Aerial Photomaps Help Protect Norfolkâ€™s Wildlife

High-resolution aerial photography is providing a map of hard-to-access land to help the UK's Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) to plan, manage and report on a range of groundbreaking habitat restoration projects. Downloaded from Bluesky's online Mapshop by NWT, the aerial photographs detail an area of West Norfolk known as Roydon Common. Due to the nature and location of the reserve, traditional mapping is not sufficiently detailed for NWT. Even with the mobile data collection system, there are areas that simply cannot be reached on foot.

The Bluesky aerial photographs provide detail and add ground feature context to specialist maps layers, such as peat depths, water chemistry and vegetation maps, making it easier to identify and locate specific features, locations or projects.

The Bluesky imagery is supporting and informing projects to create new grassland habitats and restore rare bog and fen habitats. The photography will also benefit a project to aid the continued development of the rare mire community, including rare breeding birds, water voles and rare plant life, such as woolly feather-moss, sedge species and orchids, which call Roydon Common home. The common is also a highly important site for invertebrates, including 13 nationally scarce species, which will also benefit from the restoration and re-establishment of the mire and fen meadows.

One of the examples of lowland valley mire (an area of water logged peat), Roydon Common is home to some of England's rarest flora and fauna, and NWT is undertaking a range of innovative projects to restore and recreate the lowland habitats.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust purchased the Bluesky high resolution, map accurate images to use in the organisation's corporate Geographical Information System (GIS) from MapInfo. Covering two separate eras – 2010 and 2014 – the 25cm resolution images provide detail and context not available from other sources. The images also aid analysis, contributing to decision making and informing restoration plans.

The datasets were purchased from Bluesky's online Mapshop, which offers complete nationwide coverage of aerial photography from multiple epochs, 3D models (Digital Terrain and Surface Models DTM / DSM), Lidar data, Thermal Mapping and the National Tree Map.