

## Stocker's Lake Self-guided Walk - Summer

Stocker's Lake is a large and attractive lake in the Colne Valley. The lake is owned by Affinity Water and managed by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, with help from the Friends of Stocker's Lake. As you enjoy this self-guided walk, look out for herons flying to and from their nests. Stocker's Lake is home to the largest heronry in Hertfordshire. Little egrets also nest around the herons, using them as protection from predators.

Follow the route on the map overleaf, using the instructions below as a guide.

- A.** As you look over Stocker's Lake from the viewpoint, try spot some nesting birds: like **black headed gulls**, and if you're lucky, a **common tern** who migrate to this important wetland to feed and breed. Listen for the 'churring' song of **reed warblers** in the reeds behind you.
- B.** Recent work by the Trust to create ponds and ditches in this area is benefitting wildlife, including dragonflies, wetland plants, bats and water voles. This will also provide a place for children to pond dip. Cattle are grazing the riverside meadows here to encourage a range of meadow species to thrive.
- C.** Can you spot some ducks? **Tufted ducks** are common here, as are **pochard** and **gadwall**. Listen for warblers in the marginal reeds and seek out **large red and common blue damselflies** flying over the shallows.
- D.** The River Colne is on your right. **Kingfishers** fly along this stretch of the Colne, hunting small fish. Moorhens nest in the riverside vegetation. If you are extremely lucky you might spot an **otter!**
- E.** This is a great place to view Stocker's Lake. Migrant birds like **swifts** can be seen, with their sickle shaped wings and aerobatic flight, you might be able to hear their 'screaming' calls. – They spend most of their time in flight, feeding, sleeping and even mating on the wing! **Swallows**, with their long tail feathers can also be seen feeding over the Lake.
- F.** Wet-woodland is an important habitat for lots of wildlife. This area is home to unusual plants and bird species that have suffered declines in number. The Trust are maintaining this wet-wonderland for these special plants and animals. **Treecreepers** and rare **lesser-spotted woodpeckers** may be foraging on the large **alder** trees.
- G.** Along the sunny paths, try to spot **orange tip butterflies**. They might be feeding on their food plant – **garlic mustard**. Can you see any **red campion** flowering?
- H.** While on the boardwalk, listen for bird song. You could hear **chiffchaffs** (they sing their name), **blackcaps** (these have a lovely melodic song and make a hard 'tac' call) and **garden warblers** vocalising from within vegetation.

- I. After passing through the gate, look over the grassland. This is maintained by the Trust to provide resource to all manner of wildlife, including butterflies (and their caterpillars), moths, beetles, spiders and small mammals. To the left of the path on an island, you will see a kingfisher nesting bank. They may choose to nest here in future years, so be sure to come back!

**Find out more about Stocker's Lake and your local wildlife by visiting:**

**[hertswildlifetrust.org.uk](http://hertswildlifetrust.org.uk)**



**Black headed gull**



**Common tern**



**Reed warbler**



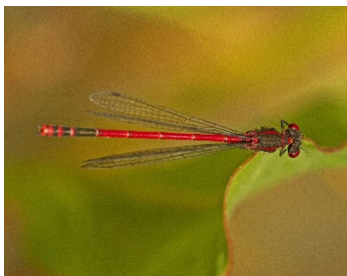
**Tufted ducks**



**Pochard**



**Gadwall**



**Large red damselfly**



**Common blue damselfly**



**Kingfisher**

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**Otter**



**Swift**



**Swallow**



**Lesser-spotted woodpecker**



**Treecreeper**



**Alder**



**Orange tip butterfly**



**Garlic mustard**



**Red campion**



**Chiffchaff**



**Blackcap**



**Garden warbler**

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