

A Users Guide

The Exeter Biodiversity Reference Map is designed to be used by anyone with an interest in planning and the future ecological health of the City. As a reference tool it will be of greatest benefit to those who are able to strategically influence Exeter's environment.

The Reference Map contributes to the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Exeter Area and East Devon Growth Point by providing more detailed information on the network of green spaces within the Exeter City Council boundary and their associated biodiversity and environmental status.

By outlining the extent and location of key habitats the Reference Map will assist the Local Authority in meeting conservation of biodiversity duties associated with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and also Planning Policy Statement 9.

Using the Map

The layers (listed in 'layers' on the left hand side of your screen) present, can be turned off and on to reveal specific information. If the layers are not visible please click the small layers icon.

The Information Layers

Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI)

The Biodiversity Reference Map indicates where Habitats of Principal importance are found.

The Government is required to publish a list of Habitats of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England, by Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This list is compiled from, and is the same as, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats which are found in England.

Some of these Habitats of Principal Importance may be also formally designated as:

- Special Protection Areas (SPA) – these sites are strictly protected and classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive 1979.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – these sites are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and represent the Country's very best wildlife and geological sites.
- County Wildlife Sites (CWS) – this is a non-statutory designation for sites of county significance for wildlife or geology. Positive management of CWS is encouraged and development affecting them is controlled by Local Plan policies

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The remaining green space (not HPI) has been assigned to one of two categories:

Greenspace A

These areas support wildlife-rich habitats that do not meet the HPI criteria (based on information available). These are important habitats for wildlife and make a significant contribution to the natural ecosystem. Examples of such habitats could include semi-improved grassland, scrub, broadleaved plantation woodland, watercourses etc.

Greenspace B

These areas support less wildlife-rich habitats than the Greenspace A category and have often been modified through agricultural improvement or woodland planting. Examples of such habitats include agriculturally improved grassland, amenity grassland (in parks, recreational areas and other open spaces), formal landscaping and conifer plantations. Whilst these areas are less wildlife-rich they still hold significant green infrastructure value.

Habitats of Principal Importance and Greenspace A and B make an important contribution to the ecological networks in the City. Such networks are afforded protection in Planning Policy Statement 9 (paragraph 12) which recognises that they can provide routes or stepping stones for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species in the wider environment. Local Authorities are required to avoid, or repair, the fragmentation of such networks through their planning policies and their control of development.

Limitations of use

A variety of data sources has been used to create the Reference Map. These include an extensive Phase 1 habitat assessment carried out in 2002 and County Wildlife Site monitoring in the 1990's, and 2009 to 2015. Extensive aerial photo analysis has also been employed with ground truthing surveys where possible.

Please note. The Reference Map uses the best available knowledge at the time of publishing. Whilst significant efforts have been made to validate the data, not all sites have received recent ground survey. Changes to quality and extent of habitat may therefore have occurred in the meantime.

The Reference Map does not provide information on the reason for designation or provide survey data. As such the map should be used as a reference tool. More detailed information such as survey records can be obtained from Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (there may be a charge for this service) www.dbr.org.uk

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Caution

In the absence of contemporary survey data, sites have been allocated to a category that may underestimate their true ecological value. The absence of inclusion of green space on the Biodiversity Reference Map does not imply lower environmental value. Sites of presumed ecological value and larger size have been prioritised for mapping.

The Biodiversity Reference Map does not represent complete coverage of species or habitats present within the City, so an absence of data for an area does not imply there are not important features present.

The Biodiversity Reference Map should not be used as a substitute for comprehensive ecological survey.

Updates

The Biodiversity Reference Map will be updated on a regular basis and can be downloaded from the Devon Wildlife Trust website. The date of issue will be clearly shown on the layerable PDF document.

Help

Please contact Devon Wildlife Trust on 01392 279244 if further help is required.

