

Navigation for pleasure is only part of the public amenity that canal restoration has provided.

The canal corridor through the beautiful Sussex and Surrey countryside provides a natural link between a rich variety of habitats, supporting a wide range of plants, trees, insects, animals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians which has improved as the restoration of the canal has progressed.



WEY & ARUN Canal Trust

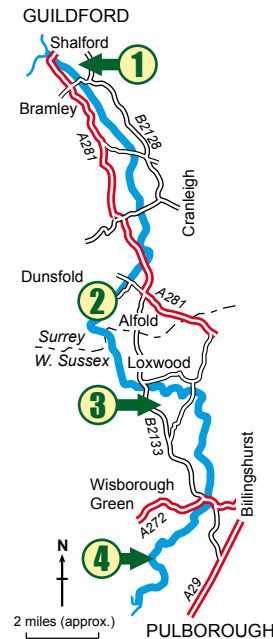
Hunt Nature Park

In Shalford, near Guildford, the Trust is creating a new amenity for local residents and visitors. Hunt Nature Park has a new meandering waterside path that opens up previously hidden views through the plantation and across to Cranleigh Waters' south bank which is studded with fine mature trees. The Trust has planted new trees in the park. These include **bird cherry, aspens, yews and dogwoods**. An **Osier bed** has been planted by the Trust. An Osier bed is where historically willows were planted and coppiced to produce withies which were used for basket making, fish-traps, and other purposes.



Key to map:

1. Hunt Park
2. Chiddingfold Forest SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) in Sidney Wood
3. Loxwood
4. Upper Arun SSSI



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The Wey & Arun Canal

Nature, Ecology and Conservation



WEY & ARUN Canal Trust

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust sells a selection of **laminated nature charts designed for use outside.**

Bird life on the canal

Hérons and **swans** are the largest birds seen around the canal. Swans are vegetarian while the heron hunts fish and newts by wading through shallow water. Swans normally pair for up for life and take turns guarding the nest. The young cygnets have brown feathers.

Moorhens can often be seen and there are usually several families of **mallard duck** each Summer. Large numbers of ducklings are hatched but sadly only a few survive until maturity. A small defenceless duckling makes a tasty snack for a hungry fox, pike or mink.

You may be lucky enough to spot a **kingfisher**. Their coloured feathers are accentuated by the light and help protect them against predators. They nest in small bankside holes and dive down from about two metres to catch small fish with their long sharp beaks.

The Trust has placed **nesting boxes** in the trees along the canal. They are ideal places for birds to raise a family.

Blue tits, great tits, nightingales, nuthatches, wagtails, woodpeckers and many other birds can often be spotted and heard singing in the trees and hedgerows.

Buzzards and other birds of prey can sometimes be seen circling above the canal.

Hedgerows

One of the Trust's working parties specialises in planting and laying hedgerows. Binders and stakes are sustainably coppiced from a nearby forest managed by the Trust. The hedgerow is an incredibly valuable habitat for wildlife. The trees and shrubs produce berries, seeds and nuts as food in the winter and a place to nest in the summer. More importantly, they provide a sheltered corridor from one habitat to another so that wildlife does not have to come out into the open to find



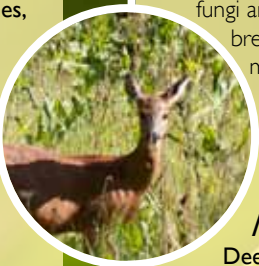
food. At night hedgerows are alive with wood mice and other small mammals trying to stay hidden from owls. The hedgerows are also used by bats for navigation.

Plants and flowers

Along the canal there is a wealth of plant species, each requiring a specific habitat. There are plants which grow in water and others which grow along the canal banks and towpath. The soil type and depth influences which plants will flourish. There are a variety of plants and flowers including **bluebell, cowslip, knapweed, orchid, primrose, wood anemone** and many others.

Woodland

There are areas of ancient woodland along the canal corridor supporting trees such as alder, dog rose, hazel, field maple, hornbeam and others. Dead and rotting wood is anything but dead. Insects,



fungi and bacteria break down this material which is then available to the whole cycle of life and regeneration.

Mammals

Deer, rabbits, water voles, mice, foxes, squirrels and badgers are just some of the mammals that can be found along the canal.

Amphibians

The canal is a welcoming habitat for **frogs, tadpoles and newts**.

Fish

Carp, roach, rudd, bream, chub, perch, eels and pike are just some of the fish that live in the waters of the canal.



Insects

Insects found beside the canal include **ladybirds, bumble bees, dragonflies and damselflies**. Dragonflies and damselflies are carnivorous and



eggs. They can fly forwards, backwards, sideways and hover. Damselflies rest with their wings in line with their bodies., dragonflies rest with their wings outstretched.



Reptiles

The **adder** is Britain's only venomous snake. They are the most frequently seen British snake and are becoming increasingly common. They are active during the day and bask in the sunshine until their body temperature is high enough to hunt for mice and other small creatures.

The **grass snake** is Britain's largest snake. They can be found throughout Southern Britain and prefer damp habitats, often close to water, where they feed on frogs, toads and newts. Grass snakes are excellent swimmers.

Slow worms are often confused with snakes, but they are a type of legless lizard. They are fairly common throughout Britain and can be up to 30cm long with a cylindrical body and a bullet shaped head. Their scales are very small giving the appearance of a metallic sheen to their brown, gold or beige colour.

