

Nordelph Internal Drainage Board

Biodiversity Action Plan Report 2020-21

Note on 2020-21 report

In November 2020 ADA published the new updated IDB Biodiversity Plan along with guidance and a press release here:

<https://www.ada.org.uk/2020/11/ada-launches-updated-biodiversity-action-plan-for-idbs/>



Internal Drainage Board Biodiversity Action Plan

Guidance Document

November 2020

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The Conservation Officer will begin moving Board reports into this new format as soon as possible and keep the Board informed of progress. The new reports are good news for the drainage industry as they reflect years of work by many people to ensure that the most up to date legislation, policy and approaches are accessible and practicable for those involved with water level management and, by extension, wildlife conservation. The existing BAP reports provide a good foundation on which to build and update as necessary.

A 12-page Guidance Notes document by ADA will be sent separately, the CO welcomes any feedback.

Report Summary

Invasive species

None reported. As previously mentioned, Floating Pennywort continues to be found sporadically in the Salters Lode area and, although not yet found in the Middle Level, should be considered a threat. Due to geographic proximity, the Board should familiarise themselves with its appearance and contact the Conservation Officer if any is suspected or confirmed within the District. An information sheet will be shared separately and a training session is being planned later in the year.

Barn Owls

District Officer reports owls are regularly seen in the area. 2020 was an exceptionally poor year across the region. Please let CO know if owls are using the box at Aqueduct PS.

Water Voles

Those drains where habitat is favourable appear to be well managed with consideration of marginal and bankside vegetation. Boards are reminded to contact the Conservation Officer *before* any bank reprofiling or

other works that may impact water voles take place. If unsure, please contact the Conservation Officer regardless.

Mink

Mink project underway across the Middle Level; Cambridgeshire now has a dedicated mink officer, a funded position hosted by the Countryside Restoration Trust and Waterlife Recovery East (WRE). All sightings of this and other invasive species are important. A WRE mink trap is in place at Pingle Bridge and caught 2 mink in 2020. A mink was caught on a camera trap at Aqueduct Bridge in December 2020 so the species remains active in the District/surrounds. All offers of financial support or physical assistance (despatch/trap checking) are welcomed for this long-term project. A more comprehensive update is available in the 2020 Natural Level newsletter.



Figure 1 mink at Aqueduct Bridge area, Dec 2020

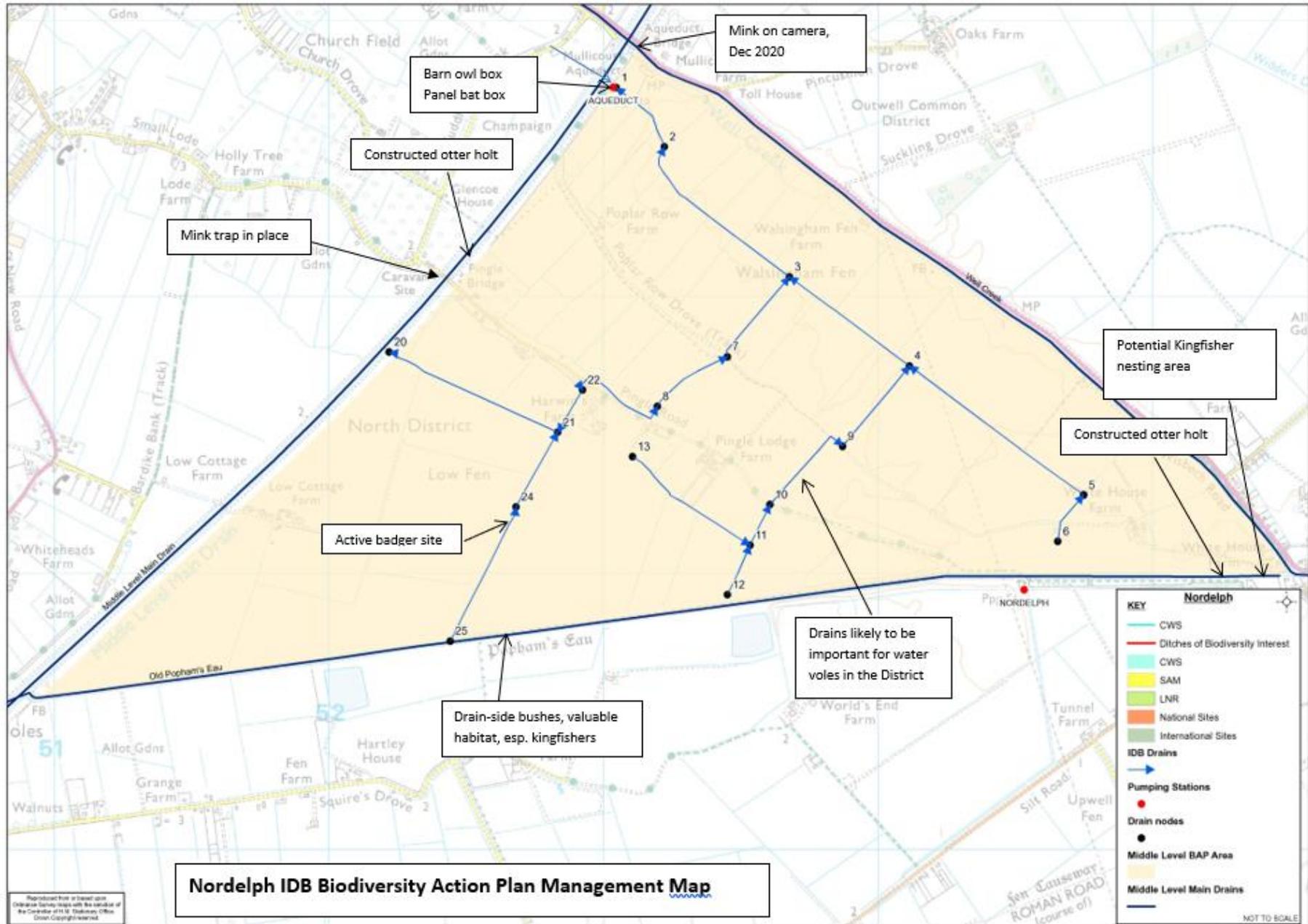
Otter

Signs indicate otters regularly use the Middle Level Main Drain.

Training

With the ongoing situation regarding coronavirus, no public events are allowed, however when this changes Boards will be notified. In the meantime, the Conservation Officer is happy to assist with any enquiries.

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Drainage Ditch Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|---|------------------|--|---|---------|--|--|
| 1 | Manage ditches for biodiversity as well as for drainage | 1.1 | Establish and maintain a management plan for routine IDB operations incorporating key biodiversity features | Conservation Officer | 2015 | Plan finalised and followed each year | <i>A map is attached. It will be amended as further information is gathered.</i> |
| | | 1.2 | Look for opportunities to provide natural erosion protection such as marginal plant ledges when re-profiling ditches | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | If re-profiling is carried out, opportunities identified | <i>Not aware of re-profiling carried out during the period.</i> |
| | | 1.3 | Provide natural erosion protection as in 1.2 if opportunities available | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | Length of ditch with ledge / natural vegetation revetment | <i>As above.</i> |
| 2 | Identify ditches of conservation interest and manage appropriately | 2.2 | Ensure appropriate management of ditches for priority species | Conservation Officer, Plantlife, Wildlife Trust | Ongoing | Specified in management plan | <i>Ditches of interest identified on Management Plan map.</i> |
| 3 | Support the Conservation Officer in working with landowners to benefit wildlife in the district | 3.1 | Refer private landowners to the Conservation Officer for advice on creating field margin buffer zones and wildlife-friendly ditch management | Conservation Officer, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, FWAG | Ongoing | Number of contacts received and passed to Conservation Officer | <i>No enquiries were received during the period</i> |
| 4 | Control invasive species | 4.1 | Report any sightings of non-native invasive species immediately to the Conservation Officer and control as appropriate (see Appendix F for species list) | Conservation Officer, Environment Agency, Plantlife, Wildlife Trust | Ongoing | Reports to Conservation Officer | <i>No invasive plant species recorded. Floating Pennywort is present in tidal River Ouse. Contact CO with queries.</i> |

Reedbed Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|--|------------------|---|---|---------|--|--|
| 1 | Identify, assess and map any areas of reedbed over 0.5ha in size | 1.1 | Pass details of any known areas to Conservation Officer | Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency | 2013 | Review of reedbed areas carried out | <i>No areas of reedbed over 0.5ha identified.</i> |
| 2 | Support appropriate reedbed creation | 2.2 | Manage the District adopted drains, where possible, to assist private landowners who wish to create areas of reedbed on their own land | Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency | Ongoing | (a) Number of requests received (b) Number of landowners assisted | <i>No requests received.</i> |
| 3 | Take conservation value of reedbed into account when planning and carrying out ditch and river maintenance | 3.2 | Where reeds are present, commence mowing or cleansing work outside the bird breeding season (7 th April – 15 th July). Where reeds are growing in water be aware of the potential for late-nesting reed warblers being present until late August and avoid mowing in that location. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, seek advice from the Conservation Officer. | Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust, RSPB | Ongoing | Reeds not cut during bird nesting season | <i>Management work was not carried out during the bird nesting period.</i> |

Open Water Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|--|------------------|--|---|---------|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Promote the creation of ponds, lakes and reservoirs in appropriate areas | 1.1 | Consider pond creation as mitigation when a ditch has to be filled in or culverted | Local authorities, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Wildlife Trust | Ongoing | (a) Number of mitigation opportunities (b) Number of ponds created | <i>(a) None (b) None</i> |

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|---|---|-----|---|---|---------|---|---|
| | | 1.2 | Support creation of flood storage areas and reservoirs | Environment Agency, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, RSPB | Ongoing | Number of projects involved with | <i>No flood storage areas or reservoir projects arose during the period</i> |
| | | 1.3 | Assist private landowners with advice, information or contacts as necessary | Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Wildlife Trust | Ongoing | (a) Number of information requests (b) Number responded to | <i>No information requests were received</i> |
| 2 | Look for opportunities to create open water habitat when managing ditches | 2.1 | Create a pool at an appropriate ditch junction when re-profiling (see the Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual, technique CL3)) | Conservation Officer | 2010 | One pool successfully created | <i>No new opportunities for this method arose.</i> |

Water Vole Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|---|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------|--|---|
| 1 | Manage ditches according to the law and to best practice for water vole | 1.1 | Assume water voles are present when carrying out works (discuss special circumstances with the Conservation Officer) and follow the ADA water vole mitigation guide | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | Measures incorporated in management plans | <i>Water vole Best Practice methods were used where appropriate.</i> |
| | | 1.2 | Publicise good practice for rat control near drainage ditches | Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust | Ongoing | Good practice publicised | <i>Best Practice for rat control was publicised in the Environmental Officer's Natural Level newsletter in December 2011.</i> |
| 2 | Enhance drainage ditch habitat to benefit water vole | 2.1 | Look for opportunities to add a marginal shelf when re-profiling banks | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | (a) Opportunities identified (b) Measures taken | <i>No opportunities identified; no measures taken during the period.</i> |

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| | | 2.2 | Consider using coir roll to stabilise banks and provide marginal vegetation | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | (a) Sites considered (b) Measures taken | <i>No appropriate sites or opportunities arose during the period.</i> |
| 3 | Monitor water vole populations | 3.1 | Set up a survey programme to monitor water vole populations | Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust | 2010 | Surveys carried out | <i>Conservation Officer to re-visit in 2021.</i> |
| | | 3.2 | Provide data on water vole to the relevant Biological Records Centres | Conservation Officer, CPERC, NBIS | Ongoing | Data sent via Environmental Officer annually | <i>Data sent to CPERC.</i> |
| 4 | Control mink as necessary | 4.2 | Carry out mink control as part of the Middle Level programme and report all sightings to the Conservation Officer | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | (a) Number of trapping days (b) Number of mink caught | <i>See note on Mink control in report</i> |

Otter Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|---|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Improve otter habitat | 1.1 | Identify and maintain existing key bushes and trees near watercourses likely to be important for otters | Conservation Officer | 2012 and ongoing | Sites identified and listed in management plans | <i>Surveys indicate likely present on adjacent waterways</i> |
| 2 | Monitor otter populations | 2.3 | Ensure any dead otters are reported to the Conservation Officer and transferred to the Environment Agency for post mortem | Environment Agency | Ongoing | Otters reported to Conservation Officer, if found | <i>No dead otters were reported</i> |
| 3 | Reduce otter deaths related to eel and crayfish | 3.1 | Report incidents of suspected illegal netting, trapping or fishing to the | Environment Agency, Angling Clubs & | Ongoing | Incidents reported, if discovered | <i>No reports or indications of illegal trapping noted. Members are encouraged to</i> |

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| | trapping and road traffic | | Environment Agency Fisheries Officers and the Conservation Officer | syndicates | | | <i>report any suspicious activity or illegal fishing to the EA or Conservation Officer.</i> |
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Bats Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|--|------------------|---|--|------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Improve habitat for bats | 1.1 | Put up at least one bat box at an appropriate site, e.g. a pumping station | Bat Conservation Trust | 2015 | Number of bat boxes sited | <i>A bat box is installed at the Board's Pumping Station</i> |
| | | 1.2 | Pollard suitable trees to provide bat roosts | | Ongoing | Number of trees pollarded | <i>None</i> |
| | | 1.3 | Identify potential sites for a bat hibernaculum, e.g. in disused buildings or tunnels | Conservation Officer, Bat Conservation Trust | As opportunities arise | (a) Potential sites looked for (b) Site created | <i>No sites identified but old barns in this quiet area are likely to offer opportunities</i> |
| 2 | Collect information on bat populations | 2.1 | Monitor bat boxes | Bat Conservation Trust | 2015 onwards | (a) Number of boxes monitored (b) Number of boxes used by bats | <i>(a) one (b) unsure</i> |
| | | 2.2 | Pass bat box information to CPBRC and NBIS | Conservation Officer, CPBRC, NBIS | 2015 onwards | Data via Conservation Officer annually | <i>Annually if box found to be occupied by bats.</i> |

Kingfisher Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|---|------------------|---|----------------------|---------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Improve the quality of kingfisher habitat | 1.1 | Provide at least one potential nest hole in sheet pilings | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | Number of nest sites provided | <i>Some natural nesting sites available.</i> |

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| | | 1.2 | Leave kingfisher fishing perches where possible (e.g. occasional branch) | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | Number of perch sites left | <i>There are many natural perch sites for kingfishers available along the Old Pop and Main Drain.</i> |
| 2 | Collect records of kingfisher breeding between March and July | 2.1 | Note sightings of potential breeding kingfisher and pass information to CPBRC and NBIS via the Environmental Officer | Conservation Officer, CPBRC, NBIS | Ongoing | Data sent via Environmental Officer annually | <i>As above, Old Pop and Main Drain have previously recorded breeding Kingfisher, monitoring to continue</i> |

Barn Owl Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|---|------------------|--|--|---------|---|---|
| 1 | Improve the quality of barn owl habitat | 1.1 | Put up at least one barn owl nest box in a suitable location | Wildlife Conservation Partnership | 2015 | Number of nest boxes provided | <i>Two (Aqueduct PS and Nordelph overspill)</i> |
| | | 1.2 | Pollard suitable trees to provide natural nest sites | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | Number of trees pollarded | <i>None</i> |
| 2 | Collect records of barn owl presence | 2.1 | Monitor nest boxes for use. Have occupied boxes checked for success by licensed barn owl ringers. | Wildlife Conservation Partnership | 2015 | (a) Number of nest boxes checked by licensed ringers (b) Number of nest boxes used | <i>(a) 1. (b). unsure</i> |
| | | 2.2 | Pass barn owl box information to CPBRC and NBIS | Conservation Officer, Wildlife Conservation Partnership, CPBRC, NBIS | 2015 | Data sent via Conservation Officer annually | <i>Annual, when box is occupied.</i> |

Procedural Action Plan

| Target Reference | Target | Action Reference | IDB Actions | Partners | Date | Indicators | Report |
|------------------|---|------------------|--|--|---------|---|--|
| 1 | Provide training on IDB BAP and conservation management of drainage channels for all relevant staff by 2013 | 1.1 | Establish programme of 1-day courses for IDB staff and members | Conservation Officer, Wildlife Trust, Natural England, other specialists | 2013 | (a) Number of courses held (b) Number of Board members / staff attending courses | <i>A representative from the Board to attend the next IDB BAP meeting would be very welcome.</i> |
| | | 1.2 | Establish suitable training for contractors' staff | Conservation Officer, Contractors | 2013 | Contractors attended training course | <i>The contractor's machine operator has attended a training workshop.</i> |
| 2 | Take biodiversity into account when planning and undertaking capital works | 2.1 | Consult with the Conservation Officer and choose the best possible mitigation solutions for biodiversity, e.g. fish-friendly pumps | Conservation Officer | Ongoing | (a) Number of capital schemes undertaken (b) Number of schemes commented on | <i>No capital schemes were undertaken by the Board during the period.</i> |