

# Ecology, wildlife and wetland habitats



The woodland areas in Morden Park encourage many different types of invertebrates – beetles, spiders, butterflies and moths, and many other types of creepy crawlies. These all play an important role in the food chains that support the larger wildlife – the birds and any mammals that you might see.

Beetles, butterflies and moths are easy to spot, although if you carefully forage in the undergrowth and under stones and wood, you may also find woodlice and spiders.

**Remember** to be careful though, and always replace any cover that you move... it might be a home!



Meadow Brown



Common Blue

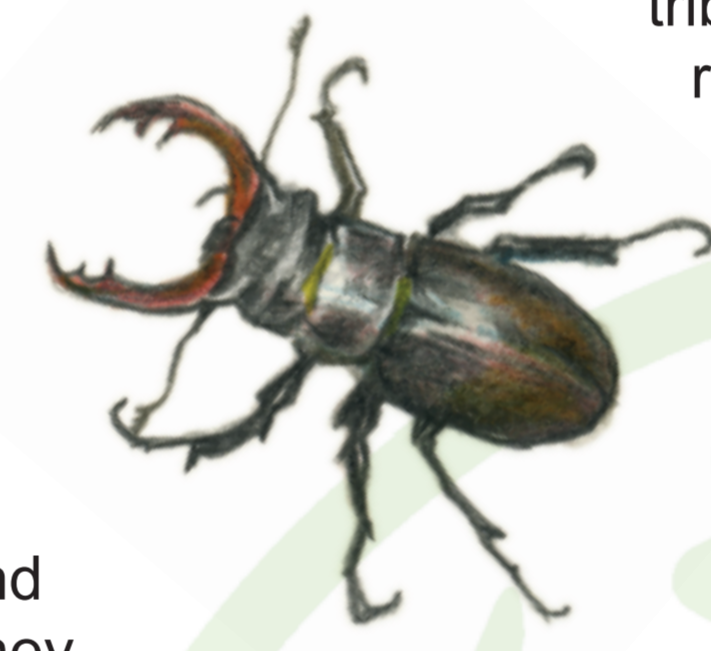


Hedgehog

One of the most striking of all the parks residents is the stag beetle. If you are lucky, you may see them flying at dusk during the warmer summer months.

**Look out for the males with their enlarged “antlers”...**

These are actually their mandibles (mouthparts) and although they look fierce they are not strong enough for biting. In fact, the smaller female beetle, which lacks the impressive antlers, has a worse bite! Male stag beetles sometimes fight each other by locking their antlers together.



Stag Beetle

For more information on Morden Park visit [www.merton.gov.uk/mordenpark](http://www.merton.gov.uk/mordenpark)

At the bottom South East corner of the park is an area of wetland caused by a small stream. The stream, known as Beverley Brook, is a tributary of the River Thames. During heavy rain it can overflow onto the surrounding grassy floodplain, creating valuable wetland habitats, which support a variety of invertebrates and is also one of the few places in London where you will find the sharp-flowered rush (*Juncus acutiflora*).

In the 1970s Morden Park was one of the first in London to allow grass to grow during the summer. The change in mowing regime allows wild flowers to grow and effectively create a hay meadow. This practice continues to this day for its attractiveness to people and wildlife.



Sharp-flowered Rush

