



PLUMSTEAD COMMON NATURE RESERVE

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report

October 2010



CONTENTS

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 1.1 | Background | 4 |
| 1.2 | Site details | 4 |
| 2 | HABITAT SURVEY (EXTENDED PHASE I)..... | 5 |
| 2.1 | Aims of the survey | 5 |
| 2.2 | Desktop study..... | 5 |
| 2.3 | Extended Phase I survey methodology | 5 |
| 2.4 | Limitations of the survey | 6 |
| 2.5 | Plant nomenclature and rarity | 6 |
| 2.6 | Habitat rarity | 6 |
| 2.7 | Habitat description | 6 |
| 2.8 | Incidental fauna | 7 |
| 2.9 | Evaluation | 7 |
| 3 | REFERENCES | 9 |
| | APPENDICES | 10 |

**REPORT AUTHORS:
TONY WILEMAN, ANGELA GORMAN
OCTOBER 2010**

London Wildlife Trust

Skyline House
200 Union Street
London SE1 0LW

tel: 020 7261 0447

e-mail: enquiries@wildlondon.org.uk

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

London Wildlife Trust was commissioned by the Plumstead Common Environment Group to undertake an Extended Phase I habitat survey of Plumstead Common Nature Reserve, with a view to assess appropriate future management options.

The survey was required to assess the extent of semi-natural habitats present by using the GLA Open Space and Habitat Survey for Greater London Methodology. This methodology is recommended in *The Mayor's Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies (A London Plan Best Practice Guide)* and is included in *The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy*.

This report is in two sections. The first section summarises the habitat types and the significant vascular plant species found at the site. The appendices comprise all the species, photographic and map data.

1.2 Site details

1.2.1 Location

Plumstead Common Nature Reserve is located on the edge of Plumstead Common in the London Borough of Greenwich at TQ 444 781. The surveyed site is approximately 0.6 hectares in area.

1.2.2 Access and usage

There are two entrance points. These are: a single gap in the fence near the southern end of Bramblebury Road and an entrance on Vicarage Park. The site is used predominantly by local people for dog walking and/or open space recreation.

1.2.3 Boundaries

The site survey boundaries are mostly a mix of residential garden fences and a somewhat ineffective broken chain link fence which delineates the site from the rest of Plumstead Common.

2 Habitat Survey (Extended Phase I)

2.1 Aims of the survey

The aims are to: -

- Identify dominant, characteristic and otherwise unusual vascular plant species and the chief habitats present using the DAFOR scale¹ for each community;
- Determine the importance of these features in a local, regional (London) and national context as noted in Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Determine whether or not the site supports notable, rare and/or protected species;
- Make incidental recording of other fauna sightings;

Survey objectives did not include non-vascular plant species (e.g. mosses, algae).

2.2 Desktop study

The aim of the desktop study was to obtain information on present and historical biological interest of the site. The desktop study comprised of a data search with the Greenspace for Greater London (GiGL) database dated 4th October 2010. GiGL were requested to provide information on protected and BAP plant and animal species, habitat community information and data on statutory and non-statutory sites within the Tower of London survey area and the surrounding land to a 500m radius.

2.3 Extended Phase I survey methodology

A Habitat Survey (phase I extended) was carried out on 26th September 2010 by Tony Wileman, assisted by the Plumstead Common Environment Group. The survey followed standard Phase I habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 1993), as modified for Greater London by the former London Ecology Unit (LEU, 1994) and later adopted by the Greater London Authority. The site was considered to entirely encompass one habitat type.

Characteristic, rare and interesting species and plant assemblages were evaluated for conservation designations and assessed as to whether they were notable for the Greater London area. Notable is defined as species which were recorded from 15% or fewer of the 400 two-kilometre recording squares (tetrads) in Greater London in the *Flora of the London Area* (Burton 1983).

Complex taxa, such as *Taraxacum* (dandelions) and *Rubus* (brambles) are treated as aggregates as there is little value in distinguishing these for determining habitat types, especially in London.

Casual recording of fauna was attempted throughout the Habitat Survey (Appendix 3).

¹ A standard format for recording relative abundance (Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, Rare).

2.4 Limitations of the survey

2.4.1 Seasonal Plants

The timing of the survey visits was considered to be adequate to characterise the habitats present on site, but late in the season to locate and identify the plant species present. It is probable that some spring flowering species were overlooked.

2.4.2 Access

All of the site was accessed and surveyed. All species found were identifiable on site.

2.5 Plant nomenclature and rarity

The *New Flora of the British Isles* (Stace, 1997), the standard text, was consulted for plant nomenclature. English names have been used in preference to Latin (only quoted in the first instance) in order to facilitate readability of the report.

Any uncommon vascular plant species were identified in the London context using the *Flora of the London Area* (Burton 1983). For national rarity *The New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora* (Preston, Pearman & Dines, 2002) was referred to (where a taxon appearing in 150 or less 10 x 10km squares was considered rare).

2.6 Habitat rarity

The Greenwich and London Biodiversity Action Plans were consulted on local and regional habitat rarity respectively, while the UK Biodiversity Action Plan was consulted on national habitat rarity.

2.7 Habitat description

A map showing the location of the site appears in Appendix 1. A full list of plant species recorded at the site during the Extended Phase I survey; along with an assessment of their abundance using the DAFOR scale in each management compartment appears in Appendix 2.

Plumstead Common Nature reserve is a small woodland in a steep ravine composed of mixed native and non-native species. The canopy trees are predominantly sycamore and Norway maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus* and *A. platanoides*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). A large London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*), a single walnut (*Juglans regia*) and a black mulberry (*Morus nigra*) are also present. The shrub layer is dominated by holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) with lesser amounts of dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), wild cherry and wild plum (*Prunus avium* and *P. domestica*) and elder (*Sambucus media*).

The ground flora is predominantly a mix of cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvatica*), ivy (*Hedera helix*), bramble species (*Rubus fruticosus* agg) and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) with some small amounts of false-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and common chickweed (*Stellaria media*). Small patches of the invasives Japanese knotweed and Russian vine (*Fallopia japonica* and *F. baldschuanica*) are present.

2.8 Incidental fauna

As part of the survey incidental vertebrate and invertebrates were recorded and are listed in Appendix 4. No assessment was made as to whether these were breeding on site.

2.9 Evaluation

2.9.1 Plumstead Common Nature Reserve

Plumstead Common Nature Reserve is a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation – GrL21(SINC). This survey appears to confirm the status of the site.

The Oaks, Plumstead, a site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (GrL03), lies within the 500m radius GiGL search area to the west.

2.9.2 Biodiversity Action Plans

The whole site can be considered to fit into the designation ‘Woodland’ priority habitat for the London (regional) and Greenwich (Local) Biodiversity Action Plans and the designation ‘Lowland Mixed deciduous Woodland’ for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

It is considered good practice that any development having an impact on these habitats is adequately mitigated for.

2.9.3 Habitat and plant species evaluation

The mixed woodland habitat present is fairly common throughout London particularly in the outer Boroughs. The species composition of many of these woodlands has changed in recent years through the increasing dominance of non-native species. This woodland is no exception with sycamore, Norway maple, false acacia and London plane covering a higher percentage of the canopy cover than those native species such as sessile oak and ash that were probably once more dominant. Most of the young trees present were of sycamore, Norway maple and false acacia. Furthermore, other young trees and shrubs present included the non-natives horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*), garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) and holm oak (*Quercus ilex*). Despite this, the woodland has a good structure with a healthy composition of shrubs and ground flora and plentiful dead wood. Both holly and ivy are abundant but pose no immediate problems on site. Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides* sp.) are known to grow on site and have been identified as native types in previous surveys but they were not present during the survey so have not been included on the species list.

Collectively the plant species present, contribute to a valued mosaic of habitats locally for invertebrates and birds although false acacia, Japanese knotweed and Russian vine are of current concern and management work should attempt to control the expansion of these species.

No London notable plant species were found on site. These are those species that occur in less than 15% of the 400 tetrads as indicated in the *Flora of the London Area* (Burton 1983).

No UK or London (regional) Biodiversity Action Plan vascular plant species were recorded during the survey.

No plant species listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were identified during this survey.² It is considered highly unlikely that any schedule 8 protected plant species were present at the site.

2.9.4 Animal species evaluation

Very few animal species were found during the survey and this may be due to either the way the survey was undertaken, they were simply overlooked or they were not present in significant numbers to be noticed. Bird species were generally more noticeable and thus provide the bulk of the animal species identified during the survey. All species found would be expected to be found in a small woodland.

No animal species fully protected under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act was identified during the survey. However, stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*) have been recorded within the 500m GiGL search area and may be present on site (GiGL 2010).

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) have been recorded nearby and are UK and London (Regional) Biodiversity Action plan animal species (GiGL 2010).

² These plants have high levels of protection; it is a criminal offence to pick, uproot or otherwise damage any species listed on Schedule 8.

3 References

Burton R., 1983. *Flora of the London Area*. London Natural History Society, London.

GIGL, 2010. *An Ecological Data Search for Plumstead Common Nature Reserve*, Greenspace Information for Greater London.

JNCC. 1993. *UKBAP website*. Available at <http://www.ukbap.org.uk>

JNCC, 2003. *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Mayor of London, 2002. *Connecting with London's nature; The Mayor's biodiversity strategy*, Greater London Authority.

LEU (London Ecology Unit), 1994. *Habitat Survey for Greater London*. London Ecology Unit, London.

London Biodiversity Partnership, 2007. <http://www.lbp.org.uk/index.html>

London Borough of Greenwich, 2010. *Greenwich Biodiversity Action Plan*
Available from <http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C745D817-8D39-45F5-A17B-50EAFFC97843/0/BiodiversityActionPlanfulloptimised.pdf>

Preston, C. D., Pearman, D. A. & Dines, T. D., 2002. *New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

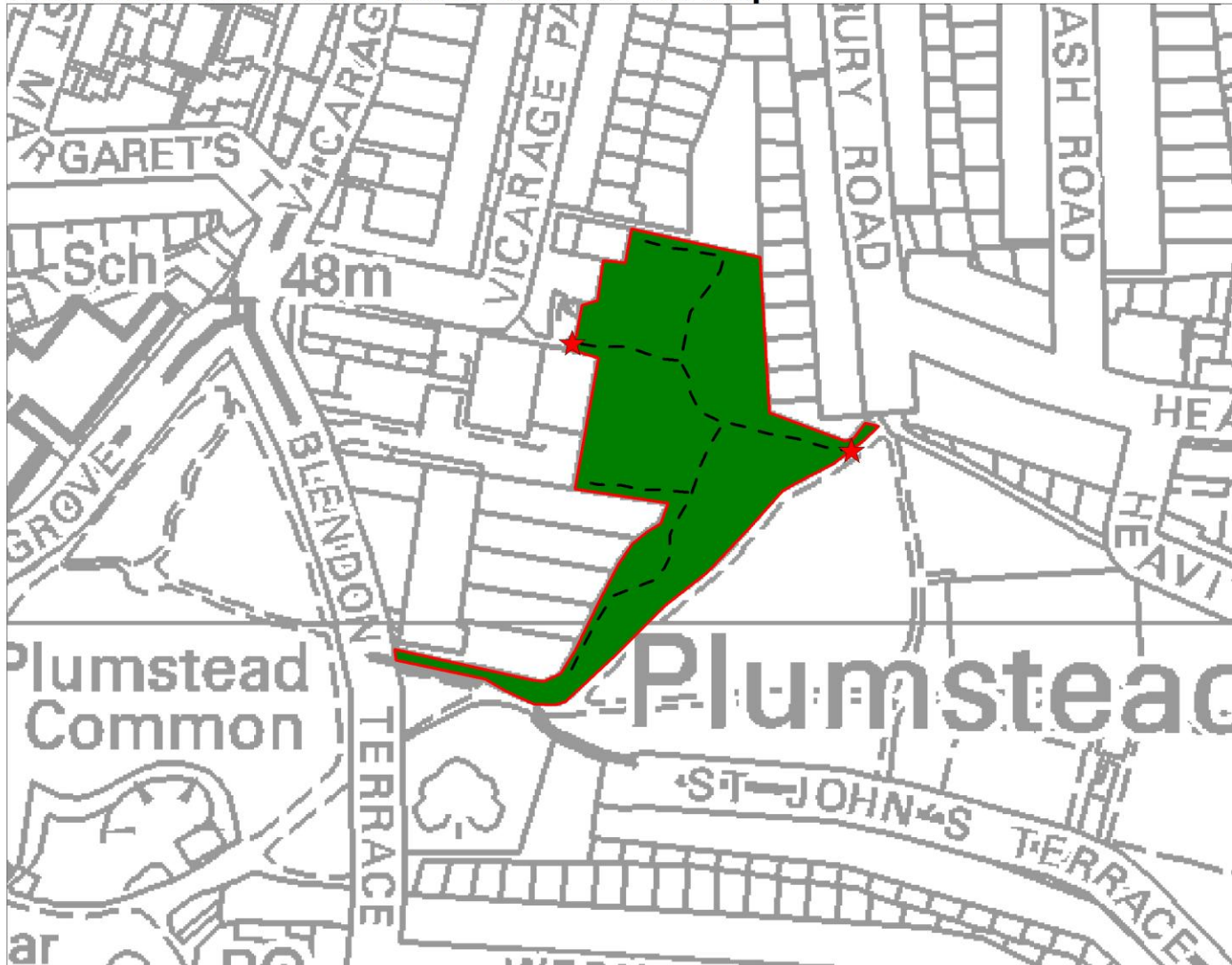
Stace C.A., 1997. *New flora of the British Isles* (2nd ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

UK Government, 1994. *Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan*. CM2428, HMSO, London.





Appendix 1

Site map

Plumstead Common Nature Reserve Site Map



Legend

-  Secondary woodland
-  Tracks
-  Entrance Points
-  Reserve boundary



Appendix 2

Plant species list

| Plant Species List (DAFOR scale: D = Dominant; A = Abundant; F = Frequent; O = Occasional; R = Rare) | | | |
|--|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Species | | Abundance | Notes |
| Scientific name | Common name | | |
| <i>Acer platanoides</i> | Norway maple | F | |
| <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> | sycamore | F | |
| <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> | horse-chestnut | R | |
| <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> | cow parsley | F | |
| <i>Arctium minus</i> | lesser burdock | R | |
| <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> | false oat-grass | R | |
| <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> | mugwort | R | |
| <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> | false-brome | O | |
| <i>Buddleja davidii</i> | butterfly-bush | R | |
| <i>Calystegia sepium</i> | hedge bindweed | O | |
| <i>Cornus sanguinea</i> | dogwood | O | |
| <i>Corylus avellana</i> | hazel | O | |
| <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> | hawthorn | R | |
| <i>Fallopia baldschuanica</i> | Russian-vine | R | potential invasive |
| <i>Fallopia japonica</i> | Japanese knotweed | O | potential invasive |
| <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> | ash | O | |
| <i>Galium aparine</i> | cleavers | R | |
| <i>Geranium robertianum</i> | herb-robert | O | |
| <i>Geum urbanum</i> | wood avens | R | |
| <i>Hedera helix</i> | ivy | A | |
| <i>Hedera helix hibernica</i> | Irish ivy | O | potential invasive |
| <i>Hirschfeldia incana</i> | hoary mustard | R | |
| <i>Holcus lanatus</i> | Yorkshire-fog | R | |
| <i>Hypericum x inodurum</i> | tall tutsan | R | garden escape |
| <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> | holly | A | |
| <i>Juglans regia</i> | walnut | R | |
| <i>Laburnum anagyroides</i> | laburnum | R | |
| <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i> | garden privet | R | |
| <i>Lolium perenne</i> | perennial rye-grass | R | |
| <i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> | Oregon-grape | R | |
| <i>Morus nigra</i> | black mulberry | R | planted |
| <i>Petasites fragrans</i> | winter heliotrope | R | |
| <i>Platanus x hispanica</i> | London plane | R | planted |
| <i>Prunus avium</i> | wild cherry | R | |
| <i>Prunus domestica</i> | wild plum | R | |
| <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> | bracken | O | |
| <i>Quercus ilex</i> | holm oak | R | potential invasive |
| <i>Quercus petraea</i> | sessile oak | O | |
| <i>Ribes rubrum</i> | red currant | R | garden escape |
| <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> | false acacia | O | potential invasive |
| <i>Rubus fruticosus agg</i> | bramble species | A | |
| <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> | broad-leaved dock | R | |
| <i>Rumex sanguineus</i> | wood dock | R | |
| <i>Sambucus nigra</i> | elder | O | |

| Plant Species List (DAFOR scale: D = Dominant; A = Abundant; F = Frequent; O = Occasional; R = Rare) | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Species | | Abundance | Notes |
| Scientific name | Common name | | |
| <i>Stellaria media</i> | common chickweed | O | |
| <i>Urtica dioica</i> | common nettle | F | |

Appendix 3

Incidental fauna list

| Species | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Common Name | Scientific Name |
| Invertebrates | |
| garden snail | <i>Helix aspersa</i> |
| black garden ant | <i>Lasius niger</i> |
| 7- spot ladybird | <i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i> |
| garden spider | <i>Araneus diadematus</i> |
| four spot orb-weaver spider | <i>Areneus quadratus</i> |
| Vertebrates | |
| <u>Birds</u> | |
| woodpigeon | <i>Columba palumbus</i> |
| feral pigeon | <i>Columba livia</i> |
| ring-necked parakeet | <i>Psittacula krameri</i> |
| wren | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> |
| robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> |
| blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> |
| long-tailed tit | <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> |
| Blue tit | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> |
| great tit | <i>Parus major</i> |
| jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> |
| magpie | <i>Pica pica</i> |
| chaffinch | <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> |