

## Habitats

Wildlife Sites and priority Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats are not protected by any statutory designation. However, they are given some protection within the planning system.

### Planning applications

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust monitors all planning applications in Hertfordshire and parts of Middlesex, and comments on any which are likely to impact on a Local [Wildlife Site](#).

We are limited in the extent of our work within Middlesex, as we do not have access to detailed information of Wildlife Sites in these areas (called SINC sites). This is because the districts within Middlesex (e.g. Barnet, Enfield, Hillingdon and Harrow) are within the Greater London Authority area, and so not within the geographical boundary of the Hertfordshire Wildlife Site Partnership.

Wildlife Sites are selected because they meet agreed scientific criteria for their important habitats and species. They represent critical natural capital with regard to Hertfordshire's environment and are therefore, included in Local Plans.

The protection of Wildlife Sites is also outlined in Policy ENV3 (Biodiversity and Earth Heritage) of the East of England Plan (May 2008). Planning Policy Statement 9 states that "Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites have a fundamental role to play in meeting overall national biodiversity targets; contributing to the quality of life and the well-being of the community; and in supporting research and education....Plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests."

We are also working to ensure that the new Local Development Framework documents currently being produced by Hertfordshire's ten Local Authorities contain adequate policies to protect and enhance Wildlife Sites and biodiversity in the districts.

### Surveys

Some Wildlife Sites are home to important populations of protected species. Some, such as great crested newts, bats, otters and dormice, are protected by European legislation. Any planning applications on sites affecting [European Protected Species](#) should, by law, be accompanied by a survey to determine the impact of the proposed development on the population, and propose mitigation or compensation as appropriate. Where mitigation or compensation is not adequate or possible, permission may be refused.

Other species such as reptiles and water voles, are protected by national legislation and surveys and mitigation (which may include translocation and habitat creation or enhancement) may be required as a condition of permission of any development which may affect the population. Again, where mitigation or compensation is not adequate or possible, permission may be refused.