

PRIORITY HABITAT FACTSHEET



*Farmhouse and pond near Eye (Malcolm R. Bell),
Kingfisher (Neil Rolph), Common Frog (Paul Kitchener).*

Ponds

Permanent and seasonal standing water bodies up to 2ha in extent.

**Not connected to each other or to other water bodies –
and are only fed by rainwater or groundwater.**

**High quality ponds form particularly significant elements of
the landscape, for example pingos in the Brecks.**

IMPORTANCE FOR WILDLIFE

Ponds support about two-thirds of all freshwater species, while also providing non-aquatic animals such as mammals and reptiles with food and water.

Suffolk ponds support wildlife of importance at the European scale including great crested newt, turtle dove, rare stoneworts and a host of other species, as well as providing a range of resources and habitat for our more common species.



IMPORTANT ASSOCIATED SPECIES

Mammals

Water Shrew *Neomys fodiens**
Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus**
Nathusius' Pipistrelle Bat *Pipistrellus nathusii**
Daubentons Bat *Myotis daubentonii**
Otter *Lutra lutra*

Reptiles and Amphibians

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*
Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*
Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*
Common Toad *Bufo bufo*

Beetles

Scarce Four-dot Pin-palp
Bembidion quadripustulatum

Fungi

Frogbit Smut *Tracya hydrocharidis*

Plants

Pitted Frillwort *Fossombronina foveolata*
Bearded Stonewort *Chara canescens*
Tassel Stonewort *Tolypella intricata*
Pillwort *Pilularia globulifera*
Tubular Water-dropwort *Oenanthe fistulosa*
Native Black Poplar *Populus nigra* spp *betulifolia**

*Suffolk Priority species

**Priority - Research Only. Common and widespread, but rapidly declining.



Images: Top – Smooth Newt (Gary Last). Bottom, left to right – Water Rail (Steve Roach), Otter (Neil Rolph), Daubenton's Bats (Arthur Rivett), Tubular Water-dropwort (Stuart Read).

FACTORS AFFECTING HABITAT IN SUFFOLK

- Pollution and nutrient enrichment damaging wildlife communities and result in a loss of biodiversity
- Recreation and sporting use having detrimental impacts e.g. disturbance to wildfowl & trampling of vegetation; stirring up sediments by boats destroys aquatic plants and contributes to enrichment.
- Infilling due to farming and development. Ponds are not valued and are seen as expendable.
- Introduction of non-native plants and animals, including fish, affecting biodiversity. Recreational fishing may lead to the loss of natural populations and may affect plant and invertebrate communities.
- A change in water supply and throughput (e.g. due to water abstraction) alters the character of water bodies. A rise in temperature will produce wide ranging effects e.g. acceleration of plant growth.



HABITAT MANAGEMENT ADVICE

- **Maintain natural processes:** The guiding principle is continuity of habitats, thus maintenance of mosaic is best achieved by phased treatment.
- **Maintain habitat heterogeneity:** margins have greater biodiversity than open water. Maintain a mix of vegetation, bare marginal substrate and beds of submerged vegetation. Before managing determine the conservation value of the pond, removing vegetation to create diversity risks losing fauna dependent on a single margin type.
- **Over-managing can be detrimental to the fauna;** all successional stages are of value and while some species require unshaded conditions, others thrive in shaded ponds.
- **Maintain water quality and water levels.**
- **Temporary pools have great conservation value and should not be filled in or excavated to create permanent water bodies.**
- **Maintain gently sloping bank profiles.**
- **Adopt small-scale rotational management.** If material must be removed do it in August so that overwintering and pupating individuals will not be present; April to June are the worst months for such work.
- **Minimise disturbance resulting from recreational use.**
- **Light grazing around ponds can be used to prevent the invasion of scrub.**
- **If a pond has recently become shaded it should be cleared, particularly to the south.** Shaded woodland ponds should not be opened up without good reason.

Migrant Hawker (Paul Kitchener).



VISION FOR SUFFOLK

1. Improve knowledge of extent and quality of ponds.
2. Maintain the existing extent of ponds to ensure no net loss.
3. Re-create ponds as opportunities arise.
4. Encourage the restoration and improvement of degraded ponds.



WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION

Buglife – advice on managing BAP habitats

- <https://www.buglife.org.uk/resources/habitat-management/eutrophic-standing-waters>

Buglife – Notable invertebrates associated with open water (pdf)

- <https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2019/07/1020Notable20invertebrates20associated20with20eutrophic20standing20waters.pdf>

Freshwater Habitats Trust – Manage your pond

- <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/flagship/pond-management-info>

JNCC Habitat Description (pdf)

- <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/dec49c52-a86c-4483-90f2-f43957e560bb/UKBAP-BAPHabitats-42-Ponds.pdf>

MAGIC website – interactive mapping information including designations • <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Making Space for Nature, a Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network 16 Sep 2010.

- Chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS. Defra website (pdf) • <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402151656/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

Natural Environment White Paper June 2011 – *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature* (pdf)

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf

Suffolk Ponds Group • <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/suffolk-ponds-group>

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Habitats Explorer • <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/habitats/freshwater/ponds>

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Pond restoration and management

- <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/pond-restoration-and-management>

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