

# **NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:  
5 November 2009 – 11 February 2010**



## NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

### Co-ordinator's Progress Report: 5 November 2009 – 11 February 2010

#### Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 5 November 2009 to 11 February 2010. As with previous progress reports, it is presented using the template from Natural England, which is now in use by a majority of LBAP partnerships across the country.

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

#### Highlights

This has been a relatively quiet few months for the Partnership, with the Christmas break and the snow all contributing to a less intensive period than usual. This has provided a welcome opportunity to catch-up on a backlog of reporting and correspondence, as well as other administrative tasks. However, substantial progress has been made in several key areas. Highlights since the last meeting of the Steering Group have included:

- Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group: In response to a recommendation from the 10-year review, a new Topic Group dealing with planning and biodiversity has been established. A well-attended inaugural meeting was held on 4 February, and included a discussion about the Topic Group's role and membership, Norfolk's 1 App local validation requirements, the Breckland Habitat Regulations Assessment, and other issues.
- Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative: Detailed arrangements have been put into place for the implementation of the Defra-funded projects. These projects are linked to the Water Framework Directive, and take NNNSI into an exciting phase of implementation on the ground. Mike Sutton-Croft has prepared templates for grant offers to partners, and has also begun working up briefs for those activities that will be put out to tender.
- Brecks Biodiversity Audit: The Brecks Audit has continued to make excellent progress. To date, over half a million records (575,619) have been collated, for nearly 13,000 species; these include 1,898 Red Data Book, Nationally Rare or Scarce, or BAP species. A technical workshop on the management of arable field margins for Breckland species is being organised in mid-February, and the final report of Phase 1 of the project is expected this summer. The audit has already helped to highlight the biodiversity importance of the Brecks significantly.

- Biodiversity Project Fund: Three new projects were approved over the reporting period, as follows:
  - BCT support to local bat groups
  - Designation of County Wildlife Sites in the Broads: Phase 2
  - Cut-off Channel Management Project: Phase 2
- Action Plans: Four action plans were finalised over the reporting period: the Habitat Action Plan for ponds and the Species Action Plans for crucian carp, Norfolk hawkler and little tern.

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

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

- Overseeing the management of the next phase of the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative;
- Continuing work to promote the International Year of Biodiversity;
- Collaborating with the Suffolk and Essex Biodiversity Partnerships to finalise the regional action plans for marine cetaceans, marine fish and seagrass beds;
- Continuing work on a new design for the Partnership's website.

Scott Perkin  
Biodiversity Co-ordinator

February 2010

## 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>Following the recommendations that emerged from the 10-year review, the National Trust was formally invited to become a member of the Biodiversity Partnership's Steering Group. Unfortunately, this was declined, as the Regional Nature Conservation Adviser has been requested to reduce his external liaison work and focus on the Trust's internal priorities.</li> <li>A meeting of the Steering Group was held on 5 November 2009. Agenda items included a presentation by Prof Rob Fuller from BTO on woodfuels and woodland birds; endorsement of the hedgerow and reed bunting action plans; and consideration of the proposal to designate little tern as a local BAP species.</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>Topic Groups have continued to develop project proposals for consideration by the Biodiversity Project Fund. Although the Fund is currently exhausted, it is hoped that it will be replenished by Norfolk County Council in the new financial year. In the meantime, a "waiting list" of approved projects has been established.</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>• A detailed funding application was submitted to South Norfolk Council, requesting support for the Partnership in 2010/11; a decision is awaited.</li> <li>• A comprehensive end-of-year completion report was prepared for Broadland Council, summarising the Partnership's achievements in 2009; Broadland is currently considering the Partnership's request for support in 2010/11.</li> <li>• In collaboration with NNNISI, a pre-application proposal for the eradication of signal crayfish was submitted to SITA. The initial response was encouraging and the possibility of developing a full proposal is now being considered.</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>• The new, grouped action plan for bats has been entered onto BARS (but not yet populated).</li> <li>• Norfolk has offered to take part in a pilot exercise to test the new spatial version of BARS.</li> <li>• Comments on Norfolk's experience with BARS have been forwarded to the national BARS review team.</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>: NCC's Ecology Manager (Heidi Thompson) has assumed lead responsibility for National Indicator 197, but the Biodiversity Co-ordinator has continued to play a supporting role. This has included working with NWT and the Broadland Community Partnership to help develop a County Wildlife Site project for Broadland District. Work on the LAA local indicator on econets has also continued, and a meeting of the lead partners was held on 17 December.</li> <li>• <u>Planning</u>: The Co-ordinator has started to make arrangements for the next Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, to be held at South Norfolk Council on 9 September. Mike Oxford from ALGE has once again offered to be the lead resource person for the day. The Chief Executive of Buglife has also tentatively agreed to give a case study presentation on their legal challenge to the development of the West Thurrock brownfield site.</li> <li>• <u>Community Strategies</u>: The Co-ordinator has continued to serve as the "Environment Champion" for the Broadland Community Partnership and remains actively engaged with the Norwich LSP.</li> <li>• <u>Rackheath Eco-community</u>: The Co-ordinator is a member of the Rackheath sub-group that has been established to advise on the biodiversity aspects of the eco-community. This has included contributing to the preparation of the draft biodiversity design principles for the site.</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 second electronic newsletter is well advanced and will be distributed at the end of February. It is now envisioned that the newsletter will be produced three times a year (winter, summer and autumn).</li> <li>• Work on re-designing the Partnership's website is continuing. A number of news articles, updates and reports have been added to the site.</li> <li>• A full-length feature written by the Co-ordinator and celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BAP was included in the last edition of NWT's <i>Tern</i> magazine; this is sent to NWT members and is also included as a free supplement in the EDP, thereby reaching some 11,000 readers.</li> <li>• NBP and a number of other organisations have formed an informal partnership to promote the International Year of Biodiversity in Norfolk. BA and NBP are organising a major event at the Forum on 7 March. With NBP support, NWT will be putting on its "Conservation Counts: Grains of Truth" exhibit at the Forum on 22 May. A number of other events are also being planned, including a biodiversity conference for sixth formers in the autumn, led by the Castle Museum.</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 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>• The Co-ordinator took part in the Regional Biodiversity Forum on 28 January 2010. Agenda items included presentations on: the Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas; the new spatial version of BARS; the results of the Defra Innovation Project; and priorities for species work in the region.</li>   <li>• Suggestions and feedback were provided on the draft regional habitat targets leaflet being prepared by the Regional Biodiversity Forum.</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 underway, including the Brecks Biodiversity Audit, the organisation of the Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, and the preparation of regional marine action plans.</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>The Co-ordinator has started to make arrangements for the next Annual Biodiversity Forum, provisionally scheduled for 6 October. The theme of this year's Forum will be "biodiversity and economics". Speakers from the National Ecosystem Assessment, the RSPB's economic team and TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) have been invited.</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>Nine Topic Group meetings were held over the reporting period. (Please see Annex 1 for a summary). This included the first meeting of the newly-established Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group.</li> <li>Through NNNSI, arrangements were made for Stephanie Peay (a leading national crayfish expert) to visit Norfolk and advise on a possible signal crayfish eradication project in North Norfolk. Following Stephanie's site visit, a special meeting of the crayfish sub-group was held on 15 January to discuss the next steps.</li> <li>Four action plans were finalised over the reporting period: the Ponds HAP, the Crucian Carp SAP, the Little Tern SAP; and the Norfolk Hawker SAP.</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>Three new project proposals were approved over the reporting period (Annex 2). However, the Biodiversity Project Fund is currently exhausted, and as a result, it has not been possible to issue grant offers. A "waiting list" of approved projects has been created, and it is hoped that NCC will replenish the fund in the 2010/11 financial year.</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	2 February 2010	Agenda items included: an overview of the Topic Group's activities since its inception and discussion about the Group's remit and future priorities; an update on the Marine Act; and a review of the action plans for little tern, natterjack toad and seagrass beds.
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	24 November 2009	Agenda items included: an update on the Ponds HAP; a review of the BCT's proposal for a regional bat workers' conference; a discussion about the International Year of Biodiversity; and a presentation about the Gaywood Valley Living Landscape Project.
Ecological Networks Topic Group	18 November 2009	Agenda items included: a presentation by Tom Butterworth (Natural England) about the South-east's approach to ecological network implementation; and a discussion about the desirability of broadening the Topic Group's focus to encompass climate change adaptation.
Farmland BAP Topic Group	9 February 2010	Agenda items included: a series of presentations covering woodfuels, the Rural Development Programme for England, and the RSPB's Farmland Birds Package. A proposal for the second phase of the Cut-off Channel Management Project was also considered.
Heathland BAP Topic Group	1 December 2009	Agenda items included: a presentation by Doreen Wells (County Ant Recorder) on ant ecology and distribution in Norfolk; an update on the NWT heathland County Wildlife Site audit; a presentation from Tim Pankhurst about the new Plantlife project for the Brecks; and a discussion about Butterfly Conservation's request for a third party contribution for its WREN project (also in the Brecks).
Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group	4 February 2010	This was the inaugural meeting of this newly-created group. Agenda items included: membership and Terms of Reference; 1 App local validation requirements; the Breckland Habitat Regs Assessment; and the arrangements for the annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar.

<b>Topic Group</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Principal Issues Discussed</b>
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	26 January 2010	Agenda items included: review of the action plans for Norfolk hawker, crucian carp and ponds; and an update on biodiversity research at Rockland Broad.
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	6 November 2009 and 29 January 2010	Agenda items included: a presentation by Gerry Barnes on the Wet Woodlands Project; a discussion about the action plans for fen orchid and crane, and an update on the Flood and Water Bill.
Woodlands BAP Topic Group	No meeting this period.	

**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	Cetacean Sightings Network	Coastal Topic Group/ SeaWatch	£2,222	Not approved. Although the review panel was supportive of the proposal, members felt that the budget could be reduced. A concern was also expressed that the project would still result only in casual records (ie, it would not entail systematic surveys).
2	Regional Bat Conference	Communities and Nature Group/BCT	£350	Approved, on the condition that the funds be used to support BCT's follow-up visits to local groups in Norfolk. Grant to be offered only when the Biodiversity Project Fund has been replenished.
3	Designation of County Wildlife Sites in the Broads: Phase 2	Waterbodies Topic Group/ NWT	£2,821	Approved. Grant to be offered only when the Biodiversity Project Fund has been replenished.
4	Cut-off Channel Management Project: Phase 2	Farmland Topic Group/NWT	£800	Approved. (NB: This project subsequently received additional funding from EA, so NBP support is no longer required.)
5	Brecks Heathland Restoration for Threatened Butterflies and Moths	Heathland Topic Group/BC	£3,000	Deferred; additional information 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**

- 17 June
- 4 November

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

- 3 June
- 21 October

#### **Topic Group Meetings**

- Coastal Topic Group:
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 23 February
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: 12 May
- Farmland Topic Group:
- Heathland Topic Group: 16 March
- Waterbodies Topic Group:
- Wetlands Topic Group:
- Woodlands Topic Group: Date to be set

#### **Biodiversity Forums**

- Heaths Forum: 23 February
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: Date to be set
- Annual Biodiversity Forum: 6 October

#### **Other Biodiversity Events**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 7 March     | "Wake up to Wildlife: Celebrating Biodiversity in the Broads", The Forum, Norwich |
| 13 March    | Norfolk Bat Workers' Conference, BTO, Thetford                                    |
| 13-14 March | "Norfolk Rocks", Castle Museum, Norwich   |
| 24 March    | Norfolk Non-native Species Stakeholders' Forum, Abbey Conference Centre, Norwich  |

5 April	Easter Fair, Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse
22 May	“Wild about the Wensum”, Pensthorpe Nature Reserve and Gardens
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity, The Forum, Norwich
5-6 June	NWT’s “Big Wildlife Watch” (a Springwatch and IYB event)
17-18 July	Non-native Species: Action Weekend (various locations around the county)
9 Sept	Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, South Norfolk Council, Long Stratton
6 October (tbc)	Annual Biodiversity Forum: Biodiversity and Economic Development, Abbey Conference Centre, Norwich
9 October	“Wild about Norfolk”, Neatherd High School

### **Regional and National Meetings**

- East of England Biodiversity Forum: 21 July; 14 October
- Regional Meeting of LBAP Chairs: 2 March
- Regional Orchards Meeting: 11 March, Hertfordshire