

Newsletter

Spring 2017

In this issue:

	Page No.
SBIS news	2
Ipswich Hedgehog Project	Ali North, Suffolk Wildlife Trust 3
A day at the Pliocene Beach	Caroline Markham 3
Nature Natterers	Suffolk Coast Greeters 4
'Getting the Green Edge'	Deborah Wargate 4
Water & So Much More at Lound	Helen Jacobs 5
Orchards East	UEA and STOG 6
Blyth Woods Community Woodland	Serena Inskip 6
Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project	Steve Piotrowski 7
GeoSuffolk's phone-friendly website	Caroline Markham 8
Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve update	Adrian Cooper 8
Bat Training Days	David Mitchell 9
Carter's Meadow Community Project	11
Importance of Suffolk AONBs	11
Projects - keeping up to date and getting involved!	11
How many of Britain's wild mammals have you seen?	People's Trust for Endangered Species 12
Spreading their Wings	Adrian Cooper 13
Manifesto for the Green Mind	Jules Pretty 13
Swifts in Woodbridge	RSPB Woodbridge Group 14
Ufford Parklands Woods	15
SWT - Get Ready for 30 days Wild!	Suffolk Wildlife Trust 15
Help to Record Suffolk's native black poplar	Sue Hooton 16
Farmers in East cultivate hopes for future of Stone-curlews	RSPB 17
Appeal for new Nature Reserve in Broads hits £400 k milestone	Suffolk Wildlife Trust 18
Biodiversity News Issue 75 published	JNCC 18
Contact and About Us	SBIS 19

Pilot Biodiversity Checking Service

Suffolk's new Biodiversity Checking Service, is an innovative service developed by Suffolk County Council in partnership with, and now piloted by, Babergh & Mid-Suffolk District Councils. The pilot is being delivered by Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS).

The aim of the checking service is to streamline the planning process for applicants with low biodiversity-impact developments by avoiding delays, providing certainty about biodiversity requirements and ensuring a lawful decision based on high quality information. This is achieved by checking that the biodiversity surveys and assessments are appropriate, and mitigation measures are deliverable, pre-submission for an application to the Local Planning Authority.

With all in place the developer is awarded with a Biodiversity Certificate which is submitted with their planning application, showing that biodiversity assessment has been completed and any appropriate mitigation measures are deliverable. The Checking Service's first certificate has gone to Taylor Wimpey East Anglia for its Chilton Leys development near Stowmarket. [See the EADT publicity >](#) For further information contact Gen Broad p. 18.

Online resources

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS) has recently put a huge amount of scanned material online (hosted on ISSUU) including all of Suffolk Natural History back to 1929 Volume 1 - [SBIS website >](#) This includes early Bird Reports and all Conference reports 1990-2016.

We have made a search tool using Google which will enable you to search for anything in the journal. SBIS have also created some 'stacks' on ISSUU so you can quickly find, for example, all the Geology papers, or all the papers on Redgrave & Lopham Fens.

These add to SBIS's growing 'Online Library' where a collection of useful Suffolk references can be found. The next phase of digitisation will cover the rest of the Bird Reports (1979-2016) as well as some important early publications like Morley's Coleoptera of Suffolk (1899), Hymenoptera of Suffolk (1899) and Hemiptera of Suffolk (1905).



Angular Crab *Goneplax rhomboids* found on the strandline at Sizewell

Crab species new to Suffolk found at Sizewell!

This Angular Crab *Goneplax rhomboids* carapace was found by naturalist Jerry Bowdrey at Sizewell beach on the strandline in February 2017.

Jerry spotted that the carapace was unfamiliar and identified the crab as the Angular Crab - a species previous only found north of Yorkshire and south of the Kent coastlines according to the NBN.

Please keep a lookout for any unfamiliar species on the beach and let us know what you find. And records of common species are welcome too - visit [Suffolk Biological Recording Online >](#)

Ipswich Hedgehog Project: Hedgehog Highway plaques, surveys and Night Safaris!

Ali North, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

As the evenings become longer and the temperature (slightly!) warmer, hedgehogs are emerging and looking to replenish their reserves ready for the mating season. With hedgehog activity increasing, so too are our Ipswich hedgehog project events, but we still need your help!

The overall aim of the project is to create a network of Hedgehog Highways across Ipswich, made up of ground level fence holes (13x13cm) and hedgehog habitat (feeding and nesting areas). If you have hedgehog access points to your garden in Ipswich, send us a photo to receive a set of free Hedgehog Highway plaques. This will help us map how connected the town is becoming, and the plaque will mark the purpose of the hole for years to come.

To help monitor hedgehogs across the town, we'd love residents to get involved. We have footprint tunnels and trail cameras that Hedgehog Champions can borrow. These will help discover what wildlife is using your garden, and will hopefully record some interesting behaviours too. Email us for equipment availability!

To show everyone how much wildlife we have in our town, we are also running a number of survey events in parks around Ipswich. Mammal Mornings will invite attendees to help us check Longworth traps (for voles, mice and shrews) and footprint tunnels (for signs of hedgehogs and other smaller mammals) and our Night Safaris will help discover the more elusive nocturnal wildlife of the town, with our night vision monocular and thermal imaging technology, bat detectors and torches.

If you'd like to receive your Hedgehog Highway plaques, become a Hedgehog Champion, borrow our equipment or just find out more, please email Ali at hedgehogs@suffolkwildlifetrust.org. For more information about our upcoming events, please head to our website: <http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/whats-on>. Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Ipswich Hedgehog Project is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and British Hedgehog Preservation Society.



Hedgehog Highway and plaque by Ipswich Hedgehog Champion Angie

A Day at the Pliocene Beach

Caroline Markham, GeoSuffolk

On February 7th Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteers helped GeoSuffolk investigate the junction between the Coralline Crag and the younger Red Crag at the Chicken Pit at Sutton Knoll. Eight willing helpers dug out a section of the Red Crag beach which sits against the Coralline Crag which forms the higher part of the Knoll. The excavation produced many blocks of highly indurated Red Crag, indicating substantial changes after deposition some 2.5 – 3 million years ago. Our Pliocene 'beachcombing' also produced a variety of fossil molluscs, including *Nucella incrassata*, *Glycimeris*, *Natica*, *Colus* and *Mytilus* – denizens of Suffolk's ancient Crag seas. It is good to have the area opened up for further study.





Some visitors like to go it alone finding nature's gems all on their own.

Others like to meet new, friendly faces, folk to reveal treasures within places.

Suffolk Coast Greeters are people like you, sharing tales and titbits old and new.

We are looking for chatty, personable people to volunteer who have a love of nature, local businesses, walking and talking. They will become part of an international network of Greeters, introducing visitors and people looking to move into the Suffolk coast to the hidden or obvious gems they have found and to give gentle tips on what visitors can do to look after them. <http://suffolkcoast.greeters.info/aboutus/greeter-of-the-month/>

The process is: a greeter signs up and has an introductory session followed by a practice greet. Their interests and the locations they can cover are captured by the Greeter coordinator. Meanwhile visitors complete an online form, saying what they are interested in and the days they would like to explore. The coordinator then gets in touch with them to find out a bit more and will see if any suitable Greeters are available. If a Greeter is available the Coordinator will put them in touch with the visitor to finalise arrangements and the Greeter will practise the route and look out for any hazards or need to change the route. A greet then takes place (basically a two hour walk and chat).

For more information or to become a Greeter visit www.suffolkcoast.greeters.info or email suffolkcoastgreeters@gmail.com

'Getting the Green Edge'

Deborah Wargate

When I go on holiday my first criteria is 'wildlife' – are there good nature walks and cycle routes nearby? Is the accommodation I will be staying in affordable and doing their bit to boost nature and reduce their environmental impact? I am not alone in that back in 2013 [a visitor survey](#) (Suffolk Coast Tourism Strategy 2013-2023) showed that peace/tranquillity (53%) and quality of the scenery/ landscapes (47%) were key draws.

To help our tourism businesses compete through doing their bit, a local resource has been created called '[Getting the Green Edge](#)'. We recognise that many are trying to help wildlife and reduce their environmental impacts while thriving as businesses and this resource provides a checklist of environmental actions, links to case studies and further support. It was created as part of the recent Coastal Communities Funded project 'Developing prospects on the Suffolk Coast: Economy, People, Environment'.

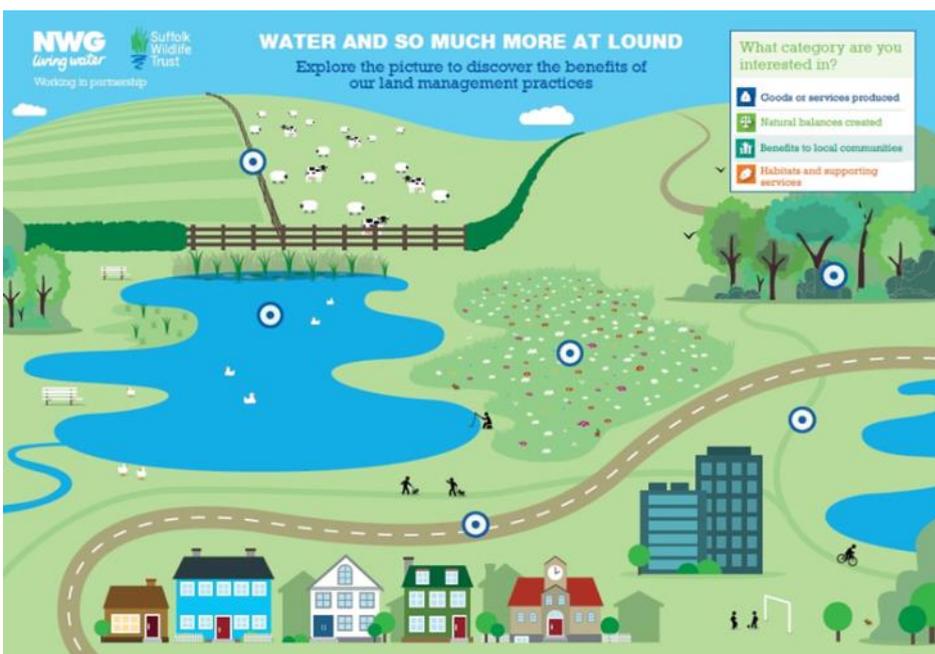


Water & So much More at Lound

Helen Jacobs, Essex & Suffolk Water

Here at Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW) we are excited to share with you a first for the water industry; an innovative and interactive communication tool called 'Water & so much more' which is based on ecosystem services. The natural environment is at the heart of ESW's business and our customers who receive our high quality drinking water all benefit from us helping to maintain the natural environment in a healthy state.

Two of our Suffolk sites, Lound Lakes and Langham have now had 'Water & so much more' maps developed for them. By exploring the interactive maps people can click through and bring up ecosystem service information for areas or habitats that interest them. Alternatively, a particular ecosystem service such as 'Natural balances created' or 'Benefits to local communities', can be selected by choosing the relevant logo and all the information relating to that ecosystem service will appear. Follow this [link >](#) and explore the interactive PDF.



Tables of key facts and figures illustrate the benefit of ESW's management practices to particular ecosystem services. For example Lound Lakes provides accessible green space to 20,645 households within 5km of the site. By working in partnership with Suffolk Wildlife Trust, over 300 school children receive environmental education at Lound Lakes each year. The water in the lakes contributes to the 7.5million litres of clean, safe drinking water produced each day at Lound Water Treatment Works, an excellent example of 'Goods & Services Produced' from a functioning ecosystem.

'Water & so much more' is extremely effective at enabling ESW to share large quantities of information on land management, a subject often overlooked and undervalued, to much larger audiences. It shows people another side to ESW that they might not have realized existed before.

We hope you enjoy exploring our 'Water & so much more' documents, we would love to hear your feedback. In the future we plan to engage with schools and all our stakeholders to spread the message of how important it is to raise awareness of ecosystem services.

GRASSLAND		
NATURAL BALANCES CREATED		
FEATURE	FUNCTION	DESCRIPTION
Erosion regulation	Healthy soil is needed for plants to grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Lound grass cutting is reduced which allows vegetation to decompose over winter and improve soil organic matter, to create healthy soils which support a diverse plant life. A good grassland cover at Lound reduces effects of soil erosion.
Pollination	Enables majority of plants including crops to reproduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diversity of habitats at Lound encourages a variety of pollinating insects to the site. Grassland habitats at Lound are being managed to protect and encourage wildflowers, which in turn attracts pollinating insects.
BENEFITS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES		
FEATURE	FUNCTION	DESCRIPTION
Aesthetic value and sense of place	Provides people with a sense of place and belonging Can give people a sense of freedom, provide tranquility in an ever increasingly hectic society, promote creativity and give inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site has a therapeutic value by providing a place of wilderness and scenic beauty. People are able to use the site to obtain a sense of being, freedom and adventure.
Accessible landscape	The enjoyment and recreational pleasure people get from being in the natural environment Improves health and wellbeing, and provides social interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grassland at Lound is covered by a network of footpaths for people to use.
HABITAT AND SUPPORTING SERVICES		
FEATURE	FUNCTION	DESCRIPTION
Habitats for species	Provides a good habitat for biodiversity including birds, mammals, invertebrates and aquatic plants A source of genetic variability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lound offers a mosaic of habitats and a safe haven for a range of wildlife with over 140 bird species recorded. Grassland associated birds, such as Yellowhammer and Skylark breed on site. Three of the five UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority grassland habitats, acid grassland, lowland hay meadows and rush pastures can be found at Lound. There is approximately 58 hectares of grassland managed for biodiversity at Lound. A large and diverse population of moths (over 250 species) have been recorded, the reptile population is of local significance and there are three species of orchid on site.

Helen Jacobs, Senior Conservation Advisor, Essex & Suffolk Water email: Helen.jacobs@nwl.co.uk

Orchards East project growing strong thanks to National Lottery players

The Landscape Group in the School of History at the University of East Anglia has been awarded £477,700 National Lottery funding for a three year project looking at the regions' orchards. The project will be known as Orchards East.

Made possible by National Lottery players, the funding has been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It rolls out, across the whole of eastern England, initiatives already developed by partner organisation, the Suffolk Traditional Orchards Group.

The English landscape has been described as the richest historical record we possess. Orchards are an integral part of this landscape, but have been relatively poorly researched. Orchards are important for landscape and biodiversity as well as being a rich resource for local communities.

Working with the East of England Apples and Orchards Project, a range of other partner organizations and hundreds of new volunteers, the project will survey and record traditional orchards across the east of England, and research the history of fruit growing in the region. The project will also involve the restoration of important old orchards, and the creation of entirely new examples.

Working across Bedfordshire, Cambridge, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, the project will recruit and train members of the community to take part in surveys. Other volunteers will receive training in traditional orchard management – helping to halt the decline of these vital skills. Head of the Landscape Group, Professor Tom Williamson says: "I am delighted that we have been awarded this National Lottery grant. Orchards are an important heritage resource, both in terms of biodiversity and as key features in our historic landscape."

For further information and to find out how to get involved, contact Paul Read: paul@home-farm.myzen.co.uk or Professor Tom Williamson: t.williamson@uea.ac.uk

Blyth Woods Community Woodland

Serena Inskip

Since 2012 Blyth Woods has been working with Wenhaston School and looking for a suitable piece of land to create a community wood. Now we have been offered Grove Piece to buy and here is our latest news.

"GROVE PIECE CELEBRATION DRAWS A CROWD" On a shivering misty morning in late December, at the end of an unforgettable year, and beyond the end of a long slippery muddy path came a bunch of enthusiastic and curious supporters. Posters promised a treasure hunt, a tree to plant, food and drink – no-one was disappointed. After being given the Licence to Occupy the Grove Piece field, this was our first experience of carrying everything to the field in barrows and bags. Gingerbread stars, Bramfield cider, hot potatoes, more mince pies and hot coffee gave us enough energy to tramp to the centre and see the first hornbeam planted, echoing the legacy of splendid coppiced specimens in Vicarage Grove. Three misty-breathed cheers then some of the brave ones continued over the sticky clay to admire the hedges, and peer down into the ponds beyond the borders. This year our new pond will be dug on the water-logged patch near the eastern boundary. By the end of this year we hope to be the proud owners of this beautiful plot. There's been brilliant fund-raising by past and present steering group members securing funds from Suffolk and Essex Water, Woodland Trust, Suffolk Secrets / AONB, Greenprint Forum, Postcode Local Trust and a County Councillor.

In mid-January, after snow in the morning, the sun came out and we walked along the windy footpaths to Grove Piece with Years 6 and 7 and family members to launch the first planting programme. Having lifted the latest batch of oak seedlings from the school tree nursery, they planted them in the sunniest patch of the plot. Wading ankle-deep in the sticky clay, they managed to ease in the roots, secure the trees with guards and stakes, then mulched them with straw and clods. It was a wonderful thing for us all to stand back and see the beginnings of new woodland. A fine way to start another extraordinary year, connecting up more and more corridors of natural diversity and laying down a legacy for years to come, while engaging an ever-broadening sweep of the community.

Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project

Steve Piotrowski



SCBOP (founded in 2005) is dedicated to the conservation of barn owls. Its success has been much acclaimed and the project was very proud to receive Suffolk County Council's Greenest County Awards on two occasions. The project's principal partners are Suffolk Ornithologists Group, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and BTO, but a number of smaller independent projects also fall under the SCBOP umbrella including those administered by Dedham AONB and Stour Valley Project, Thornham Owl Project and Suffolk Owl Sanctuary.

The project as a whole has advised on the fixing of over 1800 barn owl nest boxes throughout Suffolk, on nature reserves, farmland and on community spaces like village greens and school grounds. By providing an extended connected network of good habitat and nesting opportunities, we can give the barn owls the fighting chance they need to thrive. The project involves the whole community and the boxes are made by local organisations and monitored by an army of expert volunteers each year. This system of raising awareness, creating nesting opportunities and managing suitable nearby habitat is having a positive effect on barn owl populations across Suffolk. This is a project of which all Suffolk people can call their own and we can be truly proud of our achievements.

During the 2015/2016 winter period about 30 dilapidated boxes were replaced and a further 46 boxes were installed. However, 42 boxes had either fell down or were in such a poor state of repair that they have been removed from the monitoring list and will be replaced only if further funding is forthcoming.

The 2016 Breeding Season

Barn owls live a topsy-turvy life and populations are subject to dramatic fluctuations, which are linked to the annual abundance in the short-tailed vole population, the barn owl's favourite prey that peaks and troughs every 3-4 years.

In 2016, SCBOP volunteers monitored 83% of its 1,800 nestboxes and logged the presence of barn owl in 476 of them. This figure is a new record and way above the 375 pairs reported to be breeding in Suffolk in 1938. A total of 329 pairs then went on to lay eggs and many raised chicks during the summer and autumn of 2016. However, despite such high occupancy, productivity was relatively poor.

The breeding season was far from plain sailing as inclement weather resulted in a stuttery start. Barn owls normally lay their first egg during the second half of April, so a sudden dip in temperatures in late April/early May wasn't conducive for breeding. To make matters worse, some areas in southeast England had their wettest June on record and this unseasonably weather was unhelpful as males were unable catch enough voles to sustain their brooding females or her newly hatched brood. Barn owls have no water-proofing on their feathers so have to brazen out wet weather, which may force partners to vacate nests, causing incubation to be interrupted and eggs and recently-hatched chicks to chill and die.

However, increasing numbers of voles coupled with the unusually warm and especially dry weather conditions throughout the autumn months from August to October meant that all was not lost! Occupied barn owl nests monitored between July and October proved to be more successful with a total of 483 chicks produced from 206 boxes occupied at the chick stage in July to October 2016. Fledging success of second broods is particularly low in most years, so this figure is relatively good for late-breeding barn owls. It was also an extremely prolonged breeding season with chicks still occupying boxes at the end of October.

The Future and Fundraising

The sustainability of the project is paramount to the conservation of barn owls and SCBOP has set up a fund-raising initiative to raise money to see the project though for decades to come. Nowadays, East Anglia hosts the highest densities in Britain. A significant proportion of Suffolk's Barn Owls frequent the Waveney Valley, so it is vitally

important that these populations are maintained. Many of the special nest boxes in NE Suffolk pre-date the project, being fixed some 15-20 years ago and so some have become dilapidated and others are literally falling from the trees.

Health and Safety has always been high on the project's agenda, but partners are becoming increasingly nervous about the hazards involved with volunteers using of ladders! Two one-day Health and Safety training workshops are held annually, but to minimise ladder work, the Project now proposes to develop, trial and roll-out portable CCTV for monitoring barn owl nest boxes. This system will be used by our volunteer barn owl monitors for looking inside nest boxes without having to leave the ground. This is a ground-breaking and innovative use of technology that will see an increase in efficiency and capacity of monitoring barn owl nest boxes, as well as making the practice of monitoring much safer. We are delighted that Suffolk Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale AONB's have agreed to fund this project through their Sustainable Development Funds.

The project is grateful to all the people of Suffolk, south Norfolk, north Essex and elsewhere who put their hearts into saving the barn owl for generations to come.

To find out more about the project, visit [Suffolk Ornithologists' Group >](#)

Steve Piotrowski, Project Founder and Director, Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project – spiotrowski@btinternet.com or call on 01986 893311

GeoSuffolk's phone-friendly website

Caroline Markham, GeoSuffolk

Site information is available in the field on GeoSuffolk's new phone-friendly web site. Created with the help of our younger professional members, and online since January, this has new pages on the Pliocene Forest and Breckland, a growing archive which includes GeoSuffolk Times and GeoSuffolk Notes plus links to Suffolk geological literature and our Facebook and Twitter sites. It is designed for easy access by phone – next time you are at a geological site (e.g. in Dunwich) try it and see! www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve Update

Adrian Cooper

Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve is celebrating the beautiful biodiversity of our town through our new Buds and Blossoms film. All pictures were taken by members of our Community Nature Reserve. Local musicians added the sound track too. We hope you enjoy the film and can share it with others - [YouTube link >](#)

Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve podcasts - [click here for the story of the reserve so far >](#)

Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve's inspiring "This is a community nature reserve" - [YouTube link >](#)

Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve [Facebook page >](#)

Bat Training Days

David Mitchell

Sue Morgan is a Chartered Ecologist and Chartered Environmentalist with over 18 years commercial experience. She holds Natural England Licences for surveying several protected species, including bats. Sue runs her own ecological consultancy, Anglian Ecology, and is a full member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management. She is also a fully qualified teacher.

David Mitchell has 40 years arboricultural experience, 25 in practical woodland management and local authority development planning. He holds the Prof. Dip. Arb. (RFS) and is a retired Fellow of the Arboricultural Association. As well as managing his own 8ha woodland, David's consultancy role with Woodgate Partnership promotes ecology with tree management. He also holds a Natural England Licence for surveying bats.

Bats are the most frequent European and UK protected species that tree workers encounter, yet most (including arbs, foresters & countryside rangers) that I meet have poor understanding about how their interactions with trees can affect these fascinating creatures – for good or ill.

In my experience, most tree-workers exhibit a strongly positive desire to ensure their working practices avoid damaging or destructive impacts upon bats...but lack confidence in how to achieve this.

Statutory protection of all bat species in England is complex but complete, these being subject to the home-grown Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 deriving from the EU (both 'as amended'), which last create 'European Protected Species' (EPS) status.

Implications for tree and woodland works are considerable. Bats, their roosts (whether bats present or not) AND their associated foraging/commuting habitats (or other nearby trees!) are subject to these EPS regulations, since 'deliberate disturbance' involves a strict liability offence even where an operation is otherwise lawful. Felling, pruning, thinning and coppicing all have potential to disturb bats and, where impacts are significant and foreseeable, operators can be liable to a Level 5 prosecution.

Brexit may ultimately change the regulatory landscape but the current situation is unlikely to alter over the next two years at least. The professional ecology associations are meanwhile pressing for the current level of regulatory protection to be maintained or even enhanced for the future.

Government-backed best arboricultural practice guidance, which might otherwise provide essential defensible evidence for those at risk of legal 'unpleasantness' involving bats, is sadly lacking at present.

To minimise legal liability, all involved in tree and woodland management need to consider and record the presence of bats (and other protected species for that matter), including the risk of them being present, following 'best practice'. This requires a significant element of survey work.

Until the publication of British Standard 8596 in 2015, tree-workers relied for practical guidance on a hotchpotch of sources, including the Arboricultural Association's own admirably concise 'Bats in the context of tree work operations 2011'. This however devotes only a couple of lines to habitat management (Para 3.4). Limited guidance is also available from the Forestry Commission, otherwise there is Bat Conservation Trust – which, if any, of these derives from the state is open to question.



Bats are highly likely to be found in a tree like this

BS 8596 in its current format is only a 'Guide' that "should not be quoted as if it were a specification or a code of practice and claims of compliance cannot be made to it" (Foreword P.iii). You might understandably therefore wonder what the point of it is! My short response would be 'what else do we have?' The BS is aimed squarely at tree-workers and, crucially, addresses the needs of the 'non-specialist' (i.e. unlicensed by Natural England) in their day to day work – providing information on scoping and surveying methodology; roosts and potential roost features (PRFs...yet another three-letter acronym); commuting and foraging habitat; deciding when to back off and call in the specialists.

I suspect that, following a period of familiarisation, feedback, adjustment and bedding-in, the Guide could be promoted at some point to a full 'Recommendation', so I believe it benefits us all to understand and use the document now.

In 2013 I formed Woodgate Partnership and with friend and colleague Sue Morgan of Anglian Ecology, developed a suit of training days aimed specifically at all involved in tree management and seeking significantly more information on bats and trees.

My own North Suffolk woodland provides the venue for the field work. It includes veteran trees with confirmed bat roosts, classic coppice with standards, high forest, glades, rides and ponds...and a huge array of PRFs and commuting/foraging habitat.



A workshop trainee in action

Publication of BS8596 in 2015 allowed us to modify our course content in response to demand from tree workers wanting a full-on BS8596 bat training day, including survey methodology and use of endoscopes. Delegates are assessed throughout and a Certificate of Appropriate Training issued by the course tutors, following analysis of the assessment documentation. This covers:

- scoping and non-development secondary (non-specialist) surveying of roosts in trees and woodlands
- scoping (non-specialist) surveying of groups of trees and woodland commuting
- foraging habitat (non-development)

This wording is taken verbatim from the BS, so please don't blame us!

In 2016, Sue and I were delighted that Simon Cox from Arboricultural Association attended one of our training days and that the Association has been kind enough to offer support for our further courses – this recognition means a tremendous amount to us, justifying an idea that has morphed into a popular and (hopefully) valuable educational resource for the industry.

We have further BS8596 days planned in Suffolk for 2017. Delegates are limited to 15 per day maximum and are advised this is a full, tiring event requiring indoor and outdoor wear. Read as much around the subject as possible and stand by for a fairly frantic day with lots of info packed in. The next course is on 26th May.

We offer support with copies of presentations, further information and we return all assessment sheets. No need to worry about catering; we have developed a legendary reputation for refreshments!

Working in a commercial environment, we are keen to embed best ecological practice within the practicalities of tree and woodland work without compromising commercial viability or, for that matter, common sense! These days are about information exchange and discussion and, above all, we want them to be challenging and enjoyable; our feedback indicates we are getting this part just about right in any event.

Please contact me or Sue for further details, or visit our website www.anglianecology.co.uk.

A version of this article was originally published in the Arb Magazine, Autumn 2016

Carter's Meadow Community Project, Cotton

This amazing wild-flower meadow is on the edge of the village of Cotton. The 4-acre site was given to the village around the millennium and the community have worked on it since then, transforming it into a stunning site. They get together a working party each month to maintain pathways etc. in between large areas of wild-flowers. [Find out more >](#)



Importance of Suffolk AONBs

New research commissioned by the AONB team and undertaken by Destination Research has identified the value of the [Suffolk Coast & Heaths >](#) and [Dedham Vale >](#) AONBs to the local tourism economy.

The work demonstrated that the value of tourism is £198M p.a. on the Coast and £55M p.a. in the Vale. Furthermore, the work showed that tourism in the wider Stour Valley, outside the AONB, is worth a further £41m p.a. In addition, the tourism industry supports 5,576 jobs across the two AONBs.

When the health and well-being benefits are factored in, it demonstrates the importance of these outstanding landscapes to Suffolk's economy.

Projects - keeping up to date and getting involved!

For the Brecks HLF-funded project's **Breaking New Ground** latest update, with news of projects and forthcoming events please see [here >](#)

Follow **Suffolk's Fab 40 adventures**, a range of seasonal activities designed to help families get outdoors and active, on [Twitter >](#)

Follow **Brandon Country Park** on [Twitter >](#) to find out everything that's going on, or to get involved in volunteering.

[Wild Days Conservation Holidays](#) based at Dunwich, Orford and Walberswick are supported by [Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#). Wild Days Conservation is the only company that specialises in UK based conservation volunteering holidays. Those taking part in May will help prepare the RSPB site at Minsmere for BBC's Springwatch programme and take part in camera trapping and surveying deer.

[East Suffolk Greenprint Forum newsletters >](#)

How many of Britain's wild mammals have you seen?

People's Trust for Endangered Species



Credit: People's Trust for Endangered Species

People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) is calling for an army of volunteers to record any sightings of wild mammals they see in their gardens or local green spaces, as part of its annual *Living with Mammals* survey.

Now in its 15th year, PTES' *Living with Mammals* survey relies on members of the public volunteering their time for a few weeks between Monday 3 April and the end of June. Volunteers are required to choose a site close to their home or place of work, and to spend a short time each week looking out for wild mammals or the signs they leave behind. Volunteers can record their sightings online or via paper forms.

David Wembridge, Surveys Officer at PTES, explains: "*Living with Mammals* provides a nationwide picture of how wildlife is faring in our towns and cities. Recording wildlife and tracking how numbers are changing is key to ongoing efforts to conserve it."

Last year, grey squirrels were recorded at seven out of every ten sites (69.4%), making them the most commonly reported wild mammal in the survey. But grey squirrels are just one of the 28 wild mammal species that have been recorded during *Living with Mammals*. Over the survey's 15-year history, mammal sightings range from smaller species such as wood mice, water voles and hedgehogs, to much larger species including deer, badgers, foxes and otters.

Many of Britain's mammals, including the hedgehog – recently voted as the nation's favourite mammal in a 2016 poll – foxes, grey squirrels and bats, are typically found in household gardens, recreational areas, cemeteries and brownfield sites, but other green spaces close to buildings may also provide a home to them. However, there are some mammals that only live in certain parts of the country: red squirrels are found mostly in Scotland, on the Isle of Wight and in northern England; while hazel dormice, which are rare but occasional visitors to gardens, are mostly found in southern counties of England and in Wales.

Wembridge concludes: "The natural world is never far away from us, even in towns and cities. The presence of wild mammals is a positive sign of the health of these spaces, and while it may not be commonplace to see some of these species, we can still find a surprising number. Taking part in *Living with Mammals* is a huge help to PTES' ongoing conservation efforts."

To take part in PTES' 2017 *Living with Mammals* survey, register online at www.ptes.org/living-with-mammals/

Spreading their Wings

Adrian Cooper, Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve

Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve continues to grow and spread its wings, which is great news for local biodiversity. At the last count, 659 local people have bought and planted at least one of the wildlife-friendly plants which the community nature reserve team has been recommending. Together, those 659 people have helped to create just over 0.4 acres of new wildlife-friendly habitat in the Felixstowe area. Those numbers continue to grow every week.

Through their connections on the internet, Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve has also begun to spread its wings elsewhere. In Leicestershire, two more community nature reserves have become established, both of which have been based directly on the Felixstowe-based model. They are based in the villages of Cosby and Burbage.

In December, it was announced that schools in the Bristol area are also going to copy the model established by Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve.

Perhaps the most exciting news of all in this theme of them "spreading their wings" comes from Canada, where the internet TV station Sustainability Television has promoted the story of Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve in this feature. <https://www.sustainabilitytelevision.com/news/how-create-new-nature-reserves> This link has been tweeted and re-tweeted between Canadian conservationists almost 600 times at the time of writing.

[Felixstowe Community Nature Reserve Facebook >](#)

Manifesto for the Green Mind

Jules Pretty & colleagues, University of Essex

Jules Pretty sets out a plan to engage people with Nature and create more sustainable and enjoyable living for everyone. The first call to action is: "Every child outdoors every day".

Listen. Have you heard this tale? Progress carved a path through forest and swamp, shadows gone under centuries of light. Progress offered freedom to individuals, reason hand in hand as darkness disappeared. There were setbacks but, oh, they were only minor. In the richer countries, people produced and earned more, consumed much more. Princes and princesses gold-glittered, from the poorer countries aspirations converged.

But you know what follows. Darkness lurks in every fairy tale, a reckoning still to come. We consume more, we fill the atmosphere with carbon dioxide. We have more stuff, our lives are more convenient, yet we are not happier. We have solved many infectious diseases, yet we have stumbled into an era of savage health problems caused by our behaviours. We have built cities monumental, yet we have moved further from Nature. The way we live today is killing people in affluent countries – through cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, mental ill health, dementia and loneliness. We are living longer, but we are not sure it will be worth it.

A five-minute dose of nature brings immediate wellbeing

In this torrid tale, we have not learnt to live happier ever after.

At the University of Essex, we have worked for 15 years on how Nature produces mental and physical health benefits. We call this 'green exercise'. It works for all people, young and old, rich and poor, all cultural groups, in all green environments whether urban park or Nature reserve, whether wild or farmed, small or large. We have shown that a five-minute dose of Nature brings immediate wellbeing. All activities work too, and most people receive an additional benefit from social engagement – doing things together.

There is something very ancient going on here: we humans evolved in natural environments, learned to cooperate, shaped the land for food and resource. Now we can measure how good this Nature and social engagement is for us.

Yet still those lifestyle health problems wash ashore, costing the United Kingdom £150 billion every year for treatment. We know the primary causes, yet we seem helpless. Too many calories consumed, too little daily physical activity, irregular social and cognitive engagement. Progress returns to this tale: it is the simple fault of individuals. Their choices, your choices – you made them. You will live and die by them. And meanwhile grow unhappier.

Our manifesto for the green mind focuses on institutions, communities and individuals, and sets out ten calls to action.

Every child outdoors every day.

Every adult physically active every day.

Every adult learning a new skill or craft throughout life.

Every care home with a garden.

Every hospital redesigned on greener, pro-social principles.

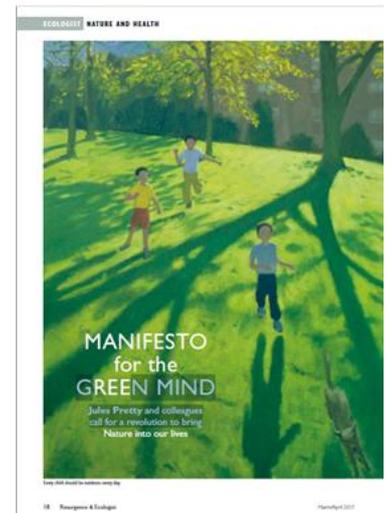
Every natural environment promoted for human use.

Every person able to access green, social and talking therapies.

Every person engaged in neighbourhood groups for social interaction.

Every kilogramme of fossil fuel left in the ground.

Every economy green and pro-social.



Call on individuals to change behaviours if you can, but it will be institutions and communities that are likely to reach the largest number of people quickly. We need emphasis on Nature, social and craft engagements in neighbourhoods, schools, care homes and health-care facilities. Environmental organisations and charities have a vital role to play: promoting healthy engagement with Nature as part of their mission. Every child should be outdoors every day; every older person in a care home should sit in a garden. Every economy should be green and pro-social.

Now is the time for a new ethic: the economy is the environment. Nature will survive us all. Meanwhile, the green mind manifesto offers routes to wellbeing and a better planet.

[Read the article on Resurgence and Ecologist website >](#)

Swifts in Woodbridge

Please contribute to RSPB Woodbridge 2017 survey

Join the RSPB Woodbridge Local Group for the third year of our campaign to Save Our Swifts. In 2017 we are looking for swift nest sites either in roofs or nest boxes. From surveys in 2015 and 2016 we have gathered information from Woodbridge and 10 of the surrounding villages and recorded 25 houses with nesting swifts totalling 55 nests.

We are sure that there are many more nest sites in roofs waiting to be recorded. We would like to hear from observers in Woodbridge and any of the nearby villages, but would particularly like more information from Woodbridge, Wickham Market, Saxmundham, Bawdsey, Bredfield, Shottisham, Orford, Hasketon, Snape, Benhall, Sternfield, Great Glemham and Waldringfield.

If you see swifts flying in at roof level between early May and early August, particularly around the eaves, this could be a nest site. You may see them flying directly into a hole or through a loose tile into the nest. If it is your house you may hear them from the upstairs rooms. Another sign of breeding swifts is 'screaming parties'. These are the groups of birds which fly around in a tight group, at or just above roof-top height.

RSPB Woodbridge Local Group would like to hear about nest sites and screaming parties. Please send your records to: woodbridge.swifts@gmail.com

For more information about swifts, swift websites, leaflets to download and their meetings, visit the [RSPB Woodbridge Group website >](#)

Ufford Parklands Woods

Ufford Parish Council purchased Parklands Woods (8.12ha) from Suffolk Coastal District Council in 2014. The woodland has historically been used by the community of Ufford predominantly for recreational purposes. It is the intention that this usage continue, along with more structured woodland management that ensures the woodland not only survives but allows an increase in biodiversity and habitat.

A group of ten volunteers formed Friends of Parklands Wood and working closely with the Green Light Trust manage the woodland in accordance with an agreed [Plan](#). Anyone can help by joining their [working parties](#).

With funds from the Greenprint Forum 20 year fund, two local District Councillors, and Ufford Parish Council the group used their Queen's Birthday Treasure Hunt as the basis of a Welcome/Information Board. This was unveiled on Saturday 19 November 2016. Their morning started with coffee, followed by a talk from the village naturalist, Kevin Rogers on the positive effects for wildlife of the work undertaken in the woods during the last year. The Interpretation Board was then unveiled and volunteers set off to plant the 430 saplings that were supplied by the Woodland Trust. The saplings were planted beside the dead hedge that their work groups had spent the previous months creating. Over the next few years the dead hedge will collapse and the new live hedge will grow to take its place.



Sat 19
November 2016
Planting
morning with
Ipswich Building
Society and
community
volunteers also
served as a
launch for the
board.

SWT - Get ready for 30 days Wild!

Sign up for this year's nature challenge as study reveals 'Random Acts of Wilderness' promote happiness and wellbeing

This June, Suffolk Wildlife Trust is urging everyone, everywhere to spend time in nature every day!

As part of The Wildlife Trust's annual [30 Days Wild challenge](#), people are being encouraged to enjoy both the nature on their doorstep, as well as the great outdoors, with inspiring 'Random Acts of Wilderness': practical, fun and quirky ideas for connecting with the wild around us.

People can spend a few minutes, or a few hours each day enjoying nature – how they do it is up to them. Perhaps spend an evening star gazing, build a bughouse, become a stream sleuth, enjoy mindfulness in a meadow, or even just sit in the garden, sipping a G&T and watching butterflies!

What's more, this daily dose of nature, even in bite-sized chunks, is good for you. The impact of taking part in 30 Days Wild has been tracked by academics at the University of Derby. Their study found that people who did something 'wild' each day for a month, felt happier, healthier and more connected to nature. From walking barefoot in the park to feeding garden birds, all sorts of activities proved positive for people – with added benefits for the natural world too.

Dr Miles Richardson, Director of Psychology, who led the study, said: "The impact of 30 Days Wild adds to the compelling argument for bringing nature into our everyday lives. Two months after taking part in 30 Days Wild, there was a 30% increase in the number of people who reported their health as excellent."

Apply for a free 30 Days Wild pack, download the phone app or look online for those inspirational Random Acts of Wilderness. 30 Days Wild packs include a packet of wildflower seeds, activity sheets, a calendar to record adventures, stickers, and a poster. Schools will get a large deck of 'Random Acts of Wilderness' cards for inspiring ideas. [Visit SWT 30 days wild website >](#)

Help to Record Suffolk's Native Black Poplar!

Sue Hooton, County Recorder

The native black poplar *Populus nigra ssp. Betulifolia* is one of the UK's rarest trees. There are thought to be less than 8,000 mature specimens in Britain, with around 430 of these in Suffolk. Thanks to the work of enthusiasts, including Peter Webb and Peter Ennis, over the past three decades, many young native black poplars have been planted out into the Suffolk countryside from cuttings.

The mature trees can grow to 30 metres and be identified by their leaning trunks, often with large bosses and arched boughs. In the past, the timber was used for carts, cruck-framed buildings and floorboards - especially around fireplaces, as it is highly fire-resistant. The native black poplar has great wildlife value - especially for insects such as the poplar hawk moth - and provides nesting sites for owls and roosts for bats.

The native black poplar is associated with wet meadows, river valleys, streams, ditches and farm ponds. For the tree to regenerate naturally, male and female trees must grow fairly close together, and fertilized seed must fall on bare mud or silt which must remain moist until autumn for the seedling to establish. This habitat has become very rare due to floodplains being drained for agriculture or development and so today the tree usually has to be regenerated from cuttings.

Distinguished Suffolk botanist and black poplar enthusiast Edgar Milne-Redhead, carried out a survey of black poplars in Britain for The Botanical Society of the British Isles from 1973-1988. He was keen to re-establish the tree across Suffolk by encouraging the planting of cuttings and so arranged to have seed collected from a female tree growing next to a male tree in Cheshire. The seedlings were donated to Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) in the 1970s for planting on their reserves and nine of these have survived and grown into mature trees.

The Suffolk register of native black poplars has been maintained for the past 25 years by ecologist Sue Hooton, who was Chair of the Suffolk Black Poplar Group c.1990 to 2012. In 2010, the focus was on testing the DNA of 'Cheshire seedling' black poplars which survived on SWT reserves. All these trees proved to be brand new clone types (5 males and 4 females), so the aim now is to conserve them and minimise the risk of losing this unique genetic material. This is being achieved by growing on cuttings from material in Suffolk clone banks and planting them out in suitable locations.

Suffolk Naturalists Society (SNS) has now recognized this work by designating Sue as the native black poplar County Recorder. She is keen to encourage enthusiasts to record mature black poplar trees and let her know if they are still alive and hopefully standing. Many trees have not been checked for over a decade and the focus now is on bringing the register up to date to avoid the sites being lost from the active SBIS dataset. To help with this work, please contact Sue at SNS email blackpoplar@sns.org.uk to find out which trees need checking and avoid wasted effort.

There is still a need to propagate material, particularly from the unique clones, so any volunteers willing to grow on cuttings into native Black Poplar saplings for planting would also be much appreciated. If you can help, please contact Sue. The more common clone types (1 female and 5 male) have been conserved in several clone banks and been widely planted out in the Suffolk countryside over the past 25 years. Sue is continuing to work with the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Countryside Project and also with St Edmundsbury Borough Council rangers at Nowton Park, to ensure these two clone banks can conserve Suffolk's valuable genetic resource for this rare tree.



Native black poplar in Dedham Vale. Photo: Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project

Farmers in the East cultivate hopes for future of stone-curlews

RSPB

Four-year collaboration between farmers, RSPB and Natural England leaves outlook improved for rare stone curlews

Nearly 300 safe nest plots are now created every year and 3,000 hectares of grassland habitat – the size of a small city – is being restored for this beguiling bird, reducing dependency on expensive, labour-intensive conservation methods

RSPB optimistic that UK stone-curlew population could be self-sustaining within five years – but support from land managers and government schemes still crucial to enable farmers to continue to create safe nesting habitat.

Farmers in the Brecks and Suffolk Coast, together with the RSPB and Natural England, have helped secure the long-term recovery of a rare bird. Along with their counterparts in Wessex, East Anglian farmers have played a key part in a four-year EU LIFE+ project that has seen an increase in safe nesting habitat for stone-curlews away from crops, giving conservationists hope that their UK population will become sustainable within the next five years.

Once widespread across farmland and heathland, stone-curlew numbers crashed by 85% between the 1930s and 1980s due to habitat loss and changes in farming methods, and without intervention to help them the stone-curlew population was expected to continue declining.

Today, most of the breeding population is concentrated to small areas in the Brecks and around Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, with a small but growing number of birds also breeding on the Suffolk Coast close to RSPB Minsmere nature reserve.

Stone-curlews are masters of camouflage, making their nests on the ground in areas of low vegetation to enable them to see predators, but where they nest on farmland this puts them at risk from farm machinery – leading to dramatic declines in these birds in the second half of the 20th century. They also need quiet open spaces, away from developments. As such, site protection will remain important in the future.

For more than 30 years, RSPB volunteers, with the help of farmers and landowners, have worked tirelessly to find and mark nests, sometimes even lifting up individual chicks during farming operations and returning them afterwards. This work had been funded by Action for Birds in England, administered by Natural England, until 2009 when the stone-curlew population exceeded 350 pairs. However a more lasting solution was needed to replace this expensive and labour-intensive approach.

To secure the future of these iconic birds, the RSPB and Natural England have been working with landowners and farmers to create more habitat suitable for nesting stone-curlews. The £1.3 million 'Securing the stone-curlew' project, funded by EU LIFE, began in 2012 with the aim of increasing the proportion of stone-curlews nesting on safe ground to over 75% of the population, and establishing a self-sustaining population which is less dependent on labour intensive nest protection – crucial for their long-term survival.

To do this, farmers have been creating 'fallow plots' on or near their fields which will lay undisturbed by machinery, allowing stone-curlews to nest in peace. This also benefits rare plants, insects and other birds such as the threatened turtle dove which feed on the seeds from these plants.

Nearly 300 of these nest sites are now created by farmers each year, with support from stewardship schemes, and over 3,000 hectares of grassland habitat is now being restored to create the right conditions for stone-curlews. 144 more chicks fledged in 2015-16 compared to 2012-13.

[Find out more about stone curlews and the project here >](#)

Appeal for new nature reserve in Broads hits £400k milestone

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Vision of creating 1,000 acres of wildness another step closer

Suffolk Wildlife Trust's campaign to create a new nature reserve in the Broads National Park has reached another major milestone.

The appeal, which has been personally backed by Sir David Attenborough, has now raised £400,000 towards the £1million needed to purchase a parcel of land flanking the Trust's existing reserve at Carlton and Oulton Marshes.

Broads Warden, Matt Gooch, said the way people in Suffolk and beyond had got behind the Trust's vision had been "truly inspirational".

"The support that people have given has really been quite moving. I think it shows the importance of this landscape and that there is a real belief in what the Trust is trying to do, both for wildlife, and for the communities that live in and around Lowestoft.

"We know that £1million is a big target but this is a huge opportunity to create a truly special place that can be enjoyed for generation after generation."

The appeal, was launched in October last year after the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) approved the Trust's initial plans for the land purchase, together with proposals to improve the reserve for visitors and develop wide-ranging education activities.

The HLF has awarded the Trust a development grant of £246,300 to work on the detailed plans necessary to secure a full grant of £4m for the project. The Trust's appeal will go towards match funding that grant.

The land purchase, the biggest attempted in the Trust's 55-year history, will lead to the creation of a mix of wet habitats that so many nationally rare animals and plants depend on.

The new reedbed will be the largest in the Broads, supporting breeding marsh harrier and bittern, as well as reed bunting, grasshopper warbler and lesser known species like white mantled wainscot moth, which has only been found in Suffolk.

A seven mile network of restored freshwater ditches will be amongst the best in the UK and will allow Broadland specialists including plants, water voles and the rare fen raft spider to spread across the landscape.

More than 150 acres of marsh, fen meadow and shallow pools will be created, with thousands of metres of soft muddy edges, for wintering wildfowl and nationally declining waders like lapwing and redshank to feed. [Find out more on SWT website >](#)



Biodiversity News Issue 75 published

Biodiversity News Issue 75 – Winter and Spring has now been uploaded to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee website and can be viewed [here >](#) The contents include: bats and churches National Lottery funding; rise in hedgehog sightings due to late start to winter; new research on nightjar migration; monitoring of bush-crickets; wintering blackcaps; State of the Environment in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes; and Ministry of Justice shared estates first Bioblitz. And of course there's much, MUCH more....

Past editions of Biodiversity News can be seen [here >](#)

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership

The Partnership's work has now been integrated into [Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service \(SBIS\) >](#)

The SBP website closed on 31st August 2016 and the website pages have been moved to the SBIS website. If you need further information, please contact Gen Broad.

An archive of SBP newsletters (2008-2015) can be found [here >](#) This e-newsletter will continue to be published quarterly through SBIS - please send us your news articles!

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

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.

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

Like us on Facebook [>](#)

Share photos on Flickr [>](#)

Newsletter Publication dates : Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

Deadline for Summer 2017 newsletter articles: **Friday 28th July 2017.**

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!**

Contact Us

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

Ben Heather (Biological Records Officer—GIS) email: ben.heather@suffolk.gov.uk, tel: 01473 433571

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