

# Ponds and Lakes Habitat Action Plan

## 1. Introduction

Five habitat types relevant to this Action Plan were included within the UK BAP and subsequently Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006: Aquifer Fed Naturally Fluctuating Water Bodies; Eutrophic Standing Waters; Mesotrophic Lakes; Oligotrophic and Dystrophic Lakes; Ponds.

## 2. Current Status

### 2.1 Description of habitat

The conservation value of ponds and lakes lies in both the role they play in the landscape and cultural heritage of the British Isles and in the high levels of biodiversity a functioning freshwater ecosystem can contain. They are a significant feature in terms of local distinctiveness and in many areas form a parish or village focal point. The value of ponds to wildlife is immense and it has been suggested that a pond supports a greater diversity of species per cubic metre than any other habitat in Britain. A huge variety of invertebrate, plant, amphibian and bird life is dependent on still, enclosed water bodies for part or all of their life cycle. In addition a number of mammal species depend on or use still open water bodies.

The UK's 14,000 lakes can be divided into three categories:

Oligotrophic: usually found on old, hard rocks in upland areas, with naturally very low nutrient levels and supporting only very limited biological production.

Mesotrophic: usually found on softer, more easily eroded rock with naturally low nutrient levels supporting a wide range of plant and animal species including many that are nationally scarce or rare.

Eutrophic: hard calcareous water in lowland areas, with naturally high nutrient levels supporting prolific and often diverse aquatic plants.

Ponds and lakes can also be described ecologically according to their aquatic vegetation composition. Table 1 describes the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities of open water that occur in Worcestershire.

**Table 1. Open water NVC occurring within Worcestershire (Liley, 1999).**

NVC community	Description
A2	<b><i>Lemna minor</i>: Common duckweed.</b> Vegetation community of the water surface or sub-surface, found in moderately-rich to eutrophic standing waters.
A8	<b><i>Nuphar lutea</i>: Yellow Water-lily.</b> One of the rooted water-lily and pondweed communities, found in still or slow-flowing water.
A9a	<b><i>Potamogeton natans</i>: Broad</b>

	fully aquatic or found in water margins or damp grassland.
A15	<b><i>Elodea canadensis</i>: American pondweed.</b> One of the rooted, fully submerged pondweed communities, found in ponds, canals and slow-flowing rivers.
A19	<b><i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>: Common water-crowfoot.</b> One of the communities of rooted pondweeds with floating leaves.

Worcestershire has a variety of pond and lake features, ranging from areas with a





## **Lyppard Grange Ponds SSSI / Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**



**Development**

Housing and infrastructure development often results in the fragmentation and isolation of pond habitats or the outright destruction of ponds. Retaining existing water bodies within new developments has become more accepted in recent

## **Policy and legislation**



**Planning and Development Control** provides opportunities for the creation and management of water

volunteer-

Davies, B. R., Biggs, J., Williams, P. J., Lee, J. T and Thompson, S (2007). *A comparison of the catchment sizes of rivers, streams, ponds, ditches and lakes:*

