



Tower Habitats Newsflash

Latest news on nature conservation and wildlife in Tower Hamlets

August 2012

New butterfly and reappearing orchid at Cemetery Park – on 21 July, Terry Lyle saw a White-letter Hairstreak in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, the first record for the park of this inconspicuous butterfly whose caterpillars feed on Elm. Also in the Local Nature Reserve, 2 spikes of Pyramidal Orchid have reappeared on Ackroyd Drive Green Link after several years' absence.

Biodiversity conference a success – the “Biodiversity: from balcony to building site and beyond” conference took place in Mile End Park on 27 June. Almost 100 delegates, including local residents and representatives of Council departments, social housing providers, businesses and voluntary organisations, heard six excellent presentations on a wide range of topics. Several local and London-wide groups had stalls and displays, and the conference ended with a tour of Mile End Park.

Portuguese duck moves to Millwall Docks – the male Tufted Duck, marked in Portugal with a red nasal saddle, which was seen at East India Dock Basin in the spring, has moved to Millwall Docks, where he's been seen several times between 23 June and 22 July.

More free wildflower seeds – the Council's offer of free wildflower seeds for residents has been so successful that the first 1000 packs of seeds were taken up within a few weeks. A second batch of seeds is now available from Idea Stores, libraries, city farms and the Soanes Centre. Hopefully, bees and butterflies will reap the benefits of wildflowers in gardens, schools and planters all over the borough.

New Mudchute online photo gallery – volunteers at Mudchute Park and Farm have begun to explore the wildlife that inhabits their 32 acres of park and farmland, which includes a wide range of habitats. You can see just a few of the wild plants and animals they've encountered so far at the flickr group Wildlife at Mudchute (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/2046249@N22/pool/>). Everyone is strongly encouraged to contribute their own sightings and identifications! Find out how to get to Mudchute at <http://mudchute.org/>.

Wandering Nuthatch excites local birdwatchers – a young Nuthatch spent the day in the Copse at East India Dock Basin on 25 June, the first ever record for the nature reserve. Remarkably, a Nuthatch was heard calling in Millwall Park the following day – presumably the same bird and probably the first record for the Isle of Dogs, too. A common woodland bird, the nearest places that Nuthatches can be seen regularly are probably Epping Forest and, across the river, Shooters Hill Woods.

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