

NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**Co-ordinator's Progress Report for the Period:
21 January – 25 April 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 21 January to 25 April 2006. It seeks to record the progress that has been achieved, identify any obstacles or difficulties encountered, and 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

Topic Group and Co-ordinators' Group Meetings

- The Topic Groups have continued to be active. Meetings of the following groups were attended:
 - Coastal: 20 February
 - Communities and Nature: 27 February
 - Ecological Networks: 20 April
 - Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: 27 March
 - Waterbodies: 22 February
 - Wetlands: 16 March
- A meeting of the Co-ordinators' Group was held on 11 April 2006. Amongst other issues, the Group discussed: the Co-ordinator's draft workplan for 2006/07; the draft Memorandum of Agreement between EN and NCC; preliminary ideas for the Annual Biodiversity Forum; and the draft annual newsletter.

Action Plans

- Two heathland bird SAPs (nightjar and woodlark) were finalised and sent out for formal consultation;
- Significant progress has also been made on a considerable number of action plans, including the following: silver-studded blue butterfly; coastal sand dunes; churchyards and cemeteries; lowland calcareous grasslands; lowland meadows; tower mustard and the scarce ground beetle, *Harpalus froelichii*.

Biodiversity Project Fund

- As summarised in Annex 1, two project proposals were submitted to the Biodiversity Project Fund over the period in question. These were: the Broads Mink Management Project (request for additional, “top-up” support); and the Wensum and Nar Wet Woodlands Project (revised proposal);
- A brief update on the current status of all the projects currently being supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund is given in Annex 2.

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

Surveys

- Roadside Survey of Traditional Orchards: With support from the Biodiversity Project Fund, the East of England Apples and Orchards Project (EEAOP) has been carrying out a roadside survey of traditional orchards marked on the Millennium Edition Ordnance Survey Explorer map (which uses baseline data from 1992). Some 313 orchard sites in 68 parishes have been surveyed to date, and the project is now nearing completion. A preliminary analysis of the project’s initial results has revealed some alarming trends:
 - 126 (40 per cent) of the areas surveyed had no fruit trees left, whilst a further 37 sites had only remnant trees;
 - Of the 150 sizeable orchards still in existence, 47 had been reduced in size compared with the mapped area;
 - Only 94 sites were identified as containing traditional orchard habitat.

These results will require further analysis, and there are several questions about the baseline data that remain to be resolved. Nevertheless, the statistics highlight the rapid loss of this important but often under-valued habitat.

- BAP Molluscs: With a grant from EA, arrangements have been made with the Wheatfen Partnership to carry out surveys of three species of BAP molluscs: *Vertigo angustior*; *Segmentina nitida*; and *Anisus vorticulus*

Norfolk Biological Records Centre:

- With funding from EN and the Planning and Transportation Department, Norfolk County Council has recently requested Mott MacDonald to assist with the development of a ten-year strategic framework for the NBRC, as well as a funding proposal to HLF. As a first step in this process, a consultative workshop with local recorders was held on 25 January. The workshop attracted some 20 participants and highlighted a range of issues and concerns, including the recording community’s desire for greater interaction with – and support from – the Centre.
- I represented the Partnership at a meeting of the NBRC Advisory Group held on 27 February.

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

Publications and Articles

- The information/advocacy document on ecological networks, entitled *Making Space for Wildlife and People*, was sent to Chief Planning Officers and other key players in the county. The document can also be downloaded from the biodiversity website;
- The most recent edition of the NCC magazine, *Your Norfolk*, carried an article on biological recording and the NBRC. This is the first in a number of pieces which are being planned to raise the profile of the Centre.

Website

- There have been no recent changes to the website.

Presentations and Events

- Arrangements have been made to give a presentation on biodiversity and the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan at the Annual General Meeting of CPRE West Norfolk, to be held on 27 April.

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

- Two members of the Steering Group took part in a BARS training session organised by English Nature in Peterborough;
- Additional Plan Leaders have been identified and one-to-one training sessions to introduce new users to the system have continued.

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

Norfolk Local Area Agreement

- The Norfolk Local Area Agreement has now been formally signed, and includes three major components of direct relevance to the Partnership, dealing with: ecological networks; ecological footprinting; and environmental enhancement in the Fens (submitted by the Fens Rural Pathfinder Project). The econet component will require further development before it can be implemented, and the Partnership has been requested to identify: indicators for assessing progress; a baseline; and targets for 07/08 and 08/09; the Partnership has also been requested to develop the “evidence base”.

Local Development Frameworks

- In collaboration with the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership, preliminary arrangements have now been made for the second seminar on biodiversity and LDFs. South Norfolk Council has once again kindly offered to host the seminar, which is to be held on 28 June;

- Reg Land (NWT) gave a detailed presentation to the Norfolk Planning Policy Implementation Group, describing the importance and value of ecological networks and the potential role that LDFs could play in delivering a network for the county. The presentation was well received, and there is clearly support for the econet approach among many local authorities;
- In collaboration with Heidi Thompson (Ecology Manager, NCC), arrangements have been finalised for a seminar on the potential of the minerals industry to contribute to biodiversity. The seminar – entitled “Not Just Newts! - is being held at Barnham Broom on 21 June and is being designed to contribute to the new minerals LDF which is currently under preparation. It will feature speakers from the private sector, NWT, NCC and the British Geological Survey.

Community Strategies

- The Norwich Environment Strategy and Action Plan has now been published under the auspices of the Community Strategy. The final plan contains a significant number of activities and outputs put forward on behalf of the Biodiversity Partnership, including commitments to: revise the Norwich Biodiversity Action Plan; bring natural areas into favourable management; promote the effective use of the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance; and manage parks and gardens in a more biodiversity-friendly manner.

Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- Guidance on the steps to be followed in order to convert the SPG into an SPD under the LDF system was sought from GO-East.
- Arrangements have been made to give a talk about the Biodiversity SPG to planners and development control officers at King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

2.6 Contribute to regional/national biodiversity processes

LBAP Conference

- A national conference for LBAPs was organised by EN (with Defra support) in Rotherham from 21-23 March. The conference brought together LBAP Co-ordinators from across the UK, and provided a valuable forum for information exchange and networking. The conference had a particular focus on wetlands and wood-pasture; Gerry Barnes gave a well-received presentation on the steps that are being taken to implement the Norfolk Wood-Pasture and Parkland Action Plan. Two posters dealing with the Norfolk fens assessment and the Brograve ochre and salinity study (both of which are supported by the Biodiversity Project Fund) were also put on display and attracted considerable interest.

East of England Biodiversity Forum

- A meeting of the Regional Biodiversity Forum was held in Cambridge on 14 February. Issues discussed included the workplan and priorities for the Forum over the coming year.

SITA Enriching Nature Programme

- I took part in a meeting of the Project Assessment Panel held in Cambridge on 9 February. The Enriching Nature Programme is emerging as an important source of funding for biodiversity projects in the region, and has continued to attract a considerable number of new and often innovative proposals.

3. Workplan for the Next Three Months

Activities over the coming three months will include the following:

- Developing the ecological network component of the Local Area Agreement;
- Finalising the Memorandum of Agreement between English Nature and Norfolk County Council;
- Printing and distributing the Partnership's 2005-06 annual newsletter;
- Representing the Partnership in the design, organisation and holding of the NBRC stakeholders' workshop;
- Holding the minerals and biodiversity seminar on 21 June;
- Preparing a position paper for the Partnership on LDF biodiversity indicators.

Scott Perkin
Biodiversity Co-ordinator
April 2006

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

	Title of Proposal	Topic Group/ Lead Organisation	Amount Requested	Decision
1	Norfolk Broads Mink Management Project (request for top-up support)	Waterbodies	£2,900	Approved (£1,500).
2	Conservation, Enhancement and Re- creation of Wet Woodland and other Wet Habitats in the Wensum and Nar River Valleys	Woodland	£4,000	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
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 Biodiversity Action Plan".	Norwich City	Matt Davies, Norwich Fringe Project	One year (Sept 2005-Aug 2006)	£30,490	£5,000 (16%)	Ongoing. Project Co-ordinator employed; activities in Cooper Wood initiated; plans finalised for a photo competition.
Communities and Nature	Support for "Wild about Norfolk"	- 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.
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

 = Project Completed

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Ecological Networks (Large Areas)	Making Space for Wildlife: Creating an Ecological Network for Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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%)	Ongoing. Advocacy document published; draft maps under preparation.
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 the provision of management advice and targeting future grant aid. 	Heathland HAP	County-wide	Helen Baczkowska, NWT	Oct 2004 - Oct 2005	£1,000	£1,000 (100%)	Ongoing
	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%)	To be carried out in summer 2006, subject to EN consent.

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
Waterbodies	Water Vole Survey	- 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 06t	£3,400 plus in-kind costs from NWT	£1,400 (41%)	Ongoing; first phase completed;
	Great Crested Newt Record Collation	- 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
	Norfolk Broads Mink Management Project	- 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%)	First meeting of the Steering Group held on 12 April.
	Wensum Mink Management Project: Phase II	- 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 been successfully extended into Trowse; a new project on the Nar has been set up.

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%)	Ongoing. Fieldwork is nearing completion; 160 sites have been visited to date. The database has been finalised and contains information on 640 sites.
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.
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%)	Nearly completed; preliminary results available.

Topic Group	Project Title	Project Objectives	Linkage to SAP/HAP	Location	Project Manager	Time-scale	Total Cost	Biod. Project Fund	Status
	Phase 2 Biodiversity Survey of Traditional Orchards	- To carry out biodiversity surveys of invertebrates, lichens, bryophytes, ground flora and fruit varieties at five traditional orchards, representing a range of 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%)	Ongoing; bryophyte, mollusc and diatom surveys completed.
	Propagation of Traditional Norfolk Apple Varieties	— To ensure that saplings of a wide variety of traditional apple varieties are 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%)	Ongoing
	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 public access to and appreciation of wet woodlands. 	Wet Woodland HAP	Wensum and Nar River Valleys	Gerry Barnes, NCC	April 06 to March 09	£20,000	£3,600 (18%)	To be initiated.

ANNEX 3: CALENDAR OF BIODIVERSITY EVENTS IN 2006

BAP Steering Group

- Friday 21 July
- Friday 20 October

BAP Co-ordinators' Group

- Friday 7 July
- Additional dates to be identified

Topic Group Chairs

- No meetings currently planned

Topic Group Meetings, Projects and Forums

- Farmland Topic Group: 8 May
- Coastal Topic Group: 15 May
- Combined Heathland and Woodland Topic Group Meeting: 16 May
- Waterbodies: 27 May
- Broads Mink Management Project: 31 May
- Wetlands Topic Group: 15 June
- Wensum and Nar Mink Control Project: 4 July
- Woodland Topic Group: 6 July
- Communities and Nature Topic Group: 10 July
- Farming and Biodiversity Practitioners' Forum: 19 September
- Annual Biodiversity Forum: 28 September

Other Meetings and Events

- TEN Project Conference: 26-28 April
- HLS and Orchards Workshop: 11 May (Wisbech, Cambridge)
- BBC Springwatch: 4 June
- NBRC Advisory Group: 13 June
- Heritage Tree Events: 24 April (Bayfield), 10 May (Aspal Close, Suffolk), 21 May (Ken Hill) and 17 June (Ickworth)
- "Not Just Newts": Conference on mineral restoration and biodiversity: 21 June
- Community Woodland Training: 22 June
- Community Woodland Mid-Summer Celebration: 24 June
- Local Development Frameworks and Biodiversity: 28 June

- Norfolk Show: 28-29 June
- Wash Week: 5-13 August (many different events, at localities around the Wash)
- Wild about Norfolk: 9-10 September

East of England Regional Biodiversity Forum

- Tuesday 9 May
- Tuesday 1 August
- Tuesday 7 November

UK BAP Events

- UK BAP conference: 20-21 June, Belfast