



buglife

The Invertebrate Conservation Trust



Conserving Brownfield Biodiversity

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A photograph of a brownfield site. The foreground is filled with tall, thin, yellow-flowered plants, possibly wildflowers or weeds. In the background, a large, dark, industrial-looking building is visible under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is a mix of nature reclaiming a former industrial site.

Brownfield: **A hotbed of biodiversity**

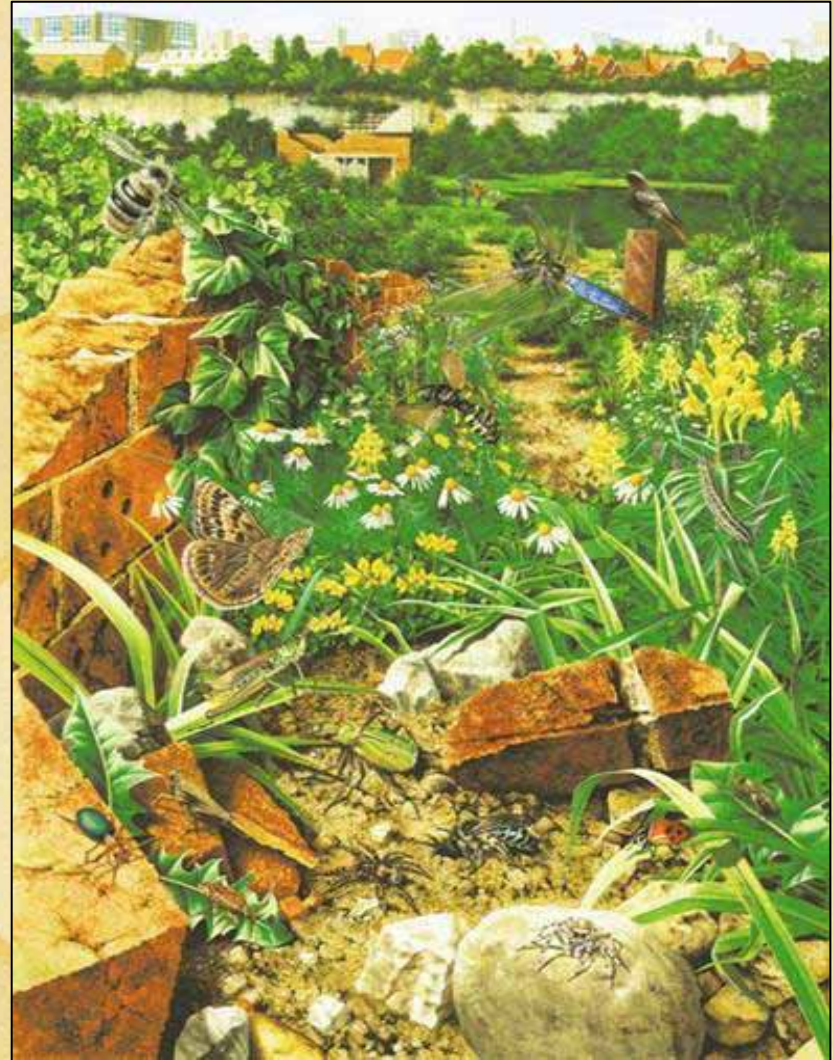
15% of all Red Data Book invertebrates occur on brownfields – **as important a resource as ancient woodlands**

At least 40 invertebrate species are largely or wholly confined to brownfields

As are over 20 of the Government's priority biodiversity species

Why is brownfield so important for wildlife?

- Remnant fragments of classic habitats
- Refuges in a sterile countryside
- Urban islands
- Early successional habitats
- New habitats and associations



Brownfield under threat

- 60% housing target
- Greenbelt protection
- Low awareness
- Lack of information
- No criteria for site protection (SSSIs)
- Public indifference



Going, going, gone

- **Going:** Rate of brownfield development increasing nationally (av 75%)
- **Going:** 2007 report estimated only 5-10 years brownfield supply
- **Gone:** Grays chalk quarry, Barking riverside, Littlebrook Lakes, Shellhaven, Corys Wharf, the Yorkshire coalfields ...

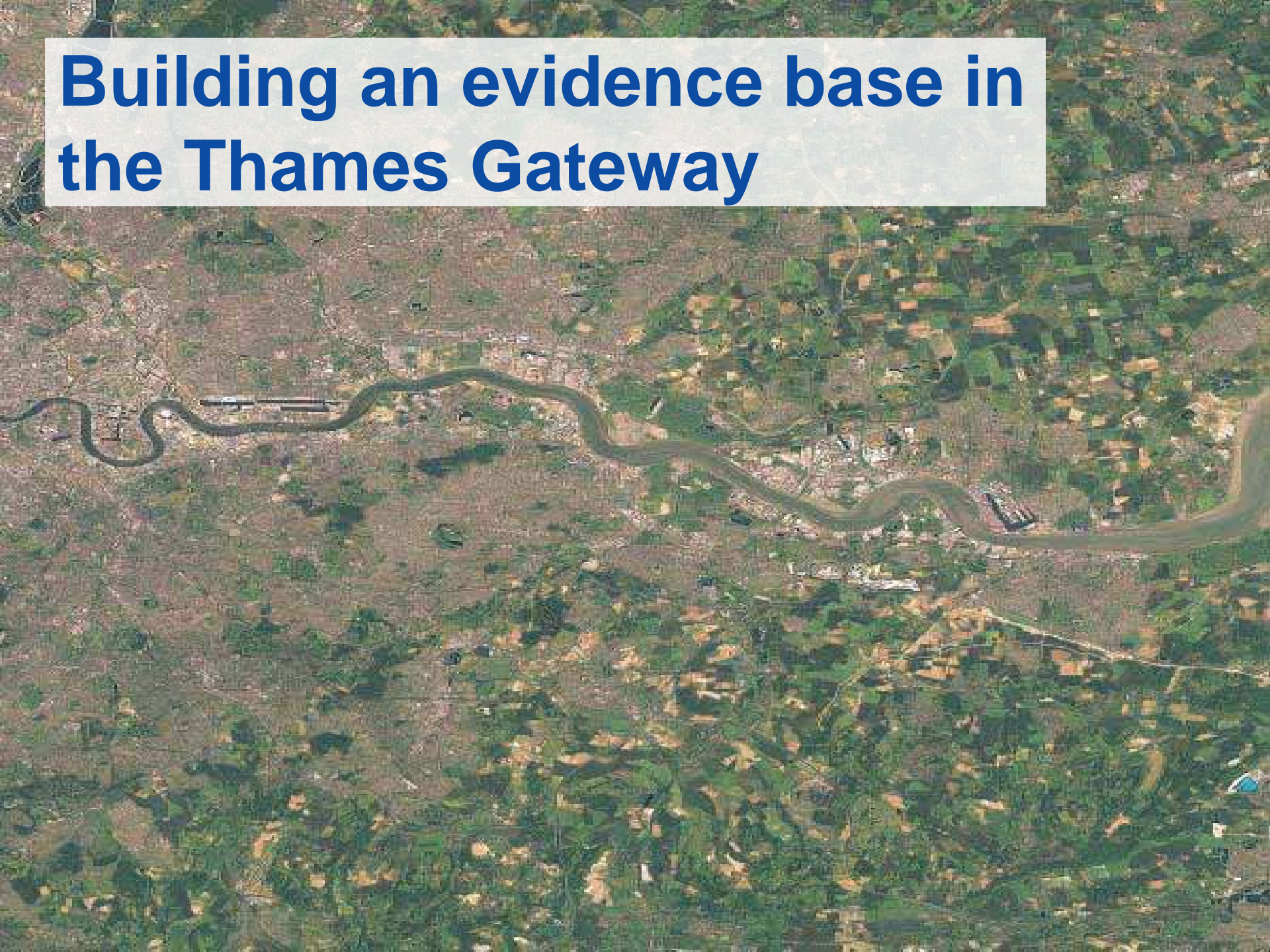
Homeless?



A photograph of a field of purple flowers, likely lupines, in the foreground. In the background, there is a shipping yard with many red and blue shipping containers, and industrial buildings with a tall chimney. The sky is clear and blue. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle in the lower half of the image.

Buglife:
Conserving brownfield
2004-present

Building an evidence base in the Thames Gateway



Achievements



1007 sites mapped

Over 400 sites assessed

55% of land 'high value' for wildlife

Importance of sites at a landscape scale

MAP 2

0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers



Recommendations

- Robust environmental information at an early stage in the planning process
- Protect brownfield sites that are important for their biodiversity, including suitable examples of 'Open Mosaic Habitats'
- New tools needed to assess the ecological quality of brownfield sites
- New developments that incorporate effective habitats for brownfield biodiversity
- Link green infrastructure provision to conservation delivery



Challenges of conserving urban habitats



Case study: West Thurrock Marshes

- 17 UK BAP species
- 36 Red Data Book species
- 2 New to Britain
- 116 Notable
- 352 Local
- In total, 1300 species on 30 hectares



One of the very best sites in the UK for endangered invertebrates

“This is a
stunning site: a
cathedral for
invertebrate life
[...] **the spiders’
York Minster.**”

Simon Barnes, *The
Times*



The future? A giant distribution centre on West Thurrock Marshes



The impacts

- 50% of site destroyed (including 70% of flower-rich grasslands)
- High impacts on 42 rare species, including Government Priority species
- High probability of regional, local and even national extinctions

Thames Gateway PARKLANDS Vision

As part of an overarching programme, the Thames Gateway will deliver a series of parklands that will provide a new green infrastructure for the region. The parklands will be a mix of open spaces, green infrastructure and recreational facilities. The parklands will be a mix of open spaces, green infrastructure and recreational facilities. The parklands will be a mix of open spaces, green infrastructure and recreational facilities.



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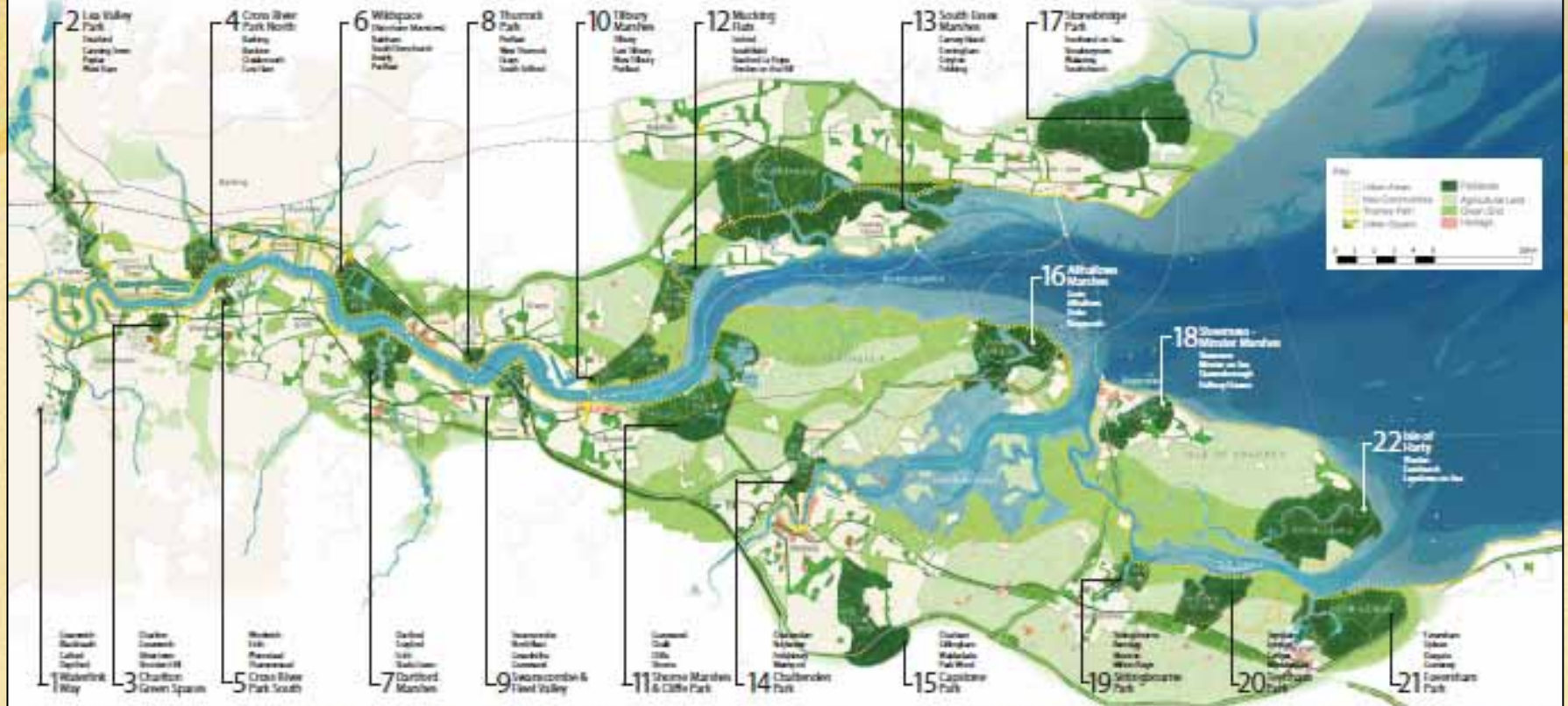


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Shared Vision?

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Buglife's campaign to **Save the Marshes**

- **Petition** – 2,500 signatures
- **Media coverage** – *The Times*, *Guardian*, ITV, Radio 4, local press
- **Meetings** with PM and Biodiversity Minister
- **Early Day Motion** – over 60 MPs from all parties
- **Letters** – Royal Mail, MPs... and the Government



Buglife legal challenge

May 07 – lodge case with the Court

Feb 08 – the case finally comes to High Court

Justice Mitting's verdict:

- Development Corporations are right to prioritise economic dev't – even if this destroys wildlife
- Wildlife protection legislation is '**weak**'
- Impacts of the development '**not significant**' and '**unlikely to cause harm**'

= Development 'acceptable'



Court of Appeal

Grounds:

1. Planning authority failed to consider PPS9 protections
2. Approval in contravention of EIA Regs

Case heard in mid November

Currently awaiting verdict

Public engagement

- Canvey Wick
- Big Bumblebee Hunt
- Posters/leaflets
- Volunteers



Developing the next phase

- Largescale brownfield habitat creation
- Building the evidence base
- Influencing/fixing planning and policy
- More public engagement

Stepping Stones for Wildlife in south Essex

- Restore 45 hectares of brownfield habitats
- New habitats for 20 UK BAP species
- Research into landscape-scale (inc PhD)

National Stepping Stones for Brownfield Wildlife

- Restore 100 hectares of brownfield habitats
- Map and assess brownfield biodiversity in South West, Yorkshire and Teesside

Living roofs for invertebrates

- 7 roofs for wildlife in Greater London
- New habitat for brownfield bugs
- Recycled substrates, wasteland flora



Future priorities

- A leading role in the delivery of Open Mosaic Habitats HAP
- More habitat creation (eg on landfill sites)
- Conserving UK BAP priority species on brownfield
- Greater public involvement in practical brownfield conservation
- Brownfield projects in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Conserving the small things that run the world

