

Success driven by data: how volunteers are making a difference

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Norfolk Non-native Species Initiative



NORFOLK MINK PROJECT

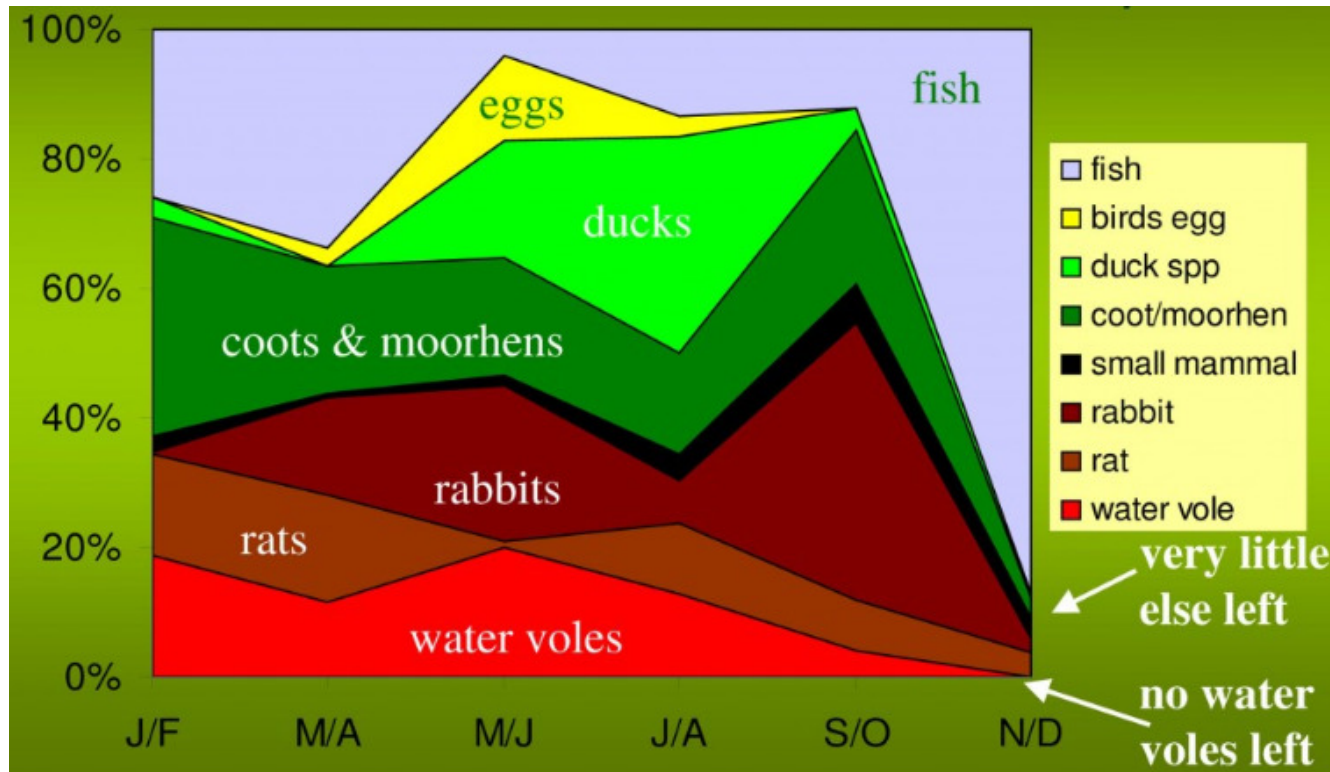


NORFOLK MINK PROJECT

- 1980s: water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) most catastrophic species declines in the UK
- Lost from 94% of sites by 1990s.
- Predation by American mink (*Neovison vison*) + habitat fragmentation and population isolation.
- Habitat protection and management but no co-ordinated control of mink.

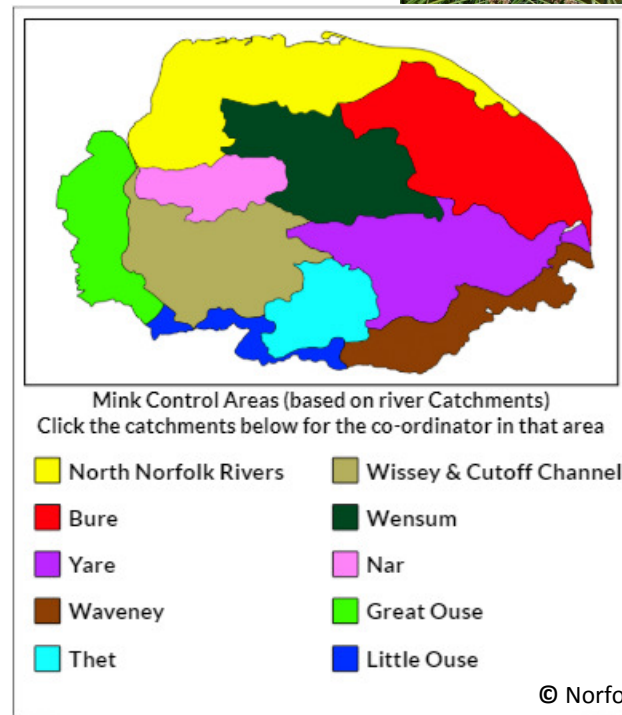


NORFOLK MINK PROJECT



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- Ad hoc trapping by gamekeepers, but previously no county wide strategy = Norfolk Mink Project est. 2003
- Started small, covering just one river catchment
- In 2012, expanded to cover the entire county (10 catchments)
- Uses a network of volunteers organised by catchment.
- Part time catchment coordinators:
ID new volunteers, provide training,
distribute equipment, collate records.



NORFOLK MINK PROJECT



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- 288 volunteers (2017/18), 3 part-time coordinators
= 'Cloud' database (EU funding)
- Remote data entry, easier mapping / analysis

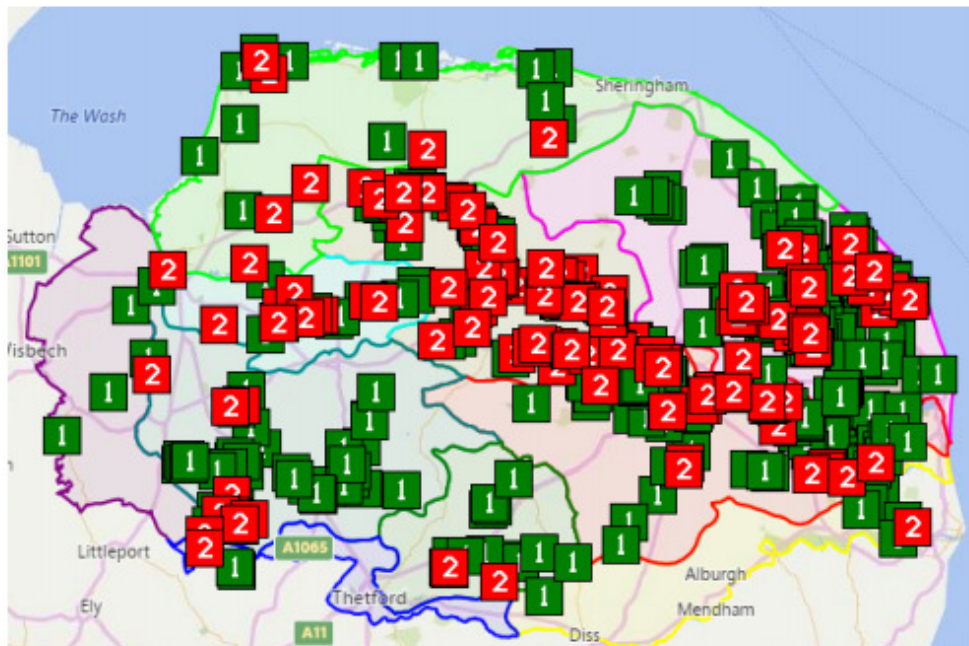
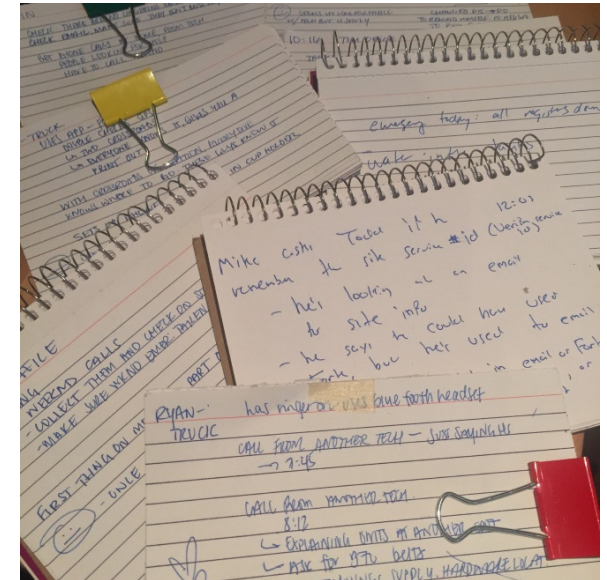


Figure 1
Raft & trap
positions
current in 2017



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- 14 years of data – now online
- How can we use this to improve practices and better target project objectives?



1. Establish monetary value of volunteer effort (secure future funding by demonstrating value for money)
2. Determine extent that the project is impacting Norfolk mink population.
3. Support the targeting of project through assessment of potential mink habitat and trapping coverage.



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1. Volunteer effort



- 288 current volunteers surveyed to find out how much time they spend on the project
- Monetary value calculated on HLF rates for volunteer time (semi-skilled) = £150 / day

= 115,000 p/a

- Project funding = £20,000 p/a

= 475% increase

= strong evidence of sustainability/operational model for funding bodies

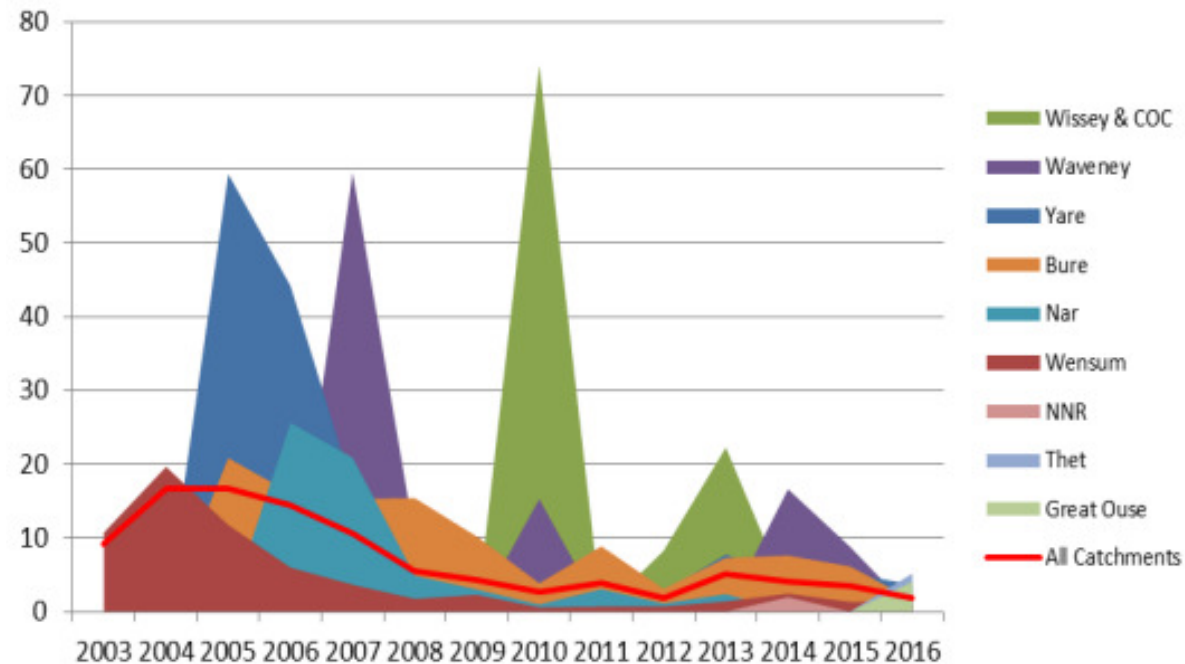
**BUT = what are they doing?
Are they working efficiently?**

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2. Impact on mink populations

- Mink kills alone don't tell you much about the population
- Mink captured per unit effort needed to quantify impact
- created index 'kill per unit effort = number of mink killed for each unit of control effort (for every 1000 raft/trap checks)

Trap captures per 1000 raft/trap checks



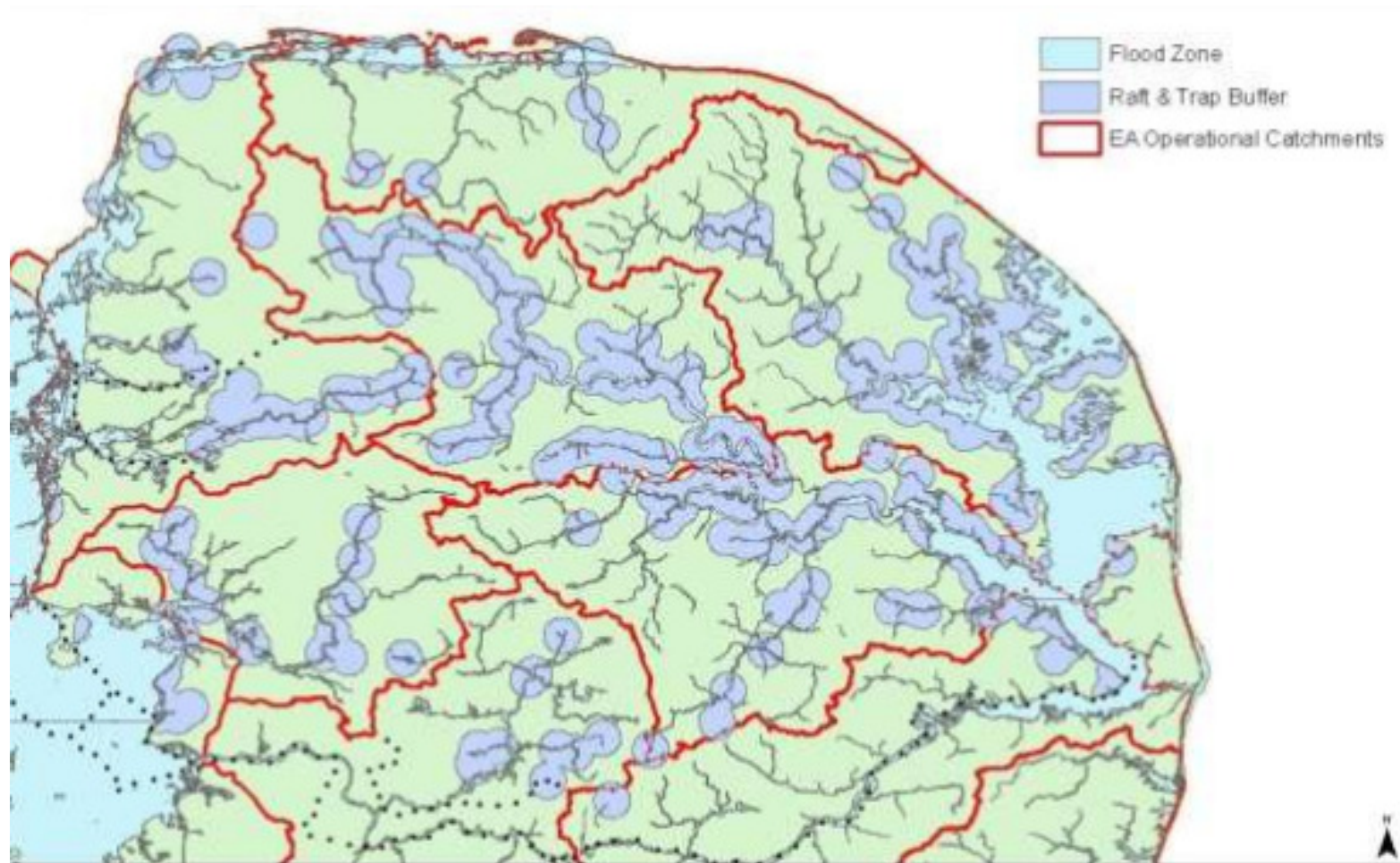
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3. Target effort

Catchment	Total mink habitat (Ha)	Covered area (Ha)	% coverage
Bure	14704	9409	64
Grt Ouse	1948	17.3	0.9
Ltl Ouse & Thet	7273	534.8	7.4
N Norfolk NW Rivers	12580	2836	22.5
Waveney	9779	3054	31.2
Wensum	6298	4183	66.4
Wissey & Cut-Off	6780	2246	33.1
Yare	6020	3336	55.4

- Potential mink habitat across Norfolk identified from EA flood map (zone 3, frequently flooded) and NE priority habitat inventory dataset layers.
- Locations of rafts and traps plotted with 1.5 km buffer (territory size) around each point.

NORFOLK MINK PROJECT



[Quarterly Live News](#)
 Q2 (April - June) • Captures: **Bure 1** • Sightings: **Bure** - Live sighting at Barton Broad

2018 Results to Date

2 North Norfolk	5 Bure	7 Yare	0 Waveney	1 Thet
0 Wissey	0 Wensum	0 Nar	0 Great Ouse	0 Little Ouse

Some records can be late coming in and the Suffolk Wildlife Trusts numbers for the Waveney and Little Ouse will not be put in until they have their full numbers at the end of the year, these will be in our yearly updates.

2017 STATISTICS

Total Mink Caught	72
Rafts Deployed	422
Traps on Loan	430
Volunteers Involved	288

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<https://thenorfolkminkproject.org.uk/norfolk-statistics/>

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