

Ten years of biodiversity

We have achieved a great deal in the ten years since we began our work to enhance biodiversity at our HQ site. By following our Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), the Met Office habitats have been able to support a growing number and diversity of species.

Building management

(Photo - Pete Chase)

Bird box sites

We have put up bird boxes around the grounds, and artificial nest boxes for House Martins. There were 94 House Martin sightings in 2017 compared to 42 in 2014.

Reptile refugia

Reptile refugia have been constructed for Slow-worms although these also attract a range of amphibians and small mammals. A dedicated team of staff volunteers check the reptile mats regularly and report the observations for our biodiversity records.

Habitats

(Photo - Phil Gill)

Wild-flower meadows

We have established a mowing regime for our wild-flower meadows and banks. These provide suitable habitats for insects that need to overwinter, such as the larvae of skipper and Marbled White butterflies.

Flowerbeds

Our work to develop flowerbeds provides sources of nectar for as much of the year as possible.

(Photo Tom Blackmore)

Wetlands / ponds

Monitoring programmes have been organised by staff volunteers. These include regular surveys of butterflies, birds, bats, and reptiles on our HQ site. We recently surveyed ponds to establish whether any rare and protected Great Crested Newts are present on site.

No Great Crested Newts were found during the bottle trapping and torchlight checks but many Smooth and Palmate Newts were present plus many other interesting pond life such as this remarkable water stick insect.

The ponds also provide habitat for a wide variety of dragonflies and damselflies, while the reed beds around the ponds accommodate birds such as reed warblers.

(Photo - Tom Blackmore)

We spotted two Kingfishers on the pond in the winter of 2017 and we are hopeful they will return.

Timeline

2008

The Biodiversity Working Group was established in 2008 to work with Property Management, our Facilities Contractor G4S and Devon Garden Services to enhance and advise on Biodiversity.



2011

As a result of the way we manage our site, the Met Office has been awarded the prestigious Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark Award.

2013

We support biodiversity at some of our frontline sites too, for example the bird and bat boxes installed at Camborne in 2013.

2017

One major challenge has been the carpark improvement, however we have taken steps to improve habitats – like seeding wild-flower mixes, creating new areas of uncut grass and establishing nettle patches for the caterpillars of the Comma and Peacock butterfly.

2017

Another major challenge was the sewer works for a new housing development nearby. To mitigate the impacts, an insect hibernaculum was installed to house solitary bees and rock piles made for basking lizards in the summer.

2018 (Photo Tom Blackmore)

The Bee Orchids continue to thrive, with an increase from 9 original plants in 2011 to a total of 261 in 2018.

460 different species and counting, of plant, animal and insect have now been identified on site.