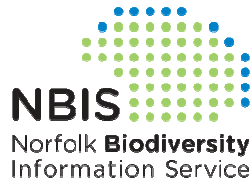


# **North Norfolk District State of the Environment Report 2015 Update**



**Produced by Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service  
March 2015**

Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) is a Local Record Centre holding information on species, geodiversity, habitats and protected sites for the county of Norfolk. For more information see our website: [www.nbis.org.uk](http://www.nbis.org.uk)



For further copies of this report please contact  
[nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)

Report written by Lizzy Oddy, March 2015

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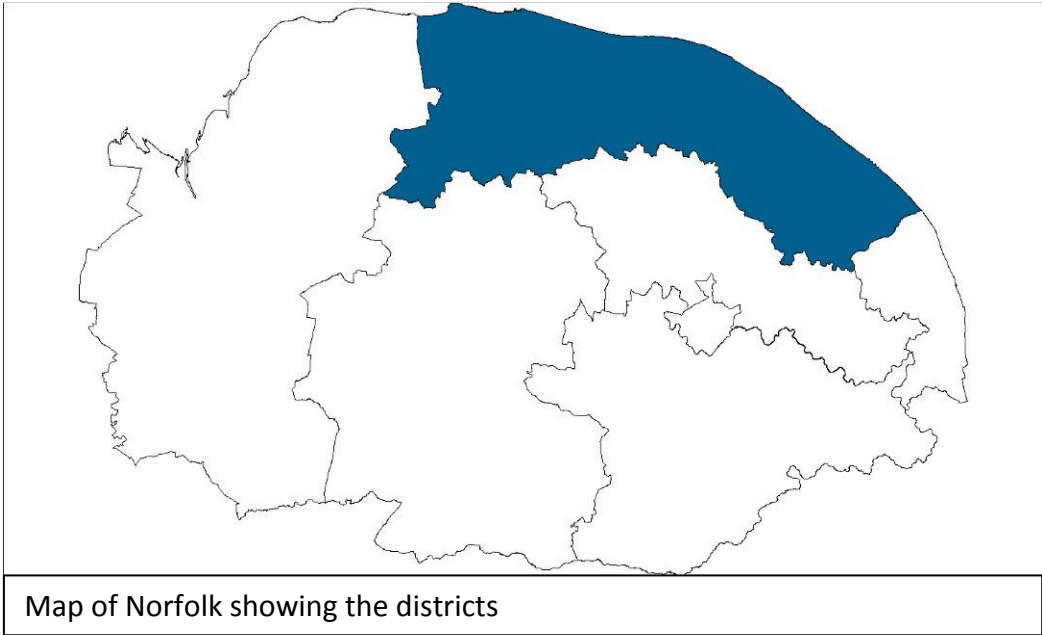
**Introduction**

North Norfolk District covers an area of approximately 99000ha, including about 43 miles (70km) of the Norfolk coastline. The district contains many important and protected sites as well as priority habitats, species, geodiversity and historic environment sites. There are numerous groups and organisations working to protect and enhance the biodiversity, geodiversity and environment of the region.

A State of the Environment Report was prepared by Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) with input from a wide range of individuals and organisations in 2011. The main aims of that report were to showcase the environmental data available for the district, presenting this in a clear and accessible format, and to highlight some of the conservation work taking place across the district and the special habitats, species and sites it is trying to protect. The information contained in the report also acted as a baseline against which future change could be measured.

This report updates the original report for 2015. Where available the updated data are presented and significant changes highlighted. In some cases it has been necessary to use different raw data and/or methodologies for the updated statistics. This is stated clearly where it is the case.

The map below shows the districts within Norfolk, with North Norfolk district shaded blue.



**Designated Sites**

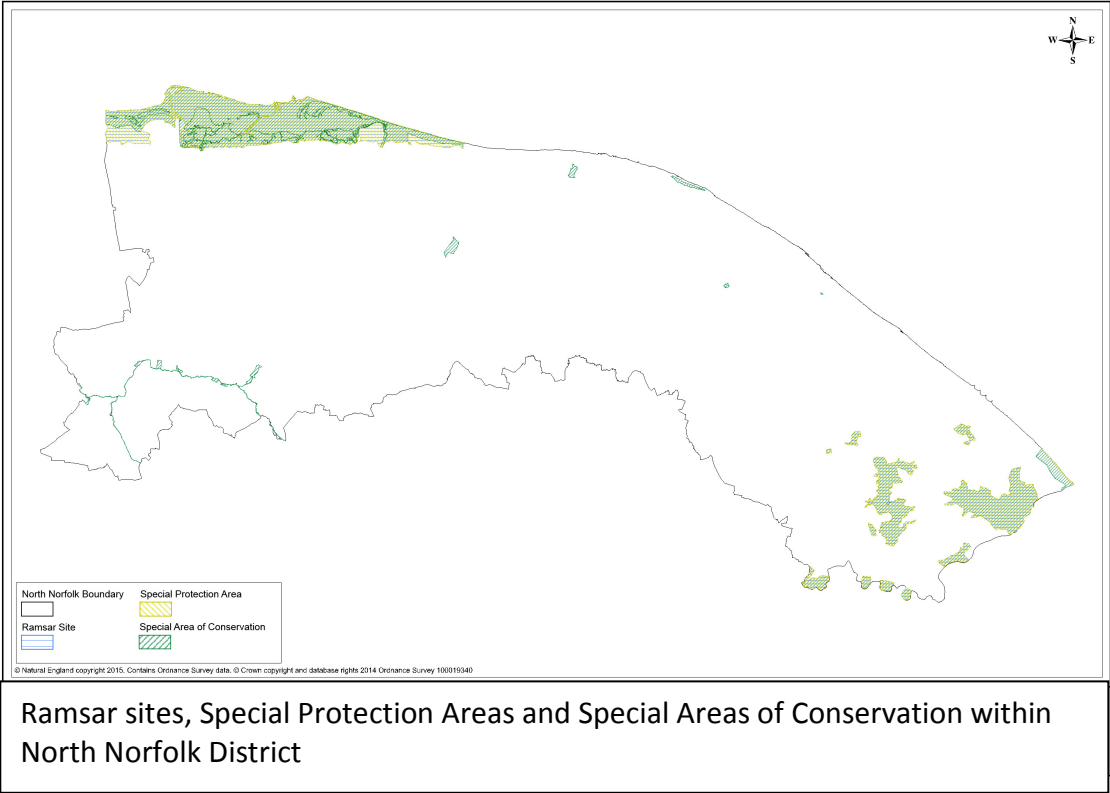
Designated sites are those areas which are particularly important for their features, flora or fauna. Some are designated under the terms of international or European agreements such as the Ramsar convention and the EC Habitats Directive. Others are protected by national law such as SSSIs and National Nature Reserves. All are specially managed to protect and preserve those features for which they are particularly valued. Many of them are open to the public and bring in large amounts of income to the local economy through tourism.

A knowledge of the extent and location of sites under such designations is important in order to be able to monitor their condition and ensure their protection in accordance with the directive under which they are designated.

This section also includes information on non-statutory sites such as County Wildlife Sites and County Geodiversity Sites. Important on a county level, while these sites are not protected by law, they are taken into account during the planning process and their condition is monitored for Central Government.

The statistics in this section of the report are mainly from the information NBIS holds about protected and important sites, as well as from the JNCC and Natural England websites.

**International and European Sites**

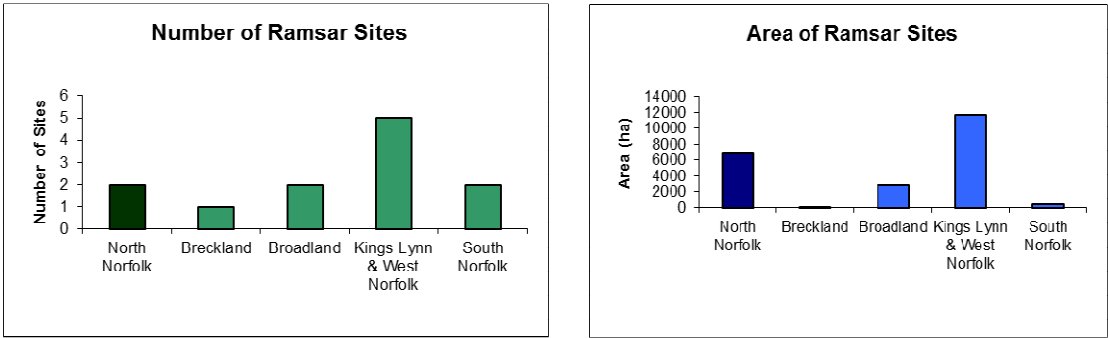


**Internationally Designated Sites**

**Ramsar Sites** are wetlands of international importance and are designated under the Ramsar Convention. Many are also very important for birds and are therefore also designated as Special Protection Areas.

	2011	2015
No. Ramsar sites	2	2
Area of Ramsar Sites (ha)	6864	6862

**Broadland** and **North Norfolk Coast** are still the two Ramsar sites overlapping with North Norfolk district. The slight difference in Ramsar area is due to boundary mapping updates.



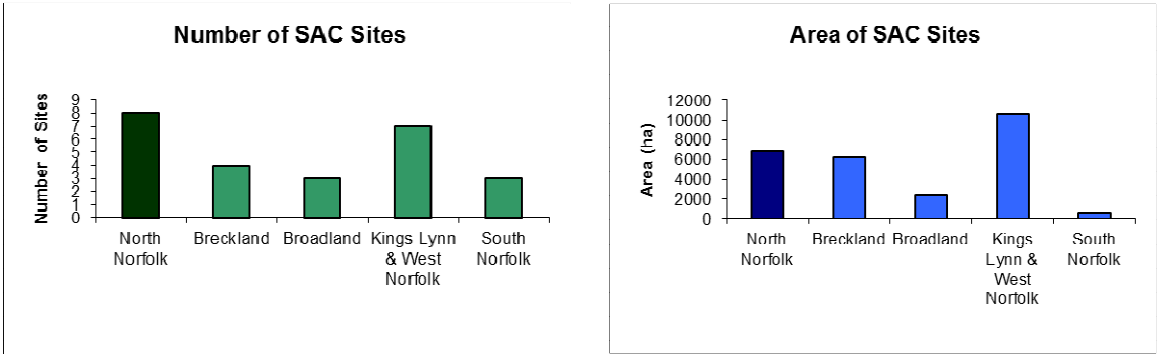
North Norfolk District contains two large areas of important wetland sites, with only the district of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk containing a greater overall area. Habitats include the fen, freshwater pools, lakes and grazing marshes of The Broads and the saltmarshes, sand and shingle shores, saline lagoons and reedbeds of the North Norfolk Coast.

Part of the North Norfolk Coast was designated a **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve** in 1976, demonstrating the area’s balanced relationship between man and nature. The North Norfolk Coast Biosphere Reserve ran along the coastline between Brancaster and Cley-next-the-Sea, and was made up of four sites, two of which (the former Blakeney Point SSSI and Cley & Salthouse Marshes) were located within North Norfolk District. Unfortunately this designation was withdrawn in 2014 as it was decided that the area no longer met the Biosphere Reserve criteria.

European Designated Sites

**Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are sites that are strictly protected under the EC Habitats Directive. Forming part of a European network (Natura 2000) these high quality sites make a significant contribution to conserving those habitats and species considered most in need of protection at a European level.

	2011	2015
No. SACs	8	8
Area of SACs (ha)	6807	6807

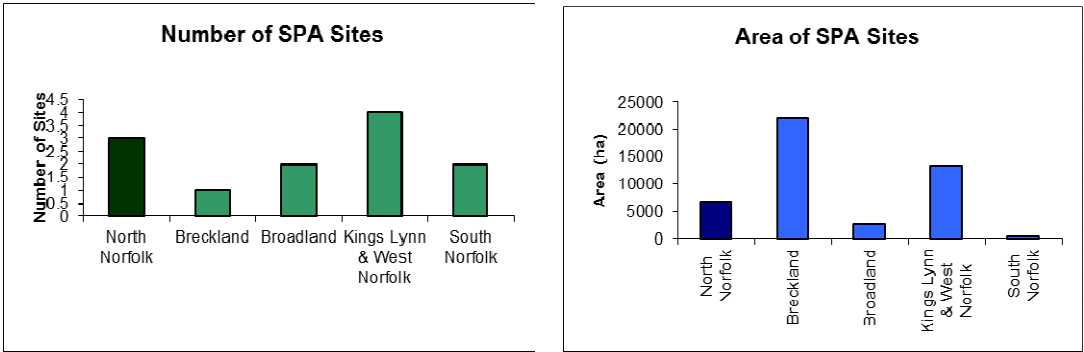


North Norfolk has the highest number of SAC sites either within or intersecting its boundaries in the county. Although some of these sites are relatively small in area they are by no means unimportant. For example, Winterton-Horsey dunes represent the only significant area of dune heath on the East Coast, while the vegetated sea cliffs at Overstrand are one of the best examples of unprotected vegetated soft cliffs on the North Sea Coast.

**Special Protection Areas (SPAs)** form the other part of the Natura 2000 network and are designated due to their importance for birds, in accordance with the EC Birds Directive.

	2011	2015
No. SPAs	3	3
Area of SPAs (ha)	6880	6886

The slight difference in SPA area is due to boundary mapping updates.



North Norfolk is especially important for migrant birds and as such has three designated SPAs. Broadland supports important breeding populations of bittern and marsh harrier, while the North Norfolk Coast SPA supports an ‘internationally important assemblage of birds’ including species such as pink footed geese, wigeon, avocet, knot and lapwing.

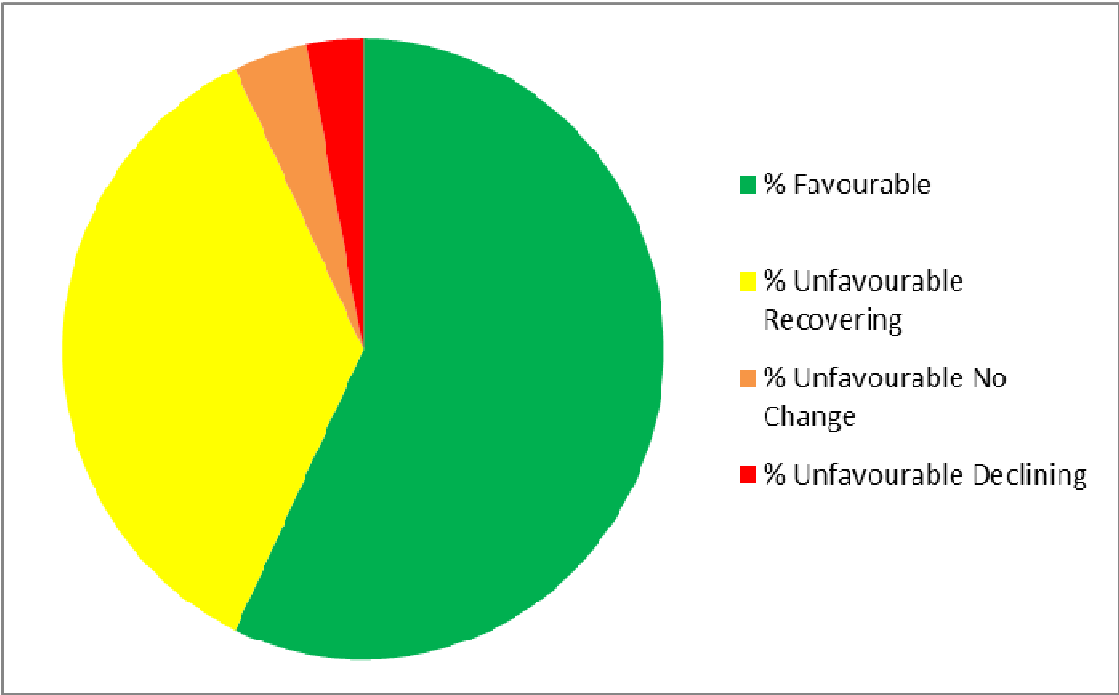
**Nationally Designated Sites**

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)** are the country’s best sites for wildlife and geology. They have statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the CROW Act 2000 and the NERC Act 2006. Many SSSIs are also international or European designated sites (Ramsar, SPA, SAC), National Nature Reserves or Local Nature Reserves. Natural England is responsible for identifying and designating England’s SSSIs.

	2011	2015
No. SSSIs	44	44
Area of SSSIs (ha)	8066	8066

The condition of each SSSI is regularly assessed to determine the effectiveness of the management in place and whether any changes need to be made. When a site is in ‘favourable’ condition it is deemed as meeting its conservation objectives. The chart below (produced using information from the Natural England website, accessed February 2015) shows the percentage of North Norfolk SSSIs in each condition:

**North Norfolk SSSI Condition**



A lower percentage of SSSIs are categorised as Favourable, with a larger percentage ‘Unfavourable Recovering’. This could partly be due to changes in how these categories are measured and displayed.



**National Nature Reserves (NNRs)** are chosen as the best of the SSSIs. In addition to managing rare and significant habitats, species and geology the majority of reserves are accessible and offer fantastic opportunities for people to get close to nature.

	2011	2015
No. NNRs	12	12
Area of NNRs (ha)	5491	5491

**The NNRs are:**

- Ant Broads & Marshes

Blakeney

Bure Marshes

Calthorpe Broad

Hickling Broad

Holkham
- How Hill

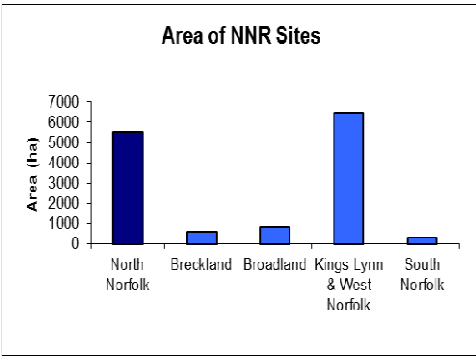
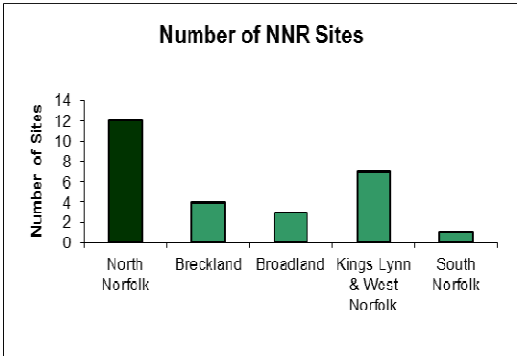
Ludham & Potter Heigham Marshes

Martham Broad

Paston Great Barn

Swanton Novers Wood

Winterton Dunes



North Norfolk has the highest number of National Nature Reserves of all the districts in Norfolk, and an area second only to Kings Lynn & West Norfolk. This means the residents of North Norfolk have a wealth of opportunities to get out and experience nature close up, and also acts as a significant draw for visitors.

**Locally Designated Sites**

**Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)** are designated for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Designated and controlled by Local Authorities in consultation with Natural England, LNRs are important for wildlife, geology, education and/or public enjoyment.

	2011	2015
No. LNRs	5	5
Area of LNRs	28	28

The LNRs are:

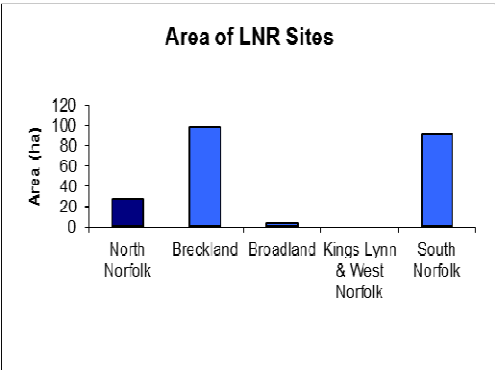
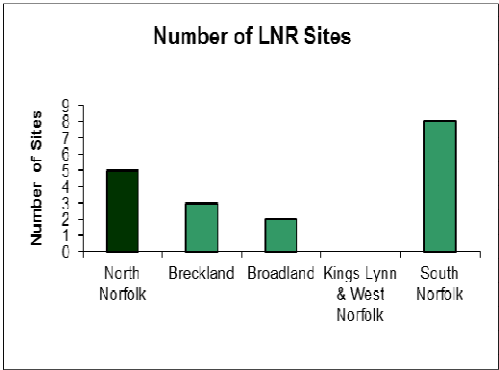
Knapton Cutting,  
Wiveton Down,  
Hindringham Meadows,  
Felmingham Cutting and  
Southrepps Common.



**Wiveton Down**

Located close to the village of Wiveton, and managed by North Norfolk District Council, Wiveton Down is a long ridge of land offering fantastic views of the surrounding area. The main habitat is heathland and part of the site is fenced and grazed as part of its management.

Wiveton Down © Norfolk County Council



The graphs show that North Norfolk has a relatively high number of Local Nature Reserves in comparison to many of the other Norfolk districts. The area covered by each site is fairly small. However this does not mean that they are any less valuable.

**Non-Statutory Sites**

**County Wildlife Sites** (CWSs) are sites considered to be important for wildlife in a county context. They aim to identify, protect and enhance the most important places for wildlife outside legally protected land. While they do not have statutory protection they are taken into account in planning decisions. Many County Wildlife Sites are privately owned and have no public access.

	2011	2015
No. CWSs	251	255
Area of CWSs (ha)	3081	3099

There have been four County Wildlife Sites designated within North Norfolk district since 2011.

**New County Wildlife Sites in North Norfolk**

**Greens Common CWS**

A small area of registered common land and bisected by a lane. A recently restored pond marks the northern boundary on the western part of the site – frogs and toads breed here. South of the pond is a low-lying species-rich area with damp hollows, comprised mainly of marshy grassland and acidic fen. Abundant species here include water mint, marsh pennywort and common fleabane. The drier south and west of the site is dominated by bracken, interspersed with a short rabbit-grazed sward.



Common fleabane © [Alan Hunt](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)



Water mint © [Derek Harper](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#).

**Abbs Common CWS**

A small area of registered common land, mainly composed of neutral grassland, but with small areas of impeded drainage and patches of more free-draining, sandy soils. There is scattered scrub and the south west of the site is wooded. The two main areas of grassland are divided by the North Norfolk Coast Path, which links the common to Congham Hill.

**New County Wildlife Sites in North Norfolk (continued...)**

**Cromer Old Cemetery CWS**

Situated on the edge of Cromer, this is a small cemetery no longer used for burials and managed largely as an open space and for wildlife. Most of the site is unimproved grassland on dry, sandy soils. Bluebell, ox-eye daisy and yellow rattle can all be seen, along with an area containing bladder campion, wild mignonette and Star of Bethlehem. To the west of the entrance gate, the grassland is dominated by burnet rose, which is uncommon in Norfolk.



Cromer Old Cemetery © N.Chadwick and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

**Ebridge Farm Meadows**

The site consists of the suite of open, marshy meadows situated east of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal at Ebridge Mill. The site is bounded by ditches and species rich hedgerows and trees. Richer areas of meadow are largely confined to the central part of the marsh with species such as jointed rush, cuckooflower, sorrel, marsh horsetail and hairy sedge. A shallow well-vegetated pond is adjacent to the central dyke. North of this the marsh is divided into a series of small meadows by shallow ditches overgrown with grey willow and alder.

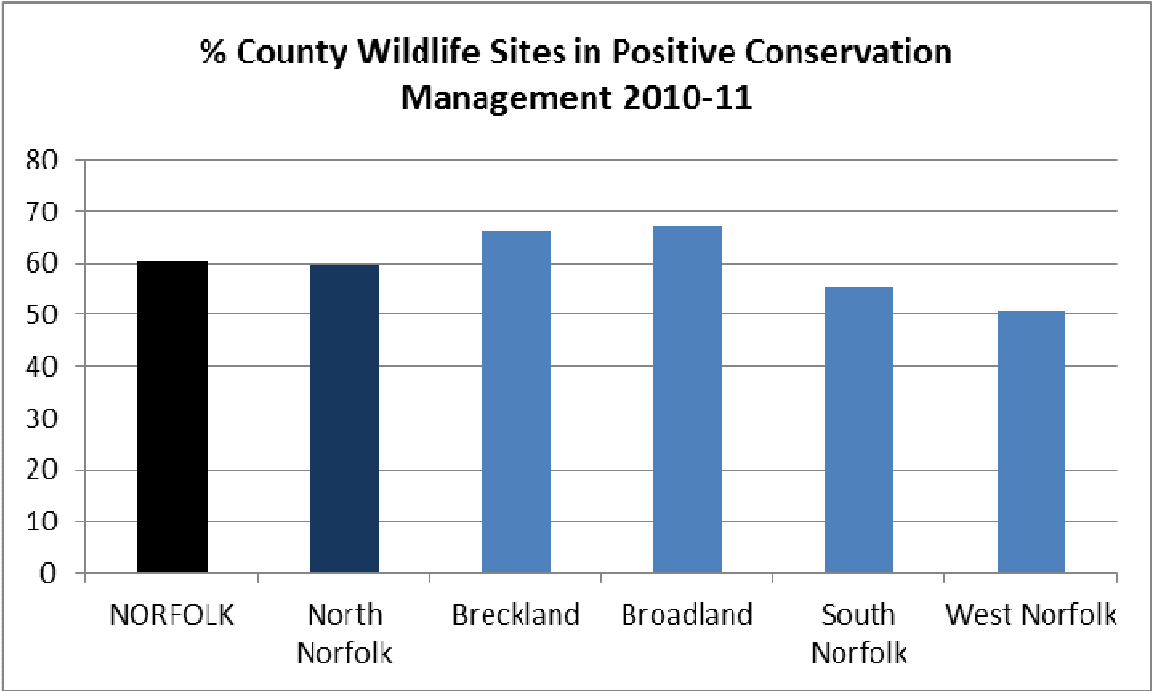


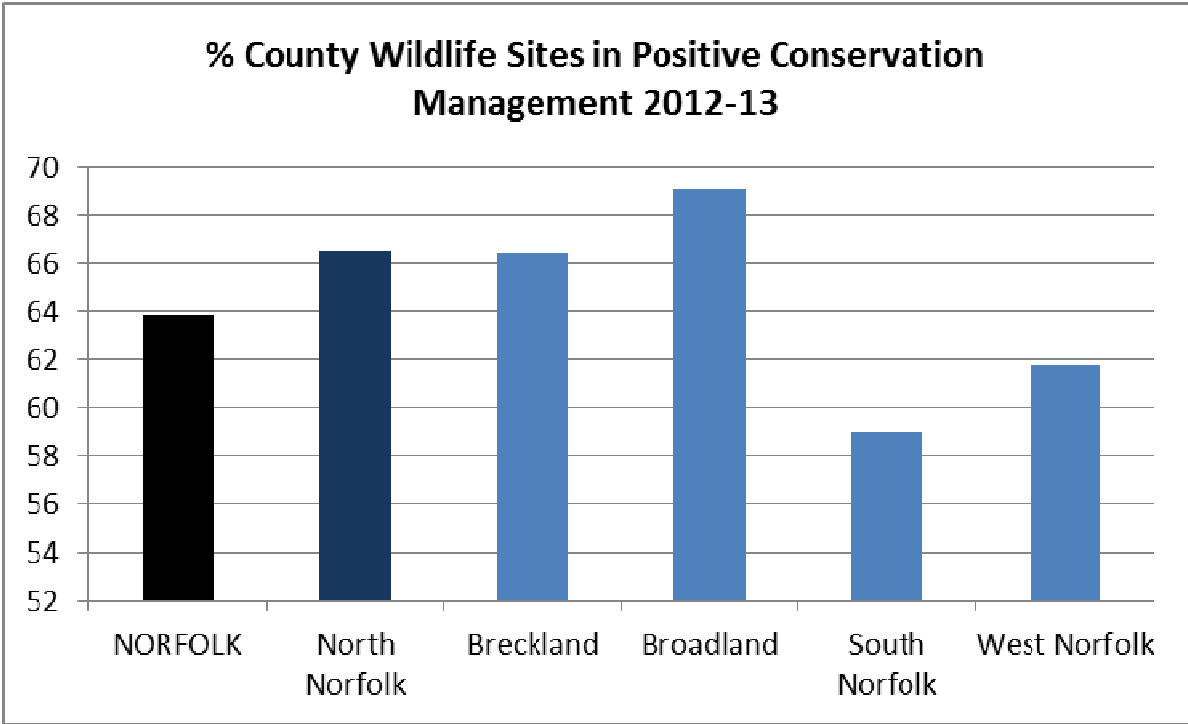
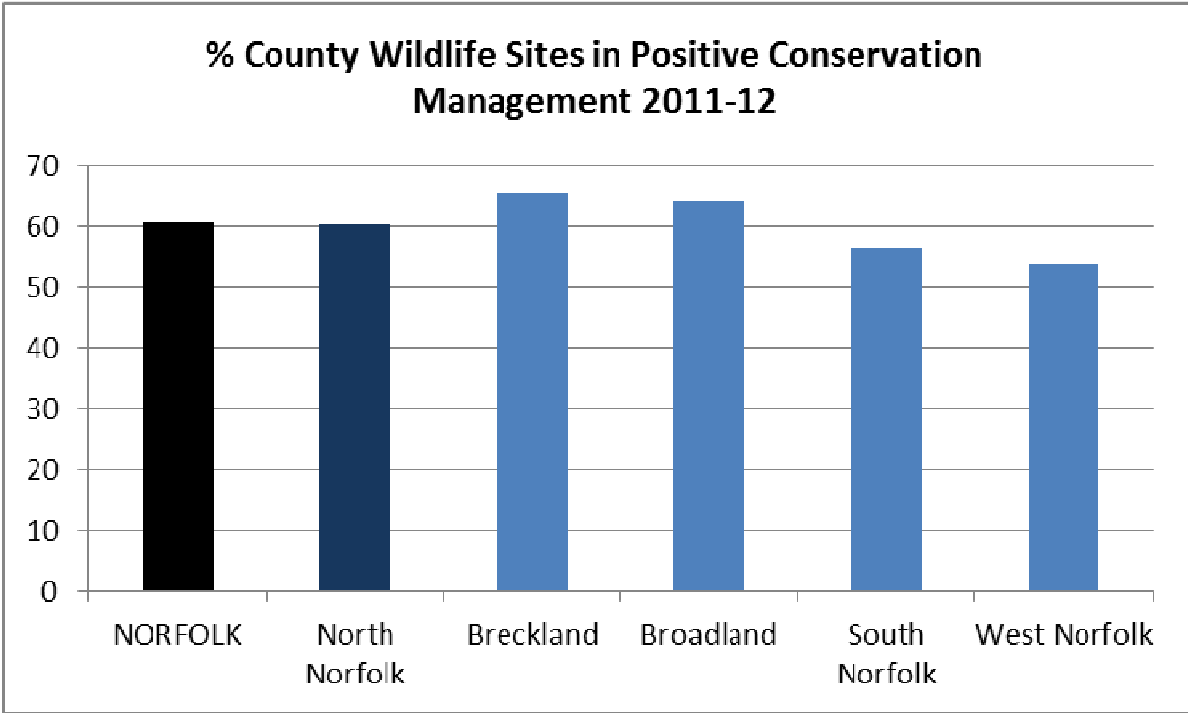
Cuckooflower © [Stefan Czapski](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

Source: CWS Citations

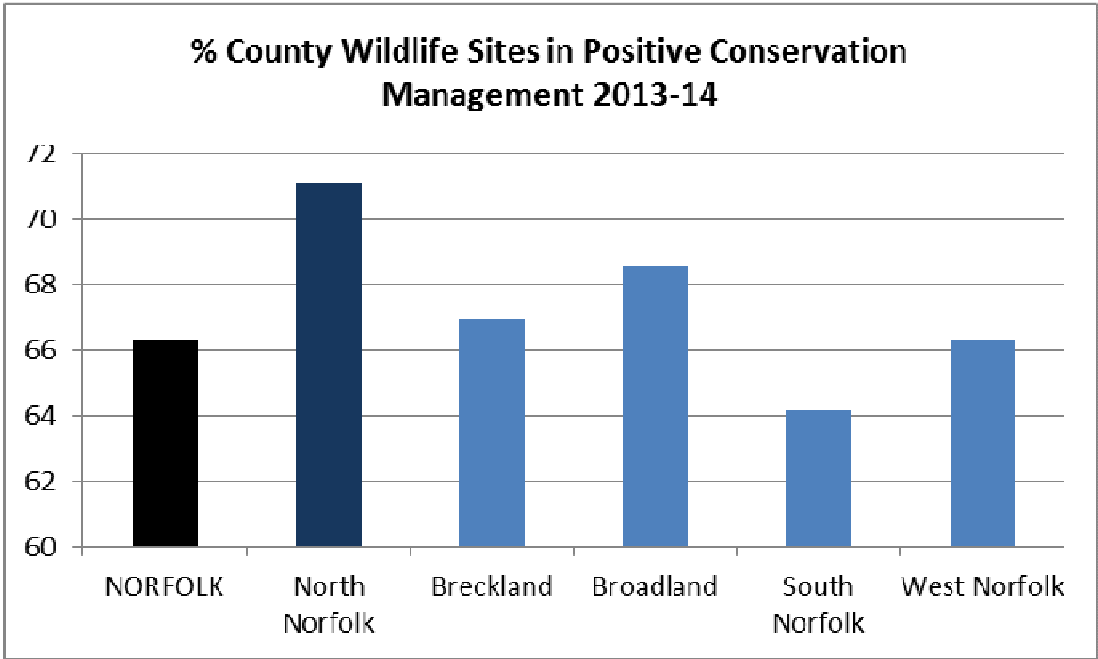
In the past, Local Authorities had a statutory duty to report on National Indicator 197 (NI197) to Central Government. NI197 was the proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or was being implemented. This acted as a cost effective proxy for determining improvements in biodiversity. In 2011, the National Indicator list has been replaced by the Single Data List. However Local Authorities are still required to provide data on the proportion of Local Sites in positive conservation management as part of their response to the Single Data list.

The graphs below compare the percentage of Local Sites positively managed for conservation in North Norfolk with other Norfolk districts and the county as a whole. In 2010-11, fewer than 60% of the district’s County Wildlife Sites were in positive conservation management – just below the county average. However, this has improved year on year, and by 2013-14, 71% of County Wildlife Sites in North Norfolk were being positively managed for conservation. This is well above the county average of just over 66% and is a higher percentage than Breckland, Broadland, South Norfolk and Kings Lynn & West Norfolk districts.









**Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs)** were established to protect and promote those road verges in Norfolk containing rare and scarce plant species. Norfolk’s road verges are often of special botanical significance and act as havens for wildlife as they are not sprayed or fertilised. Co-ordinated by Norfolk County Council, the RNR scheme brings the most important verges into appropriate conservation management.

	2011	2015
No. RNRs	22	25
Approx Length RNRs (m)	4300	6090

There have been 3 new Roadside Nature Reserves designated within North Norfolk District since 2011. These are at Wiveton (home to harebell and hoary cinquefoil) and two sites at East Beckham, both important for meadow saxifrage.

**County Geodiversity Sites (CGSs)** – These used to be known as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and had their name changed to reflect the importance of the geodiversity of a site in a county context.

There are still two CGSs in North Norfolk – **Rising Hill** (a small private gravel pit in use by the owner, thereby ensuring fresh exposures) and **Hempton Quarry** (a landfilled former quarry with one of the quarry faces retained).

**Geodiversity Sites** are non-designated sites of geodiversity interest within the county of Norfolk, determined by the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership. North Norfolk contains **45** geodiversity sites covering a wide variety of important geological features including:

- Happisburgh Dunes – an example of a coastal sand dune complex;
- Pretty Corner – a Pleistocene glacial topography of the Cromer Ridge, including periglacial erosional features (small steep valleys) to the north side;
- Fairies Lane Pit – a former exposure of Pleistocene alluvium or river gravels, including the findspot of 2 Palaeolithic hand-axes in a clay pocket within the gravel.



Happisburgh beach © [Roger Jones](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)



## **Habitats**

North Norfolk has a fantastic variety of habitats – from windswept coastal dunes and saltmarshes to pockets of woodland and stately parks. Much of the district is dominated by arable fields, but good management can mean that these too can be of value to wildlife.

Knowing how much area of each habitat type is present within North Norfolk allows monitoring to take place to detect changes or losses to important habitat types. It can also inform projects aiming to recreate various habitat types as to where that re-creation would bring maximum benefits.

NBIS has made some changes to how it maps habitats. In the past, aerial photographs were looked at manually and combined with national datasets such as the Priority Habitat Inventory datasets held by Natural England. While this method worked well, it was very time consuming, open to subjectivity and the boundaries of the habitats were often approximated.

In 2011 NBIS took part in a Defra-funded pilot project run by Environment Systems called 'Making Earth Observation Work for UK Biodiversity Conservation'. This project aimed to assess the feasibility of mapping habitats in two trial areas of Norfolk using object-based analysis of remote sensing imagery. The resulting draft habitat classification rules were then adapted and applied to the entire county of Norfolk. The habitat types mapped were a mixture of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and Annex I habitats.

The resulting map was used here to calculate the area of some key habitat types in North Norfolk District. It is important to note that while the production of the map involved a number of iterations, informed by field ground truthing, aerial imagery assessment and local knowledge, the final map has not been fully ground truthed and is a work in progress. This needs to be taken into account when viewing these figures.

The habitat classes mapped are also different to the classes mapped for the 2011 North Norfolk State of the Environment Report. Therefore they are not comparable from one to the other. It is hoped that the remote sensing map will be updated at intervals to show change over time.

It is also worth noting that the images used in producing the final remote sensing map were taken before the storm surge of December 2013, therefore any changes in habitats as a result of that event will not be included here.

**Grassland**

North Norfolk contains a number of different types of grassland habitat. These have been summarised as improved grassland (grassland which has had lots of fertiliser added and is generally less species-rich), semi-improved grassland (grassland which has had less fertiliser input and is therefore considered to be more ‘natural’ and generally supports a higher species diversity) and coastal & floodplain grazing marsh (periodically inundated pasture, mainly used for grazing, some may be cut for hay, with ditches maintaining the water levels).

Habitat	Area Within North Norfolk (ha)
Improved grassland	3807.9
Semi-Improved grassland	3766.6
Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh	2751.5

**Heathland**

Lowland heathland is a declining habitat both in Norfolk and nationally. Found on acidic soils it is characterised by shrubs such as heather and gorse. It is home to many rare and declining species of invertebrate and bird, and is an important habitat for reptiles. Coastal dune heath is a rare type of habitat occurring on mature dunes, where heather is found alongside sand sedge.

Habitat	Area Within North Norfolk (ha)
Lowland heathland	146.2
Coastal dune heath	0.34

**Deciduous Woodland**

Deciduous woodland can be natural or planted, and can contain any native broadleaved tree species.

Habitat	Area Within North Norfolk (ha)
Deciduous woodland	6336.3

**Fen, Marsh and Swamp**

This category contains all fen, marsh and swamp habitats with the exceptions of grazing marsh and saltmarsh, both of which are categorised separately.

Habitat	Area Within North Norfolk (ha)
Fen, marsh & swamp	1189.0

**Arable**

The majority of the land area of North Norfolk (and of Norfolk as a whole) is arable. This is a land-use category rather than a habitat. Intensive farming, including the removal of hedgerows and ponds and the increased use of fertiliser and herbicides has all had a knock-on effect on our wildlife. However, arable land can be species rich, particularly if managed sympathetically.

Land Use	Area Within North Norfolk (ha)
Arable	63171.2

**Coastal Habitats**

North Norfolk contains a large amount of important coastline, including many different types of coastal habitats. Three of these coastal habitats are coastal sand dunes, coastal sediments and saltmarsh (both pioneer and established).

Habitat	Area Within North Norfolk (ha)
Coastal sand dunes	225.4
Coastal sediments	1383.5
Saltmarsh	1530.1

**Marine Conservation Zones and NetGain - Update**

The UK Government committed to establishing a robust network of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) by 2012 under the Marine & Coastal Access Act (2009). One type of MPA is a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). NetGain was the North Sea Marine Conservation Zones Project.

One of the MCZs recommended by NetGain was the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds off the North Norfolk coast. This area contains one of the best examples of subtidal chalk habitat in the NetGain region. There are also two habitats not protected in any other marine conservation areas in the region. These are ‘moderate energy infralittoral rock’ and ‘moderate energy circalittoral rock’. The latter is characterised by a high species diversity, which the former is an important fish spawning ground and feeding site for marine birds.

However, while the advantages for this site were thought to justify the socio-economic impact to the renewable energy sector, further work is required to improve the data certainty of the recommendation prior to any designation taking place.

Source: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/82733/mcz-annex-a4-121213.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82733/mcz-annex-a4-121213.pdf)

**Species**

It is often the species found in North Norfolk that are such a draw for visitors to the area – particularly the migrant birds which are present in spectacular numbers in the autumn and winter months.

North Norfolk is also home to many rare and threatened species. Knowledge of the distribution and numbers of such species is important in order for their populations to be carefully monitored, and helped if necessary. As many of these rare species are also legally protected, it is important for their whereabouts to be known when developments that could potentially disturb or threaten them are planned. Non-native invasive species are also a continuing problem across Norfolk. It is important that their distribution and abundance is monitored so that their spread can be checked and their impact minimised.

The statistics in this section are from the NBIS database (search conducted February 2015). NBIS collect, collate and hold species information for the whole of Norfolk and provide that information to anyone with an interest in Norfolk’s wildlife. The data held by NBIS are also used during the planning process to inform ecological survey work, and for conservation purposes.



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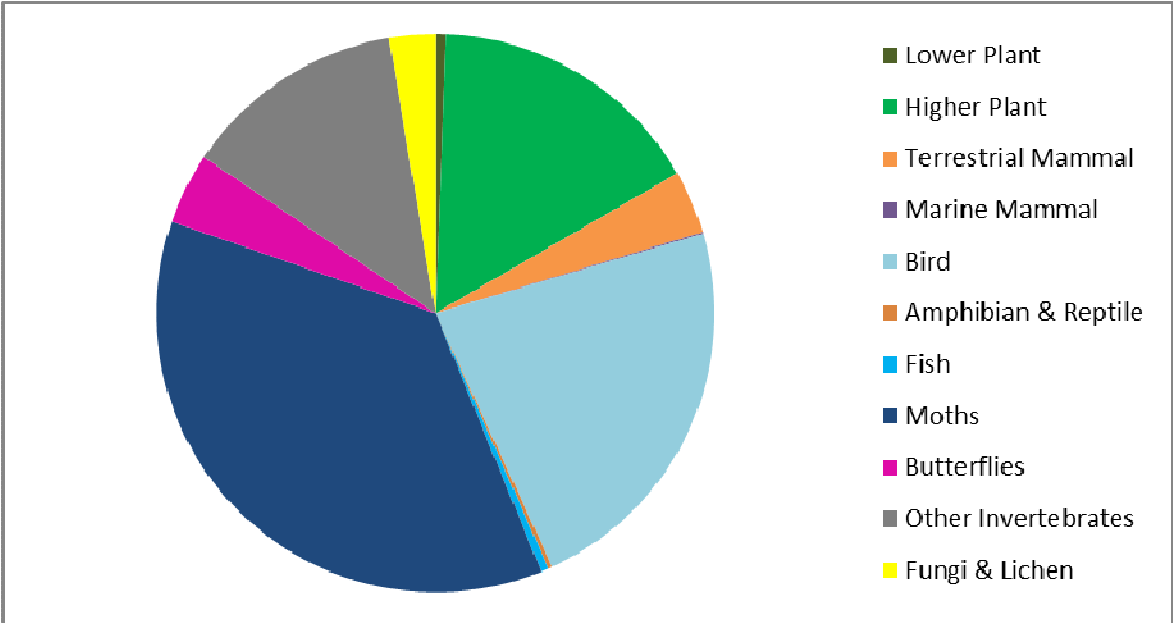


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© JC

NBIS holds **over 670000** individual species records for North Norfolk, covering the time period 1670-2014. The chart below shows that the group for which the largest number of records is held is moths, with birds and higher plants also fairly well represented. Our data holdings are much lower for lower plants (such as mosses and ferns), marine mammals, amphibians and reptiles and fish.



Taxon Group	No. Records 2011	No. Records 2015
Lower Plant	3940	4007
Higher Plant	92423	107698
Terrestrial Mammal	16732	24551
Marine Mammal	411	618
Bird	69238	152433
Amphibian & Reptile	1302	1591
Fish	1604	2975
Moth	192587	244732
Butterfly	26936	27650
Other Invertebrates	48307	88270
Fungi & Lichen	17086	17836

While the number of records held for all of the taxonomic groups has increased since 2010, the proportions of the number of records for each taxon group have stayed relatively stable, though bird records have seen the greatest increase of new records.



## Species of Conservation Concern

Included in the NBIS species data holdings for North Norfolk are **190855 records** of Species of Conservation Concern, covering just over **1400 species**.

These include:

**289** species on the **UKBAP** list;

**269 Section 41** species;

**166** species protected by the **Wildlife and Countryside Act**;

**217** species on the **IUCN Red Data List (including 10 critically endangered)**;

**145** species protected by the **EC Birds Directive**; and

**49 Red** and **120 Amber** listed bird species.

Many of the species are covered by more than one designation.

### **Biodiversity Action Plan and Section 41 Species**

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Species were those identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action. The lists were originally drawn up between 1995 and 1999 and were revised in 2007.

As a result of new drivers and requirements (both nationally and internationally), the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which was published in July 2012, has succeeded the UK BAP. The UK BAP lists were used to draw up statutory lists of priority species in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England these are 'Section 41' species.

Source: [www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5705](http://www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5705)



The hedgehog – a Section 41 species © Ed Stocker

### Grey Seals at Blakeney Point

For over a decade the number of seal pups born at Blakeney Point has been increasing year on year. The area is now famous for its breeding colony. From just 25 pups born in 2001, the seals have since thrived, with a total of 2426 grey seal pups were born over the winter of 2014-15. This makes Blakeney Point the largest colony of the species in England, overtaking Lincolnshire's Donna Nook.

With lots of space and no natural predators, Blakeney Point is a perfect breeding site for grey seals and pup survival rates are high. For the safety of both seals and visitors, the western-most mile of the beach and dunes is fenced off during the breeding season.

(Source: National Trust website)



Grey seal at Blakeney Point © Lizzy Oddy

### **Non Native Species**

NBIS holds **5743 records** of non-native invasive species (based on the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Long List) from between 1894 and 2014 (4463 of these records are from 2000 onwards). These records cover **41 species** ranging from American signal crayfish and muntjac deer to rhododendron and Canada geese.

This is an increase since 2010. Additional species recorded in the area include American skunk-cabbage, red-eared terrapin and Killer Shrimp.

#### **Killer Shrimp in North Norfolk**

The so-called Killer Shrimp (*Dikerogammarus villosus*) is a highly invasive non-native species from the Ponto-Caspian Region of Eastern Europe. It is a voracious predator and kills a range of native species including young fish. It can cause serious alterations to ecosystems.

The species was first reported in the UK in September 2010 in Grafham Water reservoir. It was found in very high numbers, suggesting that it had been there for a while. It was then detected in Cardiff Bay and in a reservoir in Port Talbot in November 2010. In March 2012, dedicated monitoring revealed killer shrimp in Barton Broad in Norfolk, as well as in the connected River Ant.

As it spreads through the Norfolk Broads, it is feared that aquatic wildlife in dykes and broads will be worst affected should killer shrimp become widespread in sufficient numbers. There could also potentially be indirect effects on the food supply of some bird species and fish. However, on a positive note, most of the substrate throughout the Broads is silt or peat, and therefore unsuitable for supporting large populations of killer shrimp, which requires a hard substrate. The main potential colonisation sites in the Broads will be zebra mussel beds and man-made structures.

While there is currently no way of eradicating killer shrimp from the Broads, the main emphasis is on not spreading it to other water bodies. The species is tolerant of poor water quality and can survive for up to five days in damp conditions, such as on angling gear, boats, kayaks and trailers. It is therefore vital that people check their gear on removal from a water body, clean it off and allow it to dry properly before using it in another water body.

Suspected records of this species should be sent with a photograph to [alert\\_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alert_nonnative@ceh.ac.uk).

Identification guides can be found at: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47>

Source: [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org) UK Non-native Species Secretariat



Killer shrimp © Environment Agency)



**Historic Environment Records**

A wide range of records relating to Norfolk’s historic environment are held by the Historic Environment Service of Norfolk County Council, based at Gressenhall. These range from details of historic and scheduled buildings and monuments, to records of artefacts found by metal detector surveys, to information gleaned from crop marks identified from aerial photographs.

Our historic environment is protected through the planning system in much the same way that our important natural environment areas are, so it is vital that their whereabouts are known.

The Historic Environment Service of Norfolk County Council, based at Gressenhall, hold **10863 records** of historic sites, monuments, buildings and artefacts found in North Norfolk (compared to 9661 records at the time of the last report in 2011). These include:

	<b>Recorded by June 2011</b>	<b>Recorded by Mar 2015</b>
Monuments	4295	4491
Buildings	2159	2513
Findspots	3143	3775

Each record is classified according to the time period it dates from. The following table outlines the numbers of records in North Norfolk for each time period:

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Number of records</b>
Prehistoric	2680
Roman	1699
Anglo-Saxon	1033
Medieval	3134
Post-Medieval	5352
Modern	3178

## **Walsingham Gaol**

A listed building in the Parish of Walsingham, this prison was built in 1787, enlarged in 1842 and saw its last inmates in 1861. The prisoners were forced to work treadmills in the nearby mill, though these were later replaced by steam power, hence the adjacent chimney.

Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer website.

Photo: Walsingham Gaol. © Elliott Brown  
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St Withburga's Church © Lizzy Oddy

## **St Withburga's Church, Holkham**

Occupying a large natural mound, St Withburga's Church was extensively remodelled in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The present tower dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The church contains a rare example of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century bell ringing machine. Roman and Medieval pottery has been found in the churchyard.

Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer website.

## **Sculthorpe Airfield**

Built in 1942, the airfield was used during World War II by the Free French Air Force, the Royal New Zealand and Australian Air Forces and the US Army Air Force. After the war it became one of the largest American airfields in the country, until its closure in 1992. A Neolithic polished flint axehead has also been found on the site.

Source: Norfolk Heritage Explorer website.



Sculthorpe Airfield © [Richard Humphrey](#) and licensed for [reuse](#) under this [Creative Commons Licence](#).

**Access and Enjoyment**

Access to greenspace and nature has been shown in many studies to improve people’s health, wellbeing and quality of life. There are various ways for people to access and enjoy the North Norfolk environment – from visiting a nature reserve or walking along the Norfolk Coast Path, to getting involved in conservation volunteering with a local group, or going out and recording the plants and animals at a particular site.

**Norfolk Coast Path – now including the England Coast Path**

The Norfolk Coast Path runs for 63 miles from Hunstanton to Sea Palling. As of the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014 it includes Norfolk’s first stretch of the England Coast Path. This runs for 25 miles between Weybourne and Sea Palling, passing through stunning scenery, with fascinating history to discover.

The Norfolk Coast Path passes through a diverse range of habitats – from sandy beaches to scrubby heaths, saltmarshes to shingle ridges. And look out for the plentiful wildlife along the route – with specialist coastal birds and plants and seals regularly seen just offshore. If you’re really lucky you might even catch a glimpse of a porpoise or whale out to sea! There is also much geological interest, with formations and rock types revealed in the soft cliffs. And this section of the coast has seen globally significant archaeological findings, including the first recorded human footprints outside of Africa, found at Happisburgh.

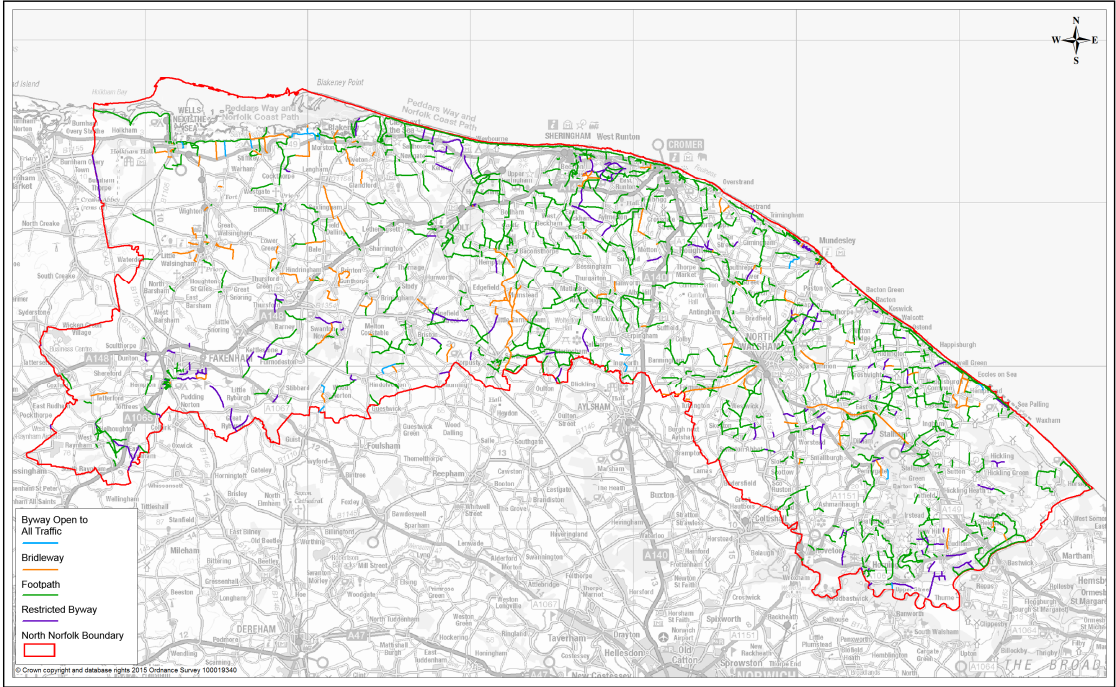
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Wells-next-the-Sea © Darren Oddy

Other Public Rights of Way

Not including the long distance trails, there is a network of other public rights of way throughout North Norfolk, allowing people to get out and about in their local area.



Type of Public Right of Way	Total Length in North Norfolk (km)
Byway Open to All Traffic	10.71
Bridleway	97.98
Footpath	569.79
Restricted Byway	98.56

Footpaths are open to walkers only, while bridleways can be used by walkers and horse riders, plus cyclists as long as they give way to other users. A restricted byway can be used by walkers, horse riders and any other vehicle (e.g. cyclists) provided that it is not mechanically driven. A byway open to all traffic can be used by any type of traffic, but is normally used as a footpath or bridleway.



### Recording Wildlife

One way in which anyone can get out and about and make a positive contribution to wildlife conservation is through recording wildlife and submitting records to NBIS. If we don't know what species are located where then it is very difficult to protect them or to spot population declines. Records submitted to NBIS are checked by local experts (the County Recorders – see below) and then stored in a database. They are then available to be used to inform planning decisions and conservation work, as well as for student and academic research projects and for interested members of the public.

For a record to be of use, it needs to have the four 'W's – WHAT was seen, WHEN it was seen, WHERE it was seen (preferably with a grid reference), and WHO saw it (in case we need to contact the recorder for further details).

Records can be emailed to NBIS ([nbis@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nbis@norfolk.gov.uk)) or entered online via the NBIS website (<http://www.nbis.org.uk/AllSpeciesSurvey>)



### The County Recorder Network

Co-ordinated largely through the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, the County Recorder Network is made up of expert volunteer recorders and specialists. They cover almost all taxonomic groups of plants and animals, and as well as carrying out their own recording they also receive, store and verify records from others, and provide these verified records to NBIS and to appropriate national schemes and societies.

Without these enthusiastic volunteers we would have far fewer data on species in Norfolk.

Source: Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service website

## **Conclusion**

- The extents of the international, European and nationally designated sites have remained constant.
- Four new County Wildlife Sites and three new Roadside Nature Reserves have been designated in the District since 2011.
- There has been a large increase in the number of County Wildlife Sites in Positive Conservation Management (in 2013-14) – North Norfolk is now well above the county average.
- There has been a good increase in the number of species records for North Norfolk District, with a particular increase in bird and invertebrate records.
- Blakeney Point is now home to the largest grey seal colony in England (2014-15).
- There has been an increase in Historic Environment records from the District.
- The new England Coast Path has extended the Norfolk Coast Path down to Sea Palling.
  
- The North Norfolk Coast lost its UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status in 2014, due to no longer meeting the criteria.
- SSSI condition appears less favourable – this could be partly due to changes in how the site conditions are measured and recorded.
- It was decided that the recommended Marine Conservation Zone at Cromer Shoal Chalk Bed required further work to improve data certainty before it could be designated.
- There has been an increase in non-native species recorded. Are they increasing, or are people more aware of them now and more likely to record them?