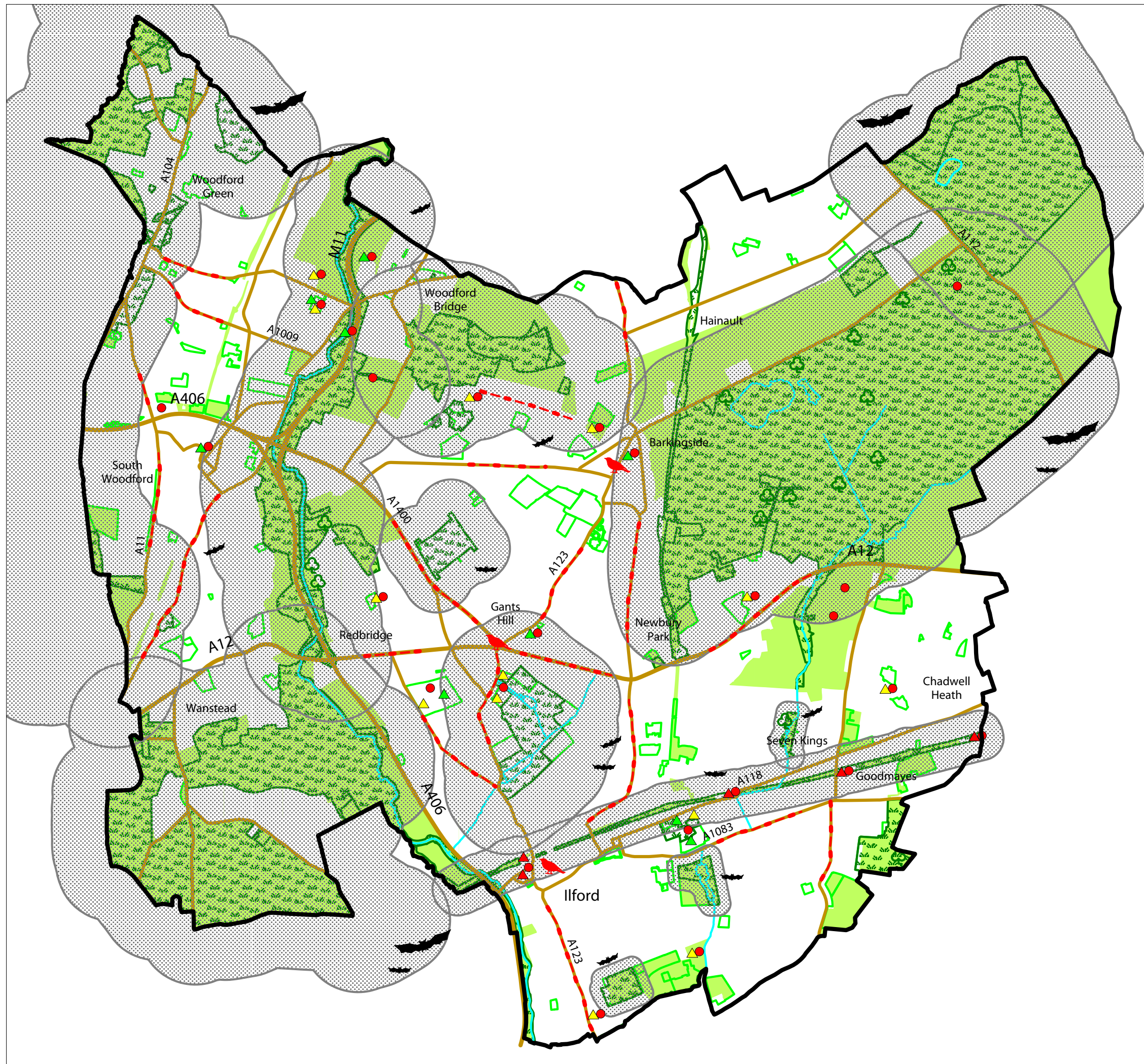







Biodiversity Action Plan





- Key
-  Bat Buffer Zone -
 - areas where there are known bat roosts or feeding populations & up to 0.5km buffer zone
 - any development including small scale loft conversions must have regard for the presence of bats
 -  Development Mitigation -
 - opportunities for habitat creation or enhancement
 - wildlife beneficial species in landscaping
 - in building consider green roofs, nesting opportunities
 -  Green Corridors
 - opportunities for habitat enhancement along railsides & adjacent land
 - important for bats & sparrows
 -  Areas of Deficiency -
 - loss of Front Gardens
 - sustainable designs should be encouraged
 - planting for wildlife
 -  Waterways -
 - opportunities for habitat enhancement along stream & adjacent land
 - important habitat for water voles, bats, house sparrow
 -  Important Hedgerows -
 - encourage sympathetic management
 -  Urban Open Space
 - Playing Fields -
 - opportunities for site enhancement for nature or habitat creation whilst still retaining use as a sports field
 - School Grounds -
 - opportunities for creating & enhancing habitat
 - Allotments -
 - important nature reserves
 - bats
 -  House Sparrow Town Centre Regeneration -
 - important opportunities for habitat creation for house sparrows & bats
 - reintroduce planters along High Road, green roofs, walls, nest boxes
 - sustainable building design
 -  Environment - Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
 -  Transport - Network Improvements
 -  Culture & Recreation - New & Improved Facilities
 -  Community Facilities - New & Improved Community Facilities

This map is based on Ordnance Survey Material with permission of the Controller of HMSO. (c) Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. L.B. Redbridge 100017755 & MSA Agreement No. DRED104.



Foreword

With the environment now a major topic of conversation and pushed into the limelight with the ever increasing threat of climate change, the publication of Redbridge's own **Biodiversity Action Plan** is a welcome reminder that the conservation of our green spaces and wildlife is not only still relevant, but is as important now as it has ever been.

Compiled over three years with the aid of EU funding, this action plan (including the actions themselves) has been formulated not only by council officers but also local members of the community. The aim to create a truly local and sustainable strategy that will play its part in helping local, regional, national and global biodiversity. The key being to think global but act local!

Developed to be a working document, the vision is for this action plan to be pragmatic, adapting to the changes Redbridge will have to face in the future. This will include the addition of new actions for species and habitats that may come under threat in the future.

As a borough so close to central London, yet blessed with such large areas of green space, we are confident that this plan will help to address future pressures on Redbridge's green heritage and its wildlife, whilst also highlighting the rich cultural benefits that this has bestowed to local residents over the many centuries, and will continue to do so.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronnie Barden".

Councillor Ronnie Barden

The Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 What is biodiversity?
- 1.2 Redbridge's biodiversity resource
- 1.3 The council's duties and responsibilities for nature conservation
- 1.4 The Biodiversity Action Plan process
- 1.5 Biodiversity within other Redbridge strategies
- 1.6 The Vision
- 1.7 The Action
- 1.8 The Future

Chapter 2: Strategic Biodiversity Action Planning

Chapter 3: Habitat Action Plans

Chapter 4: Species Action Plans



The Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan

Chapter 1

Introduction





Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Redbridge is an outer London borough, covering 5,570 hectares, or 55.7 square kilometres. It's geographic position bordering inner London and the county of Essex means the borough has a very varied range of green open space, from country parks and farmland in the north east Green Belt to small, urban parks in the south east.

Redbridge also has a diverse population, with a number of different ethnic communities, which also tend to be located in distinct geographical areas. For example, 63.5% of the population classify themselves as white, and the majority of these communities reside in the north and west of the borough. In contrast, 25% of the population classify themselves as Asian or Asian British, and the majority of these communities reside in the south and centre of the borough. ^{1[1]}

These trends have important implications for the delivery of biodiversity work within the borough, as it is critical to try and engage all sections of the community. The conservation of biodiversity is a concern for everybody, and one of the central themes for biodiversity action planning is working in partnership and ensuring all sections of the local community are involved. It is therefore critical to be aware of the differences between communities, and the different techniques that may needed to be employed to encourage involvement.

Thus, in line with the principles of the Biodiversity Action Plan process, this action plan has been written in partnership with the Redbridge Biodiversity Steering Group and the action plan sub-groups. These groups consist of representatives from a number of local community groups such as Barkingside Local Agenda 21, Ilford Horticultural Society, the London Wildlife Trust, local primary schools and a Jewish youth group. Council officers and representatives from statutory and non-statutory bodies have also been part of the wider consultation group.

1.1 What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the diversity, or variety, of plants, animals and other living things in a particular area or region. Biodiversity encompasses habitat diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. Biodiversity is of value in its own right and has social and economic value for human society. ^{2[2]}

^{1[1]} <http://www.localknowledge.co.uk> and Census 2001

^{2[2]} <http://www.lbp.org.uk/08glossary.html>

^{3[3]} London Ecology Unit, 1998

^{4[4]} Edward Milner, personal communication and Report on preliminary invertebrate survey 6 Jan 2006 - 13 Feb 2006[^]



1.2 Redbridge's biodiversity resource

Redbridge has a rich and varied array of plants and animals. In the habitat survey carried out in 1997 by the London Ecology Unit (now the Biodiversity team at the Greater London Authority), over 250 parcels of habitat were surveyed and documented, covering around 38% of the borough. A detailed breakdown of the habitats in the borough can be seen in A Nature Conservation Strategy for Redbridge.^{3[3]}

There are good examples of many habitat types, particularly old woodlands and hedgerows. The open spaces of the Roding Valley, Fairlop Plain and Claybury Park also contain important habitats and species. Fairlop Plain is particularly notable for birds, and the range of migrants that over winter here. A recent spider survey at Claybury Woods suggests that this may be one of the most important woodlands in London and Essex for a number of rare and interesting spider species.^{4[4]}

There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the borough - Hainault Forest and Epping Forest. There is also one Local Nature Reserve - Hainault Lodge Local Nature Reserve. 35 sites have been designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), 5 of which are sites of Metropolitan Importance (Epping Forest, Epping Forest South, Hainault Forest, Claybury Wood and the River Roding north of Ilford).

The borough supports a number of protected species including eight bat species, badger, great crested newt and reptiles like grass snake and common lizard. Several UK BAP species are also found in the borough, including the water vole, skylark and brown hare.

^{3[3]} London Ecology Unit, 1998

^{4[4]} Edward Milner, personal communication and Report on preliminary invertebrate survey 6 Jan 2006 - 13 Feb 2006^



1.3 The Council's duties and responsibilities for nature conservation

The key role of local authorities as custodians of the natural environment is recognised by the Government and emphasised in its various guidance documents. Most recent legislation is the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, which extends the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity” ^{5[5]}

As local planning authority and major land manager, the Council is well placed to influence the use of land and can promote environmental improvements and the sound management of its resources. As the Government state in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan, HMSO 1994):

“Biodiversity is ultimately lost or conserved at the local level... Local authorities provide the main framework within which environmental care is organised at local level and public attitudes to the environment cultivated” ^{6[6]}

The Mayor of London's Biodiversity Strategy is an important reference document for local authorities and other organisations within the London region, seeking to protect and enhance the capital's biodiversity resource.

“The Mayor's Biodiversity 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, so that all Londoners are within walking distance of a quality natural space. The strategy is an important first step in establishing a London wide framework for maintaining London's diversity of wildlife.” ^{7[7]}

The Biodiversity Strategy is closely linked with the London Plan, the region's spatial development strategy.

^{5[5]} http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060016_en.pdf

^{6[6]} Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan, HMSO 1994

^{7[7]} <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/biodiversity/index.jsp>



1.4 The Biodiversity Action Plan process

A Biodiversity Action Plan is a type of strategy, aiming to focus conservation work on those habitats and species that are considered to be most in need of help. The BAP framework is designed around partnerships, encouraging all sections of the community to work together to achieve common goals.

The BAP process has arisen from the Convention on Biological Diversity (or “Earth Summit”) held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. On signing the Convention, the Government’s response was the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, which was written in 1994 (www.ukbap.org.uk). Following on from the UK BAP, regional BAPs have since been written e.g. the London BAP (www.lbp.org.uk) and the process is now extending to the local level. Many of the London boroughs now have their own local Biodiversity Action Plan, and this is the new BAP for Redbridge.

The aims and objectives of local BAPs feed up to the regional plans, and then these in turn feed up to the UK BAP. So for example, our actions for the conservation of water voles in Redbridge will contribute towards the targets set by the London BAP, which in turn will contribute towards the targets set by the UK BAP. The whole Biodiversity Action Plan process and network is a tool for ensuring that conservation work is relevant at both the local and national levels, and that action happens on the ground as well as at the strategic level.

The Redbridge BAP will also act as a review of the former Nature Conservation Strategy, which ran from 1998 to 2003.

1.5 Biodiversity within other Redbridge strategies

The Redbridge Community Strategy “Making a Difference”^{8[8]} has a number of ambitions, the second of which is:

“To promote a positive attitude towards the environment and have a cleaner, greener Redbridge”

There are two target areas within this ambition, with associated objectives:

- “Protecting our environment”
 - Taking environmental issues into account when developing buildings and houses
 - Encouraging people to protect and enjoy their environment
 - Minimising our impact on climate change
 - Increasing native wildlife
- “Enhancing our green and open spaces”
 - Protecting our rivers, their banks and reducing flood risk

The Redbridge BAP can contribute towards all these objectives.


The Redbridge Environment Strategy 2002-2007^{9[9]} has two main aims that relate directly to biodiversity:

- Protect and enhance our open spaces and encourage a variety of wildlife in them
- Increase community participation through raising awareness and promote practical action and work supporting Local Agenda 21

The Redbridge BAP can contribute towards both these aims.

^{8[8]} <http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/files/publications/66.pdf>

^{9[9]} <http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/environment/environstrat.cfm>



The Local Development Framework contains supplementary planning documents to provide guidance on nature conservation.

The SPD for Nature Conservation “provides significant information to developers on the importance of good design and the protection of the existing ecosystems in Redbridge to promote biodiversity”

The Redbridge BAP provides planners with information about the ecosystems in Redbridge.

1.6 The Vision

A partnership that works together with all sections of the community to achieve the promotion, protection and enhancement of Redbridge’s biodiversity

1.7 The Action

This chapter details the wider aims of the Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan. These aims, along with the specific Habitat and Species Action Plans, should steer the annual programme of work for the Nature Conservation Team, and provide a guide for other Council teams and service areas, particularly the Planning and Regeneration Service. The aims should also help provide a wider overview of biodiversity action in the borough for the Biodiversity Steering Group and other groups within the wider partnership

The strategic action in this plan (Chapter 2) will set out broader aims for protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of Redbridge. The aims are grouped into themes, and cover a range of issues such as development, green corridors and community engagement.

The specific action plans (Chapter 3) focus on those species and habitats that are considered to be of particular conservation concern e.g. water vole, or on those habitats that are considered to be the most accessible to the community e.g. private gardens, allotments. These are habitats where the community can really get involved in their conservation and enhancement for biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Action Plan Summary Map illustrates a summary of all these actions, and the key sites or areas where action can be taken.

1.8 The Future

The Redbridge BAP should be reviewed annually, to determine progress on targets, and to set new objectives. On a three year cycle, the plan should receive a major review, where again individual targets are reviewed, but also the overall strategies and vision. This first round of the BAP will run from 2007 to the end of 2009, with target reviews at the end of each year.

The BAP should be treated as a very flexible document, and should be a working document, forming the basis of the Nature Conservation Team’s annual work programme. It can therefore be reviewed, amended and added to throughout its lifespan. Targets should however, be kept realistic and achievable, to avoid a constant shifting forward of deadlines!

The Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan

Chapter 2

Strategic Biodiversity Action Planning





Chapter 2: Strategic Biodiversity Action Planning

This chapter details the wider aims of the Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan. These aims, along with the specific Habitat and Species Action Plans, should steer the annual programme of work for the Nature Conservation Team, and provide a guide for other Council teams and service areas, particularly the Planning and Regeneration Service. The aims should also help provide a wider overview of biodiversity action in the borough for the Biodiversity Steering Group and other groups within the wider partnership.

The aims are clustered within seven main themes:

- (a) Enhancing urban green space**
- (b) Green Corridors**
- (c) Large development sites**
- (d) Small-scale development**
- (e) Town centres**
- (f) Community engagement**
- (g) Monitoring**

(a) Enhancing Urban Green Space

There are 36 Council-managed parks and open spaces in Redbridge, all of which will have a degree of value for biodiversity, although most, if not all, could also be significantly enhanced so as to increase their value for biodiversity. Enhancements could range from very simple changes in management regimes e.g. reducing grass cutting rates to allow the growth of longer grass fringes at the edges of playing fields, which would benefit invertebrates, to large-scale enhancement projects e.g. breaking out Seven Kings Water from its concrete culvert under Goodmayes Park Extension, and creating a natural, open stream habitat.

Larger projects will need higher levels of funding, probably external, and greater levels of management, and potentially higher maintenance costs. Links with schemes such as the Green Grid network should be maintained - as well as being an important strategic network, involvement in the Green Grid opens up access to significant funds.

Contributions from large-scale developments should also be considered via Section 106 agreements e.g. the Percent for Art scheme. Where significant enhancements for biodiversity cannot be achieved at the development site itself, adjacent or nearby open spaces could be the recipient for this gain.

- **Implement beneficial changes to park management regimes, ensuring close partnership between the Parks, Nature Conservation and Ground Maintenance teams, as well as with the public**
- **Maintain links with the Green Grid network and seek funding for large-scale enhancement projects**
- **Ensure contributions from Section 106 or other planning agreements include elements for biodiversity**



(b) Green Corridors

Green corridors are considered to be important features in the landscape to facilitate the movement of wildlife from one area of habitat to another. Green corridors must be of sufficient width and habitat type in order for them to function as a suitable medium for a species to move through.

In Redbridge, key green corridors include:

- Railway and Underground lines
- River Roding and surrounding green spaces
- Seven Kings Water and surrounding green spaces
- Hedgerows
- Chains of parks, allotments, recreation grounds, cemeteries, gardens
- Avenues of street trees

All these features are of course valuable habitats in their own right, but if they are also providing a link in a green chain of habitats, their value for supporting wildlife will be significantly increased. A green space that is well connected to a network of green corridors will also support a higher diversity of animals and plants than an isolated space, due to the greater movement of species between spaces.

- **Encourage managers of green corridors to consider biodiversity in management regimes e.g. Railtrack, London Underground**
- **Encourage sympathetic management of Council-owned corridor features e.g. hedgerows**
- **Encourage the creation of new corridors to improve the network of green links between parks and open spaces e.g. planting new street trees, maintaining road-side planters**


(c) Large Development Sites

Large development sites can provide an important opportunity for enhancing the local area for biodiversity. Where a site already supports important populations of plants and/or animals prior to the development, these must of course be considered by the developer via the usual procedures of survey and ideally avoidance of disturbance, or the implementation of mitigation measures where disturbance is unavoidable.

However, in addition to avoiding 'no net loss' of biodiversity at a site, a development should also provide opportunity for a net gain in biodiversity i.e. measures should be implemented to encourage the enhancement of the site for wildlife. Such measures could include design features within the structures themselves, such as bat bricks, bird boxes or a green roof, or enhancements within the landscaping plans to ensure suitable habitat is created for a wide range of wildlife e.g. nectar- and berry-rich trees and shrubs, wetland areas.

Ideas for the enhancement of a development site for biodiversity can be seen in more detail in the Supplementary Planning Document for Nature Conservation. ^{10[10]}

As mentioned above, large development sites may also present an opportunity for a biodiversity project to gain funds from planning agreements. This option should be considered particularly when biodiversity enhancements are not considered feasible at the development site itself, or where proposed on-site enhancements are not considered to be adequate for the level of impact.



Large (proposed) development sites presently include:

- Queen Mary and Westfield College
 - Redbridge College and King George's Hospital complex
 - PLA sports ground
 - Fairlop Plain gravel workings
- **Work closely with the Planning and Regeneration Service to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity on large development sites**
 - **Promote proposals that will encourage a net gain in biodiversity on large development sites**

(d) Small Scale Development

The issues surrounding small-scale developments are rather different to those of larger ones in that it is the cumulative effect of many small developments in an area that is of concern for biodiversity, rather than the impacts of just one development. An individual small development clearly has a lower level of impact than a single large development however, the impact of a series of small developments, such as the breaking up of large properties for flat conversions and/or constructing new-build flats in the garden, can have a significant impact on the amount of green space available for wildlife.

Particular concerns in Redbridge with small scale development include the concreting over of front gardens for car parking, 'infill' development in back gardens and the conversion of lofts or other roof space into living/working space, which may disturb roosting bats. Specific actions for front gardens can be seen in the Private Gardens Habitat Action Plan (Chapter 3).

- **Investigate the potential for developing planning policy to enhance protection for garden land, particularly blocks of gardens that form large areas of green space or corridors**
- **Promote the Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Guidance which includes an advice note about bats and development**
- **Develop and promote Council-wide campaigns to protect garden space e.g. the 'Front Gardens Matter' campaign**

(e) Town Centres

Town centres are not devoid of biodiversity and can even support important populations of some species that are not found elsewhere. Ilford town centre, for example, supports a significant population of house sparrows, which represents one of the few remaining town centre house sparrow populations in east London.^{11[11]}

In addition to the house sparrows, a recent survey has shown that Ilford town centre and the immediate environs support at least 24 other bird species.^{12[12]} The connectivity between town centres and the surrounding landscape is also therefore important. Town centres should not remain isolated from surrounding green space, nor should they create a barrier between green spaces.

In the draft Local Development Framework, many of Redbridge's local town centres have been identified as District Centres, with accompanying proposals for housing development and other regeneration plans.^{13[13]} These are Barkingside, Chadwell Heath, Gants Hill, South Woodford and Wanstead. In addition, Ilford is identified as a Metropolitan Centre, and there are plans for major regeneration here.

^{11[11]} Alison Fure, 2006, personal communication

^{12[12]} Ilford Town Centre House Sparrow Survey: A report for Redbridge Regeneration Unit, Fure, 2006

^{13[13]} <http://www.redbridge.gov.uk/planning/ldfpage.cfm>

- **Promote the inclusion of biodiversity objectives within Area Action Plans**
- **Promote the 'greening' of town centres and the creation of green links to and from town centres**
- **Organise 'wildlife road shows' in town centres to promote the borough's biodiversity and green spaces**

(f) Community Engagement

Everybody is responsible for protecting and conserving the world's biodiversity resource, and this responsibility must begin at the local level. Engaging the community of Redbridge in the Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan is critical for its successful implementation.

The recent EU LIFE Environment SUN Project that ran in Redbridge from 2003 to 2006 aimed to investigate innovative ways of engaging all sections of the community in the biodiversity action plan process. An innovative approach to engagement arose out of this project; "Biodiversity by Stealth". For example, on Valentines Day members of the community were invited to tie a love pledge to a newly planted hedge and plant a wildflower meadow. The biodiversity aims were achieved but the focus of the day was on celebrating Valentines Day. The Redbridge BAP should aim to build on the good practice developed during this project, and to build on the relationships established with the community.

- **Maintain a regular programme of biodiversity events that appeal to the diverse communities of Redbridge**
- **Encourage participation amongst those communities or sectors of the community that traditionally have not taken part in biodiversity activities**
- **Continue the best practice methods identified by the SUN Project in devising innovative ways of engaging those 'hard to reach' groups**

(g) Monitoring

Monitoring should be an important part of any working document as it is critical for determining progress on actions. The Habitat and Species Action Plans have specific actions, targets and deadlines. Progress on these actions should be recorded and reported on an annual basis. As current chair of the Biodiversity Steering Group, the Nature Conservation Team will be responsible for collating reports on progress throughout the year, and for providing an annual report. New targets can be set at the end of the year.

The strategic aims of the action plan as detailed in this chapter should also be monitored, but less formally as they will be difficult to measure. Progress on these aims should also be discussed in annual reports.

The whole Biodiversity Action Plan should receive a major review on a three year cycle, where individual targets are reviewed, but also the wider aims and vision of the plan.

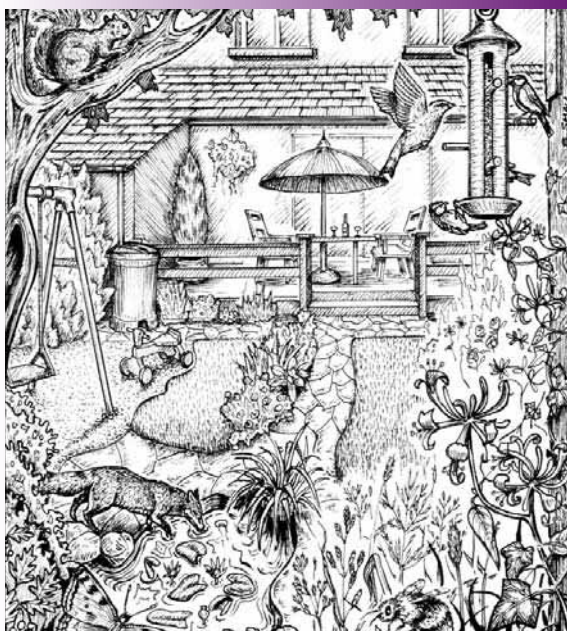
A monitoring process should be established that is based on BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System)^{14[14]} the national reporting system for biodiversity actions plans. This will ensure that the Redbridge BAP can feed directly into the targets of the London BAP, and thus into any relevant targets in the UK BAP. It will demonstrate the importance of the Redbridge plan as a strategy that is implemented at the local level but which has an impact at the regional and even national level.

- Establish an action plan monitoring system, setting up the Redbridge BAP on BARS. Use BARS as the principle monitoring and reporting system in line with the London BAP
- Monitor progress on the Habitat and Species Action Plans on an annual basis
- Produce annual monitoring report summarising our achievements and present to Councillors, the Biodiversity Steering Group and wider partners of the BAP
- Review the Biodiversity Action Plan every three years

The Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan

Chapter 3

Habitat Action Plans



A Habitat Action Plan for **Allotments**



I wonder if the cabbage knows, he is less lovely than the rose;
Or does he squat in smug content, a source of noble nourishment;
Or if he pities for her sins, the rose who has no vitamins;
Or if the one thing his green heart knows -
that self-same fire that warms the rose?

Anonymous

Allotments Habitat Action Plan

Aim

The aim of this habitat action plan is to protect and enhance the value of allotments for biodiversity.

Objectives

- To increase awareness of the importance of Redbridge's allotments for biodiversity
- To encourage sustainable gardening and horticultural practices
- To enhance existing habitat and create new habitats on allotment sites

Introduction

Allotments in Redbridge cover a notable portion of land, approximately 50 hectares in total across the borough, and therefore make a significant contribution to our environment. Plots are generally managed for the purposes of growing fruit and vegetables, but if managed sensitively have the potential to be important reserves for wildlife. Often, beyond the managed plot areas, are habitats that remain relatively undisturbed such as hedgerows, ponds, ditches, grassland and small patches of woodland.

Allotments provide important habitats for a variety of wildlife. Some of the more rare amphibians and reptiles such as slow worms and newts can thrive on allotment sites. Small birds such as whitethroat, blackcap and wren will inhabit the shrubbier areas, and the open space can provide suitable hunting habitat for birds of prey like the kestrel.

Hedgehogs, bats, foxes and badgers all use allotments to rest, eat and breed. Allotments also provide a range of microhabitats such as compost heaps that complement larger wild areas by providing a year round food supply. The open soil can yield a wealth of insects for predators.

Allotments also play a vital role in supporting migrant wildlife by providing resting, feeding, breeding places and links to other nature conservation areas and ecological corridors.

Current Status

There are 25 allotment sites in LB Redbridge, 13 are council-run allotment sites and 12 are society-run. Occupancy rates range from approximately 70%. 21 sites have statutory legal status and 4 are temporary (statistics provided by LBR Allotments Officer, 30th June 2006). Statutory allotments are parcels of land acquired or appropriated by the local authority specifically for use as allotments. These sites cannot be sold or used for other purposes without the consent of the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions.

Two sites have areas set aside as informal nature reserves; The "Kestrel Nature Reserve" is located at Goodmayes Allotments, this is an area set aside for a wildflower meadow, small woodland and bramble scrub, plans for a pond or wetland habitat are also being considered. Forest Farm has a number of community projects on site, including a nature conservation area, a community garden and a tree nursery.



Current factors causing loss or decline include:

- Threat of development to meet demands for housing or schools.
- Lack of occupation and therefore neglect; sites with a poor image will particularly struggle with low tenancy uptake.
- Poor infrastructure on site.
- Lack of investment.
- Lack of long-term planning or strategy for improvements.

Specific threats to allotment habitat and wildlife includes:

- Vandalism.
- Use of chemicals - fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides.
- Removal of weeds and wildflowers - general "tidiness" throughout the allotment site.
- Poor water conservation.
- Use of unsustainable materials - for instance, artificial fibre carpets do not biodegrade and can leach harmful chemicals into the soil.
- Use of peat compost, which has an impact on the biodiversity of the UK's peat land habitats.



Actions

Objective 1:

To increase awareness of the importance of Redbridge's allotments for biodiversity.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Provide advice and information about wildlife	Review end 2007	LBR NCT	Allotment Societies, BTCV, Froglife
Provide training and advice on recycling, water conservation and composting through Customer contact centre Master Composter Scheme Leaflets and information on LBR website	2 training days held by end 2007 6 Master Composters recruited by summer 2006	LBR Recycling	Master Composters, LBR NCT
Community days <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bug hunts and nature walks● Composting demonstration● Promotion/demonstration of good practice	2 community days held by end 2007	LBR Allotments Officer	BTCV, Allotment Societies, LBR NCT, Recycling
Training workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identifying amphibians● Creating or enhancing habitat for amphibians	2 workshops held by the end of 2007	Froglife	LBR Allotments Officer, Youth Offending Team Leaders, Allotment Societies

Objective 2:

To encourage sustainable gardening and horticultural practices.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Produce a "Best Practice" guide for Redbridge allotments	End 2006	LBR NCT	LBR Allotments Officer
Develop and promote a community tree/seed nursery at Forest Farm allotments	End 2006	LBR NCT	FFCG, Woodland Trust, PARC
Subsidised compost scheme - compost bins, water butts at reduced cost to residents.	Ongoing	LBR Recycling Team	Master Composters
Hold a Best Allotment for Wildlife competition	July 2007	LBR NCT	LBR Allotments Officer

Objective 3:

To enhance existing habitat and create new habitats on allotment sites.

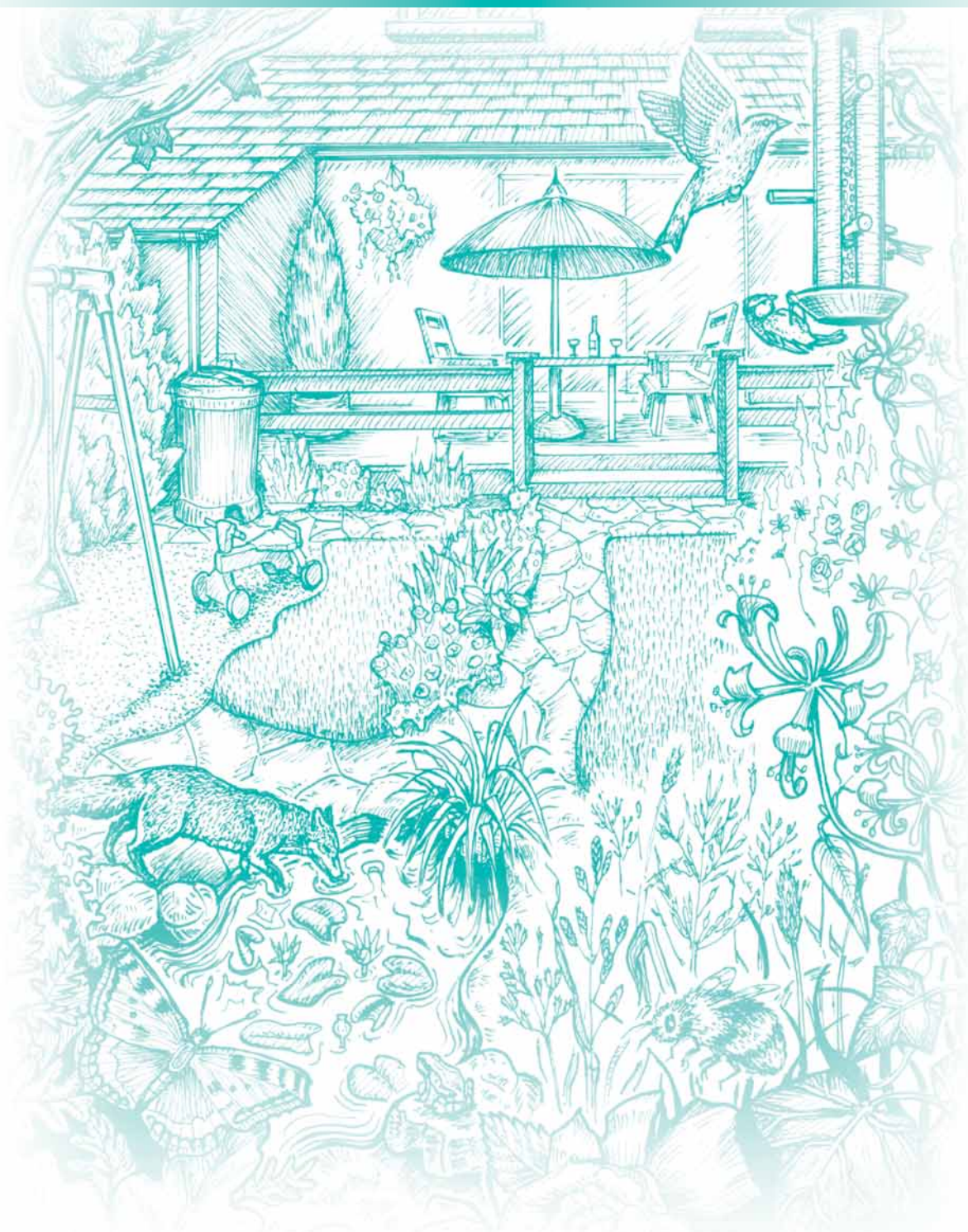
Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Start a programme of ecological surveys	One allotment site to receive full survey per year Review at end 2007	NCT, Froglife	LBR Allotments Officer
Provide help with practical tasks on allotment sites	Two allotment sites to receive practical conservation management per year Review at end 2007	LBR NCT	RNCV, BTCV, PARC, FFCG
Run a pond management project on allotment sites	Create or enhance wildlife ponds on eight sites by end of 2007	Froglife	LBR Allotments Officer, Youth Offending Team, BTCV, LBR NCT
Install stag beetle loggeries at allotment sites	Two loggeries to be installed by the end of 2007	FFCG, Kestrel Nature Reserve	LWT, FFPG, NCT

Key to abbreviations:

BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
FFCG	Forest Farm Community Gardens
FFPG	Forest Farm Peace Garden
LBR	London Borough of Redbridge
NCT	London Borough of Redbridge Nature Conservation Team
PARC	Porters Avenue Resource Centre
RNCV	Redbridge Nature Conservation Volunteers
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
WT	Woodland Trust



A Habitat Action Plan for **Private Gardens**



Keep a green tree in your heart and
perhaps a singing bird will come.

Chinese Proverb



Redbridge Private Gardens Habitat Action Plan

Aim

This action plan aims to protect and enhance biodiversity in private gardens by:

- Establishing the current health of gardens in Redbridge.
- Increasing awareness among members of public of the importance of private gardens to wildlife.
- Encouraging and promoting wildlife-friendly gardening methods.



Introduction

The image of a suburban back garden with a vegetable plot, fruit trees, shrubs, a lawn and flower borders is probably no longer typical in Redbridge. There are as many different styles of back garden in Redbridge as there is wildlife living in them. A garden is now perceived as another room, used for dining and entertaining and the fashion is for low maintenance minimalism. Water features and ponds in gardens are often considered too dangerous if there are small children in the family. Front gardens contain fewer habitats for wildlife than ever before as the increased need for off-street parking has lead to front gardens being paved over.

As cities and towns increasingly expand and develop, they cut further into natural habitats. Gardens have now become vital wildlife reserves. Private gardens in Redbridge cover a total area measuring more than double the size of Hainault Forest, Fairlop Waters, Wanstead Park, Wanstead Flats and Repton Park put together.

Current Status

The London Borough of Redbridge is on the edge of Greater London and Essex and is an important green corridor for wildlife. Gardens in this borough cover a substantial area measuring approximately 1500 hectares, according to land use statistics obtained from ODPM.

Factors causing loss or decline

It is not possible to say whether there has been a loss of area covered by gardens in Redbridge but factors that affect the quality of the garden habitat and may cause a loss or decline for wildlife are:

- Loss of front gardens as they are paved over for parking.
- Fashion trends towards minimalism and low maintenance gardens.
- Loss of interest and lack of knowledge about native plants and species more beneficial to wildlife and more interest in cultivated species.
- Misconceptions about wildlife gardening being hard work or untidy.
- Use of chemicals.
- Decline in vegetable and fruit crops grown in the garden.

Current Action

Objective 1:

To establish the current health of gardens in Redbridge.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Garden Survey	Complete by Sept 2005	London Borough of Redbridge Nature Conservation Team (NCT)	GIGL LBR Partnerships Team Ilford Horticultural Society (IHS) Redbridge LWT
Analysis	March 2006		
Feedback of results to members of public	Autumn 2006		

Objective 2:

To increase awareness among members of public of the importance of private gardens to wildlife.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Promote gardens as wildlife havens through articles in council newsletters, articles on LBR internet pages and other websites, leaflets and information in libraries and at Area Committee in line with policies such as 'cleaner, greener better place to live'	Ongoing	LBR NCT	LBR Partnerships (Area 7 newsletter) Hainault Forest Website IHS Redbridge LWT
The Skip Memorial Garden - memorial to lost front gardens - exhibit by artist and garden designer Kathy Taylor	October 2005	LBR Partnerships	
Front Gardens Leaflet - promoting environmentally friendly front gardens	October 2005	LBR Partnerships	Environment Agency Redbridge Local Agenda 21 Group
Promote events such as RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch, PTES Stag Beetle survey, London and Redbridge in Bloom, to increase awareness	Ongoing, annual	LBR NCT	LBR Parks Management and Development RSPB LWT

Objective 3:

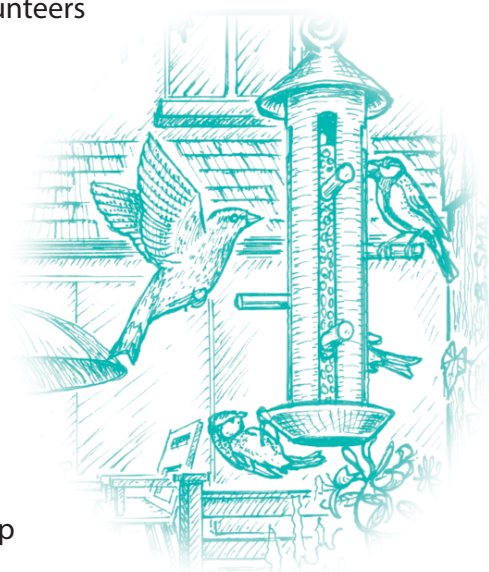
To encourage wildlife-friendly gardening methods.

Target:

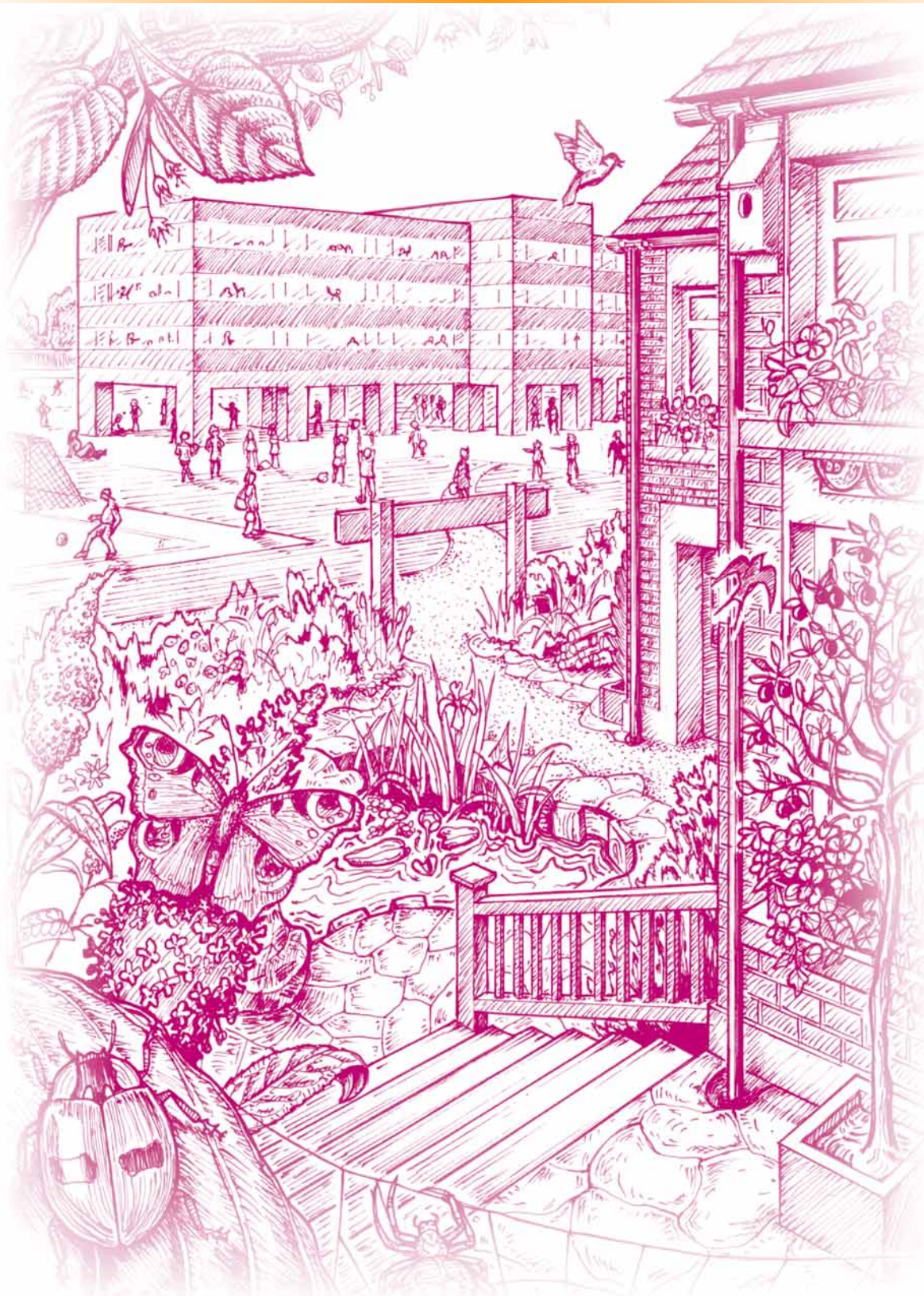
Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Promote wildlife friendly gardening methods through illustrated talks and workshops	3 workshops to be held by end 2006	LBR NCT	BTCV IHS
Produce an "Easy gardening" leaflet	Spring 2006	Ilford Horticultural Society (IHS)	LBR
Circulate "Easy wildlife gardening" leaflet to Garden Centres	Autumn 2006	IHS	LBR
Master Composter scheme - trained residents willing to give advice on composting	Ongoing	LBR Recycling Team	
Create a wildlife friendly category in "Redbridge in Bloom"	2006	LBR Parks Management & Development	LBR NCT and HAP Group
Highlight dangers of invasive plant species - produce leaflet	Autumn 2009	LBR NCT	LWT

Abbreviations:

BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
EA	Environment Agency
GIGL	Greenspace Information for Greater London (Greater London records centre)
IHS	Ilford Horticultural Society
LBG	London Bat Group
LBR	London Borough of Redbridge
LWT	London Wildlife Trust
NCT	Nature Conservation Team
RLA21	Redbridge Local Agenda 21 Group
RLWT	Redbridge London Wildlife Trust
RSPB	Royal Society for Protection of Birds



A Habitat Action Plan for **School Grounds**



Redbridge School Grounds Habitat Action Plan

Aim

The aim of this action plan is to raise awareness in schools about the value or potential value of school grounds for biodiversity and to protect and enhance biodiversity in school grounds.

- To encourage schools to use their school grounds as an educational resource.
- To encourage schools to actively manage their school grounds for biodiversity.

Introduction

School grounds provide a valuable habitat for many native plants and animals, especially where green space in the surrounding area is limited. Sympathetic maintenance regimes of boundary features, such as hedgerows and trees can increase the benefit to wildlife. Unused corners in playgrounds or sports fields can be used to grow wildflowers. Small changes can greatly increase the site's value as invertebrate and bird habitat.

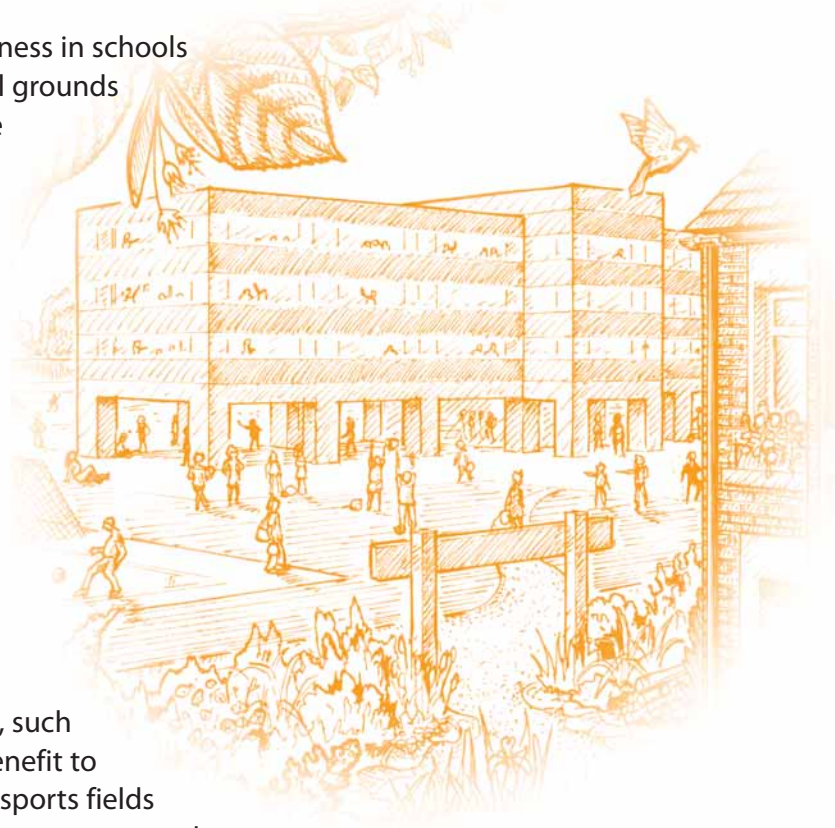
School grounds also have great potential for developing young people's awareness of the environment around them. Having school nature areas, which have been set aside or created especially for environmental education, allows children to experience and interact with biodiversity on a daily basis. Such nature areas enable children to take part in enjoyable activities that benefit nature conservation. The recording, investigation and creation of wildlife habitats within school grounds can be used in conjunction with almost all the National Curriculum core subjects and themes.

We can teach the school children of Redbridge that the protection and enhancement of our environment for biodiversity is of vital importance to the future of the planet, not just as an abstract concept but also as something that impacts directly on their lives.

Current Status

There are 68 schools in Redbridge, 51 primary schools and 17 secondary schools. To date, the Nature Conservation Team have worked with 27 schools that have an area in their grounds dedicated as nature area or school garden. Of these, 21 were primary, infants or junior, 4 secondary and 2 special needs schools.

46 schools in Redbridge have playing fields in total these cover an area measuring approx. 100 hectares.





Current Action

Objective 1: To encourage schools to use their school grounds as an educational resource.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Lead pond dipping and bug hunt activities in school nature areas	Visit 4 schools per year - review end of 2006	LBR NCT	
Teacher training sessions	2 sessions per year	LBR NCT	LWT
Promote LWT Curriculum Pack for Environmental Education	Start Autumn 2006	LBR NCT	LWT
Work with Ethnic Minorities Action Team on biodiversity projects in schools	Start Summer 2006	LBR NCT	EMAT

Objective 2:

To encourage schools to actively manage their school grounds for biodiversity.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Establish baseline data - how many schools already have nature areas?	Spring 2007	LBR NCT	
Provide advice to at least 4 schools via School Grounds Doctor	End of school year 2006	LBR NCT	
Cardboard Gardens Project	Pilot in 1 school by end of school year 2006	FFCG	LBR NCT/ LBR Recycling/ Cleveland School
Young Shoots Project	1 school - review end 2006	FFCG	LBR NCT/ LBR Allotments Officer
Seed collection project		LBR NCT	Woodland Trust

Abbreviations:

LBR NCT	London Borough of Redbridge Nature Conservation Team
LBR Recycling	London Borough of Recycling Team
LWT	London Wildlife Trust
FFCG	Forest Farm Community Gardens
WT	Woodland Trust

The Redbridge Biodiversity Action Plan

Chapter 4

Species Action Plans



Species Action Plan for
Bats



Redbridge Bat Species Action Plan



Aim

The aim of this action plan is to conserve bat populations in the London Borough of Redbridge by maintaining and enhancing foraging and roosting habitat, and by raising public awareness about bats.

Objectives

- Maintain and enhance summer roost sites and winter hibernation sites in Redbridge.
- Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for foraging bats.
- Raise awareness of bats and their needs, particularly amongst householders and landowners.

Introduction

Bats are highly adapted nocturnal mammals, generally only briefly seen at dusk and dawn when feeding, and leaving or entering roosts. It is this rather furtive, nocturnal behaviour that has led to many of the popular misconceptions about bats; horror films and stories about vampire bats have also contributed to this tainted image.

Britain's 17 species of bat eat insects and consume a huge number and variety of prey. A single pipistrelle can eat 3000 midges in one night.

Bats roost in a variety of sites. Noctule bats rely on natural roost sites, such as trees. Other species of bat such as brown long eared, serotine and horseshoe bats only use old buildings as roosts. Pipistrelles have adapted to urban living. Many Londoners are surprised to discover these unobtrusive lodgers in their lofts. Bats are an excellent indicator of the quality of our environment as their complex ecological requirements leave them highly sensitive to environmental changes.

Current status in Redbridge

Eight species of bat have been recorded in the borough of Redbridge - three types of pipistrelle, noctule, Daubenton's, brown long eared, natterer's and Leisler's. The pipistrelle species are likely to be the most common (following London-wide trends), although Daubenton's and noctule bats are also regularly recorded and widespread in Greater London (London Biodiversity Partnership, 2001). There are historical records of serotines in Redbridge but no recordings in recent surveys

A recent repeat survey in London found that there has been a statistically significant decline in the bat population of Greater London since the mid-1980s, particularly for noctules, Leisler's bats and serotines (LBP, 2001).

Specific factors affecting the species in Redbridge

The main issues affecting the bat populations in Redbridge are thought to be:

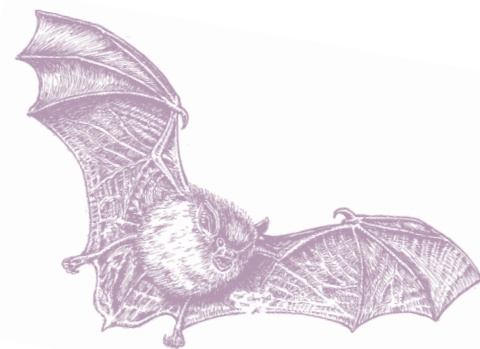
- Habitat loss due to ignorance or intolerance of the public to bats.
- Loss, damage or disturbance of summer roost sites and winter hibernation sites through development and lack of awareness.
- Loss of feeding areas through development and lighting of open spaces.
- Loss of navigation landmarks/commuting routes such as hedgerows and other linear features such as tree lines.

Current Action

Legal status

All species of bats are protected in the UK on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations (1984). Bats are also protected by the Wild Mammals (protection) Act (1996).

The UK is signatory to the Agreement of the Conservation of Bats in Europe which came into force in 1994, set up through the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979). While this is not strictly a legal instrument, as a signatory the UK is obliged to abide by such agreements.



Awareness raising

A leaflet has been produced by the London Borough of Redbridge Nature Conservation Team (LBR NCT) and is circulated to all applicants for loft conversions and other roof works, or other developments that may impact on bats or their roosts, in areas known to have bat populations. The leaflet details developers' responsibilities under wildlife law, how to look for signs of bats, and what to do if bat presence is suspected.

The LBR NCT runs an ongoing programme of events for the public such as bat walks and talks on wildlife gardening for bats to raise awareness of bats and their legal status.

Objectives, Actions and Targets

Objective 1:

Maintain and enhance the number of summer roost sites and winter hibernation sites.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Collate existing and historical records of bats in Redbridge	End 2006	London Borough of Redbridge (LBR)	GIGL, LBG, CoL
Undertake surveys in Redbridge to determine current status of bat population	End 2006	LBR	LBG, RLWT, CoL
Identify potential sites for roost or hibernacula creation	End 2006 and ongoing	LBR	LBG, RLWT, CoL, WT, HRWCG
Convert WWII Pillbox at Fairlop Station to bat roost	Summer 2007	LBR	TFL, RNCV, RLWT, HRWCG



Objective 2:

Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for foraging bats.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Encourage bat-friendly gardening amongst gardeners and allotment holders	Ongoing	LBR NCT	RLWT
Encourage appropriate management of the borough's parks and open spaces including hedgerows	Ongoing	LBR NCT	RLWT
Discourage excess artificial lighting around open spaces and areas known to be used by bats e.g. indiscriminate lighting by security lights	Ongoing	LBR NCT	LBR Planning, RLWT

Objective 3:

Raise awareness of bats and their needs particularly amongst householders and landowners.

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Run programme of guided walks for the general public		LBR	LBG, CoL, RLWT, WT, VPC
Provide advice to developers and householders about the potential impacts of development on bats		LBR NCT	LBG, LBR Planning
Run a bats workshop for planners	March 2007	LBR NCT	LBR Planning

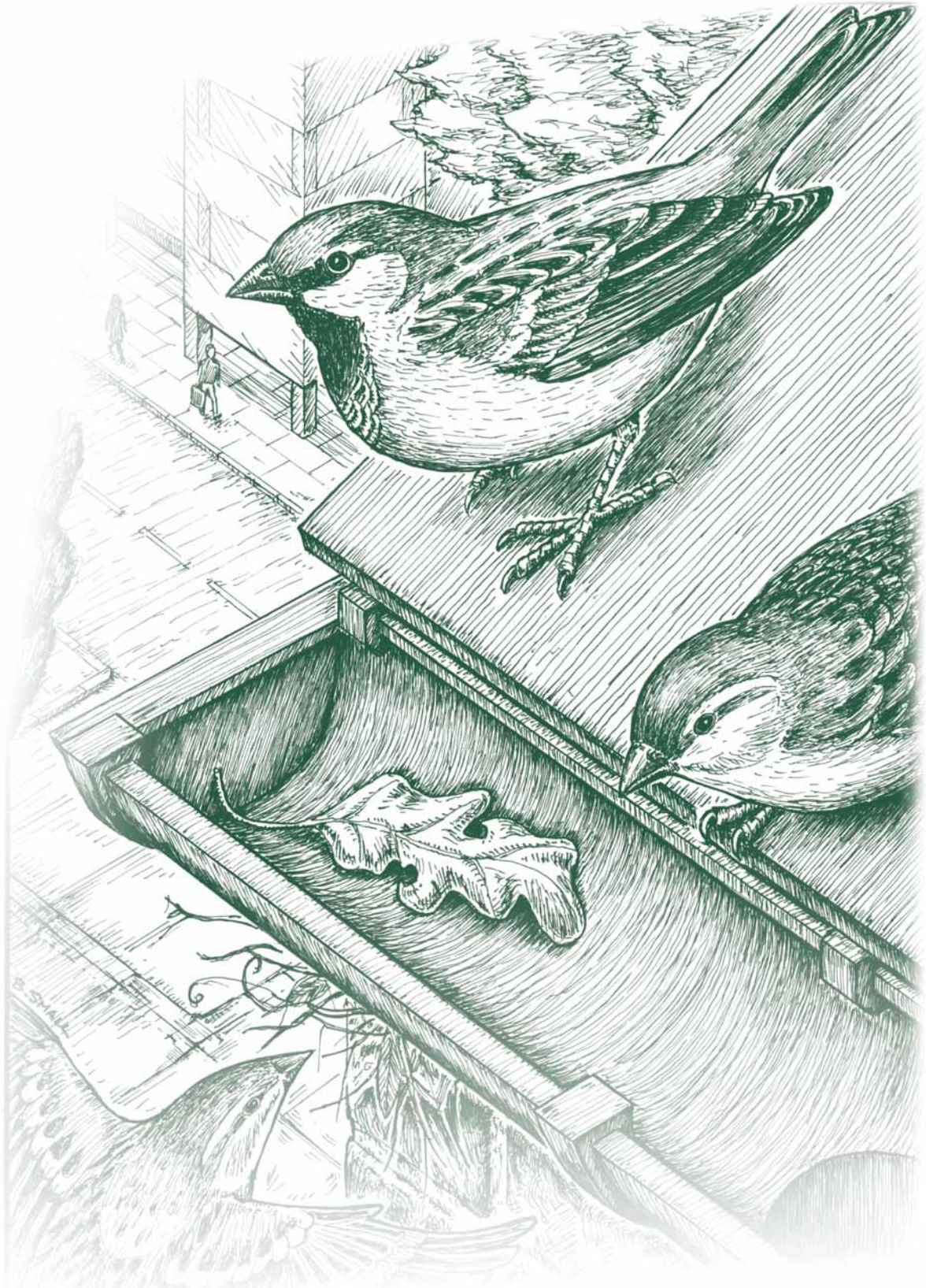


Abbreviations:

CoL	Corporation of London
GIGL	Greenspace Information for Greater London (Greater London records centre)
HRWCG	Havering & Redbridge Wildlife and Countryside Group
LBR	London Borough of Redbridge
NCT	Nature Conservation Team
LBG	London Bat Group
LWT	London Wildlife Trust
RLWT	Redbridge group of the London Wildlife Trust
TFL	Transport for London
VPC	Valentines Park Conservationists
WT	Woodland Trust



Species Action Plan for
House Sparrows



House Sparrow Species Action Plan



Aims

- Preserve and protect the existing house sparrow population and take steps to increase population numbers in the London Borough of Redbridge.
- Raise awareness of the decline of the house sparrow population and its need for conservation.

Introduction

The house sparrow probably has, of all birds, the closest relationship with humans and this is particularly evident in London. The house sparrow is synonymous with urban living and the capital city. The lively social behaviour and tame nature of the house sparrow lead to “cockney sparrow” being used as a term of endearment by the occupants of London’s east end. This little bird is familiar and very dear to the heart of most Londoners.

Once a common bird, studies have shown that their population has more than halved in the last 25 years. A Bird Breeding Survey run between 1994 and 2000 by BTO, JNCC and RSPB, showed a fall in sparrow numbers by as much as 59% in some parts of London.

Specific factors affecting the species in Redbridge

The loss of habitat and nesting sites is thought to be the main factor in the decline of the population. A report and action plan by Alison Fure for Ilford Town Centre found that “several factors were identified which might directly or indirectly have an adverse effect on house sparrow conservation. These included: a poorly managed pigeon population; insensitively managed communal shrubberies; loss of both front and rear gardens in response to residents’ parking charges levied by the council.”

Aim 1:

To preserve and protect the existing house sparrow population and take steps to increase population numbers in the London Borough of Redbridge.

Action	Lead partner	Other partners	Target date	Comments/progress
Objective 1: To investigate methods of pigeon control in Ilford Town Centre				
Investigate application for a bye-law to ban the feeding of pigeons	Regeneration	Town Centre Manager, Cleansing, Highways, NCT	November 2007	
Investigate humane removal of pigeons	Regeneration	Public protection	November 2007	
Investigate possibility of removing anti-pigeon netting from Council buildings	Regeneration	Property Management, Central Library, Kenneth Moore Theatre	November 2007	



Action	Lead partner	Other partners	Target date	Comments/progress
Objective 2: Encourage and implement improved management of Ilford Town Centre shrub beds and planters to maintain house sparrow habitat				
Maintain shrubs as wildlife habitat e.g. reduce aggressive pruning and prevent pruning during the breeding season	NCT	Highways, Public Protection, StreetScene	March 2007	
Encourage adoption of organic principles for shrub management	NCT	CCU, DSO	November 2007	
Install new planters or shrub beds	Regeneration	NCT	March 2008	To run in conjunction with the Town Centre Regeneration plans
Retain the shrubs along Corkers Path	NCT	Highways, Public Protection, Regeneration	March 2007	
Objective 3: Plant new habitat for the house sparrow in Ilford Town Centre				
Create new habitat for house sparrows e.g. plant Russian vine or Boston Ivy along fences and subways at Mildmay Road; plant privet hedges at Winston Road Car Park	NCT	Highways, Regeneration	March 2008	To run in conjunction with the Town Centre Regeneration plans
Objective 4: Encourage positive action for house sparrows				
State a firm commitment to a 'No net loss of Biodiversity' policy in the Supplementary Planning Guidance	Planning	NCT, Regeneration	March 2007	
Investigate possibility for requiring a 'positive design' before planning permission is granted for crossovers to front gardens	NCT	Planning	November 2007	
Investigate potential for providing free parking permits for residents in the Town Centre house sparrow zone	NCT	Highways Planning?	November 2007	

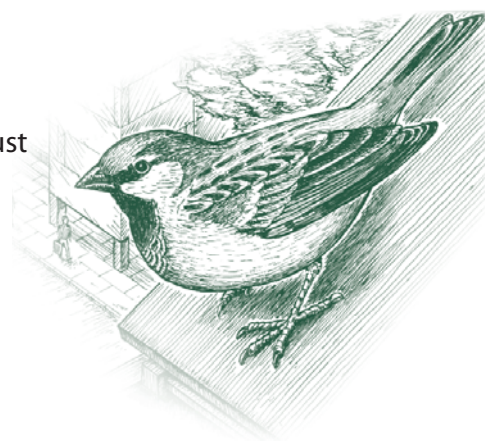
Aim 2:

Raise awareness of the decline of the house sparrow population and its need for conservation.

Action	Lead partner	Other partners	Target date	Comments/progress
Objective 5: Encourage active participation in house sparrow conservation work				
Hold two events or activities for the public to encourage house sparrow conservation	NCT	Regeneration, Partnerships, Parks, RLWT	November 2007	
Disseminate existing literature through publications and the Council website	NCT	RLWT, Barkingside LA21	November 2007	
Encourage reporting of house sparrow sightings for recording in the Recorder database	NCT	RLWT	November 2007	
Forge partnerships with local businesses to encourage participation in house sparrow conservation e.g. Sainsbury's, Thames Water, Community Payback Team	NCT	Partnerships, Regeneration	November 2007	

Abbreviations:

LBR	London Borough of Redbridge
NCT	Nature Conservation Team
RLWT	Redbridge branch of London Wildlife Trust
Barkingside LA21	Barkingside Local Agenda 21
CCU	Contract Consultancy Unit
DSO	Direct Services Operations



Species Action Plan for
Water Voles



Redbridge Water Vole Species Action Plan

Aim

To conserve the Redbridge water vole population and increase their range and numbers for the benefit of current and future generations.

Introduction

The species is experiencing a serious population crash throughout the UK, including London. There is still a healthy population in Redbridge but more detailed research is needed to assess its status and identify possible sites for habitat enhancement, habitat recreation or possible reintroductions.

Specific factors affecting the species in Redbridge

The main issue in Redbridge is probably habitat loss due to the canalisation of the River Roding and habitat fragmentation. There have been recent reports of American mink (*Mustela vison*) in Redbridge but signs of an established population are yet to be found. Competition with rats for burrow space has the potential to be a great problem for water voles however further research is needed to assess the extent of this threat.

Current Action

The Mammal Society carried out surveys for water voles along the River Roding north of Redbridge. A borough-wide survey for water vole was carried out in 2002, which indicated that water voles are only present in Redbridge at a few sites along the Roding Valley Park. This survey established a baseline of information that can be used for future monitoring.

Objective 1:

Monitor the Redbridge water vole population

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Carry out annual re-surveys for water vole to monitor the population	October 2006 then annual	LBR NCT LWT Water Vole Project	EMG
Carry out surveys for American mink to establish presence	April 2007	LWT Water Vole Project	LBR NCT, HFCP
Record findings in Recorder Database	Annual	LBR	LWT Water Vole Project, GIGL

Objective 2:

Raise awareness regarding water vole conservation

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Train volunteers to assist in surveys	Feb 2007 then annually	LBR NCT	EMG LWT WV Project
Raise awareness among pest controllers and organise training to ensure best practice	Sept 2007 then annually	LWT WV Project	LBR, EMG
Distribute best practice guidelines through landowners, developers, planners and pest control in Redbridge	June 2007	LBR NCT	LWT WV Project EMG
Organise activities for schools to raise awareness about the River Roding and water voles	3 events per year July 2007	LBR NCT	LWT WV Project
Run a water vole course for planners	Nov 2007	LWT	LBR Planning

Objective 3:

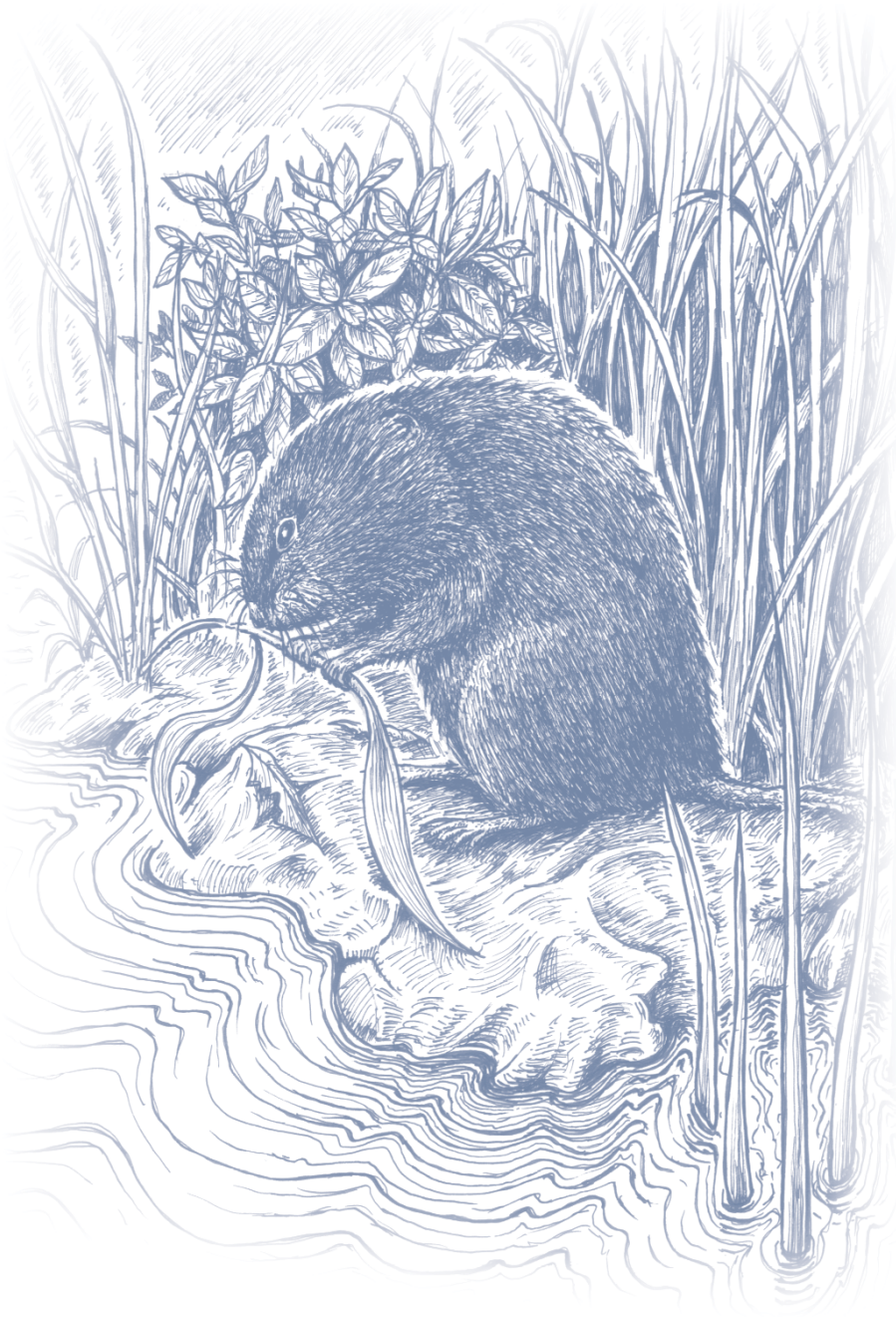
Facilitate re-colonisation of past sites and/or establish populations at suitable new sites

Action	Target date	Lead	Other partners
Assess the potential for reintroduction following completion of distribution survey/status report	Nov. 2007	LWT WV Project	LBR NCT
Identify suitable sites for habitat enhancement	Nov 2007	EA	LBR NCT, LWT WV Project
Carry out habitat enhancement/restoration	March 2008	LBR/EA	LWT WV Project
Run a water vole breeding programme	December 2006 ongoing	HFCP	LBR NCT
Run a mink control programme pending results of survey	July 2007	LWT WV Project	LBR NCT



Abbreviations:

EA	Environment Agency
EMG	Essex Mammal Group
EN	English Nature
GIGL	Greenspace Information for Greater London
GLA	Greater London Authority
HFCP	Hainault Forest Country Park
LBR NCT	London Borough of Redbridge Nature Conservation Team
LWT WV Project	London Wildlife Trust Water Vole Project
RBSG	Redbridge Biodiversity Steering Group





Illustrations by:
Barry Small, BA (Hons) ATC
Tel: 020 8854 0836

Photo Credit:
Foxgloves by Jennifer Charter

Others courtesy of the Nature Conservation Team

For further information please contact:

Nature Conservation Team
on 020 8501 1426
or email: fiona.oconnor@redbridge.gov.uk