

Loompit Lake

Including sections of Little Grove, Loompit Grove and River Wall

Loompit Lake, was created from some rough pastureland that was trapped behind the new river wall (built after the 1953 floods). It was flooded in the late 1960s as a fresh water irrigation reservoir for Gosling's Farm, later rainbow trout were introduced for a fly-fishing club. It covers about 30 acres and is fed by four 'feeder' streams (one from as far away as Kirton, and another from near Morston, both run partly underground). The water level is controlled by a small sluice under the short river wall. It is possible to drain the lake for maintenance purposes by removing one of two plugs, to either part or completely drain the water. In autumn and winter, it is not uncommon, depending on the tide and wind, for the river to overtop the wall into the lake.

A brief guide to wildlife on and around the lake

Be careful if you look these up online, some sites are unreliable

Birds

Canada Geese. Black heads and white 'chinstrap'.

Coot. Black with the white 'blaze'.

Cormorant. The black, reptilian looking birds in the trees. (They first bred one pair in 1998. This was the first time in Suffolk for over 100 years, the last time was at Fritton Lake near Lowestoft.) Between April and July it will be worth listening for the 'chants' of the young birds in the nests. Over the years, the winter night-time roost has grown from 20 birds in the 1970s, to over 3,000 in early 2020. The winter migrant birds leave, as the resident birds start nesting.

Gadwall. Similar to, but smaller than female mallards, and have a plum coloured speculum (a bright patch of plumage in the centre of the wing).

Greylag Geese. The big brown/grey ones, with orange bills and legs.

Grey Heron. Grey and white, long necks and bills, stand or perch around the back edges of the lake.

Kingfisher. A 50 mph vivid blue flash mostly very low over the ground or water (lake or river) often heralded by 4 or 5 note 'peeping' call, most likely seen November to January. It is very secretive during their long breeding season.

Little Egrets. Smaller than the Herons, pure white, black legs and butter yellow feet.

Mallard. The males with bottle green heads and silver grey sides, the females, a mottled brown; both have a dark blue patch and a speculum of feathers in the middle of the wings.

Moorhen. Black with red and yellow beaks and they show white patches on their backsides when swimming away.

Mute Swans. The large white ones.

Pochard. The males are a silvery grey with a red head and neck, females are brownish, (the reason for this, as in most ducks is that they are inconspicuous when nesting).

Tufted Duck. Black and white males, brownish females. (The other black and white duck seen in winter are Goldeneye.)

Obviously other birds occur on or over the water, several species of gulls, maybe 3 species of terns (spring/summer)

In spring, migrating Swallows, Sand and House Martins, Swifts, Common Sandpipers. In April/May, it is worth looking for goslings, cygnets, ducklings and chicks.

During the winter other ducks arrive, Wigeon, Teal, Shoveler, Goldeneye.

Small birds in the bushes/reeds, include Reed and Sedge Warblers (spring and summer), Reed Bunting, Cetti's Warbler, Pied and Yellow wagtail. Mostly in winter mixed flocks of Great, Blue and Long tailed Tits, but anything is possible.

Birds of prey. Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Buzzards, Hobby, Tawny Owl, on rare occasions Osprey.

Gosling's Farm has nothing to do with geese, it is named after John Gosling who owned it in the mid 1880s.

Flora and Fauna

In spring and summer, mostly around the margins, Common Blue, Blue Tailed, Red eyed Damselflies. Black tailed Skimmer (most likely), but also Darter and Hawker dragonfly species.

Large and Small White butterflies, also Green Veined White, Red Admiral, Peacock, Orange Tip, are fairly common.

Some noticeable plants in the water, Greater Reed Mace, Phragmites Reeds, Yellow Flag Iris. Along the river wall, 'Dog Roses', Wild Carrot, Alexanders, Fleabane, Sea Beet, Mayweeds, Dittander, Brambles and Hemlock (poisonous). Maybe of interest, there are about 300 British plants listed as *Noxious*.

On rare occasions, grass snakes may be seen swimming in the lake. They're harmless!

Mammals that you may or may not see. Muntjac, Badger, Fox, Rabbit, Brown Rat, Mole. Most years, there have been sightings of Otter, and possibly Noctule bats (rarely).

Robin Biddle February 2023