

Nature Reserves

There are 8 Nature Reserves within the Stort Valley. If you live in Harlow, Bishops Stortford, Sawbridgeworth or Roydon you will have a stunning nature reserve within walking distance of your house.



1. [Hunsdon & Eastwick Meads](#)

Hunsdon & Eastwick Meads is one of the finest surviving unimproved grassland sites in Herts & Middlesex. In the winter the mead floods bringing in many different wading birds. For over 600 years the Mead has been managed on the ancient Lammas system under which local farmers graze their cattle in late summer after a July hay cut.

2. [Parndon Moat Marsh](#)

Parndon Moat Marsh used to be a 12th Century moated manor house and mill. The eastern side was once Burnt Mill Sewage Works. The site contains the existing moat, drainage ditches, sedge beds, and ponds in the main part of the site. The banks by the roadside have attractive meadow flora and a small woodland.



3. [Maymeads Marsh](#)

Maymeads Marsh is also known as Honey Mead. There is an observation hide so that visitors can watch wildlife across the pond and marsh. Between 1983 and 1984 the site was changed from an expanse of damp grassland to include a large pond with reedbeds and marshland.

4. [Marshgate Spings](#)

Marshgate Springs consist of marshland and mature woodland. The marshland contains a network of ditches and reed and sedge beds, supporting birds such as sedge and reed warblers. Grasshopper warblers have also been heard. The main trees are oak and hornbeam with some ash, hazel, and willow. It is a lovely place to visit in late spring when the bluebells are in flower.



5. [Pishiobury Park](#)

Pishiobury Park is important for wildlife and is made up of open parkland with a woodland boundary, scattered woodland blocks, a natural spring, pond and areas of hawthorn scrub. It is a great place for the family to have a walk and picnic. There are also long horn cattle on site!

6. [Sawbridgeworth Marsh](#)

Sawbridgeworth Marsh has several open drainage ditches and two ponds rich in aquatic life. The areas of sedge, reeds and tall fen vegetation provide a valuable nesting habitat for reed and sedge warblers. In summer the reserve is alive with insects.



7. [Thorley Flood Pound](#)

Thorley Flood Pound is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with a mixture of tall wash grassland, base-rich marsh and ill-drained permanent grassland. These areas provide great habitats for snipe, water rail, wildfowl and other ground nesting birds. The site can be reached from the tow path near Spellbrook.

8. [Rushy Mead](#)

Rushy Mead was historically a sewage works and since this was removed it has become a great reserve for wetland habitat, the old ditches have made the reserve hold water, creating wet woodland known as Alder carr, reed and sedge beds and more recently a large scrape.

9. [Glen Faba & Stort Pit](#)

Situated at the junction of the Lee and the Stort, Glen Faba and Stort Pit were both formed as a result of gravel extraction. They are regionally important for waterbirds in the winter, especially Gadwall and Widgeon. You can access the site from both the Stort and the Lee Navigation towpaths.