



Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

Issue 53
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That was the year that was...



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: Not much changed during December with the little immigration. **Lapwing** hovered around the 1800 mark and **black-tailed godwit** reached a high of 560 while **golden plover** struggled over 100 on several dates. The **spotted redshank** stayed until the 21st and a **turnstone** (11th) was new. **Snipe** were scarce and a single **jack snipe** was seen bobbing on the 30th. Scarcest wader was a **pectoral sandpiper** that was seen on the 7th and 8th but it proved elusive with the vast **lapwing** flocks.

A pair of **mergansers** were seen on the Thames along with two female **scoter** and a male **goldeneye**. A **gannet** and two **kittiwakes** (28th) were notable and 10 **yellow-legged gulls** and six different



Les Harrison

Short-eared Owl mid-blink!



Russ Sherriff

Bearded Tit

Caspian gulls were seen along with a probable **Azorean yellow-legged gull**.

Pintail crept into double figures and **teal** leapt from 300 on the 20th to 1350 on the 21st. Most had gone again by the 23rd! Three pairs of **peregrines** were using the marsh and a male **merlin** was seen occasionally. The immature male **marsh harrier** dropped in and at least three **short-eared owls** were still around.



Robert North

Black-tailed Godwit

Star passerines were the **bearded tits** with about four on the trails along with eight **stonechats**, two **water pipits**, 14 **rock pipits** and three **corn buntings** along the foreshores. Finally, **ring-necked parakeets** reached a new county high of 155 south on the 6th. **Fieldfare** and **redwings** were very thin on the ground.

Don't forget to check out

www.rspb.org.uk/rainham and our Community Blog or www.elbf.co.uk for the latest reserve blog post, wildlife sightings and reserve news. Sign up at www.facebook.com and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.



Mark Hart

Peregrine



Julie Dent

Fieldfare

What to look for next: With mild weather continuing it is feeling amazingly spring-like out there! February is notorious for being one of the coldest months and if the weather does change then the country will be flooded with birds that have been lazily living it up on the continent up until now! Our next Gull ID days are on **Saturday 14 January** and **Saturday 11 February** so some cold should improve our chances!

What's On? Regular Events:

Weekly: **Wednesday: Birdwatch** (9.30am start) **Friday: Beginners Birdwatch** (10am start)

Fortnightly: The Sunday Stroll at 1pm. **January 8 & 22 February 5 & 19.**

Monthly: Kids Birdwatching Club (10.00am-12.30pm): **January: Saturday 14 February: Saturday 11**

For more information about the events and the RSPB Phone : 01708 899 840

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