



FLORA AND FAUNA OF EPPING FOREST

Habitats in Epping Forest: Ponds and Streams

Almost all of the ponds in Epping Forest are a result of human activity. Years ago, people dug gravel out of the ground and left large holes behind that gradually filled with water.

First plants arrive, followed by herbivores then the carnivores. In most of the ponds in the forest there are only living things which can get there by themselves, arriving by wind, being able to fly, crawl or even having caught a ride on the feet of a duck or a heron!



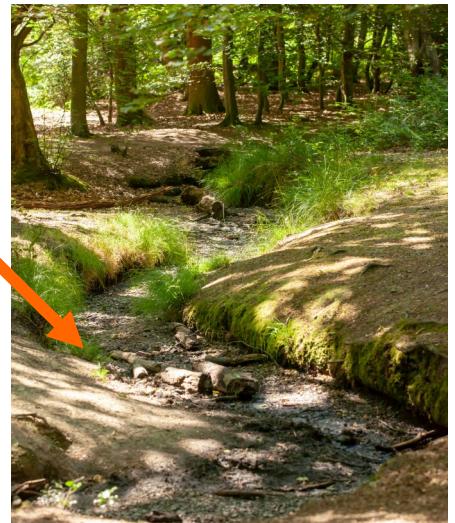
Smooth newts from one of the Suntrap ponds.

Some animals live in the ponds all year, like the water hoglouse. Others come to the pond to lay their eggs, but spend the rest of their time out of water. In spring, we find young invertebrates like dragonfly nymphs and vertebrates like newt tadpoles in our Suntrap ponds.

The streams in Epping Forest are created as rainwater erodes the soil and rock as it moves downhill to the lowest point. As the gradient flattens out, the water creates stream bends (called 'meanders'). **Have you seen any meanders in Epping Forest?**

In comparison to ponds in the forest, streams are colonised by different plants and animals as they have to be adapted to survive in faster flowing water.

In the stream next to Suntrap there are few freshwater animals as it is seasonal and dries up in the summer months.



Both of these freshwater habitats are a vital source of water for animals. They are also a fantastic place to spot wildlife, particularly bats and snakes who go there to hunt for food. **Come along to one of our [family pond dipping events](#) to find out what lives in our pond.**