



Wildlife Trail

WEST HAM PARK WALKS



Wildlife Trail

West Ham Park offers a valuable habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna. We are committed to protecting, maintaining and where possible enhancing nature conservation and biodiversity together with strengthening our links with the local community, so that more local people benefit by gaining access to nature.

We hope that this leaflet increases awareness and appreciation of local wildlife. At West Ham Park we aim to balance the demand for amenity facilities with the management of areas for nature conservation.



Please note that this trail is suitable for wheelchair users



Wildflower Meadow

We Begin at South Gate. Walk in the direction of South Lodge. Behind the lodge, this south-west facing corner of the Park is the location of the

Wildflower Meadow 1. This meadow was first developed in 1998 to increase wildlife diversity by creating a wider range of habitats and providing protection. Thanks to funding from Natural England and the Greater London



The Meadow

Authority, improvements to this area were carried out in 2008 by sowing, with the help of volunteers an annual and perennial wildflower mix. Species which were sown included Ox-eye daisy, Red Champion and Cornflower which have injected colour into the meadow and further encouraged species richness and diversity.

Follow the path back in the direction of South Gate. Take the path on the right leading towards Linden Gate. The perimeter line of the Park, to the left has been planted with a variety of daffodil bulbs by local school children, to add colour and soften the perimeter of the Park. This area is also a good location to spot Woodpeckers.



On reaching the cross path by Linden Gate, the large evergreen tree with a bulbous trunk is one of the oldest specimens in the Park and is an example of a **Veteran Tree** ② **Lucombe Oak**, *Quercus x hispanica 'Lucombeana'*. A Veteran Tree is one that is environmentally, aesthetically and culturally important because of its age, size and condition. Typical features include; large hollow stems, dead or decaying branches, loose bark, sap runs and natural depressions which collect water thus providing a wide range of habitats supporting different insects, animals and plants.



*Veteran Tree,
Lucombe Oak*

Behind the **Lucombe Oak** is the **Wildlife Garden** ③. Created in 1991, this area has limited public access in order to maintain a peaceful enclosure to encourage wildlife. Local schools use this area as an educational resource and have helped to put together dead wood piles to help attract insects and birds. There are future plans to redesign the Wildlife Garden which include opening up the overhead canopy to allow in more light and create a pond which will provide an educational resource for local schools and community groups.

One example of habitat creation within West Ham Park are the **Beetle Buckets and Vertical Log Piles** ④ which have been created since 2006 in various locations around



Volunteers with Vertical log piles

the Park including the Wildlife Garden. These habitats aim to encourage invertebrates and rare species such as Stag Beetles. Local schools were invited to assist with the practical work to learn more about habitat creation.

Follow the Path which runs adjacent to Ham Park Road, walking towards the direction of Margery Gate. This area is a good area of the Park to appreciate the

Long Grass Areas ⑤ Since 2004, the grass maintenance has been managed differently to increase the amount of long grass in the Park. This has particular benefits as flowers are allowed to seed creating a more varied grassland structure, new habitats and sheltered



Long Grass Areas

corridors are created enabling the safe movement of wildlife such as invertebrates, insects, small mammals and bird populations. Long grass verges also help to soften and naturalise the appearance of the Park boundary, provide root protection and conserve moisture. Whilst walking along this path, look across to the cricket table as this is a good viewing point to spot Mistle Thrush, Starlings and Song Thrush which frequently visit this area.

Continue on the path to Margery Gate following the path round to the right walking towards the Playground. Once you





*Common Darter,
Sympetrum striolatum*

reach the
Playground turn
right into the
Ornamental
Gardens and take

the first left which leads to the **Pond 6**.

This popular feature is home to various species of dragonfly, nesting ducks, newts, toads and fish as well as several aquatic plants such as Water Lilies. This feature also provides an important educational resource for local schools who wish to learn more about aquatic habitats.

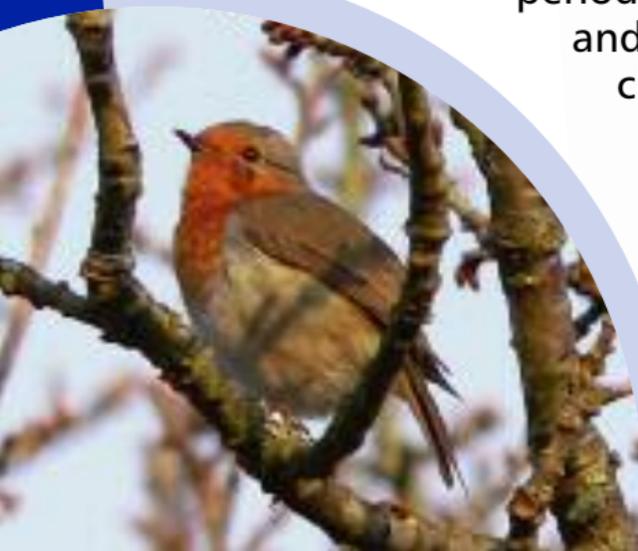
Proceed along the pathway around the Walled Garden, passing the Heather Bed on the right towards the Fothergill Rockery. According to the weekly bird surveys this area of the Ornamental Gardens is popular with various birds. Here, you can find an example of the **Bird feeders and Nesting Boxes 7** which we place in various locations to provide

additional shelter and protection during nesting periods. The boxes and feeders are checked regularly by staff and help to encourage a greater diversity of birds to the Park.



*Maintaining bird
feeders*

Robin



Wildlife Trail

Bird Surveys

The West Ham Park Friends Group carries out bird surveys and so far the results have been very encouraging. In the Park, we have regular reports of Sparrows, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Robins, Chaffinch, Wood Pigeons, Thrush and Magpie to name a few. Rarer birds such as the Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker and Sparrow Hawk have been reported to have bred in the Park.



For a full list of birds which can be found in the Park please visit the Friends of West Ham Park website at www.fwhp.co.uk

According to the bird surveys, the Ornamental Gardens has the highest number and the greatest variety of birds.

Spider Survey

In 2007/2008, we carried out year long spider survey which revealed that we manage the habitat of over 80 different species of spider including two Nationally Notable Species; *Nigma walckenaeri* and *Syedra gracilis*. In addition to this, several other interesting species of high value were recorded, which are characteristic of undisturbed acid grassland, a habitat rare in the London area. Common spiders you are likely to see in the Park include money spiders, wolf spiders and orb spiders such as the Wasp Spider, *Argiope bruennichi*.

The habitats which support the highest population density and diversity of spiders are, unsurprisingly the long grass areas highlighting the conservational value of introducing and maintaining these areas in the Park. This



Spider traps

research also highlighted that there was high population of common beetles and pseudoscorpions.

Foxes and Squirrels

Foxes and squirrels remain a common sight in open spaces and remain a popular and essential element of British park life. At West Ham Park, we have many foxes and squirrels and although, at times these animals can be a nuisance, we aim to protect their habitats as much as possible.

Butterflies and Moths

At West Ham Park, we have noted several colourful species of butterfly and moth in particular the Cinnabar Moth which has striking red and black colouring. We hope that as the Wildflower Meadow develops and long grass areas are retained these areas will attract further species of butterflies and moth to the Park.



Cinnabar moth, Tyria jacobaeae

Native Hedgerows

Thanks to funding issued by the Greater London Authority and Natural England in 2007/2008, we planted a native hedge with the help of the local community along the Territorial Army Centre fence line and behind East Lodge. We decided to use a selection of native species such as Beech, Holly and Ash which have higher wildlife value.

Hedgerows are particularly important for invertebrates such as butterflies, moths and insects providing a corridor of shelter which link other habitats. In the UK, hedgerows are a primary habitat for at least 47 species of

conservation concern but unfortunately are nationally in decline, so we are pleased that we have been able to create two new hedgerow habitats in the Park.

Monitoring and Maintenance

At West Ham Park we endeavour to further encourage biodiversity by planning the timing and methods of maintenance operations in order to minimise our impacts on wildlife and their habitats. For example, tree maintenance work is not carried out during the nesting season and where possible deadwood and cavities in trees are retained to provide potential habitats for hole nesting birds, bats and insects.

It is also important that we monitor wildlife and carry out wildlife surveys when possible as this helps us to understand what flora and fauna is present in the Park. This allows us to identify and respond to any pressures and threats that could potentially affect wildlife populations, helping us to plan for the future and adapt maintenance regimes where suitable.

This leaflet is simply an overview of some of the wildlife which can be found in West Ham Park. Other points of interest include ant hills situated in the Meadow and long grass areas as well as the occasional sightings of bats at dusk around Linden, Portway and Margery Gates.

We hope you have enjoyed this insight into West Ham Park's wildlife and conservation work, go ahead to make some interesting discoveries of your own!



Planting native hedge

End of Wildlife Trail.



WEST HAM PARK

West Ham Park is one of a number of parks, gardens and open spaces around London owned and managed by the City of London as part of its commitment to sustaining a world class city. Each open space is a unique resource managed for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the conservation of wildlife and historic landscape. A full list of sites and visitor information can be found on our website at: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/openspaces or by contacting the City Corporation's Open Spaces on **020 7332 3505** for **general enquiries**.



For further information please contact:

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Would you like to be more involved with the Park, go to our "Friends of West Ham Park" website fwhp.co.uk

Whilst in the Park, do not hesitate to approach any of our staff, who will be happy to assist you.

If you require this leaflet in another format please contact **020 8472 3584**



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