



Foreign bug causes a stir on the marshes...

On May 23 a seemingly innocuous little brown ground bug was found in the woodland on the reserve. It was a very warm sunny day and the little chap sat there enjoying the rays in the old cordite store for long enough so that a very sharp close up photograph could be taken.

Unbeknown to us (and quite probably the little bug!) it would turn out to be slightly more significant than just another insect to the ever growing Rainham Marshes wildlife list.

Initially we thought that we had identified the species as one that can be found on sandy heaths in this country. This would have been equally good for the reserve.

However, just to make sure, we sent the photo off to some local experts who raised an eyebrow in interest and suspicion that it may be something even better; so off went the image by e-mail to Europe where *the* expert on this family of critters agreed that it was *Rhyparochromus vulgaris* a species commonly found on the continent but not in Britain.

In fact it is the first documented record ever for this country, putting RSPB Rainham Marshes well and truly on the entomological map. Like many insects it does not even have an English name... yet.

It just goes to show you the amazing diversity of life that is lurking out there in the undergrowth and that all you need is a good pair of eyes and some patience to find something just that little bit special.

Why not try making your garden more wildlife friendly by creating a log pile or letting some stinging nettles grow and perhaps the next stop press insect could be yours to find?



Howard Vaughan

Reserve news: This is the slow time of year for ground work on the marsh, with all our efforts focused on the surveying of the fauna of the reserve. Our lapwings have already fledged two chicks and redshanks are still on the nest. Broods of shoveler, gadwall and mute swan have been found by the volunteers and the barn owls are looking promising. Bat walks have revealed at least five species using the marsh at night and it will not be long before the first glow-worms light up the evenings. Butterfly, dragonfly and moth surveys are all in full swing now as we head into summer and work on cataloguing the smaller, but equally important invertebrates continues with help from enthusiastic amateurs.

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: May Most of the action took place in the first two days of the month before cold northerly conditions prevailed for the next two weeks. **Little stint, sanderlings** and 17 **bar-tailed godwits** were seen on the 2nd along with three smart **black terns** and a brief **red-rumped swallow** which was new to the reserve list. Male **garganey** dropped in on two dates while four **common scoter** flew up river on the 9th. Smaller passage migrants were scarce with a few **wheatears**, three **whinchats** (1st), **turtle dove** (27th) and **spotted flycatcher** (26th).



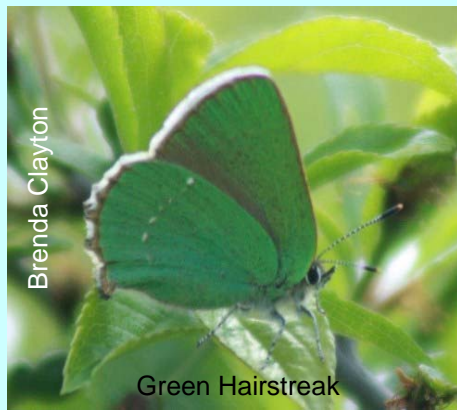
Jonathan Lethbridge

Grey Heron with a snack



Basil Thornton

Reed Warblers are everywhere!



Brenda Clayton

Green Hairstreak

A **grey heron** surprised us all by grabbing a **greenfinch**, dunking him in the water and then gobbling him down for lunch on the 16th! A **spoonbill** eluded the dawn chorus walkers and left as they did on 23rd while a **raven** was seen on 18th and 20th. Hopefully it is still in the area.

Marsh harriers and **buzzards** were seen daily along with the **peregrines** and up to eight agile insect-catching **hobbies**. Seven elegant red kites moved through from 17th and a **Montagu's harrier** was seen on 4th.

Some good insects were seen on the reserve as well as our star rarity and included a huge **Emperor moth**, 15 **butterfly** species, our 12th **ladybird** species (cream-spotted) and an impressive **wasp beetle**. Don't forget to check out www.rspb.org.uk/rainham or www.elbf.co.uk for the latest reserve wildlife sightings and reserve news. Sign up at www.facebook.com and search for 'RSPB Rainham Marshes'.



Terry Malby

Red Kite



Russ Sherriff

Spotted Flycatcher



Howard Vaughan

Emperor moth



Howard Vaughan

Wasp Beetle

Events: The **Be A Better Photographer** guided walks continue on **Friday June 18** (1pm-4pm) and **Saturday August 21** (10am-1pm) and our second **Insect Afternoon** walk is on **Saturday June 19** (1pm-3.30pm). Booking is really essential as places are limited. **Dusk Walks** (7pm-10pm) walks will take place **Thursday May 27, June 24, July 22 & August 26** and we will stay open till late for general visitors too.

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): **June:** Saturday 12 & Saturday 19 respectively **July:** Saturday 17 for KBC (No WEX)
For more information about the events, RSPB and Wildlife Explorer Group Phone : 01708 899 840
 Email : rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk Web : www.rspb.org.uk/rainham