

Bird Barges on the Thames



You may have wondered about the four barges moored parallel to the park. They were positioned there in 2002 to compensate for the loss of bird habitat from the Riverside Quarter development.

There are a number of different features on the barges to appeal to different birds. The tall posts around the edges are key places for herons and cormorants to stand. These are the easiest birds to spot - herons “loafing” apparently idle while they digest food. The corrugated roofs provide replica roost sites for lesser black-backed gulls whilst the nest boxes around the edges are aimed to attract kingfishers and sand martins.

Pools on two of the barges hold rainwater - a place for birds to drink and bathe. The western-most barge is flatter and holds shingle and sand to appeal to terns and waders. This habitat is also of interest to black redstarts (a scarce breeding species) to forage and nest.

Planters filled with nectar-rich species encourage invertebrates which act as a food source for many birds, including the black redstarts.

Interested in monitoring the birds? Please send sightings to Greenspace Information for Greater London at <https://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-a-record/>