



# Nonsuch

---

Habitat Management Plan  
and the  
Importance of Volunteers



# Important for Biodiversity, not just recreation

Nonsuch Park is an extremely important asset to the Boroughs of Epsom & Ewell and London Borough of Sutton and their residents. Currently it is managed mainly for its amenity use and is highly regarded by its many visitors; however, it is also extremely important for wildlife and **has not yet reached its potential**. It has a wide variety of habitats and species and if some key management techniques are employed, the biodiversity value of the site will flourish.

Nonsuch already contains **three priority habitats**, Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, Hedgerows and Ponds.

There are also **32 priority species** including butterflies, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians as defined under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

It is a key focus of this management plan to:

- highlight the importance of Nonsuch in terms of its Biodiversity
- to seek ways to increase the management resource
- identify practical habitat management techniques, which can continue in to the future.



View across adjacent Warren Farm, Nonsuch has the potential to be this floristically diverse.



# Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat)

- There are 11 woodlands, one of which is Ancient.
- Two woodlands have had active management and much of this was provided by volunteers.
- Work first started within The Wood 2011/12 thanks to funding secured by John Armitage of Future Woodlands and EEBC. The Wood (along with Cheam Slip aka Boundary Copse) received funds through a Woodland Improvement Grant from the Forestry Commission. The Lower Mole Partnership Volunteers helped kick-start the first coppicing task and carried out the path resurfacing and also improved the ditch and culvert bordering Cheam Park. The grant funding also paid for some interpretation panels explaining the work being carried out.
- The Nonsuch Voles have also been instrumental in working in The Wood as can be seen in the photos on this page.





# Hedgerows (Priority Habitat)

---

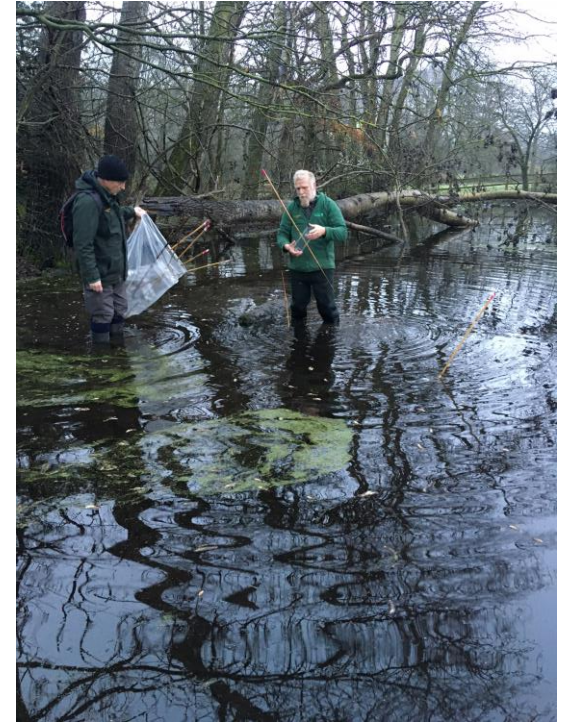
- The hedgerows that are present within Nonsuch Park have largely developed in to treelines and consist of species such as Oak, Elm, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Ash, Elder and occasionally Hornbeam, Cherry, Field Maple and Sycamore.
- Very little active management is possible with current resources.



# Ponds (Priority Habitat)

---

- 70% of ponds have been lost from the UK Countryside over the last century.
- The two ponds that still exist in Nonsuch are extremely important in that context and great work has begun on the restoration of Round Pond, again by volunteers.
- Round Pond is particularly interesting due to the presence of Great Crested Newts.
- Three ponds have silted up/scrubbed over and are no longer functioning.
- District level licensing may offer opportunities for restoration/creation.



---

## Grassland (Potential to be 'Lowland Meadows' which is a priority habitat)

---

- Grassland, largely mesotrophic, makes up the majority of the habitat within Nonsuch Park.
- Key management that is needed is cutting and crucially the subsequent clearing of arisings.
- 2023 is the first year this has happened as outlined in the management plan. Three meadows were cut for hay and the remaining meadows were cut and cleared on rotation.







# Scrub management

- A very important habitat for birds and invertebrates and is found within Nonsuch in Russet Field, Cherry Orchard Farm and along the some of the woodland edges.
- However, scrub is quickly encroaching in to the grasslands. It is important that we manage the scrub for nature conservation by creating age structure and controlling dominance over other habitats.
- This year, the Countryside Team Volunteers had a scrub management task.



# Veteran Trees

- There are a number of veteran trees across the park, mainly oak.
- Specialist contractors will be needed to manage these incredible trees. Volunteers could assist in assessing their condition.



Hazel on the edge of Cherry Orchard



Oak tree on the edge of Six Acre Field



# Our Biodiversity Duty as a Local Authority

- A clear new, **additional duty** of Local Planning Authorities comes from the 2021 Environment Act's important amendment to the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- The NERC Act 2006 includes a duty on public authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity. The **new Environment Act has amended this duty** so that there is an expectation on public authorities to look strategically at their policies and operations from time to time (at least every 5 years) and assess **what action they can take 'to further' the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.**
- They must also have regard to the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies and Protected Sites Strategies, as part of the consideration.
- The **production and implementation** of a management plan will be a key part of adhering to this duty.





# Our Biodiversity Duty as a local Authority



The UK government has proposed the declaration of a **national environmental and climate emergency** and Surrey County Council plus 10 of the 11 Surrey boroughs and districts have enacted this declaration.

The 2017 State of Surrey's Nature report Surrey has estimated Surrey's historic rate of biodiversity loss. It demonstrated that our rate of loss is likely to be far higher than the national rate, hence indicating that in Surrey we have much further to go secure the recovery of nature.





# Resources

---

No member of staff is directly responsible to implement the management plan.

---

Volunteers can only do so much and need support from staff.

---

The new grassland management regime introduced this year may need investment.

---

To increase the volunteer input from the Lower Mole Partnership will need funding.

---

Possibilities to access funding through Environment Land Management Scheme, Community Infrastructure Levy or Biodiversity Net Gain.





# Nonsuch Voles





# MANAGING WOODLAND AS COPPICE IS IMPORTANT FOR WILDLIFE

**Coppicing may look drastic but is essential for much of our best-loved woodland wildlife which may be threatened with extinction if this is not continued.**

In this traditional management system, trees are regularly cut to the ground and re-grow with several stems, providing the wood needed for a wide range of products.

Time between cuts varies depending on the intended use of the wood but needs to be regular so that there are always some open areas. Here warmth and light can reach the ground.

This encourages plant growth and insect activity - but this effect decreases yearly as trees re-grow until branches meet overhead, and light can no longer reach the woodland floor.

So coppice cycles, with some cut each year, must be maintained, to ensure continuity of open space.

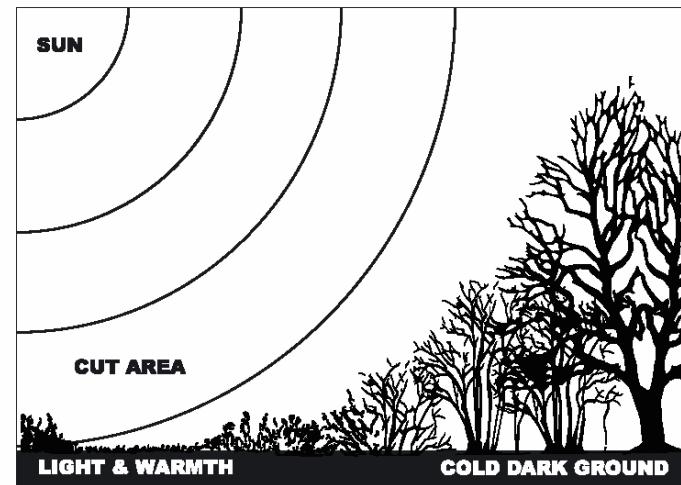


Diagram showing how coppicing affects ground temperature and light levels

**Help wildlife by supporting the coppice industry buy local logs, charcoal and other wood products.**



Local Stockist