



Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

Issue 27
November 2009



It's a home win on the Pools!

The enhancement of Aveley Pools has continued at a cracking pace with the dry weather now actually helping work along. We have already moved 37,000m³ of soil to create new channels, pool and islands to not only attract even more wildlife but to allow better viewing when you visit us.

The newly designed scrapes now only require the much needed rain and the ducks, geese, lapwings and snipe will be making a b-line for them in their droves. We can't wait!

Meanwhile the other important aspect of this project has begun; the new Shooting Butts Hide (see below). Work on the design of the foundations is underway with machinery digging deep holes into the marsh to find out what kind of soil lurks beneath. We even had an archaeologist watching the work to look



Creating new levels by removing the top soil.

Colin Bartholomew



One of many dumper trucks at work

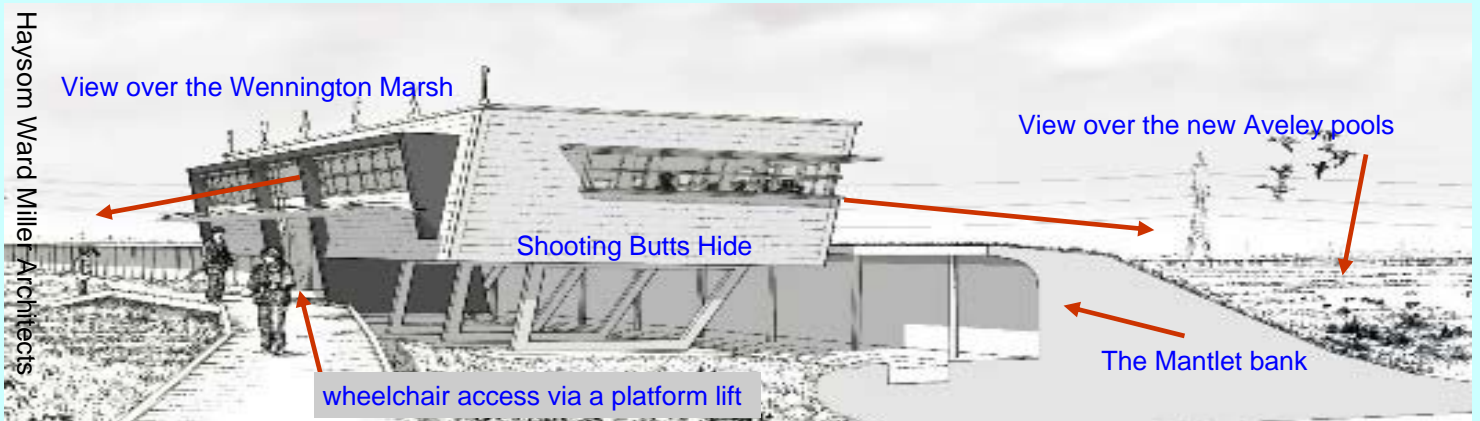
Colin Bartholomew



Reworking the marshland alongside the road to help with water control.

Colin Bartholomew

out for anything interesting! If everything goes to plan, we hope to have the hide complete by next spring, affording excellent elevated views all around. We will keep you posted as the project progresses.



View over the Wennington Marsh

View over the new Aveley pools

Shooting Butts Hide

The Mantlet bank

wheelchair access via a platform lift

Haysom Ward Miller Architects

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: October: The raptor fest of September continued into October with three **honey buzzards** and over 20 **buzzards** through. Four **Marsh harriers** on the 4th was a site record and a female **merlin** made several visits from 3rd onwards while **peregrines** became a daily spectacle. River



Andy Tweed

Spotted Crake

watching produced further rewards with two immature **gannets** on 5th and another on 6th and a fine juvenile **Sabine's gull** on 7th. Late **terns** included **Arctic** and **Sandwich** on 9th and a **common** on 14th. **Yellow-legged gulls** peaked at 23 on 9th and at least five different **Caspian gulls** were logged from 22nd.

There was a little flurry of **brent goose** sightings with five on 10th and four on 14th and a single **pink-footed goose** on 10th was good while the river also hosted two **scoter** (14th) and **goldeneye** on 15th (two) and 28th. An unseasonal **spotted crake** was seen on the 27th-28th and the same pool also held two bobbing **jack snipe**. There were some notable passerines including a late **tree pipit** on 12th and 13th and **red-throated pipit** over calling on the latter date. **Woodlarks** were seen on 2nd and 10th and as finch numbers increased there were sightings of six **lesser redpolls** (12th), **brambling** (14th and 18th)



Howard Vaughan

Red Admiral

and 13 **crossbills** (21st). A **black redstart** was found on 17th and a **wheatear** stayed till 25th. **Ring ouzels** dropped in on four dates from 4th with a **yellow-browed warbler** on 11th and the first **redwings** the next day. A **Lapland bunting** rounded off the month nicely on 30th.

Many **red admirals** and **painted ladies** were out in the late autumn sun and hundreds of **hoverflies** and **bluebottles** were also attracted to the **ivy** flowers. A **glow-worm** larvae

was an encouraging find after such a good summer for this scarce beetle on the reserve (see left). Don't forget to check out

www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/sightings.asp or www.elbf.co.uk for the latest reserve wildlife sightings. Sign up at www.facebook.com and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.



Mark Vale



Brenda Clayton

Reed Bunting



David Morrison

Wheatear



Howard Vaughan

Hoverfly—*Eristalis tenax*

Some more Country Fayre thanks: And just an extra thank you to the generosity of the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation and to John Sawyer and his amazing Hog Roast www.jbshogroast.com for keeping the staff, volunteers, visitors and musicians well fed and happy!

Events: Why not come to **Meet Santa** in his woodland grotto on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 December from 12-4pm. **Booking is essential for this event.** However we also have two free, informal **Gull ID Days** on Saturday November 21 and Saturday December 12 where you will be able to learn more about this fascinating family of birds, so why not just turn up and join in. Wrap up warm though!

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):

November: Saturday 14 and 21 respectively December: both Saturday 12

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

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