

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:
26 April – 21 July 2006**



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1. Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the activities of the Biodiversity Co-ordinator over the three-month period from 26 April to 21 July 2006. As with previous reports, it seeks to record the progress that has been achieved and to highlight some priorities for the coming quarter. For ease of reference, the report has been organised according to the major headings in the Co-ordinator's workplan.

2. Summary of Progress

2.1 Facilitate and support the implementation of the Norfolk BAP

Steering Group

- I am delighted to report that the Forestry Commission has accepted our invitation to become a formal member of the Steering Group. Sid Cooper (Woodland Officer) will represent the Forestry Commission at future meetings.

Topic Group and Co-ordinators' Group Meetings

- The Topic Groups continue to be very active. All eight groups met during the reporting period, as follows:
 - Coastal Topic Group: 15 May
 - Communities and Nature Topic Group: 10 July
 - Ecological Networks Topic Group: 12 June
 - Farmland Topic Group: 8 May
 - Heathland Topic Group: 16 May
 - Waterbodies Topic Group: 22 May
 - Wetlands Topic Group: 15 June
 - Woodlands Topic Group: 6 July
- A meeting of the Co-ordinators' Group was held on 7 July 2006. Amongst other issues, the Group discussed: the draft Memorandum of Understanding for the Partnership; arrangements for the Annual Biodiversity Forum; and the draft final report of the ecological networks mapping project.

Action Plans

Significant progress continues to be made with the development/ revision of action plans:

- The Heathland Topic Group finalised three action plans, covering: woodlark; nightjar and silver-studded blue butterfly. The plans have been through an extensive consultation process and their completion represents a major milestone in the work of the group.
- The Coastal Topic Group finalised the action plans for: starlet sea anemone; saline lagoons; maritime cliff and slope; and littoral chalk. The first two plans are revised and updated versions of the existing 1998 plans. The last two are new additions to the Norfolk BAP, and are particularly timely in view of the ongoing discussions regarding the future of Norfolk's coastal areas and the development of the Shoreline Management Plans. Substantial headway was also made on several other plans, including the coastal sand dunes HAP and the harbour porpoise SAP.
- Other plans currently under development and which were discussed/reviewed during the period in question include: lowland meadows; calcareous grasslands; churchyards; and pillwort.

Biodiversity Project Fund

- As summarised in Annex 1, three funding requests were received and approved over the reporting period, for the following activities: 1) a soft cliff invertebrate survey and workshop; 2) the development of a "farming and biodiversity" exhibition at the Norfolk Show; and 3) printing of the activity booklet for "Wild about Norfolk." A balance of £14,200 remains in the 2005/06 fund.
- A brief update on the current status of all the projects currently being supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund is given in Annex 2. One of the highlights of the period was the successful translocation of silver-studded blue butterflies (25 females and five males) from Buxton Heath to Cawston Heath. The translocation was carried out by Butterfly Conservation, with the technical assistance of Jane Harris and under consent from English Nature.

Memorandum of Agreement/ Partnership Funding

- In a major new development, a two-year Memorandum of Agreement was signed between English Nature and Norfolk County Council on 23 June 2006. The MoA identifies core LBAP services and outputs (as discussed at the Steering Group meetings on 20 January and 25 April 2006), and confirms both English Nature's and the County Council's financial and in-kind contributions to the Partnership.
- In addition to EN and NCC, financial contributions for 2006/07 have been confirmed from: the Forestry Commission; South Norfolk District Council; North Norfolk District Council; and Norwich City Council. Breckland District Council has also indicated its intention to provide financial support to the Partnership this year.

2.2 Improve the quality and availability of information about Norfolk's biodiversity

Databases

- With support from the Biodiversity Project Fund and other sources, NWT has continued work on a number of BAP-related databases, including databases for great crested newts, grasslands, and fens.

Norfolk Biological Records Centre

- Linkages between the NBRC and the Biodiversity Partnership remain strong and continue to be further developed. Responsibility for the NBRC formally moved across from Cultural Services to the Planning and Transportation Department at the beginning of July. Richard Graham from P&T has visited the Centre and prepared a detailed assessment of equipment and software needs, as well as the steps required to undertake a data migration process so that all records will eventually be available in a single, integrated database. The latest Recorder software (Recorder 6) has been purchased for trial purposes. In another exciting development, NWT has included the NBRC within its "Natural Connections project", which is the subject of a forthcoming bid from the Trust to the Heritage Lottery Fund; if successful, this would provide the NBRC with a small but very important grant to enhance its services.

2.3 Promote understanding of, and engagement in, the BAP process

Publications and Articles

- The Biodiversity Partnership's Annual Update for 2005/06 was published and has now been distributed to nearly 300 recipients. This issue has a particular focus on woodlands, and includes a feature on the wood pasture HAP as well as an article on the roadside survey of traditional orchards carried out by the East of England Apples and Orchards Project (EEAOP), with support from the Biodiversity Project Fund.
- *Biodiversity News* accepted an article on the results of the Norfolk traditional orchards survey, which appeared in the most recent edition.

Website

- The website continues to be improved and updated on a regular basis. A new section has now been created, from which the Co-ordinator's quarterly progress reports can be downloaded. Several news stories have been added, and the final report of the ecological networks mapping project has also been uploaded onto the site. Recently, work has commenced on updating the "kids and schools" section, as this is no longer current; organisations active in environmental education have been requested to send in a short summary about their programmes so that this can be incorporated.

Presentations and Events

- Assistance was provided to the Communities and Nature Topic Group with the re-launch of its Community Biodiversity Awards. Four conservation projects received awards for their outstanding contributions to biodiversity in the county and their engagement with local communities:
 - The Hawk and Owl Trust received the Site Award for restoring a neglected wetland at Sculthorpe Moor;
 - Costessey High School won the Education Award for its wildlife garden;
 - The Friends of Fiddlewood won the Group Award for their efforts to care for a neglected urban woodland on the Fiddlewood estate in Norwich;
 - Alwyn Jackson received the Individual Award in recognition of the many years he has spent as volunteer, helping to enhance the biodiversity of Sparham Pools and a number of other sites.

The awards were presented by Gerry Barnes and BBC Radio Norfolk's Gary Standley at a short ceremony held at Norwich City Hall 6 July. The event received coverage in the Advertiser and the Eastern Daily Press, as well as on radio.

- A presentation on biodiversity and the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan was given at the Annual General Meeting of CPRE West Norfolk, on 27 April. Although biodiversity was a relatively new concept for some members, the presentation was well received. Particular interest was expressed in the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance, as a tool that could help inform CPRE's involvement in the planning and development control process.

Annual Biodiversity Forum

- Arrangements for the Annual Biodiversity Forum on 28 September are now well advanced. The Forum will look at the linkages among biological recording, conservation and community involvement. Confirmed speakers include: Trevor James (NBN), Tim Sparks (Monks Wood); and Mark Cocker (author of Birds Britannica). The Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society has also been invited to give a presentation at the Forum.

2.4 Monitor and report on the progress of the Norfolk BAP, using BARS

- One-to-one sessions with plan leads have continued. Particular progress has been made in working with English Nature to enter information about the status of the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh HAP. Arrangements are also being made to work with RSPB on the reedbed HAP.

2.5 Promote the integration of biodiversity into key planning processes and sectors

Norfolk Local Area Agreement

- Considerable work has been carried out in order to develop the ecological networks component of the Norfolk Local Area Agreement. A draft paper has been prepared, which sets out the justification for working on ecological networks, and identifies a set of possible indicators. These now need to be confirmed and further refined through the Ecological Networks Topic Group; it will also be necessary to develop a baseline and to establish targets for 07/08 and 08/09.

Local Development Frameworks

- In collaboration with Heidi Thompson (Ecology Manager, NCC), a successful seminar on the potential of the minerals industry to contribute to biodiversity was held at Barnham Broom on 21 June. The seminar was designed to contribute to the new minerals LDF, currently under preparation by Norfolk County Council. Some 40 participants attended the seminar, including representatives from a number of local minerals companies, several environmental consultancies, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the British Geological Survey, and the County Council.
- Together with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, meetings with a number of local authorities are being planned to discuss the ways in which the maps and recommendations from the ecological networks project can be incorporated into Local Development Frameworks.

Community Strategies

- I have continued to represent the Partnership on the Norwich Environment Roundtable. Following the publication of the Norwich Environment Strategy, a new process is underway to identify several “big ideas” that will be accorded priority for action. One of the ideas that has been put forward is to ensure that “Norwich is recognised as a model city for the management of the natural and historic environment”. The development of an ecological network for Norwich has been proposed as a key activity under this theme.
- On 12 July, I attended the launch of the South Norfolk Alliance’s programme of action for 2006/07. The development of an ecological network features prominently under the theme of “safer and stronger communities.”

Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- Arrangements have been made for a meeting on 14 September to explore the possible role of the Biodiversity Partnership in preparing Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Documents under the new LDF system. The meeting will be chaired by Andrea Long from Breckland District Council; Nick Vass-Bowen from GO-East has kindly agreed to participate as a “resource person”.

- Together with Mikey Bentley (SNDC) and Ed Stocker (NCC), a presentation about biodiversity was given to planners and development control officers at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Topics addressed included: the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan; the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance; protected area designations and their application in West Norfolk; and bat mitigation guidelines (presented on behalf of Louise Oliver at English Nature). The presentation was well received, and there is an intention to follow-up with a more detailed seminar for planners and developers, to look at issues related to protected species.

2.6 Contribute to regional/national biodiversity processes

East of England Biodiversity Forum

- A meeting of the Regional Biodiversity Forum was held in Cambridge on 9 May. Issues discussed included: the "Breathing Places" campaign; membership; and the Forum's input to the UKBAP targets review.

SITA Enriching Nature Programme

- I took part in a meeting of the SITA Project Assessment Panel for the East of England, held in Cambridge on 18 May. The programme has continued to attract a considerable number of proposals, and most of the Year 1 funds have now been allocated. However, an additional £500,000 will be made available to the East of England region this autumn (deadline for applications: 12 September).

2.7 Other Activities

- Together with John Jones from NCC, I took part in the "Time2C" conference in the Netherlands on the 8th and 9th of June. Time2C is an EU-funded Interreg project, looking at maritime cross-border co-operation. One of the priority thematic areas is management of sensitive coastal and marine environments, including nature reserves. A number of project ideas of relevance to Norfolk were identified for possible future development, including management of Natura 2000 sites in the light of sea level rise and climate change; the Brograve area was tentatively put forward as a possible pilot area/ case study.

3. Workplan for the Next Three Months

Activities over the coming three months will include the following:

- Finalising the ecological network component of the Local Area Agreement;
- Helping to organise the soft cliffs practitioners' workshop on 21 August;
- Holding the seminar on LDFs, biodiversity and open space on 4 September, in collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership (re-scheduled from 28 June);
- Participating in "Wild about Norfolk" on 9 September;

- Organising a meeting on 14 September to explore the possible role of the Biodiversity Partnership in developing Biodiversity SPD under the Local Development Framework process;
- Organising and holding the Annual Biodiversity Forum on 28 September.

(Please note that I will be on leave from 28 July to 13 August.)

Scott Perkin
Biodiversity Co-ordinator
July 2006

ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE BIODIVERSITY PROJECT FUND (APRIL-JULY 06)

	Title of Proposal	Topic Group/ Lead Organisation	Amount Requested	Decision
1	Soft Cliff Invertebrate Survey and Workshop	Coastal Topic Group/ Buglife	£5,300	Approved (£4,300)
2	Farming and Biodiversity Exhibition	Farmland Topic Group/ RNAA	£5,000	Approved (£1,000).
3	Wild about Norfolk	Communities and Nature Topic Group/ WAN Organising Committee	£500	Approved.

**ANNEX 2: SUMMARY OF PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP THROUGH THE
“BIODIVERSITY PROJECT FUND”, FROM 2004/05 ONWARDS**

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Coastal	Saline Lagoon Workshop	- To organise and hold a one-day workshop on saline lagoon management, with Dr. R.N. Bamber	Saline lagoon HAP	North Norfolk	Peter Lambley, EN	One-day event (workshop, held on 14 Oct 2004)	£550	£550 (100%)	Successfully completed
Coastal	A Study of the Soft Rock Cliff Invertebrate Fauna of the Norfolk Coast	- To gather new data on the invertebrate communities of the Norfolk coast - To contribute data to Buglife’s UK-wide study into maritime soft rock cliffs - To hold a one-day workshop for the Biodiversity Partnership on soft cliff management.	Maritime cliff and slope	North Norfolk	Andrew Whitehouse, Buglife	May - Nov, 2006	£7,300	£4,300 (59%)	Ongoing. Buglife has contracted an invertebrate specialist to carry out the surveys. The practitioners’ workshop will be held on 21 August.
Communities and Nature	Norwich Rivers and Green Spaces Project	- To raise awareness about the wildlife supported by Norwich’s rivers and encourage community involvement to enhance certain areas of the urban river corridor.	The project has linkages to a number of HAPs and SAPs and also supports the Topic Group’s “Community BAP”.	Norwich City	Matt Davies, Norwich Fringe Project	One year (Sept 2005-Aug 2006)	£30,490	£5,000 (16%)	Ongoing. Activities in Cooper Wood continuing; photo contest is underway.

 = Project Completed

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Communities and Nature	Support for "Wild about Norfolk" 2005 (bird and bat boxes)	- To inform the general public (particularly children) about Norfolk's wildlife and inspire an active interest in conservation.	This project contributes to the Biodiversity Partnership's Awareness Strategy	Thetford	Jennie Murdy, RSPB local group	One day event (15 Oct 2005)	£4,300 + volunteers' time est. at £6,900	£500 (11.6%)	Successfully completed; report received.
Communities and Nature	Support for "Wild about Norfolk 2006" (printing of activity booklet)	- As above.	As above.	Norwich	Jennie Murdy	9-10 Sept		£500	Activity booklet currently being designed.
Farmland	Databases of lowland calcareous grasslands and lowland meadows	- To develop a database for each of the BAP grassland habitats for Norfolk	Calcareous grasslands and lowland meadows HAPs (in prep)	County-wide	Helen Baczkowska	Nov 05 – March 06	£5,000	£3,500 (70%)	Ongoing
Farmland	Biodiversity and farming exhibition at the Norfolk Show	- To demonstrate how farmers can manage their land to help conserve and enhance biodiversity.	Farmland HAPs and SAPs	County-wide	Belinda James	June 2006	£22,375	£1,000 (4.5%)	Completed. Report awaited.
Ecological Networks (Large Areas)	Making Space for Wildlife: Creating an Ecological Network for Norfolk	- To promote the development of an ecological network in Norfolk - To develop a Norfolk econet map; - To prepare a set of project briefs to take the econet forward.	An "umbrella project" with linkages to many different HAPs and SAPs.	County-wide	Reg Land, NWT	March 2005 – February 2006	£16,400	£7,200 (44%)	Final draft report and maps completed and under consultation with Topic Groups.

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Heathland	Heathland CWS Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To draw together existing information on heathland CWS; - To carry out proactive site visits and surveys; - To establish a programme of condition monitoring; - To identify priority areas for management advice and targeting future grant aid. 	Heathland HAP	County-wide	Helen Baczkowska, NWT	Oct 2004 - Oct 2005	£1,000	£1,000 (100%)	Completed. Report awaited.
Heathland	Translocation of Silver-studded blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out a translocation of SSB from Buxton heath to Horsford-St. Faith's 	Draft silver-studded blue SAP calls for re-introductions to two sites by 2010	Broadland	Matt Davies, Norwich Fringe and Mandy Gluth, BC	July 2006	£500	£500 (100%)	Translocation successfully completed. Report awaited.
Waterbodies	Water Vole Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out a repeat survey of the national survey sites in Norfolk in 2005/06 	Water vole SAP (Action 5.5.4)	County-wide (with a particular focus on Broads)	Steve Henson, NWT	Oct 05-Aug 06	£3,400 plus in-kind costs from NWT	£1,400 (41%)	Ongoing; first phase completed;
Waterbodies	Great Crested Newt Record Collation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To draw together records about GCN occurrence in Norfolk into a single, integrated dataset 	GCN SAP (Actions 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, and 5.5.2)	County-wide	Helen Baczkowska, NWT	Nov 05 – March 06	£3,000 plus in-kind costs from NWT	£2,000 (66%)	Underway

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Waterbodies	Norfolk Broads Mink Management Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To establish strategic control of mink in the Broads; - To establish a self-sustaining mink control network; - To monitor mink and water populations - To improve habitat management 	Water vole SAP	Broads National Park	Julia Masson/ Rick Southwood	April 06 - March 08	£43,100	£5,000 (12%)	Underway. A contractor has been appointed. The Steering Group is meeting regularly.
Waterbodies	Mid-Norfolk Mink Management Project: Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To establish strategic control of mink in selected parts of the Wensum River Valley; - To establish a self-sustaining mink control network. 	Water vole SAP	Wensum	Heidi Thompson, NCC	1 year	£15,000	£3,500 (23%)	Ongoing. The project has extended into Trowse; a new project on the Nar has been set up. An application for long-term funding has been submitted to SITA.
Wetlands	Sustainable Solutions to the Ochre and Salinity Problems in the Brograve Catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To undertake a feasibility study to develop a plan for sustainable use of land and water resources in the Brograve catchment. 	Reedbed, grazing marsh and mesotrophic lakes HAPs; Bittern, water vole, otter and mollusc SAPs.	North Norfolk	Lou Mayer, KLCIDB	Jan - Aug 2005	£43,524	£7,300 (17%)	Completed. Report received.

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Wetlands	Norfolk Fens Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To assess the management status and condition of all non-SSI fen sites outside the Broads area; - To identify sites in need of restoration; - To prioritise the need for restoration and management advice; - To produce site management statements and conservation plans for priority sites. 	Fen HAP (particularly Action 5.2.4)	County-wide (except Broads)	Andrina Walmsley, NWT	Oct 2004 - April 2006	£13,300	£1,000 (7.5%)	Nearing completion. The final database includes information on 678 sites, each of which is also linked to a map.
Woodlands	Phase 1 Roadside Orchard Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out a survey of Norfolk's traditional orchards to establish their extent, status and trends. 	Traditional orchards HAP	County-wide	Gerry Barnes, NCC (with EEAOP)	April-October 2005	£1,500	£1,500 (100%)	Completed; final report awaited.
Woodlands	Phase 2 Biodiversity Survey of Traditional Orchards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out surveys of invertebrates, lichens, bryophytes, ground flora and fruit varieties at five traditional orchards, representing different geographical areas and management regimes 	Traditional orchards HAP	Five sites in South Norfolk, the Fens, mid-Norfolk, and North Norfolk.	Gerry Barnes, NCC (with EEAOP)	To be completed by Dec 2005	£1,000	£1,000 (100%)	Nearing completion. Bryophyte, mollusc and diatom surveys completed.

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Woodlands	Propagation of Traditional Norfolk Apple Varieties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — To ensure that a wide variety of traditional apple saplings is available for distribution (880 trees to be grown) 	Traditional orchards HAP	County-wide	Gerry Barnes, NCC (with EEAOP)	Jan 06 to March 08	£3,036	£1,400 (46%)	Underway. Root stock was planted in February and will be budded later this year. Saplings will be available for sale in 2007.
Woodlands	Conservation, Enhancement and Re-creation of Wet Woodland and other Wet Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Establish a GIS database on wet woodlands/ wet habitats in the Nar and Wensum Valleys; — Expand the area of wet woodland in positive management by 40 ha by mid-2007; — Re-create 10 ha of wet woodland by 2009; — Enhance access. 	Wet Woodland HAP	Wensum and Nar River Valleys	Gerry Barnes, NCC	April 06 to March 09	£20,000	£3,600 (18%)	Underway. Several initial studies have been commissioned.

ANNEX 3: CALENDAR OF BIODIVERSITY EVENTS IN 2006

BAP Steering Group

- Friday 21 July
- Friday 20 October

BAP Co-ordinators' Group

- Thursday 12 October
- Additional dates to be identified

Topic Group Meetings

- Coastal Topic Group: 11 September
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 16 October
- Ecological Networks Topic Group: 18 September
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: 19 September (PM)
- Farmland Topic Group: 19 September (AM)
- Heathland Topic Group: 20 September
- Waterbodies Topic Group: 8 September
- Wetlands Topic Group: 13 October
- Woodlands Topic Group: To be announced
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: 19 September

Other Meetings and Events

- An Introduction to the "Breathing Places" Campaign (with representatives from the BBC and the Big Lottery Fund): Wednesday 26 July
- Wash Week: 5-13 August (many different events, at localities around the Wash)
- Management of Soft Cliffs (Practitioners' Workshop): Monday 21 August
- Local Development Frameworks, Biodiversity and Open Space: Monday 4 September (in collaboration with Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership)
- Wild about Norfolk: Saturday 9 September and Sunday 10 September
- Towards Biodiversity SPD: 14 September
- Annual Biodiversity Forum: 28 September
- Woodland Fair: 20 September – 1 October (Suffolk)

East of England Regional Biodiversity Forum

- Tuesday 1 August
- Tuesday 7 November

UK BAP Events

- No dates currently available.