



Biodiversity Action Plan Summary

Welcome to Sutton's Biodiversity Action Plan Summary

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity or biological diversity simply means the 'variety of life'. This includes all life, such as animals, plants, fungi, and even bacteria.

What is Sutton's Biodiversity Action Plan?

A five year plan of actions to protect and improve wildlife habitats for the benefit of wild species.

Which Habitats and Species?

Habitats threatened or declining in quality or size, locally valued, or areas important for key species have been selected. These are:

Woodland and Scrub • Parks and Open Spaces • Chalk grassland • Rivers and Wetlands • Gardens and Allotments • Cemeteries and Churchyards

Habitats were selected rather than individual animals and plants taking the view that species will flourish if their surroundings are of suitable quality and size.

A plan has also been prepared for bats as the requirements for their survival are complex, crossing over habitats not covered in this plan.

Contacts and getting involved

Although many organisations and partners have already signed up to the plan, including allotment societies and Friends' groups, everyone can be involved!

By working together, public, private, business and voluntary bodies can deliver far-reaching conservation and enhancement of wild species and wildlife habitats.

To view the whole plan visit the website

<http://www.sutton.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity>

To find out more or to get involved call the Biodiversity Team on 020 8770 5329 or email

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WOODLAND AND SCRUB

We all recognise a wood when we see one, but what actually is a wood? A woodland is a plant community dominated by trees and shrubs. Scrub, on the other hand, is dominated by small trees and shrubs usually less than 5m tall.

Older woods, with many dead wood habitats, and a variety of microhabitats (under bark, in leaf litter etc.) are best for biodiversity, but younger woodlands and scrub can have high wildlife value too.

We aim to ensure that all woodland sites are managed with nature conservation in mind.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Sutton's parks and open spaces cover 8% of the Borough. They contain meadows, wetland habitats and veteran trees, and provide nesting, feeding and roosting opportunities for animals such as birds and bats.

Outside of gardens these places are often where we have our first-hand experiences of 'nature'.

Targets are to increase wildlife-friendly areas within traditional parks by both creating and restoring habitats.





CHALK GRASSLAND

Sutton contains some of the best examples of London's chalk grassland. The soil conditions and grazing with animals allows for a rich community of wild flowers to develop.

Orchids and other rare species of plant like the greater yellow rattle, the small blue butterfly and birds such as the skylark can all be found here.

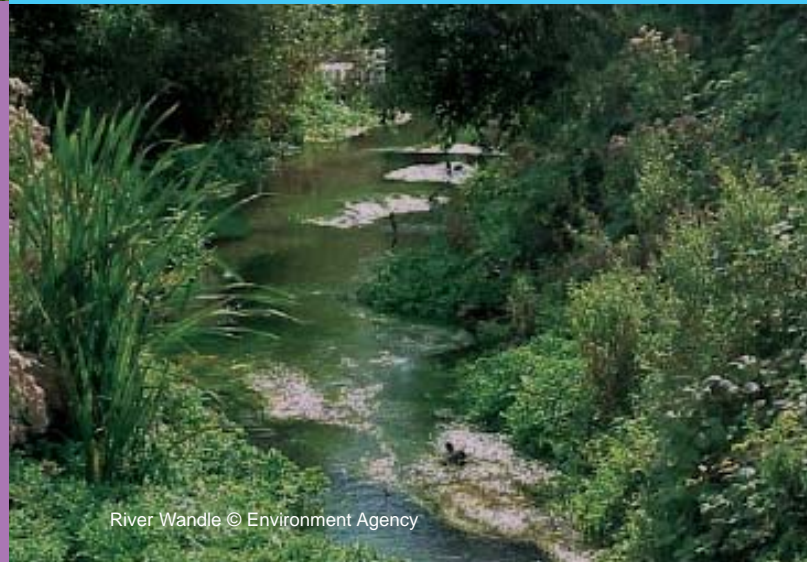
Since the decline of animal grazing grassland habitats are under threat of becoming overgrown by scrub. By grazing or sensitive mowing we aim to enhance the areas of chalk grassland for wildlife.

RIVERS AND WETLANDS

Everyone in Sutton knows the River Wandle, but Sutton's rivers and wetlands include a much broader range of aquatic habitats from rivers and streams to ponds, lakes, reedbeds, and even swamps!

These habitats support a wide range of biodiversity, including kingfishers and brown trout, and moves are afoot to reintroduce the water vole, Britain's fastest declining mammal, to the River Wandle.

We will work with our partners to ensure wetlands are a living and thriving community.



River Wandle © Environment Agency

GARDENS AND ALLOTMENTS

Whether large or small, pots or window boxes, gardens in all their forms, are invaluable for all sorts of wildlife, and by linking wildlife-friendly gardens together they can act as a mini 'nature reserve'. Allotments can also provide a haven for wildlife, especially where organic gardening is used.

We are encouraging residents to take an interest in wildlife gardening, however large or small their garden might be, and we are promoting and helping with the creation of wildlife areas in allotments.



Wildlife Garden © Centre for Environmental Initiatives



CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Together, these habitats make up roughly 1% of the land coverage of Greater London but more importantly, they are often old and undisturbed, perhaps for several hundred years.

Uncommon species such as wall ferns and lichens often thrive on the church walls, whilst areas of ivy provide nesting and feeding areas for robins, blackbirds and wrens.

With sympathetic management we aim to help maintain and enhance these areas for wildlife.

BATS (All Species)

Bats are the only mammals that have developed powered flight. Of the 17 species of British bats, 5 have been found in Sutton. Many species of bat roost in buildings. The largest bat in Britain, the noctule, roosts in holes in trees, and is found in Sutton.

All European bats are protected by law. Many species of bat are suffering a rapid decline. Our Bat Species Action Plan aims to increase the numbers of roosts, and suitable feeding areas in Sutton, as well as increasing public awareness of these amazing creatures.



Pipistrelle bat © Hugh Clark



ACTION & GETTING INVOLVED

Exciting projects are already under way!

- Bird boxes in Beddington Park with the Friends of Beddington Park and the Grange
- Reintroducing the water vole
- Restoring an area of community woodland at Westmead Allotments
- Expanding our grazing project with the Downlands Countryside Management Project
- Carrying out 'hands-on' conservation with the Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers

....and many more

