



# Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

## Annual Update 2006/07

Welcome to the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership's Annual Update for 2006/07. As summarised in the following pages, we have had yet another productive and successful year.

The development of the county ecological network map has been an especially exciting initiative, which has captured the imagination of local authorities, statutory agencies, charitable groups and the public. Rather than simply seeking to protect remnants of biodiversity in an increasingly developed world, the ecological network map presents a radical new vision of conservation, in which biodiversity is proactively restored and linkages among habitats re-created.

Considerable effort has continued to be invested in promoting the integration of biodiversity into strategies, plans and policies. The new Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and Sustainable Community Strategies have been a particular focus. It has been encouraging to see that many LDFs and strategies are incorporating explicit references to the importance of biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

Through the Partnership's project fund, it has been possible to support a variety of priority initiatives over the course of the year. These have included a survey for white-clawed crayfish along the River Glaven, water vole conservation in the Broads, the translocation of silver-studded blue butterflies and the propagation of traditional fruit varieties. By supporting activities such as these, the Partnership helps to ensure that the many different action plans it has produced are translated into practical action on the ground.

The Partnership was also pleased to welcome three new members to the Steering Group in 2006/07:

the Forestry Commission; the Water Management Alliance (formerly the King's Lynn Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards); and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society. Each of these organisations adds significant new strengths to the Partnership. The total membership of the Steering Group now stands at 18 organisations, representing a very wide array of interests and biodiversity expertise.

**Scott Perkin**  
**Biodiversity Co-ordinator**



Surveying for invertebrates along the soft cliffs at Overstrand.

Andrew Whitehouse

## Progress Summary: April 2006 – March 2007

Over the last year, the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has continued to be involved in a broad range of activities, designed to:

### Support the implementation of the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

- Over a dozen new habitat and species action plans have been produced.
- Membership of the Partnership's Topic Groups has been expanded to include representatives from the University of East Anglia, Easton College, Eastern Sea Fisheries and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society.
- The Forestry Commission, the Water Management Alliance and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society have joined the Steering Group.

### Improve biodiversity information

- In collaboration with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), an ecological network map for the county has been produced, identifying the most important biodiversity areas and strategic zones for habitat enhancement.
- A number of high priority surveys have been supported during the course of the year, including surveys of white-clawed crayfish, water voles, soft cliff invertebrates and BAP molluscs. Funding support was also provided for a comprehensive assessment of the county's fens (outside the Broads), carried out by NWT.
- Continued assistance has been provided towards the development of a new business plan for the Norfolk Biological Records Centre.

### Promote the integration of biodiversity into key planning processes

- In collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership, a successful one-day workshop on the incorporation of biodiversity and green space into Local Development Frameworks was held in Thetford.
- Significant contributions were made to the Norwich, South Norfolk and North Norfolk Community Strategies.
- Together with Norfolk County Council, an innovative seminar on the minerals industry and biodiversity was held on 21 June 2006, as a contribution towards the minerals LDF.

### Promote understanding and engagement

- The 5th Annual Biodiversity Forum was held in September 2006, bringing together nearly 120 participants from a wide range of organisations.
- The biodiversity website was updated and expanded, and now includes over 60 action plans, an events section and the quarterly reports of the Biodiversity Partnership.
- Biodiversity was promoted at a variety of public events across the county, including the Norfolk Show and Wild about Norfolk. Talks about biodiversity and the BAP process were also given to a wide array of groups, including the Rotary Club and the Norfolk Rural Forum.

### Monitor and report on Norfolk BAP progress

- Norfolk's habitat and species action plans have continued to be entered onto the national Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS).
- One-to-one training sessions on the use of BARS were arranged for representatives from Butterfly Conservation, RSPB and other organisations.



A fen County Wildlife Site. The Biodiversity Partnership has recently provided support for a comprehensive fen assessment outside the Broads.

Steve Henson

## Towards an Ecological Network for Norfolk

In mid-2006, the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership and NWT unveiled a draft “ecological network” map for the county. For the first time, we now have a county-wide overview of the location of the most important biodiversity areas in Norfolk and the broad zones in which we would like to promote habitat restoration and re-creation.

We are now working closely with local authorities to identify the ways in which the ecological network approach can be incorporated in key policies and plans, including Local Development Frameworks, Community Strategies and the Local Area Agreement. To this end, district-level maps and reports are being produced, which provide a finer level of detail than was possible in the county approach. The potential for using the maps to help target agri-environment schemes is being explored. A suite of projects to help implement the ecological network is also being developed and actively promoted.

The draft final report of the mapping project is available on the Norfolk biodiversity website ([www.norfolkbiodiversity.org](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org)).

### Understanding the Norfolk Ecological Network Map

The Norfolk Ecological Network Map identifies a number of different biodiversity zones by colour. The green areas have been defined as “core areas”.

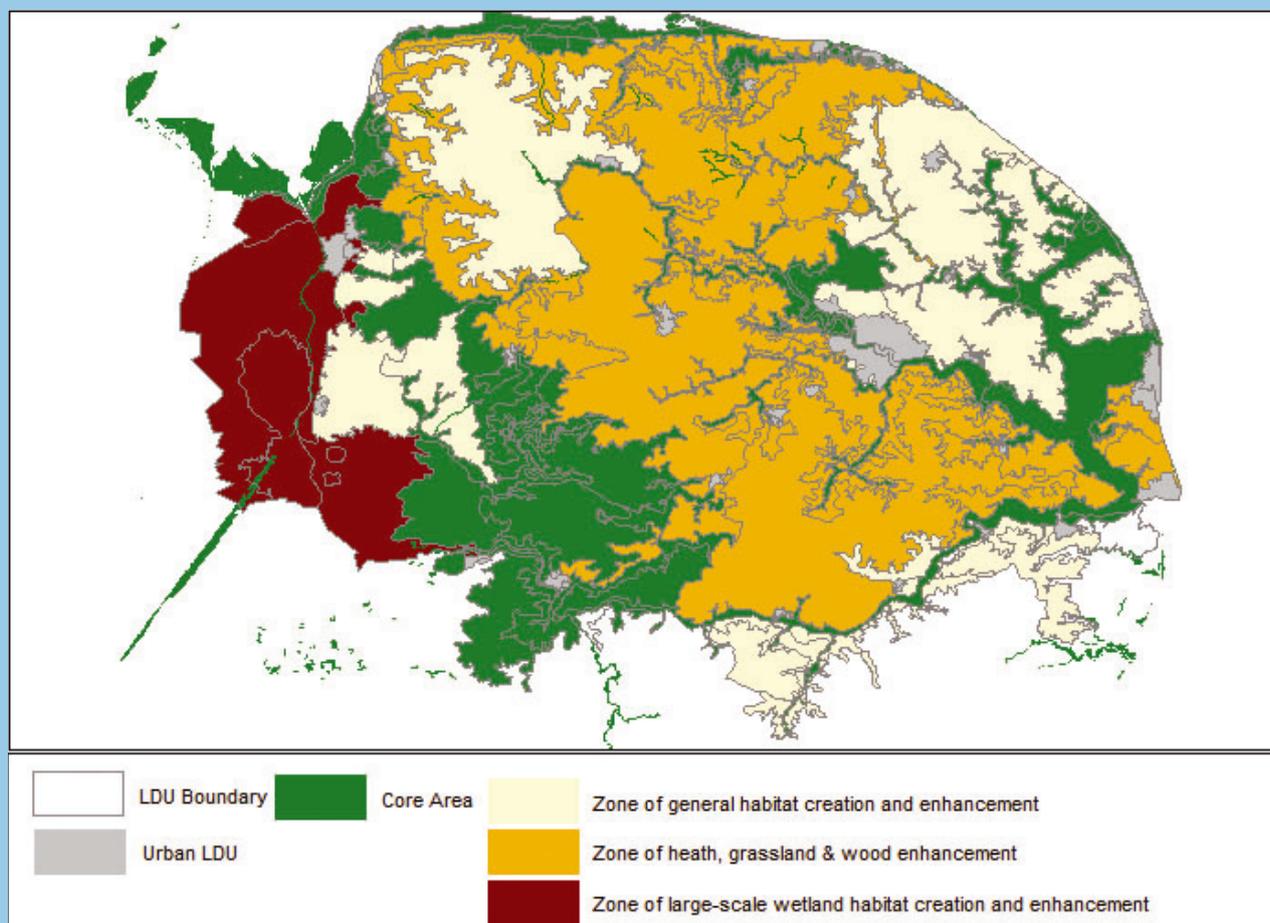
These are the most important existing areas for wildlife in the county, and include the Broads, the Brecks, many river valleys and much of the North Norfolk coast. In these areas, the priority is to protect and manage existing wildlife sites. It will also be important to “buffer” wildlife sites from the impacts of adjacent and often unsympathetic land-use, eg, agricultural spray drift.

The other colours on the map denote areas where habitat creation and enhancement will be needed in order to create an ecological network.

The maroon or dark red colour identifies a zone of large-scale wetland creation and enhancement; this is located in the west of the county, and includes areas such as the Fens.

The orange colour denotes a zone where it would be desirable to create a mosaic of heathland, grassland and woodlands; this zone runs from north to south, and occupies a broad belt of land in the middle of the county.

The pale yellow colour identifies a zone of general habitat creation and enhancement. In this zone, there are no specific habitat recommendations: the creation of any new, semi-natural habitat would be seen as a beneficial contribution to the ecological network.

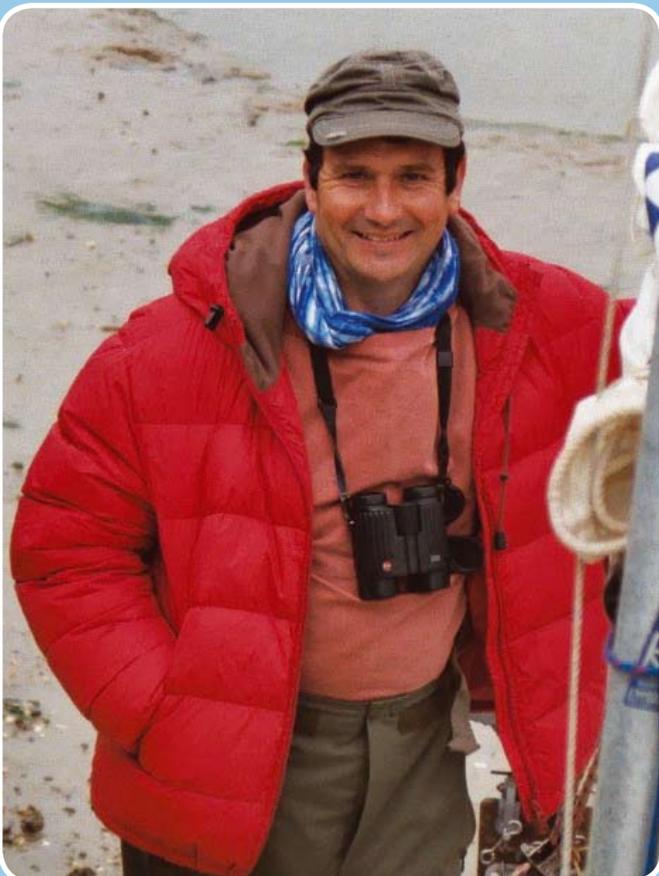


## Annual Biodiversity Forum 2006

The 2006 Annual Biodiversity Forum was the largest and most diverse Forum to date. Held on 28 September at the Abbey Conference Centre in Norwich, the Forum brought together nearly 120 participants from a wide range of organisations, including local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary conservation bodies and community groups.

The broad, overall theme of the Forum was “biological recording, community participation and biodiversity conservation”. The Forum looked at many aspects of biological recording, but there was a particular focus on exploring the ways in which recording can help to stimulate community interest in biodiversity, inform Biodiversity Action Plan delivery and promote conservation more broadly.

The day featured presentations from a range of distinguished speakers, including: Tim Sparks, from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology; Trevor James, from the National Biodiversity Network; Mark Cocker, journalist and author of *Birds Britannica*; and Simon Harrap, Chairman of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society.



Chris Gomersall

Mark Cocker, one of the speakers at the 2006 Annual Biodiversity Forum.

## Community Biodiversity Awards

Four Norfolk conservation projects received Community Biodiversity Awards from the Biodiversity Partnership, for their outstanding contributions to wildlife in the county and their engagement with local communities:

- The Hawk and Owl Trust was presented with the Site Award for restoring a neglected wetland at Sculthorpe Moor and for creating a community nature reserve.
- Costessey High School won the Education Award for creating a wildlife garden which not only benefits biodiversity but also serves as a valuable educational resource.
- The Friends of Fiddlewood was presented with the Group Award, in recognition of their work to enhance a formerly neglected urban woodland on the Fiddlewood estate in Norwich.
- Alwyn Jackson was given the Individual Award. Alwyn is a local volunteer who for many years has worked to conserve and improve the habitat and wildlife of Sparham Pools and a number of other sites.

The awards were presented by Dr Gerry Barnes (Chair of the Biodiversity Partnership) and BBC Radio Norfolk's Gary Standley, at a short ceremony held at Norwich City Hall on 6 July 2006.



Helen Ward

The winners of the Community Biodiversity Awards at the ceremony in Norwich City Hall.

# News from the BAP Topic Groups

Eight Topic Groups have been established under the auspices of the Biodiversity Partnership. These groups play a central role in developing and taking forward the Habitat and Species Action Plans, and together, form the “engine” which drives the implementation of the Norfolk BAP. Highlights from the Topic Groups in 2006/07 included the following:

## **Coastal** (Chair: John Sizer, National Trust)

Through the Biodiversity Project Fund, the Coastal BAP Topic Group provided support for an invertebrate survey of the coastal soft cliffs of North Norfolk; the survey was carried out by Buglife and confirmed the biodiversity importance of the cliffs. The group also finalised action plans for coastal sand dunes and the harbour porpoise. A project to improve our knowledge of the status and distribution of the harbour porpoise off the Norfolk coast is currently being developed; this will make use of a specially-designed identification card to encourage sailors, fishermen and others to report porpoise sightings.

## **Communities and Nature** (Chair: Paul Holley, Norwich City Council)

This group re-launched its Community Biodiversity Awards Scheme, which has been designed to recognise outstanding conservation work by local groups, schools and individuals; four awards were presented on 6 July 2006, at a ceremony held in City Hall in Norwich (for more information about the winners, please see the article on page 4). Through the Biodiversity Project Fund, support was provided to “Wild about Norfolk”, a two-day event which attracted some 4,000 participants. The group was also instrumental in having Norwich selected as a BBC “Breathing Places City”. New action plans have included a species action plan for the spotted flycatcher and a local habitat action plan for churchyards and cemeteries.

## **Ecological Networks** (Chair: Reg Land, Norfolk Wildlife Trust)

In a particularly important development, this Topic Group finalised an ecological network map for the county (please see the article on page 3). The group has continued to promote the ecological network approach by developing district-level econet reports and maps. Reports have now been prepared for nearly every district in the county and have been very positively received; with the assistance of Norfolk County Council, the maps have been digitised and are now available as GIS layers. A number of local authorities (eg. North Norfolk District Council) have expressed an interest in including the maps in their Local Development Frameworks. The ecological network concept has also been embraced by several Community Strategies, including those for South Norfolk and Norwich.

## **Farmland** (Acting Chair: Scott Perkin)

The Farmland BAP Topic Group has recently finalised habitat action plans for lowland calcareous grasslands and lowland meadows and pastures; the plans provide a comprehensive assessment of the status of these two threatened habitats in the county, as well as detailed prescriptions for their conservation and enhancement. Five species action plans have also been prepared, addressing four species of arable plants and one beetle. A second meeting of the “Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners Forum” was organised at Mill Farm near Great Witchingham, featuring a farm walk to look at practical experiences of integrating biodiversity conservation with farming.

## **Heathlands** (Chair: Heidi Thompson, Norfolk County Council)

Under the auspices of the Heathland BAP Topic Group, and with the financial support of the Biodiversity Partnership, Butterfly Conservation organised the translocation of a small number of silver-studded blue butterflies to a new heathland site in Broadland. Another meeting of the Heaths Forum (an informal grouping of heathland managers) took place in the autumn of 2006; the day included site visits to Salthouse and Kelling Heaths, in order to observe the new management activities that have recently been implemented at these two areas. The Heathlands Topic Group has also finalised a considerable number of action plans, including plans for tower mustard (*Arabis glabra*) and two species of ground beetle.



Ed Stocker

Members of the Norfolk Heaths Forum discussing heathland management approaches at Kelling Heath.

## Waterbodies

(Chair: Chris Strachan, Environment Agency)

Amongst other achievements, this Topic Group has facilitated surveys of water voles and white-clawed crayfish. With EA funding, surveys of a number of different BAP mollusc species have also been commissioned; these have significantly enhanced our understanding of the distribution and status of these often overlooked species. Two water vole conservation projects have continued to operate under the auspices of the group, focusing on the Broads, the Wensum and the Nar. New action plans have been developed for a number of species, including the tassel stonewort and pillwort.



Martin Pugh

White-clawed crayfish, recorded during the survey of the River Glaven.

## Wetlands

(Chair: Julia Masson, Broads Authority)

The Wetlands BAP Topic Group actively collaborated with BESL to identify strategic opportunities for wetland creation and enhancement in the Broads, as part of the Broads Flood Alleviation Programme. Members of the Topic Group also took part in a “visioning” exercise for the Ant Valley, as a contribution towards the Broads Authority’s “whole valley” approach. In addition, members provided input to the Broads Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, emphasising that – if natural areas are managed properly - they become more robust and can accommodate greater numbers of visitors. Substantial progress has also been made in revising the action plan for the bittern – an iconic Norfolk species. The fen action plan has also been reviewed, in order to bring it more up-to-date with current thinking, particularly with regard to climate change.



Scott Perkin

Julia Masson, Chair of the Wetlands BAP Topic Group, during a recent visit to Sutton Fen.

## Woodlands

(Chair: Gerry Barnes, Norfolk County Council)

Members of the Woodlands BAP Topic Group have continued to be actively involved in the Norfolk and Suffolk Heritage Tree Project, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). A number of successful and very popular heritage tree days have been organised, and the Norfolk database now contains information on over 3,000 individual trees from across the county. A report on the wet woodland history of the Wensum and Nar Valleys has been commissioned and received from the University of East Anglia, as the first part of a wet woodland project jointly funded by the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency, Norfolk County Council and the Biodiversity Partnership. A detailed status report on the county’s native black poplars has also been produced. In another important initiative, arrangements have been made to carry out a survey of some 100 potential woodland County Wildlife Sites in the summer of 2007; this should significantly enhance the profile and protection afforded to woodlands in the county. Members of the Topic Group have also continued their involvement with the East of England Apples and Orchards Project and Anglia Woodfuels.



Lynn Bassendine

Veteran tree day at Ken Hill.

## Regional Update – The East of England Biodiversity Forum

The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has continued to be actively involved with the East of England Biodiversity Forum. Among its other achievements in 2006/07, the Forum:

- Commissioned the Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) to carry out an assessment of regional needs for biodiversity data.
- Continued to provide the regional Project Assessment Panel for the SITA Trust's "Enriching Nature" programme. A total sum of nearly £500,000 was provided to biodiversity projects in the region, including heathland and chalk grassland restoration, reedbed enhancement and barbastelle bat conservation.
- Organised a major event about biodiversity for developers in the Thames Gateway, entitled "Providing Natural Development Solutions";
- Organised "Wild Ideas for the East of England", a regional conference involving nearly 100 participants from many different stakeholder groups. The conference was designed to launch the process of developing a regional biodiversity implementation plan.

**For more information about the East of England Biodiversity Forum, please visit: [www.eastspace.net/biodiversity](http://www.eastspace.net/biodiversity).**



The East of England Regional Biodiversity Forum during a site visit to a SITA-funded heathland restoration project at the RSPB's headquarters in Sandy.

## Priorities for 2007 - 2008

Over the coming year, the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership will:

### **Support implementation of the Norfolk BAP**

- Develop and promote new action plans for those UK BAP species and habitats found in Norfolk.
- Continue to operate the Biodiversity Project Fund and to support high priority activities on the ground.
- Support Topic Groups to implement the existing BAPs.

### **Improve biodiversity information**

- Contribute to the development of a new business plan for the Norfolk Biological Records Centre.
- Continue to support surveys and assessments of BAP habitats and species.

### **Integrate biodiversity into key planning processes**

- Build awareness of the new biodiversity duty that has been placed on all public bodies by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- Continue to champion the inclusion of biodiversity and the ecological network concept in the Norfolk Local Area Agreement, green infrastructure strategies, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.
- Organise a third workshop on Local Development Frameworks and biodiversity, in collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership.
- Collaborate with Norfolk County Council to incorporate biodiversity into the new Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework.
- Continue to work on the development of a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Promote understanding and engagement**

- Continue to develop and expand the Norfolk biodiversity website.
- Develop a new communications strategy as a framework for the Partnership's outreach activities.

### **Monitor and report on Norfolk BAP progress**

- Work with partners to "populate" the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) with up-to-date information about the implementation of the habitat and species action plans and progress towards biodiversity targets.

# Forthcoming Events

## **Wash Week**

4-12 August (many different events, at localities around the Wash)

## **Opening of Burlingham Walks**

To be announced

## **Wild about Norfolk**

8-9 September, Norwich

## **Local Development Frameworks and Biodiversity**

13 September, Long Stratton

## **Norfolk Biodiversity Forum: "Health and Biodiversity"**

11 October, Norwich

## **Plum and Apple Day**

14 October, Banham

## **Apple Day**

21 October, Gressenhall

## **Hedge Walk and Training Day**

November (date to be confirmed), Kenninghall

## **Scott Perkin**

**Biodiversity Co-ordinator**

**Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership**

**c/o Planning and Transportation Dept**

**Norfolk County Council**

**Norwich NR1 2SG**

**Email: [scott.perkin@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:scott.perkin@norfolk.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 01603-222112**

**Website: [www.norfolkbiodiversity.org](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org)**

The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership would like to thank the following organisations for their generous financial support in 2006/07:

- Breckland Council
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
- Natural England
- Norfolk County Council
- North Norfolk District Council
- Norwich City Council
- South Norfolk Council



Printed on Revive one hundred per cent recycled paper, made from one hundred per cent post-consumer waste.



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or a different language please contact us on 01603 222112 and we will do our best to help.

## **Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership**

Breckland Council • Broadland District Council • Broads Authority • Environment Agency  
Forestry Commission • Great Yarmouth Borough Council • King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council  
Natural England • Norfolk Biological Records Centre • 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 • Water Management Alliance