



Tower Habitats Newsflash

Latest news on nature conservation and wildlife in Tower Hamlets

February 2013

Portuguese (and French) ducks update – the female Tufted Duck, marked in Portugal with a red nasal saddle, was on East India Dock Basin from 12-19 November and 2-6 January before moving to Millwall Docks on 9 January. The male has been seen recently in northern Spain. Another female, with a light blue nasal saddle, seen on the Limehouse Basin on 20 January, appears to have been marked in France. Read more [here](#).

Greening the Lea – this is Thames21's project, funded by the Environment Agency, to add vegetation to the harsh concrete walls of the River Lea with the help of volunteers. This will improve water quality, attract wildlife and improve the appearance of the area. Volunteers are still needed for further events. For more information contact Ben Fenton on 07920 230970 or ben.fenton@thames21.org.uk

A colourful spring approaching – despite the current cold weather, the first spring bulbs are starting to flower in our parks and open spaces. The Manchester Estate, on the Isle of Dogs, should be worth a visit in the spring. EastendHomes planted 10,000 spring bulbs last year, so unless the squirrels have had a field day, the bulbs should make quite a show! Read more about biodiversity on the Manchester Estate [here](#).

Tower Hamlets Homes provide homes for birds and bats too – Tower Hamlets Homes is installing bird and bat boxes on its estates. Each of the 27 Tower Hamlets Homes neighbourhoods will have a standard hole-fronted box, an open-fronted box suitable for robins, and a sparrow terrace. Bat boxes will be placed in a few of the most likely locations for bats to find them.

Reed bed volunteers trained – Project Reedbed has seen 24 volunteers trained by Thames21 to survey the Lower Lea Catchment, identifying existing reed beds and potential locations for new reed beds. For more information contact Theo Thomas on 07968 012 828 or theo.thomas@thames21.org.uk

Waxwings are coming – this winter has seen a huge invasion of Waxwings into Britain from Scandinavia. These spectacular pink birds with upright crests are on the lookout for berries. There have been sightings in Mile End Park and Wapping so far – watch out for them in your local park, street trees or garden. Read more about Waxwings [here](#).

Luther in Cemetery Park – BBC crime thriller series *Luther* and its star Idris Elba visited Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park to film on the afternoon of 4 Feb. It was amazing to see such a star of Hollywood fame, who starred recently in *Prometheus* and the awesome TV series *The Wire*, in Cemetery Park. A Hackney boy, from Canning Town, he certainly done good!

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