



Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

Issue 50
October 2011



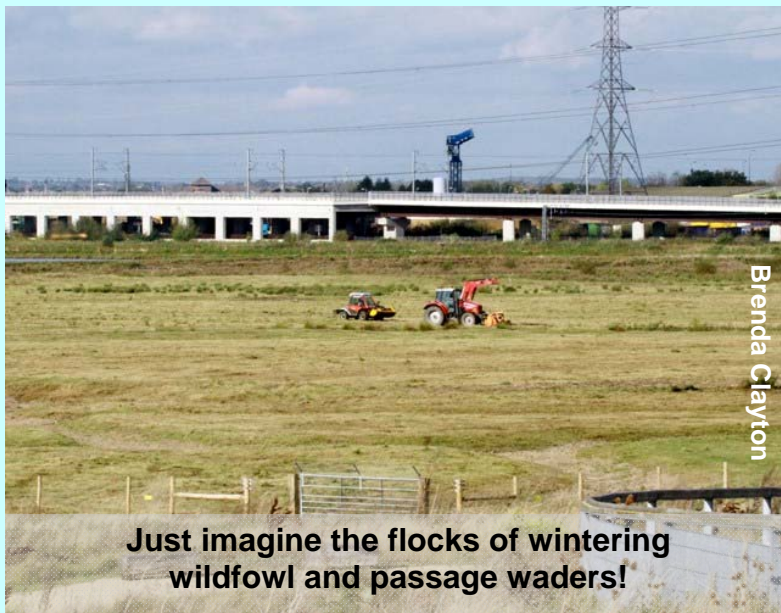
Two men went to mow...

Over the next couple of months you will notice some quite drastic alterations to the face of the reserve. Hydrology has long been a thorny issue on the marsh and the weird weather this year has made it all the more obvious that we need to be able to manage the water that we have in a better way to create the all year round bird spectacle that we and you have come to expect.

As such, work has already begun on re-profiling the islands in front of the Shooting Butts Hide, reducing the swathes of encroaching flowering rush across the wetland areas and moving water from Aveley Pool into the parched Target Pools.

A team of tractors has been removing thistles and some of the rush ; fences are due to be re-aligned and then the Purfleet Scrape will have a complete facelift that will result in a series of pools that we will be able to manage more efficiently throughout the year. This will ultimately mean that views from the Purfleet Hide, Visitor Centre and Bus Stop will be exceptional.

So bear with us while we try and get this all done before the winter sets in. There will be some disruption but it will be worth it come the spring!



Just imagine the flocks of wintering wildfowl and passage waders!

Transforming Rainham Marshes art exhibition in the Purfleet Hide was a great success. The pieces were created by Level 3 Extended Diploma in Art and Design students from South Essex College and generated a great deal of interest.

A selection of personal sketchbooks gave a real insight into the students' creative thought processes.

The first of many such exhibitions we hope!



Lots to do in October & November

For more information and to book please see contact details overleaf

- ◆ **Trick or tweet Halloween Event:** Fri 28 Oct
Are you brave enough to venture onto our spooky trail? Who knows what or who you might encounter along the way? Join us for this and more spooky goings on. Not for the easily scared!
- ◆ **Be A Better Photographer Walks:**
DSLR: Sat 26 Nov
Bridge/ Compact Digital: Fri 11 Nov
- ◆ **Gull ID Workshop:** Sat 19 Nov
- ◆ **Optics & Digi-scoping Day:** Fri 9 Nov
- ◆ **Military Walk:** Sat 12 Nov

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.

Charity registered in England and Wales no 207076, in Scotland no SC037654

What's been about: September: With westerly winds predominating it was a tricky month for migrant birds. However, a count



Dave McGough

Wheatear

of 46 **blackcaps** on the 1st was notable along with several **whinchats**, **wheatears**, **spotted flycatchers**, **redstart** and **tree pipit**. There was a good passage of **swallows** and **martins** and a **red-rumped swallow** was seen heading across the Thames on the 8th.

Two more juvenile **cuckoos** were noted and westward bound finches included several **lesser redpolls** and over 100 **siskin**. Out on the river a few **terns** were still moving including ten **Sandwich** (28th) and 15 **Arctic** (10th) while a **Manx shearwater** was battling for survival against the **great black-backed gulls** on the 7th.



Brenda Clayton

Manx Shearwater

In the skies above big raptors were on the move and during the course of the month there were at least 19 **marsh harriers** (including a regular immature male) and a staggering 54 **buzzards** reported! **Ospreys** were seen on the 9th and 10th and a beautiful male **hen harrier** was seen on the 16th. To round the month off a

juvenile **spoonbill** dropped in on the last day!



Matthew Foakes

Whinchat



Brenda Clayton

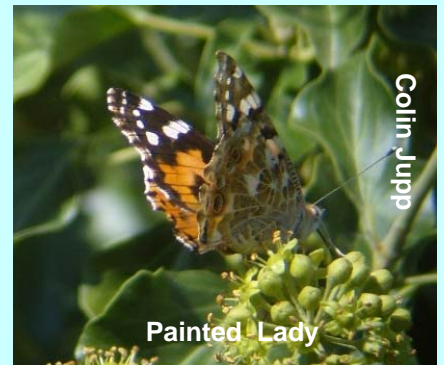
Spoonbill



Brenda Clayton

male Hen Harrier

Still plenty of dragonflies and butterflies around with **red admirals** being especially common but a couple of **painted ladies** were also found. Our three saltwater mammals (both **seals** and **harbour porpoise**) were all seen and **weasels** and **stoats** kept popping out everywhere!



Colin Jupp

Painted Lady

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'.

What to look for next: With the colder autumnal nights upon us we should be able to hear the thin calls of redwings arriving from Scandinavia and numbers of finches, pipits, larks, wildfowl, gulls and waders such as lapwings and snipe will increase as birds migrate through the reserve. Some will stay for the winter but other will have many more miles to travel.

What's On? Regular Events:

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

Fortnightly: The Sunday Stroll at 1pm. Check website for all dates.

Monthly: Kids Birdwatching Club (10.00am-12.30pm): **November** Saturday 12 **December** Saturday 10

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

