

**biodiversity
and the Green Belt**
enhancing ecological resilience



London
Wildlife
Trust

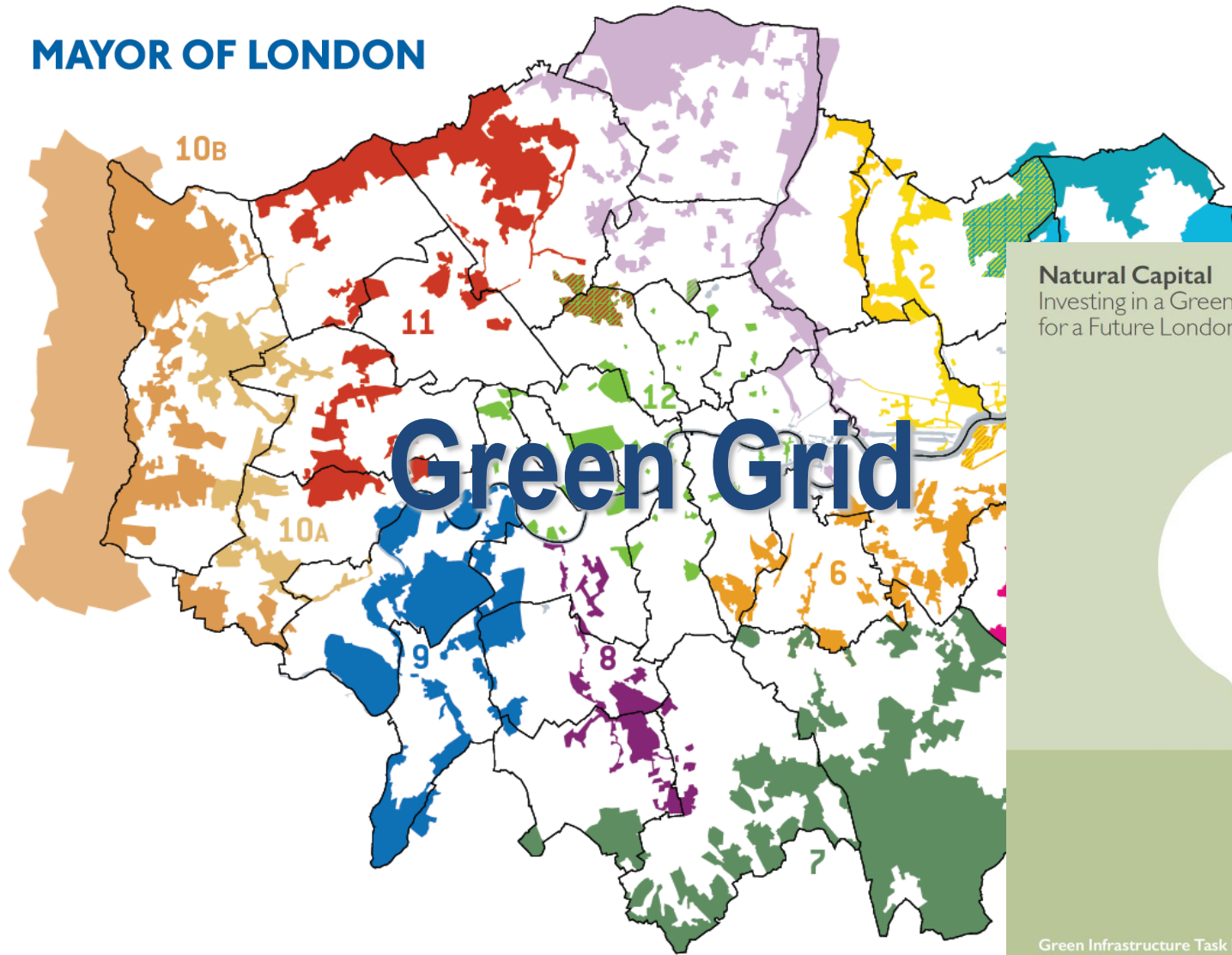


Hutchinson's Bank, New Addington





MAYOR OF LONDON



Natural Capital
Investing in a Green Infrastructure
for a Future London



Green Infrastructure Task Force Report
Prepared by the Greater London Authority on
behalf of the Green Infrastructure Task Force



A Living Landscape

Play your part in nature's recovery

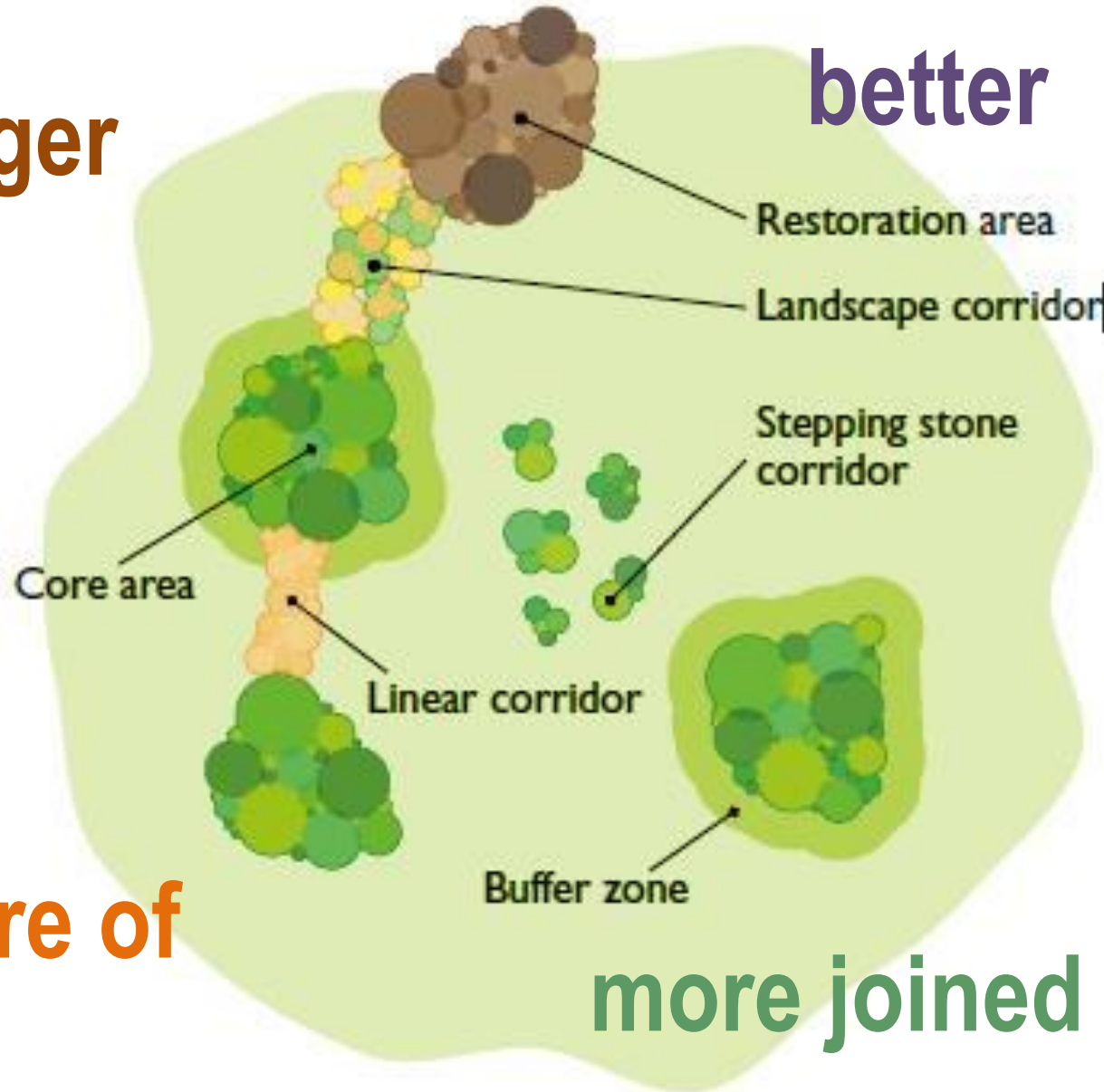
- restore
- recreate
- reconnect

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

The components of ecological networks

bigger

better



more of

more joined up

London's Living Landscapes

London's Living Landscapes are rich in wildlife, highly valued and accessible to people. They provide opportunities for learning, health and wellbeing. London's Living Landscapes help diverse local communities to thrive.

To help safeguard our wildlife through an unprecedented period of change we need to:

- Conserve wildlife habitats and restore damaged and undermanaged habitats
- Create habitats, stepping stones of green space to whole landscapes
- Connect people and landscapes
- Celebrate - what is good for wildlife is good for people too

Partnerships include

London Boroughs of Harrow, Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond, Crane Valley Partnership, Zoological Society of London, Environment Agency, Heathrow Airport Holdings

Take a Wildwalk

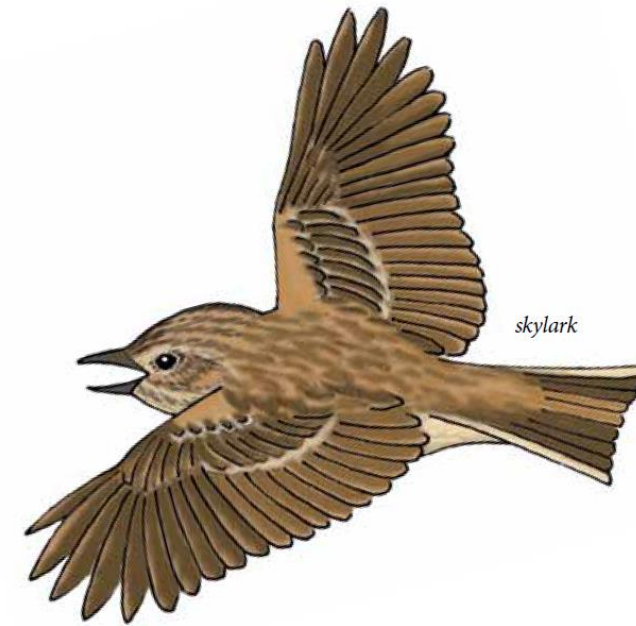
Plan a walk and create some new wildlife recordings at www.wild-walks.org

Find out more

London Wildlife Trust
wildlondon.org.uk



Protecting London's
wildlife for the future



DESCRIPTION

The River Crane forms part of the West London Green Chain, a twenty mile stretch of interconnected green spaces that runs along the River Crane, including the Yeading Brook, as the river is known in its upper reaches, to the River Thames. It is one of the most natural rivers in London, and is recognised as a vital wildlife corridor. The River Crane becomes tidal near the Thames - a feature which makes it unique amongst west London's rivers.

Some stretches of the River Crane and Yeading Brook are managed by local communities, many with support from London Wildlife Trust and support diverse wildlife such as the water vole, dragonflies, and plants such as purple loosestrife. Kingfisher and heron can be seen feeding on shoals of stickleback and minnow hiding amongst flowering beds of river water-crowfoot. The river is fringed with crack willow and alder trees both of which were once used to make high quality charcoal used in the making of gunpowder in mills that used to be in Crane Park and elsewhere. Many meadows are cut for hay in late summer, with some areas being left to provide overwintering sites for invertebrates and small mammals. Skylarks breed in the hay meadow and can be seen flying overhead in summer.



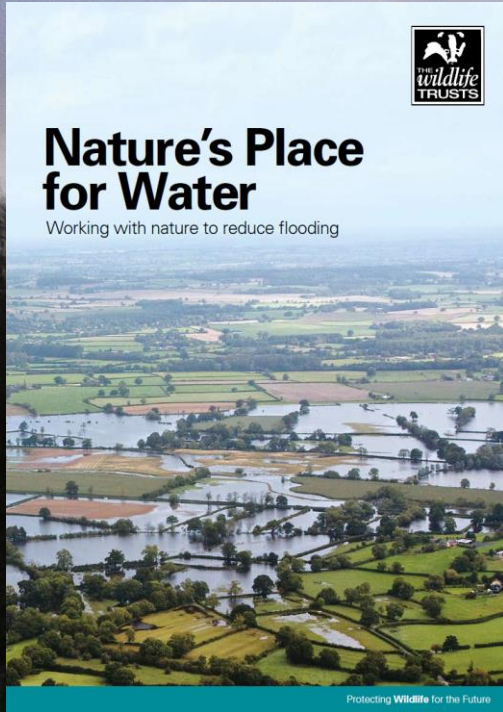
Supported by funding from the City Bridge Trust,
the City of London Corporation's Charity.



Q Park, Cranford; 2009

Crane Meadows; 2011

Crane Meadows; 2013



Crane Meadows; 2014



green or brown?

NO TRESPASSING
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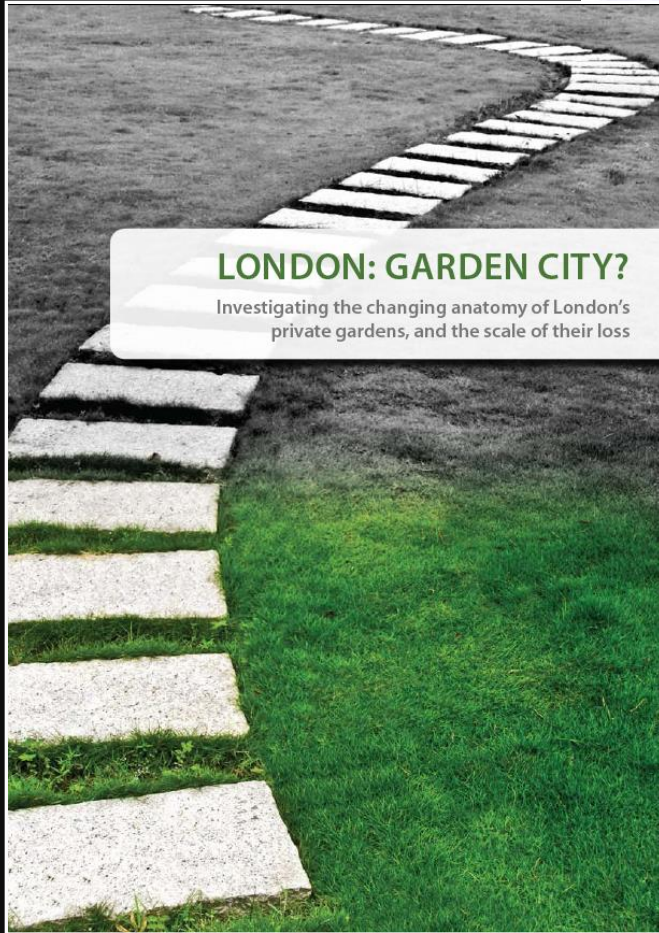
Catalyst Housing Ltd is a charitable organisation, registered no. 16561R

construction?



or pollination?

Concrete jungle: how London's gardens are being plastered with parking and patios



LONDON: GARDEN CITY?

Investigating the changing anatomy of London's private gardens, and the scale of their loss



How ways show Londoners are concreting or decking over gardens and driveways, with dire consequences for wildlife and climate change, the London Wildlife Trust warns Photograph: Alamy

is losing two and a half Hyde Parks a year' affecting drainage harming wildlife

ent editor

of England is Kent, then its may well be London, according that shows householders and re paving over front gardens, eds, laying decking, cutting and turning one of world's has a deeper shade of grey. where no garden seems to without a paved or decked rvey by the London Wildlife and the capital is losing the of two and a half Hyde Parks of ear from its domestic gardens 40 hectares (7,410 acres).

maker of TV shows such as Ground Force, banging down a decked area - and often a water feature. And the fashion lives on. Meanwhile, tougher parking rules and the rise of the multi-car family means more and more front gardens are being turned into parking bays.

The trust looked at aerial surveys taken in 1998 and 2006, and found domestic

gardens make up nearly 24% of the city's total area, or 37,900 ha. Of this, about 22,000ha, or 14% of the city, is covered with lawns and tree canopy. The report estimates there are about 2.5m trees in private gardens.

But as a result of changing fashions in garden design, the area of plant-covered land fell by 12% from 1998 to 2006, and the area of hard surfacing increased by 26%.

The loss of green space is undermining wildlife, is adding to the "heat island" effect, where temperatures in cities are much higher than in the countryside, and is contributing to drainage problems as water floods more quickly into drains.

Londoners have been discarding their lawnmowers to build sheds, the survey also found. Lawn area decreased by

16% and new garden buildings by nearly 55%.

The report does not identify individual boroughs, but anecdotal evidence suggests people in the outer suburbs, where gardens are about 10 times larger on average than those in the inner city, are increasingly paving over their green space, while landlords in inner city boroughs may be turning to concrete to avoid garden upkeep.

"The speed and scale of the loss is alarming," said Matthew Prith, the deputy chief executive of the London Wildlife Trust. "Collectively these losses detrimentally affect London's wildlife and impact on our ability to cope with climate change. It's never been more important that Londoners understand the value of gardens."

Reasons for the decline include insurance companies insisting trees are removed to avoid claims for subsidence, infill building, pressure to make gardens look more like living rooms, and the rise of the shed as a home working space.

"There has been a great gap in our knowledge about London's private gardens," said the report's author, Ghise Smith. Nearly two-thirds of London's front gardens now have hard surfaces.

The survey found that the 2.5m garden trees in London cover nearly 6,700ha, or 4% of all Greater London. This makes London technically one of England's largest privately owned forests, bigger than Sherwood. If all the public gardens and parks of the capital are included, London would almost certainly be one of the greenest mega-cities in the world.

Expert view

Unhappy legacy of Ground Force

On the way to work recently I was nearly brought to tears by the sight of the front garden of a large Victorian house ruined by a slathering of rough asphalt, devoid of life, where once there had been an overgrown but beautiful front garden.

Asphalt, decking, patios, sheds - there are so many ways greenery can be hard landscaped out of existence. Few of us can afford to move to a larger house, so people are squeezing extra value from every square metre of land: erecting sheds for extra storage, laying patios for outdoor dining and block paving driveways.

To most of us, lawns and flowerbeds spell work, whereas a patio can be laid and forgotten. This isn't entirely true, as anyone who's had to brush slippery moss from block paving will testify. While there are low-maintenance ways of gardening that keep the vegetation and soil intact - mixed hedges, wildlife ponds and wildflower lawns among them - these aren't the approaches pushed by the garden centre chains, DIY sheds and supermarkets where

most of us do our shopping for the garden. Why? Because that's not where the money is - a packet of wildflower seed costs under a fiver. And because they aren't the quick fix many of us are seeking.

That said, there's nothing wrong with wanting to make your garden into an "outdoor room". I speak as someone who has recently put up a shed, replaced slippery decking with paving and torn up a patio for a flower bed.

There are ways to maximise green space and encourage wildlife: smoother walls and fences with climbers to make homes for nesting birds; put green roofs on sheds and garages; and where you do have to lay paving, leave space for low-maintenance shrubs or opt for water-permeable paving.

Greener gardening requires us to have an eye for the long game, and that's a hard sell to many consumers. It may not be on TV any more, but the legacy of the instant garden makeover show Ground Force lingers.

Jane Perrone

Jane Perrone is gardening editor of the Guardian



London Wildlife Trust



in-fill? up-flower...?



