

Delivering Living Landscapes – Citizen Science Survey



Duration Survey: April, May and June 2015

Theme of Survey: Farmland species

Species Recorded:

- Common frog
- Brown hare
- Barn owl

Promotion:

- A5 cards distributed in the broads and King's Lynn area
- A4 poster distributed in the broads and King's Lynn area
- EDP double-page spread
- NWT E-newsletter
- Tern article
- Press release
- Social media

Survey overview:

This was the first citizen science survey to be launched under the Delivering Living Landscape project. Through the funding Norfolk Wildlife Trust launched an online survey section to collate records from community-orientated surveys. For this survey it was decided to select three species that were easily identifiable and of conservation interest, and so brown hare, common frog and barn owl were selected.

Survey Summary:

- 1,028 records submitted
- 347 individuals submitted records



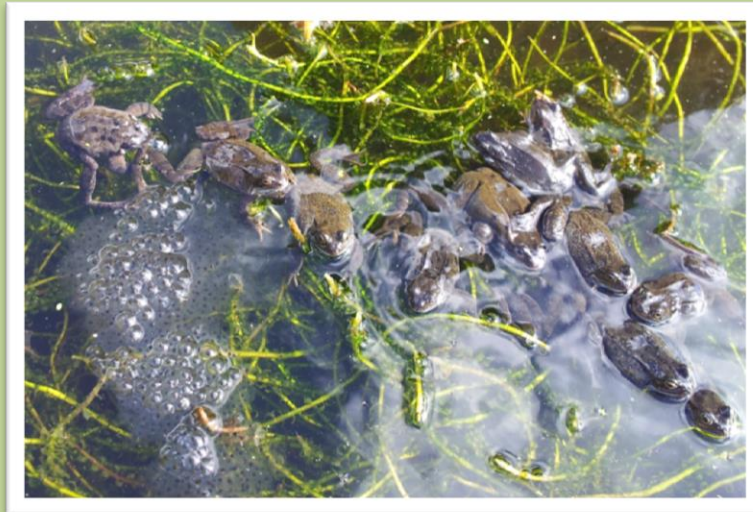
Mark Ollett

Further information:

Common frog

Although not presently threatened, common frog populations are vulnerable and are thought to be in widespread decline. The breeding habitat of the common frog is threatened by development, pollution and destruction, which means garden ponds are becoming increasingly important refuges for this species.

From our survey we saw **122** records being uploaded by **92** people to the online survey, recording **788** individual common frogs.



Teresa Laddiman



Mark Ollett

Barn owl

Barn owls have declined both nationally and in Norfolk. Barn owl numbers have fallen by more than half since 1932. Reasons for this decline include a fall in the number of nest sites with barns and derelict farm buildings being converted into homes, road deaths, decline in area of rough grassland hunting grounds and since 2009 extreme weather events.

According to the Barn Owl Trust the cold spring in 2013 had a devastating impact on barn owl populations. In 2013, the number of barn owls found breeding at nest sites was down by approximately 80% on previous years. Last year, 2014, was a better year for barn owls, due to the warm summer and a healthy population of small mammals.



During this survey **387** records were uploaded by **221** people to the online survey, recording **450** barn owls.

Taba Taberham



Mark Ollett

Brown hare

Numbers of the once common brown hare have shown a steady decline in England since the 1960s. This may be linked to changes in the way crops are grown and grasslands are managed. Norfolk holds nationally important populations of brown hares and, whilst numbers have declined, it remains a stronghold for this species. Brown hare sightings will help Norfolk Wildlife Trust map the distribution of this charismatic creature in Norfolk, and help identify strongholds within the county.

During this survey **515** records were uploaded by **208** people to the online survey, recording **1,239** individual brown hares.



Andy Brown



Mark Ollett

In conclusion

This survey was well supported with **347** people logging over **2,450** common frogs, brown hares and barn owls. The survey showed that Norfolk is still a stronghold for both barn owls and brown hares, although common frog sightings were not as forthcoming. A number of people got in touch with Norfolk Wildlife Trust during the survey period to let us know of the disappearance of this amphibian from their garden or local area. Through talking to these individuals it was felt that the migration route of the frogs may have been blocked in some way preventing the frogs from returning to their breeding areas.

The survey records were supported by lots of images being sent to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust 's photo gallery, in particular of barn owls and brown hares. We also had wonderful comments sent to us, for example:

"Lost count of the amount of both frogs and toads spawning at Felbrigg Hall lake yesterday, was amazing to see lots of dead females though due to the sheer amount of males."
(Adam Pimble)

"I have witnessed Hares behind my bungalow on this field for at least the past 5 years and on one occasion boxing".
(M Hunnybun)

"We are surrounded by farmland and the owls are seen quartering the fields on and off throughout the day. They have been seen being mocked by Crows and also a Sparrow Hawk has twice been seen stealing mice from them."
(Robin Martin)

