

The Three Brooks Lake is not a natural feature but was created following the construction of a huge relief sewer. This left a large crater of which the lake is the remnant, filled by damming the confluence of the brooks. The lake is fed by Patchway Brook, which runs from the north-west past Savage's Wood, and Stoke Brook, which flows from the south-west through Sherbourne's Brake and past Webb's Wood. The lake is drained by Bradley Brook which flows eastwards under the M4.

The lake makes a very important contribution to the reserve's biodiversity.

Plants

The lake and brooks support several native water-plants such as common reeds, bulrush and yellow flag. The reeds in particular are an important habitat. You may also see purple loosestrife and pink hairy willowherb. Clumps of hard rush, like a dark green, wiry grass, grow around the edges of the lake.

Birds

Birds, especially ducks, are the most obvious wildlife that you will spot on the lake. Most of the ducks are mallards, but you may see other types such as pochard or tufted ducks. Small, black moorhens "chuck" loudly to each other and in spring will hatch clutches of black fluffy chicks. Mute swans occasionally nest on the central island and are unmissable as they glide past.

Little grebes, also known as dabchicks, breed on the lake, so look out for the tiny, stripy chicks in spring. Grebes dive underwater to search for food and may pop up in unexpected places!

You are likely to see several gulls over the water, most probably black-headed gulls. Their heads are only black in summer; in winter this fades to a dark smudge behind the eye.

You may well see a grey heron as it flaps past on its 185cm wingspan or stands immobile in the water searching for fish. Kingfishers also hunt around the edges of the lake so look for the iridescent blue colouring as it streaks past, or you may even be lucky enough to see one on a perch over the water.

The reedbeds are an important habitat for birds. They support reed warbler and reed buntings, and a nightingale has also been heard here. An even more unusual visitor is the water rail which has been recorded here in the winter.

Insects

In the summer you may see dragonflies and damselflies around the lake. The main difference between these insects is that dragonflies always have their wings spread out whereas damselflies fold theirs when at rest.

Dragonfly species to spot include the emperor dragonfly - the male blue and the female green - and the broad-bodied

libellula or Chaser, which looks shorter and fatter (the male is blue and the female brown). Damselflies include the blue-tailed damselfly, banded demoiselle - the males have an obvious wing spot - and beautiful demoiselle (males are iridescent blue with dark blue-black wings, females green with brown wings).

Other wildlife

You may see the head of a small animal swimming in the lake. While water voles have been recorded here in the past - you may recognise them by their small ears, stubby nose and short tail - you are much more likely to have seen a brown rat; these are also very good swimmers. Rats are encouraged by the leftover bread from duck-feeding, so please don't feed the ducks any more than they will eat!

Evidence of otters has also been found and it is wonderful that such a rare animal visits a reserve in the middle of a housing estate.

The lake was stocked with fish which are thriving - when the lake was drained in 2005 as part of a desilting operation, many fish, including roach and perch, were recovered (and put back afterwards). Sticklebacks can be seen in the shallower areas.

You may find a frog or even a toad in the grasslands around the lake.

Wild birds are easily disturbed, especially when nesting. Please make sure dogs are kept under control at all times.

**How many species can you see
at the Lake?**



Pochard



Mallard

Beautiful
Demoiselle



Moorhen



Bulrush



Purple
Loosestrife

Grey Heron



Reed
Bunting



Hairy
Willowherb



Swan

Kingfisher



Toad



Little
Grebe



Yellow
Flag



THREE BROOKS LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

THE THREE BROOKS LAKE



The Three Brooks Lake is at the heart of the reserve and is a haven for residents and wildlife alike. There is a surprising amount to see on a stroll around the banks.



Group website: www.three-brooks.info



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