

## 5 Bait's Bite Lock

The lock and waterside structures are favourite places for birds such as grey wagtails to feed. The grey wagtail is easily recognised by its habit of bobbing its tail as it walks along. Cross over the lock bridge and turn left to follow the path along the riverbank.



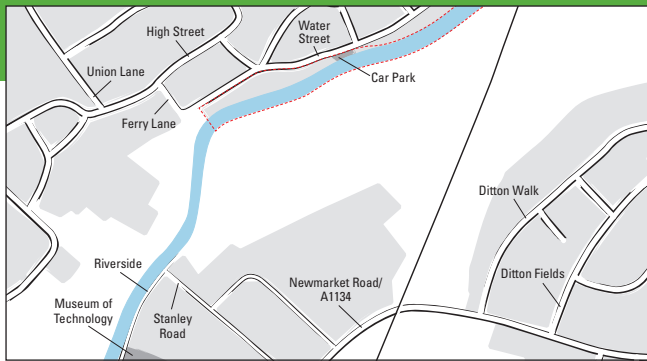
Grey wagtail

## 6 North River Bank

The towpath along this side of the river is called the Hayling Way. "Hayling" is an old form of the word hauling, which refers to the towing of trade boats along the river. Alongside the path are rows of pollarded willows. Pollarding is a traditional practice of managing trees by cutting them 2-3m above the ground. New shoots then grow, out of reach of grazing animals, and can be harvested years later.

Throughout the year, the hedgerow along the path is alive with birds feeding on the berries of the hawthorn and elder or nesting under the dense cover of the brambles. Look out for the tiny brown wren, the red-breasted robin and the vibrantly coloured blue tit. You will also see occasional piles of logs, old hollow trees and small dead trees. A wide variety of creatures, especially insects, use dead wood as shelter and for food. Carefully lift a log and you may find centipedes, snails, beetles and millipedes living underneath.

You are now nearing the end of your walk. Leave the river path by the small car park and continue left along Water Street. This will lead you back to the footbridge over the river.



### Access

This walk takes approximately 2.5 hours. The route is flat with some kissing gates and a few steps by the lock. In Winter, some sections may be muddy. The second half of the walk, from Bait's Bite Lock to Water Street bridge, is suitable for wheelchair users. There is free roadside parking on Water Street and Riverside.

### Bus Information

Bus stops are located on Chesterton High Street, Horningsea Road in Fen Ditton and Newmarket Road. Detailed information about buses is available at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk).

### About the Wildlife Trust

Your local Wildlife Trust protects the special wildlife and habitats of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough. We are a charity dependent on voluntary contributions. If you would like more information about our work in Cambridgeshire, please contact: The Wildlife Trust, The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, CB23 6DH.

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# Bait's Bite and Back

A riverside walk to the north of Cambridge  
Approx. 4.3 miles/7km



Protecting wildlife  
close to home

# Bait's Bite and Back

The River Cam is an important and beautiful habitat that meanders through Cambridge. As the river leaves the city, bustling streets give way to tranquil flood meadows. To demonstrate this transition, the walk starts in Chesterton and heads out in to the countryside.

## 1 Stourbridge Common

From Water Street, take the footbridge over the river and follow the path to your left. The large flood meadow on your right is Stourbridge Common.

For many years, this large area of open grassland was used as a site for trading fairs and cattle grazing. Today, it is an important open space where, in Summer, you can see the purple-pink flowers of spiny restharrow among the long grasses.

You can often hear the *eest* or *tissip* call of the meadow pipits or you may see the distinctive common snipe. Snipe have very long bills to enable them to find their food in soft mud.



## 2 Ditton Meadows

Looking across Ditton Meadows you will see the tall rushes along the ditches swaying in the breeze. These ditches are full of frogs in the Spring and tadpoles in the Summer and are good fishing spots for grey heron. Grass snakes enjoy the long grass of the meadow – look out for them basking in the



Summer sun. Insects such as dragonflies and butterflies also enjoy the warmer months. Meadow brown and small tortoiseshell butterflies can often be seen feeding on the Summer flowers.

## 3 Fen Ditton

The path leads away from the river and into the village of Fen Ditton. Leave the meadows via the kissing gate and, from the roadside, look through the gate ahead of you. In this paddock are two very large black poplar trees. These native trees would have traditionally been used for timber and were once a familiar sight. Now they are rare across Britain.



Bear right along the road and turn left into Church Street. In the evening, you might see common pipistrelle bats flying overhead. The river, trees, fields and farmland around Fen Ditton are all good breeding areas for insects such as moths, which are food for bats. At the end of Church Street, follow the footpath alongside the recreation ground and at the end turn left along the lane. Turn right to walk through an area of grassland towards the river.



## 4 South River Bank

The path along the south bank of the river passes through areas of scrub, grassland and woodland. Throughout the year, you will hear the distinctive laughing call of the green woodpecker. In Spring, look for the pale pink cuckooflower in the meadows.

