



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

No 33 (Mar 2014)

Photo: The setting for the Wymondham Nature Group nature day in May (see EVENTS) ©Wymondham Nature Group

Welcome to our March e-bulletin

Its been a busy month in the office, what with the end of the financial year (and its associated deadlines) fast approaching, and the survey season kicking off.

Its also been a busy month for our local wildlife and the Norfolk conservation world. The Norwich peregrines have laid this years eggs (see SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS), the Brecks have been awarded £1.5million of Lottery funding (see LocalNEWS), the search continues for Norfolk's wildlife heroes (see GETTING INVOLVED) and the wildlife events season begins in earnest at the end of April with Wild About the Wensum (see EVENTS).

The RINSE (Reducing the Impacts of Non-native Species in Europe) Project, hosted by Norfolk County Council, recently welcomed visitors from South Korea who were keen to pick up tips from Norfolk experts on eradicating coypu(see LocalNEWS).

And further afield, the NBN Gateway has a new Data & Liaison Officer, Australia uses drones to map coastal habitats and there are fears that an invasive flatworm could be brought to our shores - in a pot plant (see NationalNEWS).

Enjoy the spring sunshine (here's hoping we see some)!

SPECIES OF THE MONTH

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*) records in February. **Please submit any more sightings of Egyptian Goose here:**

<http://nbis.org.uk/egyptian-goose> or via the RINSE app which can be downloaded from here:
<http://www.rinse-europe.eu/smartphone-apps>

Photo: Rook and nest © [Walter Baxter](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

For our species of the month for March we are supporting the **2014 Norfolk Rook Nest Survey**.

Rooks are sociable birds and nest in groups, making large, obvious nests in trees. The species can be distinguished from the similar carrion crow by its bare greyish-white face and narrower beak. Carrion crows are more solitary so if you see a group of large black birds, they are likely to be rooks!

April is the best time of year to survey for rook nests; in March they have often not finished building, while in May the nests are obscured by tree leaves.

The survey has been run by Malcolm Metcalf (past president of the Great Yarmouth Naturalists' Society) since 2011, and since then the number of nests surveyed has grown as more people take part. We will pass all rook nest records we receive to Malcolm.



For more information and to record rooks and their nests click here:

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

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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-bulletinMar2014.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

Biodiversity Offsetting Research

Biodiversity Offsetting has been trialled in England over the last two years as a tool to compensate for adverse impacts on biodiversity as a result of housing development. The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) was one of the six pilot areas. The results of the 2-year Biodiversity Offsetting Trial are currently being assessed by independent consultants on behalf of Defra and a report will be available later in the year.

One of the fundamental principles of Biodiversity Offsetting is that it should measure the 'value' of the biodiversity being lost to ensure compensation is realistic. In the trials, a metric developed by Defra as been used to measure the biodiversity value of a site but in practice this has proved too simplistic. Details on Biodiversity Offsetting, including details of how the metric works, can be found at www.gov.uk/biodiversity-offsetting Researchers at Essex University are trying to improve the metric. They have developed a questionnaire to try and

identify what attributes naturalists and ecologists think are important when measuring the biodiversity value of a site. If you would like to help, you can complete the survey by following the link below:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/offsetting_metric

Norfolk Wildlife Trust Delivering Living Landscapes

Norfolk Wildlife Trust has launched a new Heritage Lottery funded project, with a vision of creating a living landscape for Norfolk. The project pilot areas are the Bure & Ant Valley in the east, and the Gaywood Valley in the west. There are lots of exciting events planned for April! Visit the new project website to find out more:

www.mylivinglandscape.org.uk

Brecks' unique character revealed in key study

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/brecks_unique_character_revealed_in_key_study_1_3428342

Brecks project scoops £1.5m lottery funding

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/brecks_project_scoops_1_5m_lottery_funding_1_3436357

Spectacular undersea world off Cromer may be given special protection as a Marine Conservation Zone

<http://tinyurl.com/p9j5sgm>

Norfolk experts drafted in to help South Korea deal with its coypus

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/norfolk_experts_drafted_in_to_help_south_korea_deal_with_its_coypus_1_3454000

Chance to protect the River Mun in north Norfolk

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/chance_to_protect_the_river_mun_in_north_norfolk_1_3386743

New West Norfolk wetland alongside River Wissey will offer home to bitterns and marsh harriers

<http://tinyurl.com/p2beowg>

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National NEWS

New Data & Liaison Officer for the NBN Gateway

Rachel Stroud takes over the fantastic work of Paula Lightfoot, working with groups and organisations all over the UK to help them share the wildlife information they hold more widely.

[http://www.nbn.org.uk/The-NBN/The-Staff/Technical-Data-](http://www.nbn.org.uk/The-NBN/The-Staff/Technical-Data-Access.aspx?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NBN%20eNews%20February%202014_3)

[Access.aspx?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NBN%20eNews%20February%202014_3](http://www.nbn.org.uk/The-NBN/The-Staff/Technical-Data-Access.aspx?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NBN%20eNews%20February%202014_3)

Australia uses drones for coastal mapping

By surveying coastal areas from 100m in the air, scientists hope to discover detailed information about the coastal environments and habitats, including shoreline erosion and wildlife behaviour.

http://geospatialworld.net/news/View.aspx?id=28529_Article&sthash.GOacPnnl.3kxi8vyW.mjjo

Citizen science study to map the oceans' plankton

A study is calling on the world's sailors to help map the oceans' phytoplankton.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26483166>

New Guinea flatworm: Foreign worm that could wipe out Britain's snails arrives in Europe via potted plant imports

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/new-guinea-flatworm-foreign-worm-that-could-wipe-out-britains-snails-arrives-in-europe-via-potted-plant-imports-9211140.html>

RSPB fears thousands of rare birds died in winter storms 'caused by climate change'

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/rspb-fears-thousands-of-rare-birds-died-in-winter-storms-caused-by-climate-change-9174446.html>

More National news here:

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#Mar2014NationalNews>

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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>

The search is on for Norfolk's wildlife heroes!

Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership is looking for nominations for the 2014 Community Biodiversity Awards. They are looking for outstanding individuals and groups that make a difference for wildlife and people in local communities. You've not got long - nominations must be made by April 25th 2014. For more details and the nomination form please see <http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/communityprojects/biodiversityawards.aspx>

Earthworm recording anyone?

The Earthworm Society of Britain needs your help to fill in the gaps of this extremely under-recorded group.

[http://nbn.org.uk/News/Latest-news/Earthworm-recording-](http://nbn.org.uk/News/Latest-news/Earthworm-recording-anyone.aspx?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NBN%20eNews%20February%202014_3)

[anyone.aspx?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NBN%20eNews%20February%202014_3](http://nbn.org.uk/News/Latest-news/Earthworm-recording-anyone.aspx?utm_source=eshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NBN%20eNews%20February%202014_3)

Track A Tree

Help scientists record the progress of spring in woodlands across the UK. <http://trackatree.bio.ed.ac.uk/>

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Norfolk Toads at the top of the UK toad crossing league

A section of the A134 near Thetford is being patrolled by the 'Toad Watch Patrollers', who last year helped over 9000 toads across the road, earning the site the No.1 position on the 'Froglife Charity' league table of Toads rescued from registered toad crossings in the UK.

So far this spring the volunteers have rescued over 3700 toads, and with the help of the Forestry Commission and Norfolk County Council a large section of verge has been fenced to keep the toads off the road until help can arrive to move them safely on their way. Part of the stretch has also been designated as a 'Roadside Nature Reserve' by Norfolk County Council, with extra hibernating habitat being constructed. The temporary fencing work is the beginning of a project to find a more permanent solution to helping the toads across the road, such as a tunnel or underpass to connect the toads with their spawning ground.

Read more about the Cranwich toad patrollers here: <http://tinyurl.com/naennvx>

and here : http://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/local/cranwich-volunteers-help-toads-cross-the-road-1-5913010?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=twitterfeed

Parishes and Community Groups wanting to create a toad crossing or improve habitat on their land for amphibians can contact Ed Stocker (Norfolk County Council Ecologist) for advice or visit www.froglife.org for more details about setting up a toad patrol.

Any sightings of toads in gardens or the countryside can be reported to the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service via their website www.nbis.org.uk which will help build a more accurate picture of where important toad populations are in the county.

Lots of Norwich peregrine action this month

The cathedrals nesting on the platform at Norwich Cathedral have had a busy few weeks!

An intruder at the nest: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WphCJSBTsRo&feature=youtu.be&a>

First egg laid: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=re2IINHDTak&feature=youtu.be>

Egg number three: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-26708467>

Fourth egg is laid:

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/video_fourth_peregrine_falcon_egg_laid_on_the_spire_of_norwich_cathedral_1_3488029

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EVENTS

Wild About the Wensum is back at Pensthorpe on Saturday 26th April 2014, 10am-5pm.

Lots of family friendly wildlife activities and an insight into the wildlife of the Wensum Valley. £4 for parking and free entry into Pensthorpe <http://www.pensthorpe.com/events/2014/1/wild-about-wensum-2014/>

Wymondham Nature Group (WyNG) Nature Day, Sunday 18th May 2014, 1-5pm.

Come and enjoy a really wild family afternoon at the Leonard Cheshire Disability Home, East Carleton NR14 8HP. Walks, crafts, stalls, wildlife information and refreshments. £2 for adults, FREE for children.

BEEcome a Young Recorder, Norwich Castle Museum, Wednesday 28th May 2014, 10.30am-3.30pm.
Come and learn how to attract, identify and record solitary bees and wasps. £5 per young person.
http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Beecome_a_Recorder2014poster.pdf

Upcoming events at Sculthorpe Moor nature reserve.
<http://hawkandowl.org/events/categories/sculthorpe/>

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AND FINALLY..

A plea was put out earlier in March for people to knit jumpers for penguins: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/06/wanted-knitters-to-create-jumpers-for-little-penguins?CMP=twi_fd. However the campaign was so successful that the charity now has a surplus: <http://tinyurl.com/o4k6p2b>

If you wish to be removed from this mailing list, please email us: nbis@norfolk.gov.uk
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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