



## River Tees Corridor Landscape Area Habitats & Species

### UK BAP Priority Habitats

#### **Broadleaved Mixed Woodland**

Found in places on the steep-sided banks of the River Tees, and on the steep banks of almost all of the section of the River Leven within the Tees Valley boundary. Tree cover has been influenced by planting, usually conifers or sycamore, either scattered through the wood or as plantation; ash is the main natural tree.

#### **Lowland Meadow**

Small scattered fragments of lowland meadow are found within the River Tees Corridor, with a concentration of sites in the Leven Valley. These meadows are present on steeply-sloping sites and managed as permanent pasture.

#### **Priority Ponds**

Priority ponds are in intermittent clusters along the river, with a major concentration at Bowesfield and The Holmes, between Eaglescliffe and Thornaby. The majority of the ponds meet the priority pond criteria due to the presence of common toad, with others also fulfilling the criteria for great crested newt, invertebrates or water vole.

#### **Fen**

There are three main areas of fen within the River Tees Corridor, one associated with the River Skerne north of Darlington (a spring-fed fen meadow), one in the Leven Valley in the south of the borough of Stockton (a rush dominated wet-flush), and one in the area around Port Clarence.

#### **Traditional Orchard**

Remnants of old traditional orchards, associated historically with small commercial enterprises and farms, are present in the western rural section of the River Tees Corridor Landscape Area, with a concentration around Yarm and Eaglescliffe. Orchards vary in their size and condition and are now mainly for domestic use.

#### **Hedgerow**

Hedgerows are present across the open farmland through which the River Tees passes, from west of Darlington to the urban fringe of Stockton.

### **Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land (Brownfield)**

There are seven sites between the Tees barrage and the eastern boundary of this Landscape Area. All are recolonised brownfield sites containing open mosaic grassland, two also with scrub and one also with wetland. They support UK BAP Priority Species including brown hare, grey partridge and skylark, and are also associated with rich assemblages of invertebrate species.

### **Reedbed**

This habitat is found at two locations within the River Tees Corridor. The largest area is within the RSPB Reserve at Saltholme, and the majority of the habitat here is covered by the SSSI designation. A smaller area of reedbed occurs within the Redcar Fields SSSI on the banks of the River Skerne north of Darlington.

### **Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh**

There are two locations for this habitat, both found within the urban and industrial section of the River Tees Corridor. One location is close to Port Clarence and comprises two areas – one within the RSPB Reserve at Saltholme and one further east within the Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and Wetlands SSSI. The second cluster is close to the Tees Barrage along the old route of the River Tees and at Portrack Marsh.

### **Mudflats**

Mudflats are found along the entire length of the tidal section of the River Tees, including the old route of the River Tees.

### **Other Habitats of Importance**

#### **Species-rich Grassland**

There are 13 Local Wildlife Sites designated for the presence of species-rich grassland within the River Tees Corridor of which six have been recorded as the priority habitat Lowland Meadow. The remaining seven sites have not been surveyed in sufficient depth to determine whether or not they are the priority habitat Lowland Meadow, but they are important locally.

#### **Broadleaved Woodland**

There are broadleaved woodlands present along the stretch of the River Tees Corridor in Darlington which are not ancient and semi-natural but support important deciduous woodland bird species, for example lesser spotted woodpecker.

### **Sites of Geological Importance**

There are two disused quarries of geological interest at Ingleby Barwick.

### **Priority species**

#### **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**

This species is found in deciduous woodland along the banks of the River Tees in the Borough of Darlington.

### **Water Vole**

Water voles are recorded at the RSPB Reserve at Saltholme.

### **Great Crested Newt**

Great crested newts are found sparsely scattered along the River Tees Corridor in the Boroughs of Stockton-on-Tees and Darlington.

### **Soprano Pipistrelle**

Soprano pipistrelle is found along the River Tees from the western boundary of Darlington to Middleton St George. Individuals have also been recorded along the River Skerne near South Park in Darlington.

### **Otters**

Otters are well established on the River Leven and along the lower section of the River Tees.

### **Brown Hare**

Brown hare is found in good numbers within the open mosaic habitat found in the industrial areas, some of which fall within the River Tees Corridor Landscape Area.

### **Harvest Mouse**

Harvest mouse has been recorded within the Bowesfield Nature Reserve.

### **Invertebrates**

Maze Park and the Tees Marshalling Yards are home to regionally significant populations of two priority butterfly species, the dingy skipper and grayling.

### **Fish**

A number of UKBAP Priority Fish species are found in the River Tees and its tributaries.

Salmon is distributed throughout the River Tees and is increasing in numbers (although still falling below the conservation limit set by the Tees Salmon Action Plan) whilst numbers of brown trout in the River Tees have declined as a result of degraded and fragmented habitat, barriers to migration and pollution.

Sea lamprey is present in the River Tees (distribution unknown) and brook lamprey is present throughout the River Tees and can be found in the River Leven and Skerne tributaries.