

Grade 1 Walk European Eels

Go along Embankment Road towards Dartmouth, cross at the Zebra crossing and go into the park by the Cafe

Watch the Zoology Society of London video.

https://youtu.be/WBRnNk_uo9Yh

and enjoy the eels' story as well as the neat way of making the video.



European Eels are a critically endangered species and need protection from humans- not just for their own sake but for the many species that live on them.

The Recreation ground used to be a mill pond for a tidal mill and so was then part of the estuary. A brook (Washa Brook?) runs into it from just below Ledstone.

Eelers seek out fresh water streams and so will nowadays enter Washa Brook via its outlet pipe to the Estuary. Many will find their way to the wetlands below and above Washabrook Mill.

Some will be swept into the pond at high tides (above 4.4m) when it takes in water from the estuary, through the underground pipework. There is a route out of the pond via the grill but many develop in the pond as far as the Silver Eel stage. We have found dozens each year, whilst emptying the pond prior to Kingsbridge in Bloom judging.



This emptying might be an important step to letting the silver eels return to the Sargasso sea, as finding the outlet may not be straightforward. If this process is continued, the pond is certainly an important and safe habitat for European Eels to develop to Silver Eels - the final stage before migration.

Walk through the park and note as approaching the far entrance, the stream on the right .

This brook now reaches the estuary via a culvert and has come from Washbrook. The culvert might be what persuades the Otters, that have been seen passing through Breakspeare Garden, to head up to the hedge above.

Follow the stream over the lane and through the Industrial Estate to the beginning of the Community Field.

Above here is secluded wet-land and a good fresh-water developing ground for eels. It might now be home to Otters, who probably enjoy the presence of eels (and ducklings?)



Return via Derby Road