

# **BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (2004-2006)**

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## Summary

Biodiversity is the sum of the natural environment, it includes all living plants and animals together with their surroundings. Governments around the world are realising how important it is to protect our environment and in 1992 a meeting took place at Rio de Janeiro between many nations. At this 'Earth Summit' those who attended made a formal commitment to work together to protect the environment. One of the agreements signed was the Biodiversity Convention. Each country agreed to draw up plans to protect it's own biodiversity.

Action Plans for individual habitats and some species are already being prepared in the UK by various agencies and organisations. Habitat and Species Action Plans provide a holistic framework for improvement of a particular habitat or species across a certain area. They determine how to action the conservation of that habitat or species over a range of sites. This local Biodiversity Action Plan identifies the important habitats and species within the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and sets out how we can preserve and enhance these through practical action.

Hammersmith & Fulham's Biodiversity Action Plan is an evolving process. Rather than being a lengthy document, which by itself will not improve the biodiversity of the borough, the emphasis is on the commitment that is generated to implement specific actions. The Biodiversity Action Plan therefore documents the co-ordination required for action.

## Introduction

### What is Biodiversity and why does it matter?

- 1.0 Biodiversity is the word we use to describe the incredible variety of living things on the Earth. It includes all living things together with their surroundings (known as 'habitats') and encompasses not only rare or threatened species but also those which are commonplace.

The concept of biodiversity has arisen from the principles of ecology. Ecology is simply the study of the relationships between living organisms and their habitats or environment. It includes the study of species populations, communities and ecosystems and the way that they interact.

- 1.1 Biodiversity is all around us but human activities are destroying biodiversity at an accelerated rate. Our use of the land, pollution of the air and water and exploitation of plants and animals threatens species and many habitats that were once plentiful are now scarce. The introduction of exotic species has also influenced the prevalence of some of our native species. It is important that we do not take biodiversity for granted as no organism can exist in isolation from other living things but we are all linked by complex natural processes (that we still do not fully understand), which contributes to the balance of nature. It is this balance, or interaction between living things, that contributes to the health of our planet and which we depend upon to survive.

#### How can human actions impact on biodiversity?

##### **Example 1: Worldwide action**

Humans are currently over-harvesting the world's resources of animal and plant life. In 2002 it was estimated that humans were harvesting about half of all animal and plant life on the planet. Trees are currently being removed 10 times faster than new growth and in the sea 70% of fish species are being harvested faster than the rate at which they can reproduce.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately this will impact on humans as well as the species concerned. For example trees take up carbon dioxide and help to prevent global warming and many communities depend on fishing for their livelihood and food source.

##### **Example 2: Local action**

Biodiversity can also be affected locally. The way we manage our back gardens, school grounds, allotments and parks influences the number and different types of species that live there. For example, using pesticides to kill black fly may also be harmful to other insects and birds. In addition to preserving biodiversity for biodiversity's sake, most people would agree that experiencing nature in our local environment provides great enjoyment and we would feel impoverished in a world without birds and other species.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Zoo Directory (<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/zoodirectory/extinct.htm>)

- 1.2 As well as supporting life itself Biodiversity matters to people for other reasons. It can be harvested for economic benefit e.g. raw materials, food and medicines and provides indirect economic advantages through tourism. It enriches our quality of life and surroundings to help us stay relaxed. Biodiversity also has cultural, social, aesthetic and spiritual values for people. Biodiversity can be locally specific and species diversity is an indicator of the health of the local environment.

## **Biodiversity Action Plans**

### Background to Biodiversity Action Plans

- 1.3 In 1992, over 150 countries from across the world met in Rio de Janeiro at what became known as the 'Earth Summit'. One of the agreements signed was the Convention on Biological Diversity with the aim of protecting the global diversity of species and habitats.
- 1.4 The Local Agenda 21 process also arose from the Earth Summit and is a programme of action for sustainable development in the 21st century. Local Agenda 21 is complementary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as action for Biodiversity will form a significant contribution to achieving a more sustainable way of life.
- 1.5 The UK followed up the convention with the production of "Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan" in 1994. The Government also recommended that every local area should develop its own Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), to be put together by a partnership of local people and organisations (a Biodiversity partnership).
- 1.6 Since the production of the national BAP, a London BAP has been drawn up by the London Biodiversity Partnership and The Mayor of London has published a Biodiversity Strategy for London. Many local authorities in London have prepared or are currently drafting a local borough BAP.

### Why do we need a BAP for Hammersmith & Fulham?

- 1.7 In the autumn of 2002 the Hammersmith & Fulham Local Agenda 21 Forum and the council met to discuss the production of a BAP for Hammersmith & Fulham. It was recognised that there was a need to develop priorities and a programme of action for biodiversity across the borough to prevent a decline of species and habitats at a local level. Levels of biodiversity are thought to have declined in recent history, globally, nationally and locally, due to natural and human induced reasons. These include industrialisation of urban areas and agricultural practices, creeping urbanisation, attitudes to wildlife such as hunting and collecting

and more recently global warming. In order to prevent and reverse this decline, practical action is needed and the Hammersmith & Fulham BAP will set out a strategy and prioritise actions for protecting, conserving and enhancing wildlife (Species Action Plans/SAP's) and habitats (Habitat Action Plans/HAPs) in the borough.

- 1.8 Hammersmith & Fulham is a member of the London Borough Biodiversity Forum (LBBF) and the West London Alliance Biodiversity Partnership. Wildlife and habitats do not conform to administrative boundaries and neither is it intended that the BAP will be operated in isolation. Instead it is proposed that the BAP be prepared having regard to particularly vulnerable habitats and species that are of value to Hammersmith & Fulham but also taking into account national, London and local priorities and targets.
- 1.9 A BAP for Hammersmith & Fulham will allow for the monitoring of biodiversity in the borough and help gauge the quality of life of our surroundings through the indicators provided by the health of our local habitats and species. It will also provide an opportunity for those living or working in the borough to become involved in protecting and enjoying their local environment and wildlife. Further detail on the content of HAPs and SAPs is provided later.

### **What wildlife does Hammersmith and Fulham currently have?**

- 1.10 Hammersmith & Fulham is a densely urbanised inner London borough and little remains of the original countryside. Substantial open space remains in the extreme north of the borough, but even here there are few habitats of old times, most of the area consisting of sports fields and parkland. Only the excellent unimproved grassland of Kensal Green cemetery contains communities of plants and animals, which have survived more or less, unchanged for hundreds of years. Nevertheless, some fine wildlife sites can still be found along the Borough's waterways and railsides, in private gardens, community gardens and other open spaces where these are not over manicured. The borough's cemeteries and parks are also of value, notably Wormwood Scrubs our first statutory Local Nature Reserve. Hammersmith & Fulham also has the Thames river frontage, the ancient grounds of Fulham Palace and several other large open spaces. The built environment is important as it can provide an opportunity for wildlife, as can the ponds and lakes distributed across the borough in our parks and gardens. The full extent of the boroughs wildlife is still unknown and the following HAP's and SAP's include actions to survey habitats and species so that we will have a better understanding of what the borough supports.

- 1.11 A survey of Hammersmith & Fulham's wildlife habitats, carried out by the London Wildlife Trust in 1988 looked at all green spaces in the borough of one tenth of a hectare or larger, assessing the wildlife value of each. The sites covered by the survey totalled 225 hectares or about 14% of the total surface area of the borough. It showed that over 60% of green space comprises formal parkland, sports pitches and amenity grassland. Of the remaining, wilder habitats, the majority is made up of grassland and herbaceous (or 'weed' communities, with comparatively little woodland, scrub and wetland; however the latter is an artificially low figure as the London Wildlife Trust's survey did not include the River Thames. (Source: former London Ecology Unit's handbook No 25, 1993).
- 1.12 The 1993 survey also describes 35 areas of land in some detail and graded them as being either:
- ◆ Sites of Metropolitan Importance (3 sites)
  - ◆ Sites of Borough Importance Grade I (7 sites) and Grade II (3 sites)
  - ◆ Sites of Local importance (16 sites)
- 1.13 In addition several linear features have been identified as Green Corridors, notably the River Thames, Grand Union Canal and railway lineside/tracksides land. Reference was also made to important sites in neighbouring authorities and shows Areas of Deficiency (in terms of public accessibility to nature conservation sites) within the borough.
- 1.14 In July 2002, an area of Wormwood Scrubs, the largest park in the borough, was declared the first statutory Local Nature Reserve for Hammersmith and Fulham. The site is made up of several different but interconnecting areas, totalling 13.7 hectares (20% of the area of the park). Its existing value in terms of natural features lies mainly in the island woodland areas and woodland/scrub habitat at the park's peripheries. These significant stands of woodland and scrub form one of the most valuable wildlife sites in the borough and support a variety of plant and animal species. There is also a translocated lizard habitat area adjacent to the railway bank supporting a population of common lizards, a species protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). A Nature Conservation Manager has been appointed to the site for the following three years and has drawn up a draft management plan for the LNR, adopted by the council in July 2003.

## **Legal framework for wildlife protection**

### European Policy

- 1.15 In 1992 the then European Community adopted Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, known as the Habitats Directive. This is an important piece of international wildlife legislation, intended to provide member states of the European Union (EU) with a mechanism to meet their obligations under the 1979 Bern Convention and to complement the provisions of the 1979 Birds Directive. The main aim of the Habitats Directive is:

"...to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the Treaty applies" (Article 2)

- 1.16 In the UK the Directives have been transposed into legislation by 'The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994' and 'The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1995', as amended (informally known as 'The Habitats Regulations').

### National Policy

- 1.17 Wildlife in the UK receive protection under various legislation including:-
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
  - The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000
  - Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (1994)

The species that are protected under this legislation includes: bats, badgers, water voles, great crested newts, reptiles and nesting birds.

- 1.18 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 9: Nature Conservation  
PPG 9 embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and to conserving the diversity of our wildlife through planning. This is to help meet our international obligations under the Biodiversity Convention signed by the Government at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the resultant UK Strategy, Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan (1994). The PPG emphasises the importance of both designated and undesignated areas in planning for nature conservation. It looks to local authorities to keep themselves informed of the state of the natural environment locally, and to take account of nature conservation interests wherever relevant to local decisions (Paragraph 4).

### Regional- Greater London

- 1.19 The London Mayor has a responsibility to prepare and publish a London Biodiversity Strategy and have regard to Biodiversity plans prepared by London Borough Councils when reviewing the Strategy. The Mayors Strategy, Connecting with London's Nature was published in July 2002.

The Strategy is the first regional biodiversity strategy with a statutory basis. The document details the Mayor's vision for protecting and conserving London's natural open spaces. It seeks to ensure that there is no overall loss of wildlife habitats in London, and that more open spaces are created and made accessible to Londoners.

### Statutory Organisations

1.20 **Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).** One of the objectives of DEFRA is to protect and improve the rural, urban, marine and global environment and to lead integration of these with other policies across Government and internationally. The Joint Nature Conservancy Council is the UK Government's wildlife adviser, undertaking national and international conservation work on behalf of the three country nature conservation agencies English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales

1.21 **English Nature** is the Government funded body whose purpose is to promote the conservation of England's wildlife and natural features. They achieve this by taking action themselves and by working through and enabling others. Their main duties and powers have been given to them by the following Acts of Parliament:

- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
- Countryside Act 1968
- Nature Conservancy Council Act 1973
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended 1985)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

### **Local Framework for wildlife protection**

#### The role of the council

1.22 The council has several important roles in furthering biodiversity within the borough.

- ◆ As a local planning authority: to protect sites of nature conservation value; prevent harmful development and to promote enhancement of existing habitats through planning agreements. Further information on the local planning framework is provided below.

- ◆ As a landowner; to protect and improve habitats in parks and open spaces, including temporary open space on vacant land and in churchyards/cemeteries through sensitive management.
- ◆ As a land manager e.g. the council hold a 100 year lease on Fulham Palace - which is owned by the Church Commissioners. The Environment department manages the grounds (as well as the buildings and tenants) and employs three dedicated gardeners.
- ◆ As an education authority; to provide environmental education in schools; for the community through talks, guided walks and the provision of interpretative materials

### The local planning framework

1.23 The statutory Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides for the planning framework for nature conservation in the borough, in particular the following policies:

<p><b>Part 1, Policy G3: Environment:</b> Recognising and protecting the natural environment and biodiversity of the borough by protecting, managing and seeking to enhance nature conservation areas and green corridors linking with other boroughs, developing new nature conservation areas where possible and securing the protection and enhancement of features of nature conservation interest in connection with development proposals.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 4, Environment</b></p>
<p><b>Policy EN22:</b> Development on public open space and other green open space of borough-wide importance identified on the proposals map (<i>selected from the LEU list and shown in the table below</i>) will not be permitted unless it can be shown that such development would preserve or enhance its open character as a sport, leisure or recreational resource; and it's contribution to biodiversity and visual amenity.</p>
<p><b>Policy EN27:</b> Protects nature conservation areas identified on the proposals map from development likely to cause demonstrable harm to their wildlife value.</p>
<p><b>Policy EN28:</b> Promotion of improvements to green corridors</p>
<p><b>Policy EN28A:</b> Prevents development harming protected species or the habitat of a protected species.</p>
<p><b>Policy EN29:</b> Guidelines for ensuring development proposals protect any significant nature conservation interest of the site and any nearby nature conservation areas.</p>

**Policy EN31A:** Seeks to preserve and enhance the special character of the nature conservation and open space aspect of the Thames corridor.

**Policy EN40:** Developments along the canal must respect its character and special nature conservation value.

(Reference: UDP 2003)

Nature Conservation Sites in Hammersmith & Fulham (UDP 2003)

1.24 The following are sites identified by the Former Ecology Unit of nature conservation importance.

Areas of Metropolitan Importance	
M6	Grand Union canal and its towpath
M31	The River Thames with its foreshore, drawdocks and inlets including Chelsea Creek
M125	Kensal Green Cemetery
Areas of Grade I Borough importance	
BI.1	Scrubs Wood and Wormwood Scrubs
BI.2	Old oak Common Sidings Birch Wood
BI.3	White City Woodlands-south of Ariel Way
BI.4	Fulham Palace and Bishop's Park (including All Saints' Churchyard)
BI.5	British Gas Pond - at end of Chelsea creek to west of railway
BI.6	Hurlingham Club Grounds
BI.7	Railside habitats (various locations)
Areas of Grade II Borough Importance	
BII.1	St Mary's Cemetery
BII.2	Hammersmith Park
BII.3	Ravenscourt Park
Areas of Local Importance	
L1	White City Community Gardens
L2	Wormholt park
L3	Uxbridge road rough *
L4	Wendell Park
L5	Cathnor Park
L6	Shepherd's Bush Common
L7	Furnival Gardens
L8	St Paul's Open Space
L9	Hammersmith Cemetery
L10	Fulham Palace Road Cemetery
L11	Normand Park
L12	South Park

L13	Eel Brook Common
L14	Little Wormwood Scrubs Park
L15	Loris Road Community Garden
L16	Godolphin Road Community Garden

\* This site has been granted planning permission with soft landscaping and a green roof as mitigation

- 1.25 This is not a definitive list of land in the borough with wildlife value, but rather a list of sites where the wildlife value is of primary importance or is a very important facet of that land. Many other locations will have other prime functions but will also have significant wildlife interest e.g. various school wildlife sites and individual household gardens

### The role of the community

- 1.26 The local community also play an important role in promoting biodiversity within the borough, for example:
- Local voluntary organisations take an interest in nature conservation and the environment and are involved in practical tasks and campaigning
  - Other groups are formed through concern for a single site and campaign for its protection or good management e.g. Friends of Parks Groups.
  - Community groups manage small open spaces in the borough which they lease from the council for peppercorn rents. These are managed with nature conservation and education among their primary aims.
  - Residents can manage their gardens and allotments in a manner which encourages wildlife
  - Some schools manage their grounds for the benefit of nature and use this resource to teach their pupils about nature and biodiversity.
  - Individuals have recorded some species of personal interest and this will assist in monitoring our ecological stock.
  - Residents and community groups can implement actions in site Management Plans e.g. Wormwood Scrubs LNR Management Plan,
  - Businesses can assist wildlife through appropriate landscaping and grounds maintenance.

### The role of wildlife organisations

- 1.27 London Wildlife Trust is a charity working throughout the Greater London area. As well as caring for over 60 nature reserves, the Trust campaigns to save green spaces from harmful development, provides information about nature to Londoners, and works with local communities and schools

to ensure that London is a better place, not only for wildlife, but for people too.

### **The Hammersmith & Fulham Biodiversity Partnership**

1.28 A partnership of local people and organisations is needed to pool existing knowledge in order to produce a BAP for Hammersmith & Fulham. Most importantly a partnership is needed to implement the actions proposed and monitor the effectiveness of the outcome.

1.29 The LA21 forum and the council generated an extensive list of potential interested organisations, community groups, environmental bodies and individuals. These were invited to participate in the BAP process and join up to a partnership. It is planned that the Partnership will be involved in a number of ways :

- As a forum for discussion of ideas and issues to achieve a balanced view
- To assist in preparation of draft sections of the BAP depending on areas of expertise
- To provide advice and comment on the draft BAP as it is prepared
- To help raise awareness of the BAP and assist in providing publicity material
- To share information on species and habitats.

1.30 The individuals and organisations in the table below have signed up to the partnership indicating their support and involvement in a Biodiversity Action Plan for Hammersmith & Fulham. The partnership is open to any individual or organisation and we welcome and encourage new members.

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS	OBSERVER STATUS
Hammersmith & Fulham LA21 Forum	British Waterways
British Waterways	English Nature
David Lindo - Ornithologist	Environment Agency
Emlyn Leisure Gardens Association	Greater London Authority
Friends of the Scrubs	London Biodiversity Project Officer
Fulham Palace Allotments	Port of London Authority
Groundwork West London	Transport for London
Hammersmith and Fulham Community Gardens Association	Peabody Trust

Hammersmith & Fulham Friends of the Earth	Hurlingham Club
British Trust for Nature Volunteers	
Hammersmith Society	
Historic Buildings Group	
London Wildlife Trust	
Sinclair Road Residents Association	
Urban Studies Centre	

## Sources of funding

- 1.31 The majority of the actions detailed in the following sections do not need new sources of funding but are more about altering existing management and maintenance to achieve biodiversity benefits. Several of the proposed actions detailed in the following sections do however depend on the level of funding available to implement them. The Biodiversity Action Plan is not intended to be a prescriptive list of actions for the council to carry out, but rather suggestions for positive action that everyone living on the borough can get involved in. The following sources will be investigated:-

### Reorientation of maintenance budgets

Many of the actions do not require additional funds but can be achieved by re-orientating existing management and maintenance budgets. This applies to both the council and all land owners such as private businesses, schools, hospitals, and railway companies etc.

### Through development

Many biodiversity improvements may be carried out at little or no extra cost if they are integrated into new development proposals. Measures can be incorporated through planning conditions and section 106 agreements such as landscaping and planting schedules, which are designed and managed accordingly by the developer. Alternatively the section 106 agreement may provide funding for environmental improvements which are linked to the development in some way and which occasionally the council may be able to apply to nature conservation improvement projects.

### Commercial sponsorship

We are keen to work with local businesses who may be willing to sponsor local improvement projects.

### Grants/external funding bids

There are several sources of funding available to biodiversity themed projects. These include the English Nature New Opportunities Fund, Esmee Fairburne Trust and the recently announced ODPM Liveability Fund. The Landfill Tax (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1 October. Under the new regulations, biodiversity related projects will be able to benefit from funding available under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. The government is also making available a new range of grants (Living Spaces- Community Enablers Scheme) for existing neighbourhood groups to improve outdoor spaces .

### BAP Partners

The biodiversity action plan partners listed above may be able to provide support through volunteering, publicising events, producing publicity material or leading on specific projects of interest to them. The LA21 forum has already expressed an interest in helping to fund the publication of a summary leaflet for this document.

## **Making it Happen- What you can do**

- 1.32 The Hammersmith & Fulham BAP includes proposals for a programme of wildlife and habitat survey work, much of which anyone can take part in. There a range of ways that you can get involved and the BAP Partnership is committed to working with local residents, schools, businesses and other organisations to protect and enhance wildlife sites across the borough. If you are interested in any aspect of the BAP or want to find out more please contact the Partnership, contact details are given below.
- 1.33 There are a range of ways you can get involved from helping out at a nature reserve, wildlife gardening in your garden or local allotment to carrying out a local wildlife survey or designing publicity material. You may even like to sign up to the BAP partnership yourself and get involved in projects that interest you.

## **Contacts**

- **Emma Banthorpe, London Borough Hammersmith & Fulham, Policy Group, Environment Department, Town Hall, King Street, London W6 9JU. Tel: 020 8753 5686. Fax: 020 8753 3036. E-mail: emma.banthorpe@lbhf.gov.uk**
- **Matt Dunckley, Hammersmith & Fulham Local Agenda 21 Forum. Tel: 020 7381 2625. E-mail: hfla21@fsmail.net**

## The Habitat and Species Action Plans (HAPs and SAPs)

### What are HAPs and SAPs?

1.34 Although there are management plans for specific sites in the borough, such as the Wormwood Scrubs LNR Management Plan, Habitat and Species Action Plans differ in that they provide a holistic framework for improvement of a particular habitat or species across a wider area. They determine how to action the conservation of that habitat or species over a range of sites, in this case within the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Management Plans on the other hand are site specific and have to bring clarity to managing a range of potentially conflicting or resource demanding requirements within a defined area.

1.35 The Hammersmith & Fulham BAP identifies 7 habitats and 3 species which are especially important in Hammersmith and Fulham. The Habitats were chosen by the partnership as they are representative of the major habitat types in the borough. The species were chosen as they are either in danger, are of particular value to the area, or are 'flagship' species, the protection of which will result in benefits to many other types of wildlife. The HAPs and SAPs are:-

#### **Habitat**

Gardens and allotments  
Standing water bodies (lakes and ponds)  
Grand Union Canal  
'Greening' Buildings  
Trees, hedgerows and woodland  
Railway land and corridors  
River Thames and it's foreshore

#### **Species**

Black Redstart  
House sparrow

1.36 These HAPs and SAPs listed are not a definitive list and it is proposed to add Action plans for other habitats and species over time e.g. parks,

churchyards/cemeteries. Similarly the existing Action plans will be updated as further information is gathered.

- 1.37 Hammersmith & Fulham has similar certain characteristics to other London boroughs and metropolitan areas. It is the intention to use appropriate HAPs and SAPs that have already been produced and to adapt them to reflect the local conditions in Hammersmith & Fulham.
- 1.38 Each HAP and SAP follows the broad format of the London Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure a consistent approach across London. The Hammersmith & Fulham biodiversity partnership has decided to concentrate on HAPs rather than SAPs in this draft but to indicate 'flagship species'. Flagship species are those whose well being are indicative of the well-being of the habitat as a whole, those which people associate as being representative of that habitat type and that generate interest among the public.
- 1.39 Each HAP provides a background to the habitat, in terms of its location within the borough, a definition of the habitat type, it's importance locally for wildlife, it's legal status and the aims of the action plan. It then explains the specific factors that can affect the habitat such as physical characteristics and management, before detailing current action being undertaken locally to improve the habitat type. Flagship species are listed to help identify the habitat type and the HAP then focuses on specific objectives, targets and actions that need to be undertaken to preserve and improve the habitat and to increase peoples awareness and understanding of it. The Species Action Plans follow a similar format.

# **The Habitat Action Plans (HAPs)**

## **Gardens and allotments**

### **Background**

2.0 In London approximately one third of land area is occupied by private gardens<sup>2</sup>. There is no exact data on the number of households in the borough with gardens or allotments, however a H&F recycling survey in 1998/99 suggests that 57% of households have access to a garden. There are also two areas of allotments in H&F, a large one off Fulham Palace Road and a much smaller one at Emlyn Gardens in Askew ward. Two community groups within the Hammersmith Community Garden Association manage small open spaces in the borough, which they lease from the council for peppercorn rents. These are the Godolphin Road and Loris Road Community Gardens. Although not typically thought of as a wildlife habitat these smallish areas of open space combine to cover a high proportion of the land surface of H&F and often have a greater biodiversity value than many areas of our larger more formal urban green spaces. The borough also has a number of public gardens (parks) such as Furnival Gardens, however this Action Plan will concentrate on private gardens and allotments and consideration will be given to producing a parks Hap at a later stage.

### **Aims**

- ◆ To determine the extent of wildlife friendly gardening currently in the London borough of H&F
- ◆ Encourage wildlife gardening in the borough, through promoting and educating those residents with gardens and allotments to manage them for wildlife.

### **Introduction**

2.1 A number of factors will affect the diversity of wildlife attracted to gardens and allotments. Gardens with ponds, a varied habitat structure and native species often have a greater biodiversity than those which have been heavily manicured with few trees and containing exotic species, (although those which provide berries or nectar can also be valuable). Gardens with edges, corners and 'scruffy areas' along with dead wood are also valuable for biodiversity.

2.2 Gardens can provide habitat similar to hedgerows or the edge of woodlands, with their trees, borders, scrubs, climbers and grasses.

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<sup>2</sup> London Biodiversity Partnership 2001

Allotments also provide a wildlife habitat particularly those that are being managed with minimal use of pesticides.

- 2.3 The adjoining nature and proximity of gardens is also an important factor, as a group of small gardens becomes a series of linked habitats. Garden fences and boundaries do not restrict birds, bats, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects and air borne seeds so even small garden plots which are generally of lower value than large gardens are an invaluable resource.
- 2.4 A range of species have become well known to gardeners, particularly in urban areas. These include garden birds such as the song thrush, blackbird, robin, blue tit and house sparrow, (although the latter is recently declining). Butterflies such as the holly blue and peacock are also common visitors and larger gardens may support woodland edge species e.g. hedgehogs, noctule bat, stag beetles and where there are ponds, common frogs and dragonflies.

## **Current Status**

### Definition

- 2.5 Gardens can be defined as pieces of land adjoining a property, usually partly grassed and used for growing plants, flowers, fruit or vegetables. They often include areas of hard standing and bare ground and may also have plant pots, a pond, outdoor furniture and artificial breeding and feeding stations for birds and squirrels. In addition those households without the 'traditional' type of garden may have, roof gardens, green roofs, balconies with plants or even just window boxes. The Green Buildings HAP provides more information on these.
- 2.6 An allotment is commonly known as a small piece of land rented (usually from the local authority) for cultivation. There are an estimated 497 allotment plots in the borough.

### Legal status

- 2.7 The majority of gardens in the borough are in private ownership. In addition there are some gardens on housing estates which are tended either by householders, community gardens associations or the council and also some community gardens such as that at the Shanti Centre in Hammersmith. The council leases several allotment plots to the community groups detailed above. Those gardens in private ownership are managed at the discretion of the owner with subsequent positive or negative impact on biodiversity. The council can however issue Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate and all gardens must be managed within permitted development rights.

## **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

2.8 There are many different factors that can impact upon the biodiversity value of garden and allotments habitats and the species they support. These can be broadly defined into 4 categories:

### Physical characteristics of the habitat

Characteristics such as

- ◆ size
- ◆ soil type,
- ◆ hydrogeology,
- ◆ habitat structure
- ◆ distribution
- ◆ microclimate

### Management/maintenance factors

Gardening is one of the most popular recreational activities in the UK and allows daily direct contact with the natural environment. The council would like to encourage gardeners to manage their gardens in a wildlife friendly way by:

- ◆ timing hedge cutting to not coincide with the breeding season
- ◆ minimising the use of or using alternatives to chemical pesticides and insecticides which can pose a threat to non target species
- ◆ not removing leaf litter, dead wood and other organic detritus (also sending this to landfill rather than composting can cause additional problems)
- ◆ not over tidying/manicuring
- ◆ not planting invasive species
- ◆ not enriching soil which can affect species rich grassland
- ◆ keeping existing features such as ponds and bird tables when change of ownership occurs, (particularly in H&F with it's transient population)

### Threat of development

Loss of vegetation and trees through:

- ◆ Off street car parking/car ports
- ◆ hard landscaping e.g. patios, decking, gravel,
- ◆ backland development and infilling
- ◆ extensions and conservatories
- ◆ removal of trees that are mistakenly thought to be a threat to buildings.

## Cultural

- ◆ Gardening for wildlife can be perceived as difficult, time consuming and uncertain, involving additional costs and effort. There is also the perception that gardens must be left to run wild if they are to be of benefit to wildlife.
- ◆ There is traditionally a limited supply of wildlife friendly plants and products available at retail outlets. Many plant breeders and horticultural societies prefer to use traditional plants with improved traits, which guarantee size, colour and yield. Genetically Modified plants are also available, with the long term effects on biodiversity still unknown.
- ◆ The pressures on our busy lives have also resulted in 'instant' gardening, using easy to manage plants rather than those which may be more beneficial to nature.

## **Current action**

- ◆ The London Wildlife Trust (LWT) has produced a series of wildlife gardening literature for public use. (Contact LWT on 020 7261 0447 or visit the website: [www.wildlondon.org.uk](http://www.wildlondon.org.uk))
- ◆ The LWT is also running a London wide Garden survey. It lists several key species which respondents are asked to identify in their gardens and backyards. See Appendix 1 for details.
- ◆ The council offers subsidised compost bins to residents, which should reduce the purchase of peat from garden centres (thus helping the retention of peat bog habitats)
- ◆ Garden centres often now supply peat free alternatives.
- ◆ The council can draw up tree preservation orders to prevent the removal of certain trees from gardens

## **Flagship species**

2.9 As detailed above the LWT Garden survey in Greater London has selected certain species to act as indicators. We propose to use the following as flagship species for gardens and allotments in H&F:

- House Sparrow
- Blackbird
- Robin
- Wren
- Hedgehog
- Frog
- Stag beetle
- Ivy (climbing)
- Tree (over 3m)

## Objectives, Actions and Targets

**Objective 1:** To gain a better understanding of the existing value and extent of wildlife gardening and allotments in H&F

**Target 1:** Survey the boroughs private gardens and allotments

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Question in 2003 sample Household survey.	LBHF	Publish results end of December	To be confirmed
Use LWT garden species survey to sample gardens in borough. Promote through HFM (questions and prizes)	LBHF, LA21, LWT	2003/04	Volunteer time. Council to analyse results

**Objective 2:** To promote wildlife gardening to gardeners and those with allotments in the borough

**Target 2:** To launch a wildlife gardening publicity campaign

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Collect and disseminate existing wildlife gardening leaflets to libraries, information points, housing estate offices and events. (Need to programme events)	LBHF  LBHF and LA21	Jan 2004, then ongoing	None, council staff can implement  Volunteer time
Produce wildlife gardening display for horticultural show in Ravenscourt Park	LBHF, LA21, LWT	July 2004	Volunteer and council staff time
Hold wildlife friendly gardening talks or workshops, including ideas for 'micro gardens' (balconies etc)	LBHF (DSD) HCGA	Ongoing annual programme	Volunteer time Guest speaker

<b>Action</b>	<b>Main partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost implications</b>
Hold a photo competition for the most natural garden/best window box etc-link into garden competition	LBHF	July 2004 to correspond with Flower Show in Ravenscourt Park	Within garden competition budget?
Publicity in HFM/website detailing wildlife friendly gardening methods and species. Publish findings from above LWT survey.	LBHF	April 2003 and ongoing updates  2004	Can be met within existing council budgets  As above

## **Standing Water Bodies- lakes and ponds**

### **Background**

- 3.0 The borough does not have any large lakes or reservoirs and the total area of open water in the borough as documented in the London Wildlife Habitat Survey 1984/85 is estimated at merely one hectare. However even small lakes and ponds provide a resource for local wildlife, many of which are able to travel by land or air and to survive late summer drought but are unable to survive in larger or moving bodies of water. There are a number of small lakes in the borough located in Ravenscourt Park, The Hurlingham Club, Bishop's Park and Hammersmith Park. The latter is usually free from water birds and supports a range of aquatic flora, whilst the other three provide nesting sites for waterfowl such as mallards, coots and moorhens. The British Gas pond, a remnant of an old canal, in the south-east corner of the borough supports a diverse marginal vegetation.
- 3.1 In addition to these, residents of the borough also make a large contribution to this habitat through providing garden ponds. There are a number of smaller ponds in community and private gardens and in school grounds. Many of these have been managed for nature conservation and are valuable refuges for amphibians which rely on them as breeding sites. Valuable ponds can be seen at Flora Gardens School, West Brompton Pond, Loris Road Community Garden and Godolphin Road Community Garden.

### **Aims**

- ◆ To determine the extent of ponds and lakes in the London Borough of H&F by number, size and location.
- ◆ To encourage the creation of new wildlife ponds in gardens, school grounds and other locations as opportunities arise.
- ◆ Explore possibilities for improving the ecological quality and biodiversity of existing ponds and lakes both in parks, school grounds and gardens

### **Introduction**

- 3.2 For the purpose of developing this action plan the definition of 'standing water' is proposed as: any essentially non-flowing body of fresh water (though not canals), even those which may dry up during summers with low rainfall. As detailed above this will be predominantly artificial lakes and ponds in Hammersmith & Fulham.

- 3.3 Lakes and ponds provide a habitat for a variety of species which might include mammals e.g. hedgehogs, birds e.g. mallards, moorhens and garden song birds, fish e.g. perch, insects e.g. breeding dragonflies and damselflies, water boatmen and pond skaters, amphibians e.g. spawning frogs, toads and newts. They can also contain a variety of marginal and submerged vegetation.

## **Current Status**

### Definition

- 3.4 Park and garden ponds are artificially created often for aesthetic and ornamental reasons and constructed from a variety of materials including concrete and plastic to ensure retention of rain and tapwater. The number and size of ponds in Hammersmith & Fulham is not known, but pond creation does seem to be popular.
- 3.5 As a habitat ponds can show enormous variation, from a pool of water with goldfish and little else, to a habitat supporting a good diversity of plants, invertebrates and amphibians. Plants may be introduced from commercial suppliers, other ponds or natural sources such as colonisation through agents (e.g. birds and amphibians).
- 3.6 Standing water habitats are important because freshwater and the wet terrestrial conditions found at its margins represent one of the most diverse ecological habitats. Water is essential for life and water based habitats therefore support a huge number of flora and fauna. Open water has several functions for wildlife:-
- Those that spend their lives in water or in moisture laden soil conditions, e.g fish.
  - Those that spend part of their life-cycle in water or moisture laden soil conditions, e.g amphibians.
  - Those that are dependent upon wetland habitats as a specialist food source e.g birds.
  - Those that visit water to drink or bathe e.g mammals.

### Legal status

- 3.7 The maintenance of the boroughs public parks including any lakes/ponds is the responsibility of the council, with work undertaken by Parks Services, Direct Services Department. Gardens in the borough are in private ownership and ponds managed at the discretion of the owner. School grounds are maintained by caretakers employed by the council

and ponds /lakes in private ownership such as the Hurlingham Club are managed independently.

### **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

- 3.8 Factors affecting standing water habitats relate primarily to, design, water quality/quantity and management. This habitat type is extremely fragile and sensitive with a variety of both internal and external factors causing a potential threat to their ecological diversity.

#### Design characteristics of the habitat

- ◆ Location-surrounding trees, shade
- ◆ Size and shape- the larger the pond the more likely it is to attract and support greater numbers of species. Shallow sloping sides allow vertebrates to escape, shelves provide variation in depth for different plant species.

#### Water Quantity and Quality

- ◆ Lakes and ponds depend on incoming surface water (and ground water in natural waterbodies) and in the case of small lakes and garden ponds generally need topping up with tap water to prevent them drying up.
- ◆ If the tap water has high levels of nutrients e.g. nitrates, this may effect the ecology of the pond. Run off of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers may also have a negative impact. The presence of abnormally high nutrient levels, a process called eutrophication leads to changes in the dominant biota, increases in water turbidity and sedimentation, reduction in dissolved oxygen levels and sometimes the development of anaerobic conditions. All of these effects can be detrimental to water quality and biodiversity.

#### Introduction of alien species

- ◆ A number of exotic (non native) plants have become invasive when people have inadvertently put surplus plants into natural ponds. Non native plant and animal species can also find their way into water bodies as garden escapees, attached to other animals and under their own mobility. Problems arise with non native species when they grow in an uncontrolled manner due to a lack of natural predators or an inability for animals to feed on them. Invasive species can cause the loss or displacement of natives which can also result in secondary losses from those groups who depended on them for their survival. Particularly problematic invasive species for ponds are Giant Hogweed and Himalayan balsam which colonise around the outside of ponds and Starwort. It is important that we look out for these species and do not let them become invasive in Hammersmith and Fulham ponds.

## Management

- ◆ Without management, garden ponds would undergo succession to marshland and then to grassland, scrub and woodland at the expense of aquatic and wetland species that require earlier open water conditions.
- ◆ Management of the surrounding area influences pond ecology e.g. by providing damp dark places for newts to hibernate, encouraging insect life for frogs and dragonflies to feed.

## **Current action**

- ◆ The London Wildlife Trust (LWT) has produced a series of wildlife gardening literature for public use, including a fact sheet on pond building (Contact LWT on 020 7261 0447 or visit the website: [www.wildlondon.org.uk](http://www.wildlondon.org.uk))
- ◆ The “pond doctor”, funded by FrogLife is available to give free advice on how to improve the wildlife potential of your pond. (Contact the pond doctor on 01986 873733 or visit the website: [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org))
- ◆ Local Garden centres supply preformed plastic pond moulds and certain aquatic plants (Look in the Yellow Pages for your nearest local garden centres)
- ◆ Groundwork West London has produced guidelines for Park Services on how to maintain the pond in Bishop’s Park.

## **Flagship species**

3.9 As detailed in the Garden and allotments HAP, the LWT Garden survey in Greater London has selected certain species to act as indicators. We propose to use the frog as the flagship species for ponds in H&F

## **Objectives, Actions and Targets**

**Objective 1:** To gain an understanding of the extent and size of ponds in H&F

**Target 1:** Create and maintain a database of the boroughs ponds

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Carry out a pond location survey using council and LA21 website, HFM, local	LBHF ,LA21 forum	2003/2004	Volunteer and council staff time.

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
paper and writing to schools			
Set up database to record information	LBHF,	2003/04	Staff time

**Objective 2:** To promote ponds as an important wildlife habitat and encourage dissemination of information regarding pond creation and management.

**Target 2:** To initiate a publicity campaign on the ecological value of ponds during 2003/04

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Source/prepare leaflets promoting construction and maintenance of ponds	LA21, LWT	Spring 2004	

**Objective 3:** To promote and enhance the ecological quality of ponds and lakes managed by the council

**Target 3:** Identify whether active management plans have been developed and establish examples of good practice.

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Meet with land owners to identify current management practice of ponds and consider ecological enhancements	council	2004	Staff time and cost of enhancement projects

Links to other action plans: HAPs; parks and allotments.

## Canals

### Background

- 4.0 London has approximately 80km of canal covering an area of 270 ha, of which Hammersmith & Fulham has approximately 6 ha including the towpath and banksides. The entire canal network in London is managed by British Waterways. The Grand Union Canal runs along the northern edge of the borough and as one of two major waterways in the borough is of considerable importance for wildlife as reflected in it's designation as a site of Metropolitan Importance for nature conservation<sup>3</sup>. It is also important as it provides public access to nature, particularly so in a built up borough such as Hammersmith & Fulham. Residents are able to walk along the length of the towpath or take pleasure cruises.
- 4.1 The nature conservation interest of the canal has arisen as a consequence of its decline as a corridor of trade and commerce. Declining canal use at the turn of the century and the more recent measures to combat pollution has enabled wildlife to colonise the canal system. It is particularly important as it acts as a corridor providing valuable links to fragmented habitats and open spaces in an intensive urban environment.

### Aims

- ◆ To protect and enhance the wildlife value of the Grand Union Canal in the borough
- ◆ To promote public awareness of and enjoyment from canals

### Introduction

- 4.2 London's canals support a wide range of aquatic flora, amongst which are found a number of locally uncommon species. These include narrow-leaved water plantain, rigid hornwort and shining pondweed, all species of clean, clear waters. Many waterside plants including several London rarities, also grow on the brickwork and banks of the canal. The canals also support an important invertebrate fauna (including several species dragon/damselflies), a diverse fish community and breeding wildfowl.
- 4.3 In Hammersmith & Fulham the canal is divided roughly halfway by Mitre Bridge. The London Ecology Unit handbook<sup>4</sup> for the borough notes that to the east of the bridge the canal has woody edges alongside St Mary's and

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<sup>3</sup> London Ecology Unit Handbook no 25, 1993

<sup>4</sup> London Ecology Unit Handbook no 25, 1993

- Kensal Green Cemeteries. The canalside is densely wooded with crack willow, ash and sycamore, with an understorey of hawthorn, elder and privet and a ground flora comprising of bramble and ivy. The tow path, which runs along the southern edge of the canal is bordered by narrow strips of grassland, which is mown short beside the path, but has been allowed to grow longer at the margins and supports a good range of common wild flowers. These in turn provide shelter and food for a variety of common invertebrates, including butterflies.
- 4.4 The brick wall to the south of the tow path supports an excellent assemblage of fern which grow between the bricks in the lime mortar. Wall flora is becoming rare in London as modern mortar is too hard to allow plants to take root. There are two substantial populations of delicate fern, wall-rue and black spleenwort which are rare in London in addition to more common ferns which have colonised here.
- 4.5 The Western half of the canal is not one of the more scenic stretches of London's waterways, edged by an industrial estate on the northern bank and high concrete walls blocking the view southwards from the towpath. The vegetation is similar along the towpath edge to that in the eastern section, although less closely mown allowing a greater opportunity for wild flowers. There is also access to an area of birch woodland.
- 4.6 The banks of the canal along its length consists of vertical brick and steel piling, allowing little opportunity for emergent or marginal vegetation. A few plants however including waterdock, rare in London, have rooted in the gaps of the brickwork.
- 4.7 The canal supports a diverse fish population, which in turn attract black-headed gulls and grey herons. Water birds such as mallards, coots and moorhens breed beside the canal. The blue-tailed damselfly also breeds in the canal
- 4.8 Canal side buildings and infrastructure (tunnels, bridges) may provide roost sites for bats.

## **Current Status**

### Definition

- 4.9 Canals are artificial waterways constructed for the purpose of inland navigation, however their importance declined with the introduction of the railway in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Canals are now used primarily as an amenity and recreational resource and provide a habitat for a range of wetland species.

- 4.10 Just over a kilometre of the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal runs right across the north of the borough, from the boundary with Ealing to that with Kensington and Chelsea. The canal provides a valuable habitat for fish, waterbirds and aquatic plants and invertebrates. The adjacent towpath forms a strip of terrestrial habitat, providing the public with unlimited free access.

#### Legal Status

- 4.11 The canal and towpath are owned by British Waterways. They have a Code of Practice for assessing and implementing all activities along the canal. They have also produced a corporate Biodiversity Action Plan (2002).
- 4.12 The canal is designated a site of Metropolitan Importance and as such has policies afforded to it in the UDP. Policy EN40 states that the council will encourage improvements to the environment and character of the Grand Union Canal and supports British Waterways objective to achieve improvements in water quality and to minimise pollution, it will seek to improve access to the canal to encourage use for transport and for recreational purposes.
- 4.13 Many species found in canal habitats may be protected by law e.g. bats and nesting birds and must not be disturbed or harmed.

#### **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

- ◆ Redevelopment of canalsides - leading to habitat loss if built development results in the replacement of naturally occurring vegetation with unsympathetic landscaping schemes.
- ◆ Increased recreational use (cycling, walking) of the canals and their environs - increased disturbance to canalside wildlife.
- ◆ The need to maintain the waterway for boat traffic may also increase the threat to wildlife habitat as existing desilting and vegetation clearance regimes may need to be augmented.
- ◆ Increased boat traffic e.g by encouraging the canal to be used for freight will have impacts on wildlife unless mitigation measures are put in place to minimise disturbance.
- ◆ Repair/repointing of canal walls and other infrastructure prevents plants from gaining a foothold and may reduce the availability of nest sites for birds and roost sites for bats.
- ◆ Water Quality- pollution of the waterway can result in harm to wildlife.
- ◆ Lack of appropriate management leading to dominance by invasive species

## Current action

- ◆ Groundwork West London (as part of the London Waterways Partnership, LWP- see below) are involved in community based projects along the canal including work with local community groups and schools such as The Mary Seacole Memorial Garden in Mitre Pocket Park. This idea was inspired by a local resident to create a memorial garden. The garden has been upgraded and planted with herbs and shrubs that Mary Seacole may have used in the garden. Kenmont school assisted with the planting/weeding and have designed an interpretation board to put on the site which is currently being made. Groundwork has also carried out educational work at the Old Oak common Sidings site (adjacent to the canal) and developed an educational pack which was used last year by Old Oak Primary School. Prior to this, as part of the LWP, they installed interpretation boards, a new path and picnic benches at the site.
- ◆ The London Waterways Partnership, an alliance of public and private sector partners centred on 50 miles of canal and river corridor north of the Thames, encourages and promotes schemes to protect and create canal side habitats. The shared vision is of a waterway network becoming a focus for economic and environmental regeneration, linking centres of commercial activity with areas of urban tranquillity.

## Flagship species

- ◆ Bats
- ◆ Dragonflies
- ◆ Trifrid Bur Marigold

## Objectives, Actions and Targets

**Objective 1:** To protect and enhance the canalside habitat through good management.

**Target 1:** To identify appropriate enhancement schemes and update current knowledge on the habitat.

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Work with British Waterways to identify enhancement schemes as identified in the London	British Waterways Council	2004/05	To be determined

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Biodiversity Partnership Canal Action Plan			
Carry out survey of existing canalside flora and fauna in order to update data from 1993 London Ecology Unit handbook and identify any changes in species diversity.	LBHF	2004	None

**Target 2:** To raise awareness of the biodiversity value and requirements of canal sides as an important habitat in the borough

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Carry out a publicity campaign to highlight the importance of canal habitats	LBHF, LA21 Forum, FoE, British Waterways	2004	Minimal- staff and volunteer time
Investigate the scope of working with adjoining boroughs and the London Waterways partnership.	LBHF, Groundwork West London, USC	2004/05	
Investigate installing interpretation boards to include ecological information	British Waterways Council	2004/2005	Cost of boards- Possibility of funding bid.

# Greening the built environment

## Background

5.0 Apart from the northern tip of the borough, which contains considerable areas of open space, including Wormwood Scrubs and Kensal Green Cemetery, the borough is densely urbanised with only small (and a few large) parks and gardens to break up the built environment. The built environment covers many different elements, as defined below and can represent an important habitat for biodiversity, supporting a range of plants and animals.

## Aims

- ◆ To raise awareness of the potential of the built environment for increasing the biodiversity value in Hammersmith & Fulham
- ◆ To develop and make available information relevant to incorporating biodiversity into the built environment.

## Introduction

5.1 This built environment Habitat Action Plan aims to cover both structures and land associated with them. For the purpose of developing this action plan the definition of 'the built environment' includes:-

- Vertical habitats: Walls, exterior buildings surfaces, fences, balconies/terraces, tombstones, bridges, monuments/statues
- Roofs: external area and eaves
- School Grounds: hard and soft landscaped areas
- Housing estates- structures and open space
- Brownfield sites: areas of redundant urban land which once served a use but have now become derelict.

5.2 Structures can provide important habitat niches for wildlife, principally for breeding and shelter. Walls often support plants such as mosses, ferns, ivy, which in turn provide shelter and food for animals. Buildings may provide nesting and roosting places for birds and bats. The construction and functioning of buildings therefore impact not only on the local community but also on local wildlife.

5.3 Roof terraces, balconies and window boxes also have an important role to play in the built environment, helping to break down the dense urban feel and creating a more attractive local environment. They also offer an opportunity for people to interact with the natural environment within their own living space.

- 5.4 Roofs can offer a variety of opportunities for wildlife and the actual surface area of the roof space in the borough is quite significant. There is the potential for creating green roofs, the term used to describe a vegetated roof, where growing medium is placed on the roof surface to allow low level vegetation to grow<sup>5</sup>. Alternatively there is the opportunity to develop a roof garden, which will give benefit to its users but requires regular upkeep. Extensive green roofs are not only good for biodiversity but also growing plants capture atmospheric pollution and cool the atmosphere through evaporation. Green plants and wildlife are also thought to have a psychologically positive impact on health.
- 5.5 School grounds can be utilised to great effect to encourage wildlife and increase their biodiversity value. The quality of school sites and the actual ground available varies from school to school, with some predominantly tarmaced or covered with asphalt, and others with areas of garden including small ponds. School grounds managed with nature conservation in mind also provide a valuable educational resource for school children as they can learn about nature first hand and get involved in improvement works.
- 5.6 Long-term vacant brownfield sites (i.e. previously developed land) are few in Hammersmith & Fulham as it is relatively rare to have undeveloped sites for significant periods of time due to the pressure for housing and economic growth. In this borough we have a lot of very small areas of land, the locations of which are largely unknown, which are likely to be providing biodiversity benefit. Brownfield sites are usually wastelands and can comprise a variety of habitats which benefit from being relatively undisturbed. Brownfield sites can support a wide range of flora and fauna due to the different stages of succession that occur, and may include foraging birds such as the Black Redstart, which is rare in London.

## **Current Status**

### Local status

- 5.7 The built environment in Hammersmith & Fulham has intensified greatly in recent years with much development occurring in order to meet the demand for housing and economic activity. In the past most of this development has only taken limited steps to ensure that it has taken biodiversity issues into account. More recently, however, the concept of sustainable development has generally become more understood and the council is able to influence the design and construction of buildings and

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<sup>5</sup> For information on Green Roofs visit [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)

their surroundings for biodiversity gain through planning conditions and legal obligations.

- 5.8 Although no surveys have been carried out to date in school grounds, the council is aware of some schools where nature conservation areas have been created e.g. Sullivan School nature Area and more recently the St Paul's C of E Primary School.

#### Legal status

- 5.9 Some species are protected by inclusion in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (e.g. Black redstart, bat species). However protection does not apply to the foraging habitats required by these species. New buildings and structures usually require planning permission and the Unitary Development Plan includes policies in Chapter 4 to secure the inclusion of features for nature conservation in any new development and prevent the loss of existing biodiversity value (see page 5 of Introduction).

#### **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

- 5.10 Protecting and promoting the biodiversity of the built environment poses several problems unique to this habitat type, compared to the more traditional habitats.
- 5.11 The main factors affecting building and built environment habitat are as follows:-

#### **Threats**

##### Ability to assess the value and importance of the habitat

- ◆ Existing site designations generally refer to land rather than buildings and the built environment e.g. site of metropolitan importance, Local Nature Reserve. It is therefore difficult to rate buildings in accordance with their biodiversity value (as no framework is in place) and subsequently to ensure their protection and/or management.

##### Habitat disturbance, destruction and fragmentation

- ◆ The built environment is constantly changing, demolition and new developments are commonplace and this causes disturbance and fragmentation of habitats. Although most species are tolerant of disturbance, some are not and also require habitat that extends over a wide area and is likely to cover several land ownerships.

##### Lack of Information and awareness

- ◆ Little information is available in the borough on the location of species within the built environment. Although some legal powers exist to

protect species, it is difficult to protect them if their existence is unknown. Also comparatively little is known about the built environment as a habitat type compared with the more recognised types. Until information is available it is difficult to address the conservation needs of this habitat. In addition built environments are not recognised by many as a valuable habitat for wildlife and consequently have been considered a low priority for nature conservation. This may be because their visual attractiveness is lower than the more traditional habitats.

## **Opportunities**

### New thinking

- ◆ Developers, architects and policy makers are increasingly recognising the important role that the built environment can play in supporting biodiversity and ensuring the incorporation of features into the design of new buildings.

### Heritage Considerations

- ◆ Hammersmith & Fulham has many historic buildings and Conservation Areas in the Borough, which whilst not offering direct protection for biodiversity may reduce developments of a detrimental nature. The designations may on the other hand lead to conflicts with nature conservation.

## **Current action**

- ◆ The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy includes relevant proposals, such as proposal 33- "The Mayor will liaise with others to research and disseminate good practice for designing or adapting buildings to enhance and maintain biodiversity. He will follow this aim when considering development proposals referred to him"
- ◆ A range of literature and guidance has been produced recently, particularly on green roofs and designing walls for wildlife. (contact English Nature for further information)
- ◆ The Peabody Trust (a social housing provider) has produced a scoping document for a Peabody Trust BAP. Measures will be sought to improve the environmental performance of their dwellings including providing more greenery and areas for wildlife.
- ◆ LBH&F runs a gardening competition with categories that encourage the use of window boxes and balconies and are looking to expand the categories further.
- ◆ Tree preservation orders cover a number of trees across the borough. The council also offers advice on tree issues (contact the Arboricultural Officer, Gavin Simmons on 020 8753 3046)
- ◆ Groundwork West London manages a Housing Estate Improvement Programme on behalf of the council.

## Flagship species

5.12 These plants and animals are characteristic of the built environment in Hammersmith & Fulham:

- ◆ The House Sparrow- recent dramatic decline in urban areas especially London (reason for decline still unknown)
- ◆ Bats- found in areas where there are trees and water; can roost in buildings
- ◆ Black Redstart- identified in both the north and south of borough at wasteland sites
- ◆ Butterfly (Holly Blue)- feeds on late flowering ivy.
- ◆ Pellitory of the wall- EN indicator species of old walls in Thames region
- ◆ Ivy (climbing)- attracts the Holly Blue butterfly

## Objectives, Actions and Targets

**Objective 1:** To promote greater awareness and understanding of the value of the built environment for biodiversity in Hammersmith & Fulham

**Target 1:** Run a campaign to highlight the value of the resource to the public, developers and planners.

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Develop links with local amenity and housing associations and produce information on gardening for wildlife.	LBH&F, H&F Community Gardens, GWL's community gardener	2004	Volunteer time.
Prepare supplemental planning guidance on Sustainable construction and design to include 'greening buildings' and more specifically internal guidance to planners on soft landscaping.	LBH&F	2004	Staff time, printing costs
Liaise with planners,	LBH&F	On going and	Staff time

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
developers and architects to encourage the inclusion of habitats in new developments, where possible in accordance with UDP Policy.			
Work with RSPB on a project to develop a network of sparrow boxes across the borough	LBH&F, Schools, H&F Community Gardens? LA21 forum	2004	Cost of materials for bird boxes, volunteer time
Promote the use of artificial habitats e.g bird and bat boxes, greening of vertical structures by residents etc through articles in HFM	LBH&F	2004	Staff time
Develop a database for recording data and add to website for local residents to record sightings. Feed data into Londonwide recorder once set up.	LBH&F, LA21 forum	2004/05	Staff time limited to project start up. Volunteer support needed to maintain database.

**Objective 2:** Encourage schools to improve the quality of school grounds for biodiversity

**Target 2:** Establish a baseline of data about the biodiversity of school grounds in Hammersmith & Fulham

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Survey all LEA school grounds.	LBH&F, USC	2004	Staff and volunteer time
Encourage schools to take part in biodiversity monitoring (devise monitoring forms)	LBH&F, Schools, H&F Urban Studies Centre	2004	Staff and volunteer time

**Target 3:** Encourage schools to take part in improvement projects for school grounds

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Participate in the RSBP nestbox programme	RSPB, Schools	2003/04	Cost of materials for nest boxes/local production
Develop a school grounds promotion campaign for biodiversity, to include an information leaflet and advice on developing grounds for biodiversity.	LBH&F, USC	2004	Staff time

## Trees, woodland and scrub

### Background

- 6.0 As a densely urbanised inner London borough, little remains of the original countryside. Most of the surviving woodland is restricted to small fragments beside railway lines, in cemeteries and parks. A separate habitat action plan for railway linesides in this borough has been produced.
- 6.1 Volume 1 of the London Biodiversity Action Plan identifies the various woodland and scrub plant community types in London. Hammersmith & Fulham is estimated to have 1 hectare of native woodland, 8 hectares of non-native woodland and 8.5 hectares of scrub. The extent of this habitat type is comparatively little as a percentage of the total surface area of the borough (less than 1% of the borough in the 1988 Hammersmith & Fulham Wildlife Survey). The situation today is even worse, as most of the native woodland recorded in the latter survey comprised Scrubs Wood and Little Scrubs Wood on railway land, both of which have since been lost to development.
- 6.2 The borough also has a large number of amenity trees. These are an extremely important component of the urban landscape bringing benefits, such as encouraging wildlife and supporting a great variety of species. Trees enhance our landscape and provide shelter and shade, in addition to helping improve our own well being. Amenity trees can also attract the deposition of airborne pollutants, they intercept rainfall aiding drainage and assist in controlling humidity.
- 6.3 Although only a small amount of research has been carried out in this area, several studies have shown that trees can act as biological filters, removing particles from the urban atmosphere. This is predominately due to their large leaf areas and also the properties of their surfaces - e.g. the presence of waxy cuticles on the leaves of some species. It is also well known that one of the main benefits of trees is as a carbon sink with newly planted trees using up carbon dioxide as they grow and mature.

### Aims

- ◆ determine the extent and biodiversity value of the woodland, scrub and amenity trees in the London Borough of H&F
- ◆ Encourage effective management of woodland and trees for biodiversity gain and planting new areas of woodland/trees where feasible.

## Introduction

- 6.4 All of Hammersmith & Fulham's woodlands are fairly recent in origin, usually having colonised on unmanaged (mostly railside) land by trees or from formal parkland becoming overgrown due to neglect. The best example is on the railway embankment besides Scrubs Lane, with a canopy of ash, sycamore, poplar, oak, birch and false acacia and well developed shrub layer of hawthorn, cherry, goat willow, elm and guelder rose. The varied ground flora at this site contributes to a well developed woodland structure (rare in this borough) which supports many woodland birds and other animals.
- 6.5 The former LEU handbook notes that where woodlands have developed through parkland "going wild", as in parts of the Hurlingham Club, Fulham Palace Grounds and Kensal Green Cemetery, the main canopy trees are those planted in the original parkland. These tend to be non native species such as horse- chestnut, London plane, common lime and various conifers. The shrub layer, which develops from overgrown ornamental shrubberies, is frequently dominated by non-native species also. Woodlands such as these with few native plants, usually support fewer animal communities than self-established woods of similar structure; nethertheless they are still valuable to many birds and invertebrates.
- 6.6 The adjoining nature of trees is an important factor, as a group or line of trees becomes a series of linked habitats. Deadwood both standing and fallen can also be a valuable resource e.g. for invertebrates, fungi and animal species such as hedgehogs, the noctule bat, and stag beetles.

## Current Status

- 6.7 The most well known and significant areas of woodland in the borough can be found at Wormwood Scrubs park. The park supports a variety of planted woodland and natural scrubland providing habitat for birds, butterflies, other invertebrates and mammals. Approximately 20% of the park area was designated a Statutory Local Nature Reserve in 2002. The reserve consists of several different but mostly connecting woodland areas. The adjacent Little Scrubs is similar though smaller and not an LNR. Another important area and also in the north of the borough is the birch woodland at Old Oak Sidings
- 6.8 Amenity or street trees are well recorded in the borough and the species that dominate are whitebeams, rowan, London plane, fruit trees and rose. The tendency is to plant smaller trees due to space restraints and issues with insurance. Parks and green spaces offer opportunities to grow trees from a wider variety of families and larger species.

- 6.9 Trees of local significance include the Holm oak at Fulham Palace which is probably the largest tree in the borough, the prominent Fulham Oak at St Pauls Church near Hammersmith Broadway and fruit trees from orchards
- 6.10 Most of the birds frequenting the back gardens of Hammersmith & Fulham are those of woodland and woodland edge e.g. the tits, robins, wren, thrushes. It is the woody vegetation of gardens that helps to sustain populations of these species and so the link between London's scrub and woodland and gardens should be recognised as an important one.

### Legal status

- 6.11 The arboricultural section in the environment department is responsible for the Borough's street trees, and also for trees in parks and open spaces and other council owned land. The section manages over 7,000 street trees throughout the borough, which range from large London Planes over 150 years old to newly planted saplings. Policy EN26 Tree Planting (UDP 2003) seeks to ensure that the council will endeavour to plant new trees whenever possible and will expect developers to plant trees where appropriate.
- 6.12 Individual trees and groups may be afforded protection under planning legislation including Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) and Conservation area regulations.
- 6.13 Wormwood Scrubs which has our most extensive area of woodland, is common land and designated as Metropolitan Open land (UDP 2003). Parts of the Scrubs including the woodland areas have recently been declared a LNR.
- 6.14 A number of species associated with woodland and trees are fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. All species of bat and most tree-hole nesting birds are protected and the Act also offers some protection to their place of shelter.
- 6.15 The railway land in the borough is owned and managed by several different rail operators; Network Rail, Transport for London (London Underground), British Rail Property Board and London and Continental Railways.

## **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

6.16 There are many different factors that can impact upon the biodiversity value of woodland, scrub and trees and the species they support.

### Management/maintenance factors

- ◆ timing branch cutting outside of the breeding season
- ◆ not using of chemical pesticides and insecticides which can pose a threat to non target species
- ◆ leaving leaf litter, dead wood (where safe) and other organic detritus (also reducing the amount to landfill by composting)

### Threat of development

Loss of trees through:

- ◆ hard landscaping
- ◆ backland development and infilling
- ◆ removal of trees that are mistakenly thought to be a threat to buildings.
- ◆ Isolation and fragmentation of remaining sites.
- ◆ Pollution from industry and traffic, causing damage to epiphyte communities and changes to soil.
- ◆ Damage to trees and roots from soil compaction and erosion caused by trampling by people and car parking and vandalism.

### Natural causes

- ◆ Loss of trees to disease (for example, Dutch elm disease, oak dieback), physiological stress such as drought, waterlogging, storm damage and competition with surrounding trees.

## **Current action**

- ◆ Details of each individual street tree are maintained by the arboricultural section at the council, in a database. At least one third of the Borough's street trees are inspected annually, but the section aims in the long term to develop a schedule that will see every tree inspected on an annual basis. In addition to this, a separate programmed maintenance schedule ensures that all the Borough's street trees are pruned on a three to four year cycle.
- ◆ On behalf of the council's parks services, arboricultural services is currently undertaking a borough-wide survey of trees in parks and other open spaces for the purpose of compiling a detailed database, similar to that maintained for street trees. The aim of this is to develop a programmed maintenance schedule to ensure that trees in parks and

- open spaces are maintained at an equivalent level to the Borough's street trees.
- ◆ The council recognises the value of street trees in the urban environment and is committed to a programme of planting to provide trees for the future. Trees should be planted wherever possible in accordance with the criteria and guidelines listed in the Street Tree Planting Policy.
  - ◆ The council commissions a tree survey by external consultants on an annual basis to provide information on the health of the boroughs trees.
  - ◆ Currently (n<sup>o</sup> to be confirmed) trees in the borough are protected by a Tree Preservation Order
  - ◆ Trees for London have carried out planting of new saplings at Wormwood Scrubs. Approximately 1,500 native trees were planted by local residents and school children in 2002.
  - ◆ Approximately 60 native trees were planted in the moat trial garden, Bishops Park in 2002 in partnership with Groundwork West London.
  - ◆ There is a tree nursery situated in Ravenscourt Park, managed by Groundwork West London and owned by the council.

### Flagship species

- Stag beetles
- Bats

### Objectives, Actions and Targets

**Objective 1:** To map the extent and quality of amenity trees within the borough

**Target 1:** Survey the boroughs amenity trees

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Use consultants to survey trees in specific areas and provide information on tree health and amenity value	LBH&F and consultants	August 2003	£1200
As part of the above work the consultants are to provide training to council officers and local community group to enable further	LBH&F and local community groups	Training in August 2003. Ongoing survey work.	Included in above cost

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
survey work to be carried out independently			

**Objective 2:** To promote and encourage planting new garden trees within the borough and good management of existing trees

**Target 2:** To publicise the benefit of garden trees as part of the wildlife garden publicity campaign

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Collect and disseminate information on trees suitable for planting near buildings/those that encourage birds/butterflies etc	LBH&F	2003	None, council staff can implement
Encourage awareness of what is already growing in gardens through a leaf identification day with pest and disease/pruning advice etc.	H&F Community Gardens Association /LBH&F	2004	Volunteer and council staff time

**Objective 3:** To implement the Wormwood Scrubs Management Plan

**Target 1:** Carry out practical conservation management of woodland areas and encourage local involvement

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Arrange practical task days	GWL, BTCV (if resources allow)	2003	Volunteer time, existing NOF bid funds
Run woodland tree identification courses, walks and illustrated talks.	GWL, Friends of Scrubs?	2003	Volunteer time

**Objective 4:** To ensure that tree/woodland improvement is incorporated into plans and briefs for sites in the borough.

**Target 1:** To provide input into the consultation on Fulham Palace Grounds

<b>Action</b>	<b>Main partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost implications</b>
To input into the development of the strategy for restoration of Fulham Palace Grounds, working in partnership with English Heritage and English Nature.	H&F, EH,EN	2004	Staff time for advice.

## Railway Land and corridors

### Background

- 7.0 Hammersmith & Fulham has three Network Rail stations within or just outside its boundaries; Willesden Junction to the north and Kensington Olympia to the east are within metres of its boundaries, but both lie just outside. West Brompton station is located on the boundary with Kensington & Chelsea and Network Rail lines cross the borough. Apart from the West London Line which more or less follows the Borough's eastern boundary, Network Rail lines are concentrated in the north, beyond Wormwood Scrubs. These include the main lines from Paddington to South Wales and the west of England, and from Euston to the Midlands, the north-west and Scotland. The third passenger line in the north of the borough, in contrast is the North London Link, very much a local service. In addition there is a very complex network of freight lines, depots and sidings based around Old Oak Common and Willesden Junction, including the depot that houses trains from the Channel Tunnel. The Strategic Rail Authority has recently given approval for a further two stations within the borough at White City and Imperial Wharf.
- 7.1 The Borough is very well served by underground lines and stations, most of which are actually above ground. From south to north these are; the District line between West Brompton and Putney Bridge; the District Line between Earl's Court and Acton Town; the Hammersmith & City line between Latimer Road and Hammersmith; the Central line between Shepherd's Bush and Acton; and the Bakerloo Line in the far north. Between them they provide 13 stations within the borough boundaries.
- 7.2 Volume 1 of the London Biodiversity Action Plan identifies Hammersmith & Fulham as having 2.2% of the total London resource of railway corridor. This includes 17.22 km railway corridor and 25ha of railway sidings that is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation
- 7.3 For the purposes of this habitat action plan railway linesides are the vegetated lands that lie adjacent to operational above-surface railways, this is the same definition as that used by the London Biodiversity Partnership.

### Aims

- ◆ To determine the extent and biodiversity value of the railway corridor in the London Borough of H&F
- ◆ Encourage effective management of the railway corridor habitat.

## Introduction

- 7.4 Lineside habitats are largely a legacy of the countryside that they were originally built through, their subsequent management, together with the indirect impacts of railway operation<sup>6</sup>. The railway network in H&F consists of corridors of sites of Grade I Borough Importance. Due to their relative lack of human disturbance, they provide a diversity of fauna and flora. Sunny grass embankments may be havens for butterflies and grasshoppers whilst woodland can support a variety of birds.
- 7.5 The linesides act as green corridors, permitting the movement of some species along them between adjoining sites. This may be through direct movement or by dispersal created by the movement of trains. In this respect railway linesides will add to and benefit from the biodiversity of the borough by creating a network of different habitat types.
- 7.6 The vegetation which develops naturally alongside London's railways tends to be a mosaic of trees, bushes, tall perennials and grassy vegetation. Open patches are often dominated by false oat-grass which give way to scrub, typically of bramble and hawthorn. The London Ecology Unit (1993) handbook contains information on species at several different railside locations within the borough, copies can be provided on request.
- 7.7 Much of the railside vegetation is restricted to narrow strips of trackside buddleia and ruderal plants, however all vegetated railside land in the borough is important, especially so as a result of its linear continuity. Also the difficulties in surveying railside habitats means that valuable habitat and rare species may remain undiscovered.
- 7.8 The Nature Reserve at West Brompton Station is an important site in the borough, containing a pond and areas of woodland scrub and grassland.

## Current Status

- 7.9 There is no national action plan for this habitat, however such sites provide a unique opportunity to promote habitat creation in a manner that helps to address national targets for other species.
- 7.10 Data on the plant and animal communities of the railway land is incomplete and further survey work is required.

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<sup>6</sup> London Biodiversity partnership 2002

## Legal status

- 7.11 Many of the species associated with this habitat may be offered legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) e.g bats.
- 7.12 The railway land in the borough is owned and managed by several different rail operators; Network Rail, Transport for London (London Underground), Network Rail Property Board and London and Continental Railways.
- 7.13 Several corridors of railway land are designated in the UDP as Sites of Grade I Borough Importance.

## **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

- 7.14 There are many different factors that can impact upon the biodiversity value of railway sidings and the species they support.

## Threats

- ◆ Loss of habitat through development
- ◆ Operational requirement (prevention of trees growing near tracks, bias against vegetation alongside tracks, herbicide treatments)
- ◆ Under-management
- ◆ Garden encroachment
- ◆ Flytipping

## Opportunities

- ◆ Potential to enhance value for wildlife- management guidance produced by Rail companies
- ◆ Opportunities for habitat creation such as ponds e.g West Brompton Station
- ◆ Local group involvement in habitat management

## **Current action**

- ◆ Network Rail has produced internal guidance for maintenance contractors on good operational practice to protect and maintain biodiversity on railway land within over-riding safety and operational constraints.
- ◆ The Friends of Brompton Station have successfully campaigned for the reinstatement of the nature area recently damaged by contractors at west

Brompton Station. A draft management proposal has been prepared by Network Rail.

- ◆ EuroStar Ltd is planning to plant a number of trees along the northern boundary of Wormwood Scrubs to screen their depot.
- ◆ The Sinclair Road Residents Association is campaigning for the protection of the woodland area adjacent to the railway line at Kensington Olympia Station. This is subject to a public enquiry in September 2003.

### Flagship species

- Lizards
- Slow worm (found by North Pole depot)
- Bats

### Objectives, Actions and Targets

**Objective 1:** To map the extent of the habitat on railside land in the borough

**Target 1:** Survey all railside land

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Work with rail company to develop better data on what is on railside land.	H&F, rail companies	2004/05	In house
Produce promotional leaflet	H& rail companies	2004	£500

**Objective 2:** To protect and enhance key locations

**Target 2:** Develop partnerships with rail companies and local groups

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Carry out improvements to West Brompton Station Nature Area	Network Rail, Friends of Brompton Station, LA21 forum, H&F	2004/05	To be met within existing Network Rail budget and funding bids.
Campaign for protection and enhancement of woodland adjacent to Olympia Car park site.	Sinclair Road Residents Association, H&F	2003/04	Inhouse and volunteer time

## **The Thames and it's foreshore**

### **Background**

- 8.0 The Thames is the reason that London has developed where it is, and why it has achieved its current role within the country and the world. The two traditional centres of the Borough, Hammersmith and Fulham, owe their existence to the river. The Thames is about 340 kilometres long, rising in the Cotswolds and entering the North sea at the Nore. There are seven kilometres of the river within the borough, forming much of the borough boundary. This section of the river extends from just below Chiswick Eyot, to Chelsea Creek, which joins the river at Chelsea Harbour. The Thames is a tidal river, with a difference of 6-7 metres between high and low tides. The river within the borough is predominantly fresh water, as the influx of the sea acts as a piston pushing back the water coming down stream.
- 8.1 Improvement in the water quality of the Thames in recent years has resulted in a dramatic increase in the diversity of both plants, and especially animals in and around the Thames. Unlike other habitats in the Borough the ecology of the Thames is influenced by all that happens within the catchment area and by major climate effects, the most critical being the surge tides of the North Sea. To manage these a barrier has been built at Silvertown in east London, and the river walls in the Borough have been raised.

### **Aims**

- To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Thames, not only within the Borough, but as part of the complete Thames
- To promote public awareness and enjoyment of the River.

### **Introduction**

- 8.2 The London Thames Habitat Action Plan<sup>7</sup> identifies 12 key habitats. Not all of these are present in the Borough. Those we have are ;-
- Artificial structures - old moorings etc. which are important habitats for invertebrates, and roosts for birds.

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<sup>7</sup> Tidal Thames Habitat Action Plan

- Vegetated embankments - small areas near Hammersmith Bridge and at Crabtree draw dock, and the post 1928 embankment at Hurlingham Club. The various drawdocks and stairs contribute to this habitat.
- Flood walls- The main structure within the Borough, important for invertebrates and some plants such as petillory of the wall, an EN indicator for the thames.
- Gravel foreshore. These are a priority habitat and an important foreshore habitat in the Borough. Most of it is “true” gravel, being small pieces of stone, some of which may be derived from rubble. Other area areas are more obviously rubble and are usually mixed with mud.
- Mud flats. This is also a priority habitat, although less of it than the gravel. Two important areas are near Chelsea Creek, due to the inflow of hot water (although this has now ceased with the closing of the power station in 2002), and on the landward site of the mooring structure near River café.
- Open water represented by the British Gas Pond
- Reed beds. There is a small patch of Phragmites at Swan Drawdock. There is a clump of (what appears to be) Common Club-rush at Broomhouse drawdock. There is an interesting community of flowering plants around Hammersmith Bridge which is probably due to the shelter provided by the many jetties and moored boats
- Sublitoral gravel. This has been identified at Putney and is a priority habitat. There appears to be more near Crabtree dock.
- Tidal creeks such as Chelsea Creek and Hammersmith Creek (currently culverted, but open as far as King Street in recent times).
- In addition to the specific river habitats, the Thames Path and the gardens of Hammersmith Mall and river Court and of Hurlingham Club provide a green corridor that is of value to wildlife.

## **Current status**

### Definition

8.3 The Thames Estuary is the UK’s busiest and most commercially significant tideway supporting port activities, commercial fisheries, leisure and recreation as well as development and regeneration.

8.4 The River lies at the heart of London and touches the lives of most people in the capital. It is a natural environment and habitat for wildlife and an

example of a recovering ecosystem which is of great ecological importance.

### Legal status

- 8.5 The Tidal Thames has been designated a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. The Thames in the Borough is also Metropolitan Open Space and the designated path is part of the Thames Path National trail.
- 8.6 Some species which use the Thames as a habitat are protected by inclusion in the Wildlife and countryside Act 1991, however protection does not apply to the foraging habitats required by these species.
- 8.7 No single organisation oversees the management and regulation of the Tidal Thames. The Thames Estuary Project was formed in 1993 to provide a focus for the range of organisations, individuals and activities linked to the Thames.
- 8.8 In addition to the Statutory Bodies (including EN, the Port of London Authority, EA, DEFRA, GLA and London boroughs), many voluntary and non-statutory bodies provide advice and undertake management initiatives.

### **Specific Factors affecting habitat**

#### Water quality

- London is still heavily dependent on its Victorian sewage network and during periods of heavy rain combined sewer overflows discharge diluted sewage into the Thames. Under the worst conditions this can lead to fish kills.

#### Water quantity

- During the summer months the Tidal Thames experiences low freshwater flows as a result of upstream abstraction. Saline tidal waters penetrate further upstream into the upper freshwater river, bringing with them marine animals but also estuarine silts. Silts deposited on areas of gravel can change the habitat and lead to a reduction in invertebrate diversity.

#### Hydrodynamic changes

- The physical hydrodynamic character of the Thames is influenced by interference from factors such as flood defence walls and encroachments. Flow changes have resulted in accelerated patterns of erosion and

deposition, leading to loss of inter-tidal vegetation, and siltation of gravel foreshores.

#### Recreation and river transport

- Following improvements in water quality there is now a trend towards the use of the river for recreation and renewed interest for water- borne transport. There is potential for increased disturbance of wildlife habitats, including nesting birds on wooded margins.
- Additions to the Thames path e.g. at Imperial Wharf will increase disturbance for wildlife, but provide an opportunity to increase the bank side vegetation and extend the green corridor. Imperial Wharf is especially important because it intersects with the corridor provided by the West London railway.

#### Development

- The Lots Road power station has planning permission for redevelopment to mixed residential and commercial use. The discharge of warm water from the power station previously made this a rich feeding ground for fish and birds. The closure of the Power station will affect this.<sup>8</sup>

#### Invasive species

- A number of invasive species have become established on the tidal Thames and its banks e.g. Chinese mitten crab and Japanese Knotweed.
- Chinese mitten crabs are not specifically a problem in this borough, but the effect they have in adjacent boroughs indicates that control is necessary.
- Given the relatively small numbers of vascular plants on the immediate structure and foreshores of the Thames (20-30), alien plant species are not particularly a problem in the Borough

#### **Current action**

- Hammersmith and Fulham council is part of the consortium of boroughs involved in the Thames Strategy- Kew to Chelsea<sup>9</sup>. Taking forward the Kew to Chelsea Strategy provides opportunities for improvements.
- The local Thames 21 group carries out regular litter clean up of the foreshore.
- The Thames Path is being extended at Imperial Wharf and will help to improve green corridor links. Consultation has taken place with local residents on proposals for Imperial Wharf riverside park.

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<sup>8</sup> Further details are provided in the Lots Road Environmental Statement

<sup>9</sup> Thames Strategy, Kew to Chelsea June 2002

## Flagship species

From the Tidal Thames Habitat Strategy:-

Grey Heron  
Two lipped door snail  
Petillory of the wall  
Purple loosestrife  
Common Club-rush

## Objective, actions and targets

**Objective 1:** To survey the thames habitat and species .

**Target 1:** To obtain more detailed information on plants, birds, fish and invertebrates.

Action	Main partners	Time scale	Cost Implications
Survey of plants, and birds	local naturalists, schools and colleges	Complete by Jan 2005	Insurance, hire of small boat
Survey of fish and invertebrates	Environment Agency. As above	When expertise available, or take from wider surveys/EA data in the case of mobile species like fish	As above

**Objective 2:** To improve the Thames Environment and peoples enjoyment of this habitat.

**Target 1:** Carry out specific Thames projects

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Rubbish clean ups on the foreshore	Thames 21, voluntary groups	At least twice a year	Volunteer time

**Target 2:** To improve understanding and enjoyment of the Thames

<b>Action</b>	<b>Main Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost implications</b>
Produce new guide to Thames Path in Borough (action In Thames Strategy)	Urban Studies centre, schools	by Jan 2005	USC and schools to cover some of the work from existing funding
Guided tours of Thames path, including natural history	Borough officer responsible for encouraging walking/Historic Buildings Society.	Programme for 2004	Insurance covered by groups/council. handouts from afore mentioned guide

# **The Species Action Plans (SAPs)**

# House Sparrows

## Background

- 9.0 Until about ten years ago, the house sparrow was one of the commonest birds in London and was one of the most numerous and regular visitors to garden bird tables. The 'Cockney sparrer' has always been popular with Londoners, reflecting its lively social behaviour and relatively tame nature. Until relatively recently sparrows had been present by the thousand in the parks of central London. However, in September 2000, a London Natural History Society 'Bird Walk' around Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens failed to find a single one.
- 9.1 The house sparrow's distribution is related to the pattern of human settlement. As a native species it extends from North Africa, throughout Europe and Central Asia and northwards beyond the Arctic Circle. It has also become established in a number of other countries as a result of introduction by man.

## Aims

- To raise awareness of the need for conservation of the house sparrow
- To encourage the spread of the house sparrow population in the borough.

## Introduction

- 9.2 House sparrows have traditionally taken bread and scraps from garden bird tables as well as the seeds of flowers in parks and gardens, wastelands or road and railside land. When feeding the young, insects such as aphids and caterpillars are a more important part of its diet.
- 9.3 The birds nest mainly in buildings, in roofs, cracks and crevices, or amongst creepers on walls and sometimes in dense shrubbery or trees. Under good conditions, sparrows can raise up to five broods per year, although two or three is more typical.
- 9.4 The house sparrow is generally regarded as sedentary, although some local movements occur. In rural areas, the birds traditionally move off to the cornfields after the end of the breeding season. Seasonal changes in London indicate similar dispersal, probably in search of autumn seed (Baker 1987).

## **Current Status**

- 9.5 The house sparrow, once so common it was officially labelled a pest has declined significantly over the years. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Bird Census recorded a 58% decline from 1973-1998 across rural areas of the UK. A new BTO census covering both rural and urban areas (The National Breeding Birds Survey) records a 53% decline in London alone between 1994 and 1999. The house sparrow which was one of the most numerous species in 1994 had been replaced in population size by the Feral Rock Dove, Wood Pigeon and Starling by 1999. Unfortunately the picture is also looking similar in other European countries and North America.
- 9.6 The London Biodiversity Partnership recognises the decline of the London House Sparrow and has drawn up a Species Action Plan with the aim of raising public awareness of the plight of house sparrows and to instigate research into the causes of their decline. Work is also ongoing nationally to improve knowledge of the current status of the house sparrow with a research project funded by DEFRA being carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology.
- 9.7 Little is known about the current status of house sparrows in Hammersmith & Fulham, although The London Biodiversity Audit notes that house sparrows, a culturally valued species, do occur in this borough.

## Legal Status

- 9.8 The house sparrow is still classified as a pest species in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It was originally listed as a bird that may be controlled at any time of year, but is now covered by legislation that provides for an annually reviewed general licence to control a specified list of pest species, with the land owner's consent (Statutory Instrument no 3010 1992).

## **Specific Factors affecting the Habitat/species**

- 9.9 A number of factors have been put forward to account for the decline in the sparrow population. It has not yet been identified exactly what is causing the decline, although there are several theories. Likely factors behind the house sparrow's decline of particular relevance to Hammersmith & Fulham include:

### Food Supply

#### Reduction in insects

- House sparrows require invertebrate food for the first three days of their life. A lack of aphids and other invertebrates in early spring may

result in house sparrow decline as the feeding young struggle to find food.

- There is a theory that possible toxic compounds that replace lead in petrol might be killing aphids which juvenile sparrows depend upon to survive.

#### Changes in agricultural practice

- These may affect the London house sparrow population especially in late summer/autumn, when birds leave their nesting territories in residential areas and move off in seed-feeding flocks some dispersing into the surrounding countryside. Changes in agricultural practice such as the switch to autumn sowing of cereals and lack of stubble as autumn and winter feeding habitat may have some impact. Additionally, if the London population has traditionally been augmented from time to time by surplus birds from nearby rural populations, a fall in breeding success in rural populations could reduce the number of immigrants into London.

#### Reduction in seed supply

- Some Wasteland in H&F has been lost to development, leading to loss of seed supply.

#### Disturbance and Predation

- Particularly from domestic cats and an increase in magpie numbers.

#### Competition

- Competition for food by other birds

#### Disease

- A virus or *Salmonella* infection has been suggested. However, few, if any, diseased birds have been observed in this country. It is possible that if the birds are already weakened by a disease of some sort, they become more susceptible to predation. If so, an increase in the population of a given predator could have a greater impact.

#### Loss of Nest Sites

- Modern roof repairs and design may prevent access to the roof space for birds. However, however a decline has also been noted in areas where roof replacement is less widespread.

#### **Current Action**

- National schemes such as the BTO Common Census and Breeding Birds Survey are taking place
- BTO carry out the annual Garden Bird Watch Scheme

- The RSBP has been carrying out a house sparrow survey to find out where nesting sites are.
- The London Wildlife Trust use the house sparrow as one of their indicators in their Garden Survey
- The London Wildlife Trust has carried out a Garden Bird Watch Scheme and the London Natural History Society is conducting a monitoring programme of house sparrows in London gardens.

### Objectives, Actions and Targets

**Objective 1:** Encourage the spread of the house sparrow population through the provision of suitable nesting sites and food sources.

**Target 1:** Carry out a House Sparrow nest box scheme by 2004

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Encourage land managers inc schools to retain potential natural nest sites for house sparrows	LBH&F Schools, USC,	2004	None
Design a nest box scheme to run across the borough and to involve local schools	LBH&F, RSPB, LA21 forum	2004	Nest box materials
Encourage local residents to provide appropriate food sources in feeders and to minimise risk of predation.	As above	2004	None- use HFM
Encourage gardeners and allotment holders to reduce applications of pesticides and to allow plants to seed.	HCGA, LA21 forum	2004	None- use HFM, letters to allotment societies.

# **Black redstart**

## **Background**

10.0 In London the black redstart is concentrated on both industrial sites and post-industrial brownfield land along the River Thames east of the River Wandle and along the River Lee. Isolated pairs are still found in central London, which was the bird's stronghold after the second world war.

## **Aims**

- To establish the current population in the LB Hammersmith & Fulham
- To promote the conservation of black redstarts through mitigation and enhancement in the key locations within the borough.
- To alert planners, architects and developers to the potential of black redstarts for sustainable development in line with other Borough objectives

## **Introduction**

10.1 The black redstart is an attractive, robin-sized bird of the thrush family with a distinctive orange/brown tail. It has been regarded by many, in the past, as the 'bomb site' or 'power station' bird. Although the species is common in continental Europe it is quite rare in the UK, being found, in the main in the conurbations of London and Birmingham.

10.2 In the past breeding black redstarts were located in and around Imperial wharf in the South east part of the borough. Since the inception of the London black redstart plan records have been supplied by a railway worker for the Old Oak Common Railway sidings [2001/2002]. Several territorial pairs were reported within the railway land at this location by an ecological consultancy in 1999.

10.3 Black redstarts prefer a combination of bare stony ground, sparsely vegetated areas and a buildings/structures, often associated with industrial yards and brownfield sites.

## **Current Status**

10.4 The black redstart population in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham is between 1-2 pairs annually. However this may well not be the true state of affairs as a full survey of potential sites has not been undertaken. And the species is therefore likely to be under recorded.

## Legal status

- 10.5 The black redstart is afforded full protection as a schedule 1 breeding species under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This therefore ensures that it is a material consideration for local planning authorities under PPG9 paragraph 44. It is also listed as a Red Data Book species and is on Appendix II of the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural habitats, 1979.

## **Specific factors affecting the species**

- 10.6 The 2 main factors affecting the black redstart in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham are:-

### Lack of data

### Regeneration

- Regeneration of brownfield sites and improvement works to railway sidings and yards has led to a loss of suitable habitat for black redstarts.

## **Current Action**

- Both English Nature and the Environment Agency advise developers that they require black redstart surveys on all likely sites along the Thames and that if present, mitigation of or the species, should be included in any planning proposals.
- In 1999 the London Wildlife Trust published '*BLACK REDSTART – an advise note for their conservation in London*' which has drawn attention to the species, the legislation, and its conservation requirements. This note has now been absorbed into an online advice note [www.blackredstarts.org.uk](http://www.blackredstarts.org.uk), which provides in depth detail of the ecology, research and, most importantly mitigation proposals for developers and their architects.
- The use of green roofs specifically those designed to replicate brownfield land is now relatively common in London, particularly in the london boroughs of Lewisham and Tower Hamlets. The development at Imperial Wharf in this borough included green roofs as mitigation for black redstarts in its plans.

## Objectives, Actions and Targets

These are in line with the current London Biodiversity Partnership' s Black Redstart Action Plan yet are specific to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Objective 1:** To increase the knowledge of the distribution of the population in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

**Target 1:** Identify and survey likely sites within the borough

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Identify potential key locations and carry out surveys	LBH&F, London Biodiversity Partnership (LBP)-black redstart working group	2004	

**Objective 2:** To promote good practice where development is likely to impact on populations

**Target 2:** To publicise existing guidance on black redstarts

Action	Main partners	Timescale	Cost implications
Advise planners to ensure Environmental assesments include black redstarts and mitigation if necessary.	H&F	2004	None- in house
Inform LBP of above Environmental statements and mitigation proposed.	H&F, LBP	As appropriate	None-in house
Ensure such mitigation is achieved	H&F	As appropriate	None-in house

## **Monitoring and evaluating**

- 11.1 This plan and the actions outlined within it will be reviewed in 2006 to ensure that it accords with national, regional and local policy. An update will be provided annually to the council, the council's Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny panel and members of the BAP partnership, on progress of the actions.

## **Consultation**

*(to be included in adopted plan once consultation has occurred)*

- 11.2 The draft version of this plan was subject to public consultation. Copies were provided to members of the Biodiversity Partnership and residents were able to view the document at local libraries. The plan was also available through the council website, [www.lbhf.gov.uk](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk). In addition the plan was sent to key interest groups, such as environmental groups, tenant & resident associations, local businesses and schools. All comments received were considered and, where practicable, reflected in this final plan.

## Glossary

Anaerobic	Oxygen free
Biota	Animal and plant life
Detritus	organic matter (which is being broken down)
Exotic species	Species introduced from or originating in a foreign country
Flagship species	Species those whose well being are indicative of the well-being of the habitat as a whole, those which people associate as being representative of that habitat type and that generate interest among the public.
Green Corridor	Relatively continuous areas of open space leading through the built environment, which may link sites to each other. They may allow plants and animals to be found further into the built-up area than would otherwise be the case.
Habitat	The natural home of an organism. The environment required to sustain animals, plants and other species
Microclimate	The climate of a small local area
Native species	Species that have originated in that country
Ruderal Plant	A plant growing on or in rubbish or rubble
Succession	The order of development of a species or community

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