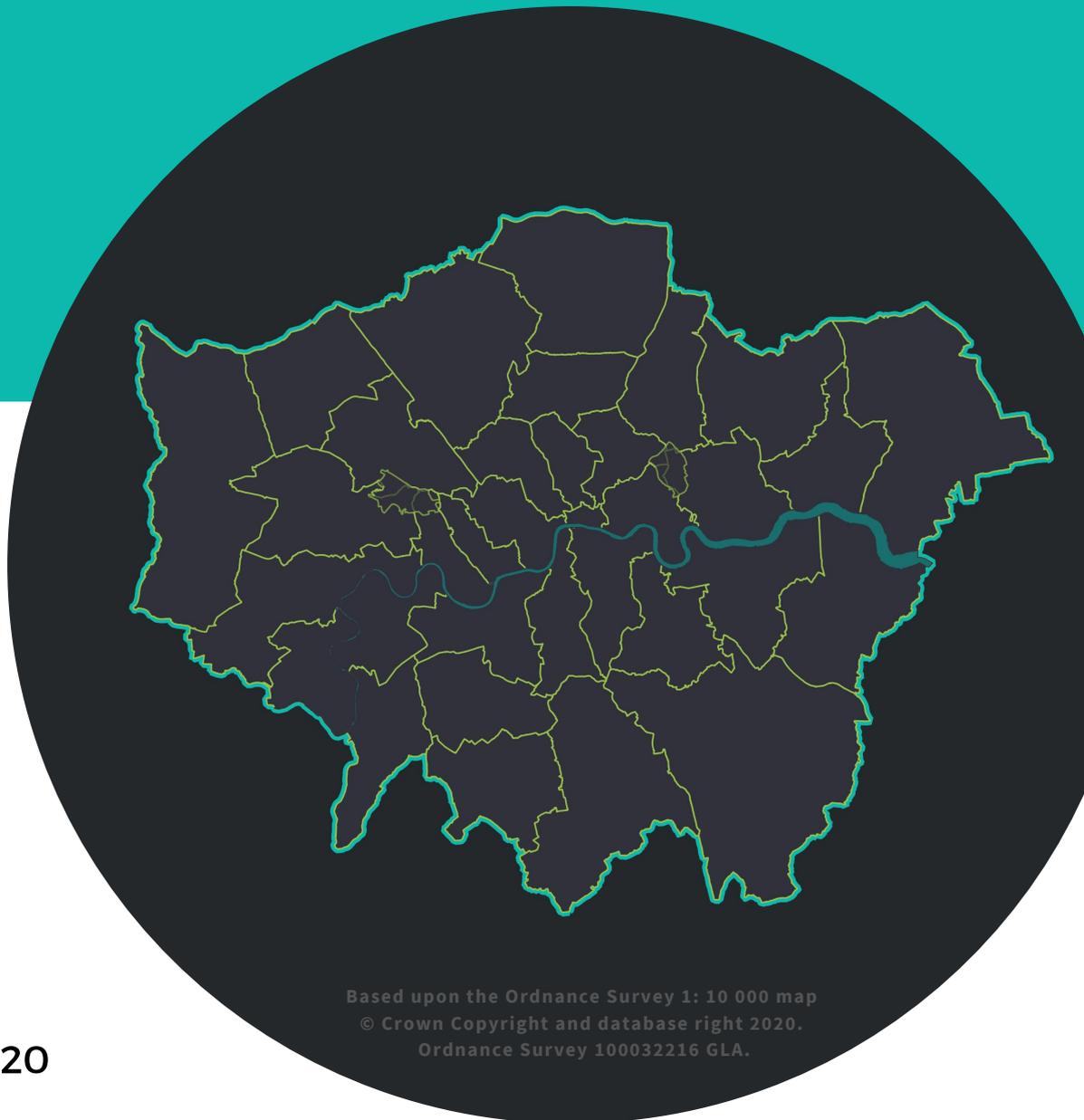


Biodiversity Evidence - Better Outcomes from Planning



POLICIES AND LEGISLATION RELATED TO BIODIVERSITY AND PLANNING IN LONDON



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September 2020

Policies and Legislation related to Biodiversity and Planning in London

The following is an overview of the policies and legislations related to biodiversity matters in the planning process in Greater London. It includes [National](#) (i.e. the National Planning Policy Framework) [Regional](#) (i.e. the London Plan and London Environment Strategy) and [Local](#) (link to a compilation of policy related documents of London's LPAs) Policies. It also includes a section on specific policies related to [biodiversity net gain and enhancements](#).

Furthermore, it includes relevant [legislation](#) (and policies, where appropriate) split into [general](#) and species/groups or habitats [specific](#). It covers protected species, habitats and species of principal importance as well as invasive species. [Species](#) or [habitats](#) of principal importance are identified under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and therefore need to be taken into consideration by every public body when performing any of their functions.

For London, the London Environment Strategy ([Appendix 2A & 2B](#)) lists the priority [species](#) and habitats for London that also require consideration in the planning process. In terms of priority habitats, it states that "opportunities should be sought to create or restore priority habitats (previously known as UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats) that have been identified as conservation priorities in London". In regard to priority species, the London Environment Strategy states "All land managers and landowners should take these species into account. This should include, for example, tailoring the management of land or design of new green infrastructure to create habitat or features (for example, nesting and roosting sites) which support their conservation". Policy G6 of the London Plan (Intend to Publish 2020) states that "Boroughs, in developing Development Plans, should: 3) support the protection and conservation of priority species and habitats that sit outside the SINC network, and promote opportunities for enhancing them using Biodiversity Action Plans".

This is part of a series of resources prepared by the "[Biodiversity Evidence – Better Outcomes from Planning](#)" project aiming to support London's Local Planning Authorities to achieve better outcomes for biodiversity through planning. The project is hosted by Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC and supported by the Mayor of London.

Note: This is not an exhaustive reproduction of the policies and legislation and we would encourage readers to read in more detail the parts of interest to them by following the links provided.

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National Planning Policy Framework 2019 [Link](#)

Paragraph 170

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”.

Paragraph 175

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity”.

Section 176

“The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites⁵⁹; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites”.

Section 177

“The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site”.

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Regional policies

<p>The London Plan (Intend to Publish 2020) Link</p> <p>Good Growth Policies</p> <p>GG2 Making the best use of land “To create successful sustainable mixed-use places that make the best use of land, those involved in planning and development must: F – protect and enhance London’s open spaces, including the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, designated nature conservation sites and local spaces, and promote the creation of new green infrastructure and urban greening, including aiming to secure net biodiversity gains where possible”.</p> <p>GG3 Creating a healthy city “To improve Londoners’ health and reduce health inequalities, those involved in planning and development must: G – plan for improved access to and quality of green spaces, the provision of new green infrastructure, and spaces for play, recreation and sports”.</p>
<p>Policy G6 Biodiversity and access to nature A – “Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) should be protected”. C – “Where harm to a SINC is unavoidable, and where the benefits of the development proposal clearly outweigh the impacts on biodiversity, the following mitigation hierarchy should be applied to minimise development impacts: 1) avoid damaging the significant ecological features of the site 2) minimise the overall spatial impact and mitigate it by improving the quality or management of the rest of the site 3) deliver off-site compensation of better biodiversity value”. D – “Development proposals should manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain. This should be informed by the best available ecological information and addressed from the start of the development process”. E – “Proposals which reduce deficiencies in access to nature should be considered positively”.</p>
<p>Policy G1 Green infrastructure A – “London’s network of green and open spaces, and green features in the built environment should be protected and enhanced. Green infrastructure should be planned, designed and managed in an integrated way to achieve multiple benefits”. D – “Development proposals should incorporate appropriate elements of green infrastructure that are integrated into London’s wider green infrastructure network”.</p>
<p>Policy G2 London’s Green Belt A – “The Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development: 1) development proposals that would harm the Green Belt should be refused 2) the enhancement of the Green Belt to provide appropriate multifunctional beneficial uses for Londoners should be supported. B – The extension of the Green Belt will be supported, where appropriate. Its de-designation will not be supported”.</p>
<p>Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land A – “Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is afforded the same status and level of protection as Green Belt: 1) Development proposals that would harm MOL should be refused. MOL should be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy tests that apply to the Green Belt. 2) boroughs should work with partners to enhance the quality and range of uses of MOL”.</p>

Policy G4 Open space

B – “Development proposals should:

- 1) not result in the loss of protected open space
- 2) where possible create areas of publicly accessible open space, particularly in areas of deficiency”.

Policy G5 Urban greening

A – “Major development proposals should contribute to the greening of London by including urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design, and by incorporating measures such as high quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage.

B – Boroughs should develop an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) to identify the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new developments. The UGF should be based on the factors set out in Table 8.2, but tailored to local circumstances. In the interim, the Mayor recommends a target score of 0.4 for developments that are predominately residential, and a target score of 0.3 for predominately commercial development (excluding B2 and B8 uses).

C – Existing green cover retained on site should count towards developments meeting the interim target scores set out in (B) based on the factors set out in Table 8.2”.

Policy G7 Trees and woodlands

A – “London’s urban forest and woodlands should be protected and maintained, and new trees and woodlands should be planted in appropriate locations in order to increase the extent of London’s urban forest – the area of London under the canopy of trees”.

C – “Development proposals should ensure that, wherever possible, existing trees of value are retained.¹⁴⁴ If planning permission is granted that necessitates the removal of trees there should be adequate replacement based on the existing value of the benefits of the trees removed, determined by, for example, i-tree or CAVAT or another appropriate valuation system. The planting of additional trees should generally be included in new developments – particularly large-canopied species which provide a wider range of benefits because of the larger surface area of their canopy”.

London Environment Strategy (2018) [Link](#)

Executive summary [Link](#)

Chapter 5: Green Infrastructure

Aim: “London will be the world’s first National Park City where more than half of its area is green; where the natural environment is protected and the network of green infrastructure is managed to benefit all Londoners”.

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Local policies

London's Local Planning Authorities

A compilation of planning documents (e.g. Local plans, Biodiversity Action Plans, etc) can be found [here](#)

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Biodiversity net gain & enhancements

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 [Link](#)

Paragraph 170

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;”

Paragraph 175

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity”.

The London Plan (Intend to Publish) [Link](#)

Policy G6 Biodiversity and access to nature

D “Development proposals should manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain. This should be informed by the best available ecological information and addressed from the start of the development process”.

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Legislation (& policies where relevant)

General

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Link
Section 40(1) “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.
Section 40(3) “Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism, or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat”.
Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation –Statutory obligations and their Impact within the Planning System (ODPM 06/2005, Defra 01/2005) Link
Section 84 The potential effects of a development, on habitats or species listed as priorities in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) ⁸⁸ , and by Local Biodiversity Partnerships, together with policies in the England Biodiversity Strategy ⁸⁹ , are capable of being a material consideration in the preparation of regional spatial strategies and local development documents and the making of planning decisions.
Section 99 “It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and/or planning obligations, before the permission is granted. In appropriate circumstances the permission may also impose a condition preventing the development from proceeding without the prior acquisition of a licence under the procedure set out in section C below”.
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Link
The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 Link
Regulation 9(3) “a competent authority must, in exercising any of its functions, must have regard to the requirements of the Directives so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions”.
Regulation 55 - Licences (1) “Subject to the provisions of this regulation, the relevant licensing body may grant a licence for the purposes specified in paragraph (2)”. (2) “The purposes are— (e) preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”; (9) “The relevant licensing body must not grant a licence under this regulation unless it is satisfied— (a) that there is no satisfactory alternative; and (b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

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Habitats and Species

Badgers

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 [Link](#)

Section 1 Taking, injuring or killing badgers.

(1) "A person is guilty of an offence if, except as permitted by or under this Act, he wilfully kills, injures or takes [^{F1}, or attempts to kill, injure or take,] a badger".

Section 3 Interfering with badger setts.

"A person is guilty of an offence if, except as permitted by or under this Act, he interferes with a badger sett by doing any of the following things

- (a) damaging a badger sett or any part of it;
- (b) destroying a badger sett;
- (c) obstructing access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett; (d) causing a dog to enter a badger sett; or
- (e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett,

intending to do any of those things or being reckless as to whether his actions would have any of those consequences".

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 6) [Link](#)

Section 11 Prohibition of certain methods of killing or taking wild animals.

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Bats

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Schedule 2) [Link](#)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [Link](#)

Part 3, Section 43

(1) “A person who—

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

is guilty of an offence.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- (a) to impair their ability—
 - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong”.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 5) [Link](#)

Part I

Section 9(1)

“Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in Schedule 5, he shall be guilty of an offence”.

Section 9(4)

“Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally [^{F723}or recklessly]—

- (a) damages or destroys, or obstructs access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
- (b) disturbs any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose,

he shall be guilty of an offence”.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) [Link](#)

Applies to some species of bats (In Greater London: brown long-eared bat, noctule and soprano pipistrelle)

Section 41

(1) “The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (light pollution) [Link](#)

Paragraph 180

“Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”.

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Birds

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) [Link](#)

Part I

Section 1

(1) "Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally

(a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird;

[^{F2(aa)} takes, damages or destroys the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1;]

(b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or

(c) takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird,

he shall be guilty of an offence".

(5) "Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally [F16or recklessly]—

(a) disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or

(b) disturbs dependent young of such a bird,

he shall be guilty of an offence".

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) [Link](#)

Applies to some species of birds

Section 41

(1) "The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity".

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Dormice

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Schedule 2) [Link](#)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [Link](#)

Part 3, Section 43

(1) “A person who—

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

is guilty of an offence.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- (a) to impair their ability—
 - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong”.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 5) [Link](#)

Part I

Section 9(1)

“Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in Schedule 5, he shall be guilty of an offence”.

Section 9(4)

“Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally [^{F723} or recklessly]—

- (a) damages or destroys, or obstructs access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
- (b) disturbs any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose,

he shall be guilty of an offence”.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) [Link](#)

Section 41

(1) “The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

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Great Crested Newts

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Schedule 2) [Link](#)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [Link](#)

Part 3, Section 43

(1) “A person who—

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

is guilty of an offence.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- (a) to impair their ability—
 - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong”.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 5) [Link](#)

Section 9(4)

“Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally [^{F723} or recklessly]—

- (a) damages or destroys, or obstructs access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
- (b) disturbs any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose,

he shall be guilty of an offence”.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) [Link](#)

Section 41

(1) “The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

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Habitats of Principal Importance or Priority Habitats

London Priority Habitats based on London Environment Strategy (2018): acid grassland, chalk grassland, heathland, woodland, orchards, meadows, rivers and streams (including Tidal Thames), standing water, reedbeds, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, open mosaic habitats
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Link
Section 41 (1) “The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.
Ancient Woodland
National Planning Policy Framework 2019 Link
Paragraph 175 “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons ⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists.”
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Link
Section 41 (1) “The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.
Government standing advice – Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development Link
“Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat. It's important for its: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wildlife (which include rare and threatened species)• soils• recreational value• cultural, historical and landscape value”
Avoid impacts, reduce ('mitigate') impacts, and compensate as a last resort “You and the developer should identify ways to avoid negative effects on ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees. This could include selecting an alternative site for development or redesigning the scheme”.

Use of buffer zones

“A buffer zone’s purpose is to protect ancient woodland and individual ancient or veteran trees. The size and type of buffer zone should vary depending on the scale, type and impact of the development.

For ancient woodlands, you should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage. Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, you’re likely to need a larger buffer zone. For example, the effect of air pollution from development that results in a significant increase in traffic.

A buffer zone around an ancient or veteran tree should be at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should be 5m from the edge of the tree’s canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree’s diameter.

Where possible, a buffer zone should:

- contribute to wider ecological networks
- be part of the green infrastructure of the area

It should consist of semi-natural habitats such as:

- woodland
- a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland planting

You should plant buffer zones with local and appropriate native species”.

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Hedgehogs

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Link
Section 41 (1) "The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity".
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 6) Link
Section 11 Prohibition of certain methods of killing or taking wild animals.

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Invasive species

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Schedule 9) [Link](#)

Section 14 Introduction of new species etc

(1) "Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person releases or allows to escape into the wild any animal which— (a) is of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state; or (b) is included in Part I^[F74], IA or IB] of Schedule 9, he shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of Schedule 9, he shall be guilty of an offence".

Weeds Act 1959 [Link](#)

Section 1 Power to require occupier to prevent spreading of injurious weeds.

(1) "Where the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (in this Act referred to as "the Minister") is satisfied that there are injurious weeds to which this Act applies growing upon any land he may serve upon the occupier of the land a notice in writing requiring him, within the time specified in the notice, to take such action as may be necessary to prevent the weeds from spreading.

(2) This Act applies to the following injurious weeds, that is to say—

- spear thistle (*cirsium vulgare*), (Savi) Ten.
- creeping or field thistle (*cirsium arvense* (L.) Scop.),
- curled dock (*rumex crispus* L.),
- broad-leaved dock (*rumex obtusifolius* L.), and
- ragwort (*senecio jacobaea* L.);

and to such additional injurious weeds as may be prescribed by the Minister by regulations".

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Reptiles

(In London: Adder, Common lizard, Grass snake, Slow worm)

Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) (Schedule 5) [Link](#)

Part I

Section 9(1)

“Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in Schedule 5, he shall be guilty of an offence”.

[“...in respect of section 9(1) so far as it relates to killing and injuring”]

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) [Link](#)

Section 41

(1) “The Secretary of State must, as respects England, publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

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