

Notes from the Nature Reserve

October 2015

Welcome to our first newsletter from East Ham Nature Reserve. We have decided that we need to increase awareness of the Nature Reserve, because most people in Newham don't even know it exists. By making sure more people know about it, we hope to get more volunteers to work with us.

We have a website <http://www.newhamgreengym.org> which will be updated regularly. Please contact us if you have any suggestions of things to put in the newsletter or on the website. Email newhamgg@gmail.com Phone Judi 020 8470 760 or Frances 078 4597 3156. The newsletter will be available to download from the website, or let us know your email address to receive it each month.

We are trying East Ham Nature Reserve Conservation Volunteers as a more descriptive name for the group than Green Gym. We will be using both names and we are still associated with TCV.

Saturday sessions

A small select group of us met on 26th September for the first Saturday session for some time. Here we are hard at work as usual!

We are planning to meet 10am-1pm on the last Saturday of each month, except December, when we will meet on the 19th. Come and join us if you can.



Animal of the month

Zootoca vivipara, the Common Lizard



East Ham Nature Reserve is a great place to see Common Lizards. They like to bask in the sun on the anthills.

Common Lizards are grey to dark brown, with bands or spots running along their back. The underside of males is yellow or orange spotted with black. The females have a yellowish grey underside.

They are 15-16cm long. About half the length is tail.

The Common Lizard is the most common reptile in Britain.

Tasks we will be tackling soon

Grassland is a very important habitat, especially for the lizards and slow worms. Poplar trees are encroaching on it, so we need to remove some of them.

We want to lay the hedge from the arch to the church. We need to clear undergrowth, cut and point stakes and cut thin weaver poles. We will then pleach the hedge, which means partly cutting and bending the branches down so they are more horizontal.

Brambles and tall plants are taking over areas of grassland. We need to remove them by cutting and digging out the roots where possible.

We will carry on cutting back ivy to reveal the gravestones. Some of the war graves have disappeared in the undergrowth.

Come and join us every Wednesday 10am-1pm or the last Saturday of each month.

Biodiversity

East Ham Nature Reserve covers about 9 acres and includes many different habitats. There are areas of grassland, woodland, meadow and scrub, with smaller habitats like woodpiles and anthills. It is important to maintain a balance between these, because different species of animals and plants need different conditions to survive.

Activities like cutting back ivy, removing brambles and cutting grass help to maintain the different areas and maximise the number of plants and animals that can be found at the Nature Reserve.

Plant of the month

Leucopaxia gigante, the giant funnel mushroom.



These have been appearing in the woods all through September and into October. They can grow to dinner plate size and form giant fairy rings.

They are edible, but quite strong tasting. Good cut into strips and dried for use as flavouring in soups and stews.

Older ones are eaten by fly maggots and eventually fall apart. Snails or slugs have eaten the stalk of this one.



Pat clearing brambles in Cricket Meadow.