

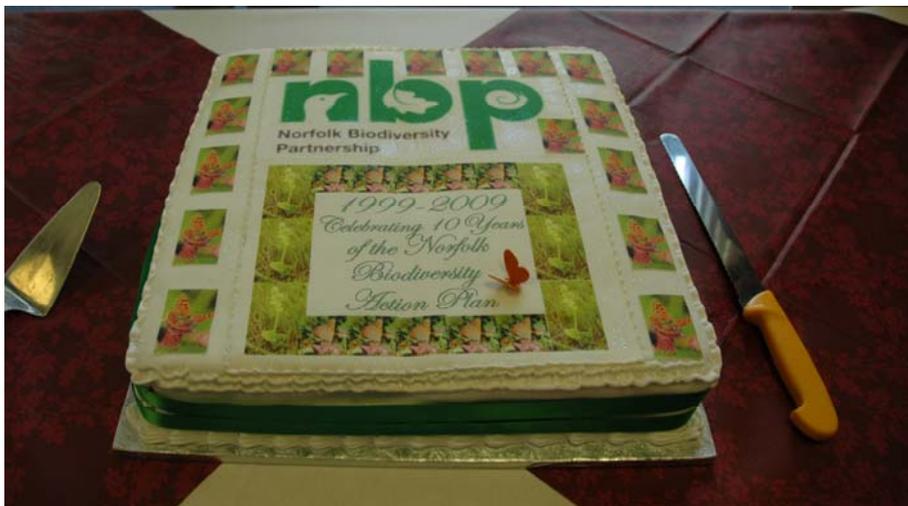
*Inside: | Welcome | Action Plans | Community Biodiversity Awards | Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative | Planning and Biodiversity Seminar | Brecks Biodiversity Audit | Biodiversity Project Fund | Partners' News | News in Brief | Events Coming Up |*

## Looking forward to the next 10 years!

Over one hundred local delegates including ecologists and conservationists were joined by acclaimed author and nature writer, Jay Griffiths, at the Annual Norfolk Biodiversity Forum in October. The event celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan.

many achievements of the Partnership since the launch of the BAP ten years ago. He drew particular attention to the growing strength of the Partnership—which has seen its membership increase from just seven organisations to 21 today, the comprehensive suite of nearly 70 Species and Habitat Action Plans, and the establishment of the Biodiversity Project Fund.

Gerry Barnes, Chair of the



Celebration cake (Credit: Mike Sutton-Croft)

Jay Griffiths gave an inspirational keynote address, drawing on her wilderness travel around the world. In her talk, she praised the efforts of all those in Norfolk working to conserve the distinctiveness and diversity of wildlife in the county, emphasising the role biodiversity plays in enriching our lives.

Scott Perkin, Biodiversity Co-ordinator, reflected on the

Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, highlighted the importance of linking biodiversity to climate change, the economy and health. He predicted that these three issues would be the government's central concerns for the next ten years.

Talks from the Chairs of several Topic Groups followed, summarising their progress over the past decade.



Jay Griffiths (Credit: Mike Sutton-Croft)

*"Modernity seems too often to disregard the unique, the precise locale, the especial place... At the heart of biodiversity and nature conservation work is an implacable belief that this place matters, this site, no matter how small it might be."*

*"The idea of the Songlines is a resonant one to me. The Songlines of Australia are famous, but I would argue that there are songlines all over the world. Every specific place has singers of the land. In local conservation, there is always that lovely heart-slipping moment when you suddenly realize that you are with a knower of the land, who keeps like treasure their stanza of the song, their knowledge, perhaps of that exact part of the fens, their observation, perhaps of that animal. In Australia, it is regarded as treasure and birthright, and belonging. How can one ever belong to one's land? By knowing it, by learning its songs..."*

Excerpt from "A Tender Wildness" by Jay Griffiths, written for the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership. Read Jay's talk in full at [www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/news](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/news)

# Welcome

Welcome to the Winter 2010 update of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership. We were encouraged by the response to our first electronic newsletter, and have allowed more space in this edition for news from our partners. As always, we welcome your feedback and comments!

Scott



*Working to conserve, enhance and restore Norfolk's biological diversity*

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## Action Plans

Revisions have been made to the **Norfolk Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan** to take account of the 2007 UK BAP review. All hedgerows that have 80 per cent or more cover of native trees or shrubs are now covered by the Hedgerows HAP (formerly the *Ancient and/or Species-rich Hedgerows HAP*).

The **Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) Species Action Plan** has also been completed recently. Numbers of this species have been declining nationally and it is likely that levels of breeding birds have also fallen in Norfolk. This plan seeks to ensure that there is a sustained recovery in numbers in both wetland and farmland habitats in Norfolk, by 2015.

Four other action plans have also been completed: Species Action Plans for **crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*)**, **little tern (*Sternula albifrons*)** and **Norfolk hawkler (*Aeshna isosceles*)**, and a Habitat Action Plan for ponds.



Little tern (Credit: Kevin Simmonds)

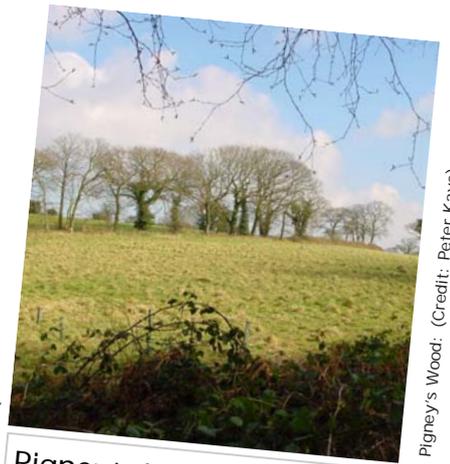
## Community Biodiversity Awards

**Four exceptional Norfolk conservation projects were presented with the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership's "Community Biodiversity Awards" in September at the Norwich Assembly House.** The awards are made in recognition of outstanding contributions to wildlife and engagement with local communities.



(Credit: Forestry Commission)

**Forest Schools East** - a Forestry Commission initiative - won the Education Award, in recognition of its pioneering work to support the creation of Forest Schools in the East of England.



Pigney's Wood: (Credit: Peter Kaye)

**Pigney's Wood**, a 23.5 ha site in North Norfolk, won the Site Award for the excellent conservation and management work carried out by the North Norfolk Community Woodland Trust.



Liz Howarth won the Individual Award for her enthusiastic and inspiring contributions to the BTCV's Green Gym and Action Team.

(Credit: BTCV)

Rosary Cemetery (Credit: Norwich City Council)



The Friends of the Rosary Cemetery won the Local Group Award, for their sensitive and innovative approach to the conservation and management of the Rosary Cemetery in Norwich.

## Five runner-up projects were highly commended for their conservation efforts:

**Kevin West**, for the creation of extensive native woodlands and orchards at 'Westies Wood' (Site Category); **Erpingham VC Primary School**, for the creation of an outstanding pond and woodland area on the

school grounds (Education Category); **The Friends of Open Green Spaces (FrOGS)**, for their conservation work at Spout Hills - a valuable wildlife site on the fringe of Holt (Local Group Category); **The BTCV Green Gym (Norwich)**, for its conservation activities at multiple sites around Norwich and its active involvement of volunteers from the community (Local Group Category); **Charles Cornish**, for his role in the creation of a large community woodland in North Walsham - one of the first to be planted in the county (Individual Category).

Read more about the Community Biodiversity Awards at [www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/news](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/news)

## Six Invasive Species Targeted for Action

A new report prepared by Mike Sutton-Croft, Co-ordinator of the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative (NNSI), has highlighted the actions needed to control six priority species in the county: Australian swamp stonecrop; floating pennywort; giant hogweed; Himalayan balsam;



**Norfolk  
Non-native  
Species  
Initiative**

**Japanese knotweed; and parrot's feather.**

The Initiative has also recently secured additional support from Defra/EA and Natural England. This funding will be used to control invasive non-native plant species in the field, as a contribution towards meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

Read the report at [www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/nonnativespecies)

For further information, please contact [Michael.sutton-croft@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.sutton-croft@norfolk.gov.uk)

## Planning and Biodiversity Seminar

Over 50 participants, including many development control officers and forward planners, attended the Fifth Annual Seminar on Planning and Biodiversity on 10 September 2009.

The event was jointly organised by the Suffolk and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnerships, and featured: a presentation from Mike Oxford of the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE); a practical exercise demonstrating the use of the 1 App local validation checklist developed by Suffolk; a presentation on planning and Green Infrastructure from Natural England; and updates from other participants.

## Brecks Biodiversity Audit

The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership is a funding member of the Commissioning Group for the Brecks Biodiversity Audit, an ambitious study aiming to build evidence-based management recommendations for Breckland.

Breckland is of national and international importance for its biodiversity. It supports large numbers of rare species characteristic of Mediterranean steppe, coastal dunes and lowland heathland, and represents a unique biodiversity hotspot in the UK.

In July 2009, a team from the University of East Anglia was commissioned by the Norfolk and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnerships, the Forestry Commission, PlantLife International, the Brecks Partnership and Natural England, to carry out the Brecks Biodiversity Audit. The project aims to collate information on the full range of

biodiversity in Breckland, in order to address the following questions (amongst others):

- What ecological conditions, processes and management do key Breckland species require?
- Is it possible to identify multi-species assemblages with shared ecological requirements?
- To what extent are the requirements of key species being met by current management approaches?

Excellent progress has already been achieved. Over 500,000 records have been collated, for nearly 13,000 species. These include 1,898 Red Data Book, Nationally Rare or Scarce, or BAP species!

The final report of the first phase of the Brecks Biodiversity Audit is expected in the summer of 2010. It will include management prescriptions to benefit different taxonomic groups, information about key localities (in GIS), and mapped opportunities for ecological networks and linkages. For more information, please contact Dr Paul Dolman at UEA.

# Biodiversity Project Fund

Four new projects received support from the Partnership's Project Fund. These were: a marine chalk gully survey; the Broads County Wildlife Site Project; the Wet Woodlands Project; and Wild About Norfolk. [Read more below.](#)

## Marine Chalk Gully Survey

The east coast is the least surveyed of the UK's marine environments. This project, developed by Seasearch, is investigating off-shore chalk reefs near Sheringham, a rich natural habitat representing the only rocky reef habitat in East Anglia. The gullies lie between underwater chalk outcrops from 0.5m to 2m high, with areas of chalk rubble and coarse sand between. Marine creatures such as squat lobsters, porcelain crabs, breadcrumb sponge and sea squirts are found there. An impression of



Anemone (Credit: Rob Spray)

these habitats can be gained at Sheringham and West Runton beaches, where the reefs extend onshore.

Volunteer diving groups will explore the extent of the undersea reefs, generating habitat and species data which will be collated into a report for the Biodiversity Partnership and NBIS.

## Broads County Wildlife Sites Project

County Wildlife Sites represent a significant proportion of the best semi-natural habitats in the county and form an important component of Norfolk's ecological network. However, only 22 CWS have been designated in the Broads; this represents less than two per cent of Norfolk's CWS resource by both number and area. This project, which was launched in summer 2009 and is expected to conclude in 2012, is assessing existing survey data, digitally mapping potential new sites, and carrying out further surveys of fen meadow, woodland and grazing marsh. Five new designations have already been made, and more are expected as the project continues.

## Wet Woodland Project

The Norfolk Wet Woodland Project, a partnership between Norfolk County Council and the Forestry Commission, was set up to help reverse the decline in wet woodlands found within the Wensum, Blackwater and Nar river catchments.

Much of this BAP habitat has been lost as a result of clearance and drainage for agriculture, reedbed and fen creation, and inappropriate management. The project has already delivered a study on the historical extent and distribution of wet woodlands in the catchments, carried out survey work in the field, and helped to create over ten hectares of new wet woodlands through Natural England and Forestry Commission grant schemes. In the latest phase of the project, the value of wet woodlands will be promoted to landowners and partner organisations, and a further ten hectares of habitat will be created.



Scott Perkin at **Wild About Norfolk 2009**, which received support from the Partnership's Project Fund.

## Visionary woodland project brings gains for wildlife and local community

Described by Professor Tom Williamson as "a great modern contribution to the landscape leaving the mark of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on it", the Burlingham Woodland Walks were officially opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009.



Guests at the launch of the Burlingham Woodland Walks  
(Credit: EDP)

The award-winning walks, which connect Burlingham with Lingwood, Hemblington, South Walsham and Acle, have been developed over the last 15 years by a partnership involving Norfolk County Council and the Forestry Commission. Hundreds of local volunteers – from Brownies and Cubs, to members of the Acle Lands Trust and Blofield and District Conservation Group - helped to bring the project to fruition, planting more than 80,000 trees and shrubs to create 13 new woods. Older woods were restored, ten new orchards containing local fruit varieties were created, three new meadows were established and ten kilometres of new hedgerow were planted. The project was the brainchild of Dr Gerry Barnes, Norfolk County Council Environment Operations Manager and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership Chair, out of a desire to restore woodland destroyed following the 1987 and 1991 gales.

The finished network includes several kilometres of short, medium and long walks, many suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. A sculpture trail and art works by Acle High School have also been installed. The woodlands also provide real gains for wildlife, by providing a contiguous habitat corridor.

## Broads Authority works towards solution for biodiversity and local sailors

Work to improve the water clarity and biodiversity of the Trinity Broads SSSI, north-west of Great Yarmouth, has been the central aim of a partnership project involving the Broads Authority, Essex and Suffolk Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England, which began in the 1990s.

At Rollesby Broad (part of the Trinity Broads), aquatic plants such as water crowfoot, flat-stemmed pondweed, and beds of stoneworts at the edges are doing well. In 2009, plant coverage reached 100 per cent of the broad, in many areas growing right to the surface. However, the success of the water plants has brought problems for the Sailing Club – which struggled to sail at all during periods of peak plant growth in June and July.

Broads Authority Conservation Officer and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership Wetlands Topic Group Chair, Andrea Kelly, said: "The Trinity

Broads project has multiple aims, including promoting appropriate recreation, so we want to enable the sailing club to continue to sail during the summer. This isn't a simple issue as the plants are a protected feature of the site under the EU Habitats Directive. But we are keen to find a solution, and are holding a series of meetings over the winter to see if a compromise can be reached in time for summer 2010".



Water crowfoot  
(Credit: Broads Authority)

## Research project helps little terns

A six-year research project funded by Action for Birds in England (AfBie) – a collaboration between Natural England and the RSPB - is aiming to reduce the number of little terns predated by kestrels at an important Norfolk colony.

The Great Yarmouth North Denes little tern colony is the largest single colony in the United Kingdom, supporting between 20 – 30 per cent of the entire UK breeding population. When the availability of small mammals falls, little tern chicks are at risk from predation by kestrels. The project, which is now in its fourth year, is investigating the effectiveness of diversionary tactics, which involve supplying the kestrel chicks with 100 per cent of their daily food requirements. The technique is proving effective, and the North Denes 'blue print' is seen as the way forward to conserving this amazing sea bird. Each season has seen different management challenges to date, ranging from loss of the beach to high tides, but the dedication of RSPB staff and volunteers, continued funding from Natural England and the support of the local community looks set to ensure the success of the project.

Little tern has recently been designated a local BAP species, and a Norfolk action plan for the species will be published in 2010.

## Broads BAP gets underway

**The freshwater ecosystem of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, made up of rivers connecting with expanses of shallow water (broads) and their surrounding habitats, is a key European area for wetland wildlife.**

The Broads Authority is in the process of producing a Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure that this precious resource is conserved and enhanced for the future. The document both outlines the species and habitats found in the Broads (within a Framework document), and also presents the actions needed by the Authority and partners to protect biodiversity (within an Action Plan). Projects such as designating new Broads County Wildlife Sites and a strategy for valley-side habitats are included. The Broads BAP is particularly relevant to the Broads Authority as a planning authority with obligations to protect biodiversity through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.



*Fen orchid—one of the BAP species found in the Broads.  
(Credit: Broads Authority)*

## Hidden Heaths revealed

The Hidden Heaths Project was set up by Norfolk Wildlife Trust to raise the profile of Norfolk heathland County Wildlife Sites (CWS) and to bring more heathland sites into appropriate management.

The project will be delivered in partnership with Natural England and Norfolk County Council and will also involve close working relationships with other groups, such as conservation volunteers, FWAG, countryside projects (such as the Norwich Fringe Project) and Easton College. The starting point will be to draw together all the current information - including condition - on the heaths. From this, a more detailed study will identify gaps in information for managing heathland sites, and will explore the effectiveness of current advisory work to landowners. A vital part of the project will be the provision of management advice and support for landowners, including information on grazing regimes and sources of funding. The final study will be presented to the Norfolk Heathland BAP Topic Group with recommendations about the ways in which the challenges of heathland management can be tackled.

## The crucian carp: Norfolk's new BAP species

The crucian carp *Carassius carassius* L. is a freshwater fish that is native to southeast England, with Norfolk believed to have been one of its strongholds. However, the species has suffered a decline in recent decades, being so rarely reported by anglers in Norfolk that a recent Environment Agency newsletter stated that "*the species is thought to be almost extinct in Norfolk*".

With funding from the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership's Project Fund, a team from University College London, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (Cefas) in Lowestoft, and Bedwell Fisheries Services (Hertfordshire) undertook a survey to assess the status of crucian carp in North Norfolk. In this research, fish populations were assessed for 29 small ponds, with 24 of these known (from interviews with local anglers and land owners) to have contained crucian carp in the 1970s–80s. The study found some of the ponds to be dry or nearly so, and crucian carp was present in just six ponds. This represents a 75 per cent decline in its distribution over the last 30–40 years. Furthermore, only one of the ponds had an abundant population of crucian carp, and four of the ponds with crucian carp also had introduced non-native goldfish or common carp. Both of these species have been linked in other studies with declines in crucian carp numbers. This study demonstrates that crucian carp has indeed undergone a drastic decline, as a result of drought (especially in 1976 and 1988–1992), a

decline in pond management, and hybridisation and/or competition with common carp and goldfish.

As a result of this study, crucian carp has been designated a local BAP species in Norfolk. This represents a major advance in the conservation of this much overlooked species. The plan is aimed at halting the decline of crucian carp through conservation measures to protect and/or rehabilitate ponds that contain, or used to contain, crucian carp populations. These initiatives will involve the collaborative efforts of landowners, anglers, the partners in this study, and the general public.

The research team would like to thank the many pond owners and anglers who have been so supportive of the work.

*Article by: Dr. Carl Sayer (UCL), Prof. Gordon H. Copp (Cefas-Lowestoft) and Mr. Keith J. Wesley (Bedwell Fisheries Services)*

Crucian carp from one of the study ponds (Credit: Carl Sayer)



## iSpot

Created by the Open University and funded by OPAL (Open Air Laboratories), iSpot is a new website allowing users to post records, observations and descriptions of wildlife. Drawing on techniques used by social networking websites such as Facebook, it provides a forum for people of all ages to share information and experiences. Links with species dictionaries held by the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) will help to identify unusual records worthy of further investigation, and mean that iSpot is set to become a useful biological recording tool in the future. Rob Coleman is Biodiversity Mentor for iSpot in the East of England, and is very keen to hear how users get on with the new community. Register with the website, and let him know what you think. [www.ispot.org.uk](http://www.ispot.org.uk)

## International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) - UK

The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has signed up to be a partner of the IYB – UK, an informal network of organisations

working to conserve biodiversity in the UK. IYB-UK partners will promote understanding of biodiversity in the UK during the International Year of Biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Partnership will run an event at the Norwich Forum on International Biodiversity Day (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010) to highlight species loss, and all that is underway locally to conserve biodiversity. Read more about IYB- UK at [www.biodiversityislife.net](http://www.biodiversityislife.net)



## TEEB

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study is a major international initiative to highlight the economic benefits of biodiversity. A report for policy makers was launched in November 2009, calling for “the creativity and vision of international and national policy makers...to design coherent policy frameworks that systematically respond to the value of nature.” Read more at: [www.teebweb.org](http://www.teebweb.org)

## Coming Up

### 7<sup>th</sup> March 2010

“Wake up to Wildlife: Celebrating Biodiversity in the Broads”. The Forum, Norwich.

### 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Norfolk Bat Workers' Conference. BTO, Thetford.

### 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Norfolk Non-Native Species Stakeholders' Forum. Abbey Conference Centre, Norwich.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010

International Biodiversity Day. The Forum, Norwich.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010

Wild About the Wensum. Pensthorpe Nature Reserve.

### 5-6 June 2010

Big Biodiversity Watch (NWT reserves across the county).

### 17 & 18 July 2010

Non-native Species: Action Weekend (various locations around the county).

### 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Annual Biodiversity Forum: Biodiversity and Economic Development. Abbey Conference Centre, Norwich.

### 9<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Wild About Norfolk. Neatherd High School, Dereham.

The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership is generously funded by the following organisations:



Norfolk County Council



NORWICH City Council



## Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

Anglian Water | Breckland Council | British Trust for Ornithology | Broadland District Council | Broads Authority | Environment Agency | Forestry Commission | Great Yarmouth Borough Council | King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council | Natural England | Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service | Norfolk County Council | Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group | Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society | Norfolk Wildlife Trust | North Norfolk District Council | Norwich City Council | RSPB | South Norfolk Council | University of East Anglia | Water Management Alliance