

Grand Union Canal Habitat Creation



KEY DETAILS

PROJECT NAME :	Grand Union Canal Habitat Creation
CLIENT :	Groundwork Thames Trust.
LOCATION :	Environment Agency, British Waterways and Blenheim Angling Society.
PROJECT CATEGORY :	Habitat Creation

The design provided for newly created islands and on-line ponds of variable depths fringed with native plants. Leaf matter and sediment was removed to create these ponds with the sediment being re-used to create the islands with a shallow area on the eastern side of the canal. This area

provided an adult fish spawning habitat with gently sloping sides having emergent vegetation and shallow non-vegetated fry shelves.

Rotting vegetation was used to replicate a natural compost bin which is highly attractive to grass snakes.

The new islands were also successful in delivering a high value area for habitat and wetland plants combining to encourage the presence of Water Voles that have recently declined to only two known sites in the Colne Valley Park area.

Post construction, an ecological survey was carried out in May 2011 by Alder Ecology. This report concluded that the site experienced an increase locally in aquatic associated invertebrates such as damselflies and dragonflies.

Alder's report showed that the general area had a greater biomass and diversity of invertebrates after completion of the works.

In addition, the newly created islands vertically cut banks contained holes that could be used by Kingfishers for nesting. Positively, Kingfisher passes were observed over the backwater and islands during the survey.



Above left and then clockwise: Site before work commenced showing no standing water, minimal disturbance to existing vegetation as work progressed.

Fish fry in the new shallows and pre-established Salix coir pallets provide new habitats.



Grass Snake in canalside brushwood revetments.

Potential Kingfisher burrow on new island.



A montage of images of work in progress.



CONTACT DETAILS

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