



Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership Partners' News August 2009

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PARTNERS NEWS

Suffolk Biological Records Centre update

Ben Heather, Biological Records Officer (GIS)

In the current wave of fashionable social networking sites one site is emerging as both a useful tool and a resource for people interested in Nature. 'Flickr' is an online photo sharing web site where members can publish and share their photos with the general public. At the SBRC we have decided to set up our own photo group where people can donate their photos of Suffolk wildlife for use in future publications, newsletters and web pages. If you would like to contribute and don't mind sharing your pictures with us please visit our Flickr page http://www.flickr.com/groups/sbrc_suffolk-wildlife-photos/. We cannot offer any payment for photos contributed but we will always try and accredit the photographer if photos are reproduced.

Following the completion of work updating Wetland Inventories for Natural England I am currently working through a piece of work mapping coastal BAP priority habitats and evaluating possible habitat loss with the onset of sea level rise in the future. This piece of work is making use of remote sensing techniques to first capture areas of habitat and then very accurate contour information known as LIDAR data to project sea level rise.

Whilst I've been working on this, Martin Sanford has successfully managed to migrate our species database into Recorder 6, the latest version of the universal system used by Biological Record Centres across the country.

In other record related news this summer has seen Suffolk's first confirmed recordings of two Emerald Damselflies; the Scarce Emerald Damselfly *Lestes dryas* and the Willow Emerald Damselfly *Lestes (Chalcolestes) viridis*. Two Scarce Emerald Damselflies were recorded at Redgrave Fen by Andrew Godfrey in late June and the Willow Emerald, a migrant vagrant was recorded at two sites at the start of August. Will Brame, Eddy Marsh and Justin Zantboer recorded the Willow Emerald at Trimley Marshes on the 1st of August and Steve Goddard recorded a sighting on the 2nd at Staverton Lake.



Willow Emerald Damselfly at Staverton Lake, Wantisden, 3 August 09. Photo: Stuart Read

For further information and sightings of Damselflies and Dragonflies please have a look at the British Dragonfly Society's website <http://www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/home.html>

Suffolk Hedgerow survey

Guy Ackers

August is normally the prime month for hedgerow surveyors to really get working on the parish surveys. Much of the harvesting is over and trees and bushes are fruiting well, making for easier and quicker species identification. There are some 10 to 12 weeks ahead until leaf fall providing excellent opportunities to get large parts of the surveyor territories covered.

Several parishes have finished their surveys and all that remains is the mapping and statistical analyses. For the purposes of this survey, the data is placed in categories based on just three of the 31 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) groups: claylands, farmland and sandlands. We can already see from the 123 parish surveys analysed that there is an extraordinary synergy between parishes in the same LCA.

The results from over 105 completed parish surveys have been analysed, involving some 16,048 hedgerows. This produced a countywide average of 46.8 species-rich hedgerows. This is not altogether very meaningful (other than a rule of thumb guide) when considering how the species rich data varies as follows

LCA group	Number of types	Species-rich hedgerows (%)
Clayland	4	61 – 64
Farmland	8	38 – 51
Sandlands	2	30 – 34

Further information will be available when we have the results from the 414 parishes undertaking hedgerow surveys.

Suffolk's Hedgerow Survey has run for 11 years, having started in 1998. It will finish at the end of 2010, so we are still aiming to get surveys underway in the 70 odd parishes which have not yet become involved. The strategy for winter 2009/2010 will be to focus attention on those parishes with the highest densities of hedgerow length per square kilometre.

Update on Crayfish Ark Project

Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership

Native white clawed crayfish were once common in Suffolk, inhabiting many of our waterways. Sadly, their numbers have declined rapidly over the past 30 years due to competition with non-native crayfish species, loss of habitat, pollution and a disease, crayfish plague. Alien crayfish species, such as Signals, were originally farmed for the food trade, but individuals rapidly escaped and are now dominant in Suffolk rivers. They drive out the smaller white-clawed natives and, although unaffected themselves by crayfish plague, they carry the disease into native crayfish populations which succumb and die within a matter of days.



Penny Hemphill, Suffolk's Water for Wildlife Officer, searching for white clawed crayfish
Photo: Gen broad

The Environment Agency (EA), Farming and Wildlife Group (FWAG), Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership are working hard to redress the balance. We have found an isolated 'ark' site with suitable environmental conditions, established that there are no alien species nearby through extensive surveys and, during August, translocated 75 individuals to their new home.

The animals were all checked to establish that they were large enough to be moved safely and that they were in good health. Just moulted individuals with soft shells and very young animals were put back where we found them, under bricks or overhanging vegetation or even large pieces of tin. Fortunately, we found a range of individuals to move, juveniles as well as small and large adults.



White clawed crayfish being measured and health-checked before heading for the 'ark'.
Photo: Gen broad

This project is the first of its kind in the East of England, so many practical problems and unexpected challenges have had to be overcome with little prior experience to fall back on. Thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of individuals from partner organisations, the landowner, and support from national crayfish expert, Stephanie Peay of the EA, the initial issues have been resolved and the project has leapt from idea to first reality. Watch this space for further updates!

A summary of the project can be seen on the [BBC News website](#) for 25 August.

Buglife, the Invertebrate Conservation Trust, are promoting the use of ark sites, particularly through the aggregates industry. To read further about this work, visit the [Buglife website](#).

We are grateful to the 'White clawed crayfish 'ark' project funders: Suffolk Environmental Trust, the Environment Agency, Essex & Suffolk Water and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership's Project Fund.

Suffolk's Soil Savers

Neil Lister, Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit and Suffolk Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group are working on a project to protect the raw material that makes up much of the precious Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) landscape, its soils.

Maintaining healthy soils on farmland can give better financial returns, sustainable food production, provide seed and fertiliser savings and reduce irrigation. Some farmland in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB experiences soil erosion and runoff and valuable nutrients are lost. Some of the soil management issues in the AONB are illustrated below.



Surface compaction limiting water infiltration and causing run-off and soil erosion.



Wind-blow depositing soil on surrounding sensitive habitats



Run-off transporting sediment and nutrients into watercourses



Water and sediment accessing public highways

The AONB Partnership is helping farmers in the AONB to conserve soils and the high quality landscape. 20 farms in the AONB have been visited by a sustainable soils expert and have received a 'Farm Soil Plan'. 'Cab Cards' have been produced to advise farm employees and contractors on best practice to conserve soils and meet agri-environment scheme targets. A 'Sustainable Agriculture & Landscape Conservation' guide for farmers in the AONB has been produced.

A 'Sustainable Soils Seminar' was held in March for farmers, land managers, advisers and agronomists. The AONB has also been represented on the Suffolk Farmland Habitat Working Group. This has kick started a funding bid to the East of England Rural Development Programme for an East Anglia Soils Partnership and Plan to assess soil types and prioritise action.

This project, funded by the AONB and Natural England through the Sustainable Development Fund will prove key to managing the protected farmed landscapes of the AONB for the future.

Martlesham grass snakes live!

28/8/09

Duncan Sweeting of [Suffolk Amphibian and Reptile Group](#) has set up a webcam to watch grass snakes hatching out. Three have hatched already and there are another 20 eggs in the nest, so this will probably take until 13/14 September. Visit GardenNature Wildlife Camera Systems and go to '[Martlesham Wildlife Cam](#)'.

Suffolk Traditional Orchard Survey update

Paul Read

Surveying the crop diversity

The nationwide surveys of traditional orchards will be looking at the tree crop just as much as the natural biodiversity of the habitat. This may be unique in biodiversity surveying. Previously surveys of farmland Priority Habitats have hardly been concerned with the crop, usually of relatively modern genetic origin, but old orchard trees are either selected clones, for example apples, pears, cherries and most plums, or are selected populations grown from seed such as some cobnuts, plums and gages.

The survey has started to record the varieties in old Suffolk orchards. Most apples are relatively easy to identify by specialists. Plums and pears are more difficult, and cherries very difficult indeed, because the written descriptions are so poor. As elsewhere in England we expect to find varieties that have not been recorded at all. A Suffolk speciality is the Cherry plum, *Prunus cerasifera*, widely planted for hedging in the last fifty or so years, but also planted in orchards here for centuries as large standard trees, and Suffolk was known to possess cherry plum clones and populations selected for their fruit.

The picture shows an old cherry plum, or cherry plum x plum, *P cerasifera* x *domestica* with numerous bracket fungi in an old Mid Suffolk farm orchard. The fruit are yellow oval and very sweet (most cherry plums make great jam, but are just a bit too sharp for eating raw). It is not listed in the literature as far as is known, but in the 19th century Burrell's Nursery, a supplier of fruit trees in Bury St Edmunds, specialised in cherry plums, so perhaps its one of theirs. Perhaps the jam making owner, also seen below, should give it a name. It is certainly worth growing for its fruit; the fallen fruit of cherry plums are a great attraction for deer, badgers and moths feed on over ripe fruit at night, in other locations in Suffolk.

Old cherry plum with numerous bracket fungi growing in an old Mid Suffolk farm orchard. The fruit are yellow, oval and very sweet.



Wildlife and art: crystal glass sculpture 'Endangered'

An internationally renowned glass engraver based in Halesworth, Lesley Pyke, is using her skills to make a practical contribution to wildlife conservation. In collaboration with Buglife, she has designed a unique sculpture featuring 13 hand engraved endangered invertebrates. These include four UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species: the Cliff tiger beetle, the Wormwood Moonshiner, the Norfolk Hawker dragonfly and the Shrilc carder bumblebee.

The collector's piece is priced at £1,200 of which 40% is promised to Buglife to help fund invertebrate conservation.



Lesley said "The Cullet was in danger of being destroyed in a remote glass factory in Northern France, and I was offered the opportunity to save it. If it wasn't properly looked after it could have become extinct, just like the rare bugs it features."

To find out more go to Lesley's website http://www.lesleypyke.com/page/for_sale.htm and [Buglife](#).

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership News

- ❖ We are delighted to announce that we have just been awarded £32,000 of Performance Reward Grants that are tied to Suffolk's Local Area Agreement for two projects: a review of County Wildlife Sites and an Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland initiative with the Forestry Commission. These projects will help us to meet the local target (NI197) for increasing positive conservation management of County Wildlife Sites.

❖ *Community biodiversity projects*

There are some exciting community biodiversity projects emerging in Suffolk. SBP's new initiative with Suffolk Biological Records Centre to record and map what's happening in Suffolk Coastal will provide ideas, inspiration and, perhaps most helpfully, the benefit of others' practical experience. Across the district, invertebrates, birds, flora and mammals are benefitting from enhancements to wet meadows, unimproved grasslands, heathlands, churchyards, allotments and village greens. People are benefitting too. A Charsfield resident said: "*It utilises an area that was already rich in wildlife and provides magnificent views across the countryside. It has already become a "meeting place" where people can observe nature around them.*" Watch for our project launch at the end of September.

Thank You! to Suffolk Coastal's Local Strategic Partnership for funding support.

Project partners: Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the Green Light Trust, Suffolk Coastal District Council Countryside Service, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Project, Greenways Project.

INFORMATION and NEWS

Consultation on the possible release of a biocontrol agent to control Japanese knotweed

Defra is seeking views on the possible release of an insect, a psyllid species *Aphalara itadori*, as a control for Japanese knotweed, *Fallopia japonica*. Anyone with an interest in the impact of Japanese knotweed can respond. If approved the release of this organism would be the first use of a non-native insect species to control a plant species in the UK and Europe.

There are two regulatory processes involved – release of non-native bio-control agents is controlled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, while there are restrictions on the import and release of non-native plant pests under the Plant Health Order 2005.

The closing date for the consultation is **Monday 19 October 2009**. For further information, go to the [Defra website](#).

Fifth of UK's honeybees died last winter: Experts call for more research funding

Honeybee numbers are in decline, and experts are calling for more money to be put into research to tackle the problem. According to the British Beekeepers' Association, almost a fifth of the UK's honeybees died last winter. Combined with an average 30% loss the year before, it means beekeepers are struggling to keep colonies going.

Bees are suffering from viruses, a parasitic mite and changes in the weather. A survey by the British Beekeepers' Association suggested an average of 19.2% of colonies died over winter, which is "double" the acceptable level.

Honeybees are worth £200m a year to UK agriculture because of their work pollinating crops. As pollinators and producers of honey, bees are a valuable natural resource, a good example of an 'ecosystem service' upon which people depend.

[Read full story on BBC News website](#) (24 August)

Suffolk Acre's quarterly magazine out now!

Click [here](#) to go to the newsletter.

British woodlands suffering biodiversity loss

Research published 22 July shows that 21st century British woodlands are less distinctive than those of the early 20th century. Native woodland plants have re-organised over the last 70 years in response to environmental changes such as increased soil fertility and canopy shading.

The research was carried out by a team from Bournemouth University, Natural England and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH).

Gaining rare access to a dataset from the 1930s, the researchers investigated changes in the flora of British woodlands over the next seven decades, with their study providing evidence of a new kind of biodiversity loss, namely a loss of the unique character of individual woods which had developed over centuries in response to local conditions.

The characteristics of the 2008 plant communities indicated that the soil was more fertile than in the 1930s, a side-effect of the use of fertilisers in agriculture and its effect on the surrounding woodland. The composition of the plant communities also indicated that there was now less light available in the woods than in the past. This light loss is probably associated with the decline in traditional practices such as coppicing, which creates openings in the woodland as trees are harvested, leading to decreased woodland management.

Read the full article on the [ALTER-net website](#)

Study of the Forestry Commission Estate in England Consultation on the Long-term role of the public forest estate

The purpose of the study is to consider the future long term sustainable role for the public forest estate. Recommendations will be made about any necessary changes to improve its ability to deliver relevant priorities in the Strategy for England's Trees Woods and Forests and contribute to other government objectives.

To make your views known, visit the Forestry Commission's [public consultation website](#). The consultation will finish on **28 September 2009**.

Hedgehog boxes

Hedgehogs are now a Biodiversity Action Plan Species. If you're putting up bird or bat boxes, perhaps you might consider installing these as well.

Designed with the help of the Hedgehog Preservation Trust and specialists from other Hedgehog groups.

Available from the [NHBS](#).



First biological recording mobile phone portal launched

From 16 July 2009 ladybird recorders have been able to send in records via their mobile phones as part of a new partnership between the UK's Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and Woolworths.co.uk. It will be the first mobile portal in Britain for biological recording, enabling records to be sent in straight from the field or garden. The partnership is part of the relaunch of the ladybird clothing range.

The new mobile portal will feed into the UK Ladybird Survey which, among other things, helps to monitor the invasion of the harlequin ladybird.

Read more on the [Centre for Ecology and Hydrology website](#).

Big Lottery Fund: Launch of Secret Millionaire Fund

The Big Lottery Fund has teamed up with the Channel 4 programme Secret Millionaire, giving viewers an opportunity to nominate worthy organisations for grant funding. The Secret Millionaire Fund will support projects that *give people better chances in life, build stronger communities, improve rural and urban environments or promote healthier and more active people and communities*. Lottery funding worth £1 million has been set aside, to be allocated as grants of between £300 and £10,000 (£5,000 in Wales) to organisations across the UK.

The fund closes **21 December 2009**. Visit [Secret Millionaires Fund website](#).

England Biodiversity Strategy Indicators

To find summaries of trends on biodiversity indicators such as farmland birds and butterflies, plant diversity in fields and field margins, woodland birds and butterflies and biological quality of rivers in England, visit [Defra's website](#). The website page contains results from 50 indicators dated between April 2008 and July 2009.

Conservationevidence.com

This University of East Anglia based website aims to improve global nature conservation practice by sharing knowledge as to the effectiveness of conservation management interventions. **Conservation Evidence online journal** comprises original, previously unpublished observations. Each paper is a case study documenting the effectiveness of a conservation management intervention. **Summaries** of previously published papers or reports document the effectiveness of management interventions. To find out more, go to [Conservationevidence.com](#)

Marine and Coastal Access Bill latest news

- **29 July:** publication of [Marine and Coastal Access Bill newsletter No.11 \(PDF 645kb\)](#).
- **14 July:** Bill completes Commons Committee stage.
- **8 July:** [Boundaries for new Inshore Fishing and Conservation Authorities \(IFC authorities\)](#). IFC's will replace the Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs)

The Bill will be reported to the House after 12 October. Work to identify Marine Conservation Zones is underway. Four regional projects are being set up (to be completed before March 2010) with a stakeholder group for each project. The North Sea regional project manager is Joanna Redhead Joanna@yhsq.org.uk.

For further information, visit: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/legislation/>

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](#).

WHAT'S ON

3 September The biodiversity debate: Engaging and educating children on biodiversity as the future guardians of our planet

Lecture at the Royal Geographical Society, London SW7 2AR 17:30 to 20:30

World-renowned National Geographic photographer and conservationist, Joel Sartore, and Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD), will focus on children's knowledge and understanding of biodiversity. They will deliver a call to action to include biodiversity in the wider debate alongside climate change and poverty, emphasising the need to reach out, engage and educate children as the future guardians of our planet.

4 September Symposium on Ecosystem Services

Royal Geographical Society, London

'Creating a new prosperity: Fresh approaches to ecosystem services and human well-being.' Event organised by FRESH, University of Nottingham and sponsored by Natural England, Defra and IWAM. Register at this website:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fresh/seminarsix.html>

5-10 September British Science Festival

British Science Association communication event, Guildford.

The British Science Festival is one of Europe's largest science festivals, bringing you the latest in science, technology and engineering.

[>>Read more and book](#)

8 and 9 September 'Exotic and Invasive Plants and Animals Conference – Big Cats: are they out there? Do we need them?'

Sheffield Hallam University

'Big Cat' workshop with illustrated presentations by Rick Minter, author of the forthcoming book 'The Big Cats of Britain' and David Blake. This should be lively and thought provoking as we discuss the myths and realities of Big Cats in Britain and the impacts of introducing 'top' predators such as big cats to the British Countryside and for game management.

Dr Ian D. Rotherham, of Sheffield Hallam University, asserts that the conference will seek to consider both positive and negative issues of aliens, as well as the need for strategic control of invasive, native problem species. Christine Handley, of The Biodiversity and Landscape History Research Institute, says the intention is to generate a broad debate on one of the most important nature conservation and environmental issues of the twenty-first century.

Dr Dick Shaw (CABI) will be giving a talk about his latest research on controlling Japanese Knotweed using an imported insect.

It is advisable to book early as places are strictly limited.

Visit www.ukeconet.co.uk the South Yorkshire EcoNet for further details, email info@hallamec.plus.com or phone Christine on 0114 272 4227.

17 September Training course: Stakeholder dialogue - why bother?

An introduction and overview of stakeholder participation with a focus on the environment. For details, go to <http://www.dialoguematters.co.uk/training.htm>

3 October Introduction to Traditional Timber frame repairs

Organised by Orchard Barns.

For more information click [here](#) or contact Sarah (sarah@orchardbarn.org.uk, tel: 077660-54042).

12 to 16 October Plant Conservation for the Next Decade: A Celebration of Kew's 250th Anniversary

Royal Botanical Gardens Kew, London.

The conference programme showcases Kew's conservation research and includes leading international research scientists presenting papers on aspects of plant conservation - Policies and politics, Management and restoration, Human cultures, Agriculture, Frontiers of plant conservation technology and What can we afford to lose?

Keynote speakers include Dr Joseph Cobbinah, Dr Saw Leng Guan, Professor Richard Hobbs, Professor Hongwen Huang, Professor Michael E Kane, Ms Sara Oldfield, Dr Peter Raven, Dr Judy West and Kew's current and previous Directors Professor Stephen Hopper, Professor Sir Ghillean Prance and Professor Sir Peter Crane. For further info, go to [Kew's website](#)

15 and 16 October Symposium: Impacts of environmental change on reproduction and development in wildlife

Zoological Society of London, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Species adapt to the environment over millennia, and reproduction is therefore highly controlled by environment, but what happens when the environment changes more quickly than expected? Will reproduction go wrong or is it sufficiently robust to cope? The symposium will examine the ways in which environmental change, such as global warming, increased radiation and exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals, influence not only short-term reproductive success and development but also long-term survival and fitness.

For details, go to ZSL website www.zsl.org/science/scientific-meetings/

25 October Apple Day

Bridge Farm Barns, Monks Eleigh, Suffolk, IP7 7AY 11am to 5pm

Sale of farm pressed apple juice and heritage apples grown by two local growers – George Hodgkinson from Suffolk Heritage Orchards, Monks Eleigh and Mike Hawkins from Brent Eleigh. Display of Suffolk raised apples with a detailed map showing where each type originated in the county (kindly loaned by East of England Apples and Orchards Project). Fruit identification service - bring 3 fruits and a leaf to have the variety identified.

Contact George Hodgkinson: 01449 740478, email gh.orchards@ukonline.co.uk

5 December

Breathing Places 'Tree o'clock 2009 as part of National Tree week'

Breathing Places will be asking audiences to **do one thing** for nature by planting a tree at their local Breathing Place. If you'd like to help the UK set the Guinness World Record for the most trees planted in one hour click [here](#) to find out more.

Various wildlife events - [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#), [National Trust](#), [RSPB](#)

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)

Deadline for October 2009 newsletter: Monday 26 October 2009.

SBP is a partnership comprised of conservation organisations, statutory bodies, local authorities, businesses and not-for-profit organisations working throughout the county of Suffolk on behalf of wildlife. The UK's Biodiversity Action Plan is delivered at a local level by members of the Partnership – for further information visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/Biodiversity.

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership consists of:
Babergh District Council, Center Parcs – Elveden, Environment Agency, Forest Heath District Council, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Natural England, RSPB, St. Edmundsbury Borough Council, Suffolk Biological Records Centre, Suffolk Naturalist's Society, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Waveney District Council.