



Is it a bee or a wasp? Or something else altogether? Find out more about this rare resident on page 2.



A cuttlefish found off the Norfolk coast. How big is it? Turn to page 2 to find out more.



Nicholson's beard moss, a rarity that is colonising new habitats. Find out where it turned up recently in Norfolk (page 2).

Images (left to right) by:
Rob Coleman; Rob Spray; Robin Stevenson)

Welcome to issue 7 of the NBIS newsletter

- Highlights from the Norfolk County Recorders;
- Green Lanes survey;
- Recording Fund update;
- NBIS developments;
- Events;
- News in Brief.

NBIS is a partnership of organisations including the Environment Agency, Broadland District Council, 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 in England and operates a not-for-profit service, recording, managing and interpreting wildlife information for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Norfolk.

NBIS to help with key Defra pilots testing innovative methodology

NBIS was delighted to be asked to take part in remote sensing and biodiversity offsetting pilots.

The England Biodiversity Strategy published in August 2011 describes how more effective and joined-up approaches to conservation will help to halt overall biodiversity loss.

Work is already underway on initiatives described in the strategy such as biodiversity offsetting and the creation of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs). However, mapping of habitats, necessary for these approaches, is costly if undertaken using traditional survey techniques.

The ability to map and monitor habitats remotely using satellite imagery could prove a cost-effective solution, and NBIS will assist with a Defra pilot study run by consultants Environment Systems, to test out this emerging methodology in Norfolk.

As custodians for environmental data in the county, and with expertise already developed in BAP habitat and land-use mapping, NBIS is ideally placed to assist with the study, which will also produce some baseline mapping against which future comparisons can be made.

The Norfolk earth observation pilot will focus on the Brecks, north coast and Broads areas and will use near infra-red (NIR) imagery from cameras mounted on 'drones' in addition to satellite imagery and aerial photography to produce land use and habitat maps. NBIS staff will help with mapping and ground-truthing.

The technology has great potential as a cost effective solution to current surveillance and monitoring needs. It is envisaged that future

The Norfolk County Recorders have sent in news of some interesting discoveries over the past six months. Here are some highlights.....

Norfolk marine recorder, **Rob Spray** reports that the Indian summer at the end of 2011 allowed Seasearch divers to continue their underwater survey off the north Norfolk coast into November, some two months later than most years.

Divers were amazed to find large numbers of little cuttlefish, *Sepioloatlantica*. This tiny octopus relative matures at the size of a bumble bee, and is notoriously aggressive giving divers an arm-waving display before jetting off leaving a blob of distracting ink. Other highlights included a foraminifera, a sessile creature 0.5cm tall with a calcium shell which looks a bit like an anemone wearing a stiff vest with the tentacles poking through.



Sepioloatlantica
(Rob Spray)

The Seasearch survey for 2011 yielded 50% more records than 2010. This coming year's survey will concentrate on the Norfolk underwater chalk reef, and sea squirts. Seasearch will also assist NWT with shore recording. For more information on Seasearch activities in Norfolk contact Rob at rob@1townhouses.co.uk

A rare moss, *Didymodon nicholsonii*, (Nicholson's Beard-moss, pictured on the front of the newsletter), was discovered on a tarmac pavement in North Runcton near King's Lynn by Norfolk Bryophyte recorder, **Robin Stevenson**

Although first discovered in Norfolk in 2008, it has taken three years to find it in West Norfolk. Classically found in area within the flood zone of rivers it has increased its range to tarmac and concrete paths.

Robin also reports a new moss species for Norfolk, *Tortula schimperi*, or Upright Screw-moss. This was spotted during a excursion with Cambridge moss hunters to Stow Bardolph estate. This species has only recently been recognised as a separate species: differences in the past have been attributed to natural variations in a related species, *Tortula subulata*.



Tortula schimperi or Upright Screw-moss
(Robin Stevenson)

Robin Stevenson, crs111@talktalk.net

Open University iSpot co-ordinator for Norfolk, **Rob Coleman** had an exciting find in his garden last autumn with the first county record (confirmed by Norfolk beetle recorder, **Martin Collier**), of the bee chafer beetle, *Trichius rosaceus*.

This spectacular European beetle which belongs to the family Scarabaeidae, is thought to have a local adventive breeding population.

<http://www.ispot.org.uk/node/163938>

Visit iSpot to share your interest in wildlife.
http://www.ispot.org.uk/whats_it_all_about

r.coleman@open.ac.uk



Trichius rosaceus (bee chafer beetle)
(Rob Coleman)

Events >>

NBIS continues to promote its services through local wildlife events. This season NBIS will be attending:

19th May 2012 Wild About the Wensum.

At Pensthorpe 10am—5pm. More information at www.pensthorpe.com/events/

9th June—10th June 2012 Gaywood valley Bioblitz

Gaywood valley from 12noon 9th June until 12 noon 10th June
More information from gemma.clark@norfolk.gov.uk

The aptly named liverwort Wood-rust, *Nowellia curvifolia* (Dicks.) Mitt., was recently discovered growing in abundance on a large fallen tree in woodland, near Aylsham. This tiny leafy liverwort is a rotten wood specialist and is usually found on bark-stripped 'pine' logs. It needs acid moist conditions to flourish. Found rarely in Suffolk, there have only been two previous Norfolk records, both close together near the West Norfolk coast. It is, however, a species to look out for, as it is increasing in Southern Britain.



Nowellia curvifolia (Wood-rust)
(Chris Roberts)

Mary Ghullam, County Recorder, bryophytes
mylia@tiscali.co.uk

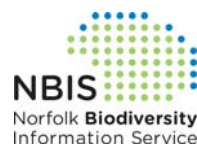
Green Lanes survey

NBIS and Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society are running a survey of green lanes in Norfolk to establish where they are located and what habitats and wildlife they support.

Green lanes are unmetalled tracks, often sunken and usually bounded on both sides by hedges. Many have a long history, going back over the centuries when they formed part of the network of trackways and parish boundaries.

If you can help NBIS discover more about Norfolk's network of green lanes, please go to the NBIS website for guidance and a survey form.

<http://www.nbis.org.uk/green-lanes>



Local Recording Fund

NBIS invests in local wildlife recording in Norfolk using monies raised from commercial enquiries. In 2010–11 NBIS supported the following projects from its local recording fund:

- Digitisation of moth records from King's Lynn and Norwich Castle Museum collections
- Thetford Forest rides spider survey
- Thetford Forest rides bee and wasp survey
- Flora of King's Lynn
- Barbastelle Study Group equipment
- Ground-truthing of Norfolk Coast AONB geodiversity sites
- East Coast Seaweed week
- ID training course for marine recorders
- Thompson pond invertebrate survey
- Cranwich Camp habitat creation aceuleate hymenoptera survey

For 2012–13, NBIS will give priority to projects that enhance knowledge of under-recorded species group, habitats and areas. We will publish these along with guidance on applying for a grant on our website in due course. In the meantime, please contact NBIS for further information: nbis@norfolk.gov.uk

NBIS update

Responding to data enquiries is a core function for NBIS and is a daily task. During 2011–2012, NBIS provided responses to **134 commercial enquiries; 100+ non-commercial enquiries** (students, public, conservation bodies); **202 Service Level Enquiries** (Planning applications).

NBIS continues to operate the Regional Standard Enquiry Service. This service, the result of a 12 month project undertaken by NBIS was developed with ecological consultants and will ensure that anyone requesting a data search for planning purposes from the region's LRCs will receive a standard set of protected species and site data within 10 days.

NBIS continues to load species data onto the National Biodiversity Network Gateway online and has, to date published the following datasets: amphibians and reptiles; bumblebees; fungi and lichens, Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative database of invasive species; spiders; East Anglian Species of Conservation Concern. In total, the datasets on the gateway are accessed around 5000 times per month.

Martin Horlock, Biodiversity Information Officer, NBIS martin.horlock@norfolk.gov.uk

23rd June–24th June 2012 Dinosaur Park bioblitz.
At Great Witchingham Dinosaur Park. More information at www.dinosauradventure.co.uk/general-information/events.php

23rd June–24th June 2012 Little Ouse Headwaters Project bioblitz. More information enquiries@lohp.org.uk

27th June–28th June 2012 - Norfolk Show
Norfolk Showground

13th October 2012 Wild About Norfolk
Easton College 10am–4pm
More information at www.wildaboutnorfolk.co.uk/wildaboutnorfolk/

widespread use of the technique will help with green infrastructure and ecological network planning as well as condition monitoring.

NBIS is also involved with a biodiversity off-setting pilot, another Defra project that started this April. Biodiversity offsets are designed to provide effective compensation for losses to biodiversity through conservation activities. The technique is highly complex and

the pilot which involves six areas will help to develop understanding of how the technique could work consistently on a wider scale.

NBIS will complete habitat and land use mapping for the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNPD) area to produce opportunity and ecological networks maps to inform the offsetting study pilot in Norwich.

Contact: Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS), Environment, Transport and Development, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich. NR1 2SG

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You can launch the NBIS website from your Smart phone using this QR code!

News in Brief

District Ecologist

David White (david.white.eta@norfolk.gov.uk), District Ecologist with NBIS, is providing environmental expertise, particularly in planning matters, for district authorities in Norfolk that do not currently employ an ecologist. His post is jointly funded by NBIS, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council with some time available for other councils to buy into as required. David will play a key role in the Norwich biodiversity offsetting pilot which began in April this year. For more information on biodiversity offsetting and the Greater Norwich Biodiversity Offsetting pilot go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/biodiversity/uk/offsetting/pilots/>

Recorders' Meeting

An enjoyable and productive meeting attended by 30 Norfolk County Recorders was held by NBIS and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society in November. Presentations covered many topics and habitats, ranging from the Brecks Biodiversity Audit, to lichens in churchyards and the Norfolk underwater chalk reef and seaweeds survey. Discussions progressed the topic of formalising the County Recorder Network.

CWS handbook update

NWT and NBIS have collaborated on a revision to the County Wildlife Sites Handbook for Norfolk. NWT re-drafted the publication which was re-formatted by staff at NBIS. Download the handbook here: http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/CWS_HANDBOOK_APRIL_2012.pdf

NBIS citizen surveys coming up

NBIS will be launching two new citizen surveys in the spring, where we seek public support for recording. We will be asking for help recording invasive alien species that are threatening our ponds and waterways in conjunction with the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative. Later in the year, we'll be asking for help spotting elm trees across the county. Keep visiting the NBIS website for more detail, or sign up to receive our electronic bulletin issued each month which will contain details (contact nbis@norfolk.gov.uk).

New Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

NBIS is pleased to have arranged SLAs with two ecological consultancies which provide enhanced access to data and establish record transfer to NBIS. Find out more from martin.horlock@nbis.org.uk