



## Watchers wowed by architecturally astute woodpeckers...

Now, we have been following the story of our industrious [great spotted woodpeckers](#) since early spring when the male drummed madly for a few weeks in the old chestnuts to attract a mate.

Needless to say he succeeded and after excavating several cavities in at least three different trees they set up home in the one with the softest wood and best views over the estate that came with the property. Before long the noisy chicks could be heard inside and both parents were seen regularly bringing in supplies of grubs and the like.

As it got near fledging time one of the more advanced red-capped youngsters took up position in the mouth of the hole which meant that only he got fed. The others were definitely getting left out but the ingenious parents had actually created another door to their high rise apartment that cleverly led back down to the main chamber and were able to continue feeding the rest of the brood!

All three chicks fledged successfully on June 2 and can still be seen around the woodland. They have even started coming to the feeders!



Barry Jackson

Another grub bites the dust...

**Reserve news:** With the breeding season almost over, it is that time of year again when the wardens dust off the mowers and set about giving the marsh a good hair cut. Work has already begun on Purfleet Scrape and the cattle have been allowed onto Aveley Pools and the Butts Scrape to graze on the lush vegetation.

Teams of willing volunteers from Barclays Bank have been in to help with the mammoth task of painting the boardwalks and have already done 90% in just two visits. An amazing effort!



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: June** Always a quiet month but exceptionally so this year with scant early wader passage with **whimbrel** (17<sup>th</sup>), **avocet** (two on 3<sup>rd</sup> and a single on 21<sup>st</sup>), **spotted redshank** (25<sup>th</sup>) and seven **black-tailed godwits** (28<sup>th</sup>). **Marsh harriers** continued to be reported and **yellow-legged gulls** were already in double figures by month end along with our first June record of **Caspian gull** on 28<sup>th</sup>. Star of the month was the unseasonal female **red-breasted merganser** that frequented Aveley bay from 15<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> where she caught plenty of small fish with that specialised serrated bill.



Andy Tweed

Red-breasted Merganser



Howard Vaughan

Stag Beetle

Two broods of **redshank** were found, but it was generally poor for breeding waders on the reserve again. **Little egrets** were into double figures by mid-month and it will not be long till the first local juveniles start arriving.

Plenty of good insect activity with sightings of **stag beetle** in the woodland and some good hoverflies and bees including a species that is fairly new to Britain called the **tree bumblebee** (*Bombus hypnorum*). The huge swathes of blooming bramble attracted almost every insect around! We found many **peacock butterfly**



Howard Vaughan

Tree Bumblebee

caterpillars on the nettles and even a few **painted lady** caterpillars as well which is quite unusual.

Young **water voles** were to be found and a **muntjac deer** on the 12th was our second new mammal of the year for the reserve.

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'.



Howard Vaughan

Adela croesella - a longhorn moth

**Events:** The **Be A Better Photographer** guided walks continue on **Saturday August 21** (10am-1pm) while **Dusk Walks** (7pm-10pm) will take place **July 22 & August 26** and we will stay open till late for general visitors too. There is a **Moth Night** from 9pm on **Friday August 6** and during the summer holidays there are frequent **Family Fun With Wildlife** and **Teddy Bears Picnic** events. Times and days vary for these two so please check the website of give us a ring for more information.

### 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): **July:** Saturday 17 for KBC (No WEx) **August:** Saturday 14 for KBC (No WEx)

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

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