



# **City of York Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

## **Summary**

Version 1, May 2024

### **What is a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)?**

Biodiversity means all the different types (species) of plants and animals and the places that they live (habitats). The City of York Local Biodiversity Action Plan was written in 2017 and provides information on the biodiversity in our area. Using specific criteria it identifies those that are special because they are rare, from locally up to internationally, or under threat. These are called Priority Species and Habitats. It outlines what is being done already and what can be done to protect, conserve and enhance them.

### **Why does Biodiversity Matter?**

To put it simply, we can't live without it! It is the basis for the functioning of the ecosystems around us and that we are part of. For example they provide us with food, clothes and medicines, and regulate our water, air and climate. As well as what they provide, the natural world also makes us feel happier.

### **What are York's Green Corridors?**

These are areas of the City of York that have been identified as having a lot of green spaces, allowing wildlife to live, move and hopefully thrive within them. They allow wildlife to move along them directly, or to travel short distances between them for food, water and shelter, and safely moving to areas that have more food or shelter if there is less in the space they normally live in. Actions that

protect and/or enhance the Green Corridors are more likely to have a bigger impact on our local biodiversity.

The Green Corridors spread out like spokes on a wheel from York city centre, connected by the 2 circles of the city walls and the outer ringroad. They include the areas along the Rivers' Ouse, Foss and Derwent, Elvington and Walmgate Tilmires, Knavesmire and Hob Moor, Askham Bog, Acomb and Wiggington corridors and Germany Beck.

## **What are the Identified Priority Habitats?**

A priority habitat has to meet set criteria about its importance, nationally or internationally, it might be in decline or it might be home to a species under threat.

In our area these have been identified as:

- **Unimproved neutral grassland, flood meadows and wet grassland**

Unimproved means that they have not been changed to make them more useful agriculturally. They include Clifton Ings, Rawcliffe Meadows, Hob Moor, Acomb Wood Meadow, Wheldrake Ings and the Lower Derwent Valley. Notably York is home to just under 10% of England's flood meadow grassland that grows specific flower types.

- **Lowland Heath and Acidic Grassland**

E.g. Wheldrake Wood and Strensall Common, which is England's most northerly extensive lowland heath.

- **Fens, swamps and ponds**

E.g. Askham Bog, Middlethorpe Ings, Hassacar Pond (Dunnington), Gollie Ponds (Naburn) and Chapman's Pond (Dringhouses).

Other habitats that are considered important in York are; Ancient and Species-rich Hedgerows (older than the Enclosure Act or contain at least 4 woody species in a 30m stretch e.g. Cherry Lane, Kexby West Bank), Woodland, Traditional Orchards (e.g. Fulford Community, The Dormouse Orchard), Farmland and Urban Habitats.

### **What are the Identified Priority Species and Groups?**

The priority species, listed below, have to meet a similar criteria to the habitats:

- **Great Crested Newt**
  - York has a healthy population of these, the largest newts in the UK, but as they are rare in Europe they are of international importance.
- **Water Vole**
  - One of Britain's mammals whose population is being lost the fastest. Yorkshire is one of the worst areas, with 97% of the population lost.
- **Otter**
  - Nationally protected due to a crash in the population felt to be due to farmland pesticide use. Otters are present in the Foss and Ouse.
- **Bats**
  - 9 of the 17 species of bat that breed in the UK can be found in York, especially at Kexby and Clifton Bridges.
- **Hymenoptera Aculeate (Bees and Wasps)**
  - 7 species of Wasp and 17 species of Bees are species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.
- **Farmland Birds**
  - Dependent on lowland farmland and not widespread in other habitats, priorities include Grey Partridge, Skylark and Corn Bunting.
- **Tansy Beetle**
  - A bright iridescent green beetle that feeds on Tansy plants and can only be found in the UK along our 45km stretch of the River Ouse, and by the Selby canal.
- **Tasteless Water Pepper**
  - An annual plant of wetland areas found at Fulford and Wheldrake Ings
- **Marsh Carpet Moth**
  - A moth that is a fen dweller, previously reported at Askham Bog
- **Waved Water Beetle**

- A flight-less diving beetle, with gold zig zag markings on its wing cases, only found at Gollie Ponds, now extinct further south in the UK
- **Depressed River Mussel**
  - A freshwater mussel with a dent in its shell rather than a low mood! Rare in Europe, the UK and Finland host the largest populations.
- **Pond Mud Snail**
  - Small pond mud snail with a long brown conical shell. Yorkshire is one of its few remaining strongholds nationally.
- **River Lamprey and Sea Lamprey**
  - Migratory fish that breed in rivers, move downstream as larvae, feed in the sea as adults and then return up the river to spawn.
- **Rare Invertebrates and Rare Plants**

For a number of species, protection of the habitats, or other priority species listed in the LBAP, will in turn help them, and so do not have their own specific plan e.g. **Corn and Reed Bunting, Skylark, Tree Sparrow, Nightjar, Corncrake, Brown Hare.**

## **What can I do to help?**

There are lots of things that you can do to help. These include:

- Volunteer with local conservation groups working within the Green Corridors such as St Nicks.
- Take action in your own outdoor space e.g. grow more plants, more flowers, leave areas wild, mow your grass less, create a pond, create a deadwood pile, put up bird and/or bat boxes
- The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has some great information and toolkits on how you can help at <https://www.ywt.org.uk/team-wilder>.
- Record Biodiversity as part of Citizen Science projects such as the Big Butterfly Count in July, and the Great Garden Birdwatch in January.