

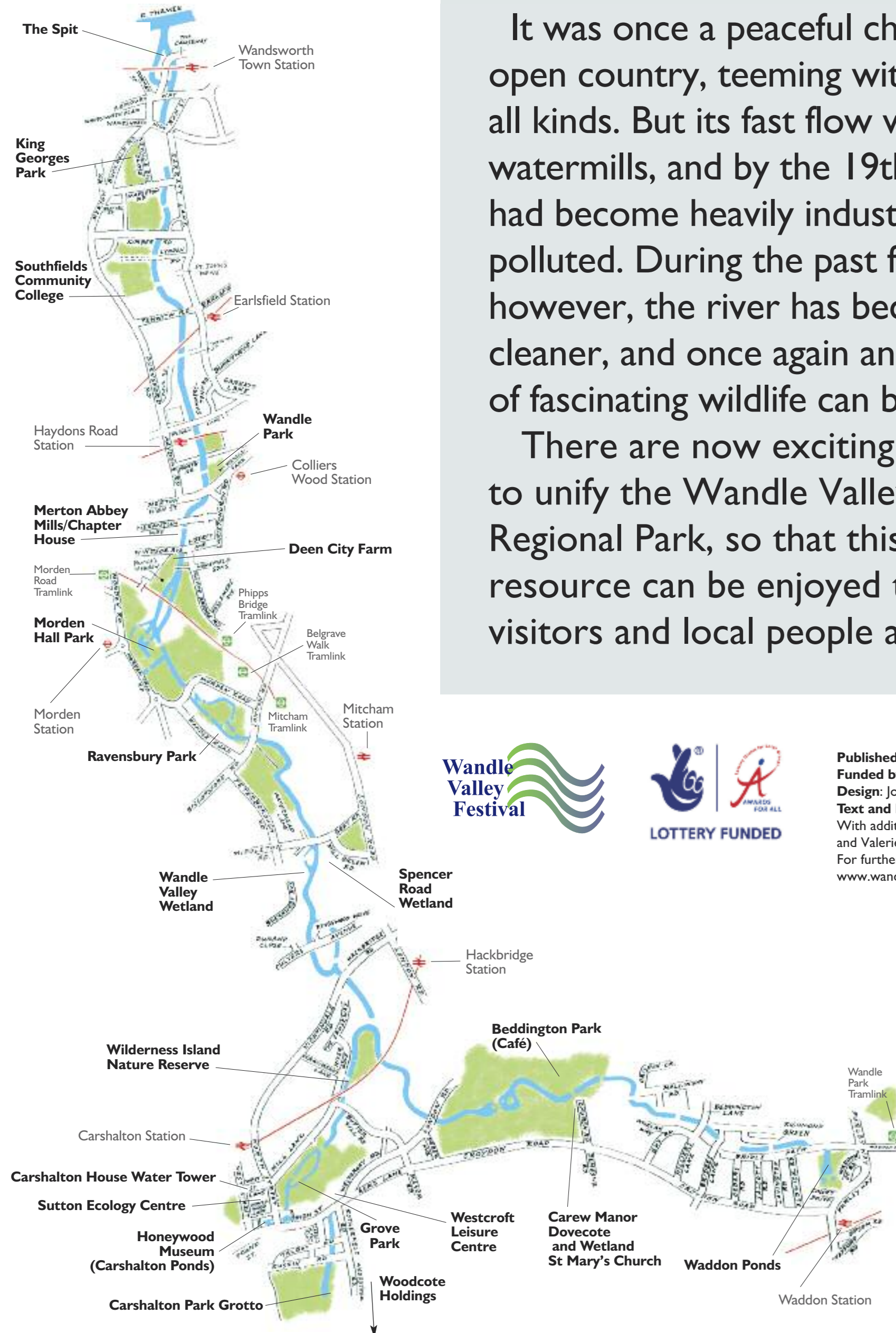
# River Wandle Fish/Animals

'A ribbon of countryside in London'

The Wandle rises in Waddon in the Borough of Croydon and Carshalton in the Borough of Sutton. It flows for 12 miles through Merton down to the Thames at Wandsworth.

It was once a peaceful chalk stream in open country, teeming with wildlife of all kinds. But its fast flow was ideal for watermills, and by the 19th century it had become heavily industrialised and polluted. During the past fifty years, however, the river has become much cleaner, and once again an abundance of fascinating wildlife can be seen.

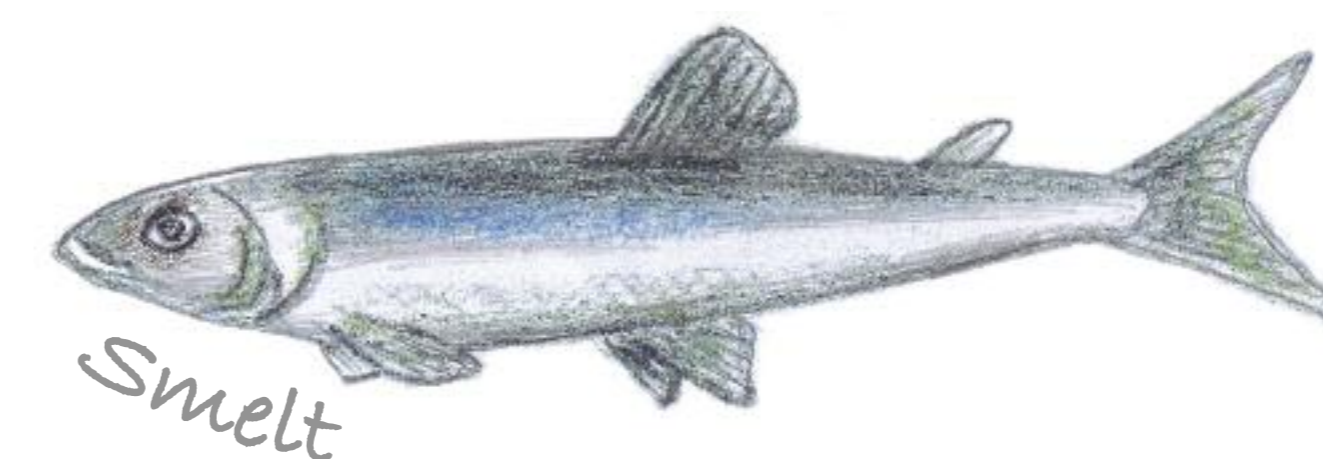
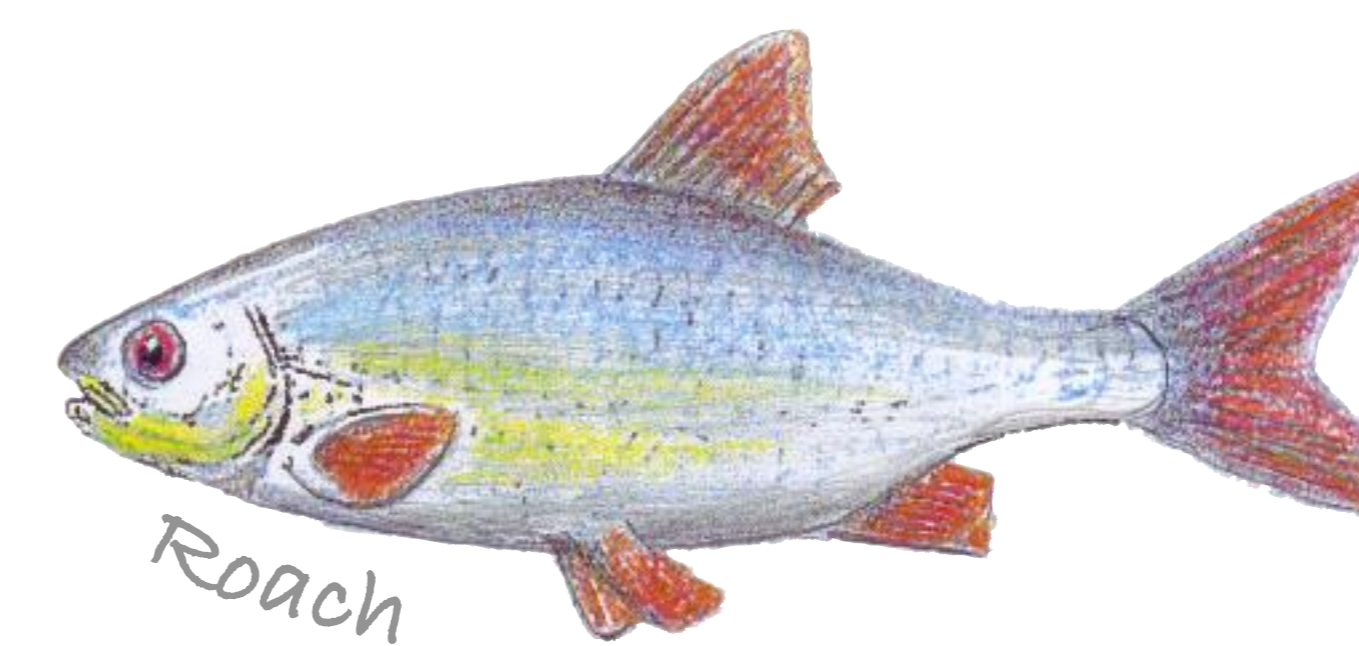
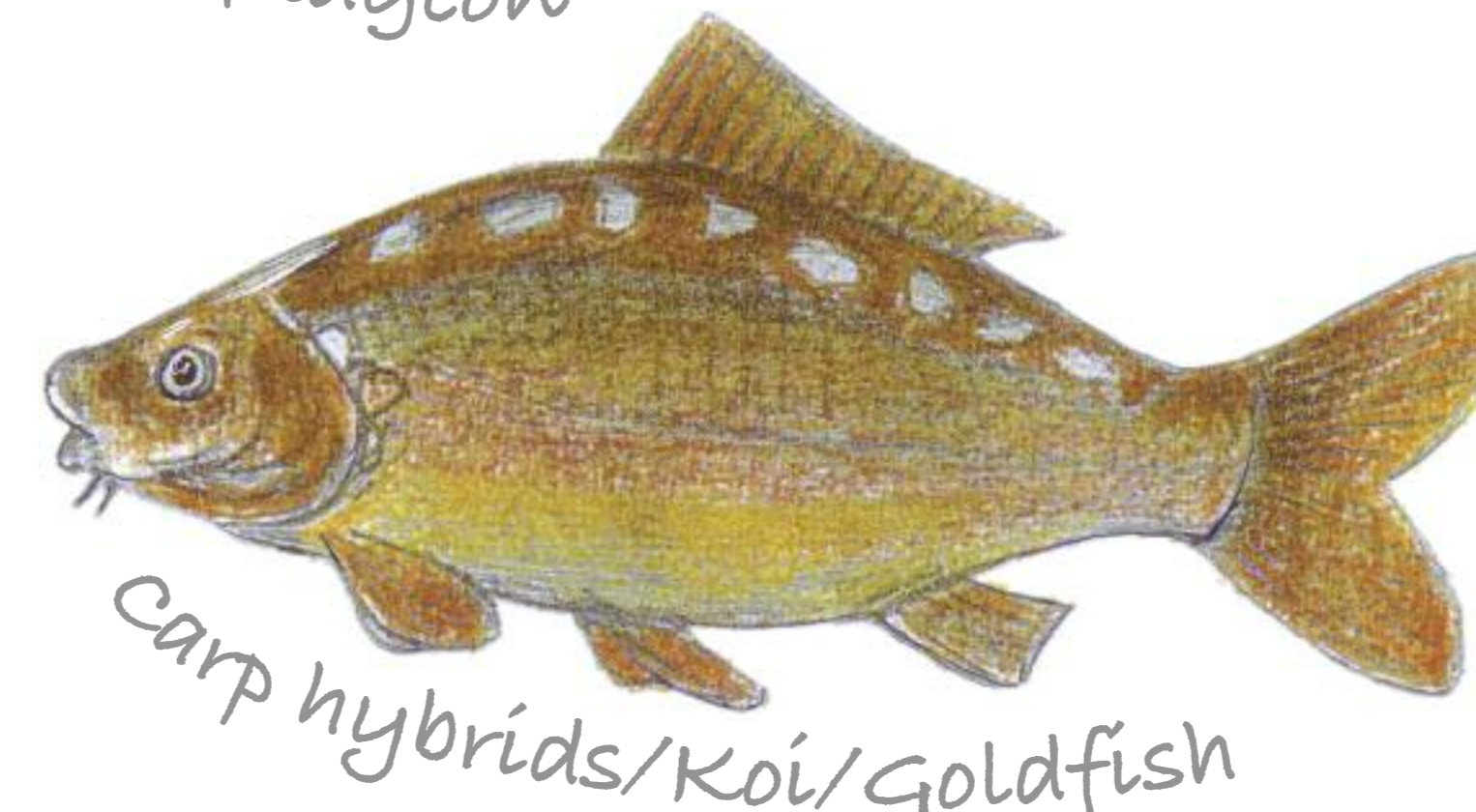
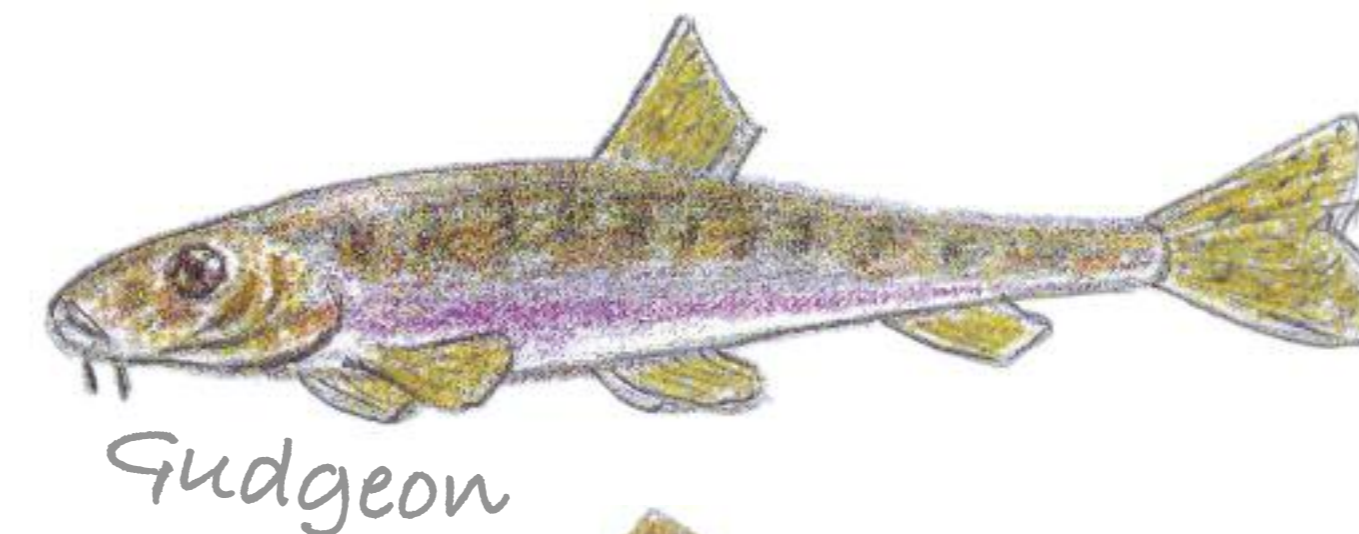
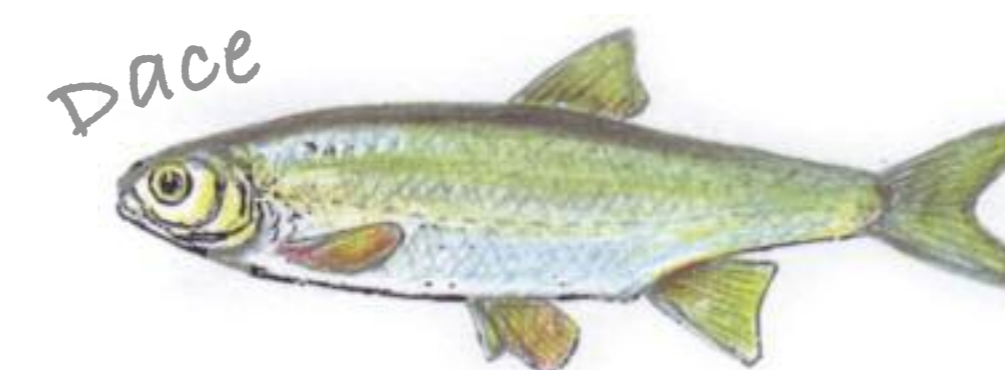
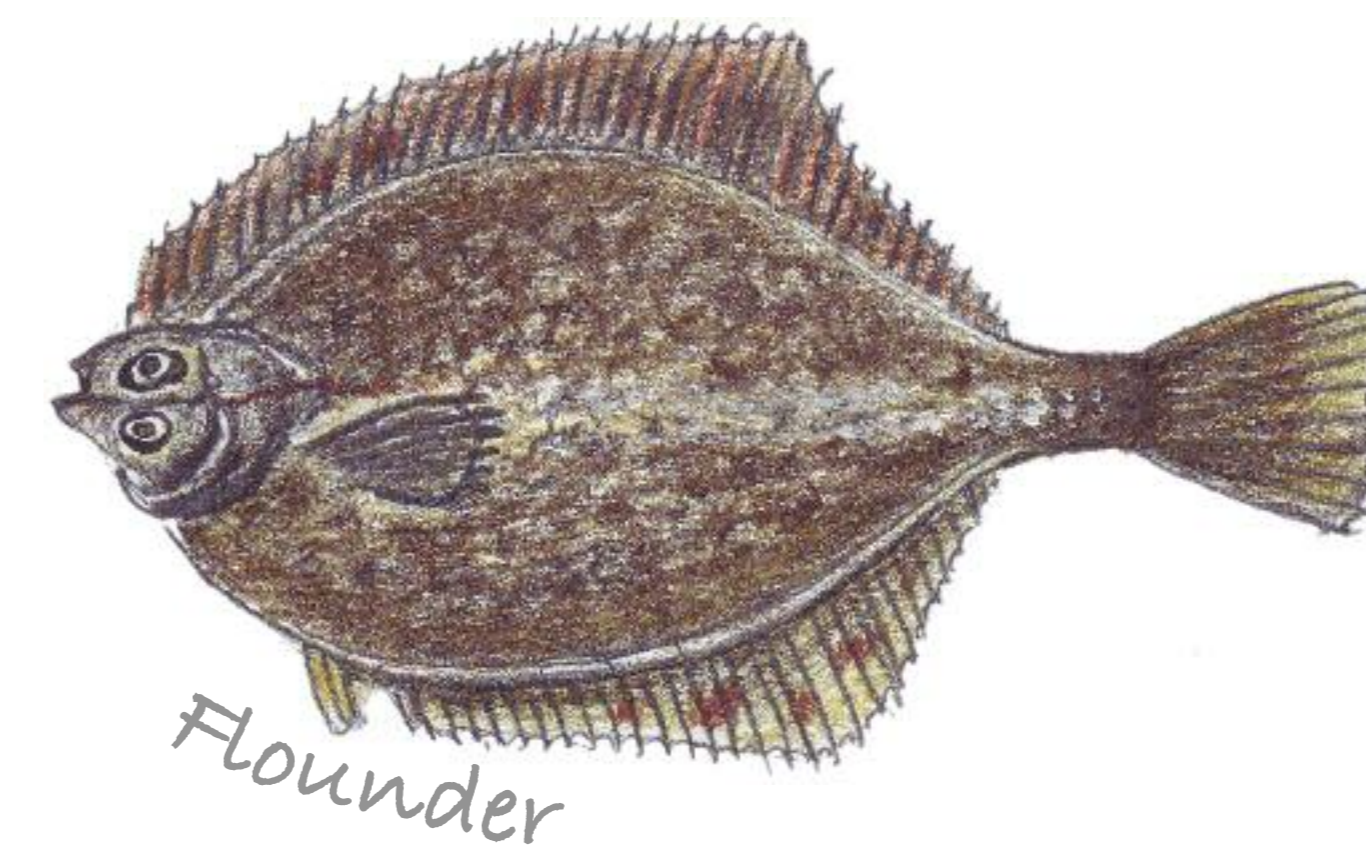
There are now exciting plans afoot to unify the Wandle Valley as a Regional Park, so that this priceless resource can be enjoyed to the full by visitors and local people alike.



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## Fish from the Wandle

The mainly swift flowing Wandle with some quieter stretches holds a variety of species. Like the **trout**, **chub** and **dace** thrive well in oxygenated water and are primarily surface feeders. Along with the **stickleback**, the **chub** is by far the most abundant fish in the river and can attain weights of several pounds. **Roach** and predatory **perch** are mid-water species while **gudgeon** are bottom feeders. Other species including bream and **barbel** are present with **flounders** and **mitten crabs** in the Wandle delta. **Koi carp** and the occasional **goldfish** can sometimes be seen having been released into the river at some stage. **Pike** lurk in quiet reaches preying on fish and sometimes water birds. **Eels** live mainly in the lower river.



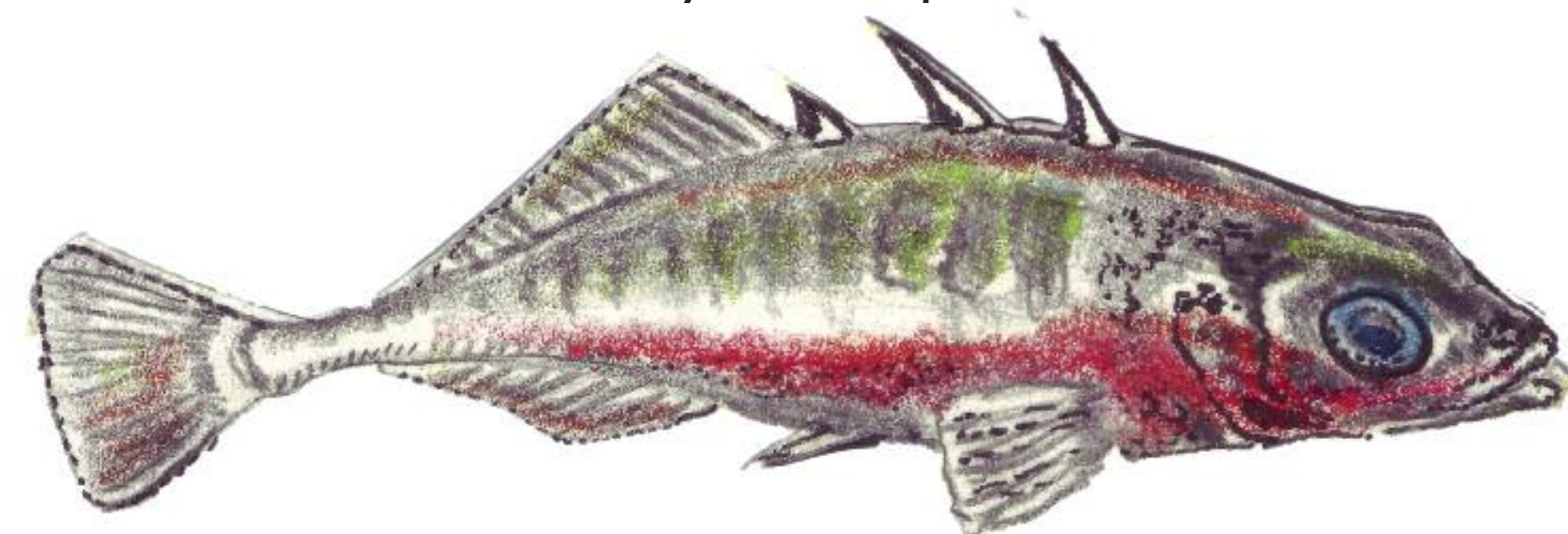
## Brown Trout

Over three hundred years ago Isaak Walton, who wrote 'The Compleat Angler', often fished the Wandle, well known for its specimen **trout**. Then gradually, industrial pollution 'muddied the waters' and the river declined. In recent years water quality has steadily improved, assisted by regular clean ups' by enthusiastic volunteers.

Trout are returning, as yet in small numbers. Along with other initiatives, a project for local schools to rear trout fry in the classroom for stocking the Wandle will help. Sea Trout may also swim upriver from the Thames and breed.

## Stickleback

The **three-spined Stickleback** or 'Tiddler' is very common in the Wandle especially in the slower runs. Sticklebacks are the only British species to build a nest.



In spring, the male, in breeding finery of red and silver, constructs a barrel-shaped nest from pieces of dead vegetation and entices females to enter and lay eggs. Upon hatching, the male vigorously guards the young sticklebacks until they can fend for themselves.



## Serotine Bat

A large powerful species confined to the South and South East of Britain. Can live for up to 15 years.



## Water Vole



Famous as 'Ratty' of Wind In The Willows, it is not a rat at all but a **Water Vole**. Slightly smaller than the Brown Rat, it has a blunt 'face', concealed ears and shorter tail, typical of all Vole species. Its diet consists solely of waterside vegetation. Once common along the Wandle, plans are afoot to re-introduce the animal to stretches of the river where habitat is suitable. But, keep a look out... he may be here already!

## Brown Rat



The **Brown Rat** has a typical pointed 'rat face', prominent ears and a long tail. Like the Water Vole he is an excellent swimmer, digs burrows and breeds along the river bank. Regarded as a pest, the rat will eat anything.