



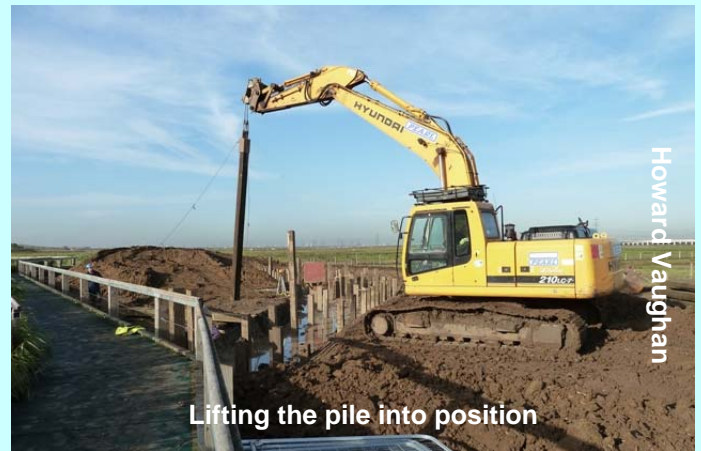
Work Presses on Despite the Weather

Come rain or snow our contractors have been hard at work on the various projects out on the reserve. The [predator-proof fence](#) is almost complete with just the electric wire to go on the top to finish it off. It has even been buried into the ground to prevent anything from burrowing underneath! It already seems to blend in with the landscape and does not impede the view of the wildlife on the marshes.



The new fence

Howard Vaughan



Lifting the pile into position

Howard Vaughan



Howard Vaughan

...and gently push it down

Meanwhile the [Purfleet Hide](#) works continue apace with huge piles being put in to support the structure and the boardwalk that will approach it.

These huge pieces of wood are literally pushed into the ground using a special device on the end of the arm of a large 360° digger and they go down with amazing ease into thousands of years of undisturbed soil, leaving only about a metre above the surface. Quite amazing!

Wherever there is disturbed soil on the marsh you will find [stonechats](#) and [pied wagtails](#) following the diggers around and here is no exception with these dapper little birds on the look out for any displaced tasty morsels. [Magpies](#) and [carrion crows](#) soon work out that there may be food on offer but tend to hang around until the workmen have

stopped or gone home before dropping in to peruse the menu.

Do not forget to check out the Rainham Marshes blog for more frequent updates on progress of this exciting project!



Chris Lowe

A male Stonechat on the lookout

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: November: Much of the attention was on the Thames in November with good numbers of waders building up including up to 2500 **dunlin**, 16 **grey plover**, three **avocets**, six **knot**, 300 **black-tailed godwits** and a single **turnstone**. On colder days **snipe** became obvious on the marsh and single **jack snipe** were seen on four dates including a showy individual from the Ken Barrett hide while two **woodcock** were found. A pair of **red-breasted mergansers** was seen on the 9th with another single on the 21st and three on the

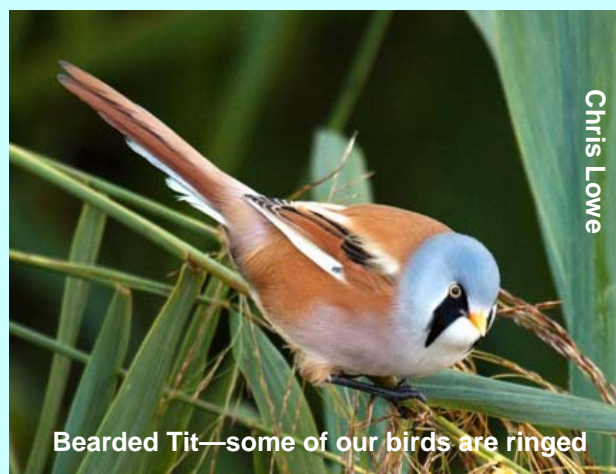


28th. **Brent geese** were seen on several dates with 15 on the 9th being the high count while **two pink-footed geese** stayed until the 25th with six reported on the 24th.

Gull watching produced possibly as many as 13 **Caspian gulls** along with an immature **Iceland gull** (20th), several **Mediterranean gulls** and seven **little gulls** on the 8th. Up to four **marsh harriers** have been on the reserve with the immature male being the most regular and our good run of **hen harriers** continued with a female on the 17th and a fine silver adult male on the 9th. **Peregrines** were seen daily and a female **merlin** made several sorties after small birds. **Little egret** numbers dwindled to just five and a **great white egret** was seen briefly on the 21st.



A very late **wheatear** was still hanging out with the **stonechats** on the 20th and a **black redstart** spent four days around the shooting butts hide from the 18th. Star birds of the month were the **bearded tits** which built up from just three at the start of the month to a wonderful 30 by the end. They often showed incredibly well to those with a little patience. **Corn** and



Lapland buntings (21st) were seen along the river wall and the elusive female **bullfinch** paid another visit on the 10th.

Stoats and **weasels** were seen with some regularity and the female **common seal** popped up occasionally. The last **common darter dragonfly** was seen on the 14th.

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: Our next free **Gull ID workshops** is on **Saturday 11 December**. There are still places for **Meet Santa** on **December 18-19** so hurry up and get booked in! The new 2011 programme will be out shortly!

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): **December:** 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

