

# NORFOLK BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Ref 1/H1	Tranche 1	Habitat Action Plan 1
Plan Author:		RSPB
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Plan Leader:		
Date:		Stage:
31 December 1998		Final draft
June 2004		Revised draft (under review)
August 2005		Final revised draft

## REEDBED

### 1. CURRENT STATUS

#### Definition

- Reedbed is defined in this plan as S4 NVC communities; all other communities containing reed to be included in the fen action plan.
- In Broadland, the fen resource has been surveyed and mapped. The distribution of reedbed vegetation by valley is as follows:

	<b>S4</b>	<b>S4 transitions</b>	<b>S26</b>
Ant Valley	43.76ha	8.7ha	4.75ha
Thurne Valley	112.95ha	25.92ha	3.13ha
Muckfleet Valley	10.49ha	0.06ha	4.07ha
Bure Valley	27.68ha	5.9ha	64.39ha
Yare Valley	43.64ha	-	279.07ha
Waveney Valley	6.46ha	0.92ha	63.75ha

- A rare habitat. The RSPB Reedbed Inventory suggests over 1,540 ha in Norfolk - almost 30% of the UK resource. However, the definition of reedbed used for this inventory was wider than that proposed here. Tables 1 and 2 below show the sites over 20 and 10 ha respectively from the inventory excluding known fen sites.
- Reedbeds of less than 10 hectares are listed in Table 3 below. Some of these sites are known to support priority species, including bittern.
- Over 50 species of conservation concern in Norfolk depend fully or partly on reedbeds and associated fens. However further research is necessary to fully identify the status of many species. The following are likely to provide the main focus:
  - birds - bittern, bearded tit, marsh harrier, Savi's warbler;
  - mammals - otter, water shrew, harvest mouse;
  - moths - small dotted footman, Fenn's wainscot, reed leopard;
  - other invertebrates - including BAP species such as the diving beetle (*Bidessus unistriatus*).

### 2. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE HABITAT IN NORFOLK

- Several important reedbeds in north Norfolk are threatened by coastal erosion and some by increasingly frequent saline incursion including the Broads.
- Lack of biological information, particularly concerning reedbed invertebrates.
- Lack of appropriate management of some existing reedbeds leading to drying and scrub encroachment and unsympathetic cutting regimes.

- Lack of hydrological information.
- Water abstraction leading to concern over freshwater supplies.
- Inappropriate water level management.

### **3. CURRENT ACTION IN NORFOLK**

- Of the 16 sites in Tables 1 and 2, all but five are within SSSIs and most are under sympathetic management (eg NWT, NT, EN, RSPB reserves).
- Current agri-environment schemes now include actions for reedbeds, which allows landowners to maintain and manage reedbeds.
- A number of key sites have been enhanced eg Titchwell, Hickling, Strumpshaw, Holme, Woodbastwick.
- There are a number of reedbed creation projects being progressed at Stiffkey, Ant valley.
- The TEN project and Broads vision have identified potential reedbed creation sites.
- The Broads Reedcutters' Association has been established and is being encouraged to undertake the sustainable management of reedbeds.

### **4. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSED TARGETS**

#### **National**

- Identify and rehabilitate by the year 2000 the priority areas of existing reedbed (targeting those of 2 ha or more) and maintain this thereafter by active management.
- Create 1200 ha of new reedbed on land of low nature conservation interest by 2010. This should be in blocks of at least 20 ha:

in areas near to existing habitat;  
linked with existing habitat wherever possible.

#### **Norfolk**

- Maintain existing area and quality as a minimum. Identify and rehabilitate by the year 2010 the priority areas of existing reedbed which are not currently at favourable conservation status.
- Create new reedbed to replace reedbeds likely to be lost due to changes to coastal management. These should be located as near as possible to existing sites on areas of current low nature conservation interest.
- Create an additional 600 hectares of new reedbed safe from future threat of sea level rise within Norfolk by 2010. This will be on areas of current low nature conservation interest.

## Reedbed - Norfolk Action Plan

NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS :
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Policy and Legislation</b>			
<b>5.1.1</b>	Continue to notify nationally important sites as SSSIs.  No action.	Designate as County Wildlife Sites all non-SSSI reedbeds meeting CWS criteria.	NWT	
<b>5.1.5</b>	Encourage development of sympathetic water abstraction, WLMPs and CZMPs to protect existing reedbeds.	Ensure appropriate water management through EA groundwater modelling initiatives, Water framework Directive implementation, WLMP and EA Review of Consents for all key reedbeds.	EN, EA, All LAs, IDBs, BA	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Site Safeguard and Management</b>			
<b>5.2.1</b>	Ensure development schemes do not affect the integrity of reedbeds.	Ensure development plans give adequate protection to SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites.  Ensure appropriate adequate water quality and quantity for all key reedbeds.  Ensure that future abstraction applications potentially affecting key reedbed sites protect reedbeds.  Reedcutters to help implement Fen Management Strategy and Audit.	Regional Government, LAs  EA  EA, AW, EN, Essex & Suffolk Water, BA	
<b>5.2.2</b>	Acquire or grant aid acquisition of land of low conservation interest for creation of new reedbeds.	Map areas with potential for reedbed and agree county 'opportunity map'. Prioritise suitable sites and undertake feasibility studies to identify future action.	EN, EA, RSPB, NWT, NT, BA	

## Reedbed - Norfolk Action Plan

NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS :
5.2.3	Ensure favourable management of key reedbeds by 2010 through management agreements where appropriate.	<p>Ensure sites are included in LA Development Plans. Create selected sites for inclusion in all relevant plans and strategies.</p> <p>Ensure sites above 10ha which are currently unmanaged are prioritised for management if appropriate - with preference for sites which are part of large wetland systems - and identify sites for non-intervention.</p>	EN, RSPB, NWT, BA, DEFRA - RDS, FWAG	
5.3	<b>Advisory</b>			
5.3.1	Ensure favourable management of key reedbeds by providing advice.	<p>Implement recommendations in the Broads Fen Management Strategy and fen audit to deliver favourable management of key reedbeds in the Broads.</p> <p>Provide advice to owners of all key reedbeds.</p>	<p>BA, EN, NWT, RSPB, DEFRA - RDS, Landowners</p> <p>EN, RSPB, NWT, FWAG, BA</p>	
5.3.3	Initiate training courses for reedbed managers and countryside advisers.	Reedbed management training workshops and seminars to be targeted to owners/managers of key reedbeds.	EN, RSPB, NWT, FWAG, NCC, BA	
5.5	<b>Future Research and Monitoring</b>			
5.5.2	Ensure continued monitoring of key reedbed species and sites.	Ensure continued monitoring of key reedbed species (eg, bittern, marsh harrier, bearded tit, invertebrates) and sites.	EN, RSPB	
5.5.4	Begin large-scale trials of the use of reedbeds for reducing point source and diffuse pollution.	Encourage large-scale trials.	DEFRA - RDS, EA	

## Reedbed - Norfolk Action Plan

NATIONAL ACTION		NORFOLK ACTION	ACTION BY:	PARTNERS :
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Communications and Publicity</b>			
<b>5.6.1</b>	Provide material which promotes the importance of reedbeds and their conservation	Ensure education activities include importance of reedbeds.	NWT, RSPB, BA, EN	
<b>5.6.2</b>	Launch a campaign to enhance the market for UK reed.	Develop further uses of reed including thatching, fuel, reed fences, mulch and reedbed water treatment plants.	British Reed Growers' Association, Broads Reedcutters' Association, BA	

## **NORFOLK DISTRIBUTION**

**Table 1 - Sites >20 ha from RSPB Reedbed Inventory 1993 - Norfolk**

<b>SITE NAME</b>	<b>GRID REF</b>	<b>SSSI or OTHER NAME</b>	<b>REED 1993</b>	<b>FRESH OR SALTWATER</b>
Belton/Fritton	TG460015		88.9	?
Burgh Common	TG445125	Burgh Common and Muckfleet Marsh	24.3	F
Cley Marshes	TG055445	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	43.0	F
Haddiscoe/Wheatacre	TM470973		21.1	S
Heacham Beach (South)	TF660360		22.3	F
Hickling Broad (include Heigham)	TG420200	Upper Thurne Broads and Marsh	141.5	F
Horse Mere	TG449222	Upper Thurne Broads and Marsh	87.5	F
Langley	TG470039		21.9	F
Ranworth Flood	TG370150	Bure Broads and Marshes SSSI	70.0	F
Reedham Marsh	TG366193	Ant Broads and Marshes SSSI	65.6	F
Stanford Training Area	TL870940	Stanford Training Area SSSI	62.6	F
Titchwell	TF752445	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	25.2	F
Number of Sites = 12		Total Area = 673.9		

**Table 2 - Sites >10 ha from RSPB Reedbed Inventory 1993 - Norfolk**

<b>SITE NAME</b>	<b>GRID REF</b>	<b>SSSI or OTHER NAME</b>	<b>REED 1993</b>	<b>FRESH OR SALTWATER</b>
East Walton Common	TF734163	East Walton Common SSSI	14.8	F
Heacham Beach (North)	TF668390		14.4	F
Horse Mere	TG463240	Winterton-Horse Mere Dunes SSSI	12.9	F
Salthouse	TG066447	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	12.0	F
Number of Sites = 4		Total Area = 54.1		

**Table 3 - Sites <10 ha from RSPB Reedbed Inventory 1993 - Norfolk**

<b>SITE NAME</b>	<b>GRID REF</b>	<b>SSSI or OTHER NAME</b>	<b>REED 1993</b>	<b>FRESH OR SALTWATER</b>
Berney Marshes	TG500075	Breydon Water SSSI	1.6	?
Blakeney Fresh	TG034447	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	3.0	F
Booton Common	TG113230	Booton Common SSSI	2.1	F
Borthwicks Marsh, near Titchwell	TF767443	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	5.0	F
Brancaster Golf Course	TF768448		4.5	S
Brancaster Staithe	TF790444	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	9.0	S
Buckenham Hasingham Broads	TG365055		?	F
Burgh Castle	TG473047		9.3	S
Burn River	TF84	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	?	F
Burnham Deepdale	TF815450	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	6.2	F
Burnham Norton (North)	TF830448	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	2.6	F
Burnham Norton (South)	TF834437	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	8.5	F
Burnham Overy	TF854450	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	2.0	F
Buxton Heath	TG175218	Buxton Heath SSSI	0.5	F
Cantley Beet Farm	TG392032		?	F
Castle Acre Common	TF802152	Castle Acre Common SSSI	2.1	F
Cranberry Rough	TL934936	Cranberry Rough, Hockham S	6.3	F
Dereham Rush Meadow	TF976140	Dereham Rush Meadow SSSI	2.4	F
Dersingham (Snettisham)	TF680315		?	F
Didlington Park Lakes	TL777963	Didlington Park Lakes SSSI	2.4	F
Dillington Carr	TF971158	Dillington Carr, Gressenhall	4.6	F
East Harling Common	TM000879	East Harling Common SSSI	1.5	F
East Ruston Common	TG340280	East Ruston Common SSSI	9.2	F
Fritton Decoy	TG482005		?	F
Guist	TF993251	River Wensum SSSI	?	F
Gunton Park Lakes	TG221345	Gunton Park Lakes SSSI	1.0	F
Halvergate Marshes	TG435060	Halvergate Marshes SSSI	1.5	F
Hardley Flood	TM380987	Hardley Flood SSSI	9.1	F

<b>SITE NAME</b>	<b>GRID REF</b>	<b>SSSI or OTHER NAME</b>	<b>REED 1993</b>	<b>FRESH OR SALTWATER</b>
Hempstead Marshes	TG410232		1.5	F
Holkham Fresh 1	TF875446	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	3.6	F
Holkham Fresh 2 (Wells)	TF910454	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	5.3	F
Holme (Inner)	TF718438		0.3	F
Holme (Next-the-Sea)	TF710443		1.6	F
Lynn Beet Factory	TF613180		?	F
River Bure River Rond	TG504095		?	F
River Waveney River Rond	TG501930		?	S?
River Yare River Rond	TG430016		?	S?
Rollesby and Filby Broads	TG4616		?	F
Roydon Common	TF685225	Roydon Common SSSI	0.6	F
Scoulton Mere	TF985014	Scoulton Mere SSSI	4.2	F
Sea Mere	TG035012	Sea Mere, Hingham SSSI	6.5	F
Sheringham and Beeston Regis	TG164424	Sheringham and Beeston Regis	2.4	F
Stiffkey	TF987442	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	1.3	F
Thetford Golf Course and Marsh	TL845838	Thetford Golf Course and Marsh	8.0	F
Thompson Water, Carr and Common	TL930955	Thompson Water, Carr and Common	3.7	F
Thornham East	TF742440	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	5.4	F
Thornham West	TF730439		8.9	F
Wells-Next-the-Sea	TF930437	North Norfolk Coast SSSI	1.6	F
Weybourne	TG110436		2.3	F
Whitlingham Marshes	TG285075		?	F
Whitwell Common, Reepham	TG088206	Whitwell Common SSSI	7.3	F
Winterton	TG487204	Winterton-Horsey Dunes SSSI	5.7	F
Wretham Park Meres	TL902918	Wretham Park Meres SSSI	5.7	F



## **MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE**

The management of reedbeds falls into two broad areas: the management of water and that of the reed itself. Within these, the fundamental requirement is the frequency of cutting of the reed and control of water levels and movement.

Control of water levels can:

- Encourage reed at the expense of other species;
- Increase the rate of 'litter'(dead plant material) breakdown and reduce the rate of drying out of reedbeds;
- Facilitate management practices;
- Provide an aquatic habitat.

Reed cutting can be used to:

- Reduce the rate of 'litter' accumulation;
- Provide reed as a product for thatching etc;
- Stimulate new bud production;
- Provide variety of habitats and control reed encroachment.

Cutting reed in the winter is a sustainable method of managing reedbeds. Annual cutting favoured for the production of reed for commercial purposes will create a different type of reedbed than one cut less frequently. A variety of cutting regimes will create conditions for a wide variety of species. The presence of open water is a crucial component of reedbeds, providing additional habitat variety for a number of scarce species such as bittern.

Over a period of time, many reedbeds will dry out as reed 'litter' accumulates. Reedbed restoration either through raising water levels or lowering the surface of the reedbed may then be required in order to maintain the interest.

## **REFERENCES AND CONTACTS**

Hawke, C.J. and Jose, P.V. 1996. *Reedbed Management for Commercial and Wildlife Interests*. RSPB.

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