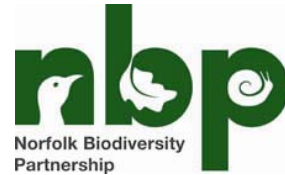


NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:
17 June – 4 November 2010**



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Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the period from 17 June to 4 November 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

Autumn has traditionally been one of the Partnership's busiest periods, and this year has been no exception. Highlights since the last meeting of the Steering Group have included:

- Planning and Biodiversity Seminar: The 6th Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar was held on 9 September, in collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership. The day attracted over 60 participants from the two counties, including many development control officers and forward planners. As in previous years, the seminar was facilitated by Mike Oxford, Project Officer with the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE). The day featured a demonstration of the new, web-based biodiversity toolkit developed by ALGE, as well as presentations and case studies from Breckland Council, Mott MacDonald, Buglife, Forest Heath District Council and the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership.
- Community Biodiversity Awards: The Partnership's Community Biodiversity Awards were presented at a special ceremony at the Assembly House on 30 September. The awards recognise the achievements of some of the most innovative and successful community wildlife projects in the county, and were presented by Steve Scott, Regional Director of the Forestry Commission. Seven awards were presented, as follows:

Local Group Award: Blofield and District Conservation Group – BADCOG (winner); North Norfolk Workout Project (Highly Commended)

Site Award: Little Ouse Headwaters Project

Education Award: Tuckswold Primary School

Species Award: Catherine Greenhough (for work on bats)

Individual Award: Ann Roberts (Wymondham Nature Group)

Special Achievement Award: David and Christine Cannon (for the founding of "Wild about Norfolk")

- Sixth Form Biodiversity Conference: To mark the International Year of Biodiversity, a special biodiversity conference for sixth formers was held on 23 September. The event was organised by the Castle Museum, in collaboration with UEA, NBP, NBIS, NNNSI and NWT. The day attracted nearly 100 students, from a total of four schools. It featured a series of interactive workshops on issues such as invasive alien species, biological recording and ecological networks, and concluded with a lively debate about extinction and whether or not too much funding is spent on conservation. The day was sponsored by CUE-East and the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership.
- Annual Biodiversity Forum: The Annual Biodiversity Forum was held on 6 October, on the theme of “biodiversity and economics”. The day attracted nearly 100 participants, as well as front-page coverage in the Eastern Daily Press. It included presentations on the National Ecosystem Assessment, a regional case study on the Woodland Wealth Appraisal, and a series of local case studies assessing the economic contribution of the natural environment to Norfolk’s economy.
- Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative: The Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative has continued to make excellent progress. Many field-level control and eradication projects were undertaken during the summer. These included projects to: control (and eventually eradicate) floating pennywort from the River Waveney; control giant hogweed along the River Yare from Norwich to Postwick; map the distribution of Himalayan balsam in the catchment of the River Wensum; and eradicate water primrose from its only known occurrence in Norfolk (a pond in Watton). A “Weekend of Action” was organised on 17 and 18 July, involving some 60 volunteers at five different sites. The Initiative also organised a training workshop for NWT field staff and carried out a very wide array of awareness raising activities (including taking part in the BBC’s “Deadly Day Out”). In an exciting new development, NNNSI’s application to the Broads Sustainable Development Fund for invasive species work in and around the Broads has recently been approved.
- Brecks Biodiversity Audit: The Brecks Biodiversity Audit has also continued apace. The first phase of the audit is now drawing to a close, and arrangements have been made for the report to be formally launched at an event in Thetford on 30 November. In addition to Dr Paul Dolman and other members of the audit team, speakers are expected to include the former Chief Scientist at Natural England (Tom Tew), the Chief Executive of Plantlife (Victoria Chester) and the Forestry Commission’s Senior Ecologist (Jonathan Spencer).

Priorities for the Next Four Months

Priorities for the coming four months (November 2010 – March 2011) will include:

- Finalising a proposal to the Interreg Two Seas Programme for work on invasive alien species;
- Contributing to the discussions regarding Phase 2 of the Brecks Biodiversity Audit;
- Collaborating with the Suffolk and Essex Biodiversity Partnerships to finalise the regional action plans for marine cetaceans, marine fish and seagrass beds;
- Finalising a number of Norfolk action plans, in particular, the Habitat Action Plans for: reedbeds; heathlands, and open mosaic habitats on previously developed land.

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"> Important new partnerships have been forged with a number of organisations, including the Castle Museum, the School of Biological Sciences at UEA, and the Sainsbury's Centre for Visual Arts. A meeting of the NBP Steering Group was held on 17 June. Agenda items included a presentation by Dr Paul Dolman on the Brecks Biodiversity Audit and endorsement of the Little Tern Species Action Plan.
<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"> Two new project proposals were considered over the period in question: preparation of a directory of community biodiversity projects and publication of a flora of King's Lynn (Annex 2). The possibility of developing a project on open mosaic habitats on previously developed land was discussed with Sarah Henshall (Buglife's Brownfield Officer), NBIS and Norwich City Council. Projects approved earlier in the year 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's application to the Broads Sustainable Development Fund for work on invasive alien species has been successful. • Work on developing the "RINSE" proposal to the Interreg Two Seas Programme has continued. A strong partnership has been assembled from Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and France. Two partners' meetings have been held over the period in question.
<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"> • The Partnership has submitted its response to the LBAP survey being conducted by Natural England.
<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. 	<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. 	<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 BCP Board meetings on 4 August and 3 November. Assistance has been provided in developing the biodiversity component of BCP's new action plan and advice given on several biodiversity projects.

CORE SERVICES	SUCCESS MEASURES AND OUTPUTS	PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Planning Seminar</u>: The 6th Annual Planning and Biodiversity Seminar was held at South Norfolk Council on 9 September, in collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership. The day featured presentations from the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE), Buglife, Mott MacDonald, Breckland Council, the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership and Forest Heath District Council. The seminar attracted over 60 participants, including many development control officers and forward planners.
<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"> A considerable number of new items were added to the biodiversity website. The Partnership's third electronic newsletter was issued in the summer and sent to over 400 people. The Partnership also had a presence at several events, including the Norfolk Show and the South Norfolk Fun Day. To mark the International Year of Biodiversity, a special biodiversity conference for sixth formers was held on 23 September. The event was organised by the Castle Museum in collaboration with UEA, NBP, NBIS, NNNSI and NWT, and was funded by CUE-East and the Biodiversity Partnership. The conference attracted over 90 students and featured a series of interactive workshops on issues such as biological recording, invasive alien species and ecological networks. It concluded with a lively debate about extinction and the scale of conservation funding. Feedback from both students and teachers was very positive.

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"> • The Co-ordinator took part in the Regional Biodiversity Forum held on 23 July. • On 18 October, the Co-ordinator took part in a meeting of the Steering Group for the East of England Local Wildlife Sites Project. The aim of this project is to bring approximately 30 sites (five sites per county) into management over the next two years, principally through HLS. • The Partnership contributed to the White Paper response prepared by the Regional Biodiversity Forum. • 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 have been undertaken or are currently underway, including the Planning and Biodiversity Seminar, the Brecks Biodiversity Audit and the regional marine action plans.

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 6 October, on the theme of “biodiversity and economics”. The event attracted nearly 100 participants, and was featured on the front page and the editorial of the Eastern Daily Press. The day featured presentations on the National Ecosystem Assessment, regional case studies such as the Woodland Wealth Appraisal, and a series of local case studies assessing the economic contributions of the natural environment to Norfolk’s economy. Feedback from the event was 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 Group meetings were held over the reporting period (please see Annex 1 for a summary). Substantial progress has been made on a number of new/revised action plans, including the Reedbed Action Plan. A meeting of the Heaths Practitioners’ Forum was held on 8 July at Buxton, to look at a major restoration project undertaken by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust with HLS funding. This was followed by a visit to Cawston heath, to see progress at a large arable reversion site. The day was led by John Milton of NWT and Dave Weaver of Natural England. The Co-ordinator is a member of the Wash BAP Steering Group and has provided detailed input to the development of the BAP.

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"> Two new proposals were put forward for consideration by the Biodiversity Project Fund, one requesting support for the publication of a flora of King's Lynn, and the other requesting funding for the creation of a community biodiversity directory. 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	No meeting held over this period	
Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group	17 August	Agenda items included: a presentation on the Sustainable Urban Fringes Project (SURF); a consideration of two project proposals (community biodiversity directory and flora of King's Lynn); and the Community Biodiversity Awards.
Ecological Networks Topic Group	No meeting over this period	
Farmland BAP Topic Group	15 September	Agenda items included: a presentation from BTO on farmland bird trends; review of progress with the implementation of the Lowland Calcareous Grassland HAP and the Lowland Meadows HAP; and arrangements for the Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum.
Heathland BAP Topic Group	7 September	Agenda items included: a presentation on the five-banded wasp; an update on the Mousehold heath green infrastructure project; and a discussion about the status of silver-studded blue butterflies at Horsford heath and the desirability of undertaking restoration work.
Planning and Biodiversity Topic Group	15 July	Agenda items included: a presentation on the Suffolk planning group; updates on a variety of national developments related to planning and biodiversity, including the Defra review of the implementation of the NERC biodiversity duty; a discussion of the draft HAP for Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land; and a discussion about the desirability of establishing an automated planning screening tool.
Waterbodies BAP Topic Group	8 September	Agenda items included: a presentation from NBIS on the Norfolk pond mapping project.
Wetlands BAP Topic Group	28 September	Agenda items included: updates on the Broads Authority's peat project and grazing marsh assessment; a discussion about the proposed Broads biodiversity audit; the East of England wetland inventory; and the draft Reedbed Habitat Action Plan.
Woodland BAP Topic Group	14 July	Agenda items included: an update on green infrastructure in Norfolk; a presentation on Woodfuel-East; and a review of the implementation status of the various woodland habitat and species action plans.

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.	Flora of King's Lynn	Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group/ Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society	£500	This proposal was discussed and endorsed by the Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group at its meeting on 17 August. A sum of £500 has been earmarked for the project.
2.	Community Biodiversity Directory	Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group/ BTCV	£1,847	This proposal was discussed and endorsed by the Communities and Nature BAP Topic Group at its meeting on 17 August. As the next step in the funding process, it needs to be considered by the Co-ordinator's Group.

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 to be set

BAP Co-ordinators' Group

- Dates to be set

Topic Group Meetings

- Coastal Topic Group: Date in February 2011 to be set
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 9 November
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: Date to be set
- Farmland Topic Group: 2 February 2011
- Planning Topic Group: 9 February 2011 (originally scheduled for 11 November but postponed to avoid a clash with the Examination in Public of the Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy)
- Heathland Topic Group: 18 January 2011
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 22 February (originally scheduled for 26 January 2011 but postponed to avoid a clash with the regional LBAP chairs' meeting)
- Wetlands Topic Group: 10 February 2011
- Woodlands Topic Group: Date to be set

Biodiversity Forums

- Heaths Forum: Date to be set
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: 8 November

Other Biodiversity Events

- NBIS and NatSoc Recordors' Event: 25 November
- Launch of the Brecks Biodiversity Audit: 30 November

Regional and National Meetings

- UK BAP Conference: 23-24 November
- Regional meeting of LBAP Chairs: 26 January 2011

