



Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

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Putting a new spin on running RSPB Rainham Marshes:

The Reserve came a step closer to becoming carbon neutral during April after the installation of a 15m high, 15kW wind turbine near the entrance to the site.

The turbine, together with existing solar technology, should provide enough energy to power the visitor centre and therefore helping to minimise the site's carbon footprint.



Up she goes!

Brenda Clayton

The visitor centre, which opened in 2006, has already won a host of architectural and regeneration awards for its greenness, which includes features such as walls insulated with lambs wool, solar panels, rainwater harvesting for

flushing the toilets and light-gathering ventilation cones on the roof.

The wind turbine marks the final piece in the sustainability jigsaw, making the reserve one of the most environmentally-friendly developments in the Thames Gateway and by powering Rainham Marshes with renewable energy it not only shows our commitment to tackling climate change, but demonstrates the important role renewable energy sources can play in delivering our future energy needs.



Jesper Mattias

Reserve Work: With the marsh getting a big thumbs up recently from our senior habitat ecologists it is great to report that preliminary work by our lapwing researcher, Chris Lodge, has revealed a good number of nests out on the marsh. The birds were a bit late starting this year but things are now well under way and displaying [lapwings](#) can be seen and heard from almost anywhere on the marsh – even the car-park!

We have carried out the first breeding bird surveys and there are already many [little grebe](#), [coot](#) and [moorhen](#) broods in the ditches. We have also confirmed that [great crested grebes](#) have two nests for the first time and five pairs of [mute swans](#) are on nests which is also a record.

Our first butterfly surveys have revealed the best spring for some time with 13 species already noted including some very smart [orange tips](#).



Paul Rigby

The aptly named Orange Tip

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.

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What's been about: April: A typically bustling April with most of the commoner summer migrants making it back from Africa successfully before the end of the month with **whitethroats**, **reed** and **sedge** warblers being especially vocal. Scarcer visitors included a **redstart**, numerous **wheatears**, **blue-headed wagtail** (the continental form of our yellow wagtail), **tree pipit**, **ring ouzel** and at least three **grasshopper warblers**. Northbound raptor passage over the reserve was fantastic with nearing 20 **buzzards**, four **marsh harriers**, three **red kites**, two **ospreys**, two **goshawks**, **hobby** and **merlin**, as well as **peregrine**, **sparrowhawk** and **kestrel**.



A dapper male Wheatear

Mick Southcott



Osprey looking for lunch

David Bradburn

Terns were scarce but a few **common** were fishing on the Thames along with three **Arctic** and a single **black** and **little gulls** were seen on three dates. Twenty-two **common scoters** spent the day loafing on the Thames and were part of a country wide inland movement experienced on the 11th of this northward bound sea-duck. Wader passage was relatively slow with 28 **golden plover**, four **grey plover**, **knot**, 2 **avocet**, 23 **whimbrel**, up to five **greenshank**, four **bar-tailed godwits** and 20 **black-tailed godwits**. Two pairs of **garganey** were found on 6th with a male being seen regularly subsequently. This is the only summer visiting duck to the UK and it has even been known to breed on the marshes.

Vestiges of winter included several **siskins**, a **brambling**, the **Iceland gull** (till 16th) and a **Tundra bean goose**. A **great white egret** flew through on 14th and a **spoonbill** dropped in on 28th. Perhaps we will have a repeat spoonbill performance of 2007 when seven different ones were seen during the summer!?



Inquisitive Stoat

Dave Morrison



Common Scoters

Andy Tweed

Stoats and **weasels** have been seen out hunting and there are baby **water voles** to be seen at various points on the trail.

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

Events: During May we have a **Dusk Walk** on Friday 22 as well as our **Treasures of the Thames** event on Saturday 23rd.

Booking is essential.

In The Shop!

By any 12.75kg sack of wild bird food and get an amazing 20% off! Offer runs from 19th May till 2nd June.



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):

June: Both Saturday 13 **July:** Both Saturday 11

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

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