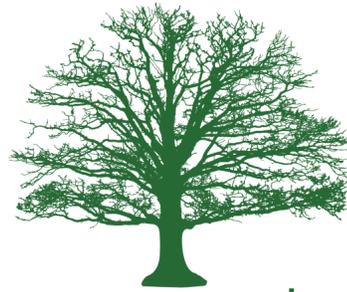


# Ealing Parks Foundation

## Northala Fields

### Nature Activity Trail



This trail will introduce you to some of the wildlife and nature in Northala Fields. We always need to cherish wildlife, because every creature helps improve our local environment- so remember to be gentle with that ladybird. Have fun and come on a journey of discovery!

#### 1 Noisy birds



Northala Fields has many areas of water- fishing lakes, a model boating lake and lots of streams. Head to the shallow boating lake (near the café) and see how many different birds you can spot. There are ducks, moorhens (with red heads and yellow feet), coots (with white beaks), and big white gulls...can you hear noisy Parakeets flying around too? Or see a pair of swans flying overhead? Sit and listen quietly, and count the different bird sounds.

One of the best ways of attracting wildlife into your garden is to build a mini pond. It doesn't have to be big or deep (a buried bucket will do). The water will attract insects, and then other larger animals will come like frogs and newts. Put some plants around the rim, place a log or bricks into the water to act as a bridge so any animal that falls in can get out again.

#### 2 Busy streams

Take a little tray and a small fishing net, and head down to the end of the path from the cafe, towards the stream. When you get to the bridge, stop there and do a bit of pond dipping (fill your tray first with some stream water). See what you can find using your net. In Spring and Summer, you can find tadpoles and newts, water scorpions, leaches and damselfly larvae. Always return your mini beasts to the natural environment they came from, don't take them home. And NEVER pond dip in the fishing lakes, as nets spread disease which can kill the fish. If you want to try out fishing, visit the fishing office by the café.



#### 3 Buzzing wetlands and wildflower meadows

As Northala Fields has many bodies of water, you can find interesting plants in the park. See if you can see water lilies floating on the fishing lakes, and tall structural grasses and reeds in the wetland areas. Then move into the wildflower meadows, and see how many different colours of flowers you can see. Wildflowers are colourful to attract flying insects (so that they get pollinated). Some mini beasts like the Cinnabar moth can only survive on a yellow wildflower (Ragwort, which would make some other animals ill if they ate it). Can you see the wasp-like yellow and black stripey Cinnabar moth caterpillars on any tall yellow wildflowers?



## 4 Wooden insects



If you stand near the bottom of the hill near the café, you will see sculptures of insects carved out of wood. Wood is a natural resource, so although the sculptures won't last forever, they are helping the environment and the soil by breaking down (decomposing) where they are, thereby returning nutrients to the soil. Can you identify which insects they are? One of them spends two years in the water as a larva (baby stage), before emerging as a very large flying insect.

It eats other insects (like butterflies), and will only live a few weeks as a flying adult! Do you think wooden sculptures are better than sculptures made using man made materials (eg plastic, that takes hundreds of years to break down)?

## 5 Mosaic art



After admiring art made out of wood, see if you can spot the damaged mosaic art on the floor by the café? Mosaics are broken pieces of tiles and pottery that have been stuck down (often on concrete). They look beautiful when intact, and are not hard to make. You could make one using torn up paper stuck to card, or ask your adult to carefully smash up a plate (taking care to protect everyone's eyes) and use some PVA glue to make your own mosaic art. The Northala Fields mosaic was created in 2008 by local students. Not much remains now- do you think it looks like the floor of an ancient temple in Rome?

Close your eyes and imagine you are in Italy, and Julius Caesar is in charge of the park. What activities might be going on around you? Perhaps some actors would be performing in an open air amphitheatre. You can too! (See challenge 6)

## 6 Open air theatre



Head to the bottom of the second big hill, and you will see a raised circular area. You can pretend to be an actor and perform a speech to your grown ups- perhaps it can be all about how wonderful wildlife is, and how we need to cherish nature! On the edge of the grass, you will see rocks in a cage, which hold the raised area up. Reptiles love basking on dry rocks, so if it's a sunny day, and you are still, you may spot a lizard sunbathing.

If you do, ask your adult to tell Ealing Wildlife Group about it via social media - sightings of lizards are very rare in Ealing and rocky banks in Northala Fields are the perfect habitat for them.

## 7 Awesome views



Northala's four hills were made from waste removed during the building of the new Wembley stadium and White City shopping centre. Now they are covered in wildflowers, and are helping Ealing's wildlife to thrive- but if you climb to the top of the middle largest hill, you can also enjoy some benefits: a bit of exercise and an incredible view over London. What landmarks can you recognise?

Can you spot the arch over Wembley stadium and The Shard (a tall building in Central London)? Look down over the Park and spot the different areas you have been to- the amphitheatre below, the play area, the fishing lakes. Look up too as you might see some Red Kites (birds that look like small eagles) flying over the hills, looking for their dinner amongst the wildflowers!

## 8 A free workout



Walking in nature is so good for our brains, our mood and our bodies. Try to walk as much as possible every day, and occasionally running and getting hot is good for you too- it teaches your heart and your muscles how to be fitter and move faster when you need to. The Park has a 1km trail around the bottom of the hills, but perhaps you can climb up and down each hill when you visit Northala Fields? You will enjoy the views and feel proud of your achievement at the top of every hill- and the cool breeze at the top will help you feel great. Go for it and get your adult to come with you! Exercise in nature is good for everyone.

## 9 Beautiful berries



In Summer you might spot lots of berries in the park. If you are with an adult, you can pick some blackberries, take them home and wash them before eating or cooking them. Picking 'wild food' (things that grow in public areas) is fun but you must only pick a small amount (enough for your own family, leaving some for others, including the birds- who rely on berries in the winter), and always be sure of what you are picking. Check carefully before you pick - if you eat something poisonous, you can get very ill. And due to pollution you should always wash what you pick before eating.

## 10 Night visitors



Come back at dusk, when the sun has set, and watch out over the fishing lakes, to see the bats dancing over the water and along the tree lined paths. Bats are mammals, like us, and they come out about 10 minutes after sunset, to feed on flying insects (like mosquitos and moths). They will feed regularly during the night, taking breaks in between feeding sessions.

Bats only have one baby a year, and they hibernate over winter in safe dark places (buildings and trees) until it gets warm again in the Spring. So, you will only see them from about March to October. Children can sometimes hear bat sounds. If you have a detector you can hear them flying and eating, but even without one, you will see them flying around as other flying animals go to sleep. But once it gets too dark, you will have to go home, as you won't see them against the sky anymore.

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Nature Activity Trail

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