



Tower Habitats Newsflash

Latest news on nature conservation and wildlife in Tower Hamlets

September 2015

Awards galore! – The Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park were joint winners of the Ethical Wildlife Award in the prestigious Observer Ethical Awards – find out more [here](#). The Lower Regent's Coalition has been nominated for the Community and Volunteering category of the Canal & River Trust's Living Waterways Awards – find out more [here](#). Meanwhile, the Council's parks won no fewer than ten Green Flag Awards this year, with additional Green Flag Community Awards for Mudchute and Cemetery Park – see all the winners [here](#).

Another good year for terns – five pairs of Common Terns fledged nine young from the rafts at East India Dock Basin this summer. While not quite as good as last year, this is far better than most recent years. Find out more [here](#).

Greening the Wapping Canal – the Council, Bow Landscapes, local residents and Citibank volunteers have been working on the Wapping Ornamental Canal around Tobacco Dock, improving it for people and wildlife. In June, almost 100 volunteers from Citibank cleaned and tidied the area and made new duck platforms and bat boxes – read more [here](#). Then in July, local volunteers helped install several floating rafts, planted with reeds and other native wetland vegetation – for more information and a video of the raft being installed, see the [Love Wapping website](#).

Big arrival of migrant birds – Redstarts, Pied Flycatchers and Spotted Flycatchers appeared at the end of August at Mudchute, Victoria Park, Cemetery Park and other sites across the borough, part of an exceptional arrival of migrating birds across London. Read more [here](#).

Bringing the Black Poplar back to Poplar – a young Black Poplar tree was planted in All Saints Churchyard as part of an event organised by the parish churches of All Saints and St Nicholas, which, after a gap of over 100 years, reintroduced the ancient practice of Beating the Parish Bounds. Read more [here](#).

Don't be too hasty pruning ivy – if you have ivy growing up a wall, fence or tree, you might be tempted to cut it down or prune it back now that any birds have finished nesting. However, this is not a good time to prune ivy, as it is just about to flower, providing a crucial source of nectar for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects in late autumn when there is little else in flower. Ivy is a great wildlife plant at any time of year, especially when climbing in sunny locations. It is far less valuable for wildlife as ground cover, where it seldom flowers and can swamp other wild plants. Climbing ivy provides cover for birds, and is the caterpillar food plant of the Holly Blue butterfly and several moths. Its nectar-rich flowers are followed by berries which feed birds in late winter and early spring, after other berries have all been eaten. Ivy doesn't usually harm trees in any way, though it can cause damage to brickwork. Leave ivy to grow where possible, but if you have to cut it back, wait until it has finished flowering. For more information on the wildlife value of ivy, see the [RSPB](#) and [Woodland Trust](#) websites.

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

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