

It is an evolving plan that sets objectives and prioritises actions to protect, conserve and enhance species and habitats of importance and value.

## A BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOR RICHMOND UPON THAMES

The first Biodiversity Action Plan for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames was launched in 2005, covering five habitats and six species considered to be a priority for conservation locally. Since then, the Richmond Biodiversity Partnership, a group of local people, professional bodies, and organisations have worked on implementing the plan into practice. In the beginning, most of the work was focused on surveying and mapping each species' population and/or habitat location in the borough in order to inform conservation efforts. Subsequently, the health of many habitat was improved or restored. New reedbeds as well as river and wetland habitats were created and hedgerows planted. Large numbers of bat and bird boxes as well as stag beetle loggeries have been installed across

the borough. The work of the partnership has also raised awareness of local biodiversity through regular guided walks, leaflets and social media.

While much has been achieved in terms of conserving and enhancing nature in the borough, species and habitats remain threatened, mainly by factors relating to human activities. The newly revised plan sets out broad actions that focus on informing and working with local residents, monitoring the state of nature in Richmond, ensuring that wildlife is considered in planning decisions, and increasing connectivity between habitats to ensure wildlife can thrive in the borough. The plan includes nine Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and ten Species Action Plans (SAPs). The BAP does not try to cover all our habitats and species: it prioritises those that are rare, in decline or characteristic of Richmond, and uses flagship species to help raise the profile of biodiversity.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP BIODIVERSITY

The key to success for the action plan is its implementation, which is why it is crucial to work in partnership with all land managers, local groups, individuals and statutory agencies.

### Would you like to help local biodiversity?

You don't need to be an expert to get involved and new partners are always welcome and needed. If you would like to join the Richmond Biodiversity Partnership or contribute to one of the Species or Habitat Action Plans, please contact the Chair of the Richmond Biodiversity Partnership for more information on 020 8892 0590. To see the full Biodiversity Action Plan visit <https://swlen.org.uk/our-work/biodiversity/>

## CONTACT

Contact the Richmond Biodiversity Partnership through

**South West London Environment Network (SWLEN)**  
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Twickenham TW1 2AR

Email: [biodiversity@swlen.org.uk](mailto:biodiversity@swlen.org.uk)  
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<https://swlen.org.uk/our-work/biodiversity/>

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LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

# Biodiversity Action Plan

*Your Borough,  
Your Biodiversity!*

## WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity, short for biological diversity, and describes the 'variety of life' - the myriad of plant and animal species, the range of habitats in which they live, and the natural processes of which living things are a part. It is vitally important and matters to everyone. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is exceptionally lucky in having a wealth of different natural habitats, supporting a great diversity of species, several of which are important on an international scale. Working together helps us to safeguard these habitats and ensure that our natural heritage is conserved for us and future generations to enjoy.

## WHY IS BIODIVERSITY IMPORTANT?

- Health and quality of life** – Accessible green spaces, with their associated diversity of animal and plant life, are vital for maintaining a healthy body and mind. Whether through quiet walks in our green open spaces, boating on the Thames or enjoying sport in the local park, everyone benefits from our rich natural environment.
- Leisure and tourism** – Richmond's many parks and open spaces attract visitors, bringing social and economic benefits to the local community.
- Ecosystem services** – These are the many and varied benefits that people freely gain from the natural environment.

They include water purification, removing air pollutants, waste decomposition, climate regulation, flood relief and seed dispersal, as well as enabling recreational, educational and therapeutic experiences.

- Intrinsic and moral value** – All species that share our planet have a right to exist. We have an obligation not to harm them by our own activities.



## WHAT IS A BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN?

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a strategy that aims to conserve and improve biological diversity and to sustain and increase natural resources.

## ACID GRASSLAND (HAP)

Acid grassland is associated with acidic soils (pH 4 to 5.5) that are free-draining and low in nutrients. It contains a diversity of fine-leaved grasses and wild flowers such as red fescue, sheep's sorrel, heath bedstraw and harebell. Richmond has the largest total area of acid grassland in Greater London, where you can also find nationally scarce plants such as clustered clover, upright chickweed and autumn squill. This habitat is also important for butterflies and a large range of invertebrates, which attract many birds such as the green woodpecker. Also of importance are the small mammals, reptiles and various fungi such as the brightly coloured waxcaps. Top sites that you can visit include:

- 🌿 Richmond Park
- 🌿 Bushy Park
- 🌿 Home Park
- 🌿 Barnes and Ham Commons



## ANCIENT AND VETERAN TREES (HAP)

Veteran trees are often found in ancient parklands where the landscape has been browsed by herds of deer for many generations. There are more veteran trees in the London Borough of Richmond than France and Germany combined and the habitat supports many species including thousands of rare insects and countless birds. Veteran trees are defined as 'trees, which by virtue of their great age, size or condition are of great value culturally, in the landscape or for wildlife'. However the age of a veteran tree will depend upon species. A veteran birch might be less than 100 years whilst some yews are reputed to be 2000 years old. Veteran oaks are typically 300-1000 years old. Top sites are:

- 🌳 Bushy Park
- 🌳 Richmond Park
- 🌳 The London Wetland Centre



## Biodiversity in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

The Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the framework for the protection, conservation and enhancement of wildlife within Richmond upon Thames. The list of habitats and species in the plan is not exhaustive, but aims to concentrate on those habitats and species, which are rare, in decline, or are characteristic of Richmond. This leaflet only gives a snapshot of selected habitats and species; and the map shows their locations.



## REEDBED (HAP)

Reedbeds are areas of shallow water dominated by a very tall wetland grass called Common Reed *Phragmites australis*. Historically the Thames estuary would have supported extensive reedbeds, but these wet areas have mostly been drained and the land put to other uses. Many reedbeds are recent, man-made habitats, quickly colonised by some interesting and uncommon wildlife. Reedbeds in Richmond occur at the margins of all kinds of water bodies and alongside several other habitats including wet woodland and Willow dominated scrub. Elusive birds such as Water Rails and Sedge Warblers hide alongside the endangered Water Vole, making reedbeds a focal point for all naturalists and bird watchers in particular.

- 🌿 London Wetland Centre
- 🌿 Bushy Park
- 🌿 Home Park
- 🌿 Richmond Park Pen Ponds



## BROADLEAF WOODLAND (HAP)

Richmond has almost 1200 acres (500 hectares) of woodland making it the third most wooded borough in London. We all love trees and it's not just eccentric wildlife enthusiasts that enjoy a walk through nice woodland! Woodland habitats generally support more wildlife when they comprise of a variety of native trees and shrubs. Woodlands with a matrix of habitats including wide rides, glades of woodland flowers, ponds, low scrub layers and tall, towering trees will be richer in biodiversity. Where decaying wood habitats such as fallen branches and 'dead' trees are retained a suite of wildlife including fungi, beetles and hole nesting birds will also be supported. Visit:

- 🌳 Crane Park
- 🌳 Ham Common
- 🌳 Richmond Park



## BATS (SAP)

Bats are nocturnal flying mammals that navigate by echolocation – a system that is so effective a single pipistrelle bat can catch around 3000 midges per night! There are 17 species of bats in the UK and at least 10 of these are present in the borough. Bats are intelligent, long-lived mammals with complex social behaviour and lifestyles. They need safe flying routes between the places used to roost, hibernate, breed and feed which make them vulnerable to changes in the landscape. Even our most abundant bat, the pipistrelle, is estimated to have declined by 70% between 1978 and 1993. All UK bats and their roosts are protected (even if bats are not present). There is a national bat helpline - 0845 1300 228 or visit [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk). Visit:

- 🦇 London Wetland Centre
- 🦇 Bushy Park
- 🦇 Richmond Park

