

# Wildlife at Coppice Pond

This man-made lake is known to date from before 1330 when the lands were in possession of Rievaulx Abbey before acquisition by the Ferrard family in 1636. It was built as a dam to supply water power for corn and fulling mills. It most probably continued in dual use as mill dam and feature of Harden Grange Estate (as St.Ives Estate was known then) until c1800 when it was landscaped and possibly enlarged prior to the estate being renamed St. Ives in 1858.

This area is a designated Site of Ecological or Geological Importance (SEGI), designated by the Local Authority as being of country wide importance for its flora, fauna or geology (as recommended by the Ecological Advisory Service in West Yorkshire). Please respect the vegetation and wildlife of the lake.

The lake contains a variety of species of native coarse fish typical of Northern England still-water habitat. Most of the species present do breed in the lake but successful spawning is dependent on climatic conditions and there can be considerable gaps between year groups. Fish can live for many years and continue to grow throughout their lives. Mature fish in the water here are known to attain the weights indicated in their descriptions.

## Mallard Anas (*platyrhynchos*)



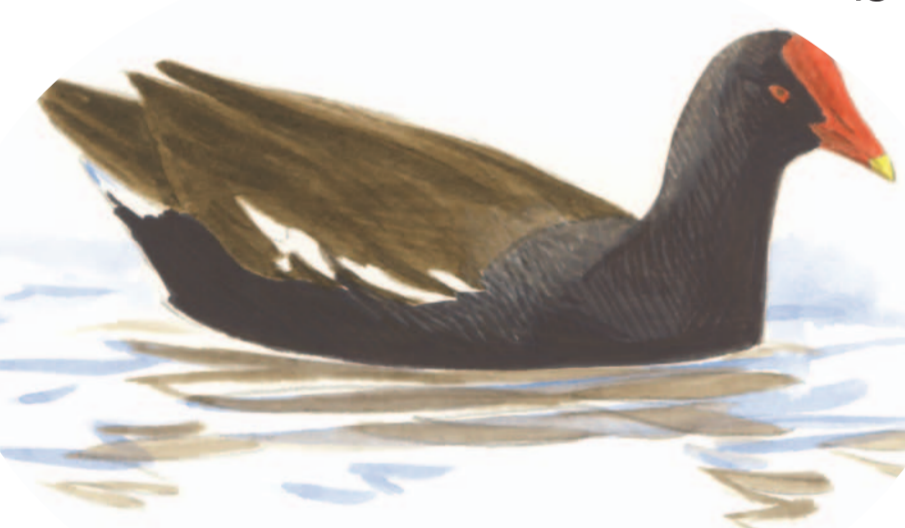
Common resident breeder at Coppice Pond. The mallard is a large and heavy looking duck. It has a long body and a long and broad bill. The male has a dark green head, a yellow bill, is mainly purple-brown on the breast and grey on the body. The female is mainly brown with an orange bill. It breeds in summer and winter, wherever there are suitable wetland habitats, although it is scarcer in upland areas. Mallards in the UK may be resident breeders or migrants - many of the birds that breed in Iceland and northern Europe spend the winter here. Eats seeds, acorns and berries, plants, insects and shellfish.

## Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)



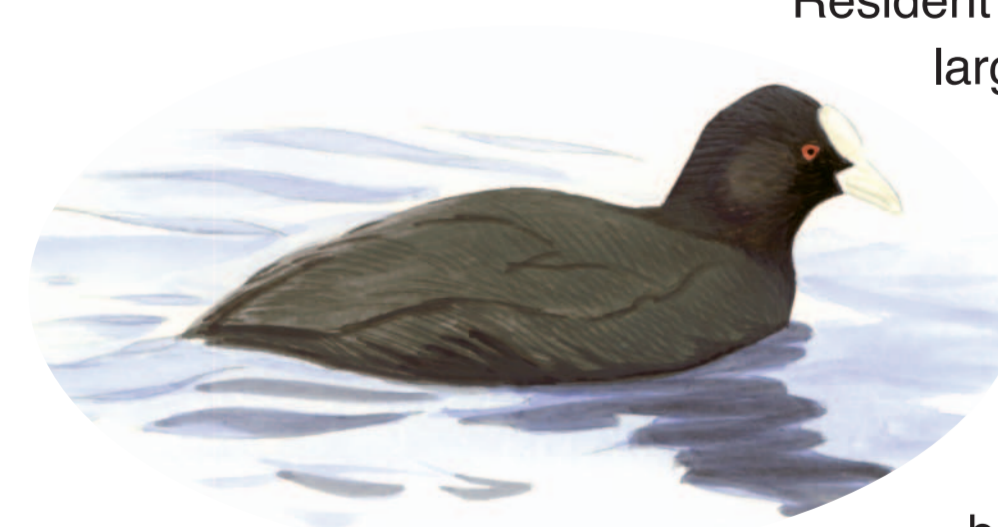
Resident breeder at Coppice Pond. A large goose, with a distinctive black head and neck and large white throat patch. An introduced species from N America, it has successfully spread to cover most of the UK. It forms noisy flocks and is often regarded as a nuisance here. Eats a varied diet of vegetation including roots, grass, leaves and seeds and has decimated most of the lake's vegetation in the past. One plant it does not have taste for is flag iris, which is the reason this has been planted around the margins here.

## Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)



Resident breeder at Coppice pond. The moorhen is a medium-sized, ground-dwelling bird, that is usually found near water. From a distance it looks black with a ragged white line along its body. Up close it is olive-brown on the back and the head and underneath are blue-grey. It has a red bill with a yellow tip. It breeds in the UK in lowland areas, especially in central and eastern England. It is scarce in northern Scotland and the uplands of Wales and northern England. UK breeding birds are residents and seldom travel far. Eats water plants, seeds, fruit, grasses, insects, snails and worms.

## Coot (*Fulica atra*)



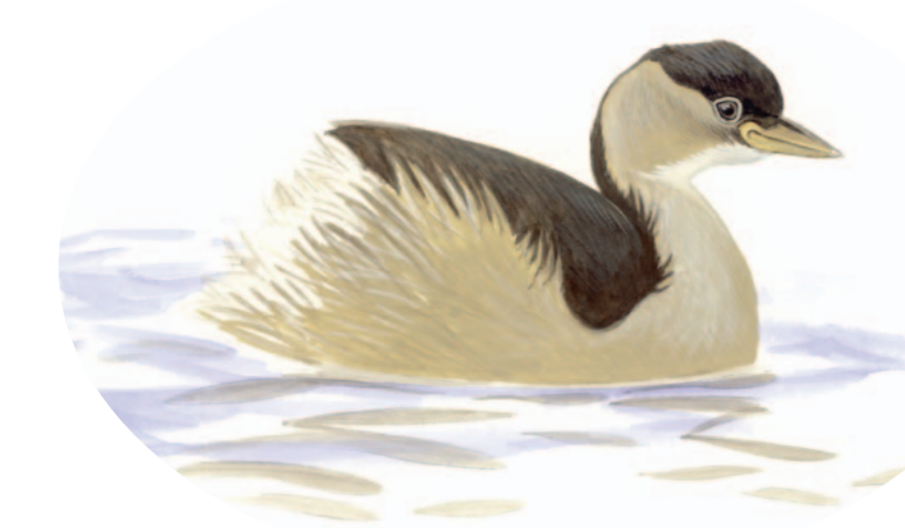
Resident breeder at Coppice Pond. All-black and larger than its cousin, the moorhen. It has a distinctive white beak and 'shield' above the beak which earns it the title 'bald'. Its feet have distinctive lobed flaps of skin on the toes, which act instead of webs when swimming. It patters noisily over the water before taking off and can be very aggressive towards others. Eats vegetation, snails and insect larvae.

## Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)



Resident visitor at Coppice Pond. The largest European heron. It can stand with neck stretched out, looking for food, or hunch down with its neck bent over its chest. In flight it holds its neck retracted and has large rounded wings. It is usually solitary although several birds may feed fairly close together. It stalks its food, often standing motionless for some considerable time. It usually feeds close to the bank or shore, but may wade out into shallow water. Eats mainly fish.

## Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)



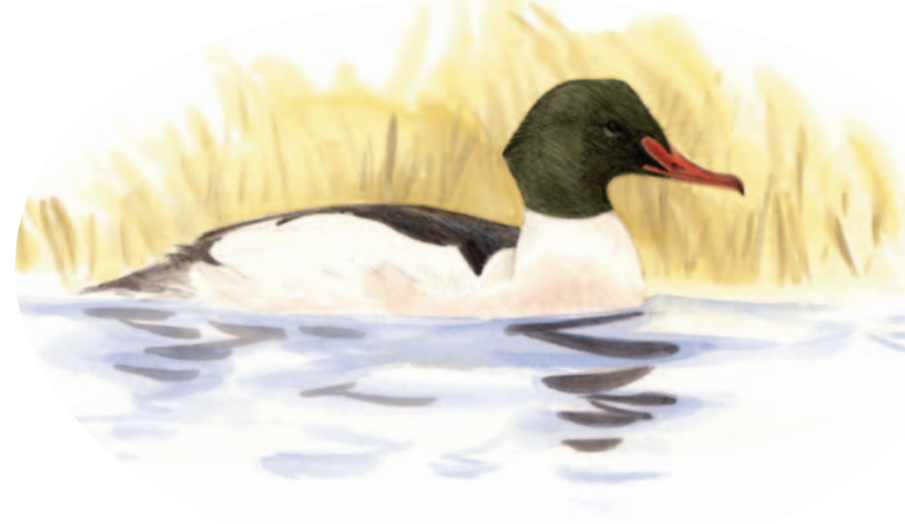
Winter visitor at Coppice Pond. A small, dumpy bird which often appears to have a 'fluffy' rear end. It readily dives when disturbed, surfacing unseen some distance away. In summer it has a bright chestnut throat and cheeks and a pale gape patch at the base of the bill. It can be noisy, with a distinctive whinnying trill. Eats insects and larvae.

## Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)



Winter/passage visitor at Coppice Pond. A medium-sized diving duck, smaller than a mallard. It is black on the head, neck, breast and back and white on the sides. It has a small crest and a yellow eye. In flight it shows an obvious white stripe across the back of the wing. It does not breed here at St.Ives but stops off in winter whilst moving to the UK from Iceland and northern Europe. Eats molluscs, insects and some plants.

## Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)



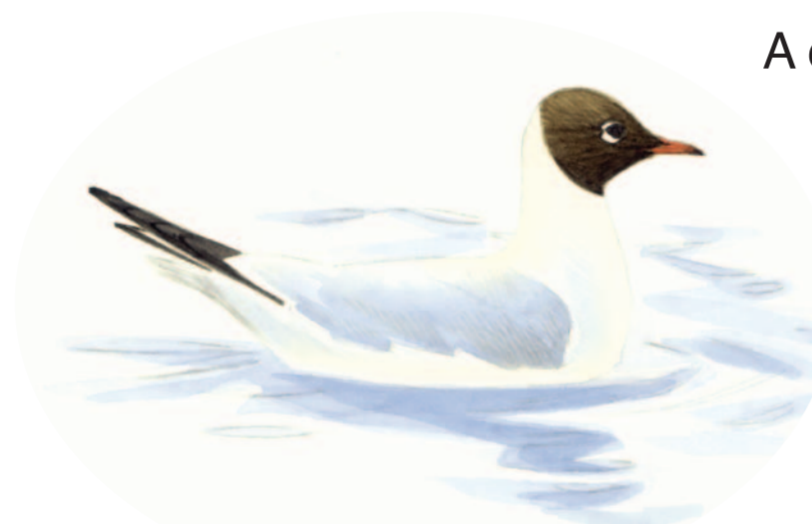
Resident visitor (occasional breeder) at Coppice Pond. This handsome diving duck is a member of the sawbill family, so called because of their long, serrated bills, used for catching fish. A largely freshwater bird. Its love of salmon and trout has brought it into conflict with fishermen. It is gregarious, forming into flocks of several thousand in some parts of Europe. Eats fish

## Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)



Visitor at Coppice Pond. A small unmistakable bright blue and orange bird of slow moving or still water. Flies rapidly, low over water, and hunts fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering above the water's surface. They are vulnerable to hard winters and habitat degradation through pollution or unsympathetic management of watercourses.

## Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)



A chocolate-brown rather than black headedbird for much of the year, it has a white head. It is most definitely not a 'seagull' and is found commonly almost anywhere inland. They are sociable, quarrelsome, noisy birds, usually seen in small groups or flocks, often gathering into larger parties where there is plenty of food, or when they are roosting. Eats worms, insects, fish and carrion.

## Common Gull (*Larus canus*)



Winter visitor at Coppice Pond. Looks like a small, gentler version of the herring gull, with greenish legs and a yellow bill. Despite its name, it is not at all common in some inland areas, though often abundant on the coast and in some eastern counties. Now seen more often in towns and on housing estates in winter. Eats worms, insects, fish, carrion and rubbish.

## Lesser Black-backed (*Gull Larus fuscus*)



Scarce visitor at Coppice Pond. Has a dark grey to black back and wings, yellow bill and yellow legs. Their world population is found entirely in Europe. After declines in the 19th century due to persecution they increased their range and numbers. This expansion has now halted and there is serious concern about declines in many parts of its range. The species is on the Amber List because the UK is home to 40% of the European population and more than half of these are found at fewer than ten sites. Omnivore and scavenges a wide range of food.

## Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)



Visitor at Coppice Pond. The ancestor of most domestic geese, the largest and bulkiest of the wild geese native to the UK and Europe. In many parts of the UK it has been re-established by releasing birds in suitable areas, but the resulting flocks (often mixed with Canada geese) found around gravel pits, lakes and reservoirs all year round in southern Britain tend to be semi-tame and uninspiring. The native birds and wintering flocks found in Scotland retain the special appeal of truly wild geese. Eats grass, roots, cereal leaves and spilled grain.

## Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

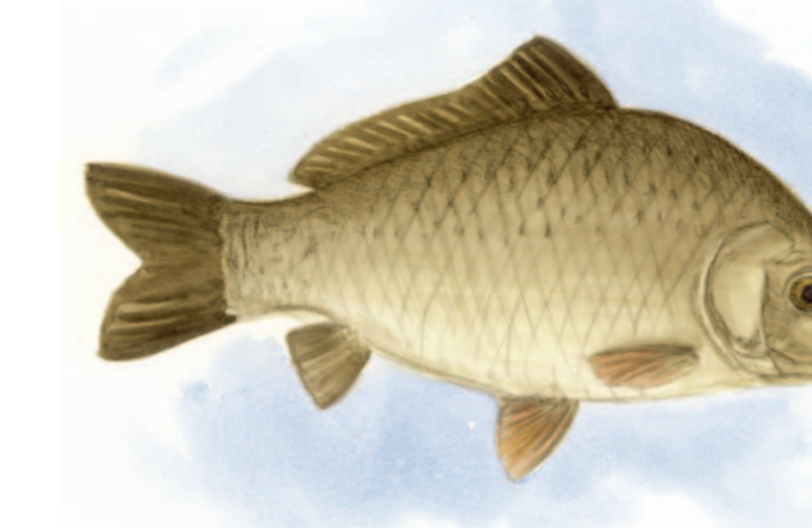


Occasional visitor at Coppice Pond. A very large white waterbird. It has a long S-shaped neck, and an orange bill with black at the base of it. The population in the UK has increased recently, perhaps due to better protection of this species. Some birds stay in their territories all year, while others move short distances and form winter flocks. In cold weather, some birds arrive from Europe into eastern England. Eats water plants, insects and snails.

## Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)

A species native to Eastern Europe and introduced to Britain during the middle ages. Carp are deep bodied with a long dorsal fin. They have four barbules (fleshy appendages) around the mouth, a long one at each side of the upper jaw and a shorter one at each corner of the mouth. An extremely powerful fighting fish that will feed at all levels during the warmer months of the year and often indicate its presence by leaping clear of the water. Two of the three original varieties of species are present in the lake:

### Common Carp



A fully scaled fish with golden-bronze sides. Up to 5.5kg/12lbs plus.

### Mirror Carp



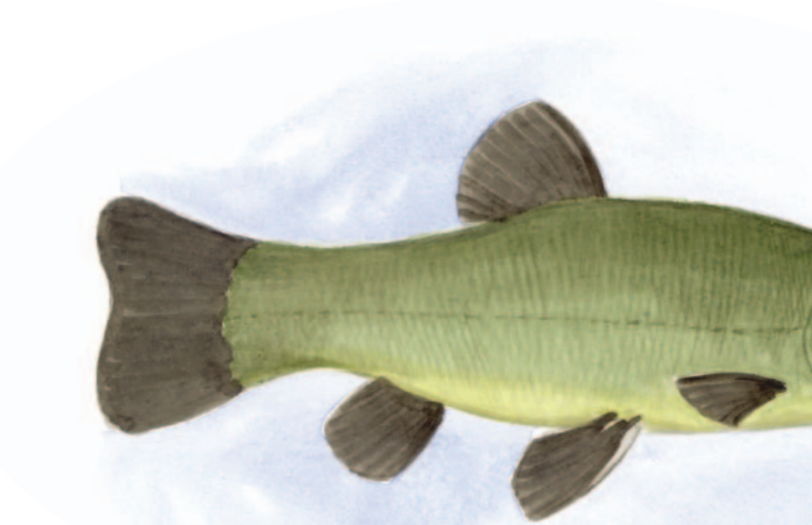
Has a darker body than the Common Carp with large scales along the lateral line. Up to 9kg/20lbs plus.

## Crucian Carp (*Carassius carassius*)



A stump fully scaled deep bodied fish which resembles the related Common Carp in shape and colour, but is much smaller and has no barbules to its mouth. A small number are present in the lake. Up to 0.7kg/1.5lbs.

## Tench (*Tinca tinca*)



This powerful fish is widely distributed throughout Europe. Its heavy thickset body has tinyscales and is covered in a thick layer of mucus. It is predominantly green in colour with a golden sheen to its sides and dark rounded fins. The tench has a single barbule at each corner of its rubbery mouth and small red eyes. Predominantly a bottom feeder and especially active at dawn and dusk during spring and summer, when it is evident from the stream of bubbles emerging through its gills as it sifts through the silt on the lake bottom searching for food. They go into a state of semi-hibernation during winter. Up to 3kg/7lbs.

## Bronze or Common Bream (*Abramis brama*)



A native bottom feeding species with protrusible (extendable) mouth. Bream are fully scaled with a deep laterally flattened body and dark pointed fins. Juvenile fish have silvery-white sides. This colouring changes to bronze on maturity and darkens further with age. Up to 3kg/7lbs.

## Roach (*Rutilus rutilus*)



A native fish widely distributed throughout Europe and present in all types of UK waters. The roach is fully scaled and has along flat-sided body with silvery sides. Its eyes and the pelvic and anal fins are bright red. They are a shoal fish that will feed throughout the year. Up to 0.45kg/1lb plus.

## Perch (*Perca fluviatilis*)



This colourful native fish, a member of the Percidae (spiny finned carnivorous predatory fishes), has two dorsal fins with the leading one large and spiny. It has a fully scaled deep body and large mouth. Its blue-green sheeny sides have a number of dark transverse stripes and its pelvic and anal fins are red. Can be abundant in numbers but generally small in size. Weighs up to 0.25kg/0.5lb.

## Fresh Water White Claw Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)



The only freshwater crayfish native to the UK are olive-green to brown in colour and can reach up to 12 centimetres in length. The common name refers to the fact that the undersides of the claws are off-white to pinkish in colour. The most devastating factor affecting them at present is crayfish plague, a virulent fungal disease carried by the aggressive introduced species, the American signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*). Spores of this disease can be easily spread by birds and animals. They are protected and have been targeted as a priority for conservation. We've worked to maintain suitable habitat features, which we have implemented as part of the bank regeneration work here at Coppice Pond. It is an offence to release the three introduced species of crayfish into the wild. They feed on a broad diet consisting of detritus, animal matter and plants. It also occasionally indulges in cannibalism, particularly on individuals with soft cuticles following their moult.

## Common or European Toad (*Bufo bufo*)



An amphibian widespread throughout Europe with the exception of Ireland and some Mediterranean islands. Warty skin with distinct bulges on back of head. Tends to walk not jump. Hibernates over winter emerging in February. Generally hunt at night, most active in wet weather. Adults spend most of their time on land, the females enter ponds and other still waters to lay their eggs, toadspawn, which can be distinguished from the spawn of the common frog as it forms strings rather than a large clump of eggs. Eggs are laid in the spring, with the females attempting to return to the water in which they were born. Tadpoles resemble frog tadpoles in their appearance except that they have a larger, rounder blacker head and shorter tail. Young toads eat ants and some small flies. Adults eat invertebrates such as insects, larvae, spiders, slugs and worms.

## Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*)



Our most familiar native amphibians have smooth skin and tend to jump not walk. The most consistent markings are the dark patch behind the eye and the strong barring on the hind limbs. Breed between February and March when they are most likely to be seen. Spawn is laid in clumps of 300 - 400 gelatinous eggs containing black embryos with a white spot. The very young tadpoles are black but soon become speckled brown making them distinguishable from the permanently black tadpoles of the Common Toad. Please do not be tempted to transfer the spawn of Common Frogs to garden ponds as there is a risk that in doing so you may spread the disease. Frogs will very quickly find and use your garden pond of their own accord if conditions are favourable to them. Tadpoles eat algae, detritus and some plants, although they will also eat other animals in small amounts. Adults eat insects (especially flies), snails, slugs and worms.

