



## The changing Landscape of Bedford River Valley Park

A Habitat is the environment in which any living organism is found. And where it finds all it needs to survive. The map of the Grange Estate shows the main different habitats found in this part of the Bedford River Valley Park. Can you list the main habitats of the Grange Estate below?



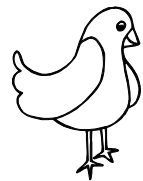

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Do you think these habitats always stay the same?

Can you think of a way in which one of these habitats may change over time? For example, trees growing or a pond being made bigger.

Here is a list of some possible changes to different habitats. Can you decide if they are *natural* or *man made* changes? Use a tally chart to mark in the boxes when you decide

- New hedges are planted alongside a cycle route to stop people disturbing birds nearby
- Hazel trees in the grange estate will be coppiced (cut to ground level) to encourage new growth.
- New trees will be planted by volunteers in the park 
- Land next to the river sometimes floods to make a shallow wetland habitat
- A new lake is created after more sand and gravel has been removed
- A grassland area is worn away when too many people walk over it 
- Small bushes and trees begin to grow creating shade so the grass cannot grow
- Dandelion seeds blow onto a patch of earth and germinate so young plants begin to grow 

Natural changes

Changes made by humans

The Grange Estate is changing all the time as it is improved for people and wildlife. Paths and bridges will be built, ditches dug and trees planted. Trees and bushes in some places may be cut down to allow more light in an let other plants grow. In some parts of the estate the grass will be kept short by grazing animals and in others the grass will be allowed to grow long for insects and for flowers. Hedges may be planted along paths so that visitors do not disturb birds and mounds of earth will be built around pools to encourage wading bird species to visit.



### Suggestions for work:

- Identify features in a familiar environment that are man made and those which are natural.
- Choose an area of the Estate to draw now and then create a second drawing of the same area in 10 year time. How does it differ? Is it possible to identify **man made changes and natural influences**?
- Discuss the habitat map for the Grange Estate, part of the River Valley Park, and the different plants and animals that may be found in them.
- Introduce the term **Conservation** to discussions and talk about how we should respect animals and the environment. Ask the group to consider implications of a lack of respect.
- Encourage research of habitats under threat, **endangered species** and action that can be take to help.
- Design a poster to encourage others to protect the environment or a particular habitat or species.