

Newsletter

Summer 2019

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SBIS GIS (digital mapping) News

Ecological Networking Project

A GIS data audit is underway with a view to identifying datasets currently held which can be used for the Ecological Networking project, an exciting new venture which aims to produce a spatial database showing links between semi-natural habitats in the county. This will provide local opportunities for connecting and enhancing designated and other sites and will facilitate the movement of species through the landscape. This will be a valuable toolkit for local planners, developers, landowners and community groups i.e. for identifying mitigation sites for Biodiversity Net Gain. The initial working group includes representatives from Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. It is intended that partners will include landowners, local authorities and community groups.

GIS Data Updates

GIS data updates have been sent to Service Level Agreement partners Anglian Water and the Environment Agency, who require their data in a specific format.

County Wildlife Site Data

Work on the County Wildlife Site (CWS) data continues, and all changes resulting from a SWT Roadside Nature Reserve (RNR) survey in 2017 have now been incorporated into the RNR and CWS datasets. A proposed RNR in Brandon to protect the endangered Field (or Breckland) Wormwood *Artemisia campestris*, food plant of the Wormwood Moonshiner *Amara fusca* ground beetle, has been digitised in anticipation of designation.



Wormwood Moonshiner *Amara fusca* at Brandon Artemisia Reserve. Credit: Brian Eversham

Volunteer experience

A volunteer gaining work experience has been doing excellent work with the Suffolk County Council Ecology team in mapping and data management. At SBIS we were able to help him with GIS and he created a GIS dataset and map of RNR post locations. The volunteer then undertook website training and has created an interactive map of RNR locations on the SCC website ([view map >](#)) - points on the map are linked to the relevant fact sheet. He is gaining valuable work experience whilst greatly helping SCC.

Supporting Partners

Suffolk Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale AONBs are undertaking a Valued Landscape Assessment of the AONBs and their project areas. SBIS data, and advice on other datasets, was provided to them for this Assessment.

Orchards East work continues with the production of Parish maps for orchard surveyors and the conversion of Suffolk Traditional Orchard Group (STOG) data to Orchards East format.

GIS Users information

SBIS contributed to an SCC GIS User Meeting where data management and metadata issues were discussed and Derbyshire County Council's [on-line GIS](#) (interactive mapping system) was demonstrated. It is hoped that a similar system will be produced for Suffolk if funding is found. At SBIS we have been trialling the latest version of MapInfo Professional (v17), provided by the Council, and come across a few problems to iron out before we can replace v15.

Commercial Data Enquiries

85 commercial data enquiries were carried out in the last 2.5 months, 12 of which were free of charge in accordance with our cross-boundary agreement with neighbouring LERCs. Searches for herpetofauna, in addition to bats and Great Crested Newts, have now been automated.

SBIS Recording News



Cimbex connatus . Credit: Nick Burfield

The Great Alder Sawfly *Cimbex connatus* was once believed to be extinct in the UK, but it was re-discovered in Wiltshire in the 1990s and has since been found as far north as Yorkshire.

The species is a European hornet mimic with a body length of about 2 cm, although it has a fatter body without the narrow waist. The clubs at the tips of the antennae are a characteristic feature.

All three of the recent Suffolk records are from the west of the county: [Lackford Lakes in 2012 >](#), Haverhill (2014) and Bury St Edmunds (2014). It was previously recorded from Freston Wood in 1904.

The species is generally seen in mid to late summer. Nick Burfield found this specimen at RSPB Minsmere on 12th August 2019, a first for east Suffolk!



Cimbex connatus . Credit: Nick Burfield

SNS Conference On the Verge of Success - *What does a successful verge look like?*

Suffolk Naturalists' Society

Date: 29th February 2020, 09:30 –16:40

Venue: [Wherstead Park, Ipswich >](#)

The conference will bring together those working to enhance and protect roadside verges from a variety of organisations including County Councils, charities, businesses and Highways England.

The aim is to share best practice principles and encourage debate on how verge management can be improved nationally for the benefit of all wildlife.

We are delighted to welcome speakers from Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils, Lincolnshire and Norfolk Wildlife Trusts, Peakhill Associates, Butterfly Conservation, the People's Trust for Endangered Species, Plantlife and Buglife.

Topics: *Plantlife's road verge campaign; Hazel dormice on road verges: B-lines and road verges; Suffolk parish Roadside Nature Reserve Pilots; Road side verges in Norfolk; Defending and extending the UK's road verge network for biodiversity; the Importance of soil fertility or lack of it; From verge grass to fuel – a possibility to make conservation pay?; Enhancing biodiversity along the strategic road network in East Anglia.* There will be a Q&A session with the speaker panel at the end of day. [Tickets will be available on the SNS website >](#)



Hawstead Roadside Nature Reserve. Credit Ben Heather

Bugs & Blossoms - an Arts-Based Approach to Conservation

Melinda Appleby, Waveney & Blyth Arts



With widespread declines in native insect and wild flower species being reported, we need to try any and every approach to engaging with people to interest and enthuse them about wildlife. *Waveney & Blyth Arts* is a network of arts practitioners and arts venues who aim to promote the distinct cultural identity of this beautiful area of north Suffolk and south Norfolk.

Over the last ten years we have, through exciting arts projects and events, supported the work of local creative people and arts organisations, and helped build connections between people and places. The natural world and local landscapes are an important focus for our work.

This year, we launched *Bugs & Blossoms* – a new initiative to work across all the creative arts – to celebrate the wild flowers and insects that are part of our lives. But we go further – we want the arts to draw attention to the plight of many of these species and to encourage people to be inspired by them and to take action, however small and however local, to conserve them. Our children will not have the rich and diverse landscapes of their parents and grandparents’ generations, nor the vocabulary that goes with them unless we act now.



Felted models of Stag beetles, artwork by Kate Nockles. Credit: Melinda Appleby

The events we have put together for this year include art exhibitions, walks and talks and a poetry competition focusing on Bugs & Blossoms. The campaign launched in May with a weekend based in Palgrave and Mellis at the top end of the Waveney Valley. It was an inspiring, educational, colourful, companionable and successful start to our campaign. Our opening night on Friday 24 May revealed the work of local artists in paintings, photographs, pen and ink, sculpture, ceramics, felted wildlife and 3D work in willow and wire.

We are honoured that nature writer, Mark Cocker, agreed to be patron of Bugs & Blossoms. In launching the new campaign Mark said: “Insects of all types – bees, butterflies, beetles, moths and even flies – have supplied their pollination services to all the Earth’s trees and flowers for the last 100 million years. It’s time we awoke to their central place in our shared planet. They are truly the little things that run the world and I commend to everyone the Bugs & Blossoms programme of Waveney & Blyth Arts. I’m also looking forward to celebrating this ancient partnership myself.”

On the hottest day of the year, Mark’s Midsummer Moths event took place at Geldeston Lock. Mark had promised to set a moth-trap in his garden the previous night and bring a few specimens from the nearby Yare valley for us to look at. What he brought was the most amazing cornucopia of moth life. He revealed hundreds of the creatures, from the flamboyantly colourful pink and green Privet hawk-moth and eerily spectral Poplar hawk-moth to dozens of pretty little Rosy footman moths and their more restrained cousins, the Common footman, as well as Arches, Cinnabar and Gypsy moths.

Back in May, we had begun to stimulate interest in native insects with a screening of the film *Microcosmos*. This followed our inaugural talk from naturalist and wildlife photographer Dr Nick Upton. An hour fizzed by while Nick described his childhood passion from grasshoppers and butterflies, marine wildlife and his involvement with BBC wildlife documentaries working with Sir David Attenborough, his encounters with insects across the globe, and then focusing down on bugs and blossoms found in UK habitats and the importance of conservation. Nick left us with a note of optimism that, if enough people care and take action, we can restore nature.



© Nick Upton

Harlequin ladybird and tiny thrips on ox-eye daisy

The following day Nick led a masterclass in macro photography on the flower and insect rich Mellis Common. We are delighted that Nick made the journey up from Wiltshire to be with us and to spend time in our subtle landscapes as a break from his photography commissions working with beavers, sea horses and white storks!

For those more interested in walking and words, we offered a morning walk on Mellis Common ending at Walnut Tree Farm, the home of Roger Deakin and the setting for much of his writing. Two intrepid swimmers were encouraged, in true Deakin style, to try out the moat. Some of us were more enthralled by the dancing spectacle of female damselflies emerging from the water in all their translucent finery. The walk along Mellis Common had yielded many exciting bugs and blossoms including good populations of Small copper butterflies and a number of caterpillars and flies in need of identification. As we walked, we heard readings from Roger's books about ants, flowers, and finding Walnut Tree Farm as a ruin.

Other events throughout the summer have included a bug hunt across the border on Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Broome Common, poetry and readings at Redgrave Fen and Outney Common, Bungay, workshops with haiku poet Tim Gardener and Beth Soule's Bugs & Blossoms inspired workshop in Bungay.

This year's campaign will draw to a close in September with an art exhibition at the Ferini Art Gallery in Pakefield and finally a joint event with *Wild Anglia* – a Wild Words debate in Norwich. This evening on 26th September, will include presentations and discussion about our native insects and wildflowers, both threats and solutions, with Matt Shardlow, chief executive of Buglife, scientists from UEA and local poets and writers.

Next year we plan to continue raising the profile of Bugs & Blossoms through more themed events. If just a few more people have been inspired to look more closely at the insects and flowers that thread through their lives, we will judge that to be a success. As organiser, perhaps it is no coincidence that I have recorded many new species in my garden including Wool carder bee, Green orb weaver spider, Pellucid fly and Broad-bodied chaser.

More information from www.waveneyandblytharts.com / 26th September event: www.wildanglia.org/wild-words



© Nick Upton

False blister beetle on Germander speedwell



Trying out photographic skills in green lane at Mellis.
Credit: Melinda Appleby



Wool carder bee photographed by Melinda Appleby in her garden.



Left and above: Nick Upton's Macro Photography workshop group in action on a sunny day on Mellis Common. Credit: Nick Upton

Lots of Good Terns at RSPB Minsmere

Ian Barthorpe, RSPB Minsmere

It's been the most successful season for breeding terns at RSPB Minsmere nature reserve for more than 40 years.

The biggest news was that little terns, the UK's second rarest breeding seabird, nested for the first time since 2007. Unlike previous nesting attempts, which were along the busy shingle beach, this year they chose to nest on low islands on the reserve's famous Scrape. This is the first time that little terns have ever nested on the Scrape, with ten pairs managing to successfully fledge seven chicks. This success was helped by RSPB wardens installing several specially constructed tern shelters, giving the growing chicks protection from both predation and the elements.

Sandwich terns nested successfully for the third year running, having previously been absent since the 1970s. This year their numbers increased to 50 pairs, with 28 chicks fledging.

Common terns also reached numbers that have not been seen for many years. The 200 pairs that nested was the highest count since 1974. They successfully fledged 53 young.

This success is a great reward for the dedication of RSPB staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to provide perfect habitat for breeding gulls, terns and waders on Minsmere's Scrape.



Little terns on the Scrape amongst specially constructed tern shelters. Credit: Ian Barthorpe

Water bird survey in the Stour Estuary

AONB Partnership

This short paper (*Recognising trends in waterbird distribution over the tidal cycle on the Stour Estuary – a Pilot Study*) by J. Kay and A. Hood explores the importance and use of intertidal mudflats by Black-tailed Godwits, Redshank and Shelduck on the Estuary. [Read the paper here >](#)

Westleton's Pebbles Explained

Caroline Markham, GeoSuffolk

In July this year, GeoSuffolk dug in a geological interpretation panel at Westleton Common - a big step forward in our contribution to management of this County Geodiversity Site (CGS). Managed by Westleton Parish Council, this disused quarry is valued for its lowland heath habitat which has developed on the free-draining Norwich Crag Gravels. The panel, designed and created by GeoSuffolk, illustrates and encourages the viewer to investigate the large, rounded cobbles which exemplify this 1.5 - 2 million year old marine deposit. It tells the story of their interpretation starting with Sir Joseph Prestwich of Oxford University who named them the 'Westleton Sands and Shingle' in 1871.

Aware of the unique landscape, including nearby some of the highest sea cliffs in Suffolk, which the Norwich Crag gravels give rise to, and their long history of academic study at this site, GeoSuffolk visited and recorded it in 2009. Following a further visit with Westleton Parish Council representatives, we designated it a CGS in 2011 and our recommendations were included in the Parish Council Management Plan for the Common. Condition monitoring was carried out in January 2012 – it was GOOD, with the caveat that the vertical faces should be kept clear. With this in mind, we asked the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB for help in 2015 when some of the faces needed to be refreshed and our clearance efforts were aided by a band of their volunteers.

Throughout this time investigative research into the origins of Norwich Crag Gravels at this site and others in Suffolk has continued, with, for example, publications by James Rose, Richard Hamblin, Peter Allen and GeoSuffolk's Howard Mottram in our 10th Anniversary Volume, *A Celebration of Suffolk Geology* (Ed. Roger Dixon 2012). Present-day climate change research is throwing the spotlight onto these and other Suffolk Pleistocene and Pliocene deposits, using their fluctuating temperatures and sea levels to inform predictive climate modelling. Westleton's pebbles help inform us about the last sea which covered large parts of Suffolk.

Thank you to Suffolk Naturalists' Society which helped to fund the panel. [The panel can be viewed on the GeoSuffolk website >](#)



The interpretation panel at Westleton Common

Minsmere Fuel Station

Ian Barthorpe, RSPB Minsmere

July 2019 has proved to be one of the best months for many years for wader passage in Suffolk. Once the short Arctic breeding season is over, millions of wading birds return south for the winter, pausing at wetlands in western Europe to feed and refuel on their long journey.

This wader passage begins in late June, with the first adult spotted redshanks and ruffs arriving, and continues throughout the autumn. July is often the peak month for adults, with young birds following in August.

No fewer than 27 species of waders were recorded on the Scrape at RSPB Minsmere during July, including 300+ avocets and black-tailed godwits. There were record counts of 65 greenshanks and 33 wood sandpipers, as well as double-figure counts of ruff, spotted redshank, green and common sandpiper, dunlin and curlew sandpiper.

With so many waders on the move, it was not a surprise to find a few scarcer visitors. The highlight was a marsh sandpiper, the first to be seen at Minsmere since July 2005. Only a handful are recorded in the UK each year.



Marsh sandpiper, a rare visitor.
Credit: Ian Barthorpe

Suffolk's Roadside Nature Reserves

Holly Emmens, Suffolk County Council

The Roadside Nature Reserve (RNR) Project in Suffolk has been undergoing a bit of an overhaul over the last few months, to improve the way people can find out about our RNRs and make the website more user friendly.

The Ecology Team has been really lucky, as we have an excellent volunteer working with us, who has taken on the project with gusto and has been doing fantastic work making it all happen.

The volunteer has re-designed the RNR interactive map on our website, so that it now uses a Google maps background, and is much simpler to navigate. The RNRs are each indicated by a coloured pin, denoting their safety rating. The pins can be clicked on to show a link to the factsheet for each RNR, with more information. When the map is expanded, it takes you to Google maps and shows your location as well, making it even easier to find your nearest RNR!

The factsheets have also all been updated to reflect any changes we have made, and they all have up to date contact details. Hooray!

You can find details of the five new RNRs which were designated last year on the map, shown by the blue pins.

We think this is a huge improvement on the old map, which was not compatible with mobile devices and was rather clunky. We'd love to hear from you if you have any feedback!

[Suffolk Roadside Nature Reserves Interactive Map >](#)

Please contact Holly Emmens (SCC Ecologist) for anything related to Roadside Nature Reserves via email: holly.emmens@suffolk.gov.uk or tel: 01473 265052.



Westley RNR 105, has been extended to include this lovely section. Credit: Holly Emmens



Crested cow-wheat at Wickhambrook 206, a new site. Credit: Holly Emmens

Water Voles Galore along the Norfolk / Suffolk Border!

Ellie Beach, Little Ouse Headwaters Project

Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP) manages sites along the Little Ouse on the Norfolk/Suffolk border between Garboldisham and Redgrave and Lopham Fen. Our sites are a wonderful mosaic of habitats with their associated wildlife. One such species which seems to thrive on our sites are water voles. In the past we have carried out thorough water vole surveys along all our waterbodies looking for burrows, droppings, feeding signs and latrines, which provided us with some really useful data, but it required a lot of dedication and time from our volunteers. It had been a few years since we undertook these surveys and we wanted to find out if we still had water voles present on some of our sites, but quickly.

Seen in use on nearby Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserves, we made up some similar very simple water vole monitoring rafts - an old piece of wood, with a drilled hole; attached with a piece of wire with a loop in one end which would slide up and down a wooden stake secured on the bank edge and numbered so we knew where they all were. With a crack team of volunteers, we installed 13 rafts in a couple of hours on two sites - Scarfe Meadows near Garboldisham and Blo' Norton Lows near Redgrave and Lopham Fen (both on the Norfolk side of the river). After a week the rafts were checked - on Scarfe Meadows 4 out of 7 rafts had droppings and some feeding remains; on Blo' Norton Lows (the site that we were unsure still had water voles as a quick walk over survey never produced any signs) all 6 rafts had droppings – which is fantastic news. The rafts will continue to be monitored over the coming weeks and then could be relocated to other sites.

We are always looking for more volunteers to help out with these and other surveys and practical habitat management to help maintain the sites in the best condition. If you are interested, please contact our Conservation Manager Ellie Beach ellie.beach@lohp.org.uk or call 07919 912045 or visit our website to find out more about us www.lohp.org.uk



Volunteer installing water vole raft July 2019



Water vole raft installed



Water vole raft with dropping and feedings remains July 2019

A Trio of Rare Moths

Ian Barthorpe, RSPB Minsmere

When RSPB Minsmere's moth experts opened the moth trap on 29 July and discovered a rare Dark crimson underwing, it completed a unique set, as Minsmere became the first site in the UK to record all three British species of crimson underwing moths.

In fact, the Dark crimson underwing *Catocala sponsa*, which is a scarce migrant to the UK, was probably the first one ever recorded on any RSPB nature reserve.

Fifteen years earlier, on 14 September 2004, Minsmere hosted the first UK record of *Catocala conjuncta*, which was subsequently given the English name of Minsmere crimson underwing – the only animal named after an RSPB nature reserve.

The third species, Light crimson underwing *Catocala promissa* was caught at Minsmere on 22 July 2017. All three are scarce migrants in Suffolk.

In addition, there have also been several records of two other *Catocala* species at Minsmere, the Clifden nonpareil *Catocala fraxini* and Red underwing *Catocala nupta*.

The Dark crimson underwing is the sixth new moth for the reserve this year and brings Minsmere's moth list to an impressive 1122. A Marbled white earlier in the month was the 38th butterfly species for the reserve, and there have also been several records of rare migrant dragonflies this summer, including Vagrant emperor, Red-veined darter and Southern migrant hawk.



Dark crimson underwing at Minsmere July 2019.
Credit: Ian Barthorpe

Suffolk's sharks, sea cucumbers and sand eels protected

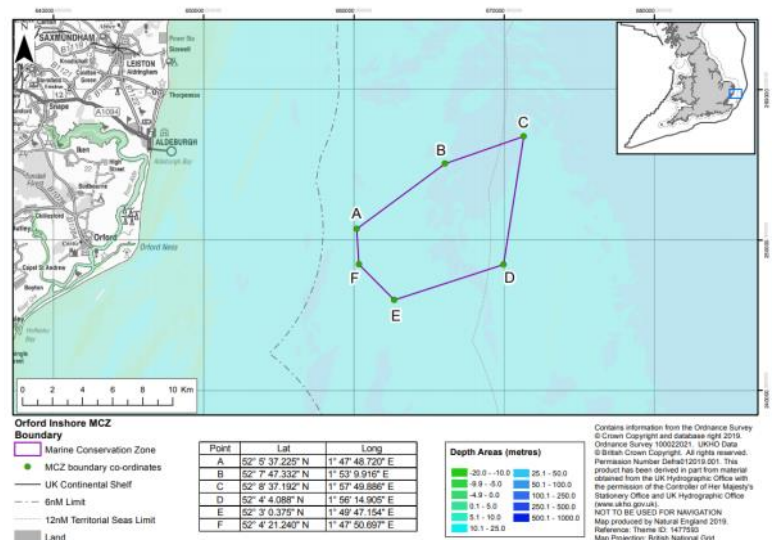
Suffolk's new marine protected zone has mixed sediments from pebbles down to finer silts and mud. These provide valuable nursery and spawning ground habitats for many fish species, including Dover sole, lemon sole and sand eels.

Orford Inshore Marine Conservation Zone, covering about 72 km², lies 14 km offshore from the Alde Ore Estuary. It was designated on 30th June, along with 40 other new sites around the country.

Several nationally important shark species have been recorded, including the Small spotted catshark (previously known as the Lesser-spotted dogfish). There are also records of burrowing anemones, sea cucumbers, sea urchins and starfish.

The area is also important for foraging seabirds and Harbour porpoise are often spotted passing through.

[Read the Orford Inshore MCZ factsheet >](#)



Location of Orford Inshore MCZ in the North Sea. [From GOV.UK Orford Inshore MCZ: 2019 Designation Map](#)

Sandy Stiltball Project - Suffolk Volunteers Needed

Neil Mahler, Suffolk Fungi Recorder

As part of Kew's 'Lost & Found Fungi Project', a complete reappraisal is being made of the Sandy Stiltball *Battarrea phalloides* fungus in Norfolk and Suffolk - it's stronghold. Tony Leech, leader of the Norfolk Fungus Study Group, has produced a recording sheet, which I intend to adopt for Suffolk to keep things simple, and volunteers are needed in Suffolk to help out with this scheme.

An ability to recognise this fungus and particularly its dry habitat is needed, but basically, if you have a known site near to where you live, then filling in the form should be simple enough. Martin Sanford (Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service) has kindly printed off 10 copies for me and



Sandy Stiltball *Battarrea phalloides*

all that is required is an 8 figure grid reference (can vary if a large population); habitat details i.e. if by main road, minor road, track or other, bank height and approximate gradient, vegetation height, nearest woody plant, other gasteromycete fungi growing nearby such as Earthstar fungi; and most importantly ... the height of the tallest intact specimen and please also take a small soil sample. Grid references can be easily found on the [Grid Reference Finder website](#) > If you cannot identify other fungi nearby, just send me a photo.

It is now known there are at least 5 different clades of *Battarrea* known throughout its international range and so far, only populations in Israel are from the same clade as those tested in the UK. But there seem to be differences between specimens found in Suffolk and Norfolk, with some being more robust than others. This suggests there could even be several clades present in East Anglia.

In July, a handful of members from the Norfolk Fungus Study Group, including myself, were trained to prepare samples for DNA sequencing. We are grateful that the John Innes Centre at the Norwich Research Park has agreed to include our samples when they send off batches of material for DNA sequencing . We hope to move on to this stage later this year, but because *B. phalloides* is fully protected by law, we first have to await permission from Natural England before we can take any part of the fungus (including the spores!).

In the meantime, the groundwork has to be done and forms need to be completed. Anybody wishing to take part can contact me by email: mycology@sns.org.uk

[The form can be downloaded from the SBIS website here](#) >

Stour Valley Education Network event

AONB Partnership

The Stour Valley Educational Network (SVEN) brings together the organisations involved in the delivery of environmental education in the Dedham Vale & Stour Valley, in both Suffolk and Essex. It is a forum for sharing ideas and best practice and to encourage wider involvement in environmental education and outdoor learning in the area.

Around 400 people attended a recent SVEN event on the banks of the river Stour. A glimpse of the event (on video) and downloadable educational factsheets can be found [here](#) >

Portal Woodlands Conservation Group

George Pennick, Nature Explorer and Young Volunteer

The PORTAL WOODLANDS CONSERVATION GROUP is dedicated to conserving the woodlands west of the Suffolk Police HQ and alongside the A1214, encouraging the local wildlife to thrive whilst preserving historical sites of interest and inspiring people to enjoy the nature surrounding them. Volunteers meet each month to work on a variety of projects and anybody is welcome to join this friendly group. You will be much appreciated! Any required training will be given on arrival and all tools and equipment are provided.

The PWCG was founded as a working group of the Martlesham Parish Council in November 1999, originally to prevent the area being developed into the Martlesham Park and Ride. Following the hard-won fight, the group worked tirelessly to clean up the woods, which had been rated as of “no wildlife value”, converting places that had only been used for fly-tipping into superb habitats for a whole variety of different flora and fauna.

Since that point, the group has grown, now incorporating around 60 volunteers, and now works to improve the woods not only for their wildlife, but also for all the many human users of the area, including dog walkers, wildlife enthusiasts and those interested in the history of the woods.

Historically, the woods are incredibly significant, hence the determination to ensure they are still around for future generations to enjoy. Aviation history has played a major role in the character of the woods. They contain not only a section of perimeter track (now part of the Sandlings Walk) that used to comprise part of the runway network of the Martlesham Heath airfield, but also sandbag ‘revetments’ that protected aircraft on the ground and an aircraft fuel store on the woodland’s eastern edge.

Going back much further in history, there are two tumuli in the woods - what appear simply as raised circular areas are in fact ancient Bronze Age burial mounds. The group is in the process of clearing vegetation in order to conserve them, with the intention of leaving grassy glades so that passers-by can appreciate them.

The project began when the group was granted permission to remove the trees that had been growing on the mounds (the whole of the woodland is under a Tree Preservation Order). By conserving the mounds, they will have the same protection as other National Monument sites, such as Stonehenge. The project is being conducted under the guidance of Historic England (previously English Heritage).

On top of projects that are intended to ensure the long-term survival of the woods, the group also works to make the woods accessible for those users of the woods that appreciate it day-to-day. For several years this has involved the annual process of putting wood chippings down on paths to ensure they are still usable after long days of rain, removing potentially dangerous trees, clearing paths and so much more.



Burial mound clearance by volunteers. Credit: S. Corley



Volunteers clearing a path. Credit: S. Corley

The group has constructed log piles for stag beetles, planted hazel trees as potential homes for dormice and created a pond for all manner of creatures, including great crested newt, damselflies, dragonflies, water beetles, the occasional grass snake, and many, many more.

The group also monitors avian populations once a year by inspecting our 35 bird boxes and uses Longworth traps to monitor the populations of mice, shrews and voles in the woods. We also carry out an annual glow worm survey with which the public is invited to help.

Often our activities involve a session at one of our Nature Watch Club or Nature Explorers meetings - groups for 5 to 11 year olds and 11 to 18 year olds respectively that aim to teach young people about the natural environment around them. The meetings provide a great opportunity

to learn something new whilst being outdoors – generally children learn about the wildlife that can be found in the woods. Once they reach the age of 11, they are encouraged to take a more active role in the conservation side of proceedings, such as learning how to care for tools, build wildlife habitats and look after trees. Over the years we have also had many young people volunteering to build up hours to work towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The wider educative function of the group has also involved hosting visits by schools and youth groups, with the pond regularly being used for pond dipping. We are very grateful to local Scouts and Guides who have been building bird boxes to replace those that have rotted or been too badly damaged (generally by woodpeckers!). The woods make an ideal setting for company team building events, and we have been pleased to host several such events for BT groups.

As we look to the future, 20th year anniversary celebrations are in the works, but with the threat of increased housing development on the woodlands' doorstep, continuous and growing manpower is needed to maintain its unique historic, wildlife, education and community value for future generations.



Group members ensuring the pond is maintained for wildlife.
Credit: S. Corley

If you are interested in joining the group, a new pair of hands is always appreciated and you would be making a real difference to the local area. Upcoming activity dates can be found at pwcg.onesuffolk.net and we can be contacted by email, pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com or phone: 01473 612632.



The woodlands in autumn. Credit S. Corley

Keeping our Watercourses Clear from Litter and Pollution in Yellow Fish Campaign

Chloe Robinson-Smith, Groundwork

Groundwork Suffolk, the community charity with a green heart, is delivering two Yellow Fish projects in Suffolk with the clear message of 'only rain down the drain!', as previously mentioned in the SBIS Newsletter Winter 2018/19 issue pp3-4.

Both projects are designed to help people reduce surface water pollution entering local rivers and to improve awareness of the negative impact it has on wildlife and habitats. It aims to encourage all members of the community to work together to make a difference.

Groundwork is providing information and practical advice on how to reduce environmental pollution to residents, businesses and schools. A number of events and activities have already taken place with more to come. Public drains are also being marked with a yellow fish symbol as a reminder that all litter or pollution entering the system can cause direct contamination of our rivers and streams.

Yellow Fish is currently being delivered in:

- [Stowmarket and Needham Market](#) – Groundwork is working with the Environment Agency to deliver the key messages to these towns which are located by the River Gipping.
- [Woodbridge, Felixstowe and Lowestoft Yellow Fish](#) – Groundwork is continuing to work with East Suffolk Council to deliver the key messages to these areas, funded by East Suffolk Partnership, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Sea Changers and Alfred Williams Charitable Trust. We are also supporting the [Refill Suffolk](#) movement under the Yellow Fish project in these towns; a campaign in which refilling your water bottle becomes a cultural norm, with refill points on every street, via cafes, retailers, hotels and businesses.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Whether you're an individual, business, school or community group there is something you can get involved with!

Groundwork has a number of FREE pocket ashtrays, stickers, River Detective handbooks and informational flyers to give out to the local community with advice on how you can make a difference to your local River. These can be found at local events which are listed on the Groundwork webpages for the two projects.



Left: Yellow Fish Pocket ashtrays Centre: Stencilling Yellow Fish symbols by drains to remind passers-by that anything entering the drain can cause direct contamination of our rivers and streams Right: Yellow Fish Stencil

Businesses can also get involved and **showcase their support** by displaying a small sticker on their shop/office window stating 'We're supporting Yellow Fish, only rain down the drain'. Informational flyers can also be provided and distributed to your network. ***Together we can make a difference!***

If you would like to get involved in the Groundwork projects please contact Chloe Robison-Smith, Community Project Officer email: yellowfish@groundwork.org.uk / tel: 01473 350370



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 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 4.27 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 Summer 2019 newsletter articles: **Friday 25th October 2019.**

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. Contact details below.

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

Contact Us

Martin Sanford (SBIS Manager) email: martin.sanford@suffolk.gov.uk, tel: 01473 433547

Gen Broad (Biodiversity Officer) email: gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk, tel: 01473 264308

Jane Mason (GIS Officer) email: jane.mason@suffolk.gov.uk, tel: 01473 433571