



***West Oxford
Nature Plan***

West Oxford Nature Plan

Contents

Introduction.....	3
West Oxford landscape history.....	4
Gazetteer of historical sites with wildlife interest	12
West Oxford Wildlife Group Butterfly Surveys 2003.....	13
Weather.....	14
Acknowledgement.....	14
West Oxford Fishery Surveys.....	15
Fishery Survey: April 2003.....	17
West Oxford Ornithological Surveys.....	19
West Oxford Flora Surveys.....	22
River Corridor Survey of Bulstake Stream.....	32
Adjacent Habitats.....	32
Banks.....	32
Margins.....	33
Channel.....	33
Bulstake Stream – Survey Stretch 1	38
Bulstake Stream – Survey Stretch 2	39
Bulstake Stream – Survey Stretch 3	40
West Oxford Wildlife Group Projects	41
Hinksey Meadow.....	41
Tumbling Bay.....	41
Other projects.....	42

Introduction

Following a meeting at the old Community Centre in Binsey Lane early in 1999, a group of local people formed the West Oxford Wildlife Group. The group's stated aims include the wish '*to conserve and where possible enhance the remaining natural and semi-natural open spaces that survive in West Oxford*' and '*to engage in activities relating to the conservation and maintenance of the wildlife interest which will offer the widest possible opportunities for involvement by the community*'. Establishing the extent and range of the local wildlife was an early priority and the group secured a grant from Oxford City Council in 2001 towards the preparation of a local nature plan that would serve both as a current position statement and as an inspiration for future conservation initiatives. This publication is the outcome of that funding and the following members of the group, Julia Hamer-Hunt, Nick Jackson, Malcolm Graham, Karl Wallendzsus, Martin Rush and Gwenllian Davies, have put it together.

To the outsider, West Oxford seems dominated by roads and traffic, but the area is interlaced by branches of the river Thames. Away from Botley Road, fields, hedgerows, parks and allotments still give it an almost rural character. The surveys in the plan demonstrate the wealth of wildlife that still exists in the area but at the same time they make clear the absence of features that were once commonplace. More positively, the plan suggests how subtle changes in the management of parts of West Oxford could greatly increase the diversity of the local wildlife and enhance the local landscape. The group has already worked with the Oxford Preservation Trust to deepen old meanders of the Seacourt Stream in Hinksey Meadow and thus create new and more varied habitats. It is now planning to involve local people in the work of transforming the sadly neglected former bathing place at Tumbling Bay into a peaceful but accessible nature reserve. The plan contains a number of surveys that will form a baseline for future comparative studies. Some aspects of the local wildlife – insects for example – have still to be studied and it is envisaged that further surveys will be undertaken in future years and published on the group's website, <http://www.wowg.org>. Anyone wishing to find out more about the group and its activities or wanting to help in any way will find up to date contact information on the website.

As this is a community plan, it has been produced by volunteers. While there is quite some range of expertise within the group, we have been able to draft in experts to assist with some of the survey work undertaken. The plan is also intended to be an evolving document, and will be added to from year to year as more information becomes available. Many individuals and agencies have an interest in different aspects of the wildlife of West Oxford and the group would especially like to thank the following for their help in leading surveys or providing help or information:

Oliver de Soissons, Oxford City Council
Mike Bayliss
Frances Watkins
Oxford Urban Wildlife Group
Jason Headley, Oxford City Council
Environment Agency
Andy Webber
Councillor Susanna Pressel
Caroline Steel

October 2003