



CityWildlife 'How to' guides



How to Monitor a Local Nature Reserve

This CityWildlife 'how to' guide explains how to add your habitat monitoring observations to CityWildlife. These will be used to help define the quality of a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and tell how the habitat is changing for wildlife.

1. You need to be a registered naturewarden and have signed in to CityWildlife before you can add your habitat monitoring observations. To do this, just click on the 'naturewardens' tab at the top of the page and follow the instructions under 'Do you qualify?'.
2. Once signed in, on the CityWildlife Homepage, click on the 'Special Places' box (top box on left hand column). This will take you to the 'Special Places' page.
3. CityWildlife currently only monitors habitats on Local Nature Reserves, so select the 'Local Nature Reserves' banner under the 'Places to Discover' heading. This takes you to the Local Nature Reserves page (if the 'Ordnance Survey Statement of Purpose' page is displayed first, please read and then click on 'continue').
4. The top half of the Local Nature Reserves page includes an aerial photo with all the City's LNRs displayed. Choose the particular LNR you are interested in, either by:
 - Selecting it from the drop-down list on the right, or
 - Clicking on the  button (above the aerial photo) and then clicking somewhere in the shape of your chosen LNR.

The aerial photo starts at 20km scale (look above the orange buttons, directly underneath the photo), but you can zoom in and move around it to home in on an LNR. Here's how:

Click on the  symbol, just above the aerial photo (it will change colour to blue), then click on the aerial photo at roughly the right spot. Now click on any of the orange scale buttons at the bottom of the aerial photo and CityWildlife will zoom in to that scale, centred on the spot you selected.

Alternatively, click on the   symbols and then on the aerial photo to zoom in (+) or out (-) to a particular point, one scale increment at a time.

You can also click on 'show map' at the top of the aerial photo to switch to a map, if you find that makes it easier to locate the position.

5. You should now be in a page dedicated to a particular LNR. On the left is an aerial photo of the LNR, showing its boundary and the boundaries and names of its 'monitoring compartments'. You can zoom in to have a closer look at a particular monitoring compartment, using the methods described in 4 (above). Find a compartment that you would like to monitor and make a note of its code name (e.g. 'WILD 1').

On the right of the page, various different options are available in the boxes headed 'View', 'Do' and 'Monitoring'. Once you have found the habitat compartment you want to monitor, click on the first option under 'Monitoring', which is 'Habitat Monitoring Questionnaire'. This opens the habitat monitoring page.

6. The top of the habitat monitoring page is a list of the code names of all the monitoring compartments in that LNR (with their habitat type). It gives you the option of printing a monitoring form, or entering data for each one. Click on 'Print Monitoring Form' for the compartment you want to monitor. A questionnaire is displayed which you can then print off, to take out to the LNR with you.
7. To fill in the habitat monitoring questionnaire you will need to be able to various things, such as identify certain species of plant and estimate how frequent they are in the compartment. To help you do this, pictures of most of the plants and help notes are provided in the 'enter new monitoring data' version of each questionnaire. To look at this, go back to the habitat monitoring page and then on the 'enter new monitoring data' option of the monitoring compartment you are interested in.
8. In the 'enter new monitoring data' option of the habitat monitoring form, use the 'help' notes (see blue help signs just underneath most questions) if anything seems unclear. Questions with lists of plants to identify have the plant names in blue – if you click on these, a picture and brief description of most of the plants is displayed.
9. Once you are familiar with the questions and their help notes, take your printed questionnaire out to the relevant LNR compartment. Complete as much of it as you can – you do not need to fill in all the questions. Don't forget to read the 'guidance on naturewardening' in the Naturewardens section of CityWildlife.
10. Back at the computer, go back into the 'enter data' version of the habitat monitoring form and transfer your paper copy answers to it, then click the 'submit' button at the bottom of the page.
11. To see how your data has helped to assess the quality of the habitat, go back to the relevant LNR page and under 'Monitoring', click on the 'view habitat monitoring results' option. This displays the Habitat Monitoring Results page.
12. The top of the Habitat Monitoring Results page combines all the results to give an overall assessment of the quality of the habitat – you can read all about this by looking under Home – Getting Started and choosing 'Habitat monitoring'. The rest of the Habitat Monitoring Results page lists all the habitat monitoring questions and you can click on summary graphs and tables to see how your data has influenced the results.

Please note that you can edit (or delete) your record at any time by selecting 'Naturewardens' and then 'Your habitat monitoring questionnaires' from the drop-down menu at the top of every page. This displays a table with a complete list of all your completed questionnaires. Next to a questionnaire, click on 'Edit' in the right hand column and you will be taken back to step 10 of this guide.