



Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership Partners' News June 2011

Suffolk Biodiversity
Partnership

In this issue:

Partners News

	Page No.
Swift conservation is underway in Suffolk	1
Broads Biodiversity Audit	4
Harvest mouse project update	5
RSPB in the Brecks	5
Little Terns in Suffolk	6
Plantlife activities	7
A butterfly spring	7
Historic moment gives people in Suffolk the chance to create new woodland	9
Suffolk's last remaining crayfish hit by plague	9
Making a successful wildlife area at Castle Hill Allotments, Ipswich	11
Suffolk ARG check for Chytrid fungus in the county	13
Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership News	14
Information and news	15
What's on	23
SBP information	27

PARTNERS NEWS

Swift conservation is underway in Suffolk

Steve Piotrowski (Suffolk Ornithologist Group and Suffolk Wildlife Trust) and Philip Pearson (RSPB)

Many people confuse swifts with swallows: swifts are plain sooty brown in colour and have a pale chin, which is more pronounced in young birds. In flight, their long, scythe-like wings and short, forked tail distinguishes them. Unlike swallows, house martins and sand martins, swifts are all dark, they never perch on wires while their exuberant screaming parties, racing down high streets at roof-level, is a summer feature in many Suffolk villages and towns. They arrive in the UK from their African wintering grounds in late April and early May. They stay until late July when they return to tropical Africa, a distance of about 6,000 miles. They remain airborne except when breeding, so are thought to fly over 200,000 miles a year.



15 swifts in flight Photo Judith Wakeman

They are exceptionally long lived for such small birds, with the oldest known individual reaching 21, although the typical life span is about seven years. Most birds don't breed until they are three or four years old, although life-long pair bonds may be formed after their first year.

Swifts can nest alone or in loose colonies, depending upon the availability of nest sites. They nest under roof tiles or in holes and apertures of buildings and walls and are site faithful, returning to use the same nest year after year. The nest consists of a small cup formed from material such as feathers, paper, straw, hay and seeds, which is collected on the wing and glued together by saliva. They only have time to rear one brood during their short visit to the UK, laying a clutch of 2-3 eggs. After 19-25 days incubation the eggs hatch, with chicks fledging 37-56 days later. Once fledged, the next time birds make landfall is to nest, as they eat, sleep and mate on the wing.

Swifts eat a wide range of invertebrates (312 different species being recorded) and a single bolus (food ball) brought to the chicks may contain between 300-1000 individual insects and spiders. Insect prey includes beetles, aphids, flies, hoverflies, craneflies, moths, butterflies, thrips, leafhoppers, ants and lacewings. During bad weather eggs may be abandoned, while chicks have the ability to survive without food for several days. They achieve this by becoming semi-torpid and slowing their rate of development.

While swifts remain a common sight across the UK, colonies have disappeared from many traditional breeding areas. The European swift population is estimated at between 4.4 and 12 million pairs, with the last UK population count putting our breeding population at 85,000 breeding pairs (1988-1991). According to the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey, the swift population appears to be stable in the East of England, although it declined 44% in the south-east between 1995 and 2008. The cause of the decline here is still being investigated, but loss of nesting sites is thought to be a significant reason. Providing new nest sites can help, especially if provision is made for nest sites in the design stage of new builds. Erecting nest boxes on existing buildings is effective, and a number of effective products are available. Applying these measures in Suffolk will contribute to a network of similar plans across the UK and help develop a more co-ordinated approach to swift conservation.

Action for Swifts

A small group of people, mostly based in Cambridgeshire, have set up a blog (see <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/>) to post information that might prove useful to others wanting to help swifts. The group offers advice to those wishing to help swifts, as I discovered last year when I was privileged to be taken by Dick Newell and fellow swift enthusiasts on a tour of swift sites in and around Ely and Cambridge. Swift nest boxes in church towers, new developments and schools were being monitored to determine occupancy levels.

Action in Suffolk

There is much enthusiasm for the conservation of swifts in Suffolk, but we have a lot of catching up if we are to match other counties. Philip Pearson of RSPB has circulated his local Biodiversity Action Plan for final comment and some work on swifts is already underway in West Suffolk. "Action for Swifts" has fixed 8 new boxes in the tower of All Saints Church at Worlington this winter, taking the total to 17 boxes in the belfry.



Swifts at All Saints church tower, Worlington Photo Judith Wakeman



Swifts at All Saints church tower
Photo Judith Wakeman

Swift calls are being played daily. The first swifts bred in 2010 in only the second year of the boxes being installed.

Adrian Mann is championing the swift's cause in Bury St Edmunds and has been playing his swift calls CD since mid-April to attract swifts to three experimental boxes fixed in St John's church tower. He reports (in mid-May) that swifts are in the neighbourhood, but there have been no sightings of them at the boxes so far.

"Action for Swifts" was asked by local farmer, swift enthusiast and church supporter, Robin Upton, to advise on swift boxes in the belfry of St Ethelbert church, Herringswell. The belfry looked less than suitable, as there are no louvres; however, the eaves under the roof of the south transept provided an ideal

opportunity. John Stimpson, of Wilburton, was commissioned to make four custom-built boxes to fit between the joists extending beneath the eaves. Swift

call playing equipment has been installed by Robin inside the church behind the boxes.

Meetings are planned with the Diocese to investigate ways forward. Churches are invariably listed buildings as well as being a wonderful a feature of our heritage so, as with any nest-box scheme, it is important not to affect the external appearance of the buildings or the environment in general. This has been achieved at Herringswell. Predictably perhaps, there have been some negative responses. When Jan Tomlinson, a swift enthusiast from West Suffolk, asked about erecting swift boxes on the church of St Peter and St Paul in Bardwell, she was told it was impossible, as according to the church warden, "*respecting the seasons of both bats and swifts in other churches has prevented maintenance and repair schedules*". Jan is also a keen bell ringer, a hobby that takes her to many towers with nesting swifts. She believes that bell-restoration projects present the ideal opportunity for swift boxes to be erected in towers.

Local problems aside, the challenge of erecting more boxes shouldn't be too onerous. We have forged extremely good relationships with the Diocese as can be seen by the outstandingly successful spotted flycatcher churchyard nest box project launched earlier this year and featured in previous editions of BAP News. The SWT's churchyard project has been on-going for many years and is a shining example of the Church of England working well with conservations throughout Suffolk.

Although swifts have traditionally favoured churches for nesting sites, the use of church buildings to site swift boxes is only part of the solution. Swifts once nested in holes in cliffs and trees, but are now closely associated with the built environment. Modern construction techniques have considerably reduced the availability of breeding sites. This has been exacerbated by building refurbishments, roof insulation and re-development of traditional nest sites. The main targets of the BAP is to ensure that no existing nest sites are lost through inappropriate development during the plan period of 2011 to 2015 and that all new development incorporates a specified minimum number of boxes per building development depending upon its size. Nesting features should be built into the building structure as this is permanent, avoids the need for maintenance and will be in keeping with the aesthetics of the building.

Swift conservation is quite labour intensive and it's not a case of manufacturing the boxes, finding sites, fixing them and then walking away to hope for the best! To persuade swifts to pioneer new sites, it's essential to install audio equipment to play their piercing screams. The CDs have to be played from mid-April through to early August, so a power supply is also essential. Most of all, it's essential to have a local enthusiast who is dedicated to the cause to keep a watch over both birds and the equipment. Once everything is in place, swifts can be persuaded to nest but, for the project to succeed, we need the cooperation of county planners, the Diocese and the local community. So come on Suffolk let's wake up and help reverse this catastrophic decline in swift numbers to ensure that our children can also enjoy the spectacular formation flights in our skies that we see today.

For additional information and to see how you can help swifts go to: <http://www.swift-conservation.org/>

Broads Biodiversity Audit – how to make it ‘bigger better more’

Andrea Kelly, Broads Authority

The Broads Authority has commissioned a systematic audit of Broadland biodiversity. The international biodiversity importance of the UK's largest protected wetland is well known*. However, it is critical to map all biodiversity on a whole landscape scale to understand the spatial distribution of vulnerable species and of tolerance to climate change and sea level. It is essential for strategic planning; and management for resilience and to enhance landscape and ecosystem connectivity, as emphasised by the Lawton review ‘Making Space for Nature’, can be achieved by targeted restoration. However, this requires strategic planning and an understanding of stressors, vulnerability and spatial distribution of priority biodiversity.

The Broads Audit will be undertaken by the UEA, supported by Natural England and working with the conservation organisations in the Broads.

The aims are to:

1. To collate biological records for the wider Broads BAP area, capturing and combining key survey data and other records held by County Biological Centres and National recording schemes.
2. To quantify for the first time, the national biodiversity importance of the Broads in terms of rare and priority species and regional distinctiveness.
3. To quantify and compare the relative numbers of priority species (BAP, RDB, Nationally Rare, Nationally Scarce) within different Broads habitats or landscape elements. Identify and quantify regionally distinctive species, i.e. entirely, or largely restricted to Broadland within UK, and for these assess their designation status.



Large red damselflies in the Broads
Photo Laura Biggart

4. To classify priority species and thus habitat-assemblages according to their flooding, drought and salinity tolerance or vulnerability.

If you have any unrecorded species records that you need to pass on for the Audit or you want to know more please contact Andrea Kelly (Senior Ecologist) or Erica Murray (Ecologist) on 01603 610734.

*The Broads is made up of wet fen (including reedbed, rich fen and mire), grazing marshes and associated dyke systems, open water (shallow lakes), wet woodland, estuary and coast. One quarter of the 301 km² Broads Authority Executive Area notified as SSSI, SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

Harvest mouse project update

Martha Meek, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

The harvest mouse project has been a great success with much learnt about the species over the last few years. The field work is now finished and the project is being written up for the funders (People's Trust for Endangered Species and Chadacre trust).

Field visits found harvest mouse nests at over 79% of all the sites visited plus skeletal evidence in 35% of all the samples of owl pellets. The project has shown that harvest mice are more common in well connected sites and are not always present in isolated sites even where the habitat is ideal. This reinforces the living landscapes message that many species need a well connected landscape to survive.



Harvest Mouse Photo Terry Longley

The highest numbers of harvest mice nests were found in well connected wetland habitats such as river valleys, grazing marshes and estuaries. High numbers of nests were also found in wild bird and game cover plots containing millet. Full results from the project will be available in the autumn.

RSPB in the Brecks

Charlotte Lowry, RSPB

I started working for the RSPB in April of this year in the newly created post of Brecks Projects Manager. The RSPB has been working in the Brecks since the mid 1980s with the stone-curlew recovery project, farmland advisory work and planning casework. The Brecks Projects Manager position will now give us the resource to work with partners in a wider context within the Brecks.



So far in my new role, I've been getting out and about meeting stakeholders, partners and landowners to build up a picture of what's already happening in the Brecks and to find out where the RSPB can contribute and fit into the bigger picture. We're keen to work with others to help improve the Brecks for biodiversity and raise its profile with local communities and the general public.

It's a very exciting time to be working in the Brecks with the recent publication of the Breckland Biodiversity Audit and new opportunities for partnership funding coordinated by the Brecks Partnership. The Brecks itself is a really special and unique area being made up of grass heathland, forest and farmland. The Breckland Biodiversity Audit has proved just how special the Brecks is with statistics coming out such as 28% of all UK BAP species occur in Breckland. I feel very privileged to be working in the Brecks for the RSPB and excited at the prospect of all the work that can be achieved in the area.

If you would like to find out more about what doing or if you think it would be useful for me to find out about your work please do get in touch: email: charlotte.lowry@rspb.org.uk, tel: 01842 821787.

Little Terns in Suffolk

Malcolm Farrow, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership is appealing for help to prevent disturbance to nesting Little Terns this summer. Little Terns are a delightful chattering seabird and the UK's smallest tern. They return to our beaches each summer to nest between May and July in small scattered colonies.

Little Terns desperately need our help. Currently there are only 1400 pairs nesting in the UK, and numbers in Suffolk have plummeted from around 150 pairs ten years ago to only a few last year. 2010 marked a record low for the species in Suffolk with only 15 young fledged and there is a real risk that we could lose them as a regular breeding species.

Suffolk's beaches are busy places and the main reason for the decline of Little Terns is disturbance by people and dogs. On beaches where Little Terns nest regularly, the nesting area is fenced off by conservationists to protect the birds. Unfortunately, the fences are frequently ignored by people, causing disturbance to the birds. Little Terns are also a very mobile species and can change nesting site from year to year, something that makes them difficult to protect. Adverse weather and predators can pose additional hazards to the birds.

This year, the conservation organisations working on the coast are again coordinating their work in an all-out effort to help Little Terns to breed successfully. Warning signs and electric fences are being deployed at all the locations where Little Terns are showing signs of settling to breed.

Aaron Howe, RSPB Site Manager and Chairman of the Suffolk Little Tern Group said "*The biggest challenge is trying to alert people to how fragile this small bird is. Little Terns nest on shingle beaches near to where they can find the most abundant food sources. A Little Tern nest is tiny and the eggs are very well camouflaged. Unfortunately, this leads to disturbance and potential damage to their nests. In recent years Little Terns have nested on very busy beaches, and there have been ongoing issues with people and dogs running through colonies. Sadly, this has lead to abandonment and loss of chicks and eggs*".

Cllr David Wood, Chairman of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership, added "*Suffolk's shingle beaches are perfect nesting sites for Little Terns, and the sound of their call is such a part of summer on our coast that it would be a tragedy if we were to loose them as a breeding species. I'd appeal to everyone visiting our coast this summer to watch out for the birds and keep well away from any breeding colonies*".

Although Little Terns are not globally threatened, numbers in North Western Europe have declined significantly in recent decades. They appear on the Amber List as a bird of European conservation concern.

Plantlife activities

Felicity Harris, Plantlife

Bee Scene

A survey designed to increase learning about local natural spaces for primary school - successful last year and rerunning this year - includes supporting resources for teachers to extend learning. Also suitable for informal learning e.g. brownies, guides, cubs, scouts. Starts to develop monitoring skills.

www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/beescene

Family resources

Resources to get the family out and about and enjoying local green spaces. Flower Keys have proved popular and we are keen to get families involved in our *How wild is your wild space* survey as a means of getting people out and about, exploring and having fun.

www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/family/ and www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/family/adventure

Pioneer newsletter

A quarterly e-learning bulletin for adults featuring a relevant seasonal theme each quarter. Initial evaluation from 2010 showed subscribers felt that it had increased their learning and understanding about wildflowers and inspired them to find out more.

www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/parish

A butterfly spring

Rob Parker, Suffolk Butterfly Conservation

The weather of March, April and May 2011 has set historic records for lack of rain, and East Anglia has been drier than anywhere else. Sunshine hours have also been well above average and the impact on our flora and fauna has been considerable, with early bluebells hitting the headlines, soon followed by complaints from farmers trying to grow crops. Gale-force winds in May blew sandstorms across West Suffolk and pig farms lost their topsoil.

But what about the butterflies?

Remember the snow of December 2010? The frosts of the winter must have taken their toll on the species hibernating as adults - particularly the relatively delicate Red Admirals. A few sturdy Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks ventured out on fine days in February, but it was mid-March before they were out in numbers, accompanied by Brimstones and Commas. By then, the sun was warming everything up and it seemed that spring might be early and mild. Those species that had overwintered as pupae - Orange-tip and Holly Blue most noticeably, appeared in good numbers early in April, and kept flying through a protracted spell of good weather. Temperatures were well above the norm for April, and reached record-breaking levels by 20th (23⁰C where I was in West Suffolk). By this time, all the Whites had emerged, along with Speckled Wood and Small Copper. All the hibernators were still on the wing, and the Red Admirals joined them, perhaps as immigrants.

On the Devil's Dyke (just into Cambridgeshire) the first Dingy Skipper was noted on 23rd, and was flying in Suffolk by 4th May. The Norfolk Swallowtails were emerging by 5th May - much earlier than usual. Early May also brought Green Hairstreaks out, and this was the beginning of a good season for them. Three were sitting basking in the morning sun on the day of our first field meeting at Purdis Heath, though sadly they had disappeared by the time our group assembled at 2 pm. The hot weather induced wandering instincts, and Green Hairstreaks began to turn up in unfamiliar places. A garden in Bury St Edmunds and an old quarry not far from Sudbury were both new records for their respective 10 km squares. Like the Holly Blue, the Green Hairstreak has had one of those long spring flight periods where it gets seen more often than usual. Brown Argus too, seems to be running a populous first generation.

Our Dingy Skipper hunt in the King's Forest found them in reasonable numbers on 6th, 13th & 14th May, and although they were again absent from RAF Barnham, there does appear to be a colony in the adjacent Barnham Heath, which is a Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve (in Suffolk). This is good news as it provides some hope for re-colonisation at RAF Barnham by what is now our rarest butterfly.

Strong winds and overcast skies took over from 16th May, and suddenly it seemed that the "May/June Gap" had started. The Vanessids were no longer flying, the smaller butterflies were all sheltering, and even the Whites were scarce.

The Silver-studded Blue was on the wing in Cornwall by 15th May, which is well ahead of usual. By 23rd May, the Silver-studded Blue larvae at Minsmere had mostly pupated, so we could be heading for an early season with them. That is significant for the rest of the species which have overwintered as eggs or larvae, and we should be seeing them soon. The Large Skipper appear after these, to be followed by the Browns, whose grass-feeding larvae may have had a hard time munching on parched pastures.

Given all of the above, it is quite surprising that none of the 2011 records mentioned above are earliest-ever records for Suffolk.

Many of the spring species are bivoltine (double-brooded) and will make a second appearance in late summer. One of these is the Wall, and this year it is the subject of a special single-species survey organised by the Suffolk Naturalists' Society and Butterfly Conservation.

Still unknown, is whether this will be a good year for migrants, although you will remember that in 2009, the Painted Lady invasion got underway on 24th May - the very day I wrote this note. Let's hope that there will be clouds of migrants to brighten up our autumn.

2 June Update

In the event, Large Skipper broke cover on 26th May. On 30th May, Silver-studded Blue broke all records by appearing a whole week ahead of Suffolk's earliest-ever record (7th June 2007). The first was Rob Macklin's sighting at Aldringham Walks, closely followed by others at Ransomes, Purdis Heath and Martlesham Heath, where 18 were counted on 2nd June. Not to be outdone, White-letter Hairstreak also put in a startlingly early appearance also on 2nd June – 18 days ahead of the standing record. Summer has arrived with a bang!

Historic moment gives people in Suffolk the chance to create new woodland

Ellie Henderson, Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is offering people across Suffolk the chance to get involved in one of the UK's most ambitious native tree planting campaigns to plant 6 million trees by the end of 2012, creating hundreds of new woods across the UK, and hopefully planting thousands across Suffolk alone.

The Trust wants to make creating woodland as easy as possible, so through Jubilee Woods it is offering school and community groups FREE tree packs which can be planted in peoples' local areas and to work with businesses and landowners to help create hundreds of larger woods across the county.

The Woodland Trust hopes that Suffolk can see the creation of many new woods and it has developed lots of ways for people to get involved.

Georgina Mcleod, Head of Jubilee Woods said: *"We want to give people the chance to plant trees and we're appealing to our supporters, community groups, individuals, organisations and businesses, to help make this happen."*

With a year to go until the Queen's Jubilee, people can get involved now to plant trees and help make a real difference for the local environment. For further information visit www.moretreesmoregood.org.uk/jubilee



Abbey Grove Community Woodland, Felixstowe. A barren 10 acre site transformed into a species-rich woodland for wildlife and the adjacent town by the Woodland Trust and the local community. Photo Woodland Trust

Suffolk's last remaining native crayfish hit by plague

Julia Stansfield, Environment Agency

The very rare native white clawed crayfish has just been hit by crayfish plague at Suffolk's last remaining colony in the Chad Brook at Long Melford. It is likely that all the native crayfish in that area will be wiped out. This was Suffolk's last sustainable natural population and now only two others survive in the East of England.

Local residents spotted dead crayfish in the river and alerted the Environment Agency. When the Agency went to investigate, they found more than 50 dead and dying crayfish in the short stretch of river running through the village. A check showed the problem wasn't caused by pollution, and on Monday 4 July it was confirmed by Dr Paul Stebbing of CEFAS that the crayfish had died of crayfish plague.



Male white-clawed crayfish on the River Chelmer. Photo Martin Pugh

The disease is likely to have reached the crayfish from spores being brought on muddy wellies, a wet pond net, a crayfish trap or similar equipment from a neighbouring river such as the Stour, Glem or Lark. These rivers have populations of American signal crayfish, which can carry the plague spores but aren't affected by it.

This is the first outbreak of crayfish plague in Britain this year but the fourth in the East of England in the last four years. Because the plague is spread through contaminated water or damp equipment, people are asked to take simple measures to prevent further outbreaks. If people are moving between different rivers or lakes, they should 'check, clean, dry': check clothing, equipment and boats for any mud, weed or pools of water; clean thoroughly by scrubbing with normal detergent and ideally allow everything to dry before using it again. This will not only help stop the spread of crayfish plague, but other diseases and invasive organisms. Please see www.environment-agency.gov.uk or www.direct.gov.uk for more details.

Fortunately, a couple of years ago a partnership project moved some native crayfish from the Chad Brook to a new site as part of a pioneering 'ark' project. Diane Ling from FWAG got the project going and it was supported by Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership, Suffolk Water for Wildlife and the Environment Agency. This was done because of the risk to the Chad Brook population from the surrounding rivers. A suitable lake was carefully chosen, extra crayfish habitat was added and then crayfish were caught from Long Melford and released into the lake. It is hoped that monitoring planned for later this summer will show the population is surviving and starting to expand.



Native white-clawed crayfish
Photo Environment Agency, SW region

A further ark site was started in 2010 using crayfish from Norfolk and it is hoped that more will be established in future to create a network of self-sustaining populations.

If you have a large pond or lake with good water quality that you are willing to be used as an ark site, please get in touch with Gen Broad at SBP or Julia Stansfield at the Environment Agency, email: julia.stansfield@environment-agency.gov.uk

Did you know?

It is illegal to trap crayfish without a licence from the Environment Agency. Please get in touch with us on 03708 506506 or look at the web site. We can offer advice as well as supply a licence, if appropriate.



Signal crayfish Photo Trevor Renals

Making a successful wildlife area at Castle Hill Allotments, Ipswich

Jean Austin

My name is Jean Austin, I'm retired now, and I've always been interested in wild life – wild flowers, birds, beasties and trees. I went to a village school in the 1950's in the days before 'national curriculums' and where 'nature study' had a high priority (probably a higher one than it should have, but it's given me a life long interest in 'nature').

My allotment is on the Castle Hill Ipswich field; I've had this since 1991. The lower part of our site became allotments in 1937 when a builder donated the land to the Council for this purpose, and the 'upper' part in the mid 1950's when houses were being built in Larchcroft Road. In early 2004 our field was very run down with lots of empty plots and dumped rubbish. But then a new committee was appointed and we set to, clearing the empty and overgrown plots and carrying out much needed improvements. A five rod area in the centre of the site had been planted as a 'wild flower' meadow in about 1996 but it had never had any real upkeep and by then was just grass with a few brambles creeping in.

Several long untended plots near this area were considered to be unsuitable as they had poor access. I put forward the idea that we should make this area into a wild life area – wild flowers, woodpiles and hazel and other small native trees. One of the first things we did was to make a small wildlife pond – we didn't have very much in the way of 'field funds' (money!) so an approach was made to Ipswich seed company Thompson and Morgan and they very generously sponsored our pond liner. We were on our way.

The higher part of this area was rank grasses, nettles and brambles – lots of them. Digging out the nettle roots began, along with cutting the grass and creating patches of bare earth to direct sow wild flower seeds, such as oxeye daisy, campion and knapweed. We also sowed into pots and planted out later. We started with a smallish area; it was a couple of years before we were able to tackle areas of dense thick brambles and nettles. This type of habitat is valuable to wild creatures, but we needed the area to be appealing to plot holders as well. Once they were removed, we opened up an area for hazel coppicing. We were fortunate in having help from 'Young Offenders' on community service orders. Their contribution should be acknowledged – they mostly settled into the tasks quickly and worked well.

We also worked on our 'stream' – actually a culvert from the railway line which empties into a ditch along the edge of the site, but it runs most of the year. At first, it wasn't even possible to see the stream through the nettles and brambles, but having hacked our way through, the potential was immediately apparent. We cleared out years of rubbish like old compost bags buried in the soil, old broken wheelbarrows, remains of old sheds and broken glass (I think this breeds!) One 'young offender' made a super job of clearing out the stream. He was a small lad, only 12 years old and very shy, but he worked extremely hard and seemed to have an eye for detail. We've planted yellow flag iris, ragged robin and meadowsweet where the water coming off the railway comes down over rocks; Herb Bennet and Herb Robert have self-seeded here too.

In our main wildlife area, we've got areas of 'meadow', banks planted with 'permanent' wild flowers. In spring, there are snowdrops, primroses, violets and daffodils, later red and white campion,



Castle Hill allotments wildlife area. The young trees are mostly hazel saplings which will be coppiced for pea sticks.

Photo Jean Austin

foxgloves, knapweed, chicory and 'jack-go-to-bed at noon' or goat's beard. Any creeping thistle we keep under control, but they are excellent 'nectar' plants so we leave a few, as well as teasels and other species. Another area we dig over each year to encourage the 'annuals' like poppies, corn marigolds, corn cockle and cornflower. There are mown pathways round and through various areas so the area can be viewed from different angles.

We also have an area of about four rods which is a 'heritage' apple orchard (including a Medlar tree). There are lots of wild flowers in this area too – meadow buttercup, musk mallow (pink and white), scabious, meadow cranesbill, fritillary, cowslips and primroses.

Our pond has a large number of frogs every spring and we occasionally see newts. There are lots of slow worms (we have a large compost heap for material from our wildlife area and they love this), stag beetles and lots of butterflies and moths such as speckled wood, holly blue, peacock, red admiral and cinnabar moths. I even saw a Camberwell Beauty a few years ago. We also have hedgehogs and bank voles. These little creatures make stores of nuts and plum stones. When we were first clearing this area, we found the whole area under an old discarded upside down wheelbarrow was full of nibbled stones. We have lots of wood piles; we don't allow bonfires on our site (we have a shredder to deal with most fruit bush prunings); any large thick tree branches are added to the wood piles. We also find lots of interesting beasties in our 'habitat piles', heaps of branches with a 'thatch' cover which is topped up annually.



Wood piles attract lots of wildlife. A stag beetle grub was found in one piece of rotting wood. Photo Jean Austin

One wild flower which I especially like and am helping to preserve is 'weasel's snout' – *Misopates orontium*. This is an annual wild flower with small dainty pink antirrhinum type flowers. I first discovered it growing on my granddad's allotment at Belstead when I was about four years old. I was given a small piece of ground for 'my' plot, but I preferred the pretty wild flowers, like this and speedwell and chickweed with its lovely starry white flowers. Then I didn't see it again until about fifteen years ago when I read about it becoming rare. So I grew it from seed on my own allotment plot and when we started the community wildlife area, I sowed some there too.

Our hazel is coppiced in rotation yearly for pea sticks; some of the original 1996 planted hazel has been left to grow tall thick clumps, much loved by birds. In February 2007 we planted a living willow 'wigloo', helped by the young offenders. This has done extremely well and is much loved by our school pupil visitors. We've also planted a 'fedge' which is willow woven to produce a fence-cum-hedge, which part screens our compost heap.



The 'wigloo' was planted in February 2007. Photo Jean Austin

We have regular (weekly year round, except for the very severest winter weather) visits from years 2-6 pupils at St. Pancras Primary School; they have an allotment plot which they tend. We also have visits from pupils at The Thomas Wolsey School; their plot has wheelchair height raised beds to cultivate and we also see pupils from Castle Hill Infants School.

There's just so much of 'nature' interest in small areas like this on allotments – so if you're on an allotment site and with an 'awkward' area which isn't the best for 'crops' why not consider making it into a wildlife area – it takes time initially but once it's up, it just needs a little maintenance.

Suffolk ARG check for Chytrid fungus in the county

Trudy Seagon

Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Group (SARG) members have been involved in the second "Big Swab" for chytrid fungus. Chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, which has caused such devastation in amphibian populations around the world, is present in the UK but its extent and effects here are not known. 2008 saw the start of a DEFRA funded project, run by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and manned by 400 volunteers recruited from the Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK. In the first survey volunteers swabbed over 6,000 amphibians at 200 sites to check for the presence of the fungus. The current, second round is to check if the fungus has changed its range or effects and will include an additional 100 sites, taking in Northern Ireland for the first time.

This spring SARG members revisited the two Suffolk sites first checked in 2008. These had been declared clear of chytrid in the initial survey. The sample size at each site was 30 animals and the target species were toads at the first site near Ipswich and smooth newts at the second in the west of the county. Unfortunately, the first visit in March produced a lot of dead toads, some of which were sent to ZSL to investigate the cause of death. ZSL has reported that it was not ranavirus, which is good news, but we are still awaiting the final results.



SARG members taking swabs to check for chytrid fungus. Photo Chris Allen

In May the second site, at Ickworth Park, was revisited and the required number of smooth newts caught fairly easily, along with a number of great crested newts that use the same series of ponds.

The unusually dry spring has hindered the programme in many other parts of the country, so SARG has done especially well to return samples from both of its sites.

Special thanks to Duncan Sweeting for his heroic consumption of Aero chocolate drink to ensure each toad or newt had a separate container to sit in while waiting to be swabbed to avoid cross contamination. All the swabs have now gone to ZSL for testing and the results should be available in the autumn.

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership News

❖ **Proposal for Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership**

Norfolk and Suffolk have joined forces to submit an application to Defra for a two-county Local Nature Partnership (see page 17). This initiative has the full support of members of each of the Biodiversity Partnerships, Norfolk & Suffolk Wildlife Trusts and the new Local Enterprise Partnership (New Anglia). The results of the first round of proposals will be announced in September.

❖ **East of England Biodiversity Forum**

The regional Forum has changed its format since the withdrawal of Natural England funding from the six East of England Biodiversity Partnerships earlier this year. Only the Norfolk and Essex coordinators have full-time employment over the longer term; other coordinators have either left, have short-term employment or in the case of Suffolk, become part-time. The last full meeting of the Forum was held at the Forestry Commission's Oak Lodge near Santon Downham on 7th April.

The members agreed that the Forum provides a valuable networking facility for the six counties and so it will be continuing to meet for the foreseeable future. *Thank you* to Essex Biodiversity Project who have kindly undertaken future administration of the Forum.



East of England Biodiversity Forum members April 2011

❖ **Saving Suffolk's stag beetles**

Throughout the early summer, researcher Colin Hawes brought the stag beetle project to delighted young schoolchildren in the Stour Valley, allowing them to see and handle the beetles. By 26th June, he had visited 6 of the 9 interested Stour Valley primary schools - Wormingford, Stoke by Nayland, East Bergholt, Lawford, Nayland and Stratford St Mary.

At Nayland School, Colin talked to three classes for just over half an hour each. All the children were excited to see and handle adult beetles, even though many of them had seen stag beetles before. The children were learning about habitats as part of the national curriculum, so Colin's visit fitted in well with what they were doing in class and outside in their wooded school grounds. They already have a wood chip pile in their wildlife area, which as it rots from below will attract female stag beetles to lay their eggs in it.

The school visits have been highly successful. The head teacher from one of the schools said *“I just wanted to let you know how fantastic the talk on stag beetles was yesterday. All of our children were fascinated, and Colin was excellent at presenting and involving the children. We are very privileged to have stag beetles in our school grounds, and the children now are much more aware of how to look after them. The talk has sparked a lot of work in all the year groups, and we have some really informative posters from the oldest children.”*

Colin was most impressed by the children's enthusiasm, knowledge and questions. His hard work has ensured that all of these schools would like to continue with the project, burying buckets and building logpiles.

❖ **Brecks Biodiversity Audit**

There was further publicity for this high profile project following the launch of the report *Securing biodiversity in Breckland* last November.

The BBC One Show mentioned the Audit whilst filming with Darrell Stevens and Norfolk Wildlife Trust – [Easter Bunnies and Rare Birds put on a show](#)

❖ **Project fund achievements**

A huge **‘Thank You!’** to Essex & Suffolk Water the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority who have all contributed to the SBP Project Fund in the current financial year, making it possible for us to continue to support surveys, research, habitat management and other vital conservation work in the county.

One project to benefit from the Fund is a farmland bird survey proposed by Waveney Bird Club (WBC). This project will help in future conservation strategies for farmland birds by establishing the foraging ranges and favoured food of four BAP species that winter on Suffolk farms: Tree Sparrow, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting. Suffolk Naturalists Society is also supporting the project and WBC is working with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the British Trust for Ornithology.

INFORMATION and NEWS

Funding opportunities

SITA Trust Enriching Nature Programme

The Trust has committed £8m in new funds to this programme. In 2011 a total of £2.7m has been allocated with £300,000 for each of England's 9 biodiversity regions including the East of England. Applicants may request up to £120,000 for an individual project.

Deadline for applications: 4 November 2011.

[Visit SITA Trust >](#)

Forestry Commission – Big Tree Plant

The main aim of The Big Tree Plant funding scheme is to encourage and support community groups to plant trees in neighbourhoods where people live and work. The scheme can fund work such as community involvement, site surveys and expert advice as well as trees, planting materials, labour, and tree care and maintenance. The Big Tree Plant funding scheme will give £4 million in grants from 2011 to 2015. We want this to pay for the planting of at least one million trees in a mixture of street trees, small groups of trees in greenspaces, and other neighbourhood tree planting.

Deadline for applications: 5 September 2011

[Visit Forestry Commission >](#)

Viridor Credits

The Landfill Communities Fund (previously Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) provides funding for community or environmental projects within ten miles of landfill sites. In Suffolk, the only site is at Wangford. If your project provides, conserves, restores or enhances a natural habitat, or maintains or recovers a species from its habitat on land or in water within 10 miles of Wangford the project may be eligible for funding. 10% third party funding from an independent source will be needed e.g. from a local authority, a club, an individual or a charity.

[Visit Viridor Credits >](#)

UK Mammals Grants (UK)

The People's Trust for Endangered Species is inviting applications from voluntary conservation organisations, scientific researchers, individuals and consortia needing financial support for work that relates to the conservation of mammals, to apply for funding of up to £30,000 through their UK mammals grant programme. The trust aims to fund scientific research, practical habitat management work, reintroduction and monitoring programmes and educational projects. Priority will be given to those projects aimed at furthering the aims of Biodiversity Action Plans and similar initiatives. The average grant given per project has been £9,000. Projects supported in the past include: Bats in the Lake District; monitoring of UK bat species in underground sites; and monitoring Irish pine martens.

Deadline for applications: 1 November 2011.

[Visit People's Trust for Endangered Species >](#)

British Ecological Society - Education Grants (UK)

The British Ecological Society is offering grants to enable teachers to make the teaching of ecology more innovative, interesting and exciting in primary, secondary and tertiary schools. The aim of this grant is to promote good practice in teaching ecology and to support ecology teaching that is innovative, inspiring and intellectually stimulating. Grants are available to enable teachers to develop and resource innovative teaching and learning activities and/or to undertake research to evaluate methods of teaching ecology. This can be achieved in many different ways and can include projects based in or outside of the classroom. Grants of up to £1,500 are available.

Deadline for applications: 15 September 2011.

[Visit BES website>](#)

Sustainable Development Fund

Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB **Sustainable Development Fund** is for projects that enhance and/or benefit the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Projects previously supported can be seen on the AONB website, grants available from £1,000+. Projects should be match funded, grants available for up to 75% of the project costs.

[Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB SDF website >](#)

[Dedham Vale AONB SDF website >](#)

Funding for Environmental Projects (UK)

Patagonia, the outdoor gear company, is inviting applications for funding through its Environmental Grants Programme. The company are most interested in making grants to organisations that identify and work on the root causes of problems and that approach issues with a commitment to long-term change. They seek to support small, grassroots activist organisations with provocative direct-action agendas, working on multi-pronged campaigns to preserve and protect the environment. Most grants are in the range of \$3,000 to \$8,000. This is an international grants programme and UK projects supported have included: Buglife - \$7,800 towards work to prevent the extinction of various invertebrate species; Marine Conservation Society - \$10,000 towards marine work.

Deadline for applications: 30 September 2011.

[Patagonia website >](#)

Essex & Suffolk Water Branch Out Project

Working in partnership to reconnect habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife

This initiative will encompass a number of projects with the aim of helping the region build resilience and adapt to the changing climate whilst bringing benefits to water, wildlife and communities. Our partners will include other utility companies, conservation organisations, farmers/landowners, local authorities and the general public.

Fund opens for applications from September 2011.

To find out more visit [Essex & Suffolk Water website >](#)

Natural Environment White Paper

The Natural Environment White Paper (*The Natural Choice*), published June 2011, outlines the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. New initiatives in the White Paper include:

- [Local Nature Partnerships](#) - strategic partnerships of organisations that work to create a shared vision for their area and deliver better, more integrated, environmental outcomes.
- [Biodiversity offsetting](#) - conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses, in a measurable way. The initiative should deliver planning policy requirements for biodiversity loss compensation in a more effective way.
- [Nature Improvement Areas](#) – opportunities to deliver integrated ecological networks that improve connectivity through a shared vision amongst a wide partnership.

For further information, visit the [Defra website >](#)

OPAL Bugs Count

Bugs Count is led by the Natural History Museum and aims to get people exploring and discovering the invertebrates that live close to their homes, schools and places of work. We will be investigating the micro-habitats available in the built environment, and comparing invertebrate abundance in urban, sub-urban and rural areas. The survey also asks people to send in biological records (supported by a photo) of six particular species that we want to record – the Two-spot Ladybird, Devil's Coach Horse beetle, Tree Bumblebee, Small Tortoiseshell butterfly, Green Shieldbug and Leopard Slug. Please keep an eye out for these and send in your records! All data will be shared with national recording schemes. Bugs Count is a great activity for natural history groups, public events, schools and individuals – you can download a survey pack from www.bugscount.org or order one by emailing bugscount@opalexplorenature.org.

Visit the [OPAL website >](#)

HM Government

The Natural Choice:
securing the value
of nature



UK National Ecosystem Assessment published

The synthesis of the key findings of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment was published on 2 June. The assessment provides the first comprehensive analysis of how UK society benefits from the natural environment. The assessment, which has involved 500 experts, has been a significant contribution to the Natural Environment White Paper. A synthesis of the key findings can be downloaded from the website (6 MB). Visit the [UK National Ecosystem Assessment website >](#)

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Summer newsletter

Topics in the current newsletter include a visit by Richard Benyon MP, Minister for the Natural Environment, to the AONB in June, the launch of the EU BALANCE project and the future of the public forest estate in the AONB. Newsletters can be downloaded from the [SCH website >](#)

Earth Heritage Suffolk

GeoSuffolk's Action Pack, *Earth Heritage Suffolk* by Bob and Caroline Markham, is a 60 page handbook - informative, lively and a 'must have' for anyone with an interest in, or responsibility for, geodiversity. Available at £6 (inc. postage) from: GeoSuffolk, c/o Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QH. GeoSuffolk champions rocks, landscape, building stones and Suffolk's wonderful extinct biodiversity, including elephants, gazelles and pikas.

Congratulations to GeoSuffolk chairman Bob Markham who has been awarded the prestigious Halstead Medal Award by the Geologists' Association for "his outstanding contribution to East Anglian geology and Crag palaeontology".

EARTH HERITAGE SUFFOLK



Action for Suffolk's Geodiversity - a Handbook

May 2010



'I love landscapes' Green Infrastructure Community Growth Award winner

The Haven Gateway Partnership wanted to give the public control over how some of the public funding it manages is allocated. The funding will be spent improving the quality of life in the Haven Gateway. Green spaces provide for health, wealth and wildlife.

The winner is..... [Shotley Cliff & Picnic Area near Ipswich](#)

The challenge was to reinstate, repair and improve the pleasures of a section of coastal footpath which overlooks Erwarton Bay RSPB reserve. The work will help protect a section of woodland and restore a beautifully located picnic area.

New publication for bats - guidance on surveying for onshore wind farms

This new guidance has been drafted to become an individual chapter of the second edition of the *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines* (to be published in their entirety in the autumn). It can also be used as a standalone document. It is intended for all types of onshore wind farm for which bat surveys are required, from single to multi-turbine developments. The document can be [downloaded](#) from the Bat Conservation Trust website.

EU Biodiversity Strategy Launched

The European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 was released on 3 May 2011. This strategy has been devised to co-exist closely with the Aichi Targets agreed in the CBD COP10 in Nagoya last year. It established the context for biodiversity management outlined in the Natural Environment White Paper (published in June) and the forthcoming England Biodiversity Strategy.

For more information, visit the [European Commission Environment website >](#)

New UK Biodiversity Indicators in your pocket

The revised 2011 UK Biodiversity Indicators Guide reports on changes in the status of species and habitats, pressures on them, and responses to those pressures within the UK. The indicators are produced by Defra and JNCC, on behalf of the UK Biodiversity Partnership, working with input from government, statutory agencies, non-governmental organisations, and academic institutes. The guide looks at 18 indicators grouped in six areas aligned to the internationally agreed indicators:

1. Status and trends in components of biodiversity
2. Sustainable use
3. Threats to biodiversity
4. Ecosystem integrity and ecosystem goods and services
5. Status of resource transfers and use
6. Public awareness and participation

To download the publication visit the [JNCC website >](#)

Suffolk Sandlings featured on 2020 Vision for a wilder Britain May 'lowdown'

OK, OK so February isn't the first month that springs to mind when you think about visiting a big Suffolk heathland repair job. But of course winter is the time when all the work is done, so we had to be there. Kitted out with all sorts of fancy machinery, an army of volunteers set to work improving this threatened lowland heath. [Read Chris Gomersall's and David Tipling's blog here.](#)

To find out more, visit [2020 Vision – for a wilder Britain >](#)

EU budget cut funding for wildlife-friendly farming by 5%

To find out how the RSPB campaign helped to ensure funding was not cut by more than 5%, visit the RSPB website to read the article [Wildlife forgotten in the next EU Budget>](#)

The new NI197

The government has finalised the list of central departments' data requirements for 2011-2012; the indicator for biodiversity, previously called NI197 is now **Local nature conservation/biodiversity** (Reference number: 160-00-01).

To find out more visit the [Communities and Local Government website >](#)

Biodiversity News – Spring 2011

Includes an article about the **Brecks** by Tim Pankhurst of Plantlife 'Wild plant conservation boosted in Breckland' (p.13). Buglife have initiated surveys for **oil beetles** and the **scarlet malachite beetle** p.14). **Coastal vegetated shingle** is the focus for a feature article on page 23.

To download the Newsletter go to [Biodiversity News >](#) (4.7MB)

Biodiversity News – Summer 2011

The Scaly Breck lichen in Suffolk is the millionth lichen record for Britain - There are about 1800 different species of lichens in Britain and the British Lichen Society is creating a database of where each of them occurs. The records go back hundreds of years and enable scientists to see how the environment of Britain is changing. The millionth record is a major step towards the completion of this database. The record was made in October 2010 in an army training area in the Suffolk Breckland, at its last known British site.

To find out more, download the [Biodiversity News Summer 2011 >](#)

ThinkBIG: How and why landscape-scale conservation benefits wildlife, people and the wider economy, NE report 309

This report, produced on behalf of the England Biodiversity Group, explains the reasons for adopting a landscape-scale approach to nature conservation and highlights the wider economic and social benefits (known as ecosystem services) that this approach can provide. The report provides information relevant to local authorities, land managers, farmers, and local communities, in support of the Government's aspirations around landscape scale conservation.

Download from: <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NE309>

Invasive & introduced Plants & Animals

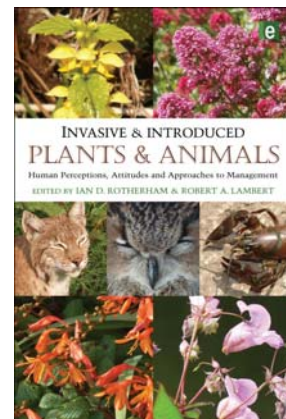
Editors: Ian Rotherham and Robert Lambert, pub. April 2011

Hb ~~£65.00~~ £52.00 9781849710718, 352 pages

"...a truly momentous, provocative and at times, hilarious analysis of the complex, controversial and conflict-ridden world of invasive and introduced plants and animals. In bridging the gap between objective science and subjective sociocultural fashions and values, this compelling tome dares to go 'where no one has gone before'".

Sarah Simons, Executive Director, Global Invasive Species Programme

For a 20% discount, enter the voucher code **AF20** when ordering at www.earthscan.co.uk



Lowland Heaths: ecology, history, restoration and management

Editors: Ian Rotherham (Sheffield Hallam University) and Janice Bradley (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust)

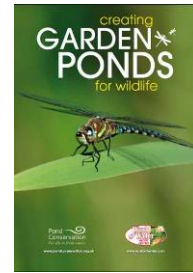
Wildlifetrack Publishing Cost: £17.50

Proceedings of the UK *National Lowland Heathland Conference* held in Nottingham in September 2002. Publication will be of interest and value to heathland managers.

Can be downloaded as a pdf at [UKEconet](#)

Creating garden ponds **Pond Conservation step by step guide**

A 32-page booklet that covers all aspects of pond creation and management: Download pdf at [Pond Conservation Advice](#)



Ipswich Museum – Visit the Henslow display!

To mark the 150th anniversary of the death of the Reverend Professor John Stevens Henslow, (Founder and President of Ipswich Museum from 1850-1861) the Museum is hosting a small display in his honour. He is famously remembered as Charles Darwin's tutor and the man who encouraged Darwin to accept the position on the HMS Beagle voyage. But he was deeply entwined with the early days of Ipswich Museum, the development of the collections and placing the Museum at the forefront of the eminent scientific community of the time. Henslow's legacy remains at the Museum to this day where the original 1847 cabinets are still in use and the cases are still arranged according to his design. On display are some of the objects he collected and donated to the museum as well as the documents which tell us about his life and personality.

[Ipswich Museum](#) High Street, Ipswich IP1 3QH. Tel: 01473 433550.
Opening times: Tuesday - Saturday, 10.00 - 17.00.

A review of the impact of artificial light on invertebrates (2011) **Charlotee Bruce-White and Matt Shardlow**

This report reviews the available literature on how humans are changing the light environment and the impact that this has on insects and other invertebrates. The report also makes recommendations and identifies several further research areas.

Download the report from the [Buglife website](#) >

MCS Your seas Your voice – the campaign to safeguard our seas

Less than 1% of the UK's seas are fully protected. Vote now for the places you want to protect. You can vote for a Marine Conservation Society recommended site for marine protection or you can vote for a site that is not on the map. The 73 MCS sites have been chosen to protect rare and threatened species and habitats identified from over 20 years of dive surveys. **Survey closes September 2011.**

To find out more and to vote, visit the [MCS website](#) >

Managing sea walls in Essex for Bombus muscorum

Tim Gardiner (EA) and Ted Benton (University of Essex) have produced an initial report on managing sea walls in Essex for *Bombus muscorum*.

The report is available on the [Hymettus website](#) > (750 Kb)

A new climate change advice programme

Additional funding for the Environment Agency to provide practical advice to help businesses, organisations and communities prepare for climate change was announced by Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman in March 2011.

The Environment Agency (EA) has taken on a new, additional role as the Government's delivery body in England for advice on climate adaptation – the actions needed to build our resilience to the changes and impacts projected such as hotter, drier summers; warmer, wetter winters; and an increased risk of severe weather and flooding.

Defra will provide EA with an additional £2 million per year to deliver climate adaptation advice, an increase on the current £1.5 million per year budget paid to the current delivery partners, the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) and the UK's regional climate change partnerships. Further information available on the [Environment Agency website >](#)

Snippets from Suffolk flood and Coastal news

Shotley Gate

The second phase of the Shotley Gate cliff stabilisation project is due to commence in the summer. The local community group has obtained funding to undertake this work, which included success in securing an additional £18,000 from the Haven Gateway Partnership's Green Infrastructure Community Growth Award, *I Love Landscapes Campaign*, for works to enhance the woodland and picnic areas.

Shotley Re-alignment

The project to re-align the estuary walls and create new inter-tidal habitat at Hill House Farm, Shotley is making progress. In order to allay fears about this type of scheme, the National Farmers' Union has commissioned a short video on this project which shows that the project has the landowner's full support as he is hoping to develop an eco-tourism business. The project team is working with the Port Authority to utilise port dredgings as a way of raising land levels prior to breaching the estuary wall, in order to aid the creation of saltmarsh habitat.

Flood defence works at Minsmere

The Environment Agency will be starting flood defence works at the RSPB Minsmere Reserve in August 2011. The plan is to raise and widen the existing Coney Hill Cross Bank so that it provides protection against coastal flooding to the area to the south and to the Minsmere RSPB reserve. Additional works will also be undertaken to control the movement of water and reduce the risk of failure of the secondary flood defences during storm surges. The work will involve bringing in clay to the reserve over the coming months to raise and widen the bank, using a route agreed with the County Council to reduce disruption on local roads. The main construction works are due to start in August 2011 and should be complete by February 2012.

To view Suffolk flood and Coastal News newsletters, visit [Suffolk County Council >](#)

International Press Centre for Biodiversity Research

The website is an initiative of ALTER-Net and provides a biodiversity news service. <http://www.biodiversityresearch.net/>

Net Gain news

(Net Gain is the North Sea Marine Conservation Zones Project)

Net Gain is appealing to as many sea users as possible to submit their data so that it can be included in the regional profile of maps and information before it is too late. See [Net Gain newsletter # 5 >](#)

Balanced Seas works in the South-East area and covers the Suffolk coast south of Bawdsey. Visit the [Balanced Seas website >](#) to read the latest news.

Biodiversity in the East of England

To find out what's going on in our region, check the websites for the county Biodiversity Partnerships forum:

[Norfolk, Bedfordshire and Luton](#), [Essex](#), [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough](#).

And the revised [East of England Biodiversity Forum website](#) >

The **East of England Biodiversity Forum newsletter Oct 2010 to Jan 2011** is now available on the [SBP website](#). Contents include: Business and biodiversity; a new brochure providing an update on regional targets; East of England Local Wildlife Sites Project; Natural England biodiversity delivery post April 2011; invasive species and more...

WHAT'S ON

Mollusc day – leader Simon Taylor, Essex county recorder

27 August Daws Hall Nature Reserve, Henny Road, Lamarsh, Bures CO8 5EX

Information and field work. Search for snails and slugs on land and snails and bivalves in Losh House Brook and the River Stour. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided but bring a packed lunch and your wellies if you want to sample the brook. Cost: £25.00
Pre booking essential tel. 01787 269766 or 01787 475142

Spatial Ecology and Conservation Conference

5-7 September, University of Birmingham

The conference will bring together an international field of ecological research scientists, with conservation practitioners and planners, to review, discuss and evaluate the latest advances in spatial ecology and associated technologies, and how these can best be deployed to underpin conservation. Current gaps and future needs will also be identified, and a range of potential solutions discussed.

Theme 1: Generating ecological data, Theme 2: Undertaking spatial analysis, Theme 3: Using spatial analyses for conservation

Further information: <http://www.ert-conservation.co.uk/SEC1-Homepage.htm>

Suffolk Naturalists Society field trip

11 September, Orchard adjacent to Oakley House, Diss

A large commercial dwarf tree apple and pear orchard planted in the 1960s, abandoned for a decade but revived and back in production. There are bryophytes on the trunks, there is a range of interesting Orthoptera, and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers have been seen.

Please book with Paul Read - email: readhf@aol.com

50 years of action for Suffolk's wildlife 1961 - 2011

To mark Suffolk Wildlife Trust's 50th year, SWT has a year of wildlife celebrations showcasing some of the county's best wildlife moments.

September 11th **Heather, hawkers and hobbies at Sutton & Hollesley Common**, October 8th

Fungi at Captain's Wood, November 16th **Starling roost at Lackford Lakes**, November 27th

Starling roost at Hen Reedbeds, December 14th **Gull roost at Lackford Lakes**.

Book in advance by calling Brooke House on **01473 890089**. Cost: £3 per person payable on the day. Visit [Suffolk Wildlife Trust website](#) >

Autumn on the fen

A free Plantlife workshop, hosted by Tim Pankhurst

12 September Redgrave and Lopham Fen 10:00 – 15:00

There will be a short introduction inside in the morning and the rest of the day will be spent outside looking at a range of plants. In the case of poor weather, participants will be able to make some collections and examine them inside.

To book visit www.wildaboutplants.org.uk/events .

Restoring and managing old orchards – Flora Locale training event

14 September Ref M2 Bewdley, Worcestershire

Facilitator : Wade Muggleton, Wyre Community Land Trust

All events must be booked in advance. Book and pay on-line at www.floralocale.org , email info@floralocale.org or ring 01672 515723 for further information and to reserve a place. All events are charged at our standard fees unless otherwise stated.

How can we manage our seas in the real world?

Plymouth Marine Sciences Partnership in collaboration with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

13-14 September Plymouth Hoe, Plymouth

The conference will highlight the key challenges in managing our seas in a sustainable manner and discuss the tools available to do so. Experts from a wide range of organisations will be speaking including the MMO, Government agencies, industry, NGOs and scientific institutes.

To book, visit the [Plymouth Marine Sciences Partnership website >](#)

Animals, man and treescapes – the interactions between grazing animals, people and wooded landscapes

14-16 September, Sheffield Hallam University

Cost: Local Authority/ Statutory Agency/ NGO - £85 per day or all 3 days - £240 + VAT)

Further information: Visit www.ukeconet.co.uk

Birds of the Waveney ... Identification & ringing: SWT event

17 September 8.30 am – 3 pm

Join Steve Piotrowski at the beautiful Carlton Marshes Reserve to learn more about bird identification and ringing on the Waveney. Book on line at www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org or [download the flyer here](#)

Restoring a lowland river – Flora Locale training event

20 September Ref SE4 Hungerford, West Berkshire

Facilitator: Sue Everett, hosted by the Trustees of the Town and Manor of Hungerford.

All events must be booked in advance. Book and pay on-line at www.floralocale.org , email info@floralocale.org or ring 01672 515723 for further information and to reserve a place. All events are charged at our standard fees unless otherwise stated.

Keeping up-to-date with non-native species workshop (RPS)

21 September, London Zoo

Cost: £120 + VAT

Topics include: Building and maintaining partnerships within large scale projects; Non-native species in the water environment; Approaches to landscape scale non-native species management, Updates on water primrose, oak processionary moth and Asian hornet. Contact: Laura Masterson (laura.masterson@rpsgroup.com, tel 01480 302 751)

World Conference on Marine Biodiversity – Our Oceans our Future

26-30 September University of Aberdeen

The conference will bring together scientists, practitioners and the public to discuss and advance our understanding of the issues surrounding the importance of biodiversity in the marine environment. The aims are to:

- Review our knowledge of marine biodiversity and its role in marine ecosystem functioning
- Assess the most critical threats to marine systems and consider management strategies
- Discuss sustainable development and socio-economic impacts on the marine sector
- Identify future research priorities

Further information: <http://www.marine-biodiversity.org/>

Fungus Foray – leader Ian Rose, Colchester Natural History Society

8 October Daws Hall Nature Reserve, Henny Road, Lamarsh, Bures CO8 5EX. 10.00 – 16.00

A fungus hunt around the reserve. Daws Hall is a beautiful setting with views across the Stour Valley and a variety of habitats including woodland, wildflower meadow, freshwater brook and the River Stour. See how many specimens common or rare you can find and identify with Ian's assistance. Over 60 species have been recorded on site.

Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Bring a packed lunch. £25.00

Pre booking essential tel. 01787 269766 or 01787 475142

7th Annual Suffolk & Norfolk Planning & Biodiversity Seminar

6 October 9.30 am – 4.15 pm British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford

This popular annual seminar provides an overview of the latest developments and best practice related to biodiversity in spatial planning and development control and a forum for local authorities to share information and experience.

For further information, contact Gen Broad email: gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk or tel: 01473 264308.

Good practice in managing ancient trees

19 October Ref SE7 Burnham Beeches, Slough

Facilitators: Ancient Tree Forum*, Dr David Lonsdale, Caroline David and Helen Read

All events must be booked in advance. Book and pay on-line at www.floralocale.org, email info@floralocale.org or ring 01672 515723 for further information and to reserve a place. All events are charged at our standard fees unless otherwise stated.

IEEM Annual Conference – Rebuilding biodiversity

2-3 November The Liner Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool L3 5QB

This conference aims to inform delegates of the strategic and practical approaches to conserving and rebuilding biodiversity in the UK. The conference will paint the 'European picture'; examine current biodiversity conservation tools available (including biodiversity offsetting); consider the evidence base for priority actions (biodiversity auditing as well as recent climate change research); and feature practical case studies (small and large scale) in the terrestrial and aquatic sectors.

To book and for further information visit the [IEEM website >](#)

Habitat management for lower plants and fungi

8 November Ref SW2 Cleeve, North Somerset

Facilitator: Justin Smith

All events must be booked in advance. Book and pay on-line at www.floralocale.org , email info@floralocale.org or ring 01672 515723 for further information and to reserve a place. All events are charged at our standard fees unless otherwise stated.

Propagating and planting tree seeds for woodland creation projects – Flora Locale training event Ref E4

10 November Cranfield, Bedfordshire

Facilitator: Colin Carpenter

All events must be booked in advance. Book and pay on-line at www.floralocale.org , email info@floralocale.org or ring 01672 515723 for further information and to reserve a place. All events are charged at our standard fees unless otherwise stated.

Catchment Delivery: towards more effective environmental and societal benefits

23 November 9 am – 4 pm University of London

The Minister for the Natural Environment, Richard Benyon, will be delivering the keynote speech outlining how the Government see the development of the catchment based approach. Topics: major programmes, Water Framework Directive, governance focussed on delivery.

For more information, visit the [CMS website >](#)

ARG South East and London Regional Meeting 2011

19 November 10:00 – 16:00 University of Greenwich, Chatham ME4 4TB

Cost: £10 members, £20 non-members

The agenda includes: Setbacks and successes – tales from the field; Action plans for adder conservation – examples from further afield; The contribution of genetics to adder conservation; How do we take adder conservation forward?

Booking form available from [Kent Amphibian and Reptile Group >](#) (1st September)

Various wildlife events - [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#), [National Trust](#), [RSPB](#), [Butterfly Conservation Suffolk Branch](#), [Suffolk Moth Group](#), [Suffolk Fungus Group](#), [Suffolk Ornithologists Group](#), [Suffolk Naturalists Society](#)

SBP INFORMATION

If you would like to share information on how your organisation is benefiting biodiversity in Suffolk, please send your article to Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Officer (tel: 01473 264308, Mobile: 0789 4885337, email: gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk)

Please note that the Biodiversity Officer, Gen Broad, now works part-time; work days are usually Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Publication date change

Please note that the newsletter will now be published in March, June, September and December.

Deadline for September 2011 newsletter: Friday 30th September.

SBP is a partnership comprised of conservation organisations, statutory bodies, local authorities, businesses, not-for-profit organisations and community groups working together throughout Suffolk to protect biodiversity. The UK's Biodiversity Action Plan is delivered at a local level by members of the Partnership – for further information visit www.suffolkbiodiversity.org

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership

Babergh District Council, Center Parcs–Elveden, Environment Agency, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Essex & Suffolk Water, Forestry Commission, Forest Heath District Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, National Trust, Natural England, RSPB, St. Edmundsbury Borough Council, Suffolk Biological Records Centre, Suffolk Naturalist's Society, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Naturalists Society, Waveney District Council.