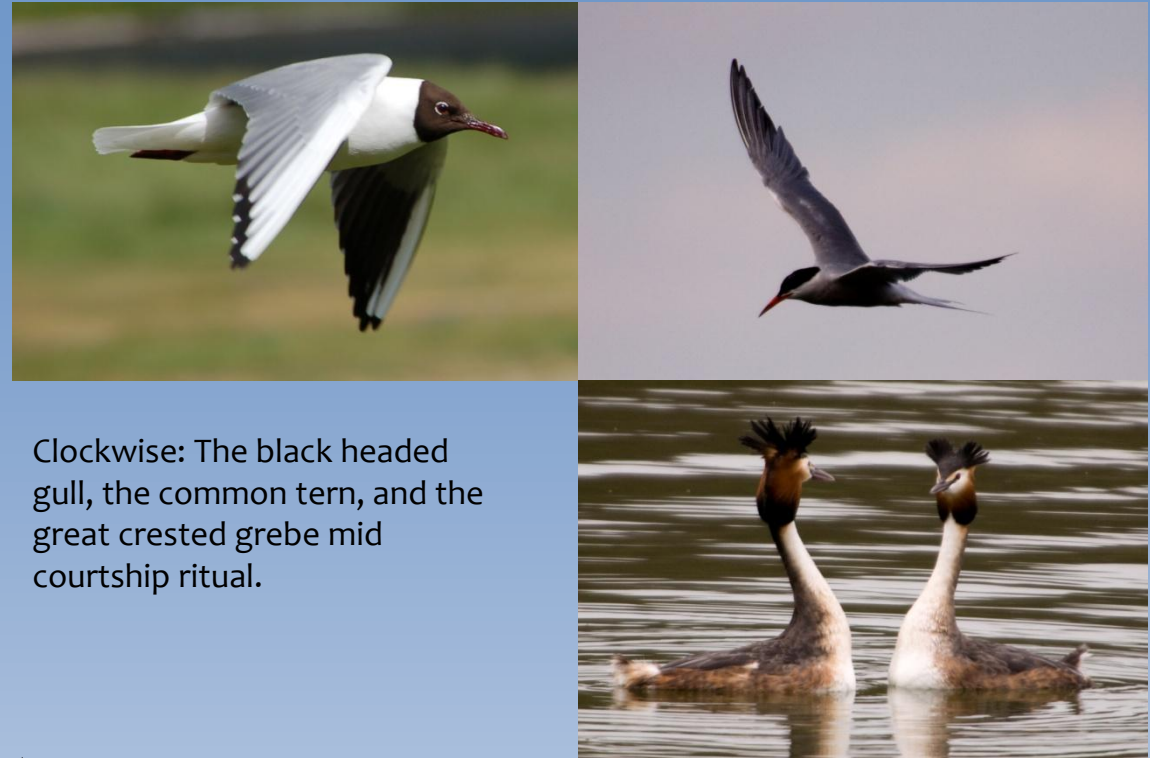


VALLEY CREEK HIDE

RESERVOIR RESIDENTS

Overlooking the south-west corner of the reservoir, Valley Creek Hide offers superb views of many species of waterfowl. Whilst an array of species can be enjoyed year round, it is in the winter time that the reservoir truly comes to life. Flying in from Siberia and Scandinavia, the reservoir hosts vast flocks of over-wintering birds such as the coot and tufted duck. Other notable visitors include diving ducks such as the greater scaup, pochard and the delightfully elegant great crested grebe. Up above the waves, vast numbers of black headed gulls can often be seen soaring alongside the common tern, which delights visitors with its stunning displays of aerial acrobatics.



Clockwise: The black headed gull, the common tern, and the great crested grebe mid courtship ritual.



From left to right: Common blue damselfly, great crested newt, and the common frog.

THE PEOPLE'S POND

Situated close to the hide you will find Valley Creek pond. The pond, along with its viewing platform, was built by community volunteers in 2008 as an environmental education resource for local children. Since its construction a diverse range of aquatic plants, invertebrates and amphibians have colonised the pond including frogs, toads, pond skaters, greater water boatman and an array of colourful damselflies such as the common blue. The pond is also home to one very special reserve resident; the nationally rare and protected great crested newt. It is known to breed successfully in a number of ponds like this one around the reserve, making Grafham Water Nature Reserve a prized site for this endangered species. Occasionally they can be spotted foraging within the surrounding grasslands for a range of prey species.



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