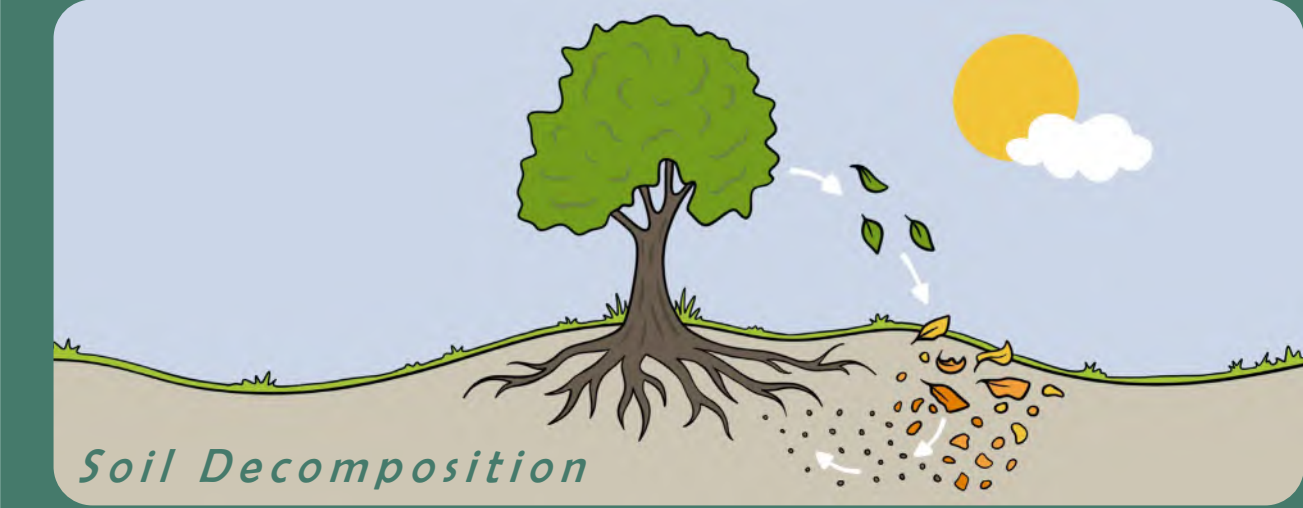


# Biodiversity in Lickey End Recreation Ground

## What is biodiversity and why does it matter?

Biodiversity is a measure of variety amongst all living things, including the plants, fungi and animals that we can see, as well as things like microscopic bacteria and single-celled organisms.

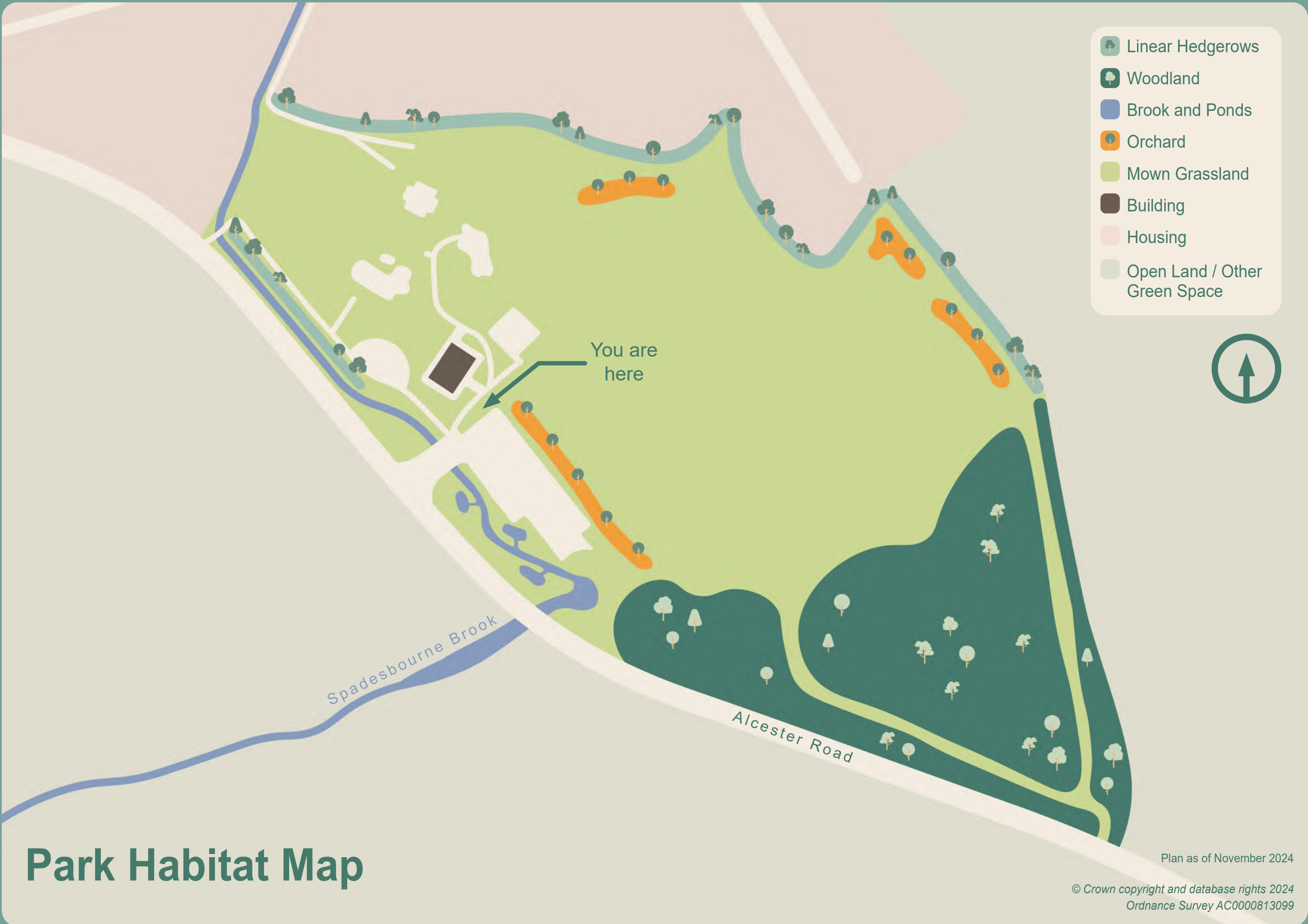
Together, living organisms and their environment form interconnected eco-systems or habitats. They interact with each other in a carefully balanced way and do some really important jobs to help keep life going on earth. These are sometimes referred to as 'eco-system services' - see one example in the diagram below.



Soil Decomposition

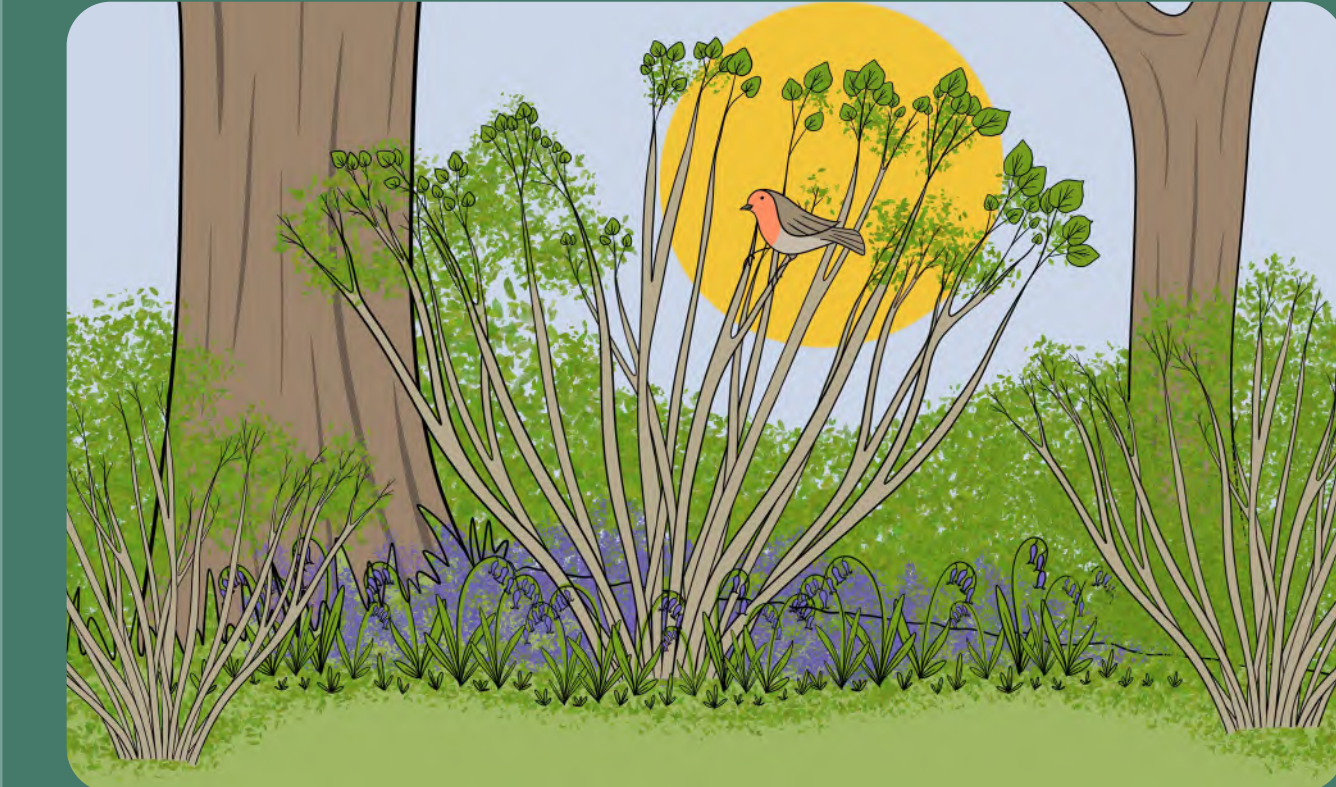
Through study, we have discovered that these systems work better and are more resilient to changes if they are more biodiverse. The loss of even one or two species from a habitat can put it out of balance.

Biodiversity in the UK has been in decline in the past 60 years as habitats have been lost or broken-up through a combination of built development, industry and changes to farming. However, growing recognition of the importance of biodiversity to our environment and the benefits of nature mean that many of us are increasingly valuing our outdoor spaces and are working to restore and create new habitats.



## Biodiversity success story

An important ecological feature of Lickey End Recreation Ground is the wooded area. This section of the park supports a variety of tree species, including oak, alder and hazel. Over time and through management of this area, a multi-layered woodland is being established here, offering important local habitat for wildlife, such as native woodland birds, including robins, blackbirds and goldcrests.




Tree thinning is used to help regenerate the woodland, keeping a healthy range of tree species. This also helps to encourage the growth of shrubs, like dogwood, and woodland flora, like bluebells, because thinning means that more sunlight reaches the ground.

Coppicing is also used to help achieve this. This involves cutting small trees, such as hazel, back to ground level to encourage new growth. This practice is done in rotation, ensuring not all trees are cut back at the same time. This keeps habitat in place for insects, which in turn supports birds and other wildlife that feed on them.

## Supporting biodiversity at Lickey End Recreation Ground

For a relatively small greenspace, Lickey End Recreation Ground offers a wide range of habitats for wildlife, as well as benefitting from connections with open countryside beyond.

The map above shows the range of habitats found in the park. Here is some further information on each:



**Woodland and woodland edge habitats**

Woodland and woodland edge habitats, such as borders between forests and fields, are very important for wildlife. They offer a mix of sunlight, shade, and a multi-layered plant community, creating a perfect environment for many insect species. Insects like bees, butterflies, and beetles find food, shelter, and breeding sites in these habitats. You can find out more about how the woodland area is being managed in our 'Biodiversity Success Story'.



**Orchard trees**

The orchard fruit trees have been planted in rows to the edges of the open space, where they provide important edge habitat for wildlife. In the spring the blossom attracts pollinators, while in the autumn the fruit feeds birds and other animals. These habitats offer extra nesting sites and cover, allowing small animals to hide and move around safely.



**Linear hedgerows**

Some of the hedges in Lickey End have been laid in the 'Midland' style, which creates a dense and compact hedgerow. This makes an excellent habitat for local wildlife while also reducing shading over Spadesbourne Brook. Shade reduction over the brook encourages the growth of aquatic plants which, in turn, provides a better habitat for water voles. These hedgerows create 'habitat corridors', allowing animals to move safely through the local area. Their roots also reduce soil erosion and improve water quality by filtering the rainwater that runs through them.



**Brook and ponds**

The brook and ponds in Lickey End Recreation Ground provide crucial habitats for a wide range of wildlife, including frogs, insects and birds. These water sources support plants and small aquatic animals that help filter and clean water. The ponds and vegetated edges to the brook also help to prevent floods by storing and slowing the flow of surface water during heavy rain.

Lickey End Recreation Ground is lucky enough to be home to breeding water voles. They live mainly along rivers, streams and ditches with slow moving water where they dig burrows in the banks to live in, with entrances both above and below the water level. They prefer habitats with lots of grasses and reeds growing on the banks which provide them with food and shelter.