

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:
11 February – 17 June 2010**



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Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 11 February to 17 June 2010. As with previous progress reports, it is presented using the template from Natural England, which is now in use by a majority of LBAP partnerships across the country.

Additional information is presented in a series of annexes: **Annex 1** presents a summary of the issues addressed at recent Topic Group meetings; **Annex 2** presents a summary of the recent project proposals considered by the Biodiversity Project Fund; and **Annex 3** presents information about forthcoming biodiversity events.

Highlights

Highlights since the last meeting of the Steering Group have included:

- Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative: Under Mike Sutton-Croft's management, the Defra and NE Water Framework Directive projects are now well underway, including projects aimed at controlling floating pennywort on the Waveney, giant hogweed along the Yare, and Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed on the Wensum. The NNNSI Stakeholders' Forum in March attracted over 70 participants, and included not only an impressive array of national and local speakers, but also, a series of practical, "hands-on" identification workshops.
- Brecks Biodiversity Audit: The Brecks Audit has continued to make excellent progress. A technical workshop on the management of arable field margins for Breckland species was organised in mid-February, and proved to be very successful. Partly as a result of the work of the project, the Brecks were identified as an "Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area" at a regional workshop convened by Natural England. This designation has unlocked an additional £10,000 for the project from NE. The first phase of the project is due to conclude in early autumn and an official launch of the report is being planned.
- International Year of Biodiversity: In collaboration with NWT and NBIS, a special event to mark the International Day of Biodiversity was held on 22 May at the Forum in Norwich. This featured the innovative "Grains of Truth" display, developed by David North to convey facts and figures about biodiversity using grains of locally-grown barley. It also featured displays by NBIS and the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative, including a "life-size" alien spaceship and live examples of several invasive species. Additional events to commemorate IYB are being planned, including a biodiversity conference for 6th formers (being organised in collaboration with the Castle Museum) and a study day to look at the connections between biodiversity and art (in collaboration with the Sainsbury Centre for the Arts).

- Biodiversity Project Fund: Norfolk County Council has provided a generous contribution of £10,000 towards the Biodiversity Project Fund. This has enabled grants to be made to the following projects:
 - BCT Support to Local Bat Groups
 - Designation of County Wildlife Sites in the Broads: Phase 2
 - Pingo Project: Phase 2
 - Broads Mink Management Project (continuation)
 - Natural Neighbours (Community Wildlife Conference)
 - Designation of Coastal County Wildlife Sites
 - Wild about Norfolk
 - Heathland Restoration for Moths and Butterflies in the Brecks

- Action Plans: The Fen Orchid Action Plan has been substantially revised by Plantlife, and is now nearing finalisation. Significant progress has also been made on the action plan for Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land; a complete first draft is now available and is under review and discussion. Work on the revision of several other plans has also been initiated, including the action plans for fens and reedbeds.

Priorities for the Next Four Months

Priorities for the coming four months (July – November 2010) will include:

- Organising the 6th Planning and Biodiversity Seminar on 9 September;
- Assisting with the Castle Museum's special conference on biodiversity for 6th formers (23 September);
- Holding the Community Biodiversity Awards ceremony on 30 September;
- Arranging the Annual Biodiversity Forum on 6 October, around the theme of "economics and biodiversity";
- Overseeing the finalisation of the first phase of the Brecks Biodiversity Audit, the development of Phase 2, and the further elaboration of the Brecks Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area;
- Collaborating with the Suffolk and Essex Biodiversity Partnerships to finalise the regional action plans for marine cetaceans, marine fish and seagrass beds.

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Summary of Progress

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p>1. Establishing and maintaining a broad partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As far as possible, ensure that all relevant sectors are engaged in the local biodiversity partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local partnership contains representatives from a wide range of sectors including, as far as possible and as appropriate: business and industry; agriculture; water; marine and coastal; forestry; education; and health. It also includes local government, NGOs and government agencies. Partnership meets regularly (at least three times per year) and fosters ownership of outcomes by all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary discussions have been started with Plantlife to see if they would be interested in the possibility of becoming a formal member of the Partnership. A meeting of the NBP Steering Group was held on 11 February 2010. Agenda items included: the Co-ordinator's workplan for 2010/11; and action plans for ponds, little tern, Norfolk hawk and crucian carp.
<p>2. Delivering BAP locally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where they do not already do so, ensure that local biodiversity objectives include spatially-explicit SMART targets for the delivery of habitats and species, taking into account national targets. Work with the partnership to agree a range of projects to deliver the local biodiversity objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A prioritised list of biodiversity projects that incorporate spatially-explicit targets for the delivery of habitats and species and which, where possible, make links to social and economic objectives. Implementation of these projects and demonstration of progress towards local objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic Groups have continued to develop project proposals for consideration by the Biodiversity Project Fund (please see Annex 2 for a full list of the proposals reviewed over the period). The Fund has recently been replenished with a generous grant of £10,000 from Norfolk County Council.

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p>3. Fund-raising for BAP delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a funding strategy to obtain national (e.g. HLF) and local sources of external funding in support of BAP projects and to obtain funding for the local biodiversity service in the long term. • Work with the regional biodiversity partnership in the development of funding for collaborative projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of funding strategy to lever funds for biodiversity from external bodies and to secure long-term funding for biodiversity in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership's applications for funding to South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council have been successful. • The possibility of developing an Interreg project on invasive species is being explored. A concept paper has been prepared and potential partners identified in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK.
<p>4. Reporting and monitoring progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) to report on the implementation and delivery of actions initiated locally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress is reported at least annually, and the LBAP contribution is fully reported in triennial national BAP reporting rounds. • Results of monitoring used to inform review of objectives and to set future directions. Undertake a review of the LBAP at least every 5 years seeking to ensure that it remains relevant and adapts to take into account any changes to national priority species, habitats and targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input has been provided to the national BARS review and development project, currently being implemented by JNCC.
<p>5. Integrating BAP into local policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively support local authorities, so that they are better able to develop innovative ways of delivering biodiversity locally. • Actively promote the inclusion of biodiversity objectives into Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and other local plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison established with the local strategic partnership and planning authority. • Increased profile for biodiversity within existing and new local plans. • Community Strategies and LDFs include biodiversity objectives consistent with LBAP targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>NI 197</u>: NCC's Ecology Manager (Heidi Thompson) has assumed lead responsibility for National Indicator 197, but the Biodiversity Co-ordinator has continued to play a supporting role. The target for Year 2 of the LAA (56% of sites in positive conservation management) has been met, which is a tremendous achievement for the CWS Partnership.

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote best practice in the planning system, providing support and advice to LPAs to avoid loss of features through development, and to make the most of opportunities from planning gain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Local Indicator on Econets</u>: A meeting of the econets indicator sub-group was held on 11 March. Although the 2009/10 targets have not been met, the indicator has successfully raised the profile of ecological networks amongst a wide audience. The methodology itself is also proving to be a viable approach to assessing the development of ecological networks. <u>Planning Seminar</u>: Arrangements for the next Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, to be held at South Norfolk Council on 9 September, are now well advanced. The day will feature presentations from ALGE, Buglife, Mott MacDonald, Breckland Council, the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership and Forest Heath District Council. <u>Community Strategies</u>: The Co-ordinator has continued to serve as the “Environment Champion” for the Broadland Community Partnership and recently provided advice and guidance on a County Wildlife Site project for the district. <u>Green Infrastructure and Rackheath Eco-community</u>: The Co-ordinator is a member of the Norwich Green Infrastructure Steering Group and the Biodiversity Sub-Group for the Rackheath Eco-community. Over the reporting period, input was provided to the biodiversity design principles for Rackheath.

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p>6. Promoting BAP locally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a communications plan to raise awareness in support of BAP, working with partners and any established public awareness working group. • Increase the engagement of local businesses and communities in the BAP process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a web-presence for the partnership is maintained and take steps to promote biodiversity through implementation of the communications plan, including the publication and distribution of an annual newsletter. • Demonstrate an increase in business participation through funding and implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New action plans, progress reports and updates continue to be added to the website. • The Partnership's third electronic newsletter is under development and will be distributed in the summer. Feedback on the previous two editions has been positive, and there has also been a significant cost-saving in moving away from a printed version. • The Broads Authority organised an event at the Forum on 7 March to launch the International Year of Biodiversity in Norfolk. The day included a samba band, mask making and a range of other activities. NBP, NNNSI and NBIS also took part. • NBP, NWT and NBIS organised an event at the Forum on 22 May to mark the International Day of Biodiversity. This featured David North's innovative "Conservation Counts: Grains of Truth" exhibit. Displays from NBIS and the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative were also on view, including a "life size" alien spaceship (which proved very successful at attracting attention!), and live examples of several invasive species. • A number of other events to celebrate IYB are also being planned, including a biodiversity conference for sixth formers in the autumn, led by the Castle Museum, and a study day on biodiversity and art, led by the Sainsbury Centre.

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p>7. Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the LBAP partnership is represented on the regional biodiversity forum and other relevant regional and national meetings. • Respond to consultation from partners at regional and national levels of the BAP process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the LBAP partnership is represented at appropriate regional and national meetings and fora (e.g. review groups and training workshops). Demonstrate with examples. • Responses to regional and national consultations relating to biodiversity (demonstrate with examples). • Regular contacts exist with the regional biodiversity partnership and the national LBAP co-ordinator and facilitator, with a two-way flow of information including exchange of examples of good practice and over-arching problems (demonstrate with examples). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Co-ordinator took part in the Regional Biodiversity Forum on 21 April. Agenda items included: monitoring regional HAP targets; the regional report on NI 197; and the Fens Wetland Vision. • The Co-ordinator took part in a meeting of the Project Assessment Panel for the SITA Enriching Nature Programme on 27 April. • On behalf of the Regional Biodiversity Forum, the Co-ordinator prepared a detailed response to the national consultation on the new Planning Policy Statement on a natural and healthy environment. • The Co-ordinator remains in frequent communication with other LBAP officers in the region (particularly Suffolk) as well as the Regional Biodiversity Co-ordinator. Several joint initiatives with Suffolk are underway, including the Brecks Biodiversity Audit, the organisation of the Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, and the preparation of regional marine action plans.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p>Establishing and maintaining a broad partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise an Annual Biodiversity Forum, in order to: encourage networking among a diverse range of organisations and stakeholders with an interest in biodiversity; provide opportunities to learn about the work of the Biodiversity Partnership; and stimulate discussion about the key issues and challenges facing biodiversity in the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Forum is held on an annual basis, with participation from a diverse range of organisations and stakeholders; feedback via evaluation forms demonstrates that objectives are being met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements for the next Annual Biodiversity Forum, scheduled for 6 October, are now well advanced. The theme of this year's Forum will be "biodiversity and economics". An array of national and local speakers has been invited.
<p>Delivering BAP locally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and support the operation of multi-stakeholder, thematic/habitat-based Topic Groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Topic Groups continue to meet on a regular basis, and to develop, promote, monitor and revise Habitat and Species Action Plans and other relevant LBAP plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six Topic Group meetings were held over the reporting period. (Please see Annex 1 for a summary). Under the leadership of EA, arrangements are being made to eradicate signal crayfish from ponds adjacent to the River Glaven in North Norfolk (a white-clawed crayfish stronghold of regional and possibly national significance). A meeting of the project group took place on 12 May to review progress and discuss the next steps. Substantial progress has been made on the action plans for fen orchid and open mosaic habitats on previously-developed land. The Little Tern SAP has been finalised.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to the availability of funding, administer and manage a Biodiversity Project Fund to support the delivery of projects linked to the implementation of the Habitat and Species Action Plans and/or the achievement of LBAP aims more broadly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing Biodiversity Project Fund remains operational; projects which meet the Fund's criteria are financially supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC has provided a generous top-up of £10,000 for the Biodiversity Project Fund. This has enabled grants to be offered to a total of eight projects, including many initiatives that had been approved earlier but had been placed on the NBP's "waiting list". A complete list of the activities supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund from its inception is available from the Co-ordinator on request.

Annex 1: Summary of Topic Group Meetings Held

Topic Group	Meeting Date	Principal Issues Discussed
Coastal BAP Topic Group	14 June	Agenda items included: <i>Sabellaria</i> mapping; revision of the Starlet Sea Anemone SAP and Saline Lagoon HAP; finalisation of the Little Tern SAP; and updates on the Marine Act.
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	20 May	Agenda items included: the action plan for Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land; a review of the proposal to hold the second Natural Neighbours conference; and the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative.
Ecological Networks Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Farmland BAP Topic Group	8 June	Agenda items included: Green Lanes; a presentation on the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative; and the regional project on Local Wildlife Sites.
Heathland BAP Topic Group	16 March	Agenda items included: the heathland CWS audit; revision of the Heathland HAP; and Topic Group priorities for 2010.
Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group	Meeting scheduled for 15 July	
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	25 May	Agenda items included: the Chalk Rivers HAP; a review of the Broads mink management proposal; and an update on the crucian carp project.
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	27 May	Agenda items included: the Fen Orchid Species Action Plan; the Fen Management Strategy; steps towards revising the Reedbed and Fen Habitat Action Plans. There was also a discussion about issues raised by BRASCA (Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters' Association). The meeting was followed by a site visit to Catfield Fen, organised by Butterfly Conservation.
Woodlands BAP Topic Group	No meeting over this period.	

Annex 2: Summary of Recent Proposals Submitted to the Biodiversity Project Fund and Decisions Taken

	Title of Proposal	Topic Group/ Lead Organisation	Amount Requested	Decision
1.	Designation of County Wildlife Sites in the Broads	Wetlands Topic Group/NWT	£2,821	Proposal approved; a grant of £1,500 offered.
2.	Wild about the Wensum	Communities and Nature Topic Group/Pensthorpe	£500	Not approved for this year because of competing priorities. However, the Review Panel expressed a desire to assist in 2011, if funds permit.
3.	Broads Mink Management Project	Waterbodies Topic Group/BA	£1,599	Proposal approved and a grant of £1,000 offered. The Review Panel asked to see: a) a strategic framework for the project; b) the evidence base for Norfolk.
4.	Natural Neighbours Conference	Communities and Nature Topic Group/BTCV	£4,400	Proposal approved; a grant of £1,000 offered.
5.	Breckland Biodiversity Audit: Proposal for Extension Funding to Complete Phase 1	Heathland Topic Group/UEA	£2,000	Not approved. The Review Panel felt that NBP had already made a significant contribution to Phase 1.
6.	Designation of Coastal County Wildlife Sites	Coastal and Marine Topic Group/NWT	£3,450	Proposal approved; a grant of £1,000 offered.
7.	Wild about Norfolk 2010	Communities and Nature Topic Group/WaN Organising Committee	£600	Proposal approved; a grant of £500 offered.
8.	Pingo Project (Phase 2)	Wetlands Topic Group/NWT	£2,750	Proposal approved; a grant of £1,500 offered.
9.	Broads Reed Bunting Survey	Wetlands Topic Group/RSPB	£792	Deferred to next year (start of the survey season had been missed).
10.	Fen Restoration Project (Phase 2)	Wetlands Topic Group/NWT	£5,000	Proposal approved; a grant of £3,500 offered.

11.	Brecks Heathland Restoration for Threatened Butterflies and Moths	Heathland Topic Group/BC	£3,000	Proposal approved; grant of £1,000 offered.
12.	Invertebrate Survey of the Cut-off Channel	Farmland Topic Group/NWT	£2,500	Not approved because of competing priorities. Might be suitable for support under the NBIS Recording Fund.

A complete summary of all activities supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund since its inception in 2004 is available from the Biodiversity Co-ordinator on request.

Annex 3: Calendar of Forthcoming Biodiversity Events

BAP Steering Group

- 4 November

BAP Co-ordinators' Group

- 21 October

Topic Group Meetings

- Coastal Topic Group: 11 October
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 17 August
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: Date to be set
- Farmland Topic Group: 15 September
- Heathland Topic Group: 5 July
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 8 September
- Wetlands Topic Group: 28 September
- Woodlands Topic Group: Date to be set

Biodiversity Forums

- Heaths Forum: 8 July
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: Date to be set
- Annual Biodiversity Forum: 6 October

Other Biodiversity Events

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| 17-18 July | Non-native Species: Action Weekend (various locations around the county) |
| 9 September | Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, South Norfolk Council, Long Stratton |
| 23 September | 6 th Form Biodiversity Conference, Castle Museum, Norwich |
| 30 September | Community Biodiversity Awards ceremony, Assembly House, Norwich |
| 6 October | Annual Biodiversity Forum: Biodiversity and Economic Development, Abbey Conference Centre, Norwich |
| 9 October | "Wild about Norfolk", Neatherd High School |

Regional and National Meetings

- East of England Biodiversity Forum: 21 July; 14 October
- Regional Meeting of LBAP Chairs: 21 September
- UK BAP Conference: 23-24 November