



# Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

Issue 41  
January 2011



## 2010 was quite a year...

### They say a picture tells a thousand words...

The montage alongside is just a small selection of the 210 different species of bird recorded on our wonderful reserve last year.

And these are just the birds; can you imagine one made up from the insects and flowers?!

As ever, many thanks to all the generous photographers who have given their work so freely and to all the visitors who have supported us over the first ten years.

Let us hope 2011 is equally breathtaking.

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.

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**What's been about: December:** It was a harsh month and the birds we found were representative of this weather with many species forced south by the snow and northerly wind. Three angular **pomarine skuas** got the month off to a good start with an plump **eider** the next day (till 4th) and another on the 29th. All three sawbill (fish-eating) ducks were seen including an amazing eight **goosander** and three **smew** (19th) along with a couple of **red-breasted mergansers**. Two **goldeneye**, **common scoter** and **scaup** added interest and two herds of **Bewick's swans** were seen with 27 on the 3rd and 19 on 22nd. They did not linger long and three adult **whooper swans** on the 24th did likewise. Fourteen **Tundra bean geese** were seen



Barnacle Geese looking at home!

Russ Sheriff



Waxwing

Jonathan Lethbridge

on the 1st and 19th with 28 **white-fronted geese** north on 21st and a **pink-footed goose** going the same way on the 29th. A **pale-bellied brent goose** on 22nd was potentially a first for London of this form and a **dark-bellied** bird was seen on the 18th while three **barnacle geese** from the 19th coincided with a massive influx from the low countries into the south-east.



Part of the flock of 27 Bewick's Swans - pure magic!

Paul Hawkins

It did not stop there with two sightings of an adult **gannet** (21st and 30th), two **black-necked grebes** (27th), **bittern** (28th), **raven** (30th), over 40 fly-through **waxwings**, a **grey phalarope** (4th), wintering **ring ouzel** (!), **yellowhammers** and **corn buntings**, single **Lapland buntings** and a very showy **snow bunting** (7th-10th) that was initially found under the bird feeders. **Caspian**, **Iceland** and **little gulls** were all picked out from the throng and our **marsh harriers** and **short-eared owls** were still around. Two ring-tail **hen harriers** were noted on 9th and 13th making it the best year for the species on site in perhaps 20 years. **Bearded tits** continued to show well and included some north Kent ringed birds and **water pipits** were in their usual haunts.

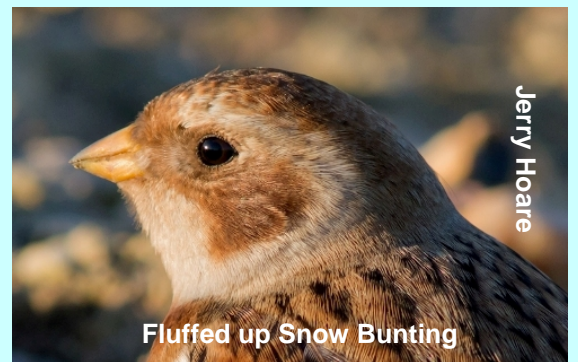
Both **common** and **grey seals** continued to be seen regularly and at long last we got our first **harbour porpoise** of the year on the 29th. **Foxes** have been especially obvious in the snow.



Frosty Fox

Chris Lowe

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



Fluffed up Snow Bunting

Jerry Hoare

**Events:** Our next free **Gull ID workshops** are on **Saturday 15 January, 12 February & 12 March**. Our new fortnightly **Sunday Stroll** walk starts on 6th February at 1pm and new dates will be out soon for this years photographic events. Full listings for 2011 can be found on our website.

### 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): **January:** Saturday 8 & 15 respectively; **February:** both Saturday 12

**For more information about the events, RSPB and Wildlife Explorer Group** Phone : 01708 899 840  
 Email : [rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk](mailto:rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk) Web : [www.rspb.org.uk/rainham](http://www.rspb.org.uk/rainham)



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