



# Marsh Matters

The Newsletter of RSPB Rainham Marshes

Issue 23  
July 2009



## Our Reserve Needs You!

It takes a dedicated team to manage over 800 acres of ancient marshes, trails, boardwalks, gardens and a state of the art visitor centre. At Rainham Marshes we are fortunate enough to have built up a tremendous group of volunteers who help out in all aspects of life on this unique urban site.

Anyone can become a volunteer with the RSPB (our oldest is about to celebrate her 100th birthday!) and there is something for everybody. You would be amazed at the variety of roles available! .

- ♦ working in the visitor centre around the reception, shop or café
- ♦ hands on work party tasks such as painting boardwalks, ragwort pulling and clearing the Thames foreshore of rubbish
- ♦ promoting the reserve and the RSPB at outreach events such as summer fairs and county shows.
- ♦ on site events volunteers (have fun helping build nest-boxes and make feeders!)
- ♦ working to keep the stunning wildlife garden in shape
- ♦ sharing your enthusiasm with visitors out on the reserve by trail walking or helping lead walks
- ♦ helping man our amazing Marshland Discovery Zone during the school holidays

This is just a taster of what you could do to help us keep RSPB Rainham Marshes thriving. So, if you feel that you may have a few hours to spare then why not get in touch with our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Sue Housden (she is also a volunteer!) on [01708 899840](tel:01708899840) or [sue.housden@rspb.org.uk](mailto:sue.housden@rspb.org.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you!



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.

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**What's been about: June:** This is traditionally a quieter month on the reserve with many of the residents and summer migrants like **meadow pipits**, **reed buntings**, **reed** and **sedge warblers** and **whitethroats** busy starting a second family.



Steve Staples

Hobby looking for lunch

As a consequence baby birds of one shape or another were everywhere! Wader passage is also normally non-existent in June but with inclement conditions in the high Arctic, many species were making an early return southwards. Highlights were a **wood sandpiper** and **knot** through on 1st, **whimbrels** on 3rd and 24th, **greenshank** from 5th with up to five on 26th, 26 **black-tailed godwits** on 22nd, **ruff** (26th), four **avocet** (12th) and a **grey plover** (28th).



Malcolm Fish

Meadow Pipit

Two adult **Mediterranean gulls** were seen regularly and four **little gulls** and two **common gulls** were seen on 26th. The first **yellow-legged gulls** were back on the river from 18th for their summer holidays from the Mediterranean. The summering male **wigeon** and four **teal** were still on the marsh and the **ruddy shelduck** that had been seen elsewhere in the Thames estuary, made distant appearances on 1st and 16th.



Brenda Clayton

Male Scorpion Fly

Up to six **hobbies** made daily sorties after dragonflies and nine **buzzards** through on 14th was exceptional for June. A female **marsh harrier** was around till 5th with an immature male present from 26th. The female was seen catching marsh frogs! A **spotted flycatcher** hung around till 2nd and both **grey** and **yellow wagtails** were seen on 27th.



David Bradnum

Ruddy Darter

As the weather warmed up the butterfly and dragonfly population exploded and many species could be encountered on your walk around. **Peacock** butterfly caterpillars have been seen munching the nettles and several impressive **emperor moth** caterpillars have been found. Three spikes of colourful **bee orchid** and a single **pyramidal orchid** added floral interest. Things can only get better!



Howard Vaughan

Pyramidal Orchid

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](https://www.facebook.com) and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.

**Events:** During July we will be holding another **Digi-scoping Optics Day** (Saturday 25) and our famous **Bug Hunt** (Sunday 26). As we head into the summer holidays there are a whole host of family events with **Teddy Bears Picnics** on July 29, August 12 and September 3 and **Family Fun With Wildlife** days on July 31 and August 3, 8, 14, 20, 24 and 30. Booking is essential for all bar the Digi-scoping day. Hope to see you there!

### 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):

**August:** Saturday 15 (KBC only—No WEx this month) **September:** both Saturday 12

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

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