

Reed work helping to protect wildlife

by Amanda Smith

ONE of the UK's scarcest habitats is being protected by conservationists to help hundreds of species to thrive.

Volunteers used the latest techniques to plant and protect reed beds at Moses Gate Country Park in Farnworth.

The reed beds have become increasingly rare, with only about 5,000 hectares remaining in the UK. They provide a home for different species, including 700 types of invertebrates, amphibians and birds.

Reed beds are also a green and effective way of purifying water and improving water quality.

Bolton Conservation Volunteers were behind the latest action to protect the environment.

They visited the country park to use a new method of planting to stop the beds being damaged by swans and Canada geese.



VOLUNTEERS: Back from left, Fred Lovell and Jim Cookson. Front: Gill Whelan, Francis Williams and chairman Rick Parker

The technique involves planting reeds in special wire-mesh cages with closable lids.

Rick Parker, Bolton Conservation Volunteers chairman, said: "The geese love to eat the young shoots

and this stops them from doing that.

"The reeds are able to grow through the gaps in the mesh and the geese are less interested when they are longer."

He said the event was

helping to protect a vital environmental resource

"We had 12 volunteers taking part and it went really well," he added.

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