



CANARY WHARF GROUP

BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

January 2005 - December 2007



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## INTRODUCTION

Biodiversity is the name used to describe all living species from micro-organisms to the largest plants and animals, it also includes their habitats.

The Canary Wharf Group Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was created in 2003 to conserve and enhance biodiversity on the Canary Wharf Estate, and launched publicly in 2004. It was designed to support the Tower Hamlets BAP where this latter document deals with issues of common interest.

Further information, including lists of the plants and animals to be found on the Canary Wharf Estate, is available on the Canary Wharf Group environmental web-site ([www.canarywharfenvironmentalandsocialreport.com](http://www.canarywharfenvironmentalandsocialreport.com)).

## KEY PARTNERS

Tower Hamlet Biodiversity Partnership  
Livingroofs.org  
Royal Holloway University of London  
British Waterways  
London Swifts  
Lorraine Roberts BSc (Hons) Animal Biology and Conservation  
Peoples Trust For Endangered Species  
English Nature  
Mudchute Farm

## ENGAGING OTHER PARTNERS

The Plan is to be used to encourage other businesses to participate in the Canary Wharf Biodiversity Action Plan or to establish their own biodiversity action plans, and involve local people, workers and organisations.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Canary Wharf Estate was created on the site of the former West India Docks that ceased operation by 1980. The area is thus a brownfield site, with very little indigenous biodiversity. The dock silt is officially classified as contaminated.

The London Docklands Development Corporation was set up to redevelop the area, and one of their objectives was to create an attractive environment. From the outset the Canary Wharf Estate developers included parks and other outdoor spaces accessible to the public. Westferry Circus garden was completed in the first phase of building, followed by Canada Square and, more recently, Jubilee park. A major feature of these park areas, and of the estate as a whole, is the extensive use of mature trees. All the



soil was imported to the site and in recent years extensive use has been made of composted green waste.

The creation of the Canary Wharf Estate had strong links with North America - Canada in particular - which influenced the plant species that were chosen. As its name suggests, Canada Square is home to a large number of North American trees and shrubs. Elsewhere a diverse range of species has been selected, including British natives, garden ornamentals, and even the traditional London Plane.

Although some structures have been built over or - in the case of Jubilee Park and Montgomery Square - in the original dock area, the Estate is predominantly surrounded by the North and South Docks, and has part of the Middle Dock remaining within it. The sides of the dock are vertical stone, which offers little or no roothold for plants.

In the early days of the redevelopment of Docklands, the LDDC installed a number of floating rafts covered in pebbles. Although one was used by a tern to nest in nearby Millwall Docks, none were inhabited around the Canary Wharf Estate. Prior to the nesting season in 2004, CWG added nesting material to the rafts and this stimulated geese and ducks to use them as breeding sites.

The original purpose of the "greening" of Canary Wharf was to improve the environment for its human inhabitants. However it was not long before other animals started to visit or take up residence. To the casual observer birds are the most obvious inhabitants. However, food chains start from the bottom up. It was only after the populations of insects and other small animals had become established that birds such as the hedge sparrow could join the herbivores in gleaning a living from the Estate.

Sedum roofs were retrofitted to several "low"-rise buildings, primarily to improve their appearance when viewed from the towers. Later, a sedum roof was incorporated into the design of the building over Canada Place. In conjunction with a substrate-based green roof laboratory and the parks, which are "intensive" green roofs, this gave us the biggest area of green roofs in a single location in the UK.

Recently Canary Wharf Group has sought to understand better the ecology of the Estate. In partnership with local organisations, and using the services of a consultant biologist, we have increased our knowledge of the ecosystem, and its potential to contribute to the ecologies of Tower Hamlets, and London. Species lists have been compiled, and posted on our environmental website. As a result, our actions are better documented and targeted.



## TOWER HAMLETS LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

### Introduction

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Tower Hamlets was prepared by Tower Habitats and issued in 2004. [www.towerhabitats.org](http://www.towerhabitats.org)

The Plan includes Objectives, Action and Targets that cover the 5 years January 2004 to December 2008. Several of these have specific links with Canary Wharf, as detailed below.

### LBTH BAP - Generic Action

This Plan includes:-

**Objective 3** - Ensure that Biodiversity considerations are incorporated into Planning and other Statutory Strategies of LBTH, as well as day to day working practice in Tower Hamlets.

**Target 3** - Integration of biodiversity considerations into decision making processes.

**Action 3.3** - Provide advice on ecological impact for Environmental Impact Assessments of major developments.

### LBTH BAP - Habitat Action Plan 3 - Gardens and Grounds

This Plan includes:-

**Objective 5** - Compile best practice guides and provide resources on wildlife gardening.

**Target 5** - Resource database/library in place providing advice to landholders.

**Action 5.4** - Provide businesses wishing to undertake their own Biodiversity Action Plan with information packs and give advice to ensure cross linkage and structured collaboration.

### LBTH BAP - Habitat Action Plan 3 - Canals, Rivers and Docks

This Plan includes:-

**Objective 2** - To secure appropriate maintenance and management for water space and waterway habitats and species.

**Target 2** - Appropriate maintenance and management on all waterway sites by 2005.

**Action 2.6** - Incorporate awareness raising of the waterspace biodiversity to local business, developers and relevant planning department.

### LBTH BAP - Habitat Action Plan 4 - The Built Environment and Brownfield Land

This Plan includes:-

**Objective 1** - Promote knowledge and appreciation of the biodiversity of existing built structures and brownfield land to the public, developers, planners and educational facilities.

**Target 1** - Produce and compile existing resources and organise events to interest and inform.

**Action 1.3** - Produce a guide for planners, developers and businesses which will enable the specification, creation and management of visually attractive habitats for local wildlife.

### LBTH BAP - Species Action Plan 4a - Black Redstart

This Plan includes:-

**Objective 3** - Promote back redstarts and the broader benefits of green roofs associated with black redstart mitigation to businesses and the wider community.

**Target 3** - Presence at relevant events and contribution to research in the Borough.

**Action 3.1** - Ensure information on black redstarts is covered during seminars and displays e.g. Canary Wharf's Green Canary Day.

**Action 3.2** - Implementation of trays on the roofs of Canary Wharf for research into soil types, soil dept and plant species most suitable for green roofs in London.

**Action 3.3** - Creation of trays and green roofs on existing buildings in core areas. 80 trays on 4 buildings in the key area of Isle of Dogs. Proposal for 45 going on roof at CW and around South Quay.



## PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2005 - 2007

### Birds

Surveys will be undertaken to establish trends and changes in the species of birds currently using the estate for breeding, migrating and feeding, compared with the 2004 baseline survey.

**Action:** At least 2 surveys will be carried out by December 2007.

### Sand Martins

A sand martin is a migrating bird that travels at least 5,000 miles every year. They excavate sand to over 40 times their body weight to nest. To encourage breeding, two small sandboxes have been installed in dockside.



**Action:** Although the boxes have not yet been occupied, we will continue to monitor them. If there is no occupancy, expert advice will be obtained regarding possible enhancement or relocation.

### Swifts

Swifts migrate to South Africa from August to November after breeding. They travel an approximated distance of 14,000 miles without landing.



The UK population of swifts has decreased by 20% over the past few years.

In partnership with Mudchute Farm, local children have constructed swift breeding boxes. They have been positioned within the Pyramid of One Canada Square along with a calling system to attract in birds.

**Action:**

Operate the calling system at the start of the breeding season and monitor the boxes for occupancy. (Note – expert advice indicates that similar projects have taken several years to attract birds to a new site.)

### Black Redstart

A rare bird that was first reported to have bred in London in 1926, its population boomed as a consequence of the Blitz. The now declining numbers are thought to be linked with regeneration of the city. The establishment of two green roofs and roof laboratories has provide potential feeding areas for this species.





**Action:**

Include Black Redstarts in bird surveys on green roofs and green roof laboratories.

**Green Roofs**

Canary Wharf has one of the largest areas of green roofs in the UK. Canary Wharf Group have funded a three year research project 'Green Roofs and Biodiversity' undertaken by a Royal Holloway, University of London PhD Student, a key action for the London Biodiversity Partnership's black redstart action plan.

The project aims to identify the best location for green roofs and to determine the preferred medium for them to thrive, which includes recycled aggregates and other commercially available products.

Funding has enabled an intensive study of green roofs, to establish what insects are currently using the roofs and how future green roofs could be designed better for biodiversity.

**Action:**

Continue to co-operate with Royal Holloway University and Living Roofs in the monitoring of green roofs and laboratories on the Estate.

Encourage companies occupying buildings on the Canary Wharf estate, and new clients for construction projects, to install green roofs.

**Water Space**

The water space of the West India Docks and River Thames provides an aquatic and riverine habitat that contrasts with the urban habitat of the publicly perceived Canary Wharf office complex. The water spaces contain aquatic birds, fish, molluscs and plant life different from that only meters away on a land environment.

The Biodiversity Action Plan includes working with British Waterways on their Waterway Strategy in the West India Docks. The British Waterways strategy aims to establish landscape improvements that would be appropriate for biodiversity in the West India Docks.





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**Action:**

Complete plans to provide viewing sites so that the public can better see the diversity of species in the dock.

Enhance the potential for dock life by various means, including providing vegetated, low depth areas.

**Phones 4 Trees** The Phones 4 Trees initiative is an Estate-wide recycling scheme set up in 2003 with Future Forests. For each old and unused mobile phone sent for recycling a sapling tree is planted in a plot of land to produce a forest.

**Action:**

Promote the campaign around the Canary Wharf estate and within the company and encourage companies to get involved. The campaign will be on going.

**Partners**

Local businesses, organisations and local people are to be encouraged to be involved with the Canary Wharf Biodiversity Action Plan.

**Action:**

Develop the Biodiversity content of the CWG Environmental Website.

Promote Biodiversity at Green Canary Days in conjunction with invited collaborators.



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## Further Information

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