of this year.

One person not troubled by the British weather, is Gerry Barnes, our former Environment Manager, since he is currently in Australia visiting his son. This newsletter features an article from Gerry in which he reflects on changes to the environmental movement over the course of his 30+ year career. This insightful article is well worth a read, and ends with what I consider to be his greatest achievement at the Council -- the strong case he made, that the natural environment of Norfolk underpins our very economy.

Gerry left Norfolk County Council at the end of April, and is much missed. I particularly miss his down-to-earth advice and the protection he afforded his team from the deluge of management initiatives, reorganisations and bureaucracy that are inevitable when working for a large organisation. He never let us forget that what we were trying to achieve was the conservation and enhancement of the Norfolk countryside, which he loved with a passion. Woodlands, of course, were his first love and we were all delighted to see him receive an MBE in this year's New Year's Honours list, for services to forestry. Never was a gong so well deserved.

However, as he keeps reminding us "I'm not bloody well dead you know" -- and he will remain as chair of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, and of the woodland topic group. He will stay on in his official capacity with the Forestry Commission, and we hear rumours of some landscape history work at UEA too. So it looks as though he will continue to be a force for good, shaping the landscape of Norfolk for future generations, and making us all smile at the same time.

Gerry has kindly put together some 'Musings on Biodiversity status since the 1970's', as he reflects on his time working in conservation in Norfolk, he summarises with the following words for the future: "In some respects we have come a long way since the 1970's. Biodiversity is less of an afterthought to development than it used to be -- but it is still often an afterthought.

The challenge we now face is to fully integrate biodiversity with our economic well being.....We must put environment at the top of the Agenda. Without a viable environment we have no economy."

His full 'Musings' can be read here:

http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/BiodiversityArticleJune2012_GerryBarnes.pdf

Other news this month includes the exciting new 'Important Arable Plant Areas in Norfolk' report, the results of two successful bioblitzes and the news of a bumper year for bee orchids.

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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-bulletinJune2012.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

Gerry Barnes retires and deservedly picks up an MBE for services to forestry

Gerry (Environment Manager) left Norfolk County Council at the end of April, and is much missed; Heidi has written a farewell message in the introduction above.

Although the timing was unconnected, very shortly after retiring we were all delighted to see Gerry receive his long overdue MBE for services to forestry, having been awarded in this year's New Year's Honours list. Gerry has kindly put together some 'Musings on Biodiversity status since the 1970's', as he reflects on his time working in conservation in Norfolk:

http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/BiodiversityArticleJune2012_GerryBarnes.pdf

Report highlights importance of the Norfolk arable landscape for threatened plants

A new report, '[Important Arable Plant Areas in Norfolk](#)', commissioned by the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, highlights the importance of the farmed landscape in Norfolk for a threatened group of plants – the arable flora. The report has already been promoted at the Norfolk Show in the countryside advice barn and within the media:

[http://www.edp24.co.uk/business/farming-](http://www.edp24.co.uk/business/farming-news/new_report_highlights_areas_of_north_norfolk_s_arable_landscape_important_for_threatened_plants_1_1421998)

[news/new_report_highlights_areas_of_north_norfolk_s_arable_landscape_important_for_threatened_plants_1_1421998](http://www.edp24.co.uk/business/farming-news/new_report_highlights_areas_of_north_norfolk_s_arable_landscape_important_for_threatened_plants_1_1421998)

Read the full report here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#ArablesReport>

Bioblitz at Dinosaur Adventure (23rd and 24th June)

NBIS had a really successful two days at the Dinosaur Adventure bioblitz, where at least 616 species (and counting) were recorded on the site near Lenwade (between Norwich and Fakenham). This interim total has already easily beaten the target of 500 species for the 12pm-12pm 24 hour period of the bioblitz. We will update you with a final total and species group totals soon, through the NBIS website and Twitter and in next month's e-bulletin.

Gaywood Valley Living Landscape Wildlife Watch

Norfolk Wildlife trust also held a successful bioblitz in the Gaywood Valley over the 12pm-12pm 24 hour period, on the 9th and 10th June. A total of 429 species were recorded, see the summary of results, including break down by species group, here:

http://www.nbis.org.uk/GaywoodValleyBioblitz_ResultsMap

Gaywood Valley Community Wildlife Toolkit released

[Please download the Community Wildlife Toolkit here](#), which has been undertaken by David North from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. As you will see it is a fantastic report with some great photos of the Gaywood Valley and advice for identifying species that call the Gaywood Valley their home. We hope you will be able to use it to find out a bit more about the Valley. The report will also soon be on the Norfolk Wildlife Trust website. This report will act as a template for future work so if you have any feedback or suggestions please do contact the authors.

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

Big Norwich Bat Project - update

The project has now recorded 8 of the 12 species known to occur in Norfolk!! Possibly even more, but they are working on the analysis. More information can be found on their website:

<http://www.norwichbatgroup.org.uk/project.html>

The under-sea world off Cromer

Norfolk Wildlife Trust launches Friends of Marine Conservation Zones campaign: <http://fb.me/1saeCh165>

Great Hockham County Geodiversity Site stone was turned on the Queen's Jubilee

Sunday according to tradition: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#GtHockhamStone>

And in the EDP: <http://t.co/9gon4ktQ>

BTO keeping track of the Canada and Greylag geese:

<http://t.co/oSmnR6co>

Happisburgh to discuss how tree defences could turn back tide:

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/meeting_called_in_happisburgh_to_discuss_how_tree_defences_could_turn_back_tide_1_1402392

Gunton park plants 60 acre diamond jubilee wood:

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/gunton_park_near_cromer_planting_60_acre_diamond_wood_to_mark_jubilee_1_1398015

Buckenham primary school win RSPB gold award:

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/education/young_eco_champions_at_old_buckenham_primary_school_win_rspb_gold_award_1_1414307

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National NEWS

Rio+20, the UN conference on sustainable development

The UN decade of Biodiversity Newsletter 23 summarises the outcomes of this theoretically important conference: "The low visibility in the UK press has been matched only in the level of disappointment expressed in many quarters at the conference outcomes. Guardian 23.06.12 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jun/23/rio-20-earth-summit-document>, Telegraph 29.06.12 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/9349274/Rio20-Earth-Summit-is-a-washout.html>. The truth is that there were vast and diverse issues and views from across the globe coming together in Rio, and the expectations of a major declared agreement have been remote for many months. While there is something of a developed world vs. the developing nationals about the problems, the tensions are far more complicated than that.

The final document does support the drive for a sustainable economy but there are not agreed targets or dates and only very broad commitment. Some commentators see a major retreat in intent - pointing to change in the final outcome terminology with the tautological emphasis on 'sustainable growth' in place of 'sustainable development' - defying the concerns of those campaigners pointing to limited planetary resources and the need for one-planet living"

Managing biodiversity data from local government - Guidance for local authorities on publishing through the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) network, helping preserve knowledge about biodiversity:

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2012/pr-2012-05-25-gbif-en.pdf>

Meet the Cuckoo Class of 2012! 11 new birds have joined Chris and Lyster and are

available for sponsorship:

<http://t.co/MYUITUyC>

The Independent has sponsored one of the Cuckoos, naming it 'Indy':

http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/nature_studies/nature-studies-by-michael-mccarthy-good-luck-indy--the-cuckoo-thats-carrying-our-name-to-africa-7869904.html

Creating a buzz

Friends of the Earth (FOE) chose May 22 – the International Day of Biological Diversity to launch The Decline of England's Bees. This report was commissioned as part of the FOE Bee Cause campaign. It is a synthesis review of the many diverse areas of policy and practices that impact on bee decline and offers realisable approaches which could significantly improve bee decline in England and more widely in the UK

<http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/beesreport.pdf>

France bans bee-killing pesticide but it's still rife here - The Independent (07/06/12)

<http://t.co/GxMITc6l>

Honeybee decline linked to killer virus - The Guardian (07/06/12)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jun/07/honey-bees-virus-varroa-destroyer-mites>

Bat underpasses only effective if placed on pre-construction commuting routes - PLoS ONE (13/06/12)

<http://t.co/ggSL4Gwo>

Dry rivers kill rare mussels - The Independent (29/06/12)

<http://t.co/4EtJOMQQ>

And in The Guardian: <http://t.co/fflKpDqN>

Wild flowers are overpowered by exhaust fumes - The Independent (20/06/12)

<http://t.co/wPTnPFPA>

Butterfly numbers fell by a fifth in 2011, study shows - The Guardian (01/06/12)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jun/01/butterfly-numbers-falling>

Extension of infestation zone for exotic beetle pest outbreak in Kent - Forestry Commission website (13/06/12)

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebNewsReleases/A1634F9F116F1E0B80257A1D0045CB39>

The only National Trust property they don't want you to see - Secret site will protect at-risk plant species from disease - The Independent (22/06/12)

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/the-only-national-trust-property-they-dont-want-you-to-see-7873560.html>

New version of BARS released

<http://www.nbn.org.uk/News/Latest-news/New-version-of-BARS-released.aspx>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#June2012NationalNews>

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GETTING INVOLVED

NBIS carder bee, hornet and hoverfly survey

Last week was National Insect Week! And NBIS is currently asking people to look out for and send in records of three fascinating insects this spring and summer. Two of the insects in our survey, the European hornet, *Vespa crabro* and the wool carder bee, *Anthidium manicatum* belong to the hymenoptera, a large insect order which also includes wasps, ants, bees, ichneumons and saw-flies. Our third survey species, the hoverfly *Leucozona lucorum*, is a member of the diptera (flies). They are probably quite widespread in Norfolk although we don't know for sure as we don't have many records on the NBIS database.

Find out more here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/Hymenoptera2012Survey>

New smartphone game to benefit bumblebees

<http://www.nbn.org.uk/News/Latest-news/New-smartphone-game-to-benefit-bumblebees.aspx>

Volunteers for Barbastelle bat survey wanted

The North Norfolk coast is used by some of the UK's rarest bat species. The Norfolk Barbastelle Study Group are investigating how these bats use the coast, and they need your help. They would like volunteers to help us carry out a simple bat survey along Sheringham beach on Friday 27th of July and Hunstanton beach on Tuesday 11th of September. No prior experience of bat detecting is needed. If you would like to come along, learn a bit more about bats, bat detecting and contribute to valuable research please reply to this email letting me know which night you would like to attend. Full details of all our events are listed on our website www.norfolkbarbastellestudygroup.org

Enter into the Integrated Habitats Design Awards

You have until July 31 to get the project you are most excited about entered into the Integrated Habitats Design Awards. These awards reward the most ingenious and exciting efforts to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into regeneration and development schemes: <http://www.ihdc.org.uk/>

Help map the UK's bumblebee population

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2012/jul/02/help-map-uk-bumblebee-beewatch>

25 wild places to get up close to nature in Norfolk (EDP)

<http://t.co/O58Jsu5O>

Your chance to name a species

Help Natural England and The Guardian popularise 10 more British species by giving them a colourful common name

<http://t.co/xKm79YSc>

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Bee orchids

The recent changeable weather, with plenty of rain and good stints of sunshine have been frustrating for most of us, however this seems to have been perfect conditions for the a bumper year for Bee orchids, with considerable numbers of large populations already reported. Dave White NCC's district ecologist has written two short pieces on this year's Bee orchids; the first regarding the huge population of roughly 500 plants at South Norfolk Districts office where he says: "It's a fantastic show. The best areas are the slopes both sides of the driveway next to the visitor car park where there about 500 flowering plants, but these bee orchids are scattered everywhere. It is the best display of these lovely flowers that I have seen in Norfolk in nearly 20 years." You can read his full article here:

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

Dave also discusses the slightly unusual white variant of the orchid at Lenwade is this short article:<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#whitebeeorchid>

An EDP article regarding these orchids at a site on Carrow Road, Norwich, can be read here:<http://t.co/Neg79j82>

Peregines

The drama of Norwich Cathedral's Peregrine falcons has been even more enthralling this year, with the arrival of three chicks, the loss of one and the first flights of the two remaining chicks. The chicks have now been named, following a competition:

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/norwich_cathedral_peregrine_falcons_are_named_1_1416864

The EDP story regarding the chicks' first flight can be read here:

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/peregrine_falcon_chicks_fly_from_their_norwich_cathedral_nest_for_first_time_1_1408570

First modern day vice-county 28 record of Grey Dwarf, recorded from Foulden Common on 24th May this year:

<http://fb.me/1xmVt9Dgm>

Rare fungi finds at Dinosaur adventure Bioblitz

An amazing 54 species of fungi were found, bringing the Park total up to just 100 (a fraction of what will be there). Some unusual finds too, one 1st for the county (*Psilocybe subcoprophila*), two 2nd for the county and one 3rd for the county records. Thanks to Tony Leech for the records and these details here regarding their rarity.

Also another rare fungus with medical benefits found in Thetford forest:

<http://t.co/GaKURIYj>

Squacco heron sighted at WWT Welney reserve

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-18680729>

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EVENTS

13th October - Wild About Norfolk

Easton College 10am—4pm

More information at www.wildaboutnorfolk.co.uk/wildaboutnorfolk

8th July - Treasures of the Valley walks booklet launch

from 10 to 3pm at the Green Quay King's Lynn

Come along to the Green Quay and pick up your free copy, it will be a useful guide for the looming summer holidays if you want ideas of fun things to do with the children

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AND FINALLY..

BBC News - Last Pinta giant tortoise Lonesome George dies

<http://bbc.in/KVZDIW>

Reported Sightings of Exotic Species Compiled by Natural England 2011, including BIG CATS, RACOONS etc!!!! <http://t.co/D4rjZpfn>

Four young barn owls that hatched off this year in Stephen Mace's owl box at Marsh Farm on Haddiscoe Island. The owls were being ringed at the time of the below photos, by the East Norfolk Ringing Group (ENRG). (Photos: Stephen Mace):

<http://i671.photobucket.com/albums/vv76/macey79/Owl1.jpg>

<http://i671.photobucket.com/albums/vv76/macey79/Owl2.jpg>

<http://i671.photobucket.com/albums/vv76/macey79/Owl3.jpg>

<http://i671.photobucket.com/albums/vv76/macey79/Owl4.jpg>

<http://i671.photobucket.com/albums/vv76/macey79/Owl5.jpg>

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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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