



Tower Habitats Newsflash

Latest news on nature conservation and wildlife in Tower Hamlets

February 2017

Vote for a reed bed in Bromley by Bow! – Thames21 is running an online poll to decide where new reed beds will be installed in the Lea Navigation. They have identified nine potential sites, and have funding to install reed beds in the five sites which receive the most votes. One of the sites is in Tower Hamlets – Site 1 at Navigation Road E3. Voting closes on 31 March. As a thank you for voting, if you leave your e-mail address you will be entered into a prize draw. **Please [visit the poll](#) and vote for Site 1.** [Read more about the reed bed vote.](#)

Citizen science with the Woodland Trust – the Woodland Trust is asking volunteers to take part in two great citizen science projects. Nature's Calendar monitors events which mark the changing seasons, such as first flowering of spring flowers and arrival of migrant birds. Your observations could add to almost 300 years of data that helps us monitor how nature responds to environmental change. [Read more about Nature's Calendar.](#) Observatree provides resources to help volunteers identify and report the ever-increasing number of pests and diseases that threaten Britain's trees. With Oak Processionary Moth recently found in Victoria Park, and Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner widespread in the borough, now is a good time to look out for pests and diseases on trees in Tower Hamlets. [Read more about Observatree.](#)

Waxwings, Firecrests and eastern gulls – there have been lots of exciting birds seen in Tower Hamlets this winter. Bird-ringing events were held in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park in October and February, and on each occasion the birds trapped and ringed included a Firecrest. As February's Firecrest was unringed, it's clearly a different bird from the one in October, demonstrating that Cemetery Park remains one of the best places in London to see this lovely little bird. [Read more about Firecrests in Cemetery Park.](#) Perhaps less beautiful, but definitely rarer, is the Caspian Gull seen and photographed at East India Dock Basin in January, perhaps the first record in Tower Hamlets of this gull from eastern Europe and central Asia. Also from the east was a Black-headed Gull with a Lithuanian colour-ring, seen by the same keen-eyed birdwatcher at Poplar Dock Marina. [Read more about these eastern gulls.](#) Perhaps most exciting of all, Waxwings have arrived in Britain in good numbers this winter. There have already been sightings of these spectacular birds in Cemetery Park and at the Tower of London, and there are likely to be more, so keep a lookout, especially where there are trees or bushes with berries. [Read more about Waxwings.](#)

Matilda House hedge planting completed – Tower Hamlets Homes has completed the restoration of a mixed native hedge along the eastern boundary of Matilda House, which started in 2015. Many of the existing hedgerow trees were coppiced to allow more light to reach the newly-planted saplings. [Read more about the hedge at Matilda House.](#)

Rare fungus in Mile End Park – Local fungus expert Keir Mottram found *Hemipholiota populnea* (it doesn't have an English name), a nationally rare fungus, in Copperfield Road Woodland Walk in Mile End Park in November. Typically for the species, it was growing from the cut end of a large poplar log. [Read more about the rare fungus.](#)

Volunteers needed to rescue amphibians at Victoria Park – we need a few volunteers to help move frogs, toads and newts to safety when the spring bedding plants are stripped from the Sunken Garden in Victoria Park to make way for summer bedding in May. [Read about the successful rescue last autumn.](#) If you'd like to help, please [e-mail the Biodiversity Officer.](#)

For more information on these and other stories, see www.towerhabitats.org

If you have news on wildlife or biodiversity conservation, please e-mail the Biodiversity Officer john.archer@towerhamlets.gov.uk or phone 020 7364 7478