



Biodiversity

Teffont is fortunate in that it still has a wide diversity of species and varied habitats, although there have been stresses and losses. The chalk downs, valley and stream, the high-sided many wooded hills, the fields, meadows, broad, mixed hedgerows, green lanes and many different types of soil make a wonderful environment for nature to flourish.

Teffont has two Statutory Wildlife Sites: the first significant for its geology, the second for bats. Both are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the second is also a Special Area of Conservation. There are six Non-Statutory Wildlife Sites, termed 'County Wildlife Sites', three of botanic interest, two Areas of Ancient Woodland and one Woodland Site. Teffont has legally protected species, UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and Red and Amber List birds of conservation concern. The River Nadder is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest and part of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation.

Grassland

The three botanic sites important for their plant diversity are part of only two percent of multi-species grassland typical of old meadows and pastures remaining in Britain. Both churchyards, their graveyards and Village Hall grasslands have been surveyed and are plant-rich. There are many sites including hillsides, gardens and roadside verges that have not as yet been surveyed but look promising, and some villagers allow areas of their 'lawns' and verges to grow and flower.

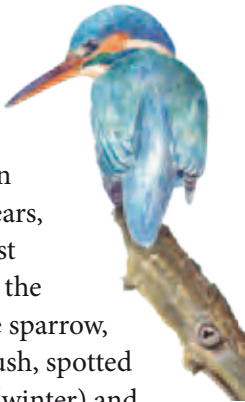
Three Teffont farms have planted field margins, one with a wildflower and grass mix, leading to greater plant diversity and new habitat for insects, mammals and birds. The other two farms have opted for a grass mix which also benefits wildlife.

Birds

Of the more than fifty bird species that have been noted in the Parish over the past few years, there are eleven on the Red List of high conservation concern: the bullfinch, corn bunting, house sparrow, linnet, quail, skylark, song thrush, spotted flycatcher, starling, willow tit (winter) and yellowhammer.

Twenty are on the Amber List Species of medium conservation concern: the barn owl, dunnoek, fieldfare (winter), goldcrest, green woodpecker, grey wagtail, house martin, kestrel, kingfisher, lapwing, little egret, mistle thrush, mute swan, redwing (winter), snipe, stonechat, swallow, willow warbler, wood warbler and woodcock.

There are no longer any nightingales and nightjars as in former times and in recent years the cuckoo has only been heard for a few days in springtime. There is one site in Teffont where grey wagtails have been recorded nesting for a hundred years.



Mammals

Of legally protected species there are watervoles, badgers and bats. Otters are now seen again along the River Nadder and have even been spotted at Teffont's water-meadow in the centre of the village. Of UK Biodiversity Action Plan species we have brown hares and hedgehogs.

Other mammals include: roe deer, foxes, rabbits, grey squirrels, stoats, weasels, bank voles, shrews, pygmy shrews, wood mice, house mice and brown rats.



The Chilmark Quarries Special Area of Conservation, part of which falls within Teffont, is of major importance for bats. This is a statutory wildlife site with European-level protection. More or less all British bats are represented, with eleven recorded species. The serotine and pipistrelle are known to roost within the Village. Along with the greater horseshoe bat, they are common sights throughout the village.

Teffont is lucky in that we still have watervoles along the stream, as there has been a drastic decline in their numbers nationally. Until recently, only their habitats and places of shelter have had legal protection. However, since April 2008, it has also become an offence to kill or injure them. The Water for Wildlife Project Officer at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust can give advice to owners of bankside properties if required.

Reptiles

Of legally protected reptiles there are adders, grass snakes and slow-worms.

Amphibians

In recent years, the legally protected greater crested newt was discovered in a garden pond. There are common toads (UK Biodiversity Action Plan) and also frogs.



Fish and Crustaceans

Brown trout (UK Biodiversity Action Plan), bullheads, and freshwater shrimps live in the stream. There was an official recording of the legally protected native crayfish in the 1990's.

Insects

Some years ago a site in Teffont had a professional assessment of butterfly habitat, when sixteen butterfly species were recorded. In addition some species of moths, wasps, clegs, soldier beetles, weevil and bumblebees were noted.

Teffont generally would seem to have a very healthy population of bumblebees. Wasps and hornets nest in the Village. There are dragonflies, damselflies, crickets, glow-worms and grasshoppers and other species too numerous to name.



Woods, Hedgerows and Trees

The Parish has two Non-Statutory Sites of Ancient Woodland and one Woodland Site, and large areas of Teffont's woodland are managed for timber, conifer and broadleaf. Some of the hedgerows along green lanes, footpaths and tracks may be of some antiquity. For example, alongside one of the lanes the tiny clocktower plant was spotted, an indicator of Ancient Woodland. Pollarded ash trees of great girth, large oaks, field maple, hawthorn, hazel, elder and beech can all be found. The flora of the woods and hedgerows include bluebells, wood anemones, violets, primroses, celandine, foxgloves and ferns.



Illustrations and photographs Top left clockwise: Little Egret, Kingfisher, Water Vole, Freshwater shrimp, Mayfly, Comma butterfly and Yellow wagtail.





One farm in Evias has, in recent years, been planting extensive mixed native hedgerows, creating wildlife corridors and links between existing woodland and hedgerows. Another farm has been gap-filling hedgerows and replanting longer stretches. A large arable farm in Magna has planted about a mile of new native hedging. The Village Hall Committee planted a native hedge some years ago that is now well established.

Tree Preservation Orders exist on the lime trees on the east side of The Street opposite Fitz House.

Springs, Stream, Ponds and Lakes

Chalk streams are recognised as a key habitat type and are listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Teffont's stream, with its sensitive ecosystem, is an intrinsic, vital part of the village.

Apart from its major spring source at Springhead, small springlines enter the stream along its course. Much of the stream flows within an artificial channel of stone walls. However, the pond near the stream's source, (originally created for washing sheep) has natural banks, as does the Village Green by Magna church, the water meadow and the Manor parkland in Evias, where on-stream lakes were created. Beyond this point it then falls to the river Nadder below.

There are a number of ponds throughout the village, from small ones in gardens to large fishing ponds. Two new settlement ponds

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were created at Manor Farm in Teffont Magna after the last serious flood in 1999. The large pond and its ditch running through the pasture towards the stream have created a whole new area of benefit to wildlife, enjoyed by insects, amphibians, fish, watervoles and herons.

A River Corridor Survey of the Teffont stream was published in 1996. Further to this a hydrological study was undertaken and consequently the Environment Agency

published a leaflet entitled The Teffont Stream: 'How you can help your local river', which is available in the village. This gives guidance on how to achieve good management, through balancing the need to minimise flood risk with care for the stream's ecology. A summary of some of the main points is made below.

Stream management

The submergent plant that grows in the stream is water-crowfoot, which is the basis of the distinctive plant and animal communities of chalk streams, and one of the reasons they are so special. Good management recommends that weed is cut away from the entrances and outflows

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of bridges and culverts. Thereafter the recommendation is to cut winding channels, so the water can flow as fast as possible, while still providing the conditions for wildlife to thrive, leaving 30% of weed as cover for wildlife at all times.

Where possible it is important to keep a fringe of bankside plants. Ideally stone banks should be uncemented to allow springs and water to drain, and provide crevices for wildlife. Where new planting of trees near the stream is considered, native deciduous trees are recommended, ie., hazel, ash, field maple, hawthorn and blackthorn.



Below left clockwise:
The Stream; bluebells in a Teffont wood;
; Watervole; Water Crowfoot.

