



Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership Partners' News September 2008

Welcome to the September 2008 edition of the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership (SBP) e-newsletter!

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.

This regular newsletter aims to highlight the biodiversity work of partners and to disseminate information about grants, workshops, events and biodiversity project opportunities.

PARTNERS NEWS

More about bats at Ickworth Park, Suffolk

Stuart Warrington, Regional Nature Conservation Advisor East of England, National Trust.
Email: Stuart.warrington@nationaltrust.org.uk

Previous survey work by the Suffolk Bat Group had identified Ickworth Park as a very important site for bats within the county with eight species present. In 2007, the SITA Trust kindly funded a £15,000 project to further investigate the bats, and to try to find out if the rare Barbastelle bat (UK & Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan species) roosted at Ickworth. Bat consultant Chris Vine, who had previously confirmed the presence of a Barbastelle maternity roost at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire, was employed to carry out the radio-tracking study.



Soprano pipistrelle bat – Chris Vine

Initially, Chris focused his work around the delightful Fairy Lake in the south-east of the Park where Barbastelles had previously often been detected. However, he only caught males; one of these he radiotagged and tracked to a nearby oak tree where he noted that it roosted alone, under bark lifted by a lightning strike. Frustrated by the weather and the failure to catch females, Chris moved the mist nets to the Dairy wood, in the north-west. There he successfully caught both a male and a female Barbastelle.

The male once again went off to roost on its own in a lightening-struck oak. However, the lactating female was radio-tracked to an oak on the sheltered east side of the wood. Using a night-scope, Chris discovered that this female roosted with 11 other Barbastelles, and it stayed in the same tree for two weeks.

So Ickworth Park does have a maternity roost of Barbastelles, only the 16th to be found in Britain to date. Whilst waiting for the Barbastelles, Chris also radio-tracked a Natterer's bat, which was found to roost high up in a branch of an oak tree in the childrens' playground, along with 38 others. This group moved their roost the following night to a tree 25m away, and again the next night to another tree 50m further on in the park.

This mobility of roosting bats is important. Roosts are protected by law, whether occupied or not, thus the possibility that a tree may hold a bat roost must be considered whenever tree work is under consideration. In addition to confirming the presence of the eight species of bat we knew occurred at Ickworth, a Leisler's bat was also caught in a mist net, lifting the property total to nine.

The Deer Initiative

David Hooton, Eastern Region Deer Liaison Officer, The Deer Initiative,
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Websites: www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk, www.deercollisions.co.uk

The Deer Initiative is a broad partnership of statutory, voluntary and private interests dedicated to "ensuring the delivery of a sustainable, well-managed wild deer population in England and Wales". The partners abide by the Deer Accord and encourage others to share their commitment and priorities as an integral part of their management of deer.

The principles of the Deer Accord are:

- A sustainable and balanced wild deer population
- A humane, responsible and sensitive approach to the management of wild deer
- An experienced and knowledgeable capability in deer management
- An informed public understanding of deer management
- A partnership approach to reducing the adverse environmental and economic impact of wild deer



Roe deer and bluebells. Photo PW

in conjunction with woodland consultants we are starting to see an improvement in the condition of SSSI woodlands in the region, and we hope that by 2010 95% of

We are working throughout the region, focused on areas where deer have been highlighted as being in high numbers or where there numbers are causing unacceptable impacts to woodlands, in particular SSSI's. The Suffolk Priority Area covers those SSSI woodlands from Clare and Cavendish through to the Gipping valley. Here we are working with woodland owners and their deer managers, monitoring deer impact and activity and encouraging greater collaboration between neighbors. In

woodlands in this area will be in an improving condition. Please do contact me if you wish to discuss deer and their management.

Work in East Suffolk is increasing with the start of a Red Deer Management Group. Red deer numbers in the East of Suffolk have continued to rise over the past 30 years, and their range is not now restricted to the coastal belt but has moved inland and small populations of red deer can be found throughout the area joining the Red deer in the Brecks, as well as moving North towards the Broads.

A one-day event has been organised in conjunction with the Anglian Woodland Project at Yoxford Village Hall on 13 November 2008 (see Events). This event will look at the active management of red deer in the East of Suffolk, their benefits and challenges and to look for greater collaboration between landowners and the main organisations in the area with an interest in the future of red deer in this area. We will be visiting a local Estate during the afternoon to discuss on-site management issues. Booking is essential. Please contact David Hooton for a booking form. Entry is free and open to landowners and organisations in the region.



Red deer Starhouse 2007. Photo: David Hooton

The Suffolk Traditional Orchard Survey **Paul Read**

A review of priority terrestrial habitats in the UK by the UK Biodiversity Partnership began in May 2005, and in July 2007 the "Traditional Orchards" became a Priority Habitat. English Nature provided detailed reports which were summarized in March 2006 ([UK BAP – PDF 142 KB](#)) and Technical Information Notes have been prepared by Natural England ([Natural England website](#)).

Several Traditional Orchards surveys have been set up by county Biodiversity Partnerships, and Suffolk's own survey is about to start. Every county has its own locally traditional orchard form and Suffolk has several very different traditions; examples are the tall standard cherry trees in parkland settings in south Suffolk, ancient cobnut coppices, and numerous small farmhouse orchards, many less than half a hectare, with a rich mix of crop trees. Large commercial orchards are few, but small old orchard sites are now known to be more frequent in this county than was once thought.



Small farm orchard, Thrandeston, Suffolk. Originally one tree each of about 20 varieties of apples, pears, plums, cherries, and cobnuts.
Photo: Paul Read

Biodiverse orchards are a rich mix of ancient tree dependant species; a Sturmer apple tree may be only 60 years old yet have the rot holes, decay and habitats of a veteran, with epiphytes, saprophytes and wood borers dominating. The associated habitats such as grassland, scrub, deadwood, ponds and hedges that have been

more or less abandoned for decades, and have escaped the chemical spraying routines that made orchards virtually sterile when they were in production, make up the habitat as a whole.

Nationally and regionally many orchards have been lost, especially in the last 30 years. In Suffolk an initial survey carried out by the Suffolk Biological Records Centre using the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps have revealed 6,000 old sites across the county. From checking just a few representative parishes and scaling up, there appear to be about one sixth, or 1,000 sites still in some sort of existence, with remaining recognisable orchard trees. If we add in the more recent sites the number may be as high as 1,300 across Suffolk, as many as 10 per parish in the claylands of High Suffolk.

Many of these remaining sites will not be highly biodiverse, and it is becoming clear that quite a substantial team of volunteers will be needed for a survey on this scale. The next stage is to find and train a team. If any reader would like to take part please email Phil Watson at phil.watson@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk, or Paul Read at readhf@aol.com.

For apple identification days in Suffolk, see Events.

Research on Stag Beetles

Colin Hawes, Royal Holloway University of London.
(Lead for the stag beetle Biodiversity Action Plan in Suffolk).

One of the two main aims of the Species Action Plan (SAP) for the Stag Beetle is to **develop an effective monitoring strategy by 2010**. Research over the last eight years (2000-2008), using different monitoring techniques, suggests that annual Stag Beetle Road Casualty Belt-transect Surveys (SBRCBS) carried out by volunteers can provide a reliable, easily repeatable, year-on-year index of abundance for this insect. The data collected in the final year (2008) of the SBRCBS is in the process of being analysed, after which a report of the findings will be presented to Natural England (NE) and the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES).



Male stag beetle with transmitter attached

The second main aim of the Stag Beetle SAP is to **determine the factors that affect local population abundance** (particularly in terms of soil type, microbiology and climate change). To this end, research is being carried out on Stag Beetle behaviour in relation to dispersal (using mark-release-recapture and radiotelemetry) and environmental factors [such as soil type and temperature, air temperature and humidity, and habitat (urban and rural)]. Other research underway includes looking at the effect of temperature and food source on larval growth, and larval dependence on microbes for their main source of nitrogen.



Stag beetle lava

Research at Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) over the last eight years has revealed many aspects of Stag Beetle biology and ecology. In addition, local and national surveys have led to the production of distribution maps for the insect in Suffolk and the UK. I thank PTES, NE, RHUL, the Suffolk Naturalists' Society and the Forestry Commission for the financial support they have given to my research.

Broads Authority Lound Lakes Reserve

Holly Berwick, Lound Lakes warden
Tel: 07795 460866, holly.berwick@eswater.co.uk

The Lound Lakes are a County Wildlife Site on the northern tip of the Suffolk Sandlings, forming the eastern border between Norfolk and Suffolk. Essex & Suffolk Water own the lake system and 200 acres of surrounding land, which includes BAP habitats such as lowland hay meadows, dry acid grassland and rush pasture. The reserve is managed in partnership with the Broads Authority. These BAP habitats are in Countryside Stewardship Scheme management.

Successful management of the lowland hay meadow has been rewarded by sightings of Linnets feeding on the thistles and nesting Skylarks and Barn Owls. Barn Owls have been found in a box installed with the help of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Barn Owl Project beside a lowland hay meadow, a prime location for hunting voles. The success of this management would not be possible without the help of local community volunteers group 'Friends of Lound Lakes'.



Children hay raking during the Broad's Authority schools week

In the summer the reserve played host to the Broads Authority's schools week. Five local schools were invited to the reserve for an activity day. Surprisingly, the children's favourite activity was hay raking, which gave us a great opportunity to pass on our enthusiasm for the importance of the conservation of hay meadows. We also had a lot of fun bouncing in the piles of raked hay!

Restoration of Barnby Broad

Andrea Kelly, Head of Conservation, Broad's Authority
Tel: 01603 756015 andrea.kelly@broads-authority.gov.uk

The Broads Authority has been busy bringing life to silted-up lakes, as part of its Lake Restoration Strategy. The strategy provides an adaptive response to managing each lake in a changing climate, seeking to enhance the best and low risk sites first to ensure we get the most wildlife benefits.

The attractively illustrated document (Fig. 1) prioritises restoration work and reports the beginnings of the recovery of The Broads ecology while recognising significantly more investment is required for the water ecosystem to achieve its potential as the UK's premier series of lowland lakes.

Lake Restoration Strategy for The Broads

May 2008



Fig. 1 The Broad Authority 'Lake Restoration Strategy 2008'

Recognising for the first time the social value of the Broads eco-system, the Authority prioritises investment in the very best broads, with lower nutrient levels in the upper reaches, which can be more easily restored, as opposed to broads lower down the system which are likely to be affected by saline water.

Barnby Broad, in the Waveney valley, is one of these priority sites and as part of the Broads Authority's commitment to achieving Public Service Agreements, sediment removal was completed during 2007, taking 3 months of active mud pumping.

We've had huge support for the owners of this SSSI and have received several VIP visits including Sarah Nason, Head of Waterways & Marine (Defra), who was interested in our partnership working with our Defra-funded partners (EA, NE) on such restoration projects.

The average water depth is now around 120 cm as opposed to the previously recorded 30-40 cm. Around 10,000 cubic meters of wet mud have been pumped over 700 metres using our refitted mud pump. The broad was surveyed for water plants before and after mud pumping and we are delighted to report that already common plant species, such as hornwort, are growing across the lake.



Barnby Broad. Photo: Mike Page

We will continue to monitor the changes as part of our annual water plant survey and are expecting new species to recover as nutrient levels decrease with the removal of all that lovely mud.

If anyone wants to see the site, we do an orchid walk in June. This event will be advertised on our website in spring-time, all welcome.

INFORMATION

LBAP Conference 2008

The 2008 LBAP Conference was held in Cambridge 15-17 July. Professor Jules Pretty OBE, University of Essex, gave the keynote speech 'Nature, biodiversity and Health'. Other topics included the ecosystem approach, habitats and species action plans and business and biodiversity. To find out more, view the presentations on the LBAP website <http://www.keystone-group.co.uk/lbap>

New publication - 'Health impact assessment of greenspace: a guide'

The guide aims to provide a useful tool in assisting people to demonstrate the role of greenspace in improving mental, physical and community health. Developed by Greenspace Scotland, NHS Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Institute of Occupational Medicine. The guide can be downloaded by clicking on the link: [Health impact of greenspace: a guide](#) (1.4 MB)

Extinction of burbot *Lota lota* from the UK

A University of Southampton study aims to identify causes of extinction and the feasibility of a future reintroduction of the burbot, a freshwater fish related to the cod. If you would like to contribute information, please go to <http://www.burbot.soton.ac.uk> to fill in a questionnaire.

Regional Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2008-2015

The East of England Biodiversity Forum has been working on the Regional Delivery Plan since the 2006 Wild Ideas Conference. The plan will be launched on 16 October in Cambridge. The Delivery Plan is the culmination of nearly 2 years work and wide consultation. Hard copies of the plan will be available.

Funding for Biodiversity Projects

The SITA Trust's Enriching Nature programme is open for applications, deadline 14 October 2008. The Small Fund provides grants of up to £25,000 for projects that meet national and regional priorities for species and habitats, The Large Fund provides grants of up to £175,000 for projects that meet national priorities for species and habitats. There will be additional funding available in 2009. For further details, visit the [SITA Trust website](#)

Biodiversity in the East of England

To find out what's going on in our region, check the websites for the county Biodiversity Partnerships and the regional forum:
[Norfolk, Bedfordshire and Luton](#), [Essex](#), [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough](#)
[East of England Biodiversity Forum](#)

EVENTS

4 October Woodland Skills – Tree planting and local provenance.

10.00 am to 4 pm. Green Light Trust ("Bringing communities together through working with nature"). For further information, visit the [Green Light Trust website](#)

7 October / 30 October How to Manage Woods for Dormice

Venues: Hallsannery Field Centre, Bideford, Devon (7 Oct); Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst, Kent (30 Oct), 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. Tutor: Dr Pat Morris. Cost: £50 per person. For further details contact Susan Sarafi, People's Trust for Endangered Species (email: Susan@ptes.org, tel: 02074984533).

10 October Stalkers evening

Venue: Santon Downham Village Hall. 7.00 pm.
Paul Dolman, UEA - Landscape Scale Deer Management Research; Chris Brooks, BASC - Deer Services to Members; David Hooton, Deer Management Priorities for the Future; Jamie Cordery, New Best Practice Guidelines for the Industry. For further information tel: David Hooton (01842) 890 798, Andrew Wilson (01449) 736 748 or William Heal (01284) 728 752.

**16 October Earthwatch Lecture - Shrinking Habitats, Species Survival
(7.00 – 8.30 pm)**

Venue: Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, UK.
Dr. Dawn Scott (University of Brighton) 'South Africa's Brown Hyenas'
Dr. Rich Reading (Denver Zoological Foundation) 'Wildlife of the Mongolian Steppe'.
For further information, visit the [Earthwatch](#) website.

19 October Apple identification at Redgrave and Lopham Fen
Suffolk Wildlife Trust. 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. For further information tel: 01379 688333
or visit SWT website <http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk/events.html>

26 October Apple identification - Family day 1.00 to 4.00 pm at Foxburrow Farm,
Suffolk Wildlife Trust. For further information tel: 01394 380113 or visit SWT website
<http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk/events.html>

**28-30 October The Big Squeeze – dealing with pressure in our countryside
and green space**

Venue: Lackham Countryside Centre, Lacock, Wiltshire. CMA supports the work of
conservation, access and recreation professionals in the natural greenspace and
countryside sector throughout England and Wales. For further information, visit
[Countryside Management Association](#)

13 November 'Deer, the Alde Ore Project and You', a free one-day seminar

Sponsored by The Deer Initiative and The Anglian Woodland Project. Topics:
How we manage wild deer in conjunction with the Alde Ore Project - limiting deer
impacts to agriculture and woodlands; planning red deer management objectives in
the short and the long term. For further information contact David Hooton (email:
eastern@thedeerinitiative.co.uk, tel 01842 890 798).

18 and 19 November – Two 2-day River restoration courses.

Module 1 Understanding river restoration, Processes, ecology, planning and
assessing potential.
Venue: Silsoe Conference Centre, Silsoe, Bedfordshire. Fee £600 non-members.
For further information, email rrc@therrc.co.uk.

**1-2 April 2009 10th River Restoration Conference
'River restoration benefits: past, present and future'**

Venue: Nottingham University
Topics: Flood risk management working with natural processes, Climate change
proofing, River basin projects, Benefits and effectiveness of schemes for habitat
enhancement, Indicators for appraisal and evaluation, Urban regeneration, Planners
and urban design
First call for paper and poster abstracts. To present a paper or poster contact the
River Restoration Centre (RRC@therrc.co.uk), Deadline: **7th November 2008**.
Website <http://www.therrc.co.uk>

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

*If you would like to share information on how your organisation is benefiting biodiversity in Suffolk, please contact Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Officer.
Tel: 01473 264308, Mobile: 0789 4885337, email:gen.broad@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk*

Deadline for November newsletter: 21 November 2008.

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