



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

April 2025

Field Trip Tuesday 8th April Macclesfield Forest & Tegg's Nose



Trentabank Reservoir seen from Nessit Hill - Colin Park

Macclesfield Forest is the last substantial remnant of a vast Norman royal hunting forest. It provides diverse habitats that support a variety of bird species. Notably, Trentabank Reservoir hosts the largest

heronry in the Peak District. Adjacent to the forest, Tegg's Nose features a mix of moorland, meadows, and broadleaved woodland. Elevated vantage points offer panoramic views across the Cheshire Plain and towards the Peak District.

Annual General Meeting & Members' Evening

Friday 11th April

Peter Durnall will present "[Spring, New Life Begins](#)" - a film about woodland and water birds.

Ian Taylor will showcase his 2025 photos of "[Birds and Scenes of New Zealand](#)".

Peter Durnall will present "[Earth](#)" - a film about climate change and how it's affecting our wildlife.

There will be the ever-popular [Bird Trivia Quiz](#) to challenge your avian knowledge!

The evening will finish with a raffle, and refreshments will be served.

For trip details, refer to the Chairman's Note email, visit the SECOS website or contact the trip leader.

Long Weekend Trip

Norfolk

Fri 25th - Mon 28th April

We're heading to Norfolk in April for our long weekend trip, staying at the Le Strange Arms in Old Hunstanton. Norfolk is one of the UK's top birding destinations, offering a rich variety of habitats, from coastal marshes to heathland and ancient woodlands. We'll explore renowned reserves along the North Norfolk coast and venture inland to key sites near the Norfolk-Suffolk border. Expect a fantastic mix of waders, wildfowl, raptors, and woodland species. With migration in full swing, there's plenty of potential for exciting sightings throughout the trip. A full report will follow in a future newsletter.



Cley Windmill - Mike Tonks

March Highlights (first reports this month in SECOS Recording Area)

1st Black-necked Grebe, Great White Egret, Green Sandpiper, Green-winged Teal, Pochard, Raven; 2nd Chiffchaff, Hawfinch, Mandarin Duck, Siskin, Yellowhammer; 3rd Black-tailed Godwit, Fieldfare, Goosander, Little Egret, Redwing; 4th Red Kite; 5th Barn Owl; 6th Grey Partridge, Oystercatcher, Red-legged Partridge; 7th Cattle Egret, Kingfisher, Tawny Owl, Woodcock; 8th Common Gull, Crane; 9th Cetti's Warbler, Little Grebe, Pink-footed Goose; 10th Mediterranean Gull; 11th Barnacle Goose; 13th Blackcap, Little Ringed Plover; 14th Goldeneye; 15th Snipe; 16th Sand Martin; 17th Curlew; 18th Egyptian Goose; 20th House Martin; 23rd Redshank; 24th Swallow; 25th Pintail; 28th Willow Warbler

Sightings EHF/PHF - Mar

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 13 th
Buzzard	regular, max 1
Red Kite	1, 8 th

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 2
Little Egret	regular, max 7
Great White Egret	regular, max 3

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 - Mar

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 60+
Wigeon	regular, max 360+
Teal	regular, max 140+
Green-winged Teal	1, 1 st , 2 nd , 16 th
Mallard	regular, max 70+
Pochard	1, 1 st
Shoveler	regular, max 20+
Tufted Duck	1, 3 rd , 11 th
Mandarin Duck	2, 4 th
Goosander	2, 11 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 10+
Canada Goose	regular, max 50+
Barnacle Goose	1, 11 th
Pink-footed Goose	c30
Coot	regular, max 40+
Moorhen	regular, max 10+
Mute Swan	regular, max 4



High Flying Crane - Dennis Swaby



High Flying Cranes - Dennis Swaby



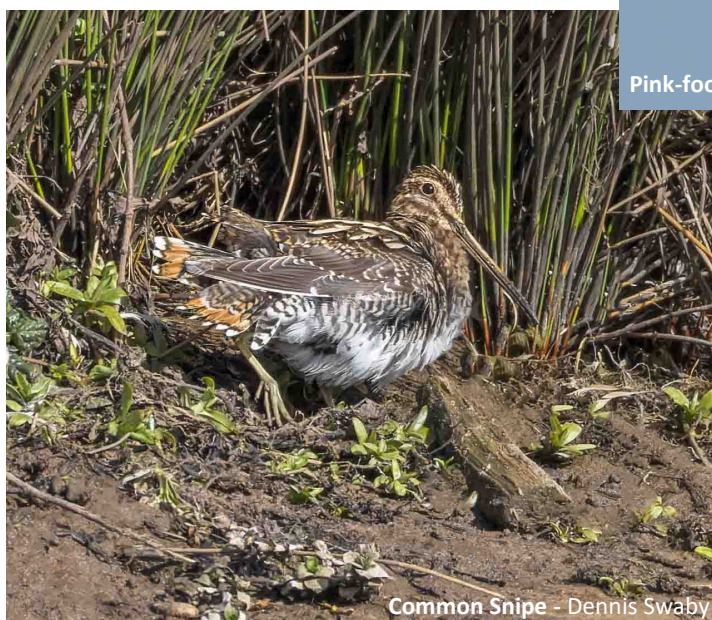
Green Sandpiper
- Dennis Swaby

Sightings EHF/PHF - Mar

Waders	Count
Oystercatcher	regular, max 4
Lapwing	regular, max 30+
Little Ringed Plover	regular, max 2
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 22
Common Snipe	1, 15 th , 28 th
Green Sandpiper	regular, max 3
Redshank	1, 23 rd
Crane	2, 8 th

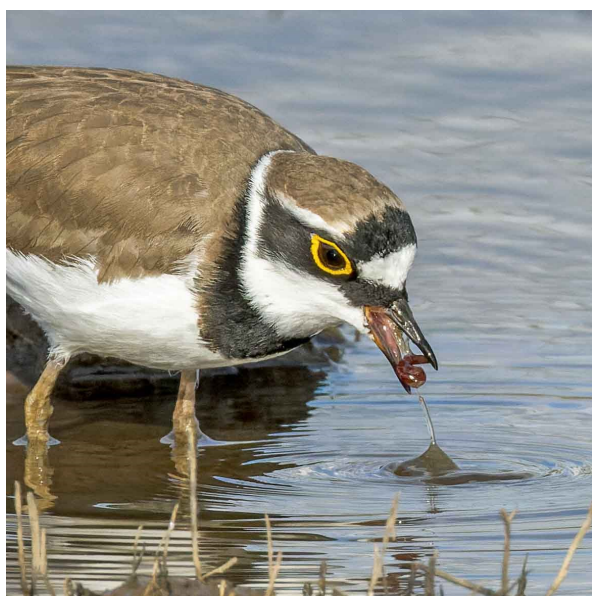


Pink-footed Geese - Dennis Swaby



Common Snipe - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	600+
Mediterranean Gull	2, 11 th , 12 th
Lesser Black-b Gull	50+
Herring Gull	5+
Common Gull	regular, max 64
Great Black-b Gull	1, 11 th



Little Ringed Plover - Dennis Swaby



Black-tailed Godwits - Dennis Swaby

Doxey Marshes - 4th March



Seven members enjoyed a sunny day at Doxey Marshes.

A big thank you to Tom Graham for leading the trip!

Species seen/heard were: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Teal, Tufted Duck, Wood Pigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Water Rail, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Common Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Common Buzzard, Kingfisher, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Cetti's Warbler, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Redwing, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

Trip Count = 39 species

Burton Mere Wetlands - 16th March



On a beautiful spring day, 21 members travelled to RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands.

Arrival & First Sightings

As we assembled in the car park, a pair of nuthatches darted through the trees, while a chiffchaff sang its familiar melody. A tree creeper was spotted, joined by blue tits and great tits flitting about the branches. A particularly bold robin perched on one of our scopes, allowing for close-up phone photos – an early highlight of the day!

At the visitor centre, sharp-eyed members spotted a kingfisher resting on the far bank of Willow Pool. This former fishery still contains plenty of fish, ensuring a reliable food source for these dazzling birds.

Reception Hide: A Busy Scrape

At Reception Hide, overlooking the main scrape known as Reception Pool, we were treated to a lively mix of ducks and waders. Teal, mallard, shoveler, shelduck and gadwall dabbled in the water, while avocets, lapwings, redshank and a lone oystercatcher foraged. A little grebe surfaced close to the hide, diving frequently. A male marsh harrier quartered the reedbed in search of prey, while a grey heron stood statue-like in a distant field.

Reedbed Screen & Heronry

Following the Burton Mere Trail, we passed Willow Pool and Woodland Pool, where long-tailed tits flitted through the trees and a pair of tufted ducks was seen.

Hoping for a glimpse of elusive wetland birds, we stopped at the Reedbed Screen. Unfortunately, bittern and water rail remained hidden, only a single greylag goose was seen. Further along the trail, we watched grey herons bringing nesting material to the heronry – an impressive spectacle.

continued >>

Burton Mere Wetlands (continued)



Marsh Covert Hide overlooking Reedbed Pool and Bridge Pool

At Marsh Covert Hide, a Cetti's warbler flew across a channel and disappeared into the reeds, while gadwall, tufted duck and a single shoveler lingered on Reedbed Pool. Over at Bridge Pool, three black-tailed godwits waded, and a squadron of twenty grey herons flew in.

Nearby, a Cetti's warbler called from the reeds, and a Raven flew over calling 'korrp' to confirm its identity.

Bridge Screen overlooking Bridge Pool

A single male pintail was sleeping on the bank at the back of the pool, occasionally standing to give us a better view. Four black-tailed godwits flew over.

We followed the Farm and Willow Trail, winding through peaceful alder and willow woodland. A kestrel was spotted on the way.

Border Hide: A Recent Addition

Border Hide, a newish feature of the reserve (opened in 2021), provided excellent views over Centenary Pool and Border Pool. We watched avocets and black-tailed godwits feeding, revealing their white wing bars as they moved between sections of the pool. A few wigeon rested on the near bank. Teal, in their full breeding plumage, showed off their vibrant colours, while a lone knot preened nearby. A little egret was added to the day's list. A buzzard soared overhead, and a sparrowhawk was spotted perched in a tree.

Burton Point: Sweeping Estuary Views

Retracing our steps, we climbed the Hillfort Trail to Burton Point, where we were rewarded with stunning panoramic views across the Dee Estuary. A great spotted woodpecker drummed in the trees, while hundreds of pink-footed geese grazed on the marsh below. Two great white egrets were a welcome addition to our list.

Bunker Hide & Final Sightings

Returning to the visitor centre, we made our way to Bunker Hide. A green woodpecker announced its presence with a distinctive yaffling call. A flock of barnacle geese dropped into a field beyond the reedbed, and a female marsh harrier was seen hunting. A reed bunting appeared briefly, while a greenfinch perched at the top of a nearby tree.

Back at the visitor centre, a male stonechat posed perfectly on a post - our last sighting of the day.

A Wonderful Day Out

With the sun shining and plenty of bird activity, we had an excellent day at Burton Mere Wetlands. Many thanks to Anthea Gater for leading the trip!

Trip Count = 55 species 2025 SECOS Field Trips Total = 92 species

Mike Tonks

Sightings Elsewhere - Mar

EHF/PHF: Skylark, Sand Martin, **House Martin**, **Cetti's Warbler**, Chiffchaff, **Blackcap**, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Meadow Pipit, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

FFF: Goosander, Lapwing, **Woodcock**, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Tawny Owl, **Kingfisher**, Cetti's Warbler, Chiffchaff, Redwing, Fieldfare, Greenfinch, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting

Alsager: Fieldfare

Alsager - Alsager Mill: Fieldfare

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Tufted Duck, Reed Bunting

Alsager - Salt Line: Chiffchaff

Arclid Green: Stonechat

Astbury: Red Kite

Astbury - Astbury Marsh: Red Kite

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: **Pochard**, Tufted Duck, Great Crested Grebe, **Black-necked Grebe**, **Common Gull**, **Red Kite**, Sand Martin, Chiffchaff, Bullfinch

Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath LNR: Shoveler, Tufted Duck, **Little Grebe**, Great Crested Grebe, Barn Owl, Skylark, Chiffchaff, Fieldfare, Reed Bunting

Checkley: **Grey Partridge**, **Red-legged Partridge**, Skylark



Goldcrest - Dennis Swaby



Cetti's Warbler - Dennis Swaby

Church Lawton - Lawton Gate Treatment Works: Chiffchaff, Grey Wagtail

Congleton - Buglawton: Raven

Congleton - Forge Mill, River Dane: Red Kite

Congleton - Mossley: **Barn Owl**, Chiffchaff

Congleton - North Rode: Little Egret, Chiffchaff

Congleton - River Dane: Goosander, Red-legged Partridge, Red Kite, Kingfisher, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Redwing, Grey Wagtail

Congleton - West Heath: Little Egret

Crewe: Chiffchaff, **Hawfinch**

Crewe - Basford: Fieldfare

Crewe - Meremoor Moss: Buzzard, Kestrel

Crewe - Wychwood Park, Weston: Chiffchaff

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Shelduck, Shoveler, Wigeon, Pochard, Tufted Duck, **Goldeneye**, Goosander, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, **Oystercatcher**, Lapwing, **Green Sandpiper**, Sparrowhawk, Red Kite, Raven, Skylark, **Sand Martin**, **Willow Warbler**, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Redwing, Fieldfare, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

Gawsworth - Gawsworth Hall: Tufted Duck

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 - Mar



Skylark - Dennis Swaby



Red Kite - Dennis Swaby

Marion: Red Kite

Moston Green, W of Sandbach: **Chiffchaff**

Nantwich: Chiffchaff

Newsbank, nr Congleton: Little Ringed Plover, **Curlew**,
Green Sandpiper, Red Kite

North Rode: Teal, Tufted Duck, **Goosander**, Lapwing,
Little Egret, **Redwing**, **Fieldfare**, Grey Wagtail,
Greenfinch

Rode Heath: **Cattle Egret**, Red Kite, **Swallow**

Rode Heath - Rode Hall: Tufted Duck, Great Crested

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Barnacle Goose,
Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, Shoveler,
Pintail, Tufted Duck, Goosander,
Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Snipe, Little Egret,
Great White Egret, Tawny Owl, Kingfisher

Sandbach - Sandbach Wildlife Corridor:
Crane

Scholar Green: **Mandarin Duck**, Grey
Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, **Siskin**,
Yellowhammer

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Mandarin Duck,
Sparrowhawk, **Tawny Owl**, Kingfisher

Diary Dates



8th Apr 10.00 am
Tuesday Field Trip

11th Apr 7.30 pm
AGM & Member's Evening


25th - 28th Apr
Long Weekend Trip

Macclesfield Forest & Tegg's Nose
Leaders: Ian & Lydia Taylor

Norfolk
Leader: Mike Tonks

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

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

 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 <https://sandbachflashes.co.uk/>