

Biodiversity Gatwick Gatwick Airport, West Sussex

JV – Gatwick Airport Ltd, JSA Group and Gatwick Greenspace Partnership

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

Two Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) have been set up to manage the green buffer zones around Gatwick's airfield and other operational infrastructure. It began with two BAPs in 2012 and they have been confirmed up to 2017, with hope to renew the plans every 5 years. Coordinated by Gatwick's Environment Team Leader, an Ecologist for JSA Group and the Wildlife Officers at Gatwick Greenspace Partnership.

The setting is the boundary between urban and rural countryside, land which has been out of use or left as amenity areas. The total areas combined equate to about 75ha.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

The land was abandoned and largely out of use, often planted up indiscriminately as mitigation for projects and developments. Some previous enhancements by Gatwick Greenspace Partnership but little coordination.

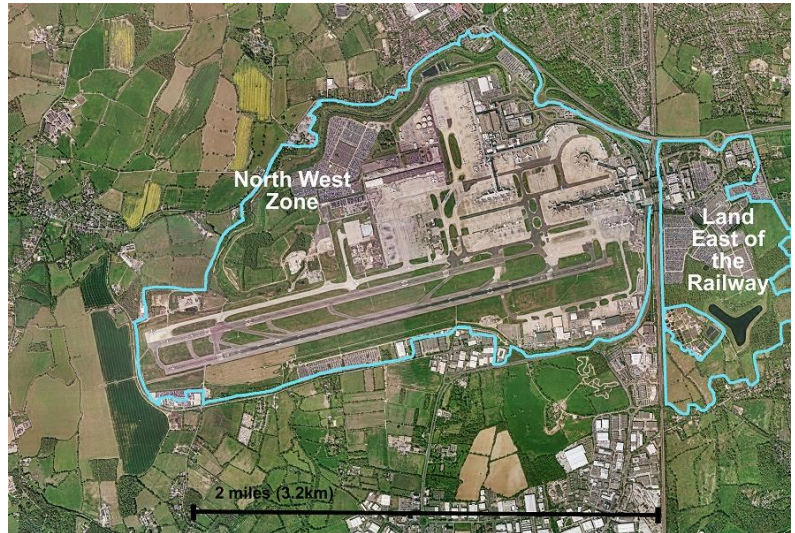


Photo: Gatwick Boundary Map

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

To help Gatwick achieve the Biodiversity Benchmark Award from The Wildlife Trusts.

What biodiversity measures were taken?

The works are managed within two Biodiversity Action Plans, one for Gatwick's North West Zone, the other for the Land East of the Railway Line.

To uphold the business award, biodiversity of the land needs to be maintained and increased where possible. Advice and help sought from local

conservation groups, natural history societies, two Wildlife Trusts and individual industry experts. Local businesses and the community are engaged through the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership, airport staff also volunteering with habitat works, invasive species removal and wildlife surveys and species recording in summer.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information:

The BAPs were first outlined in late 2011 when a biodiversity quarterly

committee was set up for the airport. Habitat works commenced that winter and ecological monitoring began in spring 2012. Since the plans were finalised in 2013, most habitat objectives and targets have been achieved with enhancements for protected species, declining species and wildlife in general. Species records for the sites have been boosted through specialist surveying; past and current records are now centralised in a database with the Biodiversity Records Centres for both Sussex and Surrey.

Local and business awareness of the value of wildlife in these areas has been increased. The project benefited greatly from an in depth ecological review conducted by an Ecology consultancy, which acted as a template to the BAPs.

Writing about the project in a blog also increased project exposure and volunteer interest... biodiversitygatwick.blogpost.co.uk

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Avid wildlife obsessive, studied Zoology at university. The goal was to manage land on a larger scale for wildlife, connecting to a wider landscape.

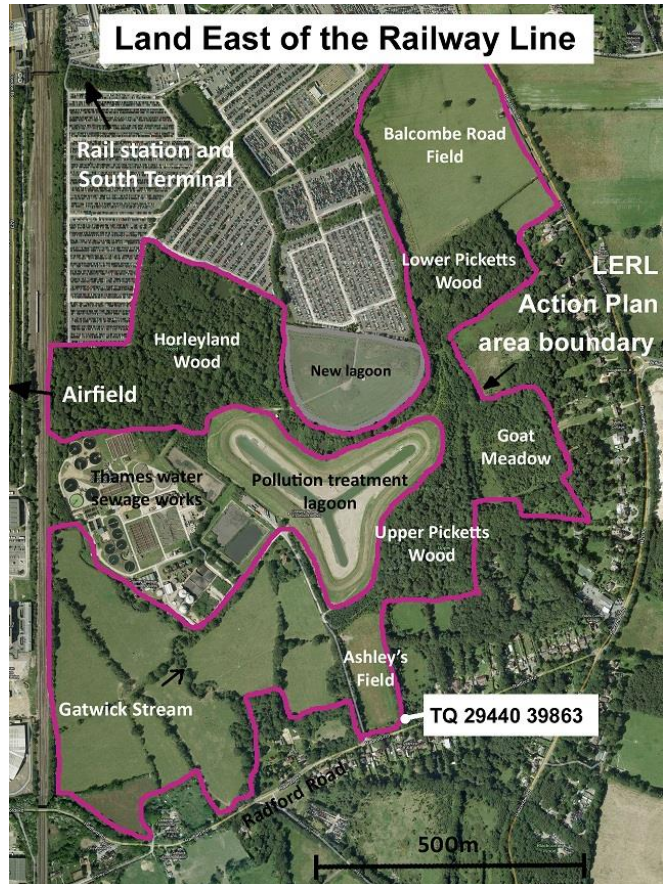


Photo: Land East of the Railway Line BAP boundary



Photo: North West Zone BAP boundary