



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

August 2024

July Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Little Egret, Little Grebe, Little Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Raven, Red-legged Partridge, Redshank, Swift; 2nd Hobby, Kingfisher, Mandarin Duck, Yellow-legged Gull; 4th Red Kite; 6th Black-tailed Godwit, *** Caspian Tern ***; Common Sandpiper, Common Tern, Curlew, Goosander, Great White Egret, Green Sandpiper; 10th Egyptian Goose; 12th Common Gull; 13th Mediterranean Gull, Common Snipe; 14th Snow Goose, Water Rail; 19th Yellow Wagtail; 20th Yellowhammer; 21st Pochard; 24th Avocet, Greenshank; 27th Spotted Flycatcher

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Jul



Caspian Tern - Dennis Swaby

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

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Jul

Caspian Tern at Sandbach Flashes



Caspian Tern - Dennis Swaby

On the 6th July, birders at EHF, Sandbach Flashes were thrilled to witness a remarkable sighting - a Caspian Tern. This majestic bird, the largest of the tern species, was seen engaging in a variety of behaviours, including flying, fishing and sleeping.



Caspian Tern - Dennis Swaby

The Caspian Tern has a length of 48-55 cm and an impressive wingspan of 96-111 cm (Collins Bird Guide). It boasts a long, thick, bright red bill and, during the breeding season, it sports a striking black cap. This bird's impressive size and distinctive features make it a standout among terns.

Known for its wide distribution, the Caspian Tern can be found on every continent except Antarctica. In the UK, it is a regular but scarce visitor, typically appearing during the summer months. The longevity of this species is notable, with individuals capable of living up to 20 years.

The sighting of the Caspian Tern at Sandbach Flashes was the first recorded appearance of this species at the site. This rarity attracted many birders, eager to catch a glimpse of this magnificent bird. The event not only highlighted the rich biodiversity of Sandbach Flashes but also reinforced the importance of local birdwatching efforts in recording and preserving such rare sightings.

Thank you to all those who participated in finding, photographing and sharing this special event.

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 - Jul

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 38
Wigeon	3, 10 th , 11 th , 22 nd
Gadwall	regular, max 12
Teal	regular, max 29
Mallard	regular, max c380
Pochard	5, 21 st
Tufted Duck	4, 7 th
Mandarin Duck	regular, max 5
Goosander	4, 6 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 60
Canada Goose	regular, max 282
G C Grebe	regular, max 2
Little Grebe	3, 28 th
Coot	regular, max 110
Moorhen	regular, max 9
Mute Swan	regular, max 3



Great Egret - Dennis Swaby



Little Ringed Plover - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c450
Mediterranean Gull	1, 13 th , 16 th
Common Gull	1, 12 th
Great Black-b Gull	1, 13 th
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 95
Herring Gull	regular, max 31
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 2 nd , 6 th , 23 rd , 24 th
Common Tern	regular, max 2
Caspian Tern	1, 6 th

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Jul

Waders	Count
Water Rail	2, 28 th
Oystercatcher	regular, max 2
Avocet	1, 24 th , 30 th , 31 st
Lapwing	regular, max 310
Little Ringed Plover	regular, max 7
Curlew	regular, max 13
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 20
Common Snipe	regular, max 3
Common Sandpiper	regular, max 8
Green Sandpiper	regular, max 2
Redshank	regular, max 1
Greenshank	1, 24 th



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

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 6 th
Buzzard	regular, max 4
Kestrel	regular, max 2



Sightings Elsewhere - Jul

EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: Swift, Cormorant, Kingfisher, Kestrel, Raven, Skylark, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Greenfinch, Bullfinch, Linnet, Reed Bunting

FFF: Swift, Hobby, Swallow, House Martin, Blackcap, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

WLF: Great Crested Grebe, **Common Tern**

Alsager: Hobby, Swallow

Alsager - Alsager Mill: Swift, Hobby, Swallow

Alsager - Alsager Treatment Works: Swift, Kestrel, **Hobby**, Swallow, House Martin, Grey Wagtail

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Kingfisher

Alsager - Fanny's Croft: Skylark, Yellow Wagtail, Linnet, **Yellowhammer**

Arclid Area SQs: Raven, Sand Martin

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Great Crested Grebe

Bridgemere - Bridgemere Garden Centre: Goldcrest, Treecreeper

Church Lawton: Swift, Swallow

Church Lawton - Lawton Gate Treatment Works: House Martin

Congleton - Little Moreton Hall: Swift, House Martin

Congleton - Macclesfield Canal: Swift

Congleton - Mossley: Sparrowhawk, Raven, Swallow, Blackcap

Congleton - River Dane: Goosander, Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail



Lesser Whitethroat - Dennis Swaby

Crewe: Yellow-legged Gull, Great Black-backed Gull

Crewe - Oakhanger: Red Kite

Doddington - Doddington Pool: **Snow Goose**, **Red-legged Partridge**, **Swift**, **Little Grebe**, **Oystercatcher**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Red Kite**, Kingfisher, Kestrel, **Raven**, Skylark, Swallow, House Martin, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, **Yellow Wagtail**, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

Doddington - Lemon Pool: Mandarin Duck, Little Grebe

Haslington: Swift

Malkins Bank: Hobby

Middlewich - Lime Beds: Greenfinch

Rode Heath: Hobby

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: **Egyptian Goose**, **Mandarin Duck**, Sparrowhawk, **Kingfisher**, Reed Warbler, Reed Bunting

Sandbach: Swift

Sandbach - Sandbach Wildlife Corridor: Swift

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/>



Goldfinch - Dennis Swaby

🕸 SECOS Website: www.secos.org.uk

🕸 SECOS Blog (to read/record local sightings): www.secos.org.uk/sightings

🕸 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

Sightings Elsewhere - Jul



Blackcap - Dennis Swaby

Scholar Green: Hobby

Smallwood: Swallow, **Spotted Flycatcher**

Swettenham - The Quinta: Swallow, House Martin, Treecreeper, Bullfinch

Walgherton - Lea Forge: Grey Heron, Hobby, Swallow, Chiffchaff, Greenfinch

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Swift, Sparrowhawk, Swallow, House Martin, Blackcap, Greenfinch

Winterley & Winterley Pool: Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Swallow, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Nuthatch, Greenfinch

Swettenham Valley - 17th July



8 members had a pleasant morning walk in the sunshine.

The owl nest box was occupied. We had several brief views of the top of a young barn owl's head. At one point, it was observed wing flapping, a sign that it was nearing fledging.

21 bird species were recorded including Buzzard, Barn Owl, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Swallow and Swift.

There were many butterflies in the meadow - Meadow Brown, Small White, Fritillary sp. and Red Admiral.

We then retired to The Swettenham Arms for lunch.

Mike Tonks

2024 SECOS Field Trips Total = 160

Diary Dates



27th August

Committee Meeting

SECOS Website: www.secos.org.uk

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

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