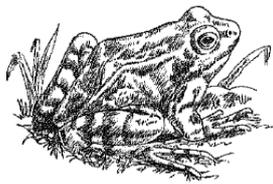


# Barnwell Country Park Nature Trail

A ½ mile nature trail on accessible stone paths, follow the **red route** and look out for the **numbered nature trail way markers** along the way on posts, benches and fences.

1

**Mill Lake** - like all the lakes at the park Mill Lake was formed by gravel workings between 1957 and 1968. It is an important area for breeding birds such as Coot, Mallard, Mute Swan and Great Crested Grebe. The lake is fringed by Lesser Reed Mace and willows of various kinds. The water is rich in fish life such as Rudd, Perch, Carp and Pike but also, unusually, a county rarity called the Spine Loach – a tiny fish also found in the river Backwater around the park.



You are also standing by Birch pond which was created in 1990 with the help of Oundle Watch group, a group of conservation minded children. The interpretation panel here will give you more information on pond life.

2

**Lowlands** - Once a small lake Lowlands was partially filled by washings during the gravel extraction and is now a marshy area with Common, or Norfolk Reed (often used for thatching), Purple Loosestrife and Water Mint. Each spring, Reed and Sedge Warblers arrive to breed here, weaving their nests around the reed stems. These birds often unwittingly become the “parents” of Cuckoos. The much less common Cetti’s Warbler is also seen and heard in this area. The Rangers and park volunteers cut a third of the reed bed and remove willow and alder growth each year to prevent



the area shading, silting up and drying out.

3

**The Backwater** – a flood channel of the River Nene, it is shallow and fast flowing and a favourite haunt of the Kingfisher. Fish such as Chub (with the black tails), Dace and Roach can be seen here when the water is clear. 10,000 years ago the river here was a mile wide with melt water from the retreating glaciers. This is when the gravel was deposited that has now been extracted.



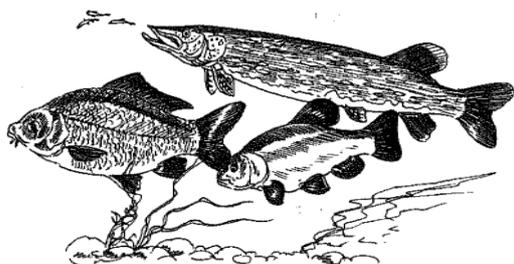
4



**West Meadow** – The small triangular meadow here is a relic of the cattle grazing pasture that was here before the gravel working. The variety of grasses such as Yorkshire Fog and Crested Dogs Tail and flowers such as Ox-Eye Daisy, Cowslip, Tufted Vetch, Knapweeds and Greater Burnet are evidence of this.

5

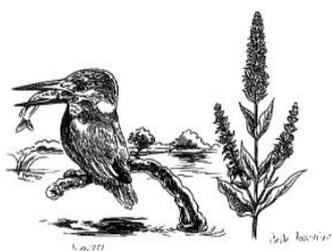
**North and Middle Lakes-** They are both open water feeding areas for water birds. In



roost!

the Winter Tufted Duck, Pochard and Gadwall can all be seen. The lakes contain a variety of native fish such as Tench, Bream, Rudd and Pike as well as naturalised fish such as Common and Mirror Carp which are present to over 30lb in the lakes here. Each year a pair of Mute Swans breeds here and rules the

6



**Home of the Kingfisher** – Viewable from the deck of the Kingfisher Cafe is an artificial nest bank for Kingfishers – We are hoping that this will enable Kingfishers breed in the park once again as this dazzling bird needs vertical banks in which to dig nesting tunnels that are safe from predators such as Mink and Grass Snakes. The interpretation panels by the cafe will tell you more about the Kingfisher and the park's history and wildlife.

We hope you enjoyed the nature trail – for more information about Northamptonshire County Council's Country Parks visit [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/parks](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/parks)