

Two projects which received money from the NBIS recording fund have been in the media spotlight recently .

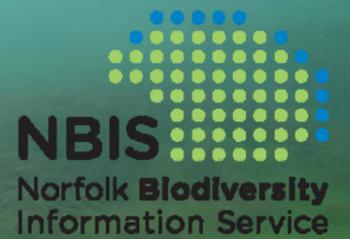
A survey of a marine habitat off the north Norfolk coast by Seasearch East generated some important wildlife records including three species which had never before been recorded off the East Anglian coast - the leopard spotted goby, the strawberry anemone and a new sponge. The chalk-reef habitat, which lies within half a mile of the shore was discovered to be more extensive than expected, covering 20 miles between Cley and Trimmingham. Stunning photographs of the reef and its wildlife by Marine County Recorder, Rob Spray, who led the survey, were widely reported in the national media, and were also used in the recent NWT "Living Seas" presentation in the Fusion studio at the Norwich Forum (see also our cover photograph).

The Brecks biodiversity audit also generated much media interest when the project report was launched in November. The audit, which benefited from NBIS funding and assistance with the collation of species information, has drawn attention to the immense diversity of life in Breckland. Over 12,000 species were recorded with 2,149 a priority for conservation and 317 listed on the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan. The report has highlighted the need for physical land disturbance - putting "the Brecks back into Breckland" - to create mosaics of different conditions benefiting many insects and plants to maintain this remarkable biodiversity.

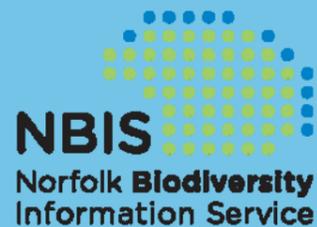


Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service Newsletter

Issue no 5 | January 2011 | www.nbis.org.uk | Email: nbis@norfolk.gov.uk
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Norfolk underwater chalk reef
Photo credit: Rob Spray



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News in Brief

Obituaries

Superb naturalist and Norfolk Wildlife Trust Conservation Officer, **Steve Henson** passed away suddenly in August this year. Involved with a diversity of conservation projects and groups in the county such as Water for Wildlife, the Otters and Rivers project, and the Glaven Conservation Group to name but a few, Steve earned great respect with the organisations and individuals he was involved with. He will be much missed, but leaves a rich legacy of achievements and inspiration.

The Norfolk recording community was also saddened by the loss of **Dick Hamond**, County Marine Recorder in July, at the age of 80. As well as researching and recording the marine life of Norfolk's inshore waters, Dick was passionate about microscopy, playing a significant role in the Microscopy Group of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society (NNS). He was also President of the NNS from 1991-1992.

IYB - UK

The UK IYB programme has been commended by the Convention for Biological Diversity for its efforts during 2010 to raise the profile of biodiversity. IYB-UK now involves more than 450 partners (including NBIS and NBP). Bob Bloomfield, IYB-UK Director is now calling for a "better core narrative which is simpler and less confusing" in addition to "new levels of innovation in engagement" to get across messages about biodiversity. www.biodiversityislife.net

New population of rare water plant discovered

A substantial new population of the rare aquatic plant, *Najas marina* or holly-leaved-naiad was discovered recently on a lake in north Norfolk. This is the first reported find of the plant outside the Norfolk Broads and demonstrates how dynamic aquatic plant communities can be, given the right conditions including good water quality.

Sustainable Urban Fringes

NBIS is helping with habitat mapping for the Gaywood Valley Project – one of a number of pilot projects receiving funding through a transnational project called SURF (Sustainable Urban Fringes). The £500,000 project will link urban areas to the open countryside around King's Lynn, create habitats for the enhancement of biodiversity, and develop outdoor classrooms for community and school use. For further information see www.sustainablefringes.eu or contact Project Officer Gemma Cousins gemma.cousins@norfolk.gov.uk

Welcome to the winter edition of the NBIS newsletter

In this issue we highlight how public involvement with surveys is proving invaluable to NBIS.

Also in this issue:

- Rare fungus records;
- News of Norfolk liverworts;
- New regional standards of service for consultants ;
- Landmark publication on Norfolk's geodiversity;
- New NBIS enquiries tool developed;
- Media spotlight on two projects funded by NBIS;
- News in Brief.

NBIS is a partnership of organisations including Natural England, Norfolk County Council, the Broads Authority, South Norfolk Council and North Norfolk District Council.

It is one of a number of Local Record Centres and operates a not-for-profit service, recording, managing and interpreting wildlife information for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Norfolk.

NBIS and the Big Society

NBIS was delighted with enthusiasm for two recent surveys which called for help from members of the public.

The NBIS glow-worm survey generated over 160 new records, giving us a better understanding of where these elusive and iconic creatures are found in the county.

This first 'citizen science' survey organised by NBIS was quickly followed with another, looking for records of three species of fungus. Once again, the Norfolk public were keen to help, leading to more records for the NBIS database.

By working with the County Recorders – Norfolk's experts in the field of recording – to choose species that are easy to spot and that are unlikely to be confused with any others, NBIS is reaching out to the public to raise awareness of Norfolk's wildlife and biodiversity, and help fill information gaps.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust's practical guide for volunteers, parish projects and community groups on recording wildlife "Putting local wildlife on the map" – has also raised awareness of the important

role that local citizens can play in recording. Local wildlife needs help: if we don't note down what's there, it's not easy to spot losses or declines.

Seasearch East - the eastern arm of a national project for divers who are interested in helping to protect the marine environment - is looking for volunteers this coming summer to help survey the shore and sea on the East Coast.

In Norfolk, surveys are planned for the 3rd and 4th of August, during Marine Week, and will involve both underwater surveying and shoreline recording for seaweeds on the north Norfolk coast. Public participation is welcomed. For further details, please contact Norfolk County Marine Recorder, Rob Spray at rob@1townhouses.co.uk

Our funding partners:



Rare fungus records



Hericium coralloides,
Photo credit: Anne Crotty

Two rare fungi have been discovered in Norfolk this autumn.

The coral tooth fungus (*Hericium coralloides*) was discovered high up on a dead tree stump at Whitlingham woods in November. This white bracket fungus, which can be up to 30cm across is considered to be one of the most beautiful in the UK with tooth-like spines instead of gills. It is uncommon in England and listed as 'Near Threatened' on the Red Data List. It has not been recorded in Norfolk before.

Another exciting find was the much smaller nail fungus, *Poronia erici*, which was discovered on rabbit dung at Holme in north Norfolk in October 2010. This is a very rare species found only once before in Britain, on Scott Head Island in 1933. It is closely related to *Poronia punctata*, a Norfolk Action Plan fungus, which is found on horse dung at coastal sites in the county. *P. erici* has been collected widely in Australia and is usually reported on kangaroo dung.

Good summer for liverwort records

The weather this summer in Norfolk seems to have suited a number of rare liverworts.

For the first time in the vice county of East Norfolk, Cavernous Crystalwort *Riccia cavernosa* has been recorded, not once, but twice in the space of three days in August! Known colloquially as the Swiss cheese liverwort, for obvious reasons, it is part of a specialised group of tiny ephemeral species, favouring the draw-down zones of the exposed edges of ponds. Before this August its nearest known location was Syderstone Common in West Norfolk. Then it was found by Francis Farrow *en masse* round the edge of the Top Common pond in Beeston Regis. This is the recently restored dewpond where Mudwort *Limosella aquatica* was found in 2008 (the first Norfolk record since 1914). Previously the pond had not been dug out since the 1950s. It is quite possible that the *Riccia* spores had lain undisturbed until management work and this summer's weather provided ideal conditions for the liverwort. On 10th August a few more thallii were spotted on mud in the corner of a field on the NT Felbrigg estate. Had the spores come from Beeston or had they been lying low for years?

In September the tiny summer ephemeral leafy liverwort Pitted Frillwort *Fossombronia foveolata* was found growing in profusion on a bare, peaty track on Buxton Heath. This UK BAP species, resembling tiny green lettuces, can only be identified microscopically by the reticulations on its spores. Luckily it was fruiting freely. A few weeks before there had been no sign of it on the track. Its last known location in East Norfolk was in the nearby Horsford Woods in 1936. Perhaps it is still there?

Mary Ghullam *Bryophyte Recorder for East Norfolk, VC 27.*



Top: Cavernous Crystalwort, *Riccia cavernosa*
Photo credit: Francis Farrow

Bottom: Pitted Frillwort *Fossombronia foveolata*
Photo credit: Colin Dunster

A good number of County Recorders braved snow and ice to attend the 3rd Annual Recorders meeting on the 25th November.

NBIS was delighted with presentations from Doreen Wells, County Ant Recorder; Andy Brazil, County Butterfly Recorder; John Goldsmith, County Bat Recorder, and Tim Holt-Wilson from the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership.

The meeting also heard from Biodiversity Information Officer, Martin Horlock, how NBIS has gone from strength to strength over the past two years, with 1.6 million records now held, representing 15,750 species and 60 taxon groups. An impressive 300 enquiries for biological information are now dealt with annually and the service is involved with many local and regional mapping projects supporting conservation initiatives. Public awareness of the service is higher following attendance at many events, and the development of citizen surveys has led to greater direct local involvement with recording.

New service for consultants

A new regional standardised enquiry service for environmental consultants will soon be launched by the region's Local Records' Centres (LRCs).

NBIS Assistant Biodiversity Information Officer, Lizzy Carroll has been at the forefront of the project, which was one of three suggested by the recent Natural England review of LRCs in the East of England. The standard data enquiry service :

- Includes records of species of conservation concern;
- Includes a map of statutory

and non-statutory site boundaries;

- Does not incur a charge if no records are found;
- Is completed within 10 working days (usually sooner);
- Includes the most recent data held by the LRC, with a metadata statement (information about the data itself) available on each LRC website;
- Presents information in user-specified format;
- Provides records from the adjacent county (within the region) with no further charge if the search area spans the boundary.

Regional Advocacy Officer Fiona Hazelton, who is based at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC), has been working on ways to improve interaction between the region's local records centres and key audiences, such as data providers and local government.

This project is another which emerged from the recent regional review of LRCs. Fiona is currently organising an event for planners in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire, and has been helping the newly established Essex Records centre strengthen local relationships.

Fiona can be contacted at fiona.hazelton@cperc.org.uk

Enquiries tool

A new Geographical Information Service (GIS) enquiries tool that improves the data search and output reports issued by the service, has been developed by NBIS and Richard Graham (Service Development Officer at Norfolk County Council).

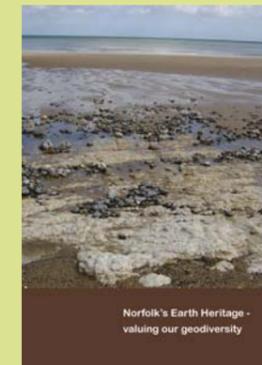
Biodiversity Information Officer, Martin Horlock is delighted with the facility: "NBIS users will benefit from the new style reports that our enquiries tool generates which include interactive pdf maps with layers that can be turned on and off, as well as a spreadsheet with all site and species information."

For more information about the NBIS enquiry services, please get in touch with Martin, Sam or Lizzy at enquiries.nbis@norfolk.gov.uk 01603 224458

New landmark publication

The NBIS recording fund has helped to pay for the production of a landmark publication on Norfolk's geology.

Norfolk's Earth Heritage written by Tim Holt-Wilson of the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership, runs to over 70 pages and contains many colour photographs



Norfolk's Earth Heritage - valuing our geodiversity

alongside concise, accessible text providing an excellent introduction to this important topic. Geology shapes our landscapes, influences the soils and biodiversity that are found here, and gives us an insight into life that once inhabited the land.

The Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership is now working on an Action Plan which will identify activities that will help conserve geology in Norfolk. Geodiversity can come under threat from a number of activities which might obscure or damage geological features, such as vandalism, fly-tipping or land management schemes.

Production of the publication was financially sponsored by NBIS as well as the Closed Landfill Team at Norfolk County Council. Tim Holt-Wilson's work was funded by Natural England via Geo-East. NBIS holds information about geological sites found in Norfolk, such as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), County Wildlife Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated for their geological interest.

The publication is available in printed version at £12 + £2

p&p from jennygladstone@aol.com. It can also be

downloaded free of charge from :
www.norfolkbiobiodiversity.org ;
www.geo-east.org.uk/publications.htm ;
www.nbis.org.uk.

The NBIS recording fund can make a contribution of up to £1000 towards Norfolk recording projects. For more information, please contact NBIS on 01603 224458.

Events >>

24th January 2011 - Regional conference "Local Records' Centres and Environmental Consultants", Cambridge
Further details from : elizabeth.carroll@norfolk.gov.uk

19th February 2011 Bat Workers' conference, Thetford
Further details from : dave.leech@bto.org.uk