

TOWNS AND VILLAGES

DEFINITION

Wildlife is not confined to the countryside and can be found in association with people in urban areas. For example playing fields, gardens and parks provide large areas of green space. Buildings, roads and rivers even derelict and waste ground may provide a haven for some wildlife. Gardens can be far richer in nectar than improved agricultural landscapes and may be less exposed to herbicides and pesticides.

Often urban wildlife is especially adapted to life in developed areas, but it is important in larger settlements to maintain a linking network of green corridors to allow wildlife to thrive.

Whilst many of the open areas are managed to improve the quality of our lives, many natural species may thrive in these conditions. Many garden plants and flowers have proved an ideal source of food for insects such as bees and butterflies. Some species, including swifts, swallows and house martins have become mainly dependent on human habitation for their nesting sites.

People living in the built environment benefit from daily contact with wildlife and green spaces. Trees can keep down levels of airborne pollution; parks can provide areas of escape from vehicles and a stimulating environment for children to play. Gardens and allotments provide people with close contact with greenery and wildlife which all helps to improve our quality of life.

DISTRIBUTION

Whilst the area has fewer urban centres compared to other parts of the country there are many towns and villages scattered across the area.

Sub Regional Centre: Barnstaple.

Principal Centre: Bideford (including East-the-Water) /Northam /Appledore /Westward Ho!

Area Centres: Braunton (including Wrafton), Great Torrington (with Taddiport), Holsworthy, Ilfracombe and South Molton,.

Local Centres: Bradworthy, Chulmleigh, Combe Martin, Fremington, Halwill Junction, Hartland (including Hartland Cross and Eastdown,) High Bickington, Lynton/Lynmouth, Shebbear, Winkleigh, Witheridge, Woolacombe.

CHARACTERISTIC WILDLIFE

Mammals:	bats, hedgehogs, foxes
Birds:	blackbird, song thrush, blue tit, house martin, robin, swift
Amphibians:	common frog, toad, great crested newt
Invertebrates:	bees, butterflies (tortoiseshell, red admiral, peacock, speckled wood, orange tip), moths, spiders
Plants:	primrose, foxgloves, bluebells, snowdrops, daffodils
Reptiles:	slow worm

THREATS

There are many threats to this wildlife resource. The most important is the loss of open land to development within existing urban settlements, which can affect both the habitat and the wildlife corridors that link them. However, there are many other threats to this wildlife resource, which can come from the pressures of pollution, conversion of gardens into hard landscaping and inappropriate or incorrect management of sites. Often there is a lack of public understanding and awareness of the wildlife conservation value of some sites and how they could be managed and enhanced.

SITE STATUS

Site of Special Scientific Interest:	Taw & Torridge Estuary
Local Nature Reserves:	Hillsborough, Fremington, Kenwith and Meddon Green

CURRENT ACTION

The councils protect many open areas and green spaces, as planning authority and land owner. North Devon Council and Torridge District Council have, along with Devon Wildlife Trust and other partners, surveyed and identified areas of nature conservation importance within the development boundaries of the major settlements. This work involved the confirmation of identified County Wildlife Sites and the identification of key biodiversity network features or wildlife corridors within the urban areas.



There are many local environmental groups which have organised themselves to manage areas of conservation importance within the urban area. These include groups such as the Cairn Conservation Carers, Combe Martin Conservation Group, the Braunton Beacon Volunteers, Fremington and District Environment Group, Friends of Yeo Valley Community Woodland and Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society at Kenwith LNR. Some local schools have set up their own initiatives, helping to manage land for the benefit of environment and education on sites in or near the vicinity of the school.

Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) state that there should be provision of at least 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population; this standard is included within North Devon 's adopted green infrastructure strategy.

LINKS TO OTHER BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS

	UK BAP	SW BAP	Devon BAP	Exmoor BAP
Habitat Action Plans		Urban	Cities, towns & villages	
Species Action Plans	Greater horseshoe bat Lesser horseshoe bat Song thrush	Pipistrelle bat Greater crested newt	Greater horseshoe bat Great green bush cricket Primrose	

OBJECTIVES

- 1 To improve knowledge of the amenity and wildlife areas within the urban areas of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve.
- 2 To improve the wildlife value of existing urban green space areas by supporting favourable conservation management
- 3 To consider the ecological value of urban green spaces which are under threat from development.
- 4 To actively encourage new provision of green space particularly linking existing areas of semi-natural habitat to allow travel and re-colonisation by species.
- 5 To encourage the provision of accessible urban green spaces in every town and village.
- 6 To foster greater public understanding, involvement and enjoyment of urban green space within North Devon's Biosphere Reserve.

	ACTION	TARGET	LEAD DELIVERER	PARTNERS	Obj. No.
A	Policy and Legislation				
1	Ensure that planning policies and local development documents protect open spaces from inappropriate development and seek to mitigate adverse affects from planning proposals.	Preparation/ implementation of Green Infrastructure Strategies	NDC, TDC	DCC, PCs, DWT, NE	3
2	Incorporation of policy within District Local Development Frameworks that improve new development design to include ecological benefits such as swift nest boxes built into new buildings	10 swift boxes added to new buildings	NDC, TDC	NDABS, RSPB	2
3	Identify areas short on urban green space provision and look to provide additional areas through local development documents.	Ongoing	NDC, TDC	DCC, PCs, DWT, NE	5
4	Use Planning Obligations to create new urban green spaces and enhance existing open spaces by the use of appropriate design.	Ongoing	NDC, TDC	DCC, PCs	5
5	Support the involvement of local communities in the design, maintenance, management and purchase of open space in their vicinity.	Ongoing	NDC, TDC.	CPRE	1, 6
B	Site Safeguard and Management				
1	Liaise with the Landowners where appropriate to establish suitable management and agreements.		NDABS	DWT, DCC	1, 2
2	Designate 5 Local Nature Reserves across the Biosphere Reserve	By 2015	NDABS	NDC, TDC, NE,	2,5,6

	ACTION	TARGET	LEAD DELIVERER	PARTNERS	Obj. No.
3	Review the maintenance regimes of open spaces and consult with local residents with a view to enhancing their potential as sites for wildlife and its enjoyment.	3 sites per year	NDC TDC DCC	PCs, DWT	2, 6
C Advisory					
1	Offer advisory service to landowners on management techniques and financial aid schemes, which promote regeneration and benefit characteristic wildlife types within the urban areas of North Devon.	Ongoing	NDABS	NDC, TDC, DWT	1, 2
D Research and Monitoring					
1	Promote an efficient communication network between key data holders and encourage sharing of information.	Ongoing	NDC, TDC		1
E Communication and Publicity					
1	Promote the nature conservation benefits of Council projects and schemes.	Update NDC website by end 2012	NDC, TDC	NDABS, PCs	6
2	Seek to influence competitions (e.g.) Britain in Bloom, Best Kept Village to become more orientated towards wildlife gardening, sustainable maintenance and permanent planting.	Ongoing	NDC, TDC, NDABS	PCs, CPRE	2, 6