

# Life Around The Pond



The ponds are spring fed and the clear chalk filtered water provides ideal living conditions for aquatic life, like millions of midges, sticklebacks, fresh water shrimp, frogs, newts and toads, all of which in turn feed a host of birds and mammals. The fresh waters also support a range of water plants which grow along the edges and provide shelter and food.



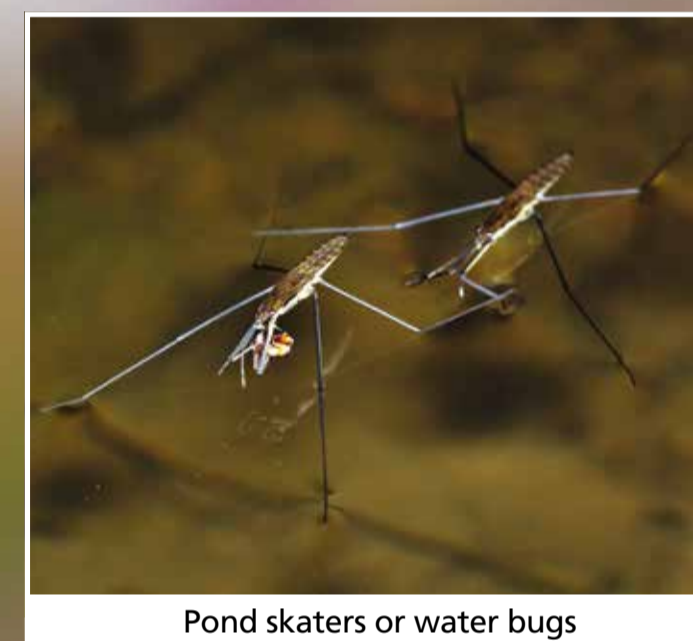
Frogs

**Bats** – the only flying mammal, can be seen hunting over the water at dusk and during the night, catching insects. **Pipistrelle bats** are the most common species locally and only weigh 5 grams. Bats are not blind but they use echolocation to find their food in the dark. The sound bounces off objects which enables them to find their food.

**Frogs** will leave their eggs or frogspawn near the shallow water edge in the spring. The emerging tadpoles are a common food for dragonfly larvae. Herons like to hunt frogs.

**Emperor dragonflies**, with their characteristic green and black body, dart over the water in search of places to lay their eggs. Dragonfly larvae live in the water for up to 4 years before they emerge to fly around though only for 3-4 weeks whilst searching for a mate.

You can also spot **Damselflies** which are much smaller than dragonflies but come in striking colours of blue and red.



Pond skaters or water bugs

**Pond Skaters** or water bugs, 'skate' around on the surface of the water on the pond, feeding on smaller insects which they stab with their sharp mouthparts or beaks.

**Flag Iris** and **Purple Loosestrife** grow along the water edges providing colour and nectar for honey bees and bumblebees.

**Piles of sticks** can be seen, seeming to float on the water. These are crafted nests made by **Coots**, which use anything to line their nests – even bits of plastic.



Flag iris



Urban fox

These are anchored to a branch or the ground. Siting a nest on the water keeps the chicks safe from predators like foxes, who don't like to swim.

**Urban foxes** will visit the park at night, in search of eggs in unattended nests,

left over lunches or a frog. Foxes are very versatile and well adapted to city life. They live under sheds and earth burrows and eat whatever they can find.

**Terrapins**, can be seen basking in the sun. Terrapins are popular pets, but once they are fully grown many get abandoned in public ponds and lakes. The species has a devastating impact on frog and dragonfly populations, as they have a huge appetite.

**Please do not introduce any pet animals, reptiles, fish or plants into Waddon Ponds.** Many species are in the wild and will die while others have a devastating impact on local wildlife, competing for food and space.

Help to protect Waddon Ponds and report any sightings of non-native species to Croydon Council.



Terrapins



Pipistrelle bat



Emperor dragonfly



Damselfly



Common coot and nest

## GET INVOLVED

Local residents can get involved in their park by uniting and forming a Friends of Park group, to work in partnership with the Council towards common aims. These include improving the park for people and wildlife, reporting issues, organising community events and creating more wildlife habitats.

Volunteer for your local park along the River Wandle: create habitats, improve access for all or clear invasive species, meet like-minded people, learn new skills and enjoy the outdoors.

Watch wildlife, like birds, bats, dragonflies, water voles and help monitor and protect wildlife along the river.

**For more information about the River Wandle and how to get involved visit:**

Wandle Valley Regional Park  
[www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk](http://www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk)

Croydon Council:  
[www.croydon.gov.uk](http://www.croydon.gov.uk)