

Birdham

Birdham is a sailing village situated on Chichester Harbour, just south of Chichester Marina.



- 1 Birdham Village Pond
- 2 Triangle Pond
- 3 Kingfisher Pond

Parking: St James' Church, Church Lane, PO20 7HG

Public transport: Bus 52/53 stops along the A286



Approx. 1.5 miles. At the 14th century church—note the magnificent, twisted cedar tree in the churchyard—cross the triangle to see the village pond. Turn left to visit the other two ponds and continue along the lane. Take the next footpath right, onto the coastal path. At Court Barn Lane, turn right heading back to the church.

Birdham Village Pond

This pond used to fill up with silt and it was shaded in overgrown vegetation. The FLOW team dug out the silt and deepened the pond bed. Thick vegetation was cut back to allow sunlight onto the pond and to support important **oxygenating plants**.

Since the improvements, the pond holds more water and is less likely to become stagnant as sunlight can reach it. **Bats** have been observed feeding here in summer, and **water voles**, the UK's fastest declining mammal, have moved back after many years of absence!



Water voles are small, semi-aquatic mammals that thrive on the variety of wetland plants here. The Manhood Peninsula is a stronghold for them.



Triangle Pond



Previously overlooked and neglected, this pond was too shallow to hold water and the copse was too overgrown to offer much variety for wildlife. The FLOW team widened, deepened and reconnected the pond to the wider ditch network so it can carry water out to sea.

Dominating sycamore and willow trees were cut back to create new open areas that were seeded with native wildflowers, including **ox-eye daisy**, **teasel** and **red campion** to feed birds and pollinating insects. **Hazel**, **cherry**, **crab apple** and other fruiting trees were also planted for wildlife.

Coir rolls were partially-submerged in the pond. The rolls contain a mix of wetland plants such as **yellow flag iris** and **purple loosestrife**, a favourite with **bumblebees**. The winding wood-chip path was added so everyone can enjoy the copse.



Can you hear the delicate, high-pitched squeaky song of the **goldcrest**? It is the UK's smallest bird weighing only 5-6g!



Kingfisher Pond

Torrential rainfall events in 2012 and 2013 left this section of the lane completely underwater. The pond was congested by willow trees, whose roots had inadvertently built a dam, resulting in a backlog of silt. This was compromising a nearby culvert and grill which are both designed to carry flood water away from the lane.



To improve this pond, the obstructing willow trees were removed and the bed was dug deeper to increase its capacity. This has significantly reduce the flooding risk here, and as the pond is more open it is home to lots more wildlife.

Wetland plants such as **water forget-me-not** and **water mint** are a great food for rare **water voles** which have been sighted here since improvements were made.



Water mint