



Biodiversity News in Norfolk

Issue 4 (July 2011)

Giant hogweed (Olaf Booy)

Welcome to our July biodiversity e-bulletin

It's been a busy month for the Biodiversity Team, with:

- The Community Biodiversity Awards, held on 12th July at County Hall, which recognise the efforts of local people in achieving improvements for the wildlife of Norfolk (see [Local News](#));
- Launch of the revitalised NBIS website, which features online recording (see [Local News](#));
- Launch of Broad Sweep, to find out where six "alien" species are found in the Norfolk Broads (see [Getting Involved](#));
- A biodiversity conference for 6th formers held at Norwich Castle Museum (see [Local News](#));
- Natural Neighbours community biodiversity conference (see [Local News](#));
- Many public events attended to raise awareness of the many aspects of our work, such as Norfolk Show and NatureFest ([Local News](#)).

There are plenty of opportunities to get 'hands on' with recording biodiversity featured in this issue (see [Getting Involved](#)) and some good news for a rare plant found on a Roadside Nature Reserve (see [Local News](#)), plus lots of events coming up (see [Events](#)).

If you find this bulletin useful or can think of something that would improve it, please let us know. You can use this very simple "Doodle poll" to let us know what you think (it's very quick and straightforward to complete - and doesn't involve any registration, plus your answers can't be viewed by other participants):

<http://doodle.com/r5an6c36czehtc6t>

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

New look NBIS website developed

The NBIS website now includes more interactive features, including an online recording facility for all our public surveys, dynamic links to Flickr and Facebook, plus an area for comments at the bottom of specific pages. Other developments coming soon include local conservation/community pages and further online recording areas which will allow direct input of records for most common species.

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

Community Biodiversity Awards

Eleven projects/individuals who have worked to enhance biodiversity and engaged with local communities, were recognised at the Community Biodiversity Awards, held on July 12th at County Hall. The Awards are presented each year by the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership to the best community biodiversity projects in the county. They acknowledge the efforts of local people in achieving improvements for the wildlife of Norfolk, and reward excellence in this area.

<http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/news>

Crested cow-wheat 'boom'

Crested cow-wheat is a plant which once graced many of our Norfolk waysides, but it is now restricted to one solitary site – a Roadside Nature Reserve near Beetley. "Last year the population had gone down to a perilous ten plants, which was a great concern," said Heidi Thompson from ETD's Environment team, who is responsible for RNRs. A change in verge management has led to a population boom this year and it now covers a stretch of approximately five metres of verge with its attractive pink flowers.

Norfolk Show

The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (NBP) joined forces with Norfolk Wildlife Trust at their stand to promote the findings of the Brecks Biodiversity Audit - a pioneering study commissioned by NBP and other partners and conducted by UEA to find out more about the biodiversity of Breckland and its management needs. The NWT stand won the Somerleyton Cup for best environmental and conservation stand.

<http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/Home/News/NWT-wins-best-stand-at-Royal-Norfolk-Show.aspx>

Meanwhile, at Norfolk County Council's Countryside Advice Area, Mike Sutton-Croft, NNNSI Co-ordinator used an alien spaceship to draw visitors to his stand, and Martin Horlock, Biodiversity Information Officer exhibited live moths to promote the latest citizen science survey from NBIS.

Natural Neighbours community biodiversity conference

A conference for community conservation groups was organised by BTCV on behalf of the Biodiversity Partnership. This highly successful event was held on 9th July and attracted over 40 participants. It set out to help local community groups address challenges such as attracting volunteers, finding funding and sourcing the technical know-how to achieve their ambitions for a better environment.

6th form biodiversity conference

NBP, NBIS and NNNSI all took part in a recent conference for 6th formers organised by Norwich Castle Museum on 5th July. The event included interactive workshops on the role of nature reserves, biological recording, invasive non-native species, collecting and curating, international conservation and the importance of biodiversity for pharmaceutical development. The day attracted over 40 AS-level biology and geography students from four local high schools. The day concluded with a chaired debate on whether or not too much funding is spent on conservation, generating lively discussion.

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National NEWS

Branching out for a green economy

A short animated film, narrated by Sir David Attenborough highlights the role forests can play in national development, a green economy and climate change.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=alKnTqWNy9Y

IEEM medal awarded to Pavan Sukhdev

Pavan Sukhdev was awarded the IEEM Institute Medal for his work to bring the concerns of biodiversity loss to businesses focussed on short term financial profits. Read more here:

<http://bankofnaturalcapital.com/2011/06/30/pavan-sukhdev-receives-ieem-institute-medal/>

NERC Taxonomy and Systematics Review

Following concerns over the state of taxonomy and systematics in the UK, the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) commissioned a study by the Natural History Museum which provides quantitative data on the subject.

<http://goo.gl/fb/Kd9MU>

Map lays bare landscape of UK in intimate detail

From the mountains of Scotland to the broad fields of the barley barons of the east, a new map has revealed the environmental "DNA" of the nation.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2011/jul/06/mapping-technologies-farming>

Ladybird made into 'zombie' bodyguard by parasitic wasp

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13860891>

Smartphones are the "butterfly nets of the 21st century"

The iBat is an application that allows volunteers to detect and record more than 900 species of bat, with the help of an ultrasonic microphone. The recordings are uploaded to a website that identifies each of the calls, allowing an accurate picture of bat populations. Similar studies encouraging public participation in wildlife recording led the Wall Street Journal to make the headline comment above.

<http://t.co/b5r7BLx>

Enhancing arable biodiversity

The UK Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board has recently produced a step-by-step guide to enhancing arable biodiversity through the management of uncropped land. Voluntary measures to use less productive or accessible land for the benefit of biodiversity – with knock-on rewards for farmers (through better pollination and control of crop pests) can make a real difference – especially if land managers work together.

http://www.hgca.com/cms_publications.output/2/2/Publications/On-farm%20information/Enhancing%20arable%20biodiversity%20through%20the%20management%20of%20uncropped%20land%20-%20an%20HGCA%20guide.msp?fn=show&pubcon=8628

Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership draws attention to White Paper omissions

Don't forget the abiotic part of nature!

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jun/16/price-nature-oil-gold-wind-power>

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GETTING INVOLVED

Help NBIS hunt for moths (a quick reminder)

NBIS launched a moth survey in the EDP. The help of the Norfolk public is wanted in the hunt for moths <http://t.co/5FYX8rd>. Let us know if you spot them!

OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) "Bugs Count" survey

Do you know what bugs are living near you? Take part in Bugs Count and help the OPAL scientists learn how the urban environment may be affecting invertebrates.

<http://www.opalexplornature.org/bugscount>

Volunteers needed for survey of visitors to nature reserves

Planners in the Norwich area require more information on the way people travel to and use nature reserves. They are running a survey over the summer, and are looking for volunteers to help. Volunteers would undertake a short face-to-face questionnaire with visitors to a number of specific sites, mainly in the Broads area. Limited expenses and mileage can be claimed. This is a great way to make contacts and meet future employers for recent graduates in any environmental discipline.

Contact Helen Lambert 01603 430128 for further details

What's happening to our conker trees?

Our conker trees are under attack from 'alien' invaders, which cause whitish patches on the leaves which then turn brown and die. Find out what's causing the damage, and what you can do to help.

<http://www.ourweboflife.org.uk/index.html>

"Broad Sweep" launched

Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative Co-ordinator, Mike Sutton-Croft, has launched a public survey aiming to find out where six "alien" species are found in the Norfolk Broads. You can help by sending us your sightings of: Himalayan balsam; giant hogweed; Japanese knotweed; floating pennywort; red-eared terrapin; and American mink. <http://www.nbis.org.uk/BroadSweep2011>

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SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS

Pink grasshopper

A pair of rare pink meadow grasshoppers was spotted recently at Dersingham National Nature Reserve by two seven-year old local bug hunters. The colouration is a genetic abnormality affecting less than one percent of individuals.

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/young_naturalists_noah_and_meg_find_rare_pink_grasshopper_at_dersingham_1_960629

Andrena varians spotted at Sheringham

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-13876524>

Rare wasp favours brownfield sites in Norwich

A rare 5-banded weevil wasp (*Cerceris quinquefasciata*) has been recorded at several new sites around Norwich this year - mostly on post or pre-development sites, but also arable field margins.

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EVENTS

8th August - 13th August

NWT Saving Species presentation at Fusion, Norwich Forum

Spectacular panoramic wildlife photographic presentation.

<http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/Things-to-do/Events/Events-archive/NWT-Saving-Species-presentation.aspx>

1st August - 6th August

NWT Living Seas presentation at Fusion, Norwich Forum

Spectacular panoramic photographic presentation at the Fusion Gallery in the Norwich Forum as part of National Marine Week.

<http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/Things-to-do/Events/Events-archive/NWT-Living-Seas-presentation.aspx>

5th August

Water vole training course

Led by Ecological Consultant, Paul Gambling, at Fakenham. £60 (£30 concessions) + VAT.

Further details from Abi Hemmant abiH@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk 01603 625540

<http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/Home/News/New-course-on-the-ecology-of-the-water-vole.aspx>

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AND FINALLY..

There have been several sightings of a big black cat that have been reported in the EDP. Unfortunately, without a clear species identification, Martin has been unable to put any records onto the NBIS database!

http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/big_cat_spotted_twice_over_past_few_days_in_north_norfolk_1_949094

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Webpages: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/>; www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/; www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NorfolkBiodiversityInformationService; www.facebook.com/NorfolkInvasives

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkBIS>; <http://www.twitter.com/NorfolkNNSI>

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