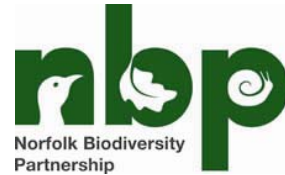


NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:
4 November 2010 – 2 March 2011**



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Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 4 November 2010 to 2 March 2011. 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

- **Breckland Biodiversity Audit:** The principal highlight of this reporting period was the formal launch of the Breckland Biodiversity Audit at an event in Thetford on 30 November 2010. In addition to Dr Paul Dolman from UEA, speakers included the former Chief Scientist of Natural England (Tom Tew), the Chief Executive of Plantlife (Victoria Chester) and the Forestry Commission's Senior Ecologist (Jonathan Spencer). The audit confirmed that Breckland is a nationally-important biodiversity hotspot. Nearly one million records were collated by the study. These revealed that some 12,500 species have been recorded from Breckland, including nearly 2,000 species of conservation concern and 28 per cent of all BAP species. The audit has received a large amount of interest and attention, and has been given extensive coverage in both the local and national media. The audit has also inspired a similar exercise to be undertaken in the Broads. The audit's Commissioning Group is continuing to meet in order to take forward the findings from the study, and both the Forestry Commission and Natural England have begun to implement some of the report's key recommendations. The full report of the audit can be downloaded from the Partnership's website: www.norfolkbiodiversity.org

Priorities for the Next Four Months

Priorities for the coming four months (March – June 2011) will include:

- Finalising a proposal to the Interreg Two Seas Programme for work on invasive alien species;
- Taking forward the recommendations of the Breckland Biodiversity Audit;
- Initiating arrangements for events such as Natural Neighbours, the Community Biodiversity Awards, the Planning and Biodiversity Seminar and the Annual Biodiversity Forum.

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"> The new partnerships with the Castle Museum and the Sainsbury's Centre for Visual Arts (which originated from the activities carried out to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010) continue to be strengthened, and joint activities are planned with both organisations in 2011. A joint meeting of the NBP/NBIS Steering Groups was held on 4 November 2010; this was the first joint meeting of its kind. Based on the success of this initial experiment, it has been decided to continue to hold joint meetings of the two bodies.
<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"> The Partnership was fortunate to receive a top-up for its Biodiversity Project Fund from Norfolk County Council. Six new project proposals were considered over the period in question, as summarised in Annex 2. Projects approved in 2010 are progressing well, including the designation of County Wildlife Sites in the Broads, the fen restoration project, and the pingo project.

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 was fortunate to receive £15,000 from Natural England's 2010/11 underspend; this is being used to support a wide range of projects, including mobile fencing for protection of little tern colonies, pond surveys, digitisation of bat records, and management of County Wildlife Sites. • Several project ideas put forward by the Partnership have been provisionally included in an HLF bid being developed for the Fens Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area. • Work on developing the "RINSE" proposal on invasive species for submission to the Interreg Two Seas Programme has continued. A strong partnership has been assembled from Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and France. A fourth partners' meeting is planned for April in Gent, with a view to submitting the application in July 2011.
<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 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"> • Action plans continue to be revised and updated on an individual basis. Revision priorities for 2011 include the Habitat Action Plans for heathland, reedbeds and fens.

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<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. 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"> 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. As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Community Strategies</u>: The Co-ordinator has continued to serve as the “Environment Champion” for the Broadland Community Partnership and attended the BCP Board meeting on 2 February. Assistance has been provided in developing the biodiversity component of BCP’s new project commissioning guidelines. <u>Planning Seminar</u>: Preliminary discussions with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership have begun regarding the 7th Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar. The seminar is likely to focus on the theme of biodiversity offsetting. <u>Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance</u>: Arrangements are being made to revise and update the Norfolk Biodiversity SPG; the possibility of developing Breckland-specific guidance on invertebrates is also being considered. <u>Biodiversity Offsetting</u>: Several members of Defra’s biodiversity offsetting team have been invited to give a 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 will also be discussed.

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"> • The Partnership was invited to take part in a Media Trust event on 22 February, aimed at linking media professionals with voluntary groups. The event generated many ideas and suggestions for strengthening the communications activities of NBP, NBIS and NNNSI. The Partnership has been “matched” with two media companies which have offered to provide additional support and guidance free-of-charge, on topics such as search engine optimisation. • The Partnership is planning to have a presence at a wide range of events in 2011, including Wild about the Wensum, Wild about Norfolk, Breckland Nature Fest and the South Norfolk Fun Day. In a particularly exciting development, the Partnership will be joining forces with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to host a display at the Norfolk Show about Breckland species and the results of the Breckland Biodiversity Audit. • The Castle Museum has been successful with its bid to CUE-East to hold a second biodiversity conference for 6th formers. This will be held on 5 July in partnership with NBP, UEA, NBIS, NNNSI and NWT. • Through the assistance of The Landscape Partnership, a number of private sector companies have been approached regarding the possibility of supporting this year’s Community Biodiversity Awards ceremony. • The Partnership’s fourth electronic newsletter will be issued in March.

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 country, 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 county, 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 attended the UK BAP conference in Scotland on 23 and 24 November 2010. The conference provided useful linkages to national BAP processes as well as insights into the UK's participation in the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Co-ordinator took part in a meeting of regional LBAP Chairs in Cambridge on 26 January 2011. The meeting reviewed the key achievements and financial position of each partnership in the region and discussed future funding strategies. The Co-ordinator also participated in a meeting of the Regional Biodiversity Forum held on 3 February 2011. The Co-ordinator represented the Partnership at several other meetings over the reporting period, including: the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Council; the Gaywood Valley Project Advisory Group; the County Wildlife Site Steering Group; the NBIS/NatSoc Recorders' Workshop; and the Wash BAP Steering Group. 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 7th Planning and Biodiversity Seminar and the Breckland Biodiversity Audit.

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"> Initial planning for the Annual Biodiversity Forum has begun. It has been suggested that this year's Forum could explore the issues surrounding species' re-introductions. Key objectives would be to raise awareness of the IUCN guidelines and to highlight the complexities of successful re-introductions.
<p>Delivering BAP locally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and support the operation of multi-stakeholder, thematic/habitat-based Topic Groups. 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"> 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. The existing Biodiversity Project Fund remains operational; projects which meet the Fund's criteria are financially supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four Topic Group meetings were held over the reporting period (please see Annex 1 for a summary). In addition, a meeting of the Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum was held on 8 November near Diss, at a 500 ha mixed farm supporting a considerable array of wildlife, including corn bunting, grey partridge and turtle dove. Six new proposals were put forward for consideration by the Biodiversity Project Fund; five were approved for funding (Annex 2). A complete list of the activities supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund from its inception is available from the Co-ordinator on request.

Other Activities:

- Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative: NNNSI has continued to make good progress over the winter months, despite it being a period when many invasive species are dormant and little control work can be carried out. Some highlights have included:
 - Overseeing the final stages of a number of practical control and eradication projects, including the control of floating pennywort on the River Waveney (reports on this and several other projects are now available on the NNNSI webpage);
 - Publishing the 5th NNNSI Newsletter in December 2010, which received positive feedback from a range of stakeholders;
 - The NNNSI Co-ordinator giving a talk at a recent Wensum NFU Meeting, an important step in engaging more closely with the farming community and facilitating more strategic control of Himalayan balsam across the Wensum catchment;
 - Attending the National Workshop for Local Action Groups tackling Invasive Non-native Species, where the NNNSI Co-ordinator facilitated a workshop on obtaining funding.

Over the coming months, control and eradication projects will once again get underway, and there is a considerable amount of planning still to be done. In addition, a new project called 'Broad Sweep' (funded through the Broads SDF) will be launched in June. This project aims to improve knowledge of the distribution of invasive non-native species in the Broads (through a 'citizen science' survey), facilitate 'community action days' at a number of sites in and around the Broads, pilot a garden centre accreditation scheme and exchange experience between NNNSI and the New Forest Invasive Plants Project.

- Norfolk Bat Workers' Conference: In collaboration with the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society and the Biodiversity Partnership, NBIS organised the second Norfolk Bat Workers' Conference on 19 February. The full-day event attracted over 60 participants, and featured presentations on the Norfolk bats and churches project, the Barbastelle Study Group, the Norfolk Bat Group, and the spatial dynamics of the serotine bat in England.

Annex 1: Summary of Topic Group Meetings Held

Topic Group	Meeting Date	Principal Issues Discussed
Coastal BAP Topic Group	7 February	Agenda items included updates on saline lagoon surveys, starlet sea anemone translocations, the MCZ designation process and the marine chalk gully survey, as well as a discussion about the proposed valuation of the North Norfolk coast.
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	9 November 2010 and 17 February 2011	Agenda items at the most recent meeting included: a discussion about the desirability of designating barn owl as a local BAP species; an update on the Community Biodiversity Awards; arrangements for the Natural Neighbours conference; the future of Norfolk school tree nurseries; the launch of Wild Norfolk; and update on the Gaywood Valley Project.
Ecological Networks Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Farmland BAP Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Heathland BAP Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group	9 February	Agenda items included: a presentation on NBIS about the potential for developing an automated planning screening tool; a presentation about trees and planning by NCC; and a discussion about the Community Infrastructure Levy and the biodiversity offsetting.
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	22 February	Agenda items included: an update on the work of the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative; a presentation on the potential to re-introduce burbot; an update on the proposals to create crayfish ark sites in Norfolk; and a presentation about invertebrate monitoring on the Wensum
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Woodland 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.	Community Biodiversity Directory	Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group/ BTCV	£1,847	Grant of £500 approved.
2.	Wild about the Wensum	Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group/ Pensthorpe Conservation Trust	£500	Proposal not approved.
3.	Grassland CWS Inventory Update and Condition Assessment	Farmland BAP Topic Group/ Norfolk Wildlife Trust	£3,300	Grant of £2,000 provided.
4.	East Coast Seaweed and Sponge Expert Survey	Coastal BAP Topic Group/ SeaSearch	To be determined	Proposal approved in principle; budget details from SeaSearch are awaited.
5.	Initiating the Recovery of Crucian Carp Populations in Norfolk	Waterbodies BAP Topic Group/ University College London	£4,209	Grant of £1,000 offered.
6.	Valuing Norfolk's Coast: Demonstrating the Economic Benefits of Environmental and Wildlife Tourism	Coastal BAP Topic Group/ RSPB	£2,000	Grant of £1,000 offered.

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

- 13 July 2011
- 16 November 2011

BAP Co-ordinators' Group

- Dates to be set

Topic Group Meetings

- Coastal Topic Group: 6 June
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 19 May
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: Date to be set
- Farmland Topic Group: Date to be set
- Planning Topic Group: 1 June
- Heathland Topic Group: 6 April
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 28 June
- Wetlands Topic Group: 29 March
- Woodlands Topic Group: 16 March

Annual Biodiversity Forum and Practitioners' Forums

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

Other Biodiversity Events

- Gaywood Valley Project Launch: 8 May
- Wild about the Wensum: 21 May
- Big Wildlife Watch: 4-5 June
- 6th Form Biodiversity Conference: 5 July
- Natural Neighbours: 9 July
- Breckland Nature Fest: 9 July
- South Norfolk Fun Day: 17 July
- Wild about Norfolk: 15 October

Regional and National Meetings

- Regional Biodiversity Forum: 21 July and 20 October
- UK Non-native Species Stakeholders' Forum: 18 May, Edinburgh.