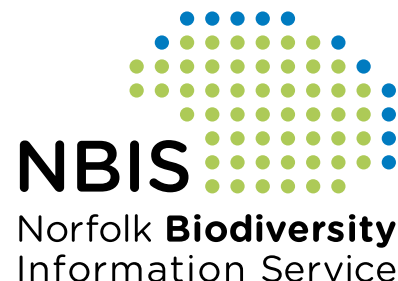


# Introducing NBIS



For more information, contact:

NBIS, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2SG

T 01603 224458

E [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

F 01603 223219

W [www.nbis.org.uk](http://www.nbis.org.uk)



As portfolio holder for Waste Management and the Environment at Norfolk County Council, I am delighted to introduce and recommend the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) to you.

The natural world is under increasing threat from our growing human population, habitat loss, climate change and invasive non-native species. In Norfolk, development pressures mean that the need for sound decision-making to conserve our precious

wildlife has never been greater. At the same time, we need to create new opportunities for wildlife wherever we can. A good understanding of where species and habitats are located in the county is therefore essential. NBIS can help.

The service collects, manages and interprets Norfolk wildlife data for a range of people and organisations, allowing them to make informed decisions. It brings together the energies of professionals and volunteers, building on existing networks and providing easier access to information. NBIS represents the most practical and cost-effective way of accessing up-to-date, detailed baseline data on biodiversity in Norfolk, a key requirement for many sectors, such as local authorities, consultants, developers, government agencies and parish councils.

I do hope that whatever your biodiversity information needs that you will consider using NBIS in the near future. Further information on the service (in the form of Factsheets - see blue box for details) is available.

**Ian Monson**



## NBIS Factsheets

- 1 Biodiversity Obligations
- 2 Our Records
- 3 Working in Partnership
- 4 Our Services
- 5 Biological Recording
- 6 Case Studies



Sheringham (credit Norfolk County Council)



With access to authenticated wildlife records for the whole county in addition to other datasets such as habitat data and protected site boundaries, **NBIS provides comprehensive biodiversity information** enabling managers to make informed decisions.

## NBIS is a modern service that uses the latest technology to record, manage and interpret wildlife data for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Norfolk.

It operates through a partnership of organisations including Natural England and local authorities and is hosted by Norfolk County Council. Data from the network of skilled Norfolk recording specialists, primarily the County Recorders who undertake much field work, mostly on a voluntary basis, continues to be essential.

Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS):

- Manages over one million species records
- Acts as a secure archive for data
- Interprets biological information spatially
- Belongs to the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC)
- Supplies data to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN)
- Works with the voluntary Recorders in Norfolk.

NBIS is well placed to assist public bodies (local authorities, unitary, county and district councils, parish and town councils) fulfil their biodiversity duties under the NERC Act of 2006. Information from NBIS can help with Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements and with identifying the locations of sites and species of conservation importance so these can be taken into account within the planning system.



# NBIS Factsheet 1

## Biodiversity Obligations

For more information, contact:

NBIS, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2SG

T 01603 224488

E [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

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**By supporting and using NBIS, public authorities (all public bodies, government and statutory undertakers such as local authorities, unitary, county and district councils and parish and town councils) can help meet their statutory obligations towards biodiversity.**

The overarching statutory driver for the conservation of biodiversity is the duty contained in the NERC Act, 2006, Section 40: “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

The Act places a duty on public bodies, particularly local authorities to demonstrate that they are:

- Fully aware of local sites and habitats of importance for biodiversity within their area
- Fulfilling statutory obligations for the protection of wildlife and biodiversity within the forward planning and development control processes (including Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Appropriate Assessments (AAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs))
- Incorporating the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity into their strategies such as Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)
- Protecting and enhancing the biodiversity for which they are responsible (e.g. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), school grounds, roadside verges and trees)
- Contributing to the development of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).



### **Public authorities must:**

**Comply with national and European legislation** for the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity;

**Fulfil their overarching duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity** under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act of 2006;

**Protect and seek to enhance biodiversity through strategic planning and development control planning policies.**





**Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth and includes all species of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them. It is an indicator of the wider health of our environment and supports our own health and well-being.**

**NBIS provides easy access to extensive information on biodiversity, allowing public authorities to develop informed strategic plans, fulfil their obligations to achieve sustainable development and to protect and enhance biodiversity.**

**NBIS can provide:**

Planning Policy Statements (PPS) 9 and 12 and EU Directive 2001/42/EC interpret obligations to the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity under national and international wildlife legislation.

Norfolk Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) gives advice for protecting biodiversity within the planning process. Read more at: [www.norfolkbiodiversity.org](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org)

- Baseline information on the location of habitats, species, ancient woodlands and statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites for a local authority area so that biodiversity can be easily assimilated within forward planning strategies, and responsibilities towards local sites and habitats fully appreciated and met.
- Biodiversity reports for planning applications, listing important species, priority habitats and proximity to wildlife sites for a defined site or area, greatly facilitating the production of responses
- Maps to help identify opportunities for local wildlife (e.g. biodiversity network maps) or to highlight important environmental factors that affect biodiversity (e.g. flooding) which can be used in local development strategies and SEAs
- Annual “State of Nature Reports” based on collated information, to demonstrate improvements made by local authorities for biodiversity.





# NBIS Factsheet 2

## Our Records

For more information, contact:

NBIS, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2SG

T 01603 224458

E [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

F 01603 223219

W [www.nbis.org.uk](http://www.nbis.org.uk)

**Norfolk is fortunate in its wealth of biodiversity. A recent audit of the million database records held by NBIS showed that over 400 species listed on the national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) occur in Norfolk, representing nearly 40% of the national list.**

Much of the data held by NBIS derives from voluntary County Recorders who collect information about wildlife in Norfolk. Information is held electronically using "Recorder" software, and in paper format. Many records are historical. NBIS also holds records sent in by the public as well as data from biological surveys. Powerful visual interpretation of these data is made possible through mapping software (Geographical Information System – GIS) that also allows access to geographical boundary datasets.

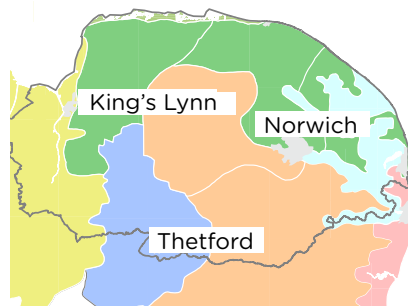
NBIS is keen to improve holdings of spatial data on habitats in Norfolk. With its increased staff complement, NBIS is now able to reassess, and digitally map, habitat data from existing surveys, adding greatly to its worth and useability. Where survey data are unavailable, habitat mapping from aerial photography is possible. Planned new surveys and access to further data sources will also help.



### NBIS holds data on:

- BAP priority habitats
- Species of conservation concern
- Ancient woodlands
- County Wildlife Site (CWS) boundaries
- Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)
- Statutory wildlife site boundaries
- Biological surveys
- Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites (RIGS).

- Breckland
- The Broads
- East Anglia Plain
- The Fens
- North Norfolk
- Suffolk Coast and Heaths



### Natural Areas in Norfolk

These interpret the ecological variations found in Norfolk in terms of wildlife and natural features



# NBIS Factsheet 3

## Working in Partnership

For more information, contact:

NBIS, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2SG

T 01603 224458

E [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

F 01603 223219

W [www.nbis.org.uk](http://www.nbis.org.uk)

### **NBIS represents the most practical and cost-effective way of accessing up-to-date, detailed baseline data on biodiversity in Norfolk.**

The service does not make a profit, but incurs staffing and equipment costs. To maintain current levels of provision, and to meet increasing needs for biodiversity information, NBIS requires sufficient income.

The service currently operates in collaboration with Norfolk County Council, Natural England, South Norfolk Council and North Norfolk District Council, but is seeking further funding partners particularly those with an ongoing need for access to a biodiversity information service.

**Service Level Agreements (SLA)** with main partner organisations, in which services and fees are defined, are a sound mechanism for both NBIS and the purchaser. They describe the nature of specific routine work to be undertaken, such as site enquiries in relation to planning developments. Bespoke projects for SLA partners can be accommodated at cost levels, whilst those undertaken for non-SLA partners will be at full consultancy rates.

#### **Pay as you use fees**

Commercial users of NBIS, such as ecological consultants, are charged at a standard rate based on the length of time required to complete the data search (rather than for the information itself). A charge of £100 per enquiry is made to cover the first hour of work, and £50 for each subsequent hour.

#### **Project fees**

A daily rate of £250 covers complex GIS project work



Enquiries from non-commercial organisations, or from individuals, or for research purposes, do not usually result in a charge for the provision of data.

NBIS is very keen to invest in biological recording in Norfolk and uses monies generated from commercial enquiries to help. Grants can be made for the purchase of recording equipment, or for the provision of training for the recorders themselves.



# NBIS Factsheet 4

## Our Services

For more information, contact:  
 NBIS, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2SG | T 01603 224458 | E nbis@norfolk.gov.uk | F 01603 223219 | W www.nbis.org.uk

**NBIS provides a professional and cost-effective suite of services appropriate for many sectors. This table gives more details:**

### NBIS activity/service

**Service users**  
 Consultants (e.g. ecological, planning)  
 East of England Biodiversity Forum  
 General Public  
 Government Agencies e.g. Natural England  
 Local Authorities  
 Norfolk BAP partnership  
 Parish Councils  
 Planners and Developers  
 Recorders  
 Research (e.g. UEA)

NBIS activity/service	Consultants (e.g. ecological, planning)	East of England Biodiversity Forum	General Public	Government Agencies e.g. Natural England	Local Authorities	Norfolk BAP partnership	Parish Councils	Planners and Developers	Recorders	Research (e.g. UEA)
<b>Site Enquiries</b> NBIS provides a comprehensive service for all those requiring biological information for a target site or area, eliminating the need to contact a number of different individuals or organisations for information, saving time and money.	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Habitat, Species and Site Mapping</b> NBIS can help digitise paper maps to use proactively for conservation benefit. Data can be managed on behalf of associates and even exported to the original partners' system. NBIS can also help to identify data gaps to target future survey efforts.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Reporting</b> NBIS can run bespoke reports for many diverse purposes.					✓	✓				
<b>Ecological Network Maps</b> NBIS is well placed to help with the development of biodiversity network maps which help to identify opportunities for biodiversity.		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
<b>Support for research, education and recording</b> NBIS encourages student placements and provides training and support for those involved with recording in Norfolk.			✓					✓		✓



**NBIS services are tailored to meet the needs of the end-user and we would be delighted to discuss your biodiversity information requirements with you. Here are some examples of our work to show the range of services we can offer.**

### Site Enquiries

#### **NBIS can produce site reports which:**

give details of species records; show the position of protected wildlife sites (such as County Wildlife Sites, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest); identify whether species are protected under UK or EU legislation; identify if species are on the Norfolk BAP; identify the location of important habitats; provide ecological information that can be used to identify data gaps

### Habitat, Species & Site Mapping

#### **NBIS is helping to:**

update wetland habitat maps for Natural England; audit existing datasets of Norfolk's wet-woodland habitat for the Forestry Commission; update County Wildlife Site maps; consolidate existing information on coastal zone habitats and species in Norfolk; monitor the management of invasive non-native species in Norfolk; provide regular species data updates for Natural England.

### Ecological Network Maps

#### **NBIS is involved with:**

input to the regional biodiversity network map; development of local 'opportunity' maps

### Reporting

#### **NBIS can produce summary reports, for example:**

NBIS is the technical lead for reports on Local Area Agreement National Indicator 197 (NI 197) which measures positive conservation management on local wildlife sites. We produce annual "State of Nature Reports" showing improvements that have been made for biodiversity. We can also summarise requests for biodiversity information associated with planning applications to show how a local authority is meeting its biodiversity duty.

### Support for Research, Education and Recording

#### **NBIS can:**

provide security and a back-up facility for wildlife records from an area, individual or group; provide help with IT queries from Recorders; give small grants for recording equipment or projects; encourage student placements; help with training; assist with PhD studentships.



# NBIS Factsheet 5

## Biological Recording

For more information, contact:

NBIS, County Hall, Norwich, NR1 2SG

T 01603 224458

E [nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

F 01603 223219

W [www.nbis.org.uk](http://www.nbis.org.uk)

**Norfolk is very fortunate to have an energetic and expert community of nearly 40 voluntary recorders and specialists known as the County Recorders who organise the gathering of biological information, involving a wide network of volunteers.**

The County Recorders are responsible for a particular group (or sub-group) of animals or plants, such as mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish, insects, spiders, woodlice, centipedes, molluscs, marine invertebrates, galls, vascular plants, mosses and liverworts, algae, lichens and fungi. With detailed specialist knowledge, the Recorder network generates the majority of species records held by NBIS. County Recorders take on the job on the basis of expertise and willingness.

NBIS works closely with the Norfolk County Recorders and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society to address priorities for future recording to close the gap between available data and data needs. Efforts must be directed to Norfolk's most endangered animals and plants such as those on the national Biodiversity Action Plan list, and protected species. Current records are essential, often meaning locations need to be revisited and checked for species recorded in the past.

### **NBIS also:**

- Runs an annual Norfolk Recorders Event in partnership with the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society (NNS) [www.nns.org.uk](http://www.nns.org.uk)
- Is planning joint projects and publications with the Norfolk Recorder Network
- Can provide small grants to assist with biological recording in Norfolk, for example, the purchase of surveying equipment



### **County Recorders:**

- Record wildlife
- Receive records from others
- Store records for their 'group' on a database
- Validate records (by following up anything doubtful)
- Pass records on to NBIS and to appropriate national schemes



## A biological record is simply a species observed by a person at a location on a given date.

To be of use, records must contain four essential pieces of information. These are:

**What** species was observed (common name or scientific names are both acceptable)

**Where** was it observed – ideally a six-figure grid reference

**When** was it observed (ideally the exact date)

**Who** recorded it (full name of the recorder)

### Anyone can help with biological recording in Norfolk

Even changes in the distribution and abundance of common species will only be noticed if data is collected. NBIS would be really keen to hear from you if you wish to submit your own records. Please make certain you capture all the information needed to ensure your record will be useful. We will share your record with the appropriate County Recorder, and then it will be added to our central NBIS database.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Natural Connections project is also a good way to get involved with local wildlife surveys. Find out more at:

[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections)

### NBN Gateway

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) gateway is a website ([www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)) that aims to simplify the job of sharing and using information on biodiversity. It acts as a “data warehouse” for biodiversity information, which can be quickly and easily accessed to understand the distribution of particular species in the UK. Where appropriate, and with agreement of the County Recorder, NBIS is working to integrate datasets with those held by the NBN.

