

HABITAT

Rivers and Streams

The River Avon and some streams including Battleton Brook have, over the years, been significantly modified. This creates a reduction in diversity and fish movement together with a loss of spawning places and reduction in aquatic flora.

Water quality continues to be affected by pollution from agricultural runoff (phosphorus and nitrogen), highway runoff and sewage.

Inappropriate development on floodplains.

Unsustainable water abstraction affects flow rates and the quality of habitats.

Removal of coarse woody debris has also contributed as it helps to provide important habitat niches.

Despite these issues the Avon still supports a wide range of native species including various fish, invertebrate and plant species, birds and otter.

Protections are provided via legislation.

Listed as a priority habitat under s.41 NERC Act 2006.

Both the Avon and the Isbourne are designated Local Wildlife Sites which also provide some protection.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows have been lost over the years with development.

Hedgerows provide valuable habitat corridors. A mix of native planting is generally better for wildlife.

Hedgerows are particularly useful for the brown hairstreak butterfly, small birds, such as linnet, yellow hammer and song thrush as well as small mammals. Depending on the makeup of a hedgerow it may also be helpful to pollinators.

Hedgerows are listed under s.41 NERC Act 2006. They are also a priority habitat.

There is some protection through legislation. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) may be used for trees within a hedgerow.

Road Verges

The use of hedge cutting machinery, herbicide application and pesticide drift can all contribute to the degradation of road verge habitat.

Other problems are; car and lorry parking, use by travellers, run off, spray containing salt and fly tipping. There may also be inappropriate cutting regimes and over management by adjacent landowners.

Road verges can contribute connectivity of biodiversity as well as being a habitat in itself.

Roadside verges are usually a thin strip of grassland adjacent to the highway though it may contain scrub and trees. There is sometimes a ditch which provides an additional habitat.

These areas can be rich in wildflowers and there is already an area identified in Evesham that is registered with Buglife as a beeline for this reason. Some verges can also provide homes together with hedgerows for other notable species such as glow worms, slow worms and harvest mice.

Road verges do not have any legislation specifically protecting it though the presence of species which are protected can provide some assistance. Worcestershire County Council has a network of locally notified Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (RVNR) one of which is in Evesham, it is also an LWS (Local Wildlife Site).

