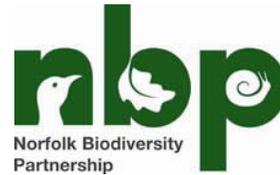


NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:
5 June – 5 November 2009**



NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Co-ordinator's Progress Report: 5 June – 5 November 2009

Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 5 June to 5 November 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

Summer and autumn are traditionally the busiest times of year for the Partnership, and this year has been no exception. Highlights since the last meeting of the Steering Group have included:

- Ten-Year Review Workshop: The ten-year review workshop was held on 23 June, with the assistance of a professional, independent facilitator (Rowena Harris). The workshop was designed to:
 - Jointly review progress and achievements, in order to identify what has worked well and what not so well;
 - Consider ways of improving where needed;
 - Identify if any changes are required to the membership, structure or operation of the Partnership in order to better fulfil our aims.

The workshop provided a strong endorsement for the work and overall direction of the Partnership, but also identified a number of areas for improvement; a full report of the workshop is available on request. A special Steering Group meeting was subsequently held on 20 August to consider the issues arising, and resulted in a simple action plan.

- Planning and Biodiversity Seminar: In collaboration with Suffolk, the fifth Annual Seminar on Planning and Biodiversity was held on 10 September. This attracted over 50 participants from the two counties, including many development control officers and forward planners. The day featured: an overview presentation on the latest developments from Mike Oxford (ALGE); a practical exercise demonstrating the use of the 1 App validation checklist developed by Suffolk; a presentation on planning and Green Infrastructure from Natural England; and brief updates from the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service, the Suffolk Biological Records Centre, Forest Heath District Council and the Geodiversity Partnership;
- Community Biodiversity Awards: The Partnership's "Community Biodiversity Awards" were presented at a special prize-giving ceremony held at the Assembly House in Norwich on 24 September. Nine awards were presented by Prof Tom Williamson from UEA, recognising the achievements of some of the most innovative and successful community wildlife projects in the county. The winners were as follows:

Local Group Award

Winner: Friends of the Rosary Cemetery.
Highly Commended: The Friends of Open Green Spaces (FrOGS) and BTCV Green Gym (Norwich)

Education Award

Winner: Forest Schools – East
Highly Commended: Erpingham VC Primary School

Site Award

Winner: Pigney's Wood (North Norfolk Community Woodland Trust)
Highly Commended: "Westies Wood" (Kevin West)

Individual Award

Winner: Liz Howarth
Highly Commended: Charles Cornish

- Annual Biodiversity Forum: The Annual Biodiversity Forum was held on 1 October, and attracted over 100 participants. This year's Forum was organised around the theme of "celebrating ten years of the Norfolk BAP", and featured a keynote address by the acclaimed nature and travel writer, Jay Griffiths (author of *Wild*), as well as short summary presentations from the Topic Groups.
- Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative: Mike Sutton-Croft has prepared NNNSI's draft status report and action plan, dealing with six high priority species of aquatic and riparian invasive plants; the report is available on the Partnership's website. In a particularly exciting development, the Initiative has also secured nearly £150,000 from Defra/EA and Natural England for control and eradication activities on the ground, linked to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. This means that we now have sufficient funding to continue the Initiative for a further two years.
- Brecks Biodiversity Audit: The arrangements for this project have now been finalised with Dr Paul Dolman at the University of East Anglia. The audit has been making excellent progress: over 500,000 species records have been collated, and two stakeholder workshops have been organised. The first workshop was held on 5 October. It involved taxonomic experts and recorders, and was designed to validate the species data acquired so far. The second workshop was held on 20 October and involved site managers; this was designed to look at the correlations between specific management practices and the delivery of biodiversity outcomes.
- Action Plans: Two action plans were finalised over the reporting period. The Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan was revised and updated, in order to take account of the new definition of this BAP habitat. The Reed Bunting Species Action Plan was also completed. Substantial progress has also been made with a number of other action plans, including those for ponds, Norfolk hawkers and crucian carp.

- Biodiversity Project Fund: Four new projects were approved over the reporting period, as follows:
 - Designation of County Wildlife Sites in the Broads: £1,500 (NWT and BA);
 - Phase 4 of the Wet Woodlands Project: £1,000 (NCC and FC);
 - Chalk gully marine survey: £1,000 (Seasearch)
 - Support for Wild about Norfolk: £500 (WaN Organising Committee)

Priorities for the Next Four Months

Priorities for the coming four months (November 2009 – February 2010) will include:

- Working with Mike Sutton-Croft to ensure that the contractual, reporting and delivery arrangements are in place for the next phase of the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative;
- Beginning work on a new design for the Partnership's website;
- Preparing and distributing the next issue of the Partnership's electronic newsletter;
- Working with partners to develop the draft Ponds HAP and a number of other action plans;
- Collaborating with the Suffolk and Essex Biodiversity Partnerships to develop regional action plans for marine cetaceans, marine fish and seagrass beds.

Scott Perkin
Biodiversity Co-ordinator

November 2009

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"> Following the recommendations to emerge from the 10-year review, discussions are underway with the National Trust about the possibility of their joining the Partnership's Steering Group. A meeting of the Steering Group was held on 4 June 2009. In addition to a progress report from the Co-ordinator, agenda items included: a presentation on the work of the Geodiversity Partnership; consideration of a proposal to designate crucian carp as a local BAP species; and an update on the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative.
<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 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).

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"> • Key recommendations within the Partnership's Funding Strategy continue to be taken forward. • A funding application is being prepared for South Norfolk Council, for submission at the end of November.
<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"> • A special, ten-year review workshop was held on 23 June, with the assistance of a professional independent facilitator (Rowena Harris). The workshop involved nearly 30 participants, representing a majority of the Partnership's member organisations. It was designed to jointly review progress and achievements, identify what has worked well and not so well, and formulate recommendations for the future. The workshop provided a strong endorsement for the work and current direction of the Partnership, and put forward a set of constructive suggestions for consideration. These were subsequently discussed at a specially-convened meeting of the Steering Group on 20 August.

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 (demonstrate this with examples). New or revised Community Strategies and LDFs include biodiversity objectives consistent with LBAP targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Norfolk Local Area Agreement</u>: NCC's Ecology Manager (Heidi Thompson) has assumed lead responsibility for National Indicator 197, but I have continued to play a supporting role. There have been a number of promising initiatives related to this indicator. For example, NCC has commissioned a special project in the Brecks, designed to engage proactively with landowners and encourage the positive management of County Wildlife Sites. The Broadland LSP has expressed interest in supporting a similar project in Broadland and this is currently under discussion with NWT. The Forestry Commission, NCC and SCC have also launched a project aimed at supporting woodland CWS owners in the Waveney area to enter the English Woodland Grant Scheme. <u>Seminar on Planning and Biodiversity</u>: The Fifth Annual Seminar on Planning and Biodiversity was successfully held on 10 September, in collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership. The meeting attracted some 50 participants, including many development control officers and forward planners. The day featured an overview from Mike Oxford (ALGE), a practical exercise on the 1 App validation checklist, and a presentation from NE on green infrastructure. <u>Community Strategies</u>: I have continued to serve as the "Environment Champion" for the Broadland LSP and remain engaged with the LSPs for South Norfolk, North Norfolk and Norwich.

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"> • An initial meeting to discuss ways of re-designing the Partnership's website has been held with the NCC's web team. A discussion paper putting forward ideas and suggestions for the website has also been developed by Su Waldron. • The Community Biodiversity Awards and the Annual Biodiversity Forum both received significant press coverage. These articles have been followed by a number of additional, related pieces, including a full-length feature on orchards in the Sunday edition of the EDP. • NBP and the Non-native Species Initiative have exhibited displays at several events, including the Norfolk Show (1-2 July) and Wild about Norfolk (3 October). • NBP has signed up to be a formal partner with the Natural History Museum, to help celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. The possibility of organising a special event on International Biodiversity Day (22 May) is being considered. • A new and attractive leaflet describing the work of the Partnership has been published and widely distributed at events such as the Norfolk Show. • As a result of the Forum, several private sector representatives have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the BAP process, through participation in the Topic Groups.

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"> • I took part in the UK BAP conference from 6-8 October and the Regional Biodiversity Forum on 22 October April. • The Non-native Species Initiative responded to the consultation on the proposed release of a biological control agent for Japanese knotweed. • I remain in frequent communication with other LBAP co-ordinators in the region (particularly Suffolk) as well as the Regional Biodiversity Co-ordinator. • In collaboration with the Essex and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnerships, work has begun on three pilot regional marine BAPs, dealing with: cetaceans; marine fish; and seagrass beds. A stakeholders' workshop to review the draft plans is being planned for 2010.

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"> The Annual Biodiversity Forum was successfully held on 1 October, and attracted over 100 participants. The Forum was organised around the theme of “celebrating ten years of the Norfolk BAP”, and featured a keynote presentation by the author Jay Griffiths and short overviews from the various Topic Groups. Feedback from the Forum has been very positive.
<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"> Seven Topic Groups held meetings over the reporting period. (Please see Annex 1 for a summary). A meeting of the Farmland Practitioners’ Forum was also held, at Dunham Lodge. A “Crayfish Group” has been established under the umbrella of the Waterbodies BAP Topic Group, to oversee and guide work on an updated SAP for white-clawed crayfish, the organisation of future river surveys, the implementation of possible signal crayfish eradication activities, and the creation of “ark” sites. The revised Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan and the Reed Bunting Species Action Plan were finalised over the reporting period. In addition, substantial progress was made on a number of other action plans, including the Ponds HAP, the Crucian Carp SAP, and the Norfolk Hawker SAP.

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"> Four new project proposals were approved over the reporting period, totalling £4,000. Please see Annex 2 for a summary of proposals considered. Project funding for 2009/10 is now exhausted. Discussions are underway with NCC about the possibility of receiving a "top up", but in the current financial climate, only a modest amount of support is anticipated. 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	17 June and 15 October	<p>Agenda items on 17 June included: a discussion of the proposal to designate little tern as a local BAP species; a review of the Sea Watch Foundation's proposal to establish a cetacean sightings network; and a discussion about the need to update several of the coastal action plans.</p> <p>On 15 October, the Coastal Group welcomed John Hiskett from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust as its new chair; the many contributions of the former chair (John Sizer from the National Trust) were gratefully acknowledged. Agenda items included: a presentation by Peter Rushmer on the European Marine Site Coastal Disturbance Study; a review of the draft Little Tern Action Plan; and brief updates on the marine chalk gully survey and the Wash BAP.</p>
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	18 August	<p>Agenda items included: an update on the Community Biodiversity Awards and the arrangements for the prize-giving ceremony; and a presentation about the consultation on the role of the public forest estate.</p>
Ecological Networks Topic Group	Next meeting scheduled for 18 November	
Farmland BAP Topic Group	6 July and 27 October 2009	<p>Agenda items on 6 July included a presentation from NWT about its grazing programme and an update on the arable plants project. The Topic Group was followed by a meeting of the Practitioners' Forum at Dunham Lodge. Richard MacMullen (FWAG) and Anthony Blanchfield (Albanwise Ltd) led a guided farm walk, during which there was an opportunity to see a suite of HLS options and management approaches, including activities aimed at: conserving and managing veteran trees; restoring wood-pasture and parkland; restoring traditional orchards; maintaining and restoring ancient woodlands; providing educational access; and restoring a listed building.</p> <p>The meeting on 27 October featured: a presentation from the Bedfordshire Biodiversity Partnership on the "Nude Ewe Project"; a talk about Roadside Nature Reserves by Norfolk County Council; and a discussion about the "Campaign for the Farmed Environment".</p>

Topic Group	Meeting Date	Principal Issues Discussed
Heathland BAP Topic Group	1 September	Agenda items included: an update on the Brecks biodiversity audit from Dr Paul Dolman; a presentation on NWT's "Hidden Heaths Project"; and a discussion about the next steps in revising the Heathland HAP.
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	20 October 2009	Agenda items included: a review of the latest versions of the action plans for ponds, Norfolk hawkers and crucian carp; and a discussion about possible follow-up activities to the <i>Tolypella intricata</i> project. The first formal meeting of the newly-established "crayfish group" was held immediately afterwards.
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	21 July 2009	Agenda items included: a review of the final draft of the Reed Bunting Action Plan; updates on the Broads BAP and the Non-native Species Initiative; and a discussion about taking forward the wetlands opportunities map. The meeting was followed by a site visit to Sculthorpe Moor.
Woodlands BAP Topic Group	28 October 2009	Agenda items included a presentation on the Norfolk Deer Parks Project from Dr Rob Liddiard (UEA) and an update on orchards research from Patsy Dallas (UEA).

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	Waterbodies Topic Group/ NWT	£1,500	Approved. An additional sum of £1,500 has been provided by the Broads Authority; BA has also contributed significant staff resources to the project.
2	Wet Woodland Project: Phase 4	Woodlands Topic Group/ NCC	£1,000	Approved. An additional sum of £5,000 has been provided by the Forestry Commission.
3	Marine Biodiversity and Geographical Extent of Sheringham Chalk Gullies	Coastal Topic Group/ Seasearch	£2,000	Proposal approved and a grant of £1,000 provided. (The balance of £1,000 to be provided by NBIS.)
4	Support for "Wild about Norfolk"	Communities and Nature Topic Group/ WaN Organising Committee	£500	Approved.

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

- Dates in 2010 to be decided

BAP Co-ordinators' Group

- Dates to be decided

Topic Group Meetings

- Coastal Topic Group: 2 or 4 February 2010 (date to be confirmed)
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 24 November 2009
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: 18 November 2009
- Farmland Topic Group: 9 February 2010
- Heathland Topic Group: 1 December 2009
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 26 January 2010
- Wetlands Topic Group: 6 November 2009
- Woodlands Topic Group: Date to be set

Biodiversity Forums

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

Other Biodiversity Events

- Planning for the Planting of a New Orchard: 8 November 2009, Little Downham
- Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service – Annual Stakeholders’ Meeting: 16 November 2009
- Keeping up with Non-native Species: 23-24 November, Birmingham
- Suffolk Biodiversity Forum: 26 November 2009
- Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists’ Society and NBIS Meeting: 2 December 2009
- Restorative Pruning of Apple Trees: 5 December 2009, Wisbech St Mary
- East of England Regional Bat Conference: 30 January 2010
- Restorative Pruning of Apple Trees: 30 January 2010, Steeple Morden
- Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative – Stakeholders’ Forum: 24 March 2010
- Wild about the Wensum: 22 May 2010
- International Day of Biodiversity: 22 May 2010

Regional and National Meetings

- East of England Biodiversity Forum: 28 January 2010