

### KINGFISHER

*Alcedo atthis*  
Kingfishers are small unmistakable bright blue and orange birds. They prefer the slow moving or still water and fly rapidly, low over water, to hunt fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering above the water's surface.



### OTTER

*Lutra lutra*  
The Otter is a charismatic, playful animal that eats fish. Otters suffered a decline in the 1950's but are slowly coming back to the Kennet in small numbers.



# Wildlife at Stonebridge Lane

## What can you see?



### BULL HEAD

*Cottus gobio L.*  
The Bullhead is a small fish, with a flattened body and a mottled skin that camouflages it among weeds and stones.



### STARWORT

*Callitriche stagnalis*  
Common Water-Starwort has tiny, single sex flowers carried in the leaf axis. These are followed by fruits which have four winged lobes. This plant provides cover for a wide range of aquatic invertebrates and their larvae and small fish. It provides food for the water vole.



### STICKLEBACK

*Gasterosteus aculeatus*  
The Kennet has a limited but distinctive range of fish. By finding a quiet reach and jiggling among the stones with a fishing net, it shouldn't be long before you find Three-Spined Stickleback. They are nocturnal predators, but need quite a lot of light to be able to detect the movement of their prey. They eat all sorts of invertebrates, such as worms, insect larvae, small snails, crustaceans and water fleas.



### COOT

*Fulica atra*  
All-black and larger than its cousin, the Moorhen, the Coot has a distinctive white beak and 'shield' above the beak which earns it the title 'bald'.



### WATER VOLE

*Arvicola terrestris*  
The Kennet valley is now a stronghold for that much-loved and much-declined animal, the Water Vole. It can be mistaken for a rat, which also forages along the river, but the Vole has a shorter tail, more rounded head and browner fur. It is most easily detected by searching for the distinctive burrow entrances, generally just above the water's edge.



### WATER CROWFOOT

*Ranunculus*  
Few water weeds can survive in the main current of the river. One that does is the Stream Water Crowfoot (*Ranunculus*). In May and June its massed white flowers appear above the water. It prefers places where the flow is broken by riffles.



The Moorhen is a medium-sized, ground-dwelling bird, which is usually found all along the River. From a distance it looks black with a ragged white line along its body.

### MOORHEN

*Gallinula chloropus*



### BROWN TROUT

*Salmo trutta*  
The most common fish found in the River Kennet is the Brown Trout, which spawns in the shallow gravel-beds of the river. On hatching, they are immediately independent and remain territorial throughout their lives.



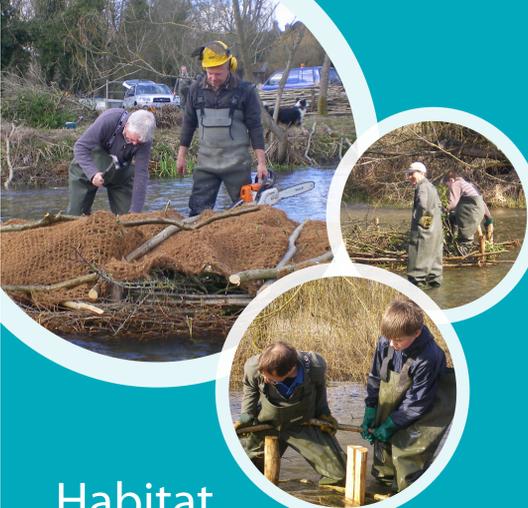
### INSECTS

Many species of insect live in the river. Mayfly, Stonefly and Caddisfly species have a nymph stage which lives underwater, sometimes for years, before emerging as a flying insect. They are vital to the chalk stream ecosystem, providing food for fish and birds.



### HERON

*Ardea cinerea*  
It can stand with neck stretched out, looking for food, or hunch down with its neck bent over its chest. It stalks its food, often standing motionless for some considerable time.



## Habitat Restoration

Action for the River Kennet (ARK) has worked with the Wild Trout Trust to improve the habitat, along this stretch of the River Kennet, to encourage the return of wild brown trout and support other wildlife, such as the water vole and river lamprey, which are associated with chalk streams.

The work was done by volunteers and made possible by funding from the Environment Agency, WWF-UK and HSBC (as part of the HSBC Climate Partnership), the Association of Rivers Trusts, the North Wessex Downs AONB and Biffawards.

Working together to restore rivers and protect wildlife

