



# Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

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## RSPB Rainham Marshes Country Fayre 19—20 September

It's that time of year again when we pull out all the stops for our autumn fayre out in the heart of the marshes.

This year we have two whole days of family fun with traditional stalls such as wood turning, bee keeping, woodland crafts and even a hedge laying demonstration alongside plants, jewellery, cards, a big prize raffle, books, tombola, cakes and clothes! Something for just about everyone!

A Fire engine will be dropping in and Wise Owls will be showing off some of their feathered friends. Kids will have plenty to do with pond dipping, face painting, a bouncy castle and inflatable bungee run, name the calf and a host of other exciting activities!

Amongst the food stalls, the hog roast is sure to generate a queue and there will be ice-cream for afters with musical accompaniment from several local live bands.

The reserve will open at 9.30am as usual with the gates to the fayre field opening at 10am.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

### Reserve News:

August was incredibly dry and we have certainly been at the mercy of the elements but we are constantly working to gain better control of the water in order to keep the marsh wetter towards the end of summer. As such, the Aveley Flash project is now underway and planning permission has just been granted for the new Shooting Butts Hide which will overlook the newly enhanced wetlands. More to follow on this breaking story.

The dry weather has however, given us the opportunity to push on with the mowing of invasive thistles and even more swathes of ragwort have been removed.



Howard Vaughan

The volunteers have been out mending fences and managing the trails as well as keeping the gardens in tip-top shape throughout.

Meanwhile, Romeo, our [Limousin bull](#) has been continuing to live up to his Shakespearean namesake and has been one of the biggest visitor attractions in the summer.



Tony Coombes

Romeo contemplating his next move...

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: August:** Although not especially hot, it was another dry month and on warm days there was often a **marsh harrier** to be seen with juveniles seen on 15 dates, with two on 22nd.

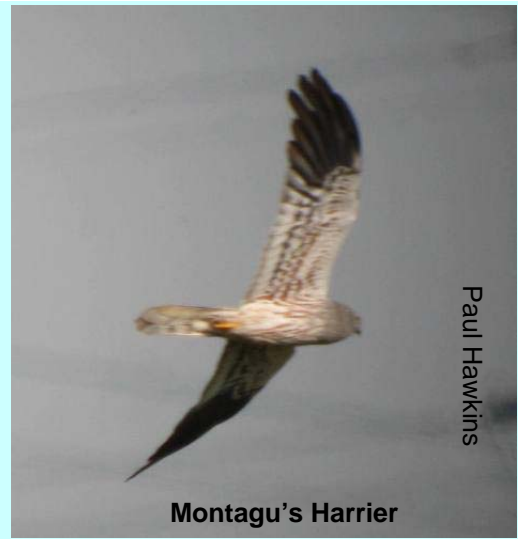


Honey Buzzard

David Morrison

**Buzzards** drifted over on 19th and 23rd with four together on 22nd. A **honey buzzard** moved south on 23rd and our third **red kite** of the year was seen on 7th.

However, the star raptor was a male **Montagu's harrier** (another Romeo and Juliet link!) that quartered the fields on 24th-25th. This is the first record here of this rare British breeder in five years



Montagu's Harrier

Paul Hawkins



Jersey Tiger

Annie Jackson

and he attracted quite a crowd. **Water rails** showed amazingly well for such a skulking species and three **Egyptian geese** (24th) were new for the year.

Waders were a little thin on the ground but Icelandic **black-tailed godwits**, **green sandpipers** and **snipe** performed very well in front of the hide. A **spotted redshank** (26th), two **turnstone** (6th), 11



Black-tailed Godwit

Dave McGough

**whimbrel**, (6th), **ruff** (11th), and **sanderling** (25th) were notable. Migrant small birds were definitely on the move with up to eight **whinchat** (17th), **tree sparrow** and **tree pipit** (25th), several **spotted flycatchers**, **pieb flycatcher** (29th), **redstart** (6th and 11th) and two **crossbills** (3rd).

**Grass snakes** were recorded almost daily with six being the highest count but with reduced water levels **water voles** became tricky. A male **lesser emperor** became our 22nd species of dragonfly on 21st and **migrant hawkers** were zooming everywhere! Mothing on calmer evenings provided several new species to the reserve but the striking **Jersey tiger** won hands down on looks!

Do not forget to check out [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/sightings.asp](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/sightings.asp) or [www.elbf.co.uk](http://www.elbf.co.uk) for the latest reserve wildlife sightings. Sign up at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.

**Events:** There is still room on our **Bat and Moth Night on** Tuesday 15 September so book now and after the **Country Fayre** on 19-20 September the next big event is our **Feed The Birds Day** on Saturday 24 October! Unfortunately, we have had to cancel Halloween Trick or Tweet for this year.

### 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):

**September:** both Saturday 12 **October:** Saturday 10 and 24 respectively

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

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RWE Group