



Biodiversity News in Norfolk No. 7 (October 2011)

Hot foam in action, trial to eradicate *Crassula helmsii* (photo courtesy of Weeding Technology Ltd)

Welcome to our October biodiversity e-bulletin

After an unusually hot start, October now feels and looks like autumn. In the news this month, the Norfolk/Suffolk Local Nature Partnership gains a “capacity building” funding boost, a successful Wild About Norfolk is our final event attendance of the year, “hot foam” is trialled in Norfolk as an approach to eradicate Australian swamp stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*), the 7th Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar is well attended and remains fresh and topical, and a very rare antlion is found to be breeding at Holkham NNR. So all in all, it has been quite a varied and exciting month for biodiversity conservation in Norfolk!

As we have been producing these bulletins for six months, last month we gave you the chance to let us know what you think. You can still do this, as the **reader survey** <http://www.nbis.org.uk/e-bulletin-survey> is open for another month. We will collate the responses at the end of next month and report the results in the November issue; most importantly we will use your responses to shape the way in which we take the newsletter forward.

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.

If you'd rather not receive this in future, please email us at nbis@norfolk.gov.uk, and we'll remove you from our circulation list.

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Local NEWS

Wild About Norfolk – a great success

Over 1200 people attended the annual wildlife and environment fair, held this year at Easton College. NBIS, NNNSI and NBP were all exhibiting, finding the day as useful as always for networking and engaging with the wider public. Check out a photo of the team at the event: <http://tinyurl.com/6ffgsfx>
Event website: <http://www.wildaboutnorfolk.co.uk/wildaboutnorfolk/>

Norfolk and Suffolk on track to form a Local Nature Partnership

Proposals to establish a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Norfolk and Suffolk are off to a strong start, with the news that a grant of £31,000 has been awarded to Norfolk County Council from Defra/Natural England. The funding will be used to support a range of “capacity building” activities over the next eight months. Read more here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#LNP>

Trial uses “hot foam” to eradicate invasive aquatic weed

During October 2011 the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative (NNNSI) has been trialling the use of 'hot foam' technology as a means of eradicating the invasive aquatic weed Australian swamp stonecrop *Crassula helmsii*. This technology uses heat, rather than chemicals, to kill the plant with the foam being made from completely organic and biodegradable products.

The trial was carried out on two ponds in north Norfolk, where the weed is only found growing around the periphery of the pond, but not in the main water column. These ponds form part of a remarkably biodiverse 'pond-scape' in the area around Briston, which contains a large number of rare aquatic plants, so it is critically important that *Crassula helmsii* is eradicated from the area as soon as possible.

(See hot foam in action in the above photo, courtesy of Weeding Technology Ltd; for more information on the technology, go to <http://www.weedingtech.com/>)

Britain's Great Reef – BBC special

The exciting discoveries found by Seaweed East, on and around the chalk reef off the North Norfolk coast (as reported in our August issue: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/E-bulletinAugust2011.pdf>), were featured in a BBC One (East) special on 10th October. Although the full programme is no longer on the BBC iplayer, clips and other information can be found on the BBC website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0161m9n>

Norfolk benefits from WREN funding

The WREN Biodiversity Action Fund has announced that it has awarded grants to RSPB's Sutton Fen (£246,030) and Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Hickling Broad (£244,098) reserves. At Hickling Broad, the money will be used for a long-term project to restore, extend and improve wetland habitats. Norfolk Wildlife Trust will create 35 hectares of fen from grassland and restore a further 42 hectares of fen. For more information, click here <http://www.wren.org.uk/apply/biodiversity-action-fund>

7th Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar

Although Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership have been organising this popular event for planners for 7 years, it remains fresh and topical each year: <http://www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/news.aspx>

E bulletin Reader Survey

Please complete our reader survey for this bulletin!

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/e-bulletin-survey>

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National NEWS

JNCC Consultation on 3 Proposed SACs

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has launched a consultation on three proposed marine Special Area of Conservation: the Wight-Barfleur Reef in the English Channel and the Pisces Reef Complex and Croker Carbonate Slabs in the Irish Sea. For more information, click here <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4534#DoggerBank>

National Park Expansion

Natural England has approved plans to expand the boundaries of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, increasing their combined area by nearly 500km². A final decision will be taken by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

For more information, click here http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2011/280911.aspx

Restrictions on plant imports to halt introduction of deadly diseases that threaten Britain's tree species

Tighter controls are to be placed on plant imports to halt an invasion of diseases that threaten an increasing number of Britain's tree species. Caroline Spelman, the Environment Secretary, will unveil a strategy next month to address this issue; this after recently announcing that £7m will be made available for further research. For more info see these recent articles:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/deadly-foreign-diseases-threaten-britains-trees-2364353.html>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/oct/23/trees-exotic-diseases-gardening>

For more national news, read more here:

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

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GETTING INVOLVED

Schools urged to hold marine mammal month

Eco-Schools England has linked up with Sea Watch and is urging primary schools to hold a marine mammal month this term. Over the last few months, the Sea Watch team has been developing marine mammal themed educational materials which have been made available to schools through the Eco-Schools website:

<http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/ecoschools/newsevents?id=268>

If you have children at primary school, work at a primary school or know of someone that this might interest, please forward the link to them. The materials included cover key stage 1 and 2 and various topics.

Moth survey needs your help

Remember to send NBIS your records of three autumn-flying moth species: red underwing; large thorn and figure of 8: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/MothsAutumn2011Survey>

“Broadsweep” encourages visitors to the Broads to record invasive alien species

Send in your records of: Himalayan balsam; giant hogweed; Japanese knotweed; floating pennywort; red-eared terrapin and American mink to NBIS at <http://www.nbis.org.uk/BroadSweep2011>

BES centenary - small grants available

In 2013 The British Ecological Society will celebrate its centenary with a series of scientific, policy and education events throughout the year, culminating in a public focused Festival of Ecology from June–August 2013. The Society is inviting UK-based organisations to bid for small grants and to contribute to the festival

<http://www.nbn.org.uk/News-and-Events/Biodiversity-news/BES-centenary.aspx>

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Survey confirms Holkham NNR as only the second breeding area in Britain for rare antlion (*Euroleon nostras*)

Staff at Natural England's Holkham National Nature Reserve have discovered what is thought to be only the second established breeding area in Britain for the mysterious yet savage antlion, an insect whose larvae excavate cone-like pits and lurk in wait for other insect prey. And its numbers on site appear to be increasing....Read the press release and EDP article below;

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2011/171011.aspx

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/no_place_like_norfolk_for_rare_insect_1_1092003

Water voles set up “home” at Home Farm, a County Council small holding

Peter Mallett, who runs Home Farm, North Burlingham, spotted a water vole crossing his pond this spring. Since then it has bred producing a litter of at least 3 maybe 4. Peter is also a keen wildlife photographer, you can see images of the voles on his website: <http://www.wildnorfolk.co.uk/watervolealbum.php>; Peter has also kindly allowed us to use one of his photos in our “And finally..” section below.

Peter told us how he was able to get within 4 metres of three voles feeding and said “ I just hope they establish a sustainable population here as it is a great privilege to have them”

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EVENTS

1st November 2011 (10am – 3pm) BTO offices, Thetford

Capturing Birds Through Art

Learn how to use watercolours to illustrate birds with Norfolk artist Steve Cale

Booking essential 01603 598333. http://www.nbis.org.uk/news#NWT_WinterProgramme

This event is part of the NWT “Wild Norfolk” programme funded through Natural England’s Access to Nature scheme

20th November 2011 (11 am) Ted Ellis Nature Reserve, Wheatfen Broad, Surlingham

Winter Walk with the Warden

£4 including tea/coffee

Booking essential – contact David Nobbs on 01508 538036

<http://www.wheatfen.org/tethtml/events.html>

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AND FINALLY..

Winners of 2011 Wildlife Photographer of the Year announced:

<http://t.co/WrNdW3Tv>

In terms of local wildlife photography, here is one of Peter Mallett’s excellent water vole pictures, more at

<http://www.wildnorfolk.co.uk/watervolealbum.php>:



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