

Reedbed Creation & Restoration



Reedbeds are wetland habitats dominated by Common Reed, where the water table is at or above ground level for most of the year.

Larger reedbeds can provide vital habitat for rare bird species such as Marsh Harriers and Bitterns, but small reedbeds can also be of great value to a range of uncommon insect and bird communities.

In addition to their biodiversity benefits, reedbeds can also be used as water filtration and purification facilities.

Reedbed Creation

Key Requirements

Reedbeds can be created in a variety of locations, as long as there is:

- A reliable water supply that will maintain flow and up to 300mm of water depth in spring
- Generally flat or very gently sloping ground
- An available source of reed, ideally natural, but adult plants and seedlings can be planted
- Access to allow management

Land Forming and Establishment

In order to create a reedbed, it will probably be necessary to install some water management infrastructure, such as bunds or weirs. This may require consent from the Environment Agency/IDB.

Allowing natural expansion of an existing source of reed is the cheapest option for establishing the bed. If this is not possible, then planting of locally sourced reed or seedlings is an alternative.

During the establishment phase, precise control of the water levels will be required to promote establishment and discourage competition.

Reedbed Restoration

Management Changes

To restore a reedbed, changes in management are usually the best way to bring about improvements. These can include:

- Raising of water levels and creation of open water areas to discourage competing plant species
- Removal of scrub and accumulated leaf litter
- Implementing a regular cutting regime – this can have the benefit of producing a marketable crop
- Introducing controlled grazing, particularly by hardy native species of cattle and sheep
- Creation of a varied mosaic of reed heights and densities, with different areas connected by habitat corridors and other features allowing movement of species around the reedbed



For further information please contact: