



County Wildlife Sites Newsletter 2019

Image by David North

Welcome to third edition of Norfolk County Wildlife Site News – a newsletter for the owners and managers of County Wildlife Sites (CWS) in Norfolk.

We hope you find this newsletter a useful way to find out more about CWS and access any further information or advice you require.

CWS in Norfolk

CWS are areas of land rich in wildlife, they are found across Norfolk. Outside of the nationally protected areas (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves), they are the best areas for wildlife in the County. There are over 1,300 CWS in all, totalling over 15,000 hectares – this makes them a fantastic resource for wildlife.

Unlike SSSIs and National Nature Reserves, CWS is not a statutory designation, but rather a register of high quality sites. However, CWS are acknowledged by local planning authorities and can be taken into account when developments are proposed.

Honey bee by David Tipling



Barn owl by Danny Green/2020VISION



CWS can support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife species and habitats; they also complement Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and nature reserves by helping to maintain links between these sites. In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving such places, so that wildlife can survive in the wider countryside, outside of nature reserves.

Working in partnership

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) takes a lead in providing advice on CWS management and works in partnership with conservation organisations across Norfolk.



Saving **Norfolk's Wildlife** for the Future



CWS in the Living Landscape

CWS occur across Norfolk, from the sandy soils of the Cromer Ridge to the clay valleys of South Norfolk. In the Brecks, CWS include areas of heath and naturally formed ponds often called 'pingos'. Along the way are CWS that are ancient woods or meadows, damp fens or marshes and even former gravel pits.

There are 1360 CWS in Norfolk, covering over 15,000 ha. The smallest site is a flower-rich meadow less than half a hectare in size, whilst the largest are woods and grazing marshes extending to nearly 200 ha. Most CWS occur in rural Norfolk, but urban sites, such as Mousehold Heath in Norwich and Neatherd Moor

in East Dereham are vital for local wildlife. Viewed like this, CWS are important not just for the wildlife they support, but also for the role they play as 'stepping stones' for species moving across the whole County.

In recent years, Wildlife Trusts in Britain have been working on projects

to re-connect and re-create habitats within defined areas known as Living Landscapes. The aim of these project areas is to create more space and corridors for wildlife, something that will also help species move and adapt to a changing climate.

In Norfolk, Living Landscape priority areas cover the Norfolk Brecks, part of the Broads, clusters of heaths and woods in North Norfolk, wetlands on the edge of The Fens, the South Norfolk Claylands plus rivers and heaths east of King's Lynn.

As NWT develops new projects in Norfolk's Living Landscape areas, CWS will form a crucial element in the re-connected landscape. As well as encouraging management for wildlife, NWT seeks also to find ways of making habitat management more sustainable and financially viable in the future.

To find out more about Norfolk's Living Landscapes, please visit: www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-in-norfolk/a-living-landscape



Norfolk Ponds Project

NWT is a partner in the Norfolk Ponds Project, which aims to provide advice to landowners on how best to restore and manage ponds in farmland and on CWS.

Norfolk holds more ponds than any other English county with an estimated 23,000 present. Most of these ponds are located in farmland, and have their origins as marl or clay pits. Ponds can provide vital clean freshwater environments in farmland and are important habitats for aquatic biodiversity covering plants, invertebrates, amphibians, fishes, and mammals.

Many farmland ponds have been greatly neglected over the last 50 years and have become overgrown with trees or have been in-filled to create more agricultural land.



Common frog by Mark Hamblin/2020VISION



Restored pond by UCL

If you manage a CWS with ponds, NWT is able to offer free help and advice and an information sheet on farm pond restoration is available on request or via the Norfolk Pond Project website: www.norfolkwd.co.uk/norfolk-ponds-project

Helping Hedgehogs in Town and Country

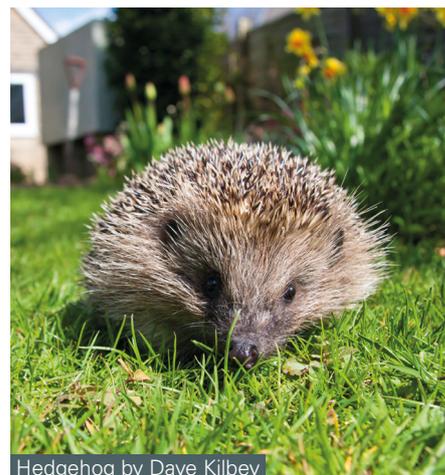
Hedgehogs are probably Britain's most recognisable mammal, being the only native mammal with spines.

In the past 20 years, hedgehogs have declined by around a third in both rural and urban areas. In built-up areas, research has shown that the decline is linked with the loss of foraging areas, a lack of connectivity between gardens or habitats, over-tidy gardens with extensive paving or decking and garden pesticides. In rural areas, loss of habitat and poor connections between habitats are also a problem: intensively managed fields with few or very gappy hedgerows offer little food or shelter for hedgehogs and

the loss of pasture or meadows has contributed to their decline.

To help both farmers and the managers of urban greenspaces create more opportunities for hedgehogs and help reverse the decline, the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the People's Trust for Endangered Species have created information sheets on habitat management for hedgehogs.

For farms and rural CWS, the information sheet sets out a range of management that can help hedgehogs and links these with options available under the Countryside Stewardship



Hedgehog by Dave Kilbey

grants. The information sheet for rural areas can be found at www.hedgehogstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Farmers-leaflet.pdf and includes information on hedgerow management, field margins and size, ploughing regimes and prey availability, plus the need to maintain areas of scrub and decaying vegetation.

For urban CWS, information on management also focuses on habitat connectivity and availability and can be found at ptes.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/HEMP.pdf.

If you have hedgehogs on your CWS and would like more information or advice, please contact NWT's Conservation Officers.



Hedgehog by David Tipling

CWS Re-survey Project

Over the next five years, NWT's Conservation Officers, the Norfolk Flora Group and volunteers will be carrying out summer surveys to help us get a better picture of the plant communities and habitats on some of our best wildlife sites in Norfolk. The County Wildlife Site Re-survey Project is aiming to survey 200 priority fen, heath and grassland sites through this project.

The project prioritised fen sites in 2018, as these are very sensitive to change over time due to variations in water levels, scrubbing up and

lack of suitable management. Fens surveyed last year revealed carpets of meadow rue, common valerian and myriad sedges and rushes. Cattle grazing helps keep some of these special sites open and scrub free, whilst others need a little work to restore them to their former glory.

NWT have written a strategy to inform re-surveys, helping us decide which sites to target over the next few years so if your site hasn't been surveyed since 1995 we might be contacting you for permission to visit.



Common valerian by David North

Free advice available to CWS owners can cover:

Why the site is valuable:

Information can be provided about the wildlife and nature conservation interest of the site and a re-survey carried out if necessary.

What needs to be done:

A plan can be produced identifying objectives for management and priorities for action to maintain or improve the site's value to wildlife.

How it can be achieved:

During the past year, Norfolk Wildlife Trust has visited over 120 CWS across Norfolk.

As part of CWS visits, NWT can help with finding funding for work, including through Countryside Stewardship Schemes. NWT can work alongside agents, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Natural England to help you apply for a grant and can provide additional support with delivering schemes.

Advice to owners and managers

The majority of County Wildlife Sites are privately owned and their survival depends on owners and managers sympathetic to the needs of wildlife.

The high wildlife value of a CWS is often a direct result of land

management practices that have allowed wildlife to flourish, including traditional practices such as coppicing woodlands. The continuation of such management is usually essential to prevent a decline in the wildlife value of the site.

We want to take good care of your information!

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other third party for their own marketing use.

This is our summarised privacy notice. For our full privacy policy please visit our website at: www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/privacy or contact us for a postal copy.

Further information

Telephone: 01603 625540 • **Fax:** 01603 598300
Email: info@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

Please quote CWS name or reference number to help us with your query

Helen Baczkowska: Conservation Officer: general CWS information and management advice

Sam Brown: Conservation Officer: general CWS information and management advice

Return slip

Freepost address **RTKH-LGSA-TCJS**, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Bewick House, Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1RY

Please help us save paper by emailing us your enquiry, stating your CWS name and number (if known) in the subject.

Email: info@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

CWS name and number (if known)

Your contact details

Nature of request – please let us know how we can help with your CWS

Let us know if you no longer own the site and please pass this newsletter on to the new owner if possible