

# **NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:  
2 March – 13 July 2011**



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#### **Introduction**

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 2 March – 13 July 2011. As with previous progress reports, it is presented using the template provided by 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**

The most important achievement over this reporting period has been the finalisation of the proposal for RINSE (Reducing the Impacts of Non-native Species in Europe) and its formal submission to the Interreg Two Seas Programme. The proposal involves nine partners in four countries (England, Belgium, the Netherlands and France) and has a total budget of just over 2.5 million Euros. Objectives include: improving targeting and prioritisation, by carrying out an audit of invasive non-native species in the Two Seas region and developing a “black list” of the species of greatest concern; enhancing the capacity to address invasive species through a series of training and communications activities; and reducing/eradicating selected populations of invasive species at strategic sites, through a series of field-level projects. If the application is successful, RINSE will provide an exciting opportunity to learn from the experiences of other countries in the region and will also provide a significant boost to the Partnership's Non-native Species Initiative.

Other highlights over the reporting period have included:

- The 6<sup>th</sup> form conference on biodiversity on 5 July, organised by the Castle Museum with input from NBP, NBIS, NNNSI, NatSoc, UEA and NWT;
- A pilot seminar on 9 May with the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, which used the topic of invasive alien species to explore some of the linkages between biodiversity and art.

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

Priorities for the coming four months (mid-July to mid-November 2011) will include:

- Preparing an application for Local Nature Partnership designation;
- Taking forward the recommendations of the Breckland Biodiversity Audit;
- Finalising arrangements for the Planning & Biodiversity Seminar and the Annual Biodiversity Forum;
- Finalising the Habitat Action Plans for reedbeds, fens and open mosaic habitats on previously developed land.

## 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>The Co-ordinator has continued to meet with staff from the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and UEA, to explore the potential for developing a joint programme on “art and biodiversity”. A pilot seminar focusing on invasive alien species was held on 9 May, involving artists, media experts, ecologists and others. Based on the success of this initial pilot, additional activities are now being planned. This offers an exciting opportunity for NBP to engage with an entirely new sector.</li> <li>A joint meeting of the NBP/NBIS Steering Groups was held on 2 March. Agenda items included: designation of swift and barn owl as local BAP species; draft guidelines for the Local Recorders’ Fund; and the NBIS constitution and revised Business 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 (see Section 9 as well as Annex 2).</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>• Although Natural England has withdrawn its funding from all BAP partnerships across the country, the Norfolk Partnership has been fortunate to receive continued financial support from nearly all district councils, as well as the Broads Authority and the Forestry Commission.</li> <li>• Several project ideas put forward by the Partnership have been provisionally included in an HLF Landscape Partnership bid being developed by the Brecks Partnership.</li> <li>• The “RINSE” proposal on invasive species was finalised and submitted to the Interreg Two Seas Programme. This includes significant budgets for both the NBP Co-ordinator and the NNNSI Co-ordinator.</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 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>• Substantial progress has been made on revising the Habitat Action Plans for heathland, reedbeds and fens.</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; Community Strategies and LDFs include biodiversity objectives consistent with LBAP targets.</li> <li>As above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Community Strategies</u>: The Co-ordinator has continued to serve as the Environment Champion for the Broadland Community Partnership and gave a “Review of the Year” presentation at the BCP Board meeting on 12 May. The Co-ordinator also served on the project review panel which assessed biodiversity bids to BCP’s project fund.</li> <li><u>Planning Seminar</u>: Arrangements for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar (to be held jointly with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership) are now well advanced. The seminar will once again be facilitated by Mike Oxford from the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE). Topics to be discussed include the implications of Localism Bill and biodiversity offsetting.</li> <li><u>Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance</u>: Arrangements are being made to revise and update the Norfolk Biodiversity SPG; it is anticipated that this will be one of the responsibilities of the new District Ecologist recently recruited by NCC.</li> <li><u>Biodiversity Offsetting</u>: Several members of Defra’s biodiversity offsetting team gave a special presentation to the Partnership on 28 March. Feedback from the meeting will be used by Defra to help inform its approach to this issue. The possibility of Norfolk becoming a pilot county in which to test biodiversity offsetting is under discussion.</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 website is currently being re-designed by the County Council's ICT team. The new website will have a more attractive and contemporary look, and will also include a searchable database on community conservation organisations.</li>   <li>• The Partnership has had a presence at a number of events, including the Bats and Tree Surgeons conference, the launch of the Gaywood Valley Project in King's Lynn and the Norfolk Show. NWT's display about Breckland (which included a special section on the Brecks Biodiversity Audit) received the award for the best environmental display at the Norfolk Show.</li>   <li>• The Co-ordinator took part in a special biodiversity conference for 6<sup>th</sup> formers on 5 July, organised by the Castle Museum with funding support from CUE-East. This was the second conference of its kind, and attracted over 40 students from four different schools in the Norwich area. Workshops were offered on a range of topics, including: biological recording; invasive species; curating; the development of new antibiotics; and international conservation (co-led by the Co-ordinator).</li> </ul>

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<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 country, 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 county, 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>• The Co-ordinator participated in a meeting of the Regional Biodiversity Forum held on 7 April. Agenda items included: a discussion about the financial status of LBAPs and LRCs; Natural England's new structure; an update on the Fens Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area; and the future of the Regional Forum;</li> <li>• The Co-ordinator represented the Partnership at several other events over the reporting period, including meetings of: the WREN Project Assessment Panel; the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society Council; the Gaywood Valley Project Advisory Group; and the County Wildlife Site Steering Group.</li> <li>• The Partnership has been invited to become a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Biodiversity, to be launched on 19 July.</li> <li>• 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 currently underway, including the 7<sup>th</sup> Planning and Biodiversity Seminar and follow-up to the Breckland Biodiversity Audit.</li> </ul>

ADDITIONAL SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<p><b>8. 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>Preliminary arrangements for the Annual Biodiversity Forum have been made. The Forum will explore the issues surrounding species' re-introductions, with the aim of raising awareness of the IUCN guidelines and highlighting the complexities of successful re-introductions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. 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> <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>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> <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>Seven Topic Group meetings were held over the reporting period (please see Annex 1).</li> <li>A well-attended meeting of the Heaths Practitioners' Forum was held on 9 June at Thetford Warren Lodge, with the assistance and input of FWAG, the Brecks Partnership, the Breckland Society and the Forestry Commission. Participants discussed: future management strategies for the site; the history and impacts of warrening; management of heathland within a golf course; and management of heathland adjacent to wet woodland.</li> <li>As summarised in Annex 2, two new proposals were put forward for consideration by the Biodiversity Project Fund, requesting support for: a) experimental ride management in Thetford Forest; and b) the organisation of Wild about Norfolk. Both proposals were approved, bringing the total number of projects supported this financial year to seven.</li> </ul>

### **Other Activities:**

Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative: NNNSI (co-ordinated by Mike Sutton-Croft) has continued to make excellent progress:

- The control and eradication projects being overseen by NNNSI are all underway. Following a survey that was carried out in April 2011, the giant hogweed on the River Yare around Carrow Abbey Marsh has been sprayed. Also, acting upon the results of the Himalayan balsam survey that was carried out across the River Wensum catchment last year, control of the plant is currently being carried out at strategically important sites by volunteers and contractors. The Floating Pennywort Eradication Project began its work programme for 2011 in mid-May, and is currently in full swing. It is anticipated that the plant could be eradicated by the end of 2012.
- The fifth Norfolk NNS Stakeholders' Forum was held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at the Abbey Conference Centre, Norwich. The half-day event was attended by more than 50 delegates and featured presentations on the latest national issues as well as local case studies. Topics covered included: killer shrimp; the biological control of Japanese knotweed; the floating pennywort eradication project on the River Waveney; and the eradication of coypu in the 1980s.
- A range of activities has been undertaken to raise awareness of the risks and impacts associated with invasive non-native species. This included a return of the popular 'alien' spaceship display at the Royal Norfolk Show. The Co-ordinator has also given a number of talks to interested local groups, including the Waveney Valley Canoe Club, which has offered to help survey for floating pennywort on the river.
- Arrangements are currently being made to establish the first "ark" site for white-clawed crayfish in Norfolk. Following a site visit in May 2011, an MSc student from UCL is currently working to identify the most suitable sites along a North Norfolk river to introduce the crayfish.

### Annex 1: Summary of Topic Group Meetings Held

Topic Group	Meeting Date	Principal Issues Discussed
Coastal BAP Topic Group	6 June	Agenda items included: the role of the new IFCA; Marine Conservation Zones; an update on the 2011 chalk reef and seaweed surveys; an update on the Little Tern Working Group; and a presentation on salt marsh restoration. The meeting was followed by a site visit to the managed realignment site at Brancaster.
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	19 May	Agenda items included updates on the Community Biodiversity Awards, the Community Directory, the Natural Neighbours conference and the Big Urban Wildlife Watch.
Ecological Networks Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Farmland BAP Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Heathland BAP Topic Group	6 April	Agenda items included: nightjar research in the Brecks; an update on the management of NCC heaths; a review of the proposal to carry out experimental management of rides in Thetford Forest; and the draft Heathland Habitat Action Plan.
Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group	1 June	Agenda items included: a presentation on micro-turbines, wildlife and planning; landscape and biodiversity issues connected with agricultural reservoirs in the Brecks; and the potential for Phase 1/land-use mapping using satellite imagery.
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	28 June	Agenda items included: invertebrate monitoring on the Wensum; crayfish ark sites; mink management projects; RINSE; and a discussion about the priorities for HAP/SAP revision.
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	29 March	Agenda items included: Norfolk hawker research; the NE wetland inventory; an update on the CWS designation project; and the draft Reedbed Habitat Action Plan.
Woodland BAP Topic Group	16 March	Agenda items included: an update on the work of the Suffolk Orchards Group; the NCC/SCC woodland project; and the revision of woodland HAPs and SAPs.

**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.	Invertebrate responses to experimental ride management in Thetford Forest	Heathland Topic Group/UEA	£1,000	£1,000
2.	Wild about Norfolk	Communities and Nature/RSPB Norwich Local Group	£700	£700

*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**

- 16 November 2011

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

- Dates to be set

#### **Topic Group Meetings**

- Coastal Topic Group: 13 October
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 25 August
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: Date to be set
- Farmland Topic Group: Date to be set
- Planning Topic Group: 28 September
- Heathland Topic Group: 27 September
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 18 October
- Wetlands Topic Group: 19 July
- Woodlands Topic Group: Date to be set

#### **Annual Biodiversity Forum and Practitioners' Forums**

- Annual Biodiversity Forum: Date in late October/ early November to be set
- Heaths Forum: Date to be set
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: Date to be set

#### **Other Biodiversity Events**

- Planning and Biodiversity Seminar: 6 October
- Wild about Norfolk: 15 October

#### **Regional and National Meetings**

- Regional Biodiversity Forum: 21 July and 20 October