

Thamesmead Reed Beds Feasibility Study Summary

Introduction

Thamesmead is an area located in south east London that was developed on reclaimed marshland in the 1960s. Forming part of the drainage system are 7km of shallow, narrow canals, and five major lakes. In 2016 The Water Framework Directive classified the catchment as moderate. Lack of habitat, in addition to nutrient load resulting from misconnections and cross connections and run off were listed as factors. Between 2017 and 2018 T21 and LWT installed 284.5m of floating reed beds throughout the catchment. In late 2018 the EA funded Thames21 (T21) and the London Wildlife Trust (LWT) to undertake a feasibility study to identify suitable locations to install additional reed beds, both floating raft and in-stream planted types.

Study Method

Both T21 and the LWT undertook several walkaround surveys to identify suitable locations for reed bed installation. Likely areas were assessed by utilising weighting criteria (such as visibility to the public, connectivity to neighboring habitats, proximity to previously installed reed beds for example).

Recommendations

Seven locations were selected for floating reed beds and two for in-stream beds. In addition to reed beds both study partners also highlighted other interventions, predominantly changes to land management practices. These are;

- 1) Tree maintenance in area where there is shading of canal channel
- 2) Reed bed overgrowth in parts of the canal that could be removed to restore connectivity
- 3) Tern rafts and bat boxes to provide additional nesting/habitat opportunities
- 4) Relaxed mowing to leave buffer stripes providing 'corridors' for wildlife along the canal bankside

