



WHAT DO WATER VOLES NEED?

- Water in the channel or pond all year
- Steep soft earthy banks for burrowing
- Lots of food available even in winter
- Plants on the banks to protect from predators
- No American Mink in the vicinity
- Quiet waterways with little human / dog activity
- No rats
- Gentle management of the banks

GOOD HABITAT

- Vegetated banks at least 6 metres wide on both sides of the waterway from the water's edge
- A good variety of riparian plant species that offer food year round
- Mature plant growth that has died back and grow up - creating vegetation structure that water voles can use to hide .
- Connectivity with other waterways
- Clean water with no pollutants
- A steady water level that changes very little
- Few trees or bramble shading the channel
- Open clear water, at least in parts



POOR HABITAT

- Canalised banks - no burrowing opportunities
- Pollution and litter in the water & on the banks
- Flooding and drought of the water channel
- Willow and bramble dominated banks causing significant shading
- Repeatedly cut vegetation on one bank and cuttings left on bank
- Bare, tightly mown and unvegetated banks
- Duck / game bird feeding nearby

MAIN THREATS



Fly tipping



Shading



Invasive non native plants

WATER VOLE HABITAT MANAGEMENT



HABITAT CREATION (new ponds & channels)

- Ensure that any new habitat is connected to the wetland network
- Create banks that are stepped and steep
- Curve the line of the banks to offer microclimates
- Have some deep areas in the pond or waterway and create islands if the site allows.
- Plant up with native riparian and bankside wildflowers, using coir rolls if funding allows
- Create a steeper bankside to offer an escape from flooding

HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

- After carrying out a water vole survey to inform the work, deepen the channel if needed
- Cut back any overhanging trees, after checking for Tree Preservation Orders and bat roosts
- Manage any bramble and prevent from crossing the water
- Use cut material to create a dead hedge around the site
- Add wildflower seeds to the banks, plant plugs in coir rolls on the water's edge and native trees nearby.



ONGOING ANNUAL HABITAT MANAGEMENT

- Litter picking
- Cutting back bramble from the waterway
- Removing some of the overhanging tree branches
- Gentle trimming of the vegetation on some sections of the bank
- Put the cut vegetation into a dead hedge on the site, avoid having a fire
- Dig out Hemlock Water Dropwort roots, take care as all parts poisonous including sap

