



# Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

Issue Twelve  
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## Supporting RSPB Rainham Marshes comes in many guises...

The reserve continues to evolve but can not do so without public support. This takes many forms, from the sterling work of our volunteers who give their time freely both inside the centre and out on the marsh,



Calvin's School Fair

to donating nest-boxes or plants for the wildlife garden or raising money through events or managing a pin badge box or two.

Within the last month £420 was raised by selling the late Ken Barrett's natural history books, kindly donated by his family and a huge owl box was presented

to us by Vernon Merchant from the Belmont Allotment Association from Grays.

Two local Wildlife Explorer members have also been out raising money with Calvin from Abbott's Hall School in Stanford-le-Hope holding an RSPB stall at his summer fair and another nine year old, Ben Green, doing a sponsored birdwatch whilst on holiday in the Great Lakes in Canada where he was also lucky enough to help with some bird ringing.

So, as you can see anyone can contribute to keeping the reserve a fantastic place for not only the local wildlife but for all those people who may wish to visit it in the future. If you feel you can help us in any way please do not hesitate to get in touch and many thanks to those who already do so.



The Owl Box



Ben with a Blue Jay

**Reserve Work:** In July, we completed the breeding season bird surveys and were very pleased to discover a second brood of tufted ducks and another two broods of shelducks. Cetti's warblers bred for the first time with young being seen in late July.

During our annual insect surveys, we discovered at least 12 glow-worms (which were all glowing!), some unusual moths including the scarce tree-lichen beauty which is only half an inch long but will have flown here from Europe, and a healthy population of ringlet butterflies.

As part of the national bat survey we have been out on several warm evenings and have so far revealed the presence of noctule, serotine, Leisler's and two species of pipistrelle which hints at the wealth of nocturnal insect life on the menu!



Howard Vaughan

Tree-lichen Beauty



David Preston

Small Red-eyed Damselfly on the new pond

The centre garden continue to bloom and sweet peas are picked for the café tables every day while marsh frogs, smooth newts, dragonflies and great diving beetles are all now calling the pond home.

We are noticing that the wildlife garden benches are already becoming a favourite place for visitors to unwind.

If you wish to join our e-news group to receive future Marsh Matters please email and let us know.

All the images used in Marsh Matters are taken at RSPB Rainham Marshes.

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**What's been about: July:** Little egrets continued to increase and by the 23<sup>rd</sup> we had a new record of 56 which included a chunky yellow-billed juvenile that was frequently reported as a great white egret! Returning wader passage was light but continuous with peaks of nine **whimbrel**, 15 **little ringed plovers**, 12 **greenshank** and 25 **common sandpipers** along with single **knot** (29<sup>th</sup>), **wood sandpiper** (9<sup>th</sup>), **spotted redshank** (1<sup>st</sup>) and **golden plover** (24<sup>th</sup>). **Yellow-legged gulls** slowly increased to a peak of 26 on 31<sup>st</sup> and several **Mediterranean gulls** were seen.



Priscille Preston

House Sparrow



Beth Nighthingale

Four-spot Chaser

Small parties of **common terns** patrolled the Thames and a **kittiwake** on 5<sup>th</sup> and a **siskin** (4<sup>th</sup>) were both unseasonal.

The centre feeders are attracting good numbers of **goldfinches** and **greenfinches** as well as an impressive flock of over 50 **house sparrows**. **Yellow wagtails** re-appeared amongst the cattle from mid-month and two **crossbills** were seen on 31<sup>st</sup> when the bird of the month, a **black kite**, was

watched for several minutes as it cruised over the reserve. This continental bird of prey has been seen with increasing regularity in Britain in recent years. Juvenile **marsh harriers** started to move through from 22<sup>nd</sup> with two on several dates.



Howard Vaughan

Wasp Spider

With a warm spell at the end of July it was good to see many butterfly species on the wing although the actual numbers were still low. Hundreds of **small red-eyed damselflies** hatched out on Aveley Pools and **brown hawkers** took to the wing.

**Wasp spiders** are appearing in the long grass and some are already pretty big.

Why not come along and find your one for yourself?



Malcolm Fish

Stoat with Water Vole

**RSPB Rainham Marshes Country Fayre: Saturday 20 September!** Put it in your diary now as it will be a great day out for all the family with many craft and produce stalls, refreshments, art exhibitions and displays by many local organisations. There will be a variety of fun activities for kids of all ages as well as Punch & Judy, Morris dancing, sheep shearing, a live band and guided walks. No need to book, just turn up and enjoy! The reserve will be open as normal that day.

### August is chock-a-block with events for all the family to enjoy!

**Family Fun With Wildlife:** all ages welcome, every Sunday 10.30 am-12.30 pm, **Creepy Crawly Days:** ages 8-12, every Tuesday 10 am-3 pm, **Helping Hands Day:** ages 12-16 Thursday 14 10 am-3 pm, **Teddy Bears Picnic:** under 6's, Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 3 September 11 am-1 pm. The last late night opening will be on Thursday 4 September until 9.00 pm which also includes a **Moth and Bat Walk** from 7 pm. **Booking is essential** for all of these fun days, please contact us for more information on these and any of our other events.

### What's On? Regular Events:

**Weekly:** Wednesday : **Birdwatch** (9.30am start)  
 Thursday **Healthy Living Walks** (12.15pm start)  
 Friday : **A Walk With Wildlife** (10am start)

**Monthly: Wardens Walk** (11am start) Sunday 14 September & Sunday 12 October

**Wildlife Explorer Group** (10am start) and **Kids Birdwatching Club** (9.30am start) : **August:** Saturday 9 and Saturday 16 respectively. **September:** both on Saturday 13.

**For more information about the events, RSPB and Wildlife Explorer Group**

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