

6.9. Wetlands

Main Objectives & Key Actions:

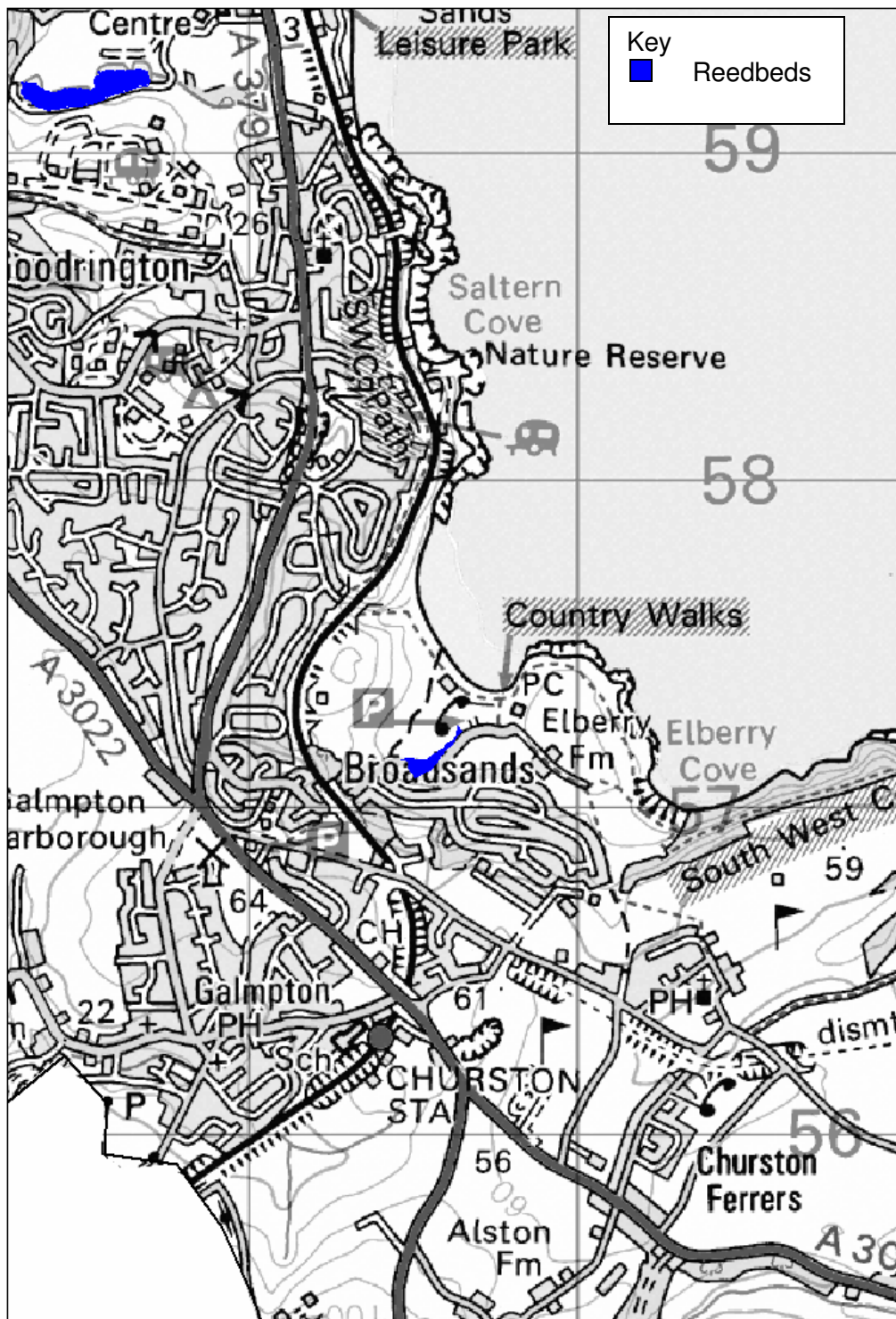
- 1) **Conserve and enhance the existing remnant areas of reedbeds and open water.**
 - Improve designation of sites by 2009.
 - Restore the current resource of reedbeds by 2012.
- 2) **Manage marginal vegetation to create a mosaic of reedbed, areas of scrub and Sallow woodland.**
 - Complete up to date management plans for identified sites by 2012.
- 3) **Manage the sites for key species of conservation concern.**
 - Establish complete list of reedbed key species by 2009.
- 4) **Survey and monitor the areas of reedbeds and associated habitats.**
 - Ongoing.
- 5) **Increase education and awareness of Torbay's wetlands.**
 - Install interpretation boards at Broadsands and Clennon Valley by 2009.

6.9.1 Background and Current Status

The term 'Wetlands' in this action plan refers to reedbeds, open water and ditches. Farmland ponds are included in the Farmland Habitat Action Plan. Reedbeds are a rare and threatened habitat in the UK, with only about 5000 ha in total and provide a habitat for species such as the reed warbler, bittern, Cetti's warbler, water rail, tufted duck and unusual plants and invertebrates.

Although wetlands can only be found in small pockets in Torbay and there are no rivers, some wetland areas have been identified as having considerable wildlife value (Torbay Wildlife Survey, 1991). Reedbeds were once extensive in Torbay with historical sites at Goodrington Sands, Broadsands, Preston, Paignton and Torre Abbey Sands. Broadsands and Clennon ponds now have small areas of remnant reedbeds (*Phragmites australis*), with c 1.5 ha at Broadsands and have been under-managed for a number of years. Figure 8 shows the current areas of reedbeds in Torbay. Torbay's reedbeds are important as a link for bird species between bigger areas of reedbeds outside the Bay at Slapton Sands and the Teign and Exminster Marshes. A bittern has been sighted on the reedbeds at Broadsands.

Clennon Valley ponds are by far the most significant area of open water in Torbay and support interesting aquatic and marginal flora, including extensive stands of Common Reedmace *Typha latifolia* (Torbay Wildlife Survey, 1991) and the most productive breeding population of tufted duck in the county in 2005 (minimum 4 pairs and 5 broods raised). There is also a substantial lake system within Paignton Zoo which is used by native species as well as zoo birds.



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Figure 8: Map showing areas of Reedbeds in Torbay.

The marshland habitat creation at Youngs Park is already proving to be a success with birdlife and with continued management could create a small window into the past showing what the whole of Goodrington would have been like.

Key Species:

Cetti's warbler
 Water rail
 Reed warbler
 Sedge warbler
 Silky wainscot
 Fen wainscot

6.9.2 The current problems/threats to this habitat:

- Inappropriate management leading to scrub dominance and succession to woodland.
- Small, isolated fragments.
- Development pressures
- Trampling
- Coastal defence and urban squeeze.
- Pollution and litter.

Table 12: Wetlands Action Plan. Actions shaded in grey indicate further funding is required. **High priority actions** are proposed for completion within the next 3 years (to end of 2009). **Medium priority actions** are proposed for completion within the next 6 years (to end of 2012). **Low priority actions** are proposed for completion within the next 10 years (to end 2016).

Actions for Wetlands Priority Action Plan	Priority (High, Medium and Low)	Objective	Partners	Ongoing Action
Policy & Legislation				
W1 - Ensure that development schemes do not affect the integrity or conservation of this resource and are considered in planning applications.	H	1	TC, NE	✓
Site Management				
W2 - Control Japanese Knotweed at Clennon Valley.	H	1,2,3	TC	✓
W3 - Draw up plans on cutting techniques and regime.	M	1,2,4	TC, TCCT, NE	
W4 - Control scrub and willow carr by cutting and extraction of stumps.	M	1,2,4	TC, TCCT	
W5 - Draw up a management plan	H	1,2,4	TCCT	

for the area of willow carr at Broadsands.				
W6 - Control bulrush to allow regeneration of phragmites.	M	1,2,4	TC, TCCT	
W7 - Plant phragmites rhizome at Youngs Park	M	1,2,4	TC	
W8 - Maintain, continue flow within the natural water courses.	H	1	TC	✓
Communication & Publicity				
W9 – Install a board walk at Clennon and Broadsands.	L	5	TCCT, TC	
W10 - Increase interpretation and consider options for environmental education at sites.	L	5	TCCT, TC	
W11 - Involve voluntary groups in the local area to help with management.	M	1,5	TCCT, TC	✓
Research & Monitoring				
W12 - Re-survey to look into promoting Broadsands marsh from a LWS to a CWS.	H	4	TCCT, DBRC, NE	
W13 - Monitor areas of Japanese Knotweed	H	1,2,3	TC	✓
W14 - Determine areas where past ponds existed.	L	4	TCCT, TC	
W15 - Establish a list of species of key conservation concern.	M	3,4	TCCT, DBPS	
W16 - Map distribution and condition of the Phragmites.	M	1,2,4	TCCT, TC	
W17 - Conduct standard surveys for invertebrate, bird and plant species.	M	4	TCCT, TC, DBWPS, PZ	
W18 - Survey the area covered by willow carr and monitor the regeneration of the reed.	H	4	TCCT, TC	

Abbreviations: Torbay Coast & Countryside (TCCT), Torbay Council (TC), Natural England (NE), Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society (DBWPS), Paignton Zoo.