

Waltham Brooks

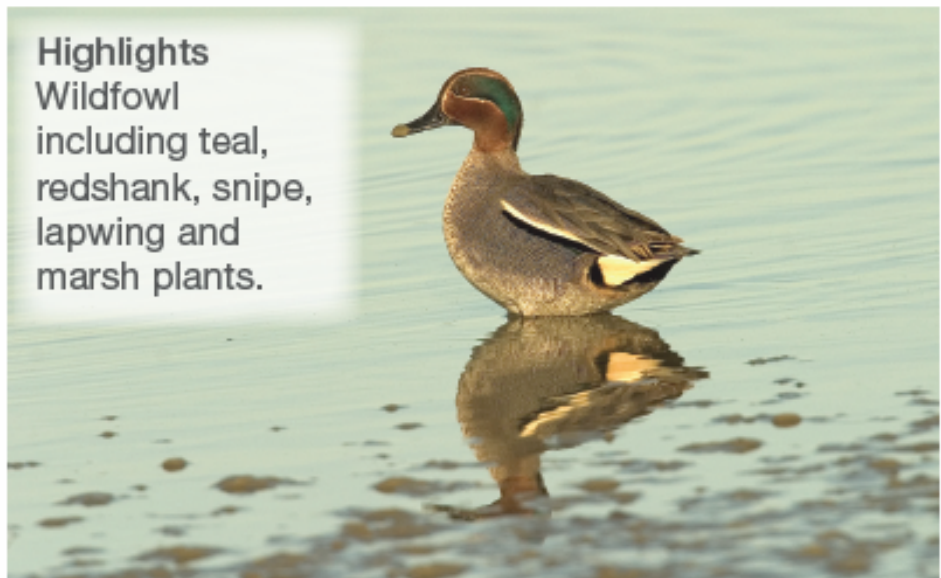
**Grazing marsh with a large open water area
important for birds**

Almost opposite our extensive reserve at Amberley Wildbrooks, just across the river, lies Waltham Brooks. Sadly the river banks of the Arun floodplain have been built up as flood defences, but in winters of very heavy rainfall these are still overtopped and almost the entire reserve becomes a giant lake. Wildfowl such as teal, shoveler, wigeon and pintail then take advantage of the sanctuary and feeding opportunities offered.

Even in the heat of the summer a large pool in the centre retains some water, and as it dries out exposing its muddy banks, it becomes a major attraction to wildfowl and waders. Redshank, snipe and lapwing are often seen and greenshank, green and wood sandpiper and other birds of passage are also frequent visitors.

Highlights

Wildfowl
including teal,
redshank, snipe,
lapwing and
marsh plants.



teal

Hugh Clark

There is a network of ditches throughout the reserve, and like Amberley, they support a variety of water plants and insects. The line of the old Wey and Arun Navigation Canal can be made out, still retaining water in the southern part where it used to connect up to the river itself.

A local farming family holds the grazing rights, or 'leazes', to the area of the reserve, which is also a registered common. The small area to the west of the railway line is somewhat drier, kept short largely by the attention of rabbits. A damper section to the south holds a fascinating marsh flora, and is coloured deep blue in late summer by devil's-bit scabious.



Clockwise devil's-bit scabious, lapwing, redshank