

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Tower Hamlets

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Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation

Canals in Tower Hamlets

Site Reference: M006

Reasons for designation: Aquatic plants, fish, aquatic invertebrates, breeding birds, access to nature, green corridor

Grid ref: TQ 362 810

Area (ha): 19.95 in Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Canal, Ruderal, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Vegetated walls

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Canal & River Trust

Site Description:

The whole of the Grand Union Canal system in London is recognised as a single Metropolitan site. In Tower Hamlets, this includes a section of the Regent's Canal, the Hertford Union Canal, Limehouse Basin and the Limehouse Cut.

The canals support a wide range of aquatic flora, amongst which are found a number of locally uncommon species. These include rigid hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) and small pondweed (*Potamogeton pusillus*), both species of clean, clear waters. Many waterside plants, including several locally scarce species, also grow on the brickwork and banks of the canals and on specially-provided gabions and rafts. The canals also support an important invertebrate fauna (including several species of dragon/damselflies), a diverse fish community, and breeding waterfowl. Sand martins nest in holes in the walls of the Limehouse Cut. Kingfishers are seen regularly in winter, and a nesting bank was installed on the Regent's Canal in 2016.

London's network of canals fulfils an important function in allowing nature into heavily built-up environments, and provides important access to nature.

Site first notified: 01/04/1986 **Boundary last changed:** 30/11/2005

Citation last edited: 16/01/2020

River Thames and Bow Creek

Site Reference: M031

Reasons for designation: Fish, wintering birds, marine invertebrates, intertidal reed beds, green corridor

Grid ref: TQ 368 801

Area (ha): 180.44 in Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Intertidal, Reed bed, Running water, Vegetated walls

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: Port of London Authority

Site Description:

The River Thames across London and the tidal sections of creeks and rivers which flow into it are recognised as a single Metropolitan site. In Tower Hamlets, the site includes a section of the Thames, and Bow Creek, the tidal section of the River Lea, the midline of which forms the borough boundary with Newham south of Bow Locks.

The Thames and its tidal creeks provide a number of valuable habitats not found elsewhere in London. The mud-flats, shingle beach, inter-tidal vegetation, islands and river channel itself support many species from freshwater, estuarine and marine communities which are rare in London. The site is of particular importance for wildfowl and wading birds, though the Tower Hamlets section of the river is not one of the most valuable for birds. The Thames is extremely important for fish, with over 100 species now present. Many of the tidal creeks are important fish nurseries, including for several species of commercial importance.

Bow Creek supports significant numbers of teal and smaller numbers of other ducks, as well as redshank and common sandpiper. Shelduck nest in most years. The creek also has areas of intertidal reed beds which support breeding reed and Cetti's warblers.

Site first notified: 01/04/1986 **Boundary last changed:** 30/11/2005

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Lea Valley

Site Reference: M071

Reasons for designation: Rivers, aquatic plants, fish, aquatic invertebrates, birds, access to nature, green corridor

Grid ref: TQ 375 833

Area (ha): 6.91 in Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Canal, Reed bed, Ruderal, Running water, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Canal & River Trust

Site Description:

This large Metropolitan site includes the River Lee Navigation, River Lea and associated watercourses downstream to the tidal limit; Rammey Marsh; King George V and William Girling Reservoirs; Walthamstow Marshes and Reservoirs; and the new Middlesex Filter Beds nature reserve. The river below the tidal limit is included in the River Thames and tidal tributaries Metropolitan Site. In Tower Hamlets, the site includes the western half of the River Lee from just north of Carpenters Road to the tidal limit at Bow Locks (the borough boundary with Newham runs along the midline of the river), and the Lee Navigation between Old Ford Locks and the London Overground Stratford line.

The watercourses of the Lee Valley support a diverse aquatic flora including many regionally uncommon species; river water-dropwort (*Oenanthe fluviatilis*), tubular water-dropwort (*O. fistulosa*), whorl-grass (*Catabrosa aquatica*), arrowhead (*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), flowering-rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and stream water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus penicillatus*), though not all of these are found within Tower Hamlets.

The water vole occurs further up the river, but there are no recent records from Tower Hamlets. Otters have returned to the Lee in recent years, and there have been two records in Tower Hamlets. Breeding birds include kingfisher and sand martin. A good range of fish are present, along with aquatic invertebrates, including several species of dragonflies.

Site first notified: 19/09/1988 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park & Ackroyd Drive Green Link

Site Reference: M117

Reasons for designation: Woodland, calcareous and neutral grassland, birds, invertebrates, small blue butterfly, plants, access to nature, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ 369 823

Area (ha): 11.61

Habitat(s): Pond/lake, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Chalk grassland, Vegetated wall/tombstones

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

This large Victorian cemetery consists mainly of secondary woodland, with smaller areas of scrub, grassland and several ponds. The woodland is dominated by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), but a wide range of other tree and shrub species are present, after many years of management aimed at diversifying the canopy and shrub layer. It is by far the largest woodland in a wide and densely-populated area of London, which contains few opportunities for enjoying the natural world. A diverse flora is found in the meadows and in the woodland ground layer, consisting of both naturally-colonised and introduced plants. Breeding birds include stock dove, sparrowhawk, blackcap, chiffchaff and whitethroat. Firecrest is regular in winter. The site also supports a wide range of insects, including 481 species of beetles and a large number of species of bees and flies, the latter including the nationally Endangered flat-footed fly *Agathomyia collini*. An astonishing 31 species of butterflies have been recorded this century, including small breeding populations of small blue (the only inner London site for this nationally scarce species) and silver-washed fritillary. The spider list stands at 157 species, one of the highest for any site in London.

The Soanes Environmental Centre is an important interpretative and educational facility providing specialist tuition to local schools and community groups. A Local Nature Reserve.

Site first notified: 29/10/1990 **Boundary last changed:** 01/03/1994

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Mudchute Farm and Park

Site Reference: M133

Reasons for designation: Open mosaic habitats, grassland, plants, breeding birds, invertebrates, amphibians, access to nature, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ 381 789

Area (ha): 13.20

Habitat(s): Ponds, Roughland, Ruderal, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Orchard, Hedge, Secondary woodland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

The "Muddie" is a large city farm and nature area at the southern end of the Isle of Dogs, serving an extensive area of inner-East London where there is an acute paucity of wildlife-rich open space. Habitats include pastures, scrub, planted woodland and various wetlands, supporting a surprisingly diverse flora of native and non-native plants. It is famous among botanists for some of its unusual naturalised plants, such as large-flowered nipplewort (*Lapsana communis* ssp *intermedia*) and Turkish iris (*Iris orientalis*), which are rare in the wild in Britain. Hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*), a plant of chalk grassland rare in London, is frequent in some of the paddocks. Breeding birds include blackcap, chiffchaff, whitethroat and great spotted woodpecker. The site is also an important haven for invertebrates and other fauna, including a large population of smooth newts. Extremely popular with local people, the Mudchute is an important resource for environmental education. A full-time teacher is employed at a new nature centre, which supplements the longer-established city farm, stables and café facilities. A Local Nature Reserve. The farm is a certified Rare Breeds Centre, and maintains important populations of rare domestic animals.

Site first notified: 19/10/1993 **Boundary last changed:** 01/03/1994

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Mile End Park

Site Reference: M157

Reasons for designation: Habitat diversity, open mosaic habitats, grassland, woodland, ponds, invertebrates, breeding birds, amphibians, black poplar, streaked bombardier beetle, green corridor, access to nature, environmental education

Grid ref: TQ 364 823

Area (ha): 23.53

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Flower beds, Marsh/swamp, Planted shrubbery, Pond/lake, Scattered trees, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

A linear site adjacent to the Regents Canal, stretching from Victoria Park to St. Pauls Way. The site comprises linked areas of amenity and herb-rich grassland habitat, with numerous trees, discreet areas of woodland and scrub and formal planted beds of aromatic and nectar-rich herbs. Trees include Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*), lime (*Tilia x europaea*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and a few black poplars (*Populus nigra* ssp *betulifolia*). Wetland features have been created in three sections of the park, ranging from a naturalistic wetland supporting emergent and aquatic species (both native and exotic) to a water-feature with water flowing between concrete-sided pools. These support a large population of common toads, as well as common frogs and smooth newts.

The species-rich grasslands support a diversity of colourful species and are managed as meadows. These support a diverse range of invertebrates. 448 species of beetles have been recorded, including the streaked bombardier beetle (*Brachinus sclopeta*), currently known from only one other British site. 172 species of spiders include several rare species, including two new to Britain. The presence of scrub and trees, many well-established, with some new planting, provides a mosaic of habitats, and the siting of scrub around amenity grasslands provides good habitat and creates discreet recreational areas.

The park has a number of imaginative features which give it additional interest. These include the Green Bridge, which provides a pleasant means of crossing the very busy Mile End Road, and the landscaped mounds which provide variation in topography and good views.

The park is well laid out with formal and informal paths, including separate cycle paths, and has numerous seats. The park is open at all times and accessible from numerous points, including the canal towpath. The paths have a good surface and are well-graded, making wheelchair access unproblematic.

The park is widely seen as an exemplar of how to incorporate large areas of wildlife habitat into a popular and well-used urban park.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Sites of Borough Grade 1 Importance for Nature Conservation

The Greenway in Tower Hamlets

Site Reference: THBI01

Reasons for designation: Open mosaic habitats, invertebrates, plants, green corridor, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 372 838

Area (ha): 0.83

Habitat(s): Ruderal, Scattered trees, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Thames Water

Site Description:

The Greenway was created over the Northern Outfall Sewer, built by Sir Joseph Bazalgette in 1858 and still in use. A rich and varied vegetation lies along the Greenway embankment on either side of the footpath. The mixture of sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees, scrub, tall herbs and semi-neutral grassland is a haven for small mammals and invertebrates, including the Roesel's bush-cricket (*Metrioptera roeselii*). Colour is provided by the many species that have been seeded and colonized naturally, including viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and white melilot (*Melilotus alba*). The rare warty cabbage (*Bunias orientalis*) also has a limited presence.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 12/01/2012

Victoria Park

Site Reference: THBI02

Reasons for designation: Lakes, veteran trees, breeding birds, wintering birds, bats, aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 360 839

Area (ha): 86.81

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Planted shrubbery, Pond/lake, Scattered trees, Orchard, Meadow

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

Large well-maintained park, consisting large areas of amenity grassland with a large number of trees, both native and exotic. London planes (*Platanus x hispanica*) are the most numerous, forming avenues along paths, and they line the park perimeter. A wide variety of other species are present, including mature black poplars (*Populus nigra* ssp *betulifolia*) along Grove Road and beside East Lake. The majority of trees are mature, but there has been some recent planting. There are a number of 'copses' planted around the park, and a variety of coniferous species have been planted in the north-east corner.

Three lakes support a variety of common waterfowl. Breeding species include pochard (a nationally-scarce breeding species), little grebe, great crested grebe, tufted duck, mute swan, red-crested pochard and Egyptian goose. A wider variety of waterfowl is present in winter, including gadwall and shoveler. The waterfowl are an ever popular attraction for park visitors. The carnivorous water plant bladderwort (*Utricularia vulgaris*), which is very rare in London, was found growing in East Lake in 2018.

The lakes support good populations of dragonflies and damselflies, including black-tailed skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) and red-eyed damselfly (*Erythromma najas*). The nationally rare red-veined darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*) was seen emerging in 2013. Common frogs, common toads and smooth newts breed in the lakes.

Over six hectares of meadows were created beneath trees along the southern edge of the eastern part of the park in 2012. Shade-tolerant flowers such as red campion and hedge bedstraw have established well, and it will be interesting to see how these meadows mature as habitats. An orchard was planted in 2019 near the Old English Garden, where another meadow is also established.

Other habitats include ornamental gardens with plenty of nectar-rich perennials, and dense ornamental shrubberies. The park provides habitat for many birds. Breeding birds include sparrowhawk, green and great spotted woodpeckers, stock dove, blackcap, goldcrest and mistle thrush. Bat surveys undertaken in 2023 recorded eight species of bat. A bee survey, also in 2023, recorded about 40 species of wild bees, including the nationally scarce brown-banded carder bee breeding near the Old English Garden.

There is access to the park from a number of points on all sides of the park, i.e. Victoria Park Road, Cadogan Terrace, Old Ford Road, Grove Road and Sewardstone Road.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

East India Dock Basin

Site Reference: THBI04

Reasons for designation: Breeding birds, wintering birds, saltmarsh, reed beds, woodland, access to nature, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ 391 808

Area (ha): 3.94

Habitat(s): Pond/lake, Reed bed, Ruderal, Saltmarsh, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Vegetated walls, Wet woodland/carr

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Site Description:

This site, although relatively small, comprises a diverse range of habitats, and is owned and managed by the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority. Along the northern side of the dock, which has been naturalised, common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and sea club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) form a dense reed bed, which supports breeding reed warblers and sometimes reed bunting, while Cetti's warbler has been present since 2015. A small area of saltmarsh, with sea milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), sea arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritimum*) and wild celery (*Apium graveolens*), all rare in London, was formerly present, but may now have been overgrown by reeds.

Common Terns used to nest regularly on rafts, but due to silt accumulation reducing the open water, they have not bred since 2015, and black redstarts nest nearby and frequently feed on the reserve. Little ringed plover and shelduck have bred on or near the site. Wintering waterfowl include several hundred teal and smaller numbers of tufted duck, mallard and a range of other species.

The dock walls support species that include polypody (*Polypodium* sp.), fern-grass (*Catapodium rigidum*), and sea aster (*Aster tripolium*), as well as a few species that have colonised from the grassland, e.g. wild carrot (*Daucus carota*). The flower-rich grassland, managed as meadow, includes two of the more unusual exotics at the site, warty cabbage (*Bunias orientalis*) and salsify (*Tragopogon porrifolius*), in addition to meadow flowers such as ladies bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*). Three spikes of pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) appeared in the meadow in 2014 and occasional plants have been seen since.

Woodland occurs in three areas around the site. There is a band of willow (*Salix* sp.) carr, along the northern edge, next to the saltmarsh, with terrestrial species along the northern perimeter. There are also two woodland blocks in the south east and south west corners of the site. Breeding birds include blackcap and, in some years, song thrush.

The site is open daily, access being via a gate in Orchard Place or from the Thames path, and its birds can also be viewed from the slip road to the Lower Lee Crossing.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 17/06/2003

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Spitalfields City Farm and Allen Gardens

Site Reference: THBI09

Reasons for designation: Grassland, access to nature, environmental education, amphibians including great crested newt

Grid ref: TQ 339 821

Area (ha): 2.06

Habitat(s): Bare ground, Planted shrubbery, Pond/lake, Ruderal, Scattered trees, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Mixed native hedge

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Network Rail, London Underground Ltd and London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

The Farm houses a number of different animals in enclosures around the site. It also has a community garden where local people grow a wide range of exotic plants and vegetables, and a wildlife area. The wildlife area has been planted with both native and exotic species, and has several butyl-lined ponds, with a variety of emergent and submerged plants. These support a small population, originating from a nearby introduction, of great crested newts, a European protected species, as well as a large (and presumably natural) population of smooth newt. Non-native amphibians (presumably from the same source as the great crested newts) include Alpine newt and European tree-frog. A nearby duck pond supports no vegetation, but has several happy ducks.

Many activities are run from the farm, working with and supported by volunteers. These include raising awareness of food issues, recycling and green spaces, and increasing skills and training in gardening, animal care, social communication, IT, language and literacy. The farm also provides services such as a 'mobile farm', film/TV location, animals for hire, sales of produce (Asian vegetables, chicken, duck & quail eggs).

Allen Gardens is a small park managed by the Council. Extensive wildflower meadows have been created around the edges in recent years to enhance biodiversity, and a small woodland was planted in 2016. A mixed native hedge runs through the park

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Sites of Borough Grade 2 Importance for Nature Conservation

Millwall and West India Docks

Site Reference: THBII01

Reasons for designation: Wintering birds, breeding birds, grassland, plants including Jersey cudweed

Grid ref: TQ 377 796

Area (ha): 30.56

Habitat(s): Pond/lake, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: British Waterways

Site Description:

These large areas of open water are surrounded by dense and high-rise development. The vertical concrete walls of the docks support a sparse flora where the old brick and stonework is still extant. A few plants of Jersey cudweed (*Gnaphalium luteoalbum*), which is protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), grow on the western wall of Millwall Inner Dock, with hundreds more plants on adjacent vacant land. Millwall Outer Dock supports the greatest number of colonising plant species on its sides, some associated with wetland habitats, others with terrestrial habitats. These include skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), hemlock water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), pellitory-of-the-wall (*Parietaria judaica*) and rat's-tail and squirrel-tail fescues (*Vulpia myuros* and *V. bromoides*). Tern rafts are present in the docks, and are used by common terns in some years. The docks provide an important area for gulls and other aquatic birds, such as breeding great crested grebe, coot, mute swan and mallard. Waterfowl numbers are swelled in hard weather, when several hundred diving ducks, mostly tufted duck, can be present. A single grey seal has been more or less resident in the docks for several years.

The land immediately surrounding the dock is hard-landscaped with some planted trees, the greater number around Millwall Outer Dock, which comprise horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*). A small semicircle of grass at the eastern end of Millwall Outer Dock is surprisingly rich chalk grassland, with plants including restharrow (*Ononis repens*) and field madder (*Sherardia arvensis*).

Access to the docks is open, apart from parts of West India Dock, where development is underway. About 25% of the water area in West India Docks has been lost to development since 2000.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/02/2024

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Bethnal Green Nature Reserve (formerly St Jude's Nature Park)

Site Reference: THBII03

Reasons for designation: Habitat diversity, amphibians, woodland, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ 347 829

Area (ha): 0.25

Habitat(s): Marsh/swamp, Pond, Scrub, Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs

Access: Public access two days per week in summer

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London Diocesan Board of Education and unregistered

Site Description:

This wildlife area, managed by a local community group, comprises woodland and scrub with grassy glades. Although perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) dominates in the open grassy areas, numerous tall herbs are present. At the west end of the site, several ponds support emergent species, including reedmace (*Typha latifolia*), greater spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*) and water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), the only submerged species present being a small amount of spiked water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*). A very large population of smooth newts (over a hundred in 2013) and a few common frogs all breed in the ponds. Common toads also bred in large numbers (over a hundred in 2013) but have not been seen in since about 2020. Adjacent to the ponds is a marshy area with hard rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and false-fox sedge (*Carex otrubae*).

Paths meander through a woodland of sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), oak (*Quercus robur*) and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), with lone specimens of crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and juniper (*Juniperus communis*). A diverse ground flora, most of it planted many years ago and now well established, includes butcher's-broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) and cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*). Wooden steps have been built leading down into the central glade where three wooden benches are located around its edges. The nationally rare picture-winged fly *Tephritis praecox* was recorded in 2021.

All materials from management of the site are composted and kept on site. There is no general access to the public except on open days; these have been regular (at least two days a week) in recent summers, and it is hoped this will continue.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 14/06/2024

Cable Street Community Garden

Site Reference: THBII04

Reasons for designation: Ponds, amphibians, breeding birds, access to nature, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ 354 810

Area (ha): 0.55

Habitat(s): Allotments, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Tall herbs

Access: Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Network Rail and The Bishop Challoner School

Site Description:

These active and attractive allotments extend north from Cable Street and under the railway line. The site has a large number of plots growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Fruit trees and numerous berry-bearing bushes are scattered throughout the site. There are also numerous mini-ponds across the site, supporting common frogs and smooth newts, as well as common blue and blue-tailed damselflies. The varied flora, and the fact that it is managed without pesticides, attracts a range of animals including numerous butterflies and other invertebrates, foxes, squirrels and birds. The latter include a very large population of house sparrow, along with robin, wren, dunnock, blackbird, song thrush, goldfinch and kestrel.

At the southern end of the site, on Cable Street, is a communal area planted up with native trees and shrubs. Access to the site is restricted to allotment-holders and is via a gate in Hardinge Street.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 14/06/2024

Stepney City Farm

Site Reference: THBII05

Reasons for designation: Open mosaic habitats, ponds, access to nature, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ 358 816

Area (ha): 1.35

Habitat(s): Bare ground, Planted shrubbery, Ruderal, Scattered trees, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Pond

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

The farm houses many animal enclosures, with a shop, café and activity facilities. Ruderal vegetation is scattered around the site in those marginal areas that are slightly less disturbed. An area of semi-improved grassland lies at the south-west side of the site. Frequently occurring species are green alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*), ribwort and greater plantains (*Plantago lanceolata* and *P. major*), black horehound (*Ballota nigra*) and white deadnettle (*Lamium album*). Two wildlife ponds have been created, and support a range of common invertebrates including dragonflies and damselflies.

This is a valuable site for environmental education, and is popular with the local community.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 17/06/2003

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

London Wall and the wall of the Tower of London

Site Reference: THBII07

Reasons for designation: London rocket

Grid ref: TQ 337 806

Area (ha): 0.04

Habitat(s): Vegetated wall/tombstones

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: English Heritage and The Historic Royal Palaces Agency

Site Description:

These historic sites support perhaps the only remaining long-established population of London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), a plant which probably first colonised London after the Great Fire. The plant has a healthy population on the London Wall, and sometimes in the species-poor amenity grassland that surrounds it. This has long been regarded by botanists as the classic location for London rocket in Britain. Other species present on the wall are prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), perennial sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*) and hart's-tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*). London rocket also grows on the inside of the northern wall of the Tower of London, where it can be viewed from the footpath along the top of the wall.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 17/06/2003

Citation last edited: 03/03/2017

Pinchin Street Disused Railway

Site Reference: THBII11

Reasons for designation: Open mosaic habitats

Grid ref: TQ 343 809

Area (ha): 0.20

Borough(s): Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Ruderal, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: No public access

Ownership: Network Rail

Site Description:

This disused section of rail land is mostly grassland, dominated by false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and rat's-tail and squirreltail fescues (*Vulpia myuros* and *V. bromoides*), with scattered butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*) and typical wild flowers of disturbed ground, such as hawkweed oxtongue (*Picris hieracioides*). The open vegetation with plenty of flowers is likely to be of value for invertebrates.

There is no public access but the site is viewable from DLR and C2C trains.

Site first notified: 02/09/2004 **Boundary last changed:** 30/09/2005

Citation last edited: 12/01/2012

Weavers Fields

Site Reference: THBII12

Reasons for designation: Woodland, grassland, breeding birds, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 345 825

Area (ha): 6.30

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

Most of Weavers Fields consists of amenity grassland with mature trees, and a few small areas of wildflower meadow and copses of young silver birch. The most important feature for wildlife is the planted woodland on the eastern side of the park. This consists of a wide variety of native trees and shrubs, and has now matured nicely into an attractive wood, through which a nature trail meanders. Glades contain meadow flowers, adding to the attraction. A good range of common birds breed, including great spotted woodpecker and blackcap.

Access to the park is via entrance points on all sides, and entry to the woodland is via gates at its north and south ends.

Site first notified: 07/12/2011 **Boundary last changed:** 07/12/2011

Citation last edited: 14/06/2024

Shadwell & Hermitage Basins, Wapping Wood & Wapping Canal

Site Reference: THBII13

Reasons for designation: Habitat diversity, aquatic plants, damselflies, breeding birds, wintering birds, open water, grassland, access to nature, green corridor.

Grid ref: TQ 352 806

Area (ha): 6.66

Habitat(s): Canal, Pond/lake, Secondary woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Canal & River Trust, LB Tower Hamlets, Private

Site Description:

Shadwell Basin is a relic of the London Docks, now a water sports centre for children. To the west of the basin is Wapping Wood, a small park with naturalistic landscaping, including woodland and meadow. A series of shallow canals leads west from Shadwell Basin, passing through new developments and ending just before Hermitage Basin.

Shadwell Basin has vertical sides, with little or no aquatic vegetation. Its main value is for birds. Several floating rafts provide nesting opportunities for common terns, Egyptian geese and mute swans, while sand martins nest in pipes in the dock walls. Small numbers of wintering waterfowl, including tufted ducks and great crested grebes, may swell in cold weather.

A narrow strip of trees and scrub on the southern side of the basin, and several larger copses in Wapping Wood, support common breeding birds including blackcaps and goldfinches. The meadow in Wapping Wood includes cornfield annuals such as cornflower, corncockle, corn chamomile and corn marigold, and meadow species such as knapweed, birdsfoot-trefoil and chicory. As the meadows have matured in recent years, the annuals have largely disappeared.

Despite their concrete bottom and vertical sides, the canals are full of submerged aquatic plants, including large amounts of small pondweed and common stonewort, both of which are rare in London. They support a surprisingly diverse community of dragonflies and damselflies, including a sizeable population of small red-eyed damselfly, a recent colonist of Britain. They are also home to fish, including three-spined sticklebacks and a few large carp. A pair of mute swans breeds annually, and other water birds include large numbers of mallards, and several pairs of coots, moorhens and tufted ducks. Rafts with native wetland vegetation have been introduced around Tobacco Dock and along Spirit Quay, the latter funded by the Mayor of London's Rewild London Fund in 2024.

Hermitage Basin is a small dock with vertical brick walls. Abundant aquatic vegetation includes water milfoil (*Myriophyllum* sp.), white water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*), and rigid hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), as well as blanket weed (*Cladophora* sp.), which is kept under control. A pair of coots nests regularly, and pied and grey wagtails and house and sand martins regularly visit to feed, indicating a good insect population. The basin supports a number of species of dragonflies and damselflies, including a very large population of the small red-eyed damselfly, a recent colonist to Britain. Fish include common bream and carp.

Site first notified: 07/12/2011 **Boundary last changed:** 01/02/2024

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Blackwall Basin

Site Reference: THBII14

Reasons for designation: Breeding birds, wintering birds.

Grid ref: TQ 382 803

Area (ha): 3.24

Habitat(s): Pond/lake

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: British Waterways

Site Description:

This large area of open water has hard surfaces around the perimeter, and is occupied by an ever-increasing area of pontoons for boats.

Common terns nested on rafts in most years until 2018. Small numbers of tufted duck, great crested grebe, coot and mallard breed, with larger numbers of waterfowl in hard winters.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 14/06/2024

Millwall Park

Site Reference: THBII15

Reasons for designation: Grassland, invertebrates, breeding birds, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 381 786

Area (ha): 7.66

Borough(s): Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Bare ground, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Orchard, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

The middle of the park is amenity grassland, used for sport, but a lot of habitat creation has taken place around the edges in recent years. A meadow on a raised mound along the western side contains a good range of colourful wild flowers. Species in this area include oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), scented mayweed (*Matricaria recutita*), lucerne (*Medicago sativa*), and selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*). In summer the meadow resounds with the calls of abundant grasshoppers and Roesel's bush-crickets (*Metrioptera roeseli*), and it also supports a good range of common butterflies. A number of trees and shrubs have also been planted on the mound, including field maple (*Acer campestre*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

A newer meadow in the south of the park is also developing nicely. There are several small copses of mostly native trees, the best developed are along the eastern edge, where there is also a small orchard. These have been underplanted with native bulbs. The park supports a good range of common birds, including blackcap and mistle thrush, as well as a small population of escaped monk parakeets.

Being located next to the Mudchute, the two sites provide a range of habitats and outdoor facilities. The efforts of the park management to diversify the habitats should be encouraged and recognized. There is free public access.

Site first notified: 02/09/2004 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 14/06/2024

Poplar Dock

Site Reference: THBII16

Reasons for designation: Open water, breeding birds, Jersey cudweed, scarce ruderal flora, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 329 804

Area (ha): 2.58

Habitat(s): Open water, ruderal, woodland, scrub

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: Canal & River Trust

Site Description:

Poplar Dock is now a well-used marina, with moorings and boats covering most of its surface. Despite the restricted area of open water, a great crested grebe, coot and mallard nest regularly, and tufted ducks nest in some years. Larger numbers of tufted ducks can appear in hard winters.

Sparsely-vegetated areas on the north and east sides of the dock support a diverse ruderal flora, with a number of species which are rare in London. These include a very large population of Jersey cudweed (*Gnaphalium luteoalbum*), which is protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Other locally rare species include slender sandwort (*Arenaria leptoclados*), rue-leaved saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*) and musk stork's-bill (*Erodium moschatum*).

Along the north edge of the site are small areas of young woodland and scrub, comprised mostly of native trees and shrubs, with woodland wild flowers such as wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), sweet violet (*Viola odorata*) and stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*) beneath. These were planted in the 1990s.

Site first notified: 07/12/2011 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 16/01/2020

Saffron Avenue Pond

Site Reference: THBII17

NOTE: THIS SITE WILL BE DOWNGRADED TO LOCAL IMPORTANCE ON SUBMISSION OF THE REGULATION 19 VERSION OF THE LOCAL PLAN AND WILL BECOME THL31

Reasons for designation: Pond, aquatic plants, aquatic invertebrates, breeding birds, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 387 809

Area (ha): 0.60

Habitat(s): Pond, reed bed, scrub, wet woodland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: East India Dock Estate

Site Description:

A sizeable and attractive pond in the East India Dock business park, right by Mulberry Place, the Tower Hamlets Town Hall. Surrounded by benches, it is a popular place for office workers to sit and eat lunch.

Until about 2020, the clear water contained abundant aquatic plants, including rigid hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) and curled pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*). This provided cover for fish, including abundant rudd and a few carp, and invertebrates. It was probably the best site in the borough for dragonflies and damselflies. Twelve species have been recorded since 2011, of which at least seven, and probably nine, breed in the pond, including the recent colonist to Britain small red-eyed damselfly (*Erythromma viridulum*) and a sizeable population of the red-eyed damselfly (*Erythromma najas*), which is scarce in London.

Since 2020, dye has been placed in the water to suppress weed growth, and populations of dragonflies and damselflies have collapsed.

The reed beds and a small wooded island provide nest sites for moorhens and coots, while common terns and kingfishers occasionally visit to fish.

Site first notified: 07/12/2011 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 14/06/2024

Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation

St George-in-the-East Gardens

Site Reference: THL01

Reasons for designation: Grassland, invertebrates, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 347 808

Area (ha): 1.30

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Bracken, Planted shrubbery, Ruderal, Scattered trees, Tall herbs

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Diocese of London

Site Description:

The site comprises a large area of amenity grassland with scattered mature trees, several small meadows, and shrub beds (mainly exotic species) located around the periphery of the site.

The site entrance off Cable Street is hard-surfaced with a few pit-planted trees, mostly downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), and small shrub beds of exotic species. The wall on the east side of the entrance has a large mural depicting the Cable Street riots. This leads into a formal area of shrub beds and seating.

The wildflower meadows around the edges of the park are well established, with a good variety of common flowers. Essex skipper butterflies can be seen here, and Roesel's bush-crickets produce their monotonous "song" on summer days. Among the trees are two large black mulberries; their abundant fruit is enjoyed by people and birds alike. The trees and shrubberies provide nesting habitat for typical common birds.

Immediately west of this stand is a fenced area with numerous pollarded lime (*Tilia x europaea*) with a herb layer of dense common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Access to the site is via entrances on Cable Street and the Highway.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 30/09/2005

Citation last edited: 12/01/2012

Fairfoot Wood

Site Reference: THL03

Reasons for designation: Woodland

Grid ref: TQ 372 823

Area (ha): 0.57

Habitat(s): Secondary woodland, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: LB Tower Hamlets, Network Rail

Site Description:

This former railway embankment lies between housing and an active railway line. Most of the site is covered in dense woodland. This is dominated by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), but recent thinning and planting of native trees by the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park will diversify the canopy and shrub layer. A large area of the invasive Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) has been cleared, along with much of the bramble which dominated the ground flora. A range of woodland wildflowers has been planted.

The more open, eastern end supports species-poor grassland with scattered trees, of which tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is the most numerous. Other trees include sugar maple (*Acer saccharinum*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and one oak (*Quercus robur*). Attempts are being made to diversify the grassland with wildflower and bulb planting.

Access is open with a short set of steps leading up to a plateau.

The site is very close to meeting the criteria for Borough Grade II Importance, and should be considered for upgrade in the next SINC review.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 17/06/2003

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

Ion Square Gardens

Site Reference: THL04

Reasons for designation: Grassland, orchard, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 342 830

Area (ha): 1.04

Borough(s): Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Semi-improved neutral and amenity grassland, Orchard, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

This small park divided into two by a dense belt of shrubs, which includes a wide range of native and ornamental species. This provides nest sites for common birds, and is used for roosting by a sizeable population of house sparrows. The larger eastern part of the park is amenity grassland with scattered trees. A good range of native trees, including a black poplar (*Populus nigra* var *betulifolia*) was planted in 2019 here. The secluded western section of the park has been turned into wildflower meadows and an orchard. The meadow includes colourful wildflowers such as such as black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), birdsfoot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), with fruit trees over about half its area.

Access to the site is open off Hackney Road to the north and Durant Square to the south. A cycle path runs through the site parallel to the footpath.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Swedenborg Gardens

Site Reference: THL08

NOTE: THIS SITE WILL BE UPGRADED TO BOROUGH GRADE II IMPORTANCE ON SUBMISSION OF THE REGULATION 19 VERSION OF THE LOCAL PLAN AND WILL BECOME THBII18

Reasons for designation: Acid grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, plants, toothed medick, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 344 807

Area (ha): 1.49

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Orchard, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets/EastendHomes

Site Description:

Lying immediately north of The Highway, a very busy road, and in a densely populated part of the Borough, this park provides a pleasant and well-used oasis for people living in the surrounding flats and houses. There is a belt of trees and shrubs along the southern edge, and an area of developing woodland in the north-west of the park. These were planted after the park was created in 1983, and consist of native species such as hornbeam, aspen, elder, ash and dog-rose, as well as a selection of ornamentals. A path meanders through the woodland.

Elsewhere in the western half of the park is a mound with a meadow containing a wide range of common wild flowers, with chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) and tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) particularly abundant. A former sandy sports pitch close to the mound has formed an interesting area of acid grassland, with several locally scarce plants. These include an abundance of hare's-foot clover (*Trifolium arvense*), as well as sand spurrey (*Spergularia rubra*) and toothed medick (*Medicago polymorpha*), the latter extremely rare in London. The rest of the park consists of mown grass, with a mixture of mature trees and saplings, as well as a playground and other amenity features.

To the east of the park, the site also includes some of the landscaping in EastendHomes' Swedenborg Estate. The most important part of this is Swedenborg Square Orchard, with 58 fruit trees planted by Trees for Cities in 2013 with wildflower meadow below. The orchard, the largest in Tower Hamlets, won second prize in the pollinators category of the BIG Challenge awards in 2014.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 17/06/2003

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Cameron Community Garden

Site Reference: THL12

Reasons for designation: Habitat diversity, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 374 819

Area (ha): 0.10

Habitat(s): Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Tall herbs

Access: No public access

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

Well-used and colourful community garden, with numerous beds of vegetables and herbs marked out with low hedges of box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and yew (*Taxus baccata*). Numerous trees are scattered around the site, including hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), oak (*Quercus robur*), pear (*Pyrus* sp.) almond, and walnut (*Juglans regia*). An espaliered crab-apple (*Malus sylvestris*) makes an interesting feature. Some of the species are planted specifically for the benefit of invertebrates and include teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera* spp.).

A number of species are reported to visit the garden. These include peacock, holly blue and small white butterflies, blue and great tits, wrens and nesting woodpigeons. Bats have also been seen.

The garden is locked and accessible to residents using the garden.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 03/03/2017

Disused railway, Bow

Site Reference: THL13

Reasons for designation: Grassland, woodland.

Grid ref: TQ 368 843

Area (ha): 1.41

Habitat(s): Scattered trees, Scrub, Semi-improved neutral grassland

Access: Can be viewed from adjacent paths or roads only

Ownership: Docklands Light Railway

Site Description:

This site is a steeply sloping embankment along the west side of the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road. It supports a mosaic of habitats, including woodland, neutral grassland and scattered scrub. The woodland is variously dominated by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). Open areas consist of rough grassland with areas of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), and clumps of elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 07/12/2011

Citation last edited: 12/01/2012

St Katharine Docks

Site Reference: THL15

Reasons for designation: Open water, wintering birds, Jersey cudweed, access to nature

Grid ref: TQ 338 804

Area (ha): 4.11

Habitat(s): Pond/lake, Vegetated walls

Access: Free public access (part of site)

Ownership: Blackstone Group

Site Description:

Docks providing moorings for numerous large cruisers and barges. No aquatic vegetation was discernible, and there is little vegetation present on the dock walls. Those species present on the walls include a few plants of Jersey cudweed (*Gnaphalium luteoalbum*), which is protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), though this has not been seen since 2014. Other plants on the walls include ivy-leaved toadflax (*Mycelis muralis*), Hemlock water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) and eastern rocket (*Sisymbrium orientale*). Elsewhere around the dock, trees and planters with shrubs provide some colour. Small numbers of common waterfowl, including tufted duck, coot, mallard and moorhen, are present throughout the year and probably nest in the marina.

Access is from the East Smithfield and St. Katherine's Way.

Site first notified: 01/05/1996 **Boundary last changed:** 01/05/1996

Citation last edited: 16/01/2020

St Anne's Churchyard, Limehouse

Site Reference: THL17

Reasons for designation: Black poplar, spring bulbs, bats.

Grid ref: TQ 367 810

Area (ha): 1.00

Borough(s): Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Amenity grassland, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Vegetated wall/tombstones

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: Diocese of London

Site Description:

Peaceful churchyard of amenity grassland with numerous trees and shrubs surrounding the church buildings. Headstones have been removed to perimeter walls, where they are sparsely colonised by a few species. Larger tombstones remain *in situ*. A wide range of spring-flowering bulbs provide a spectacular display within the short grass, and a valuable early source of nectar for pollinators. Trees include a single mature specimen of the rare black poplar (*Populus nigra* ssp *betulifolia*), a priority species in the London and Tower Hamlets Biodiversity Action Plans. Up to 20 common pipistrelle bats have been seen feeding over the churchyard in 2024 and are probably roosting nearby.

There is free public access.

Site first notified: 17/06/2003 **Boundary last changed:** 17/06/2003

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Cyril Jackson School Nature Area

Site Reference: THL23

Reasons for designation: Habitat diversity, pond, amphibians, access to nature, environmental education

Grid ref: TQ 368 807

Area (ha): 0.08

Habitat(s): Marsh/swamp, Pond/lake, Scattered trees, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs

Access: No public access

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

Attractively laid out and planted school nature area with a range of habitats designed to attract a variety of species, particularly invertebrates. The raised pond and wetland habitat with species such as water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*), greater spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*), butterbur (*Petasites* sp.) and reedmace (*Typha latifolia*) is home to smooth newts, common frogs and dragonflies. The large variety of wildflowers and shrubs (not all necessarily native) include many aromatic and nectar-rich species that attract butterflies and bees.

Elsewhere in the school grounds native planting and seeding has also been carried out, and sits alongside more formal planting. A "wildlife copse" and a native hedgerow are also included in the site.

Although accessible only to school users, the site provides an excellent educational tool, and a valuable wildlife resource in a densely developed area.

Site first notified: 02/09/2004 **Boundary last changed:** 07/12/2011

Citation last edited: 12/01/2012

Robin Hood Gardens

Site Reference: THL26

Reasons for designation: Grassland, woodland, access to nature

Grid ref: TQ 383 808

Area (ha): 0.83

Habitat(s): Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees, Semi-improved neutral grassland, Tall herbs

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

This open space, within estate of tall flats, is unusual in that it rises, forming a tall rounded mound with fairly steep sides. The site is well laid-out with a wide flight of steps leading up to the top of the mound to provide a good viewing point.

Most of the site is grassland which is quite rich in wild flowers, though frequent cutting prevents many of them from flowering. Species present include black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and a sizeable population of Blue Eryngo (*Eryngium planum*), a garden escape rarely seen in the wild. A couple of clumps of mostly native trees are developing into young woodland. Nesting birds here include goldfinch. Aromatic flowers and shrubs alongside the steps up the mound attract butterflies and other insects.

The estate is soon to be redeveloped. The existing open space will be retained, and it is hoped that it will be even better for wildlife.

Site first notified: 02/09/2004 **Boundary last changed:** 30/09/2005

Citation last edited: 03/03/2017

Meath Gardens

Site Reference: THL27

Reasons for designation: Black poplar, grassland, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 358 828

Area (ha): 4.66

Borough(s): Tower Hamlets

Habitat(s): Native woodland (developing), Mixed native hedge, Orchard, Meadow, Allotments, Amenity grassland, Planted shrubbery, Scattered trees

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

Large park with allotments in the north-west corner. Mature trees either line the various paths through the site or are located around the perimeter. These include the rare native black poplar (*Populus nigra* ssp *betulifolia*). There is one large mature black poplar, along with the decaying trunks of two more which died in recent years, and a number of smaller specimens have been planted and are growing well. Other trees present include Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra* "Italica"), hybrid black poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), false acacia (*Robinia pseudacacia*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*).

Numerous habitat enhancements have been undertaken since 2017, led by the Friends of Meath Gardens. A small orchard has been planted and a mixed native hedge has been planted around the perimeter of the park. Small areas of native woodland and wildflower meadows are being established, mostly in the south-east of the park, and further meadows are proposed.

The park has a pleasant, open feel, has children's play facilities and is located amongst dense housing. There is free public access.

The site is very close to meeting the criteria for Borough Grade II Importance, and should be considered for upgrade in the next SINC review.

Site first notified: 02/09/2004 **Boundary last changed:** 01/02/2024

Citation last edited: 18/06/2024

King Edward Memorial Park

Site Reference: THL32

Reasons for designation: daisy earthstar, habitat diversity, grassland, pond, amphibians, access to nature, environmental education.

Grid ref: TQ

Area (ha): 2.34

Habitat(s): Scrub, scattered trees, semi-improved neutral grassland, amenity grassland, pond, flower beds

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

This attractive, medium-sized park contains a number of wildlife habitats, mostly created over the last few years. An area of scrub has been underplanted with native bulbs and woodland wild flowers, and a loggery installed to provide dead wood for invertebrates. A wildflower meadow along the eastern edge of the park contains a diverse range of perennial wildflowers, including a well-established population of fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*). This is probably the best meadow in the borough away from Mudchute, Cemetery Park and Mile End Park. Elsewhere, borders contain numerous native and nectar-rich flowers for bees, butterflies and other insects. A small pond supports breeding frogs.

There is a large colony of the nationally-rare daisy earthstar (*Geastrum floriforme*) at the edge of the children's playground, at the base of a row of Leyland cypress trees. Several hundred individuals are recorded in most years, making this perhaps the largest population of this fungus in Britain.

Site first notified: 07/12/2011 **Boundary last changed:** 07/12/2011

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024

Elf Green

Site Reference: THL33

Reasons for designation: grassland, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 355 809

Area (ha): 0.07

Habitat(s): Cornfield annuals, mixed native hedge, semi-improved neutral grassland, flower beds

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: EastendHomes

Site Description:

This former area of amenity grassland on the Glamis Estate has been transformed into wildflower meadows. A scraped area is now well-established as a perennial meadow, while the adjacent mound, which is more fertile, is managed as an annual meadow. A mixed native hedge along the southern edge of the site provides an additional habitat, as does a small copse with bulbs below in the south-west corner. Across the path to the north, a mixed herbaceous and shrub bed contains species chosen to provide nectar for bees and other pollinators for as much of the year as possible.

The whole site is managed primarily for nature conservation by EastendHomes, and is a fine example of habitat creation on housing land.

Site first notified: 15/01/2020 **Boundary last changed:** 15/01/2020

Citation last edited: 16/01/2020

Bartlett Park

Site Reference: pTHL34

NOTE: THIS SITE WAS PROPOSED AS A NEW SITE OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE IN THE 2023 SINC REVIEW. IT WILL FORMALLY BECOME A SINC ON SUBMISSION OF THE REGULATION 19 VERSION OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Reasons for designation: grassland, black poplars, access to nature.

Grid ref: TQ 373 813

Area (ha): 4.30

Habitat(s): semi-improved neutral grassland, scattered trees

Access: Free public access (all/most of site)

Ownership: LB Tower Hamlets

Site Description:

This sizeable park beside the Limehouse Cut was extensively re-landscaped in 2019-20. This included tree planting, including several black poplars (*Populus nigra* var *betulifolia*), and the creation of extensive areas of wildflower meadows. Some of the meadows were created on flat areas, others on mounds. They have established with varying success, with those on the flat generally much more diverse than those on the mounds, which are dominated by coarse grasses.

Site first notified: 01/02/2024 **Boundary last changed:** 01/02/2024

Citation last edited: 09/07/2024