



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

Promoting and fostering an interest in ornithology by observation, research and record-keeping

Field Trip

January 2025

Tittesworth Reservoir

Tuesday 7th January

Established in 1858 by damming the River Churnet, Tittesworth Reservoir was expanded in 1963 to become the county's second-largest reservoir. The site features two bird hides, including Well-maintained trails along the water's edge provide ample opportunities to enjoy the natural surroundings.



Tittesworth Reservoir - geography.org.uk



Hen Harrier food pass - Keith Offord

"Skydancers"

Keith Offord

Friday 10th January

To quote Keith: "Sixteen species of harrier are found throughout the world, and are spread as far apart as Australia and South America. They are, arguably one of the most elegant groups of raptors and are known for their spectacular display flights early in the breeding season. This talk explores this fascinating group of birds with particular emphasis on our own hen harrier which I have studied and monitored on the uplands of Wales since 1974".

For trip details, refer to the Chairman's Note email, visit



Raines Observatory, Martin Mere - David Dixon

Field Trip

Martin Mere WWT

Sunday 19th January

Martin Mere WWT is a premier 600-acre reserve with a mosaic of wetland habitats and over ten hides. The reserve is home to large flocks of pink-footed geese and whooper swans during the winter months.

December Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Cetti's Warbler, Common Gull, Curlew, Fieldfare, Goosander, Great White Egret, Green-winged Teal, Kingfisher, Lesser Redpoll, Little Egret, Little Grebe, Mandarin Duck, Pintail, Redwing, Yellowhammer; 2nd Common Scoter, Green Sandpiper, Raven; 3rd Cattle Egret, Pink-footed Goose, Pochard, Water Rail; 5th Chiffchaff, Goldeneye; 6th Yellow-legged Gull; 8th Golden Plover, Jack Snipe, Woodcock; 10th Common Snipe; 11th Tawny Owl; 15th Barnacle Goose; 17th Egyptian Goose, Siskin, Yellow-browed Warbler; 24th Ringed Teal, White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan; 31st Red Kite

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Dec

Waders	Count
Water Rail	1, 13 th , 29 th
Lapwing	regular, max 300+
Golden Plover	49, 30 th
Curlew	regular, max 31
Common Snipe	regular, max 4
Jack Snipe	3, 8 th
Woodcock	1, 8 th



Curlews - Dennis Swaby

CF = Crabmill Flash

EHF = Elton Hall Flash

FF = Fodens Flash

FFF = Fields Farm Flash

GF = Groby Flash

MGT = Maw Green Tip

OTF = Oak Tree Flash

PHF = Pump House Flash

RF = Railway Flash

WF = Warmingham Flash

WLF = Watch Lane Flash

Blue text indicates place first seen.

Underline indicates high flock count (see Feb 2020 Newsletter, page 8).

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Dec

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 38
Wigeon	regular, max c800
Gadwall	regular, max 2
Teal	regular, max 166
Green-winged Teal	regular, max 1
Ringed Teal ***	3, 24 th ; 1, 29 th
Mallard	regular, max 112
Pintail	1, 1 st , 30 th
Pochard	1, 29 th
Shoveler	regular, max 12+
Tufted Duck	regular, max 51
Common Scoter	1, 5 th
Goldeneye	1, 5 th , 24 th
Mandarin Duck	regular, max 1
Goosander	regular, max 1
Greylag Goose	regular, max 237
Canada Goose	regular, max c800
Barnacle Goose	regular, max 2
Pink-footed Goose	regular, max 200
White-fronted Goose	1, 24 th , 29 th , 30 th
Little Grebe	regular, max 2
Great Crested Grebe	regular, max 2
Coot	regular, max 195
Moorhen	regular, max 15
Mute Swan	regular, max 4



White-fronted Goose - Dennis Swaby



Ringed Teal - Dennis Swaby

*** 1 male and 2 female escapees.

Male had a yellow ring and one

female had a green ring.

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 6
Little Egret	regular, max 1
Great White Egret	regular, max 2
Cattle Egret	1, 3 rd

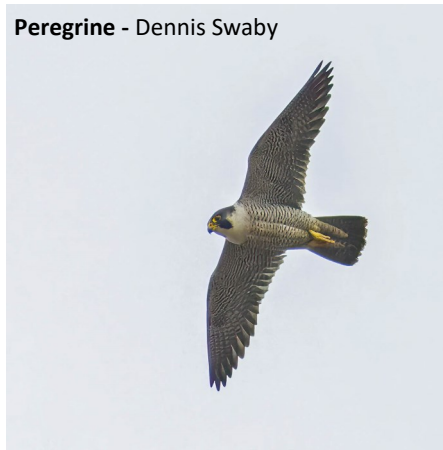


Common Gull - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c250
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 11
Great Black-b Gull	regular, max 1
Herring Gull	regular, max 83
Common Gull	regular, max 1
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 6 th , 13 th , 17 th

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 1 st , 24 th , 30 th
Buzzard	regular, max 2
Kestrel	1, 1 st , 10 th , 29 th
Peregrine	regular, max 1

Peregrine - Dennis Swaby



Sandbach Flashes - 3rd December

Twenty-three members enjoyed a rain-free morning at Sandbach Flashes. Later, we gathered at The White Lion in Warmingham for a festive lunch, where three more members joined us to celebrate the season. A big thank you to Jean for leading and for organising an enjoyable lunch!

Species seen/heard were: Canada Goose, Greylag Goose, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Gadwall, Wigeon, Mallard, Teal, Tufted Duck, Moorhen, Coot, Little Grebe, Lapwing, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Redwing, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Robin, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch

Trip Count = 39 species

Carsington Water - 15th December



Fourteen members gathered at the Sheepwash Car Park on a dry, cloudy day, ready for a day of birdwatching.

Sheepwash Car Park

The newly stocked feeding tray and surrounding trees were alive with activity. Among the visitors were robins, great tits, goldfinches, magpies, and woodpigeons. A buzzard circled overhead.

Sheepwash Hide

A short woodland walk brought us to the new Sheepwash Hide. A coordinated count by the Carsington Bird Club on 10th December had recorded an impressive 924 pochard, a likely county record. We observed over 200 pochard, both males and females, along with numerous coots.

continued >>

Carsington Water (continued)



The highlight here was a male goldeneye's brief but striking mating display, throwing his head back onto his back while extending his neck. Scanning the water, we added Canada goose, tufted duck, mallard, wigeon, great crested grebe, cormorant, black-headed gull, and lesser black-backed gull to our growing list. As we left the hide, a small party of long-tailed tits flitted through the nearby trees.

Paul Stanley Hide

From the Paul Stanley Hide, we enjoyed views of many more pochard and coots, along with teal, gadwall, and little grebe. A few lapwings perched on the spit, adding variety to the scene. Close to the hide, a robin and a wren darted through the vegetation, providing charming close encounters. As we left, about eight siskins were seen feeding in the alder trees.

Lane End Hide

We returned to the car park and then took the footpath past the Bombing Tower to Lane End Hide. Along the way, we spotted a red kite soaring overhead, a flock of redwing flying across the fields, and a few pheasants foraging.

From Lane End Hide, waterbird numbers were noticeably lower, though we added mute swan to our list. We returned to the car park for a short drive to the Visitor Centre, where we lunched in the car park.

Visitor Centre

Approaching the Visitor Centre, we spotted a kestrel hunting nearby. Blue tits, chaffinches, house sparrows and a goldcrest were on and around the feeders, offering a lively lunchtime show.

Wildlife Centre

Post-lunch, we headed to the Wildlife Centre. On a stony spit, the head of a single redshank could just be made out. Nearby, we discovered five well-camouflaged common snipe in the vegetation, first one, then two, and finally all five as we focused on the area.

Stones Island

Our final stop was a walk around Stones Island. While the hoped-for divers were absent, we enjoyed sightings of a few great crested grebes near the dam wall. Carsington Bird Club has reported that 2,000+ common gulls roost on the reservoir. Initially, only a handful of common gulls were seen, but as dusk approached, hundreds of common and black-headed gulls arrived to roost on the reservoir, a spectacular sight to close the day.

Some members capped off the trip with a hot drink at the café, and the journey home was marked by a breathtaking sunset - a fitting end to the day.

Mike Tonks

Trip Count = 39 species

2024 SECOS Field Trips Total = 167 species

Sightings Elsewhere - Dec



Great Spotted Woodpecker - Dennis Swaby

EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: Pheasant, Feral Pigeon, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, , Cormorant, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Raven, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Skylark, **Cetti's Warbler**, Long-tailed Tit, **Chiffchaff**, Goldcrest, Wren, Starling, Mistle Thrush, **Redwing**, Blackbird, **Fieldfare**, Robin, Stonechat, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Chaffinch, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll, Goldfinch, Reed Bunting

CF: Teal, Tufted Duck, Stock Dove, Great Crested Grebe, Cetti's Warbler, Goldcrest

FF: Woodcock

FFF: Canada Goose, Greylag Goose, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, **Goosander**, Pheasant, Feral Pigeon, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Moorhen, Coot, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, **Red Kite**, Buzzard, **Tawny Owl**, **Kingfisher**, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Raven, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Wren, Starling, Mistle Thrush, **Redwing**, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Robin, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, **Lesser Redpoll**, Goldfinch, Siskin, **Yellowhammer**, Reed Bunting

Arclid: **Golden Plover**, Lapwing

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Mute Swan, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Teal, **Pochard**, Tufted Duck, **Common Scoter**, Goosander, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Kingfisher, Jay, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Wren, Nuthatch, Blackbird, Robin, Pied Wagtail

Church Lawton - Lawton Hall: Pink-footed Goose, Mandarin Duck, Tufted Duck, Goosander, Little Grebe, Kingfisher

Church Lawton - Lawton Pool: Mandarin Duck, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Goosander, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Wren, Nuthatch, Blackbird, Robin

Church Lawton - Lawton Woods: **Green Sandpiper**

Congleton - Forge Mill, River Dane: **Raven**

Congleton - Mossley: Pheasant, Woodpigeon, Jack Snipe, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Blue Tit, Wren, Redwing, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Robin, Dunnock



Grey Wagtail - Dennis Swaby

This is a small selection of species seen in the SECOS Recording Area.

A full listing is on the website:

<https://www.secos.org.uk/sightings/>

Sightings Elsewhere - Dec

Congleton - River Dane: Whooper Swan, Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Stock Dove, Kingfisher, Goldcrest, Grey Wagtail

Crewe - Crewe Business Park: Yellow-browed Warbler

Crewe - Crewe FP6: Pink-footed Goose, Water Rail

Crewe Green: Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Herring Gull, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Goldcrest, Wren, Treecreeper, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Chaffinch, Goldfinch

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Pink-footed Goose, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Raven, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Wren, Starling, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Stonechat, Pied Wagtail, Chaffinch, Linnet, Goldfinch

Moston Green, W of Sandbach: Pink-footed Goose, Bullfinch, Yellowhammer

Rode Heath: Little Egret

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Teal, Tufted Duck, Goosander, Great Crested Grebe, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Buzzard, Tawny Owl, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Raven, Bullfinch, **Siskin**



Chiffchaff - Dennis Swaby

Shavington: Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Buzzard, Kestrel, Raven, Redwing

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Mandarin Duck, Mallard, Sparrowhawk, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Redwing, Greenfinch

Winterley & Winterley Pool: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Woodpigeon, Collared Dove, Moorhen, Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Black-headed Gull, Cormorant, Pied Wagtail, Goldfinch

Diary Dates



7th Jan 10.00 am
Tuesday Field Trip

10th Jan 7.30 pm
Indoor Meeting

19th Jan 10.00 am
Sunday Field Trip


Tittesworth Reservoir
Leader: Chris Parry


"Skydancers"
Speaker: Keith Offord

Martin Mere WWT
Leader: Mike Tonks

 SECOS Website: <https://www.secos.org.uk>

 SECOS Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/SECOS1964>

 SECOS Blog (to read/record local sightings): <https://www.secos.org.uk/blog>

 Sandbach Flashes: This medium does not do justice to the images that Dennis Swaby captures at Sandbach Flashes. Some of the images have been uploaded to www.sandbachflashes.co.uk