



Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership Partners' News December 2011

Suffolk Biodiversity
Partnership

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Partners News

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PARTNERS NEWS

Community Survey Projects – surveying the Stour Valley for signs of the elusive dormouse

Managing a Masterpiece team

The Managing a Masterpiece team and Suffolk Wildlife Trust have been training people how to identify and protect the elusive dormouse.

At the end of October and beginning of November 2011 we were able to run a training course for the general public under the natural heritage section of our projects. The idea was to teach people the sort of habitat that the dormouse would need and to identify signs of where they have been active. People will then be able to search for signs of dormouse activity along public foot paths in the Stour valley and report any evidence.



Dormouse Photo Alison Looser

The course took place at a couple of locations in the valley, one south of the river in Alphamstone and one north of the river in Polstead. We were very lucky with the turn-out for both events and over 60 people attended the course.

The course started at 9.30am with refreshments and a chance to meet our lecturer Dr Simone Bullion. We then spent about an hour listening to Simone talk about the dormouse and the habitat it lives in. Simone also explained the key ways to identify dormouse activity in the landscape and how the dormouse monitoring teams go about the work of recording dormouse numbers.

We saw how Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Essex Wildlife Trust and other groups go about liaising with farmers and landowners to improve the habitats available for the dormouse. Simone discussed some of the relatively simple techniques used to improve habitat and increase the links between populations of dormice. We also learned about some of the difficulties involved in habitat improvement and how other animals can cause problems if steps are not taken to protect the areas being improved.

After the talk we were given a chance to identify hazel nuts which had been opened by various wild animals such as squirrels, field mice and dormice. After a short break we went off down the road for chance to search for dormouse activity on the land of a local farmer. We would like to offer our thanks to those farmers involved, for allowing such a large group of people to traipse over their property, the day would have been far less valuable without this opportunity.

Suffolk Hedgerow Survey

Guy Ackers

The end of the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey is rapidly approaching. The project was designed to capture data relating to all the landscape hedgerows in as many Suffolk parishes as possible. Since June 2011, I have received and audited 45 newly completed surveys, making a total of 294 parishes containing 36494 landscape hedgerows surveyed.

The statistics for the Landscape Character Assessment peer group study has now very reliable and consistent synergies and correlations for the more 'popular' groups but I am seriously short on two main types, namely the Estate Sandlands in the **West** of the county and the 3 Chalkland types – Rolling Estate Chalkland, Settled Chalkland and Wooded Chalk Slopes. All of these can only be found in the far west of the county.

As far as Clayland, Farmland and Sandland (in the east) are concerned, I have a huge data bank with extremely reliable data. Likewise the Species Frequency charts for the more regular Landscape Character Assessment types have convincing correlation also. I have not counted the overall total number of different species in hedgerows in Suffolk yet but it will be a very large and varied list with one or two exceptional records.

Towards the end of this project, volunteers may like to remember the enormous successes we have enjoyed, new friendships gained, the difference we have made within the parishes and the huge cooperation we have received from landowners, farmers, parish councils, tree wardens and many, many others.

They have all taken part in a local enterprise led by volunteers, working together towards a common aim, rather than in competition, by developing social ventures. This was, and still is, part of the Rio Ethos.

Thorrington Park, Pinewood

Mark Taverner, Babergh District Council

Babergh is about to adopt various pieces of land in Pinewood, the main one being Thorrington Park between Grove Hill, Marble White Drive and the A14 with access off Burnet Close.

This area of land was originally designated for publically owned land in 1989. The area had some initial works in the mid 90s and then was pretty well neglected for the next 15 years. As with all matters involving nature, she has 'got on with it' and though there are some areas in decline (old hedges) and some nurse crops (willows) that are crowding out a wide range of other species in the main the area has matured well.

Thorrington Park consists of 5 main 'activity' areas.

1. A sound attenuation bund planted up with mixed indigenous species
2. A central open area was grass seeded with a wild flower mix.
3. Landscape belts of indigenous species were planted adjacent to housing.
4. Remains of field boundary hedgerows 'hang on'.
5. A Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), some outdoor exercise equipment and access paths (not black top!) were installed in the last year.

Babergh would not want to be adopting unnecessary maintenance liabilities but nor was it reasonable for the developer to carry out maintenance works in one season as it would cause a great deal of upset with the residents who have become used to the area's appearance over the last 10 years or so. With this in mind the new developer, Taylor Wimpey East Anglia, who are conscientiously trying to sort out the mess left by the original developer was asked to produce a management plan to bring the area up to standard.

As a core population of dormice was know to exist in nearby Spring Wood and evidence of Dormice was found adjacent to this site last year the developer was required to ask Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) to carry out a survey for Dormice. They also had to liaise with SWT over the production of the management plan to ensure it would 'encourage' or at least not be detrimental to dormice.

The good news is that Dormice, albeit a low population, have been found in Thorrington Park.

We can hope that this new area will ensure the core population of dormice remains sustainable.

Barn owls in Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

Neil Catchpole, DVSVP

What a remarkable twelve months for the Barn owl on the Essex/Suffolk borders. Last winter was just like those that some of us may recall from our youth, with prolonged cold-snaps, and snow lying deep for much of the season. Although 2010 had been a successful breeding season in the valley, with 34 young fledged from our nest boxes, these long periods of snow cover and extreme cold resulted in high mortality of both young and old.

With a possibly reduced breeding population by the end of the winter, much depended on a kind start to the spring, and hopefully a good supply of small mammals to trigger another round of mating, egg-laying, incubation, hatching, rearing and fledging.

We had one of the warmest starts to the year that many of us can remember. Dry sunny days lasted for weeks on end and the vole population boomed (vole numbers can be severely restricted in a cold, wet spring, with their young becoming chilled within their nests, in the grassy tussocks where they breed).



The female Barn-owls were soon up to their breeding weight and some very early clutches of eggs were recorded. Our most prolific pair were once again those near Kedington, where a very early brood of six young were fully fledged by the time of our first monitoring visit on June 22nd.

Five curious barn owls
Photo Neil Catchpole

Despite near-drought conditions in early summer, which seemed to hold back some of the mid-season breeders, this same hard-working pair managed, then, to produce the latest clutch of the year, with three more healthy chicks. This second brood were ringed on October 15th. A total of nine young in one season is exceptional, as, in an average year, a pair of breeding Barn-owls are lucky to rear a total of two to three young.

A fine brood of five young were also ringed near Higham and a cavity in an old todd (pollard) oak near Nayland produced two fat youngsters. Natural nest sites are now rarely found, the Barn-owl relying very heavily on our intervention to provide artificial boxes.

We must hope that the mildest November weather for years has helped the fledglings to thrive while they are taught to hunt by their parents, the only legacy they can leave them, in order to face the rigours of the winter ahead.

The overall result this year has been a record total of 38 young reared a great testimony to the ever willing band of volunteers who have helped with all the monitoring and ringing work. I am extremely grateful to them and to all the land-owners and managers who have supported our efforts once again this year, along with the Suffolk Community Barn-owl Project.

For more information contact Neil Catchpole Tel: 01473 264 263, Mob: 07989 521 084.
e-mail : neil.catchpole@suffolk.gov.uk www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

Publication of the Broads Biodiversity Audit

From the Broads Authority press release 26 November 2011

The Broads are the nation's rare wildlife hotspot

A pioneering study commissioned by the Broads Authority and carried out by the University of East Anglia reveals that this small area, which makes up only 0.4% of the UK, is a haven for an incredible quarter of Britain's rarest species.

The research project, conducted over 12 months with support from Natural England, pooled 1.5 million records collected by scientists and dozens of amateur enthusiasts since 1670.

In an 834 sq km area, the study identified 11,000 species, of which 66 are special to the Broads and 31 are rarely seen elsewhere in Britain. Species that have recovered in number in recent years include the Crane, Otter, Bittern and Marsh Harrier. The Fen Raft Spider has recently been reintroduced to the Suffolk Broads and the Fen Mason-wasp, which was formerly regarded as extinct in Britain, was rediscovered in the Norfolk Broads in 1986.

However, the research reveals that 423 rare species, including plants, insects and fish have not been recorded in the last 23 years and 67 of these are known to have become extinct. Many species which have disappeared inhabited dry grassland or arable land, demonstrating the effect of agriculture and industrialisation over the last 60 years. While it has long been realized that species such as the Swallowtail Butterfly, and Norfolk Hawker Dragonfly are restricted to the region, this study has shown that there are many more previously unrecognised specialities, such as the Broads Dolly Fly, the Slender Amber Snail and the Scarce Marsh Neb (a rare moth).

The research found that 63% of the 1,500 rarest species in the Broads rely on freshwater, which has major implications if sea level rises, as predicted, with climate change. Only 13% of rare species would tolerate mild to moderately brackish conditions.



The audit, carried out by a team from UEA's School of Environmental Sciences, is the first complete assessment of the biodiversity of the Broads, and the first time all the major data sets of species, including a large number of uncollated records dating back to the 17th century, have been compiled. It confirmed the outstanding importance of freshwater peat fens, wet grassland habitats, grazing marshes and ditches which support large numbers of rare species which are vulnerable to climate change.

Dr Hannah Mossman of the UEA's School of Environmental Sciences said: *"This study has shown we can identify which of the hundreds of rare species are most threatened by climate change, and that we can map these to show which parts of the Broads could be priorities for protection from sea level rise, based on their vulnerable biodiversity."*

Andrea Kelly added: *"In the Broads we have lost six species every decade since 1950. We can't afford to lose any more so habitat conservation is vital. We need to have dynamic and bold management and this work will help direct future conservation efforts."*

"We need to join up and increase wetland wildlife habitats whenever the opportunities arise, use diggers to punch ponds into the wetland landscape and work out how to keep our wetlands wet in the dry spring seasons."

The Broads Authority wants to inspire young people to become the naturalists of the future to continue recording and help hunt down the missing species.

Andrea said: *"The Broads having a quarter of all the rare species in the UK means that there are a lot of exciting species to look out for. These species will be put under pressure from our changing weather and it is more important than ever now to record their whereabouts."*

Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project – bringing barn owls back to Suffolk

Oka Last, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Summary: With a few records outstanding, 2011 monitoring already shows the highest number of barn owls recorded in Suffolk for generations! In 2012, our focus will be on spreading the barn owl's wings into West Suffolk.

So far monitoring results for 2011 has shown the highest barn owl occupancy of nest boxes in the Project's history. There were more boxes containing breeding barn owls, the largest average brood sizes and more barn owl chicks ringed than in any previous year. It is likely that there were more barn owls breeding in Suffolk in 2011 than at any time since the 1960s and perhaps even the 1930s. This success is undoubtedly due to conservation measures introduced at least in part by this project: feeding opportunities (Environmental Stewardship schemes) and nesting opportunities (provision of special nest boxes)

However, there are geographical variations with some parts of the county reflecting a better picture than in others. For example, Barn owls are thriving in North East Suffolk, traditionally the stronghold for Suffolk's barn owls, but in West Suffolk, they seem to be few and far between. So we must now concentrate our efforts in areas of the county that are sparsely populated by barn owls, looking at the creation of suitable grassland for short-tailed voles as well as providing more nest boxes.

The maps show the density of barn owl nest sites (Fig. 1) and barn owl presence (Fig. 2). In North East Suffolk, a high density of barn owl nest sites is reflected by the high densities of barn owl presence recorded. However the scarcity of barn owl nest sites in the west of the county is reflected by a similar scarcity of barn owls.

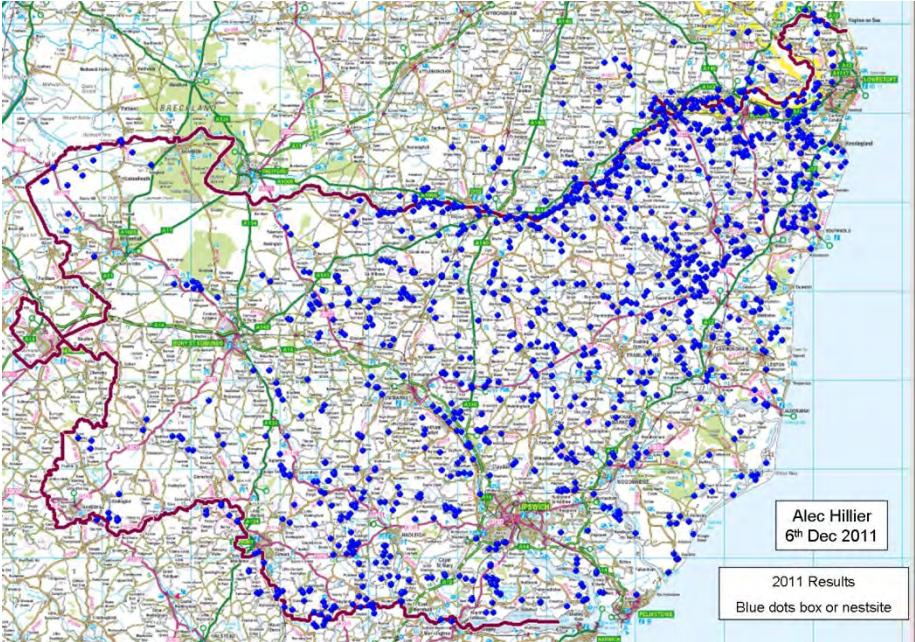


Fig 1: Barn owl nest boxes or nest sites (2011)

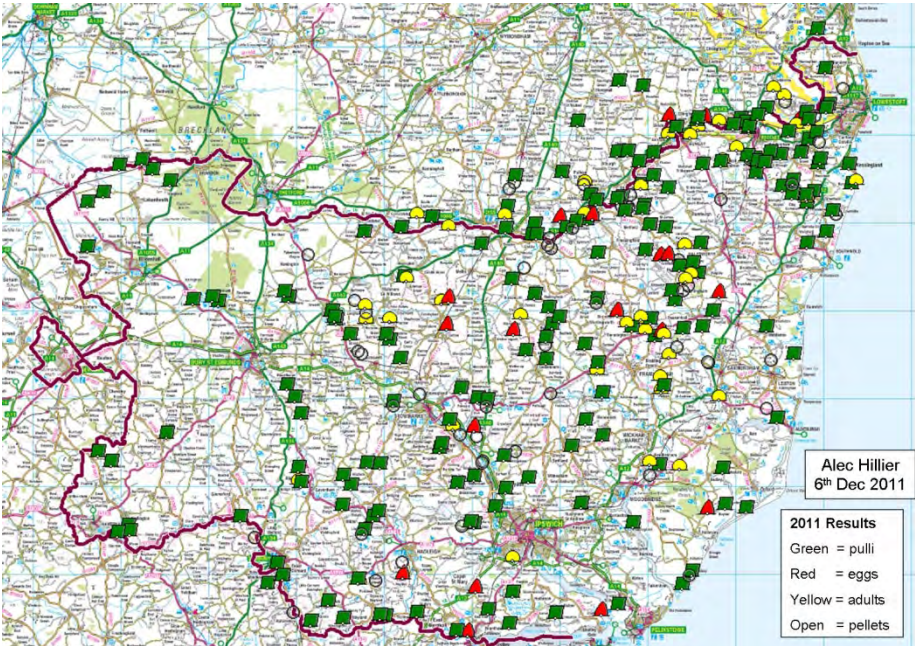


Fig 2. Barn owl presence at nest boxes or nest sites (2011)

Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project vital statistics

| Monitoring results | 2010 | 2011 so far... |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| No. barn owl nest boxes | 1205 | 1307 |
| Barn owl occupancy | 250 (boxes) | 307 (boxes) |
| Confirmed breeding barn owls | 170 (boxes) | 192 (boxes) |
| No. chicks ringed | 292 | 395 |
| Average brood size | 2.6 | 2.7 |

The Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project relies on the immense support of a large number of volunteers so a big “**Thank you**” from Suffolk Wildlife Trust for all of your hard work - Alec Hillier, (Project Recorder), Colin Carter (Project Manager), our team of Area Coordinators, our 100+ Barn Owl Monitors and 20 Barn Owl Conservation Advisers.

‘I’m a Good Dog!’ in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and beyond!

Neil Lister, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit

National research shows that between a third and a half of countryside visitors have a dog with them. The UK’s 6 million pet dogs provide many social and health benefits. However, problems are caused to sensitive wildlife by irresponsible owners and the UK’s finest landscapes, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

‘I’m a Good Dog!’ is a campaign to highlight the need for more responsible dog ownership in the nationally protected landscape of the AONB. The campaign follows local research in 2007 showing that uncontrolled dogs are a major cause of bird disturbance on the Stour and Orwell estuaries and that **some** dog owners are unaware of their responsibilities.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership want to emphasise that responsible dog walkers are very welcome to the AONB. Uncontrolled dogs can have a negative impact but, by working closely with dog owners, conservation partners, local land owners and managers, we will promote agreed solutions that are pro-responsibility, rather than anti-dog.

In November, the AONB Unit organised a training course ‘Influencing the behaviour of walkers with dogs: new approaches to better management’ at Foxburrow Farm, Suffolk



Wildlife Trust’s Education Centre. 26 land managers and conservation staff from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, RSPB, The National Trust and local authorities came along to a training day delivered by Stephen Jenkinson, specialist canine access advisor to Natural England, Forestry Commission, local authorities and others. The day aimed to help site managers, rangers and volunteers develop and deliver more effective ways

to influence the behaviour of walkers with dogs and was enthusiastically received. One participant said the training was *'brilliant, well-structured and inspirational. My head is bursting with ideas and I shall be passing on what knowledge I have gleaned across the organisation'*.

I'm a Good Dog!' is being developed and funded under the AONB BALANCE project and the training course was part funded by the AONB CONNECT Fund. Many thanks to Suffolk Wildlife Trust for the use of their Education Centre.

For further details contact: Neil Lister, BALANCE Project Manager, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit, Tel: 01394 384948, Mobile: 07920 577271, E-mail: neil.lister@suffolk.gov.uk

"The Creating the Greenest County Awards 2012 NEED YOU!"

The 5th year of the prestigious Creating the Greenest County Awards has been launched to celebrate achievements in areas such as community carbon reduction, wildlife conservation and green space development. Warmly referred to as "Suffolk's Green Oscars" they celebrate fantastic achievements across the themes of communities, business and schools.

Suffolk has some high profile innovators in the county:

- ***Jacob Bailey/White Space and Alde Garden, both holders of a Suffolk Carbon Charter, have won prestigious Business Environment and Sustainable Tourism Awards this year.***
- ***50 Suffolk companies are now part of the Anglian Green 50 businesses.***
- ***The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership has been recognised by the UK government as a Green Economy Pathfinder and the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce has a Low Carbon Development Unit.***
- ***Communities such as Green Nayland continue to innovate locally to reduce their carbon footprint and energy bills.***
- ***And the Denes High School in Lowestoft, Greenest School Award winner in 2011, continues to drive sustainability through its curriculum and wider school activity.***

The awards have captured the imagination of a wide range of sponsors including Adnams, UCS Business School, Port of Felixstowe, Thorpeness and Aldeburgh Hotels Ltd, Carillion, and support from Suffolk County Council, the Environment Agency and the East of England Cooperative Society.

So is it just an awards ceremony? No, it is a lot more than that. If you have a passion for the Suffolk environment and are taking action in some way then please submit an application to these awards, or, if you know of another individual or organisation that should apply, please inspire them to do so.

The award winners ultimately join a group of organisations and individuals recognised for their efforts to Create the Greenest County and in doing this they put Suffolk firmly on the map of "green innovation". Becoming the Greenest County is dependent upon innovation and leadership in caring for the Suffolk environment.

For more information and to apply for an award, visit www.greensuffolk.onesuffolk.net
Closing date for entries is 6 February 2012 (extended from 29 January).

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership News

❖ Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership

Proposals to establish a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Norfolk and Suffolk got off to a strong start, with the award of a £31,000 grant to the two counties from Defra/Natural England. The funding will be used to support a range of “capacity building” activities over the next four months, including:

- Dialogue with a wide range of organisations and interest groups about their expectations of a Local Nature Partnership;
- The organisation of a pilot “Business and Biodiversity Forum”, to explore the potential for conservation bodies to work more closely with local companies;
- The organisation of three stakeholder workshops, with the health sector, the marine sector and local community organisations;
- A feasibility study looking into the potential for expanding “visitor payback” schemes to benefit conservation.
- The preparation of a draft environmental vision for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Following the completion of these capacity building activities, it is envisioned that an application will be made to Defra to secure formal Local Nature Partnership status in summer 2012.

The proposed LNP will build on the strong foundations that have already been established by the Norfolk and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnerships, two effective and highly respected partnerships that have been operating at the county level for many years. The proposed LNP will look at the natural environment in its widest sense, and will seek to engage with a very diverse range of stakeholders, including:

- Health and wellbeing organisations
- Local businesses
- Tourism
- Local authorities
- Education
- Communities and the wider public
- Statutory agencies, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England
- Environmental charities, such as the Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts
- Local landowners and farmers
- Local Record Centres

Scott Perkin, Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, said: “There are powerful reasons for bringing Norfolk and Suffolk together under the umbrella of a single LNP, including the cross-county nature of many of our landscapes and ecosystems, such as the Brecks and the Broads. Additionally, the proposed LNP boundary mirrors that of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which will help us to work with local businesses.”

Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership, added: “The Norfolk and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnerships have a long tradition of working together. The proposed LNP will build upon and strengthen our existing relationship, delivering benefits for both people and wildlife in our two counties.”

❖ ***Project fund achievements***

The fund provided £1,000 for the new Native Black Poplar clone bank, contributed £500 each to the Waveney and Suffolk Green Web projects and £1,500 to the identification of carabid beetles in a Breckland study.

INFORMATION and NEWS

Funding opportunities

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 >](#)

SITA Trust

There is still money available in the East of England for the next round of Enriching Nature applications in February.

Do talk to Sita before submitting your application, they will be pleased to help you.

Deadline for applications: 27 February 2012

[Visit Sita Trust website >](#)

WREN Biodiversity Action Fund (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd) New for Suffolk***

WREN are now looking to fund large projects in Suffolk within 10 miles of ANY active landfill site. The projects should be between £75 k and £250 k.

Read about some of the projects funded to date on the [WREN website >](#)

Deadline for applications: 31 January 2012 (annual deadline)

Sustainable Development Fund 2012-13

The Dedham Vale AONB and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Sustainable Development Fund will have grants to award in 2012-13. The fund is available to community groups, schools, organisations and parishes in the AONBs, for projects that are of benefit to the environment, economy and society within our most beautiful countryside.



Projects will have to benefit the environmental, economic or social wellbeing of the AONB and be completed by 31 March 2013.

Deadline for applications: 30 March 2012

For further information about eligibility and the criteria for applications, visit:

[Dedham Vale AONB >](#)

[Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB >](#)

Or contact Cathy Smith, AONB Funding Officer on 01473 264263 or 01394 384948, email Catherine.smith@suffolk.gov.uk

Stour Valley Environment Fund – NEW!

The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Project has established the new Stour Valley Environment Fund (SVEF) to support charities and voluntary groups working to enhance the environment in the Stour Valley. The Fund will be managed by the Essex Community Foundation (Reg. Charity No. 1052061).



The new Fund is both donation seeking and grant giving, and will support voluntary and community organisations working to enhance community life and the environment in the Stour Valley area, on both the Essex and Suffolk sides of the river Stour.

Deadlines for applications: 9 January 2012 and 9 September 2012

Visit [Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project >](#)

Defra Catchment Restoration Fund

Open to charities and not-for-profit organisations. It is for:

- Restoration of more natural features in and around waters
- Reduction in the impact of man-made structures on the wildlife in waters
- Reduction of the impact of diffuse pollution from urban and rural sources

Deadline for applications: 29 February 2012

Visit [Defra Civil Society blog >](#)

Essex & Suffolk Water Branch Out Project

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

This initiative encompasses 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 include other utility companies, conservation organisations, farmers/landowners, local authorities and the general public.

Project aims must include “*linking up habitats, creating new areas for wildlife to use, or finding ways to reconnect people with the natural world around them.*”

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

Access and Amenity Fund – NEW!

Look out for information in January 2012 about a new Fund that will be available for a range of environmental access and amenity projects in Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, or to register your interest, please contact Catherine.smith@suffolk.gov.uk

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 in the British Isles and Eire, 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.

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 2012.

To find out more visit [PTES website](#)>

LOCAL NEWS

Farewell from Scott Perkin, Norfolk Biodiversity Services Co-ordinator

Scott left his post in Norfolk in December, leaving for Bangkok to work for the IUCN. The Suffolk and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnerships have worked closely on numerous projects over several years and he will be greatly missed. On leaving, Scott said: *"As I look back over my time here, I am struck by how much I have learned – about biodiversity, about partnerships and about translating national objectives and targets into local action. My perspective on biodiversity has been radically transformed; whereas I once thought of biodiversity largely in terms of national parks and great wildlife spectacles, I now view biodiversity as being of vital importance everywhere, and at all scales.*

Good luck, Scott, we'll miss you!

Norfolk Annual Biodiversity Forum – Species Re-introductions

Presentations now available to download from the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership website. Click [here](#).

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Winter newsletter published

Topics include AONB election results, the launch of the Amenity and Accessibility Fund, Suffolk Coast and Heaths Long Distance Walks Guide to be published, Estuaries update and more...

To download the newsletter, visit the [Suffolk Coast and Heaths website](#) >

Blakeney Point sees a meteoric rise in grey seals

From BBC News 16 December

The population of grey seals on the Norfolk coast has seen a "meteoric" rise, with a record number born this year. More than 750 pups have already been born at Blakeney Point this winter, compared with 25 pups born in 2001. John Sizer, National Trust property manager for the Norfolk coast, said the increase could be down to the availability of food. "It is a meteoric rise," he said.

To read the article, visit [BBC website](#) >

Ipswich: sale of ‘treasured’ nature site is revoked

EADT 23 November 2011

The decision not to put the Ipswich-based site Kiln Meadow site, back on the market – after the proposed developer pulled out of plans to purchase the site – got unanimous backing from the Borough’s executive in November. Jen Jousiffe, of the Ipswich Wildlife Group, told of her joy over the “vital decision”, which takes campaigners a step closer to ensuring the land remains suitable for wildlife.

To read more, visit [EADT >](#) or see the [BBC website >](#)

Flora of King’s Lynn published

This informative and richly illustrated guide was the culmination of 5 years effort by local botanists Robin Stevenson and Frances Schumann. The book describes the habitats of the town and includes a list of the 800 species recorded together with a mixture of facts designed to make the flora appeal to as wide a selection of people as possible. The work highlights the amount of biodiversity that can be found in an urban area such as King’s Lynn.

Available from Jarrold’s or Norfolk and Norwich Natural History Society www.nnns.org.uk, price £8.

Bug offers opportunity to tackle invasive plant

Norfolk Non-native species Initiative Winter newsletter

Norfolk has been chosen as one of the places for the controlled release of a biological control agent that will help in the battle to control Japanese knotweed. Many of you will be all too familiar with the plant, which currently costs £150 million annually to control in the UK. The tiny control bug from Japan - which feeds exclusively on Japanese knotweed and doesn't pose a threat to any similar species - is called *Aphalara itadori* - and is related to aphids. The young bugs suck the sap of the Japanese knotweed plants, hopefully weakening and stunting them, offering a sustainable, long-term control mechanism.

To subscribe to the Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative newsletter, contact Mike Sutton-Croft, Co-ordinator, Tel: 01603 228977; e-mail: michael.sutton-croft@norfolk.gov.uk

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

NATIONAL NEWS

Marine Aggregate Biodiversity Strategy

Dredging News Online reported on 31 October that the Marine Aggregates Industry has launched a biodiversity action plan. The article refers to a ‘seismic shift’ in the understanding of marine aggregate extraction and how the plan aims to ensure members of the industry work within a common framework that meets best practice requirements and dovetails into wider initiatives in the UK to support the existing Marine Protected Areas Scheme and plans for future Marine Conservation Zones which are currently in progress.

Read [Dredging News online >](#)

Biodiversity Action Reporting System update

The BARS team is on track to replace the current system with an entirely new version in March 2012. The new version introduces powerful abilities to summarise and map the distribution of actions. The focus is on specific independent actions which can be grouped under one or more pages referred to as Projects. A project page can be used to represent almost anything such as a Partnership, Grant Scheme, or Ecosystem Group. To find out more, visit the [BARS website >](#)

Butterflies: 72% of UK species in decline

From BBC News 7 December

Almost three quarters of UK butterfly species have declined in abundance over the past decade. According to a study compiled by Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), even common species have seen a fall of 24%. It found that 72% of species had declined in abundance and that the distribution of 54% had been reduced. Researchers say the loss of suitable habitats is thought to be the main reason for the declines.

To read the article, visit [BBC website >](#)

WWF 50 innovations to inspire business transformation

As part of WWF's 50th year celebrations it has recognised the importance of business for the future of the environment and biodiversity by highlighting their top 50 innovations to inspire business transformation. This comprises 50 'game-changers' – a selection of inspirational examples from around the world on how businesses and entrepreneurs are turning environmental challenges as a catalyst for innovation.

Read the digital magazine by visiting [WWF website >](#)

ARG Today Winter 2011/12 published

The winter 2011/12 newsletter of the Amphibian and Reptile Group is available to download from the [ARG website >](#) Includes articles about Chytrid, Merseyside Sand Lizards, 50 pond challenge, Million Ponds Project and scientific papers.

Forestry Commission launches GIS data download

The FC has made 62 GIS datasets available for download including national forest estate, grant schemes work areas, forest plans, felling licence applications, inventories and legal and administrative boundaries (www.forestry.gov.uk/datadownload)

Further information available from olly.stephenson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or ian.maleod@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Take part in the PTES Hedgehog 2012 Hibernation Survey

The People's Trust for Endangered Species is asking for Hedgehog Champions to help them with a hibernation emergence survey (Hedgehog Street. Please register your interest before 1st February – visit [PTES website >](#)

To find out more about hedgehogs, you can download *The State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2001* by clicking [here](#).

PTES have other news and ways to get involved with mammal surveys – visit the [PTES News webpage >](#)

Help record Chinese mitten crabs

Chinese mitten crabs are officially listed as one of the World's 100 worst invasive species. They can cause damage to fishing gear and river banks, block intake screens, modify natural habitats and compete with native species. It is this economic and ecological damage that makes this crab such an unwelcome arrival. The full extent of these exotic pests in English and Welsh waters is currently unclear and a consortium of research institutes is requesting mitten crab sightings from members of the public, anglers and waterway workers, to clarify the distribution of this species.

To find out more, visit [Mitten Crab Recording Project](#)

Online Chytrid Survey

ARG UK would like help in assessing the potential risk of Chytrid to European amphibians. The survey is organised by Race, a pan-European network of scientists. The questions relate to species/species groups, volumes, husbandry practices and bio-security, as well as personal views on handling wild amphibians. Race hopes to collect sufficient data to give a perspective on knowledge of chytrid fungus at a regional, national and international level. They hope that this will also inform EU policy, so the more reliable data the better.

For more information go to: [Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research](#)

Grazing Marsh Ditches management sheets published by Buglife

These provide information, management advice and agri-environment options for the habitat. Five different sheets are now available to download from the Buglife website:

- Sheet 1 – An important habitat for invertebrates,
- Sheet 2 - Creation and restoration for invertebrates,
- Sheet 3 - Management for invertebrates,
- Sheet 4 - Agri-environment schemes in England,
- Sheet 5 - Coastal realignment for invertebrates,

To download the sheets, visit the [Buglife website >](#)

Biodiversity News No. 55 (autumn 2011) published

Articles include: 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' published; Introducing the new newsletter on Non-Native Species, Heritage Lottery Fund announces £18.3m to protect some of the UK's best-loved views (this includes the Suffolk Heritage Coast).

To download the newsletter click [here](#)

WHAT'S ON

Herpetofauna Workers Meeting 2012

28 to 29 January, International Centre, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4JH

The programme includes *What's next for herp conservation in England?* Paul Edgar (Natural England); *The use of population genetics in UK adder conservation.* Faye Willman (Institute of Zoology); *The distribution and dispersion of herpetofauna in lowland farmland.* Rosie Salazar (WildCRU, University of Oxford); *Pool frog reintroduction update.* Dr. John Baker (Independent Consultant) and more.

Naturalist and Broadcaster Nick Baker will be the keynote speaker on 29th January.

To book visit [Amphibian and Reptile Conservation website >](#)

Non-native species Workshop – Stour Valley

23 February Nayland Village Hall

The programme has yet to be confirmed, but the event will be open to all land-owners, professionals and private individuals with an interest in, or a responsibility for, the conservation of the Stour Valley.

To book contact Neil Catchpole, Project Officer, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project (www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org) Tel:- 01473 264 263, Mob:- 07989 521 084, e-mail: neil.catchpole@suffolk.gov.uk

IEEM spring conference – Planning and Biodiversity: developing opportunities through change

21 March Birmingham

Details to follow

For more details on IEEM conferences please visit www.ieem.net/conferences.asp.

Ecosystem Services: Do we need birds?

British Ornithological Union conference 2012

3-4 April, University of Leicester

This conference will consolidate our understanding of the ecosystem services provided by birds and showcase current research into the importance of birds in ecosystem functioning. It will also explore the cultural services that birds provide and consider how Government and NGOs are engaging with this new approach in policy. Debating the philosophical and practical problems surrounding the ecosystem services approach will be a key feature of the conference, as well as finding new opportunities for bird conservation. For more information and to book visit the [BOU website >](#)

Outdoor Learning conference – *an inspirational day for primary school teachers where they can meet local outdoor learning providers.*

16 April The Riverside Centre Stratford St Andrew 9.30 a.m. – 3.45 p.m.

Cost: £25 inc. lunch

An event hosted by Natural England, the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, The Country Trust, National Trust, Suffolk Punch Trust, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, Benacre Estate and Dunwich Museum.

The programme will include indoor and outdoor workshops and displays from all the providers involved and case studies from local schools.

Book by contacting Suffolk Wildlife Trust (tel: 01473 890 089, email info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org) by Friday 24 February 2012.

IEEM summer conference – Soils and Biodiversity

13 June London

Details to follow

For more details on IEEM conferences please visit www.ieem.net/conferences.asp.

Various wildlife events (note that some organisations do not yet have their programmes arranged for 2012) - [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#), [National Trust](#), [RSPB](#), [Butterfly Conservation Suffolk Branch](#), [Suffolk Moth 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 Gen works part-time; usually Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Publication dates

The newsletter is published in March, June, September and December.

Deadline for March 2012 newsletter: Friday 30th March.

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 Naturalists' Society, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Naturalists Society, Waveney District Council.