

## **Vange Marsh: Update V**

Heavy rains in the early part of the year helped fill the lake far faster than anyone expected and meant the marsh held good numbers of birds early on in the year. Flocks of 100 curlew, 90 plus shoveler, 300 teal and 200 wigeon were regularly seen. Gull numbers remained high and black-headed gulls numbers reached 2500 in one count. With water levels still being lower than was hoped for the start of the breeding season, this was a great start for the marshes first year of being re-wetted.

The hot weather through April has lowered water levels but not put the birds off breeding. A pair of common terns have been seen displaying and passing food between each other. Shelduck, shoveler, avocet and reed buntings have also been seen displaying or singing and up to 10 greenshank have also been seen. Lapwing numbers are rising and the marshes have had several lapwings calling and displaying which is a good sign that grazing and water level management is moving in the right direction. Migrants have also been seen with a spoonbill on the 30<sup>th</sup> April as well as a few pairs of common sandpipers and several little gulls moving north along the coast to their Baltic breeding grounds. The highlight remains a single sighting of a bluethroat passing through, possibly the first of many future sightings as there is talk that global warming may encourage these birds to breed at Vange Marsh.

## **New Warden**

The South Essex Project is pleased to welcome Marc Outten as the new Warden. Marc started on the 1<sup>st</sup> May and will be working on a variety of tasks. Initially he will develop the project's workshop and once this is done will develop a volunteer work party. If you are interested in getting out and helping with a variety of reserve tasks please contact Marc on the office telephone number and he will take your details.

Marc has joined us from Southend Borough Council where he has worked as a Country Park Ranger and is just finishing a degree at Writtle College. A keen birder Marc will be an asset to the project.

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