



# Norfolk Ponds Project

Conserving Norfolk's Ponds

[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/ponds](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/ponds)



 **UCL**

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



**We must conserve this**

**fantastic habitat for wildlife**

Good ponds act as **stepping stones** that enable wildlife such as great crested newts, dragonflies and water voles to move across the landscape.

### Norfolk's ponds and their origins

Norfolk holds more ponds than any other English county with an estimated 23,000 ponds present. Most of these ponds are located in farmland, and have their origins as marl or clay pits and in some cases livestock-watering ponds dug in the 17th to 19th centuries.

In addition the Brecks, west Norfolk and sites north of Norwich are home to some of the most amazingly diverse ancient ponds in the UK, pingos – ponds that occupy ice depressions formed during the last great ice age.

A great place to see pingos is at Norfolk Wildlife Trust's nature reserve, Thompson Common.

### Why are ponds so vital?

- Ponds can provide vital clean freshwater environments in the farmland landscape
- Ponds can be wonderful habitats for aquatic biodiversity including plants, invertebrates, amphibians, fishes, birds and mammals
- Ponds provide refuge for over two thirds of Britain's rarest freshwater wetland invertebrates
- Good ponds act as stepping stones that allow species to move through the landscape
- Ponds are threatened by land reclamation, encroachment of trees and bushes, pollution and invasive species

## Case Study

### Sayer's Black Pit restoration study

Since spring 2010, the UCL Department of Geography, University College London has been studying three small farmland ponds in a before-and-after restoration project. One of these ponds, Sayer's Black Pit, was profoundly overgrown by willow and blackthorn scrub, and UCL's studies revealed a near-complete absence of water plants, dragonflies and amphibians. It underwent management in September 2011 with major tree and scrub removal. Only two years after restoration, Sayer's Black Pit has high plant cover, an incredibly species-rich dragonfly fauna and four species of amphibian, including great crested newt.



## We are here to help

Ponds across Norfolk have been largely neglected, or filled in over the last 50 years.

The Norfolk Ponds Project aims to reverse the decline of Norfolk's ponds so that agricultural landscapes contain a mosaic of clean water ponds with fewer ponds overgrown by trees and bushes. We hope to achieve this by:

- Providing advice to landowners on how best to restore and manage farmland ponds
- Establishing a fund that can be used to support practical pond restoration including the re-excavation of "Ghost Ponds," ponds lost to agricultural land reclamation
- Encouraging and supporting the creation of new ponds
- Integrating ponds into other conservation projects in Norfolk
- Promoting the conservation of key pond species, in particular threatened and

culturally important species such as great crested newt, crucian carp, water vole and plants such as stoneworts and pondweeds

- Educating the public and landowners on the value of ponds in farmland through site visits and open days
- Establishing community pond restoration projects that re-connect landowners and people with Norfolk's ponds



crucian carp



**Before** - December 2010



**During** - November 2011



**After** - June 2013



## Inspiration for the project

This project was inspired by the magnificent pond conservation work undertaken at Manor Farm in Briston, North Norfolk by Richard Waddingham. Through many years of careful management, Richard has created a network of 40 high quality ponds that are full of species and afford clean water habitats in the upper Broads system. The Manor Farm ponds show that pond conservation and intensive agriculture can happily co-exist. Recent pond conservation studies by University College London show that what was achieved at Richard's ponds could be replicated all over Norfolk.



young smooth newt

## Where to go for further information

Keep an eye on our website, blog and in *Tern*, for regular updates and more information as the project progresses.

## Contact Us

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### Visit us online at:

[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/ponds](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/ponds)

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