

Walk Highlights

Water voles live in burrows in the banks of the river. They feed on the plants along the river edge and are often seen swimming across the river. Listen out for the 'plop' as they jump into the water to warn other water voles of potential danger. There are fewer water voles on our rivers than there used to be, partly due to unsympathetic bank management. The Wildlife Trust has improved the Navigation to help water voles by putting in more plants along the river edge.



Water vole © Environment Agency

Southern damselflies are a very rare insect. They are only found in a handful of places across Europe and the Itchen Valley is one of three national strongholds. They are found around well vegetated margins of rivers and ditches. The Wildlife Trust is creating new ditches to provide the opportunity for southern damselfly to thrive again.



Southern damselfly © Jim Rouquette

Atlantic salmon live the majority of their lives in the sea and migrate to their native river to spawn in the winter. There are several gravel beds which are important salmon spawning areas between Bishopstoke and Allbrook. Look out for clean mounds of gravel on the river bed in January and February where the salmon have laid their eggs in nests called 'redds'. You may also see fish passes by old locks which help salmon and other fish migrate upstream.



Atlantic salmon © Andre Nekrasov

The Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project is a Heritage Lottery Fund project managed by the Wildlife Trust, preserving an internationally important chalk river system for future generations. Find out more about the Itchen Navigation at:

www.itchennavigation.org.uk



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WATER VOLE WAY Bishopstoke



© Dennis Bright

Distance:
3.5 miles / 5.5km

Walking time:
2 hours

Terrain: flat/
gentle slope

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Water Vole Way



Look out for water voles swimming across the Itchen Navigation and damselflies hovering over the river margin as you walk the old towpath.

- 1 From Bishopstoke Road, take the Itchen Navigation path heading upstream for 1.5 miles.
- 2 At Highbridge Road turn right along the road.
- 3 After crossing a bridge over the river, the pavement changes sides of the road. Turn off the road onto the footpath here.
- 4 Continue through the gate.
- 5 Where the path forks, take the right hand path south.
- 6 Continue straight on through the gate and over a footbridge.
- 7 Go through the gate and over another footbridge.
- 8 Go up the steps into the wood. Follow the fence line, keeping it on your left.
- 9 Go through the gate and turn right onto Church Road.
- 10 Turn right onto Oakbank Road and follow the path to Stoke Lock.

