

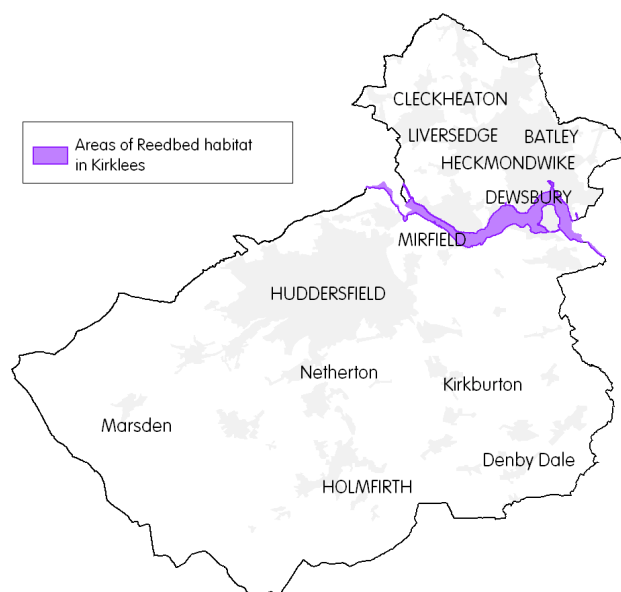
Habitat Action Plan: Reedbeds

Current status and Importance

- Reedbeds are wetlands dominated by stands of the common reed *Phragmites australis*, wherein the water table is at or above ground level for most of the year. There are about 5000 ha of reedbeds in the UK, but of the 900 or so sites contributing to this total, only about 50 are greater than 20 ha, and these make a large contribution to the total area.
- Wetland habitats such as reedbeds are important in alleviating flooding and removing pollutants from water.
- Most of the more significant reedbeds are notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and many are notified as Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as Special Protection Areas under EC Birds Directive.
- Within Kirklees, reedbeds are more likely to form small pockets almost anywhere but along the river corridors within a habitat network, often incorporating areas of open water, ditches, small areas of wet grassland and carr woodland.
- Often within Kirklees, suitable sites for reedbeds are colonised by Common Bulrush *Typha latifolia* rather than Common Reed *Phragmites australis*. However, significant stands of the latter do occur in wetlands along the Calder Valley in neighbouring districts.

Species Use

- Reedbeds support a distinctive breeding bird assemblage. Within Kirklees species may include, reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), water rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) and grasshopper warbler (*Locustella naevia*).
- Reedbeds add to the complexity of habitat networks and as such can play an important role in making water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) populations more resilient to American mink (*Mustela vison*) predation.
- Reedbeds are also important habitat for otters. Being relatively free from disturbance they will lie up in such areas.



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Areas where Reedbeds may occur in Kirklees

Conservation Issues

- Small total area of habitat and critically small population sizes of several key species dependent on the habitat.
- Loss of area by excessive water extraction and, in the past, land drainage and conversion to intensive agriculture.
- Lack of or inappropriate management of existing reedbeds leading to drying, scrub encroachment and succession to woodland.
- Pollution of freshwater supplies to the reedbed: siltation may lead to drying; toxic chemicals may lead to loss of fish and amphibian prey for key species; accumulation of poisons in the food chain and eutrophication may cause reed death.

Objectives

- Prevent loss of existing reedbed habitat.
- Manage existing reedbed habitat where opportunities arise, especially those likely to support a range of species.
- Recreate wetlands suitable for the development of reedbed habitat, especially where this will enhance ecological networks.
- Identify sites and create new wetland areas, especially where these will benefit priority species.
- Explore possibilities for incorporating reedbeds within sustainable urban drainage systems.

Target areas for habitat management and creation

- The Floodplain, especially the Calder Valley.
- Areas where water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) populations remain.
- Alongside rivers and streams in other zones where they will contribute to the enhancement of habitat networks and provide other benefits.
- For further information, please see the Biodiversity Opportunity Zones Map at www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity

Targets

- To be decided.

Key Links and Organisations

- Site protection: Kirklees Council, Environment Agency.
- Management and restoration: River Calder Project (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust), Kirklees Council (especially related to planning and development through Planning Policy statement 9 on Biological and Geological Conservation), British Waterways, the Kirklees BAP: Guidance for the management of Rivers and Riverine Corridors: Kirklees Council Environment Unit.
- Surveys: Kirklees Wildlife and Landscape Advisory Forum, West Yorkshire Ecology.

See Also

- [UK BAP Rivers and Streams Habitat Statement](#)
- [UK BAP Reedbeds Habitat Action Plan](#)

- [UK BAP Wet Woodland Habitat Action Plan](#)
- Kirklees BAP Water Vole Species Action Plan
- Guidance for the management of Rivers and Riverine Corridors: Kirklees Council Environment Unit.
(the above two documents available at www.kirklees.gov.uk/biodiversity)