

Newsletter

Spring 2018

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A mini-quiz.....

- 1) Why are hedgehogs especially good for gardens?
- 2) How far do hedgehogs travel every night looking for food and mates
a) less than 0.50 km, b) less than 1.00 km, c) between 1 to 2 km?
- 3) Do hedgehogs need access to a) 10s of gardens, b) 100s of gardens, c) 1000s of gardens?

Answers on p. 16

New member of staff

We are delighted to announce that Jane Mason joined SBIS as the new GIS Officer at the beginning of December 2017. Jane comes from a background of GIS work with Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils and is very pleased to be working within the natural history sector as she is a keen birdwatcher. To contact Jane:
Tel: 01473 433571;
email: jane.mason@suffolk.gov.uk

SBIS Database passes the 4 million mark

Thanks to the recent addition of over 550,000 Suffolk bird records from Birdtrack covering 2015 and 2016, the SBIS dataset now contains well over 4 million records. We are very grateful to Scott Mayson of BTO for extracting this data. We have also recently added over 200,000 moth records for the years 2012-2017 – thanks to County Recorder Tony Prichard for his hard work in capturing all that data. The influx of new data



SBIS team: Martin Sanford (Manager), Gen Broad (Biodiversity Officer), Jane Mason (GIS officer)

and ever-expanding database is starting to put pressure on our IT system and we are looking to move to a cloud-based 'virtual server' system which should enable us to process large amounts of data more quickly.

SBIS Publications

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

Planners' Update

Spring 2018

Welcome to the SBIS Planners' Update!

We aim to provide accessible information about biodiversity issues in relation to planning. If we can help with training events, factsheets or in any other way, please do contact us and we'll do our best to provide what you need. Previous Updates are available on the [SBIS Planners' Page](#).

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East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity Seminar 2017
24th November 2017 East Suffolk Councils' offices, Melton

Over 100 planners and ecological consultants from Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire attended this popular annual event. The day covered a wide range of issues related to planning within local government.

Mike Oxford (Association of Local Government Ecologists) gave a national update, focusing on the Raynsford Review of the planning system. There was a lively debate on the natural environment after Brexit and Natural England described their progress with the district level licencing programme for great crested newts in 150 local authority areas. Julia Baker from Balfour Beatty, a multinational construction service group, provided expert advice on Good Practice Principles for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Dusty Gedge, President of the European Federation of Green Roof Associations, talked about *Nature-based solutions - green roofs and rain gardens* with such energy and enthusiasm that everyone went away uplifted and inspired. Using examples from around the world, Dusty demonstrated what could be achieved for biodiversity on the roofs and walls of developments, relatively easily, and often for low expense.

Ipswich and Mid Suffolk and Babergh Councils and Natural England described the progress and lessons learnt whilst developing their innovative Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). The talks demonstrating practical actions at a species level were delivered with enthusiasm and authority by Sam Lee of the RSPB (farmland birds) and Simone Bullion of Suffolk Wildlife Trust (dormice).

The seminar was organised by Suffolk Planning Group, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service, Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, ALGE and Place Services, Essex County Council. Grateful thanks are due to the excellent speakers and to our hosts, East Suffolk Councils for hosting the event.

To view the presentations and the article in EADT, visit the [SBIS Planners page](#).

Clara Dawson, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils, describing the progress of RAMS

Planners' Update Spring 2018

SBIS aims to support Local Authority planners and others working within the planning system by providing relevant information about wildlife and legislation. This includes events such as the annual East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity conference and working with partners such as Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

The Planners' Update is circulated twice a year to around 400 people. The spring 2018 edition includes the East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity conference Nov 2017, Bat crime and mitigation case studies, Essex coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS), Suffolk Biodiversity Checking Service, the Wildlife Trust's vision for housing and biodiversity, and with the Protected Species focus on hedgehogs.

If you would like to sign up for the newsletter please email gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk

Crags and Clays

Caroline Markham, GeoSuffolk

Suffolk's 29 County Geodiversity Sites all have public access – one of the chief criteria, alongside their significant geology, used by GeoSuffolk for designation. However, many privately owned sites in the county also have important geology which needs to be recorded and GeoSuffolk has been catching up with a few of these this winter. Two with interesting exposures are Tarrant's pit in Ramsholt and Little Cornard Brick Pit near Sudbury.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteer team were kind enough to join with us for a work party day at Tarrant's pit. This Red Crag pit was dug out by the owner a few years ago and, in January, he allowed us access to refresh one of the faces by hand. We cleared much vegetation and dug out the face to a depth of about 5m, revealing current-bedded Red Crag, with two small vertical faults – the bedding showing mud drapes, pebbly lag deposits and shell avalanches. The pebbles included phosphate nodules ('coprolites') and specimens of *Neptunea*, *Glycymeris*, *Nucella* and *Macoma* were amongst the fossil molluscs. We also took samples for micro-fossil analysis.



Fossil molluscs and 'coprolites' found in Tarrant's Pit.

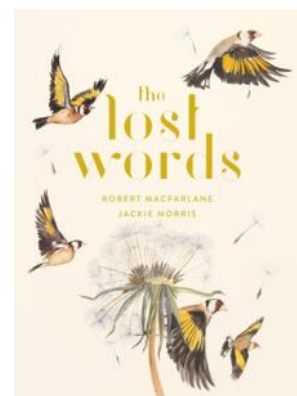
Little Cornard Brick Pit was worked for its variety of clays – Hoxnian interglacial deposits and Lowestoft Till on top of Eocene beds. The brickworks closed in 1964 and the pit was designated an SSSI (for the interglacial deposits) during the 1970s, but was denotified when it became overgrown. The owner kindly allowed GeoSuffolk members access this March to assess the remaining exposures and we were pleased to find an excellent new exposure of diamicton immediately to the west of the old workings. The main pits have been partially filled in, although the most easterly can still be seen, though very overgrown. However, there is a very good 3m exposure of finely-bedded interglacial material remaining on the south side of the old tramway. Bob Markham found the characteristic freshwater molluscs in this and we took samples for micro-fossil analysis.



The interglacial material at Little Cornard Brick Pit.

The Lost Words of Nature return to Suffolk Primary Schools Gen Broad

'*The Lost Words, A Spell Book* by nature writer Robert Macfarlane and artist Jackie Morris took the country by storm when it was published in October 2017. The book was created to celebrate and revive once common words from nature which were culled from the OJD in order to reflect "language as it is used". In the OJD, 'acorn' has been replaced by 'analogue' and 'buttercup' by 'broadband'. D was for dandelion, but now D is for 'database'. However, thanks to a new campaign by Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) all 250 primary schools in the county will have their own exclusive version of the book, funded by the public. On 26th March, the first free copy was delivered to Woodbridge Primary School by SWT. To get in touch to arrange delivery of a free book to a primary school tel 01473 890089 or email info@suffolkwildlifetrust.org [Read the Guardian's review of The Lost Words >](#)



'Magnificent Meadows' in the Stour Valley - survey help needed!

Emma Black, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project

Wildflower rich grassland is an important habitat that is disappearing fast. On the Suffolk Essex border in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley there are numerous grassland sites many of which have a local designation.

The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Project is working in partnership with Suffolk Biological Information Service (SBIS) and Essex Wildlife Trust to update the records at 30 of these grassland sites known as Suffolk County Wildlife Sites and Essex Local Wildlife Sites. Updating the existing records at these precious grassland sites is vital for their protection, as appropriate management recommendations can be given to the landowners to ensure they are managed to maximise floristic interest.

To achieve this, we would like to work with volunteers involved in local natural history /conservation groups. Volunteers will be asked to undertake surveys on at least 5 sites over the summer. To support volunteers there will be a wildflower identification training course on Saturday 5th May and help from local experts at some of the site surveys.

To celebrate the importance of wildflower rich grassland we are holding an event at Melford Green County Wildlife Site, on Saturday 7th July, which is National Meadows Day. We will be doing wildflower surveys and other activities to promote the importance of grassland as a habitat to the public.

By surveying the wildflower rich grassland, highlighting its importance and encouraging good management practices, these grassland areas will increase in biodiversity and be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

If you would like to be involved, please contact:

Emma Black, Countryside Projects Officer, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

Tel: 01394 445225/07855 756785 email: emma.black@suffolk.gov.uk

John More Local Wildlife Sites Officer, Essex Wildlife Trust

Tel: 01621 862988 / 07776 204509 email: JohnM@essexwt.org.uk

Gen Broad, Biodiversity Officer, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

Tel: 01473 264308 / 078948 85337 email: gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk



NEW Volunteering Opportunity

Magnificent Meadows Survey Volunteer

Do you want to preserve wildflower rich grassland in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley.

Are you interested in natural history, being outdoors and meeting new people ?

Then this new volunteering opportunity may be for you.

Volunteer Role: Survey volunteers will undertake wildflower surveys at Suffolk County Wildlife Sites and Essex Local Wildlife sites in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley to help update existing records.

Time Commitment: Survey volunteers will need to survey at least 5 sites.

Training & kit: Wildflower course at Abbots Hall Farm, EWT headquarters on 5th May, wildflower/grasses guides, travel expenses and expert help.

Wildflower rich grassland is an important habitat that is disappearing fast. By highlighting its importance, surveying species and encouraging good management practices these grassland areas will increase in biodiversity and be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Magnificent Meadows is a partnership project between the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and Essex Wildlife Trust.

For further information contact:
Emma Black, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley
on (01394) 445225 or emma.black@suffolk.gov.uk



Suffolk Wildlife Trust Professional Ecology Courses

Suffolk Wildlife Trust are running a series of courses for ecological consultants and other professionals. These are running from May to November in locations around Suffolk and include **Water vole ecology, surveying and mitigation, Hedgehogs & development, Introduction to NVC surveying, Hedgehog ecology & management for conservation practitioners** and **Surveying hazel dormice**. Each course costs £50, except for NVC surveying, which costs £65.

[Visit Suffolk Wildlife Trust What's On to book >](#)

Helping swifts in the Eye area

Liz Govan and Sue Hooton

A growing group of enthusiasts in the Eye area has kick-started a project to get Swift nest boxes fitted to buildings locally, building on the work of the 'Save Our Suffolk Swifts' project and others further afield. The volunteers have been working hard to get the first eight external nest boxes completed and they are now ready to be fitted on houses by early May, so that they are ready and waiting for the Swifts to return.

The Eye group is also encouraging local residents to record where Swifts are nesting – or have nested in the past - adding knowledge to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust & Suffolk Ornithologists' Group Swift Survey on the [Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service Biological Recording Online dedicated page >](#)

It is hoped that this will lead to lots of sightings of nest sites in buildings and dedicated nest boxes and, when the birds return for the summer, screaming parties too. The plan is to add more dots to the map of Eye which will help identify where nest boxes could attract Swifts to new locations and make a difference to the next generation of Swifts. One Eye resident has already got in touch to say that in addition to Swifts nesting in his roof, he put five nest boxes on his house several years ago and four of them have now been occupied – and he's taken some cracking photos too!

The Swift project in the Eye area is being supported by EGG (Eye Goes Green), Suffolk Wildlife Trust (Tracey Housley), Edward Jackson (SOS Swifts and SOG) and Peter Metcalf (Harleston's Future Swift action group).

The Eye Swift Project is keen to follow the lead of Waveney Bird Club by organising an evening Swift walk (followed by a swift pint!) around Eye in the summer and we will be looking out for Swifts screaming, maybe entering roofs and some of the newly erected nest boxes. It is hoped to grow the project next year and provide lots more nest boxes to make a difference to Suffolk's Swifts.



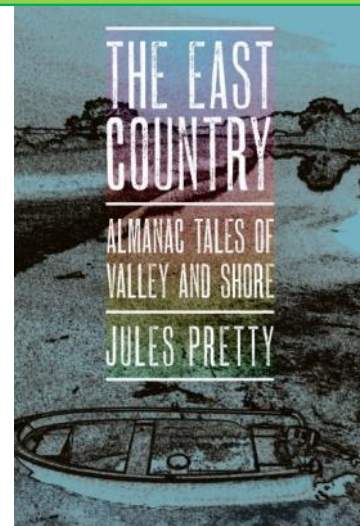
Eye Swift Project volunteers L to R - Liz Govan, Richard Jannaway, Mike Smith and Ben (hiding behind a box !)
Photo: Alistair Govan

PS If you want to know more about Swifts and their amazing lifestyle go to [Swift Conservation >](#)and for Swifts in Suffolk go to [Suffolk Wildlife Trust >](#)

The East Country: Almanac Tales of Valley and Shore

Jules Pretty

The East Country is almanac tales in wild valley and along salty shore, centred on Suffolk and Essex, and about change and attachment, rhythms within and across years; it is like no other place, yet it is every other place. Long ago, Aldo Leopold wrote that a new land ethic was needed to think of the economy as the environment. Some could live without nature; he believed most should not. *The East Country* is seventy-four almanac tales emerging from several years in valley and along salty shore, spread across twelve monthly acts. This country is a matchless mosaic, a land both farmed and wild. There are deer and bat, returned otter and rare stag beetle; rippling stands of malting barley and milling wheat; dappled orchard and survivor elm; flowered cottage garden and allotment; rare breed cattle and murmuring sheep, the air hushed with the scent of honeysuckle. Overhead plane buzzard and red kite, the jostling flocks of jackdaw and rook roaming and roosting together. The valley was menaced by dragons, short battles and long tales. There are hidden places, cool glades in woodland, riffles over weirs, silent pools with swirling midges, track of fox, and tall alder, black poplar, bat willow, old oak. There are no mountains in this east country; just sharp hill, tapestry valley, liminal marsh, coastal cliff, mud flat and shingle beach.



We should all develop long attachments to the local. Being on the land can change us. Everything we do is influencing the world; we create the world by experiencing it. Yet there is darkness too, at the edge of dreams, between shadow and hope, always a dying and a living. Out on the land of wild and garden, there does not have to be loneliness. Nothing is empty and spare: stare at the fine veins on a petal, the grain in a pebble. It should be troubling that average well-being and life satisfaction has not changed in the UK or USA since the 1950s, even though economic wealth per person has risen four fold. We have more, we spend more, we are not happier. A painful price is being paid. There are many threats. These tales describe change and attachment, rhythms within and across years. Things are far from safe, yet the land can bring a permanence and peace for all.

Twitter Campaign

Over the course of a whole year, the author of *The East Country*, Jules Pretty, is tweeting daily with comments and observations from *The East Country*, each with photograph, thus following the seasons of the year as they change. This began in September 2017, and will run through the course of 2018. This is building an installation of observations about Suffolk and Essex: its people, trees, flowers, insects and animals. It is also engaging with people local and worldwide with an interest in nature-people relations.

Published by Cornell University Press, New York (2017)

Price: £14.50

25% Discount Offer to end of June: Go to [NBN website >](#) and use code "09EAST".

You can follow the author at [@julespretty1](#) on twitter, and access the archive at [#TheEastCountry](#).

People, Ponds and Water Project Freshwater Habitats Trust

The People, Ponds and Water Project is finishing at the end of March 2018. There is a brief overview report of the achievements of the volunteers and project team available [here >](#) The Freshwaters Habitats Trust will be writing a full report explaining the findings from all the data collected throughout the last three years called **The State of Pond Nature**. Please sign up to their [Ripples newsletter >](#) to receive the latest news from Freshwater Habitats Trust and to find out when the report will be published.

The Last Straw for Plastics

Plastic. The word on everyone's lips, and it has received a great deal of bad press recently and rightly so. It is polluting the natural environment in far-reaching ways, and is entering our food chain as well. We need to take action, and we need to act quickly, and thanks to the BBC's Blue Planet 2, there is a groundswell of public support which is gathering momentum on a daily basis, and the public, businesses, manufacturers, conservation and environmental organisations are all keen to help make a change. Here at the Suffolk Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale AONB's, we are supporting various schemes to address the issue and help raise awareness of the problem. Here is just a selection of the some of the exciting things that we are involved with, taken from the Spring/Summer 2018 edition of the free bi-annual Suffolk Coast & Heaths Newspaper, which will be available from Easter 2018 from various outlets such as libraries, tourist destinations and local businesses across the area, [email us to request an annual subscription](#) for just £2 (inclusive of postage and packaging). Latest editions of the AONB Newspaper can be downloaded [here >](#)

The Value of Litter Recording

The AONB supports the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) by promoting and co-ordinating their national Beachwatch and Great British Beach Clean schemes in Suffolk, and in conjunction with East Suffolk Council, supporting teams with equipment. We encourage anyone wishing to take part in a coastal litter pick to register as a Beachwatch event. This requires the collected litter to be recorded and this data submitted to MCS. This evidence is invaluable for MCS to lobby government about pollution issues affecting the marine environment. Even if you do a #2MinuteBeachClean, it is far more beneficial if you count and weigh the items and let [MCS know the results >](#)



Greenprint Forum #PlasticAction

You will have seen the plastic litter despoiling our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. You may well have watched Blue Planet 2 or A Plastic Tide or similar programme highlighting the problems plastics cause when they escape into nature. You are probably already active in collecting litter and/or avoiding single use plastics. Well 2018 is the year for even more and very public #PlasticAction with the aim of not only clearing up what there is but stopping the plastic tide.



Plastic toys found on beach



Plastic bottles

The East Suffolk Greenprint Forum, of which Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is a member, recognises the need for us all to work together to act on:

- Production of waste: Abandoned plastic beach toys and their packaging, balloons, cigarettes, cotton buds, disposable cups, plastic bags, plastic bottles, nappies, tea bags, straws.
- Correct waste management: only items that economically and environmentally can be recycled going into the recycling bin and no plastics getting into compost.
- Stopping litter getting onto land and into water bodies and removing it if it does.

This action is essential if it we are to meet the newly launched goal for east Suffolk: that is, to have made significant progress towards a Pollution Free Environment where use of plastics is tightly controlled and everyone takes responsibility to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment by 2030.

Greenprint Forum connects and supports communities, organisational and youth champions and elected representatives to enable them to achieve our vision: drawing in funds, facilitating discussion, providing training, organising events and linking research to need.

To join the Greenprint Forum and get your own copy of our refreshed vision and goals and updates from our monthly e-zine go to www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/938PD67 or email greenissues@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Deborah Wargate, Environmental Sustainability Officer, East Suffolk Councils

Message in a Bottle

On 23 January, a group of Port of Felixstowe employees used their lunch hour to collect debris from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Trimley Marshes Nature Reserve foreshore. Amongst their finds was a 'message in a (glass) bottle', with a locket attached by a ribbon, but no indication from



where it had been sent or when! The Nature Reserve is an 84 hectare site created by the Port to compensate for the loss of habitat due to the expansion of the Trinity Terminal.

Sharing Skills to Support AONB

Having volunteered for over five years with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and for the Hollywells Park Regeneration Project, I felt I needed to consolidate my experience and fill in the gaps. So, when the opportunity to do a placement at Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB came up, I was straight on the phone! I have been working with school groups and as a scouting leader for the last few years, so it made sense to me to bring these specific skills to the table.

The Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) Beachwatch scheme was something I had always been interested in, but never scratched beyond the surface, so when Lynn Allen, AONB Countryside projects Officer responsible for coordinating Beachwatch for MCS on the Suffolk coast, needed an extra pair of hands to run a school beach clean and survey, I jumped at the chance.

It was an educational experience not just for the kids, but for me too! I truly never realised the shocking extent of marine pollution – despite everything you see in the media. Coming across discarded plastic on our Suffolk

beaches, which had washed in from the other side of the globe was horrifying. The children were dismayed by the amount of litter we collected and equally appalled at images of how it kills marine wildlife.



Alona (left) with Lucy, AONB Great British Beach Clean, Sep 2017

One local school, Kyson Primary, enlisted their 'Ecoteam' to adopt a local stretch of beach in Woodbridge at Kyson Point. As a result of their dismay at how much plastic they picked up from this tiny beach, the whole school has now embarked on a Single Use Plastics Project. Now that shows initiative!

I also put on my Scouting Leader cap to invite Cubs from the Deben District Scouts to run a Beachwatch clean and survey in Aldeburgh, on a 200m stretch of beach, twice! They amassed a shocking 1,200 items! Feeling empowered that they can make a difference, the Cubs have adopted this stretch of Aldeburgh beach for future cleans/surveys.

Tales of Trash

My name is Kate and I run Beach Bonkers, taking people beachcombing to help them find the treasures of Suffolk's seas and beaches. Everything we find tells us a story about our seas and about our impact on them.

We never complete a beachcomb without finding plastic rubbish. Food and drinks packaging, hundreds of plastic cotton bud sticks that have been flushed down the loo! Other regular finds include shotgun cartridges, cigarette butts (which are 90% plastic), pens, and cable ties. Some recent finds show just how long plastic persists in our environment.

On Bawdsey beach I found a Hovis cracker packet that had a special offer expiring in the 1980s. So, it has been in our environment for thirty-eight years! A white plastic square from Felixstowe was branded "Sealink – Marine Catering Services." Sealink ceased to exist in 1984 so this

Working on Beachwatch has been inspiring in countless ways, but not least because our children want to take this problem into their own hands and become part of the solution. I have gained invaluable experience and am so grateful to the AONB team for both guiding me and enabling me to immerse myself in projects which I felt impassioned by.

Alona Ochert, Volunteer Officer (2017)

plastic too has been in the sea for more than thirty years.

The plastic lids from Smarties tubes are also a common beachcombing find. These stopped being made in 2005 so again have been around for over a decade.

You can find out more about me, my events and workshops at www.beachbonkers.org.uk/come-to-the-beach. Beach Bonkers is supported by the Suffolk Secrets AONB fund.



Kate Osbourne
Beach Bonkers

Fantastic Fenland Bioblitz

Dave White, RSPB

Sunday 22 July 8am-8pm

Why not join us for a bio blitz to celebrate the wonderful biodiversity of RSPB Lakenheath Fen? We will be moth trapping, bug hunting, birdwatching and bat detecting at various times of the day so come and see what we find. Other species will also be covered so we won't be limited to the above activities! There may also be some surprises during the day! You can either make a long day of it or drop in for a while. Please keep an eye on the reserve blog to find out more about this event closer to the time. Adults £3, Children £1.50 (Non-members) RSPB Members free but there is a suggested donation of Adults £2.50, Children £1.25 to take part in the activities on the day.

[For further info visit RSPB Lakenheath Fen >](#)

Geology Gallery Reimagined

Caroline Markham, GeoSuffolk

March 2018 saw a major redisplay of the Geology Gallery at Ipswich Museum, using the very best of specimens from the previous display plus some top-quality additions from the store. The reinterpretation informs us on contemporary issues such as climate change, the origins of our modern flora and fauna and the foundations of our Suffolk landscape. There is much for children too. With National Curriculum Science topics to the fore, the fundamental questions – ‘What is a rock?’ and ‘What is a fossil?’ are answered and our Suffolk fossils are used to illustrate, in simple terms, aspects of evolution such as adaptation and variation.

The depth and quality of Suffolk’s abundant palaeontology is showcased here. Chillesford warrants a case to itself, it’s stratigraphy giving us a window into 3 million years of climate change from the temperate seas of the Pliocene Red Crag, through the cooling Chillesford Crag up to glacial till – illustrated with fossil molluscs such as the sub-arctic Greenland cockle *Serripes groenlandica*. From Brunton, there are mammal specimens, denizens of an interglacial period 210,000 years ago (there is still a small exposure of the gravel pit they came from hidden in the fields). The two lower jaws, one from a giant deer *Megaceros giganteus* and one from its nemesis, a large cat (lion or tiger), plus the left humerus of a bear illustrate a fauna long gone from our county – a timely reminder to look after those animals we have retained. Suffolk’s river terraces have yielded even more unusual mammal fossils from the most recent cold stage, about 40,000 years ago. There is a huge woolly rhino (*Coelodonta antiquitatis*) skull from the Waveney valley at Weybread, and a woolly mammoth tusk and, most exotic of all, a hyaena jaw from the Gipping valley at Barham. Clear evidence of the great age of our river valleys and the varying climatic conditions of their origins, these fossils are vivid reminders to value our natural landscape.

I have just ‘played on the seashore’*, illustrating seven specimens from the 350+ in the gallery. If you want a dip in the ‘ocean’, go and see for yourself.

*Isaac Newton

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Community Tree Nursery Project

Neil Lister

Overview

The Tree Nursery project involves building a community tree nursery where locally grown tree and shrub saplings can be grown on, together with locally collected tree seed. The community is advised on care of the trees and shrubs once they are grown and is tasked with finding suitable sites to plant them in the wider AONB landscape.

The benefits of the project are that it provides an investment for the future to enrich biodiversity, adds points of interest to the landscape, provides community activity and interest, healthy trees of local provenance are grown and AONB engagement with local communities and landowners.

Two tree nurseries have been built. People of all ages have been involved and some of the ‘lost heritage’ of tree growing in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths has been reclaimed and rediscovered. The connection between people and their community and their local landscape has been strengthened and celebrated.

Community involvement

The local communities involved worked closely with the AONB staff and were responsible for the success of the project. Funding was sourced for the project and so there was no cost to the communities. They were asked to make practical contributions by:

- Accepting delivery of the materials needed to build the nursery.
- Storing any necessary materials.
- Preparing the nursery site.
- Building the nursery.
- Collecting healthy local tree seeds and saplings and growing these on in the nursery.

- Providing aftercare for the nursery.
- Identifying suitable sites in the wider landscape (and obtaining permission) for planting the trees/shrubs once grown on.

Ten events have been delivered within the project and 100 people involved. Community tree nurseries have been established at Holbrook Academy and Hollesley Allotments.

The AONB team provided knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm to support the communities, giving them the confidence to approach larger landowners for sites to plant the trees.

The Project Manager said: “It is vital that we do all we can to conserve and improve our finest landscapes. The *Community Tree Nurseries* project has made an important contribution to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB landscape. Just as importantly, the project gives local people and AONB volunteers the opportunity to engage in their AONB in a very practical way.

Two community tree nurseries now exist in Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. Potentially 1000s of trees could be raised and planted on suitable sites. Community groups participating and engaged. We raised awareness of the need to purchase or grow disease free tree stock raised from local seed. Tree planting schemes that benefit the landscape and communities of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB using disease free tree stock raised from local seed are now nearer reality”.

Kerrick Newstead, Teacher at Holbrook Academy said: “All very excited here at the prospect of getting things rolling with the Tree Nursery tomorrow. The bark chippings arrived today and are squirrelled away by the garages at the back of the school. Wahoo!”



Hollesley residents and AONB volunteers pleased with the resulting Tree Nursery



Building a tree nursery at Hollesley Allotments



Website :<https://suffolkotters.wordpress.com/>

Suffolk Otter Group Workshop

A day of presentations ,discussions and site visits all about Otters in Suffolk

Saturday 7th April 2018

10.00—16.30

Hinderclay Village Hall, Suffolk

Hinderclay Village Hall is on the crossroads in the centre of Hinderclay Village (TM026769)

Refreshments will be available from 0900hrs

DRAFT PROGRAMME includes

10.00. Site reports for Little Ouse Headwaters, Minsmere, River Blyth catchment, Tom Hughes, will report on his PhD studentship on Otter DNA and Arthur Rivett will show us videos from the Waveney/ Little Ouse.

Updates on the Spraint guide. Fish surveys and Recording—also future priorities, funding, organisational matters – insurance & risk assessments

1300-14.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 Site visit to some Little Ouse “ottery” locations, or optional sessions on spraint analysis, or cameras.

16.00-16.30 Refreshments and head home

Hosted by the [The Little Ouse Headwaters Project](#)



Minsmere Family Matters

A mother and 2 cubs were first seen on the North Marsh in July which gives a possible birth date at the beginning of May last year. This still is from a video we got on 20th March so the cubs are now 11 months old. This family have not been recorded at the western end of the Reserve, either on camera or sighted on Island Mere. This suggests that at least some of our females keep to their own part of the Reserve—a pattern that Hans Kruuk describes in his Shetland study area where the range of females did overlap but they spent the majority of the time in their own core areas .



Also shown in the picture is the mouth of a short tunnel that the otters are supposed to run through, carefully placing their paws on an ink pad, so that we can capture their prints . Mark Smith has been attending post mortems at Cardiff University, initially looking at facial characteristics but he noticed that the paw prints were different on each otter. So we can recognise individuals if only we can train them to use the tunnel. No luck so far—after one month—one badger!

Redgrave and Lopham Videos.

Up to now Minsmere has had the limelight for day-light trail cam videos but recently some of Arthur's cameras at Redgrave and Lopham fen have been coming up with some remarkable sequences of fish consumption. This still from a video shows a large



rudd being consumed, starting from the head. There is also a sequence of two otters feeding on a tench of at least 4lbs (1.8kg) complete with graphic sound effects.

We will have the pleasure of seeing these at our meeting on the 7th April.

Road casualties

The Environment Agency still have a system in place for collecting dead otters so they can be delivered to Cardiff University for post mortem

If you spot a road casualty you should ring the Environment Agency help line **03708 506 506** and they will put you in touch with the relevant officer to arrange collection.

You will need to use your judgement on whether it is worth collecting for post mortem. If it has been flattened by traffic you just need to record the site and let us know via the website.

Under no circumstances should you put yourself at risk attempting to retrieve a body from a busy road.

Some results from the Cardiff post mortems can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-mortem-studies-of-otters-found-dead-in-england-and-wales-health-and-ecotoxicology>

Suffolk Tree Warden Network Relunched

Suffolk Tree Wardens have been caring for the trees of Suffolk for nearly 30 years being one of the first counties in the country to set up a network of parish Tree Wardens. The recently established *Suffolk Tree Warden Network* is now a self-managed volunteer network of parish Tree Wardens. The network still falls under the [Tree Council umbrella](#) > Suffolk County Council has pledged their support by giving the group a generous grant to set up a website and fund training events and workshops. **The first event will be a Spring Forum on Saturday 14th April** at 9.30 am to 4.30 pm at the Red Feather Club and Redlingfield Wood, Denham, near Eye. The event includes a short AGM, followed by some presentations and the opportunity to walk round Redlingfield Wood. For further information contact Frances Jannaway: email coordinator@suffolktreewardens.org.uk, tel 01379 672987 or visit the [Suffolk Tree Wardens Network website](#) >

Norfolk Biodiversity Awards - nominations open

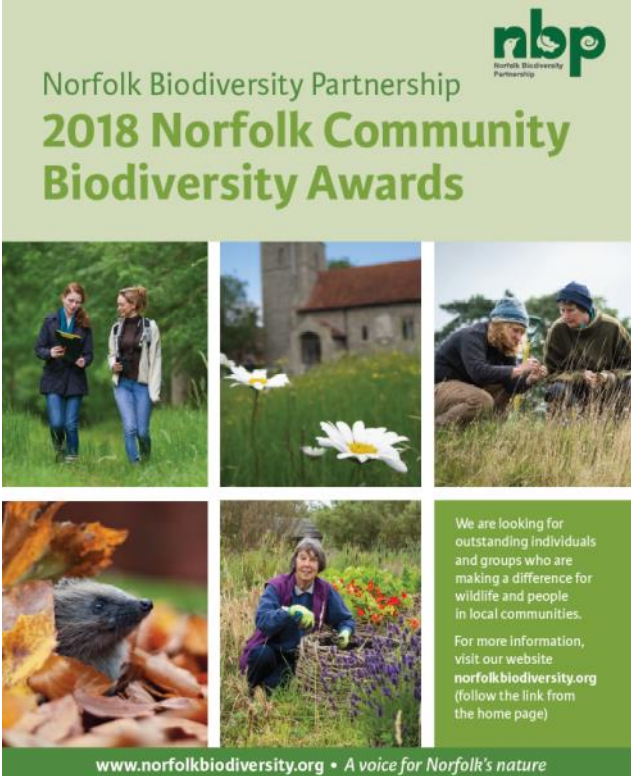
Do you know of someone (or a group, school, parish council or business) who is working to make a difference for wildlife, and inspiring others in their community to get involved? Now is your chance to nominate them for a 2018 Norfolk Community Biodiversity Award!

This annual award has 5 different categories as below:

1. Saving Species, which recognises individual or group efforts to improve the lot of wildlife species or species groups
2. Groups, which recognises the achievements of groups working on biodiversity projects in their local community;
3. Young People's Achievement, which is for individuals under 18 or those who enable young people to make a personal contribution to nature and biodiversity;
4. Nature for Health and Wellbeing, which recognises projects and activities that bring benefits for people's health and wellbeing alongside benefits for biodiversity (or knowledge of it) in the community;
5. Churchyards and Cemeteries, which recognises action to care for churchyards and cemeteries so that they provide opportunities for nature to thrive as well as being a welcoming and tranquil oasis for people.

It's easy to make a nomination – you can complete a simple [online nomination form](#) or [download an electronic pdf version](#), complete it and email back to biodiversityawards@norfolk.gov.uk **Deadline 30th April 2018**

Find out more on [Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership website](#) >



The poster features the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership logo (nbp) in the top right corner. The main text reads "Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership 2018 Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards". Below the text are six small images: two women walking in a field, a church tower, two people in a field, a hedgehog, a woman in a field, and a close-up of a flower. A text box on the right says: "We are looking for outstanding individuals and groups who are making a difference for wildlife and people in local communities. For more information, visit our website norfolkbiodiversity.org (follow the link from the home page)". At the bottom, it says "www.norfolkbiodiversity.org • A voice for Norfolk's nature".



Suffolk AONBs say Thank You to all volunteers

The AONB benefit hugely from volunteer activity across a range of areas including: Conservation, Walking route surveys, Beachwatch, Greeters, River restoration, Footpath work, as Warden and Rangers and in Work Placements. The AONB's facilitated 1,975 volunteer days in 2016/17, equivalent to 10 members of staff. Thank you to you all!

Tiger Hill LNR waxcaps - Sudbury Wildlife News

Mycologist Matthew Rooney has been recording fungi at Tiger Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR) near Assington. Matt writes: "Despite the dry weather, we've added another 79 species. Notable this year were the Piggyback Rosegill, The Deathcap, The Wrinkled Peach, The Deadly Dapperling, and a whole host of waxcaps, pinkgills and club fungi. 22 waxcap species over all our visits and 11 on one individual day".

These records make the grassland at Tiger Hill LNR internationally important for fungi based on the CHEG scale. The acronym "CHEG" stands for the main groups of relevant fungi: C - the clavarioid species; H - *Hygrocybe* species; E - *Entoloma* species; and G - the Geoglossaceae (earthtongues). The 'CHEG' fungi are indicators of ancient grassland and can be used to assess the significance of areas of this habitat, particularly where indicator plant species have been lost.

Matthew has recorded 19 species of waxcap at Tiger Hill LNR, out of the 60 species found in Europe:

Hygrocybe acuteoconica Conical Waxcap

Hygrocybe aurantiosplendens Orange Waxcap

Hygrocybe cantharellus Goblet Waxcap

Hygrocybe ceracea Butter Waxcap

Hygrocybe coccinia Scarlet Hood

Hygrocybe conica Blackening Waxcap

Hygrocybe helobia

Hygrocybe miniata Vermillion Waxcap

Hygrocybe persistens

Hygrocybe pratensis Meadow Waxcap

Hygrocybe pratensis v. pallida Pale Waxcap

Hygrocybe reidii Honey Waxcap

Hygrocybe russocoriacea Cedar Waxcap

Hygrocybe splendidissima Splendid Waxcap

Hygrocybe strangulata

Hygrocybe unguinosa

Hygrocybe virginea Snowy Waxcap

Hygrocybe vitellina

The Big Garden Birdwatch results - RSPB

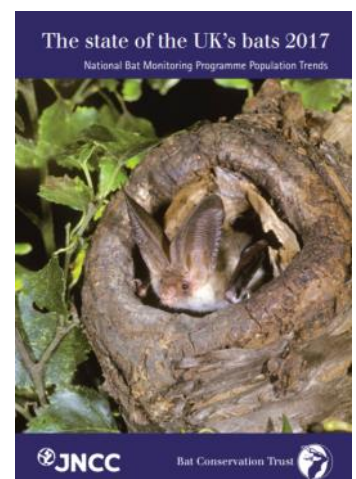
The Big Garden Birdwatch has been running since 1979, so the RSPB now has 39 years of data to look back on. This information is vital, as it is a long enough span of data to demonstrate trends and distribution rather than yearly fluctuations. In 2018, the 'Top 10' garden birds in the UK and Northern Ireland were: house sparrow (1), starling (2), blue tit (3), blackbird (4), woodpigeon (5), goldfinch (6), great tit (7), robin (8), long-tailed tit (9) and chaffinch (10). Siskins and brambling numbers are higher than in previous years and the numbers of greenfinches rose in 2017. Greenfinch numbers have decreased by 60% since the Birdwatch began in 1979.

[Find out more on the RSPB website >](#)

The State of the UK's Bats 2017

The National Bat Monitoring Programme Annual Report 'The State of the UK's Bats 2017' gives a summary of species population trends up to 2016 and highlights key findings and conservation issues. Over 1000 volunteers undertake field, hibernation, waterways and other bat surveys every year and the results are used to assess how our resident bat species are faring.

The latest trends indicate that the populations of these species are stable or recovering, which suggests that current legislation and conservation action to protect and conserve bats are having a positive impact on bat populations. However, there still many pressures on bat populations, including roost and habitat loss, the impacts of increased urbanisation, artificial lighting, and wind turbines. Bats account for almost a third of all mammal species in the UK and occupy a wide range of habitats, which means that they are important indicators of ecosystem health. [Visit Bat Conservation Trust >](#)





Sharing information about Suffolk's wildlife

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service is the One-Stop-Shop for biodiversity information in Suffolk. Operating as an independent and objective centre for biodiversity data we collate, manage and mobilise species and site information for the benefit of Suffolk's wildlife as a whole.

News [SBIS website >](#)

Events [SBIS News / Events >](#)

Funding Opportunities Check out the SBIS web page to see if any of these funds can benefit your conservation or community wildlife project. [SBIS News / Funding >](#)

Project Fund We have a small Project Fund available to individuals and communities for research, habitat enhancement or to benefit Suffolk species. Please contact Gen Broad if you're looking for small amounts of funding for your project.

We welcome species records from the public. You can make a valuable contribution to wildlife conservation - why not try out [SuffolkBro online](#)? It's easy and fun!

All records are verified via iRecord and our County Recorders and then added to our database for Suffolk (currently 4.17 million). Species records help us to understand the distribution and patterns of Suffolk's wildlife as well as informing the conservation activities of key partners and the planning process.

Follow us on Twitter [@Suffolkbis >](#)

Like us on [Facebook >](#)

Share photos on [Flickr >](#)

Newsletter Publication dates : Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.
Deadline for Winter 2017/2018 newsletter articles: **Friday 27th July 2018.**

If you'd like to share the work that you or your organisation / group is doing to protect biodiversity in Suffolk, please send your article (with photos) for inclusion in the next newsletter to Gen Broad

**Thank you to our readers for supporting this newsletter,
all feedback is welcome!**

Mini quiz answers

1. Hedgehogs eat slugs, snails and caterpillars
2. c) 1.00 - 2.00 km
3. b) 100s of gardens

Contact Us

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