Wildlife and the environment

Channel restoration
Many rivers have been enclosed in concrete channels to change their courses or protect against flooding and erosion. This has led to a loss of many of the natural river features important for wildlife. The Pymmes Brook channel at Tottenham Marshes has been improved to recreate the natural environment. Drilling holes in the channel walls provides artificial nest sites for Sand Martin and Kingfisher. Underwater, deeper pools and a gravel bed create new areas for plants to grow and fish to take cover.

Ponds
Ponds of all sizes can be beneficial to wildlife and there are many ways to create a healthy pond. Deep water provides an area for newts and toads to breed and the shallower edges provide areas for animals to feed, lay eggs and climb out of the pond. Plants have an important role in keeping the water oxygenated. Vegetation along the shallow edge provides areas for animals to shelter, feed, lay eggs and climb out of the pond. It's also a good place to look for newts and frogs hibernating in the cold winter months. Gentle sloping sides enable wildlife to easily climb out of the water or birds to take a bath. Ponds

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Glorious grasses
Grasslands like Tottenham Marshes are home to a wide variety of plants and animals. Over time grasslands would naturally revert to scrub and then woodland if left unmanaged. Here trees encroaching on the open grassland are removed to maintain the meadow.

Friends of Tottenham Marshes
Established in 2005, the Friends of Tottenham Marshes (FoTM) is a group of local people committed to promoting the marshes as a valuable and enjoyable green space for the whole community and to protecting the wildlife that lives there. Their base is the Waterside Centre at Stonebridge Lock in the heart of the marshes where they hold all their meetings, talks, workshops and informal gatherings. If you enjoy walking, cycling, watching wildlife or volunteer tasks and would like to meet people with similar interests then FoTM would love to welcome you onto the marshes. Visit the Nature Reserves section at www.leevalleypark.org.uk for the group’s contact details.

Smooth Newt
The Smooth Newt can be found in the water during its breeding season in early spring. The rest of the time they’re usually found on land where they hunt at night for insects, worms and slugs. In the winter months they hibernate under logs, stones or even at the bottom of the pond. Most will live up to six years but a small number have been known to reach 18 years of age!

Kestrel
Look above you and you could be rewarded with a view of a Kestrel, Britain’s most common bird of prey. They’re often seen hovering over verges and grassland, searching for prey such as voles. Kestrels have fantastic eyesight and are able to see and catch small prey from above.

Great Spotted Woodpecker
Likely to be found almost anywhere there are trees, happily living in parks and urban locations. The Great Spotted Woodpecker eats a variety of insects, including the grubs of wood-boring beetles. It reaches them by chipping away dead wood with its beak and using its long tongue to reach the insect.

Wasp Spider
These harmless spiders have been introduced from Europe and their range is spreading throughout southern England. The females’ wasp-like pattern acts as a defence against predators. Look low in grassland areas to see their webs spun to catch prey such as grasshoppers and crickets.

Spotted Woodpecker
Spotted Woodpeckers are widespread and likely to be found almost anywhere there are trees. They are mainly found in parks and urban locations. These birds are known for their distinctive black and white pattern with a red patch on their forehead. They feed on a variety of insects, including beetles, ants, and even eggs. Their diet varies depending on the season and availability of food.

Great Mormon Butterfly
This exotic looking plant can be found growing in pastures and grasslands. It can take up to eight years to flower and grows to 30cm tall. The flower is as big as your thumb nail and looks like a pink-winged Bumble bee. The Great Mormon Butterfly can be seen flowering in June and July.