



## Autumnal improvements on the marshes

We may have been managing Rainham Marshes for ten years now but there is always something going on to improve the reserve for you and the wildlife. This autumn is no different and as we speak several projects are about to get under way.

### For you:

- ◆ Work on the eagerly awaited Purfleet Hide will start very soon. Our diligent volunteers have been clearing the reed and other vegetation from the bank visible from the Purfleet visitor centre so that any wildlife there will have moved away from this area before the contractors start work. Hopefully there will be an artists impression to show you by next month! There will undoubtedly be some disturbance to the wildlife and the trails while this project is underway so please bear with us!



Purfleet Hide will go here and will look out over the scrape at eye level!

Howard Vaughan

Purfleet Scrape viewed from the Purfleet Visitor Centre

- ◆ Those sections of the trail that flooded last winter are to be raised so that we can all keep our feet dry as we amble round!
- ◆ A proper looping path is to be put into the cordite store off of the woodland trail, providing access to this sheltered haven for all visitors.

### For the wildlife:

- ◆ A new electric fence will be going up around all of Aveley Marsh over the next five weeks to help keep the cattle in and the predators out! This should ensure that more chicks of all species fledge next year.
- ◆ The newly flooded marshes in front of the Shooting Butts and Ken Barrett Hides is still being tweaked to provide better habitat for wildfowl and waders. This is already paying dividends with birds coming closer to the hides.



Howard Vaughan

No more pushing through the nettles in the Cordite Store!

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: September:** Wader passage continued and included up to four **knot** that stayed most of the month, nine **greenshank**, eight **bar-tailed godwit** (11<sup>th</sup>), two **sanderling** (6<sup>th</sup>), three **ruff** (9<sup>th</sup>) and a **curlew sandpiper** (4<sup>th</sup>). Tern movement was quite poor but 22 **Sandwich terns** (5<sup>th</sup>)



Jono Iethbridge

A dapper male Wheatear

was a site record and smaller numbers of **common**, **black** and **Arctic** moved through. Our first **Caspian gull** of the season was seen on 29<sup>th</sup>. A **Manx shearwater** spent a couple of hours careening up and down in front of the visitors centre on the 15<sup>th</sup> much to everyone's delight as many had never seen this pelagic species.

Juvenile **gannets** were seen on 25<sup>th</sup> and two on 26<sup>th</sup> as part of the national overland movement in the south-east. Duck began to return and **pintail** reached nine by month end while three juvenile **ruddy shelducks** paid a brief visit on 2<sup>nd</sup>. A single **pink-footed goose** came in with the 400 **greylags** on 28<sup>th</sup> and ten **brent geese** were seen on 29<sup>th</sup>. In the skies above, **marsh harriers** were noted on several dates including five in the first three days of the month and a male **goshawk** went high and west on



Basil Thornton

Common Buzzard

the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the nicer days **buzzards** were on the move with peak counts of ten (18<sup>th</sup>), six (19<sup>th</sup>) and 13 (21<sup>st</sup>) and a red kite was seen on 17<sup>th</sup>. Female **hen harriers** headed south on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and on the latter date **merlin**, **hobby** and amazingly, a female **red-footed falcon** were also seen going across the Thames. A **raven** made appearances on 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and would be very popular if it would just land for a while and **ring-necked parakeets** hit a new county record of 87 on the 10<sup>th</sup>. **Whinchats** peaked at nine (8<sup>th</sup>) and the odd **wheatear** and **spotted flycatcher** were seen. Over thirty **yellow wagtails** could be seen around the cattle and a **tree pipit** (1<sup>st</sup>) and the first returning **rock pipits** (28<sup>th</sup>) were reported. And last but not least a **marsh tit** was seen on 1<sup>st</sup> constituting the first site record of this declining species.



Tony Coombs

Spotted Flycatcher in the sun

Still plenty of butterflies on the wing including newly emerged **small coppers** and **speckled woods** and a host of **migrant hawkers** ready to snaffle them up! Both **common** and **grey seal** have been seen and **stoats** and **weasels** have become more conspicuous.



Les Harrison

Small Copper

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'.

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**Events:** The last **Be A Better Photographer** guided walks for 2010 are on **Friday October 8** and **Saturday December 4** (10am-1pm). National **Feed The Birds Weekend** is on **October 23 –24**. Why not come along and make a tasty treat for the birds in your garden as well as picking up heaps of useful information! As we head into **November** our free **Gull ID workshops** start up with the first on **Saturday 13**. **Sunday 14** sees a **Remembrance Sunday Military Walk**. Oh and book early for **Meet Santa** on **December 18-19!**

## 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): **October:** Saturday 9 & Saturday 16 respectively **November:** both Saturday 13

**For more information about the events, RSPB and Wildlife Explorer Group** Phone : 01708 899 840

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