

RSPB Rainham Marshes

Marshland Discovery Zone

Brief

Design and produce an educational exhibition aimed at school children visiting the 'Marshland Discovery Zone' – a learning centre inside a converted shipping container, nestled deep in the marshland at Rainham Marshes. The permanent display was to incorporate existing cartoon characters used by the RSPB to showcase the rich history of the marshes.

Solution

The layout of the main panels interweaves the many historical facets of life on the marshes and follows the 'footprints through time' of both humans and wildlife, pausing along the way to reveal key points in context.

In keeping with the container interior, a timber substrate was chosen and full colour graphics were applied via a new ink jet process. An opaque white layer was used for some graphics to give an intriguing visual effect.

Result


The learning centre has been a hit with visitors of all ages. The client was extremely happy with the striking, positive visual language used, and has since commissioned chacha to lead a complete overhaul of all the wayfinding and interpretation signage throughout the RSPB site.

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BIRDS OF THE MARSHES

coot



Don't mistake us for our cousins, the moorhens - we have much more stylish white beaks.

moorhen



We like to chomp on the bugs and plants at the water's edge. We look so much better than coots with our red beaks.


You can find coots and moorhens everywhere there's a lot of water, but coots have better feet for paddling.

little grebe




We're quite shy but listen out for our gurgling calls. We may look like little balls of fluff - but we're brilliant divers.

stonechat



We'd do well in a bush tucker trial! We eat all kinds of insects. Our call sounds like chucking two 'stones' together - it's the 'chat' in our name.


reed bunting



We eat seeds and insects that we find in the... you guessed it... reeds!

In summer, the boys have jet-black heads with a stylish white moustache.


lapwing



Three cheers for the crows and sheep. Without them munching the grass, it would be too long for us.

In the spring, watch for us looping about on our floppy wings calling, 'peewit, peewit'.


redshank



Shank means leg... so guess the colour of our legs!

We need lots of wet grass and mud to probe in to find the food we like.


little egret



England used to be too far north for us, but with warmer weather we now call it home.


We wriggle our bright yellow toes to attract fish and frogs and then gobble them up.

grey heron



Our long necks and dagger bills are perfect for hunting. If we can catch something, we'll eat it.

mute swan



We're soppy old romantics - we stay with our mates for life. You will find us on deeper water where we can reach the bottom with our long necks.

SUMMER WILDLIFE

marsh frog



Ooh la la! We're not from these parts. We originally come from places like France but we feel quite at home in England. Most of us are green but some are more blue and yellow. Check out our bubblegum cheek pouches that make our mad croaking all the louder.

reedmace



Don't you hate being mistaken for someone else? Most people think that we're called bulrushes.

In summer, look for our old fluffy seedheads... great food for birds and homes for insects.

dragonflies



The parents give away the main difference between these two - the dragonflies are bigger than the more dainty damselfly.

You will also find that dragonflies have two sets of wings laying back with their wings laying flat while damselflies hold them behind their back.

damselflies



Find us skimming the water for insects or snatching them from leaves, but we have to avoid being eaten by frogs, birds and hawks.

water vole



We're pretty shy and quite rare, but keep an eye out in the ditches as this is one of the best places anywhere to spot us.

common reed



Common by name, common by nature - at least we are here at Rainham Marshes. We're all over the marshes with our feet in the water.

Beaks love fitting in and out of the reeds - it's a great hiding place, but you can still hear their escape can still hear their escape even when they're invisible.

WINTER WILDLIFE

water vole



We're even more secretive in winter. We will probably be in our network of burrows in the ditches.

We like to eat reeds as well as other plants that grow near water. You can see where we've been as we bite off snails at exactly 45 degrees.

reedmace



Each of our sausage-like seedheads can have one hundred thousand tiny seeds.

Grobs like to hibernate inside our seedy heads, so there's still lots for birds to eat.

gadwall



Don't mistake us for mallards! We have a little white patch on our wings unlike those mallards who have blue bits.

wigeon



Listen out for the boys whistling to their friends.

teal



We're the smallest ducks around. We even have a shade of green named after the colour of a male teal's face. Like most birds the boys have the prettiest colours.

pintail



Brrr, it's too chilly up north in winter so we like to have a holiday in the UK and hang about with lots of our friends.

We're not as common as other ducks so look out for our slimmer bodies and pointed tails.

peregrine



Vroom... Move over, Lewis Hamilton - I can fly as fast as a Formula One racing car!

lapwings



We like being together in the winter; sometimes we hang out in big crows.

When you catch us in the sun, all the metallic greens and purples in our feathers will show up.

wintering duck

We all like to dip into the water to gobble up plants, bugs and little fish.