



Tower Habitats Newsflash

Latest news on nature conservation and wildlife in Tower Hamlets

February 2018

Victoria Park frog rescue 2017 – volunteers again came to the aid of amphibians when the summer bedding was stripped in Victoria Park's Sunken Garden in October 2017. Around 200 Common Frogs, 60 Common Toads and 20 Smooth Newts were moved to the safety of nearby shrubberies. [Read more about the Victoria Park amphibian rescue](#). There was no need to carry out a rescue when the winter/spring bedding was removed in May 2017 because the beds were too dry for amphibians, but that may not be the case this year. If you'd like to be involved in rescuing amphibians this spring, or in the coming autumn, please [e-mail the Biodiversity Officer](#).

New reed bed installed in Limehouse – in October 2017, Thames21 volunteers installed a 36-metre-long floating ecosystem on the Limehouse Cut, close to Bartlett Park. This will bring new habitats to the area, and improve the biodiversity of this section of the canal, which currently lacks aquatic vegetation. [Read more about the new reed bed and see photos](#).

Trees from phone boxes – Telecommunications company New World Payphones is working with charity Trees for Cities to plant a tree on or beside a local street for every new phone box they install. Trees for Cities organised planting days in October 2017 to plant 20 trees on EastendHomes' Glamis Estate and Tower Hamlets Homes' Shadwell Estate. [Read more about this tree planting initiative](#).

Cemetery Park beetle and spider lists reach landmarks – local spider expert Edward Milner has been monitoring spiders and beetles in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park for over 12 years, and has produced impressive species lists of these groups. Both lists have recently passed landmark figures, with the 150th spider and 400th beetle identified in the last two years. This reflects the excellent management of Cemetery Park by the Friends group. Similar numbers of spiders and beetles have been recorded in nearby Mile End Park, making these two of the best invertebrate sites in inner London. [Read more about Cemetery Park's beetles and spiders](#).

Snowdrops on Cable Street – Snowdrops are always one of the first spring bulbs to appear, and they have been out in force in many parts of the borough since mid-January. These include a large number planted by EastendHomes last autumn to add to the greening of the St George's Estate. Snowdrops can be a valuable source of nectar for early-emerging queen bumblebees. [Read more about EastendHomes' snowdrops, including a historical link to the area](#).

UK's first Speckled Wood of the year is in Tower Hamlets – a Speckled Wood butterfly seen fluttering across Bow Creek on 25 January by Biodiversity Officer John Archer seems to be the first sighting in the United Kingdom this year. Butterflies are often seen on mild, sunny days during the winter, but these are usually species which hibernate as adults, such as Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, Red Admiral and Brimstone. The Speckled Wood usually overwinters as a caterpillar or chrysalis, so winter sightings are very rare. [Read more about this exciting record](#).

A new orchard in Millwall Park – the Council has planted a new orchard at the southern end of Millwall Park, just east of the sculpture. Twenty fruit trees have been planted, including Victoria plums and two varieties of dessert apple – Cox's Orange Pippin and Jonagold. [Read more about the orchard in Millwall Park](#).

For more information on these and other stories, see www.towerhabitats.org

If you have news on wildlife or biodiversity conservation in Tower Hamlets, please e-mail the Biodiversity Officer john.archer@towerhamlets.gov.uk or phone 020 7364 7478