

# **NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:  
19 February – 4 June 2009**



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### Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 19 February to 4 June 2009. As with the 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 during this period have included the following:

- Natural Neighbours Conference: On behalf of the Partnership, BTCV successfully organised “Natural Neighbours” on 7 March. This was Norfolk’s first “community wildlife conference”, and attracted over 90 participants, including representatives from 29 community groups. The day featured both plenary presentations and interactive workshops, and covered topics such as funding, volunteers, pond management, publicity and biodiversity surveying. Participants also heard case studies about innovative projects being implemented by a range of community groups, such as the Bergh Apton Conservation Trust, Norwich Environmental Weekenders (NEWS) and the Kenninghall Lands Trust. Lord Peter Melchett of the Soil Association gave a forceful presentation on the importance of organic growing to biodiversity.
- Non-Native Species Initiative: Excellent progress has continued to be made by the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative. The database of records has continued to grow; a major new project to control giant hogweed has been developed for submission to Defra; and the introductory sections of the status report and action plan have been written. Considerable emphasis has been placed on awareness raising activities, and both the EDP and BBC Radio Norfolk have carried stories about the project. With support from Natural England, an attractive set of display boards and leaflets has been produced. The Initiative has also exhibited displays at a number of events, including Wild about the Wensum and CUE-East’s Sustainable Living Festival.
- Action Plans: Two action plans were finalised over the reporting period. The Species Action Plan for floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*) – originally written in 1998 - was revised and updated; there are small but important populations of this species in the Broads. The grouped action plan for bats (covering soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and noctule bats) was completed and approved by the Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group; the completion of this plan addresses a longstanding gap in the Norfolk suite of action plans. In a particularly positive development, funding has been provided by the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) and Natural England to carry out a county-wide, roadside survey of bats and mammals this summer; the survey should substantially increase the number of bat records held by NBIS.

- Local Area Agreement: In collaboration with NCC, NBIS and NWT, a considerable amount of time has been invested in promoting National Indicator 197 on local sites and developing the necessary reporting tools. In an especially exciting development, the Partnership has worked with the Forestry Commission to identify three woodland clusters in which CWS will be eligible for English Woodland Grant Schemes at an enhanced rate of 80 per cent.

Lead responsibility for NI 197 now lies with Heidi Thompson, the NCC's Ecology Manager. The annual report for the first year of the LAA has recently been submitted, and shows that 50 per cent of County Wildlife Sites are now deemed to be in positive management; this is just short of the Year 1 target of 51 per cent. Annual improvement targets for the second and third year of the LAA have been decreased slightly (to five per cent per year) and successfully re-negotiated with GO-East; these targets are felt to be more realistic and achievable than the draft targets originally proposed, whilst still remaining "stretching".

Substantial effort has also gone into the development of the methodology, baseline and targets for Local Indicator 4.5 on ecological networks.

- Biodiversity Project Fund: Norfolk County Council has generously replenished the Biodiversity Project Fund with an initial grant of £10,000. Three new projects were approved over the reporting period, as follows:
  - Crayfish survey of the Gaywood and Babingley Rivers;
  - Survey of the ground beetle *Harpalus froelichii* in the Brecks;
  - Continuation of the Broads mink management project.

### **Priorities for the Next Four Months**

Priorities for the coming four months (June - October) will include:

- Finalising the funding and contractual arrangements for the Brecks biodiversity audit;
- Organising and holding the 10-year Partnership review workshop, to be held on 23 June;
- Working with the Non-native Species Initiative to: prepare the Norfolk status report and action plan; develop new control and eradication projects; organise the "Day of Action" on 5 July; and seek funding for Phase 2;
- Working with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership to organise the fifth "Planning and Biodiversity Seminar" on 10 September;
- Working with the Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group to organise the prize-giving ceremony for the Community Biodiversity Awards on 24 September, at the Assembly House;

- Organising the Annual Biodiversity Forum on 1 October, around the theme of “celebrating 10 years of the Norfolk BAP”;
- Working with partners to develop the draft Ponds HAP;
- Collaborating with the Suffolk and Essex Biodiversity Partnerships to develop regional action plans for marine cetaceans and marine fish.

Scott Perkin  
Biodiversity Co-ordinator

June 2009

## NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

### Summary of Progress

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p><b>1. Establishing and maintaining a broad partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As far as possible, ensure that all relevant sectors are engaged in the local biodiversity partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Partnership meets regularly (at least three times per year) and fosters ownership of outcomes by all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A meeting of the Steering Group was held on 19 February 2009. In addition to a progress report from the Co-ordinator, agenda items included: a presentation on woodfuels by Steve Scott (Regional Director of the Forestry Commission); a presentation on the Norfolk Climate Change Strategy; and endorsement of the Barbastelle Action Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Delivering BAP locally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Work with the partnership to agree a range of projects to deliver the local biodiversity objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Implementation of these projects and demonstration of progress towards local objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership has continued to operate its Biodiversity Project Fund, which is used to support priority activities contained in the Action Plans. (For a description of projects supported over this period, please see the section on "Additional Services" below).</li> </ul>

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p><b>3. Fund-raising for BAP delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Work with the regional biodiversity partnership in the development of funding for collaborative projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of funding strategy to lever funds for biodiversity from external bodies and to secure long-term funding for biodiversity in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding applications to both Norwich City Council and Broadland District Council were successful; these funds will be used to support the Partnership's core budget.</li> <li>• A proposal to Natural England's under-spend fund was also successful, for a total of £4,519. The funding has been used to hold the Non-native Species Stakeholders' Forum, produce the NNNSI display boards and leaflets, and purchase bat detectors for use in the Norfolk Bat and Roadside Mammal Survey.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Reporting and monitoring progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) to report on the implementation and delivery of actions initiated locally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress is reported at least annually, and the LBAP contribution is fully reported in triennial national BAP reporting rounds.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans for the special ten-year review workshop on 23 June are now well advanced. This will be a full-day, professionally facilitated event, open to all members of the Steering Group as well as both current and former Topic Group Chairs.</li> <li>• Arrangements are being made to recruit a part-time assistant for an initial period of approximately 20 days, to assist with entering data onto BARS as a pilot project. Plans are also being made for a small workshop at which the results of this pilot project can be reviewed and the Partnership's approach to monitoring and reporting discussed.</li> </ul>

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p><b>5. Integrating BAP into local policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively support local authorities, so that they are better able to develop innovative ways of delivering biodiversity locally.</li> <li>Actively promote the inclusion of biodiversity objectives into Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and other local plans.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular liaison established with the local strategic partnership and planning authority.</li> <li>Increased profile for biodiversity within existing and new local plans (demonstrate this with examples).</li> <li>New or revised Community Strategies and LDFs include biodiversity objectives consistent with LBAP targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Norfolk Local Area Agreement</u>: Lead responsibility for NI 197 on local sites has now been assumed by the NCC's Ecology Manager (Heidi Thompson), but I have continued to play a supporting role. Following a review of the results for Year 1, the targets for Years 2 and 3 have been re-negotiated with GO-East and slightly reduced. The aim now is to achieve a five per cent improvement each year, which is felt to be more realistic and achievable, whilst still "stretching". The methodology and baseline for the local indicator on econets have been finalised and targets for the next two years agreed.</li> <li><u>Comprehensive Area Assessment</u>: Substantive input was provided to the biodiversity component of the CAA.</li> <li><u>Seminar on Planning and Biodiversity</u>: Arrangements for the next planning seminar on 10 September are progressing well. A meeting was held with the Suffolk Partnership to agree the format, agenda and speakers. The day will feature a series of presentations, brief updates and practical case study exercises. Mike Oxford from ALGE has once again agreed to be the lead facilitator.</li> <li><u>Community Strategies</u>: I have continued to serve as the "Environment Champion" for the Broadland Community Partnership and attended a board meeting on 6 May. I also remain engaged with the LSPs for South Norfolk, North Norfolk and Norwich.</li> </ul>

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p><b>6. Promoting BAP locally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a communications plan to raise awareness in support of BAP, working with partners and any established public awareness working group.</li> <li>• Increase the engagement of local businesses and communities in the BAP process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an increase in business participation through funding and implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Partnership's new logo has been finalised and is now in active use; this provides a stronger, local identity for the Norfolk Partnership (rather than relying on the national UK BAP logo).</li> <li>• The Partnership's Non-native Species Initiative has received substantial coverage, including articles in the local press, the Coast Guardian and the Planning and Transportation Bulletin and an interview on BBC Radio Norfolk. The Initiative has also produced a set of attractive display boards and a leaflet, with funding support from Natural England.</li> <li>• The Non-native Species Initiative put on well-attended exhibits at several events, including "Wild about the Wensum" on 16 May and CUE-East's Sustainable Living Festival (22 May; 29-31 May). To mark the International Day for Biodiversity on 22 May, a special display was erected outside the Forum in Norwich, featuring an "alien" spaceship and live examples of some common alien species, including signal crayfish.</li> <li>• The Partnership also supported NWT's "Conservation Counts – Grains of Truth" display at the Forum. This employed barley grains to illustrate a range of global and local biodiversity statistics in a very vivid and forceful manner.</li> <li>• A new leaflet describing the work of the Partnership is in preparation with assistance from NBIS and should be ready in time for distribution at the Norfolk Show.</li> </ul>

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On behalf of the Partnership, BTCV organised a very successful “community wildlife conference” on 7 March. This sought to engage community groups more actively in the BAP process and support local delivery of biodiversity action.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the LBAP partnership is represented on the regional biodiversity forum and other relevant regional and national meetings.</li> <li>Respond to consultation from partners at regional and national levels of the BAP process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the LBAP partnership is represented at appropriate regional and national meetings and fora (e.g. review groups and training workshops). Demonstrate with examples.</li> <li>Responses to regional and national consultations relating to biodiversity (demonstrate with examples).</li> <li>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).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I took part in the Regional Biodiversity Forum on 28 April. This included a site visit to the habitat restoration work being carried out at Dunwich and discussions regarding the Water Framework Directive and the Forestry Commission’s open habitats policy.</li> <li>Responses were submitted to Natural England’s consultation on its draft non-native species policy and the Forestry Commission’s consultation on its open habitats policy.</li> <li>I remain in frequent communication with other LBAP co-ordinators in the region (particularly Suffolk) as well as the Regional Biodiversity Co-ordinator.</li> <li>In collaboration with the Essex and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnerships, work has begun on two pilot regional marine BAPs: one dealing with cetaceans and the other with commercial fish. A stakeholders’ workshop to review the draft plans is being planned for the autumn.</li> </ul>

ADDITIONAL SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p><b>Establishing and maintaining a broad partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning has begun for the next Annual Biodiversity Forum, which will be held at the Abbey Conference Centre on 1 October. The Forum this year will be designed to celebrate ten years of the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delivering BAP locally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate and support the operation of multi-stakeholder, thematic/habitat-based Topic Groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven Topic Group meetings were held during the period. (Please see Annex 1). A meeting of the Heaths Forum was held at Mousehold on 7 May, to look at the challenges of heathland management within an urban setting. Members also visited the Horsford area to look at heathland restoration efforts being carried out by the Norwich Fringe Project.</li> <li>The grouped plan for bats and the revised action plan for floating water plantain were finalised over the reporting period. In addition, substantial progress was made on a number of other action plans, including the Ponds HAP and action plans for corn bunting, hedgerows and reed bunting.</li> </ul>

ADDITIONAL SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing Biodiversity Project Fund remains operational; projects which meet the Fund's criteria are financially supported.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a particularly positive development, NCC has renewed its support for the Biodiversity Project Fund in 2009/10, with a contribution of £10,000.</li> <li>Three new project proposals were approved over the reporting period, totalling £6,889. Please see Annex 2 for a summary of proposals considered.</li> <li>A complete list of the activities supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund from its inception is available from the Co-ordinator on request.</li> </ul>

## Annex 1: Summary of Topic Group Meetings Held

Topic Group	Meeting Date	Principal Issues Discussed
Coastal BAP Topic Group	No meeting held this period.	Next meeting scheduled for 17 June.
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	12 May 2009	Agenda items included: an update on the Community Biodiversity Awards; feedback on the Natural Neighbours conference; and a review of the final draft of the grouped action plan for bats.
Ecological Networks Topic Group	11 May 2009	Agenda items included: an update on the econets indicator in the Local Area Agreement; opportunity mapping and green infrastructure delivery in Greater Norwich; NWT's Living Landscapes; and an assessment of progress against the recommendations in the econets report.
Farmland BAP Topic Group	7 April 2009	Agenda items included: presentation of the draft hedgerow GIS layer and leaflet; discussion of the revised Hedgerow Action Plan; and review of the Corn Bunting Action Plan.
Heathland BAP Topic Group	24 February 2009	Agenda items included: an update on the Brecks biodiversity audit; a presentation on the nightjar research proposal submitted by UEA; a discussion about the results of the <i>Ophonus laticollis</i> survey and possible follow-up action; and a discussion about the need to revise and update the Heathland HAP.
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	13 May 2009	Agenda items included: a presentation from Natural England on the Million Ponds Project; an update on progress with the Ponds HAP; a presentation on the Norfolk hawker; and a review of the proposal to carry out crayfish surveys on the Wash and Babingley Rivers. The afternoon featured a site visit of the ponds on Richard Waddingham's farm.
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	24 April 2009	Agenda items included: a review of the second draft of the Reed Bunting Action Plan; an update on the Broads BAP; an update on the Crane SAP; and a follow-up discussion about the criteria for identifying wet grassland of BAP quality.
Woodlands BAP Topic Group	3 April 2009	Agenda items included: a detailed update on the wet woodlands project; a briefing on changes to Forestry Commission grants; and FC's consultation on its open habitats policy.

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

	<b>Title of Proposal</b>	<b>Topic Group/ Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	Survey for the Ground <i>Beetle Harpalus froelichii</i> (the brush-thighed seed-eater)	Heathland Topic Group/ Mark Telfer	£1,789	Approved.
2	Broads Mink Management Project (Continuation of Funding)	Waterbodies Topic Group/ Natural England	£2,100	Approved.
3	Wash Rivers Crayfish Project: Babingley and Gaywood Survey	Waterbodies Topic Group/ FWAG	£4,675	A contribution of £3,000 was approved; the balance remains to be sought.

***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**

- 5 November 2009

#### **BAP Co-ordinators' Group**

- 18 May 2009

#### **10-Year Review Workshop**

- 23 June 2009

#### **Topic Group Meetings**

- Coastal Topic Group: 17 June 2009
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 18 August
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: 18 November
- Farmland Topic Group: 6 July
- Heathland Topic Group: 16 June (to be confirmed)
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 20 October
- Wetlands Topic Group: 21 July 2009
- Woodlands Topic Group: Date to be set

#### **Biodiversity Forums**

- Heaths Forum: Date to be set
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: 6 July
- Annual Biodiversity Forum: 1 October 2009

### **Other Biodiversity Events**

- Kenninghall Community Woodland Mid-Summer Festival: 22 June
- Kenninghall Community Woodland/Orchard Open Day: 28 June
- Non-native Species Initiative – Day of Action: 5 July 2009
- Planning and Biodiversity Seminar: 10 September 2009
- Presentation of the Community Biodiversity Awards: 24 September
- Wild about Norfolk: 3 October 2009
- Apple Day, Banham 11 October
- Apple Day, Gressenhall: 25 October

### **Regional and National Meetings**

- East of England Biodiversity Forum: 30 July and 22 October