



White-tailed wanderer lures birdwatchers from far and wide.

July 7 will be remembered for a long time at Rainham Marshes as the day that a glorious [white-tailed plover](#) was found on Aveley Pools by Sam Shippey whilst leading the Wednesday Walk. This elegant leggy wading bird is closely related to our lapwing and had only been recorded about five times previously in the UK since 1975! This bird had been seen for two days in May in Lancashire before heading the next day all the way to Holland. It had been missing for some weeks and so within minutes of the news breaking birdwatchers began to flock to the reserve with many turning up in suits and work clothes with a hastily grabbed pair of binoculars. City workers coming from Fenchurch Street station were even getting directions to the reserve and its visitor from ticket staff who had suddenly had a flurry of 'ticket to Purfleet!' enquiries and were curious as to what was going on!



Tony Coombs

With the help of our volunteers, we kept the reserve open until 10pm and 550 people managed to get to see this special bird before dark and everyone went away happy.

White-tailed plovers are normally found from the Iraqi marshes all the way to Central Asia. Why this one has strayed off course is a mystery but it was obviously suffering from wanderlust as it was gone the next day before relocating to the Bristol Channel at WWT Slimbridge for two days and then back east a day later for a ten day holiday at RSPB Dungeness in Kent. Who knows where it shall be found next?



Sam Shippey

Reserve news: July 13 saw our Ten Year Anniversary event which was primarily aimed as a big thank you to our funders and key supporters. RSPB Chief Executives old and new graced the reserve as well as a very jovial Bill Oddie who still enthuses about all the RSPB have achieved here. Wonder if the next ten years will go so quick?

We have maintained water levels on Aveley Pools and with the Shooting Butts Hide fully open we can look forward to an autumn of improved views and bigger spectacles!



Jonathan Lethbridge

Bill Oddie and Dr Mike Clarke (our new CEO) chat after lunch

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: One bird stole the show with a county's first **white-tailed plover** on the 7th. There was a good supporting cast of waders through the reserve with daily **whimbrel** (including 22 on 8th), **greenshank** (up to eight), **little ringed plovers** (up to 11), **ruff** (from 21st), **bar-tailed godwit** (23rd) and **turnstone** (25th) as well as good numbers of **green** and **common sandpipers**. Our locally bred **redshank** chicks got misidentified as wood sandpipers on several occasions. A family of four **avocets** arrived on 24th and **black-tailed godwits** peaked at 67 on 5th. A colour flagged individual was seen on several occasions and we are awaiting details of its movements.



Les Harrison

Green Sandpipers

The summering **merganser** reappeared on the 6th but 28 **common scoters** on the 26th were more expected on a gloomy summers day. **Yellow-legged gulls** steadily built up to over 30 towards month end and **Med gulls** became more regular while **sandwich terns** were seen on several dates which is unusual this far up river. Local **common tern** families could also be seen and three **Arctic terns** were seen on 25th.



Les Harrison

Common Lizard basking



Howard Vaughan

Chrysotoxum bicinctum - this hoverfly pretends to look like a wasp



Tony Coombs

Sphaerophoria scripta - a cute little hoverfly

Hobbies were actually quite scarce but **marsh harriers** were still seen most days and included two sightings of colour-tagged birds from the Isle of Sheppey. Two **crossbills** over on 6th were part of a larger local movement.

Insect life continued to flourish and as well as **dragonflies** and **butterflies** there were many pretty **hoverflies** to look at as well as glow-worms, **long-horn beetles** and the first **wasp spiders**. The **chicory** was in full bloom and attracting pollinators and **lizards**, **grass snakes**, **marsh frogs** and **water voles** kept the visitors happy with splendid performances!

Don't forget to check out www.rspb.org.uk/rainham or www.elbf.co.uk for the latest reserve wildlife sightings and reserve news. Sign up at www.facebook.com and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.

Events: The next **Be A Better Photographer** guided walks is on **Saturday August 21** (10am-1pm) while a **Dusk Walk** (7pm-10pm) will take place **August 26** and we will stay open till late for general visitors too. During the summer holidays there are frequent **Family Fun With Wildlife** and **Teddy Bears Picnic** events. Times and days vary for these two so please check the website of give us a ring for more information. On **Saturday September 11** we will be holding our final **Insect Afternoon** of the year from 1pm-4pm)

What's On? Regular Events:

Weekly: **Wednesday: Birdwatch** (9.30am start) **Friday: Beginners Birdwatch** (10am start)
Monthly: Wildlife Explorer Group (10.30am-12.30pm) and **Kids Birdwatching Club** (10.00am-12.30pm): **August:** Saturday 14 for KBC (No WEx) **September:** both Saturday 11

For more information about the events, RSPB and Wildlife Explorer Group Phone : 01708 899 840

Email : rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk Web : www.rspb.org.uk/rainham