

Rare birds seen in the Park

For the first time a Great White Egret has been seen in Richmond Park. It was spotted on a regular Friday Friends' bird walk in early September as it flew towards, and then settled on, a treetop on the Upper Pen Pond island. Nigel Jackman and Paula Redmond took the wonderful photos seen here and on the back cover.



Nigel says: *"This graceful white bird, with yellow bill and black legs, is the same size (up to one metre tall) as a grey heron. The only previous record is of one*

seen flying over the Park in 2012. Only a decade or so ago the Great White Egret was not even mentioned in books on British birds; now it is a rare, but increasing migrant".

Jan Wilczur from the Park's Bird Group recorded another long-awaited first for the Park - a Cetti's Warbler, just 13.5 cm long and very difficult to spot. Jan's other significant sightings include:

- ◇ Whinchat: 11 on one day. The Park may be the most important staging area for this red-listed species in Greater London.
- ◇ Redstart: up to three of this scarce migrant.
- ◇ Spotted Flycatcher: at least three of another scarce migrant.
- ◇ Grasshopper Warbler: two sightings of this very scarce and hard-to-see species.
- ◇ Green Sandpiper: again, rare in the Park.
- ◇ Two pairs of Buzzard nested, one of which bred successfully

Jan also spends a lot of time observing Skylarks and believes their breeding territories have declined since last year, which may be due to a major running event held in the spring.