



1

KESTREL

MEET THE WETLANDS' DEADLIEST ANIMALS!



2

DRAGONFLIES



3

BATS



DEADLY 60 presenter Steve Backshall is impressed by the amount of wildlife found in Woodberry Wetlands. He says: "Believe it or not, there are actually plenty of deadly animals here, in Hackney."

"My number one would be the kestrel, a relatively small falcon, but it's an expert at hovering, before diving down to catch small mammals, like voles, on the ground."

"Next up would be dragonflies,

particularly the big ones, the Hawkers. Emperor dragonflies are some of the ultimate predators – they've been around for a very, very long time.

"They have extraordinary compound eyes, are experts at zooming through these reed beds, and over the surface of the water, hunting other insects on the wing."

"And then number three would be the bats. So right here we have the Noctule bats, the Pipistrelle and the Daubentons."

"Daubentons are experts at hunting over the surface of the water for flying insects."

"They are always making little sounds, many of which we can't hear. This is echolocation, a way of identifying their prey using sound – a true deadly super skill."

"So those deadly beasts are just a handful of the amazing natural wonders you can find right here. A surprising amount that live right in the city. So get out there and explore!" ➤

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Hackney pupils joined 'Deadly 60' presenter Steve Backshall to open a nature play area in Woodberry Wetlands. Their verdict?

It's dead good!



STEVE Backshall joined the London Wildlife Trust at Hackney's Woodberry Wetlands to open a new children's natural play area.

The Championing Nature ambassador welcomed children from Holmleigh Primary School, N16, to explore the space for the first time during an outdoor learning session last month.

Steve says: "This is a sanctuary. It is a haven in the middle of a city surrounded by all these housing blocks, and an incredible resource for every single one of you.

"It is a place where you can come and experience nature, have a little bit of peace, and enjoy nature at its very best."

The new play area has transformed an underused space by the reservoir's east entrance into an environment designed to encourage nature-based play.

Children climb on and through a large, hollowed-out chestnut tree and take their turns on the balance beam and stepping logs.

Others look through the microscopes dotted throughout the playground. One child excitedly shouts: "I've found a centipede!" Another replies: "No, that's a woodlouse."

David Mooney, CEO of London Wildlife Trust, explains: "Eighteen years ago this reservoir was fenced, with barbed wire and keep out signs.

The estate was rundown with antisocial behaviour.

"There's hope and joy in the visceral connection with nature on your doorstep. It improves your mental health and wellbeing and your outlook on life.

"Woodberry Wetlands is an oasis. There are more species coming here every summer. This space had little nature before – it was a barren landscape."

The new playground was supported by The All England Lawn Tennis Club and Emirates. ➤

Photographs:

Main: Deadly 60's Steve Backshall and David Mooney, CEO of London Wildlife Trust, opened the children's natural play area at Woodberry Wetlands. Children from Holmleigh Primary School joined in

Photos: AELTC/ Andrew Baker

➤ For more information on the London Wildlife Trust, visit: wildlondon.org.uk