

Lifewalks and Countrycare winter wildfowl walk

February is an excellent time of year to see overwintering wildfowl, as many species of birds migrate from harsher conditions in colder climates, to the relatively mild winter conditions we have here in the UK.

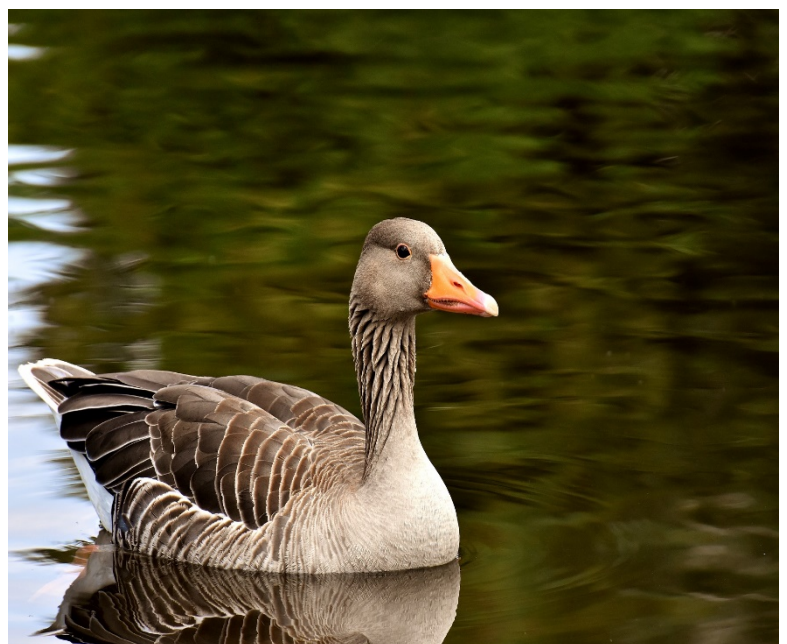
What to look out for on your walk



Great Crested Grebes can be identified by an impressive plume on top of their head. In the spring they have an orange collar around the face like a Tudor king's ruff. A dark cap on the head, white neck and dark body. Grebes are diving water birds and they nest on floating platforms constructed from water weed. In the Victorian period the birds almost

became extinct as they were hunted for their head plumes which were used to decorate ladies' hats.

The Greylag Goose is large and pale grey in colour with pink legs and an orange bill. As with many geese these can be very territorial especially in the spring/summer when nesting. They can live for around 8 years.





Tufted Ducks really stand out, especially the male who is black with white sides and a long tuft at the back of his head. The female is a lovely chocolate colour with no other markings. These diving ducks are very common on old gravel pit sites that are now lakes like here in the Lee Valley.

Gadwall ducks are grey in colour, which on closer inspection is made up of small brown and grey feathers with a black bottom. These are dabbling ducks, meaning they typically feed on the surface by tipping forward and up ending underwater plants. They rarely dive like some of the birds we have mentioned above.

