

## Why do the birds visit the Nene Valley?

A very special selection of birds, represented overleaf, visit the SPA shorelines between October and March.

Many of the birds migrate thousands of miles from Iceland, Scandinavia and Russia when food becomes scarce there, whilst others stay here all year round. The migrating birds have to build up enough energy over the winter for their return trip to their summer breeding grounds.

The rivers, streams, ponds and lakes in the valley support a huge range of aquatic plants, fish, worms and insects, all of which the birds eat. With plenty of muddy shorelines and grassland surrounding the water, the Nene Valley provides a network of habitats ideal for the visiting birds.

All this means that there is also a huge range of wildlife for visitors to see all year. Look out for breeding waders in the spring, bats and dragonflies in the summer and otters in the early mornings.



Look out for wintering birds in the

## Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area



Welcome to the Nene Valley, an important corridor for wildlife, and space for people to enjoy the great outdoors.

Visitors to the Nene Valley come for all sorts of reasons, from cycling to fishing or just to enjoy the beautiful surroundings. The valley is also visited by thousands of internationally protected birds that spend their winter here.

The Nene Valley is vital for the birds that come here and it's important that all the wildlife has space to thrive. A partnership of conservation bodies and local councils are working together to help ensure that people and wildlife can enjoy the valley in harmony with each other.

Enjoy the wildlife of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA), see how many of our top winter visitors you can spot and tell your family and friends about the importance of the Nene Valley.

For more information visit [www.nenevalley.net/spa](http://www.nenevalley.net/spa)



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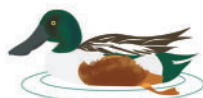
Northamptonshire  
County Council

Working in partnership

## Why is the Nene Valley important for wildlife?

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) is an internationally important wetland area that runs from Northampton to Thrapston. The series of gravel pits and wetland habitats provide valuable resting and feeding conditions for huge concentrations of wintering waterbirds, especially ducks and waders. The gravel pits attract over 20,000 overwintering water birds each year.

Many of the birds that visit the Nene Valley are facing declines worldwide, as well as a loss of suitable places to feed and breed. The Nene Valley is a vital place for these globally-threatened species to thrive and we are very lucky that they visit us right on our doorstep.



Artwork: rachelhudsonillustration.com

## Why do the birds need our help?

Unfortunately, human activity including dog walking, cycling and running can unintentionally disturb the birds, affecting their feeding both near and on the shoreline, and within the surrounding grassland. When birds are disturbed, they might not visit otherwise suitable areas again, or be able to eat enough to survive. In winter the shorter daylight hours mean feeding time is even more precious.

By making sure that we are aware of the possible effects of our behaviour on these wonderful birds, we can limit the damage caused. And by working together to look after the Nene Valley, we can make sure the wildlife continues to thrive for us all to enjoy.

## How can I help?

Here are a few ways you can help make this an area for birds and people to enjoy:

- Stay on existing pathways and viewing areas to prevent disturbance
- Look out for birds resting or feeding and move away if birds become alert or stop feeding
- Cycle on the specially designed greenway route
- Keep dogs on leads
- Exercise dogs away from the birds
- Fish in the designated areas only
- Clean up after your dog
- You can visit the many country parks situated outside of the SPA, such as Fermyn Woods, Barnwell and Irchester Country Parks. For information on country parks near you, visit [www.northamptonshireparks.co.uk](http://www.northamptonshireparks.co.uk)

Submit your wildlife records to the Northants Biodiversity Records Centre and help us build up an even better picture of the valley's wildlife [www.northantsbrc.org.uk](http://www.northantsbrc.org.uk)

