

# Introduction

Well-planned developments next to our estuaries can create better places to live and work.

When reconstructing or refurbishing the banks of an estuary, your project should include features that support wildlife, improve public access, and educate people about the importance of protecting the environment.

Replacing grey sheet piling with lush colourful plants and swards of reed stems rustling in the wind add significantly to the waterside experience.

The natural habitats of our estuaries are often missing, especially in urban areas. For example, in the Thames Estuary only around 2% of the tidal banks are now natural in profile. The absence of the soft edges – where wildlife is most abundant – impacts on the ecological recovery of our rivers and estuaries.

Improving lengths of estuary habitat can restore nursery areas for commercially sought fish, such as Sea Bass. It can also benefit recreationally important fish such as Dace and Roach. By seeking refuge in the margins during the flooding tide, juvenile freshwater and marine fish are safer from predators and can feed on the aquatic insects that are abundant in the plants and mudflats.



Reed Warbler in reed bed



A Sea Bass