



Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

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Elephants and Emeralds:

In early July we hosted a very successful Moths Count event in the wonderful woodland at RSPB Rainham Marshes. Over thirty people stayed till after midnight, glued to the bright lights used to attract the moths!



A large number of species were caught (and later released!) and included some quite stunning creatures such as the positively polished **burnished brass** (a), the subtle (but rare) **obscure wainscot** (b), the elegant yellow **swallowtail** (c) and **large emerald** (d) and the tiny **diamond backs** and **lime-speck pugs** (e).



The names themselves conjure up exotic images to mind but nothing quite prepares you for the whirring vision in lime green and pink that is an **elephant hawk moth!** (f)



This above all elicited the most oohs! and aahs! from those who had stayed till the end of a wonderful summers evening.



All images by Howard Vaughan

Reserve News: The annual clearing of poisonous **ragwort** has started in earnest with the help from four team challenges (so far); two each from Goldman Sachs and HSBC with additional help from our willing volunteers. Meanwhile, in preparation for the new scrape developments on Aveley Pools; we have started moving water from there back towards Purfleet Scrape which will hopefully act as a draw to wading birds and duck right in front of the visitor centre.

We now have a new pedigree **limousin bull** called Romeo, who is already living up to his name and the herd have been finishing off the job started by our new warden, Rob Martyr, with the quad bike and mower out on Purfleet Scrape.



Mowing the grass has never been more fun!

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 by staff, volunteers and visitors.

What's been about: July: There was a steady passage of waders during the month with up to six whistling **whimbrel** daily and bobbing **common sandpipers** reached 12 by month end. Two **sanderling** and 13 **dunlin** on 15th were noteworthy and **little egrets** peaked at 26 on 3rd including the first juveniles which may have come from the big colony on our reserve at Northward Hill in Kent. **Common gulls** moved up river in the first week and at least six different **Mediterranean gulls** were logged along with over 20 **yellow-legged gulls**. A **tawny owl** was heard on 3rd and was probably the rarest bird of the month! The first juvenile



Green Sandpiper
a regular in front of the hide

Tony Coombs



Andy Tweed

Common Sandpipers prefer the Thames foreshore to the pools

a **clouded yellow**, the second site record of **purple hairstreak** and species number 31 for the list with a **silver washed fritillary** on the 16th. Five species of **bat** were recorded on the 28th along with a staggering (for us!) 15 **glow-worms** which are of course a beetle and not a worm at all! Love struck **Oak eggar moths** have been seen zooming around and a huge caterpillar was even found while other species such as the **red underwing** and **knot grass** have been attracted to the lights on the visitor centre at night.

marsh harrier of the season was seen quartering the reserve on 30th-31st. A **spotted flycatcher** was seen on 20th and hinted that they may be breeding nearby while a **tree pipit** on 31st was the first real passage migrant. Three broods of **shoveler** and **tufted duck** and two of **gadwall** made for the best wildfowl breeding season in many years.

On the warmer days butterflies were seen in profusion including several **brown argus**, **wall browns**,



Knot Grass

Chris Slade



Chris Slade

Red Underwing Moth

Do not forget to check out www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/sightings.asp or www.elbf.co.uk for the latest reserve wildlife sightings.

Sign up at www.facebook.com and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.



Howard Vaughan



Oak Eggar caterpillar and moth

Piscilla Preston

Events: As we head into the summer holidays there are a whole host of family events with **Teddy Bears Picnics** on August 12 and 26 and September 3 and **Family Fun With Wildlife** days on August 8, 14, 20, 24 and 30. Booking is essential. September sees two **Bat and Moth Nights** on Friday 4 and Tuesday 15 and do not forget that on September 19-20 we are holding our annual **Country Fayre** so watch this space for more details. Do not forget that the amazing **Marshland Discovery Zone** is open every day so why not pop in to find out what is going on down on the marsh? Hope to see you there!

What's On? Regular Events:

Weekly: **Wednesday** : **Birdwatch** (9.30am start) **Thursday**: **Healthy Living Walk** (12.15pm start) **Friday** : **Beginners Birdwatch** (10am start)

Monthly: **Rangers Ramble** (1pm start) on the second Sunday of each month

Wildlife Explorer Group (10.30am-12.30pm) and **Kids Birdwatching Club** (10.00am-12.30pm):

August: Saturday 15 (KBC only—No WEx this month) **September:** both Saturday 12

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

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