



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

October 2024

"Bird Photography Around the UK"

David Winnard

Friday 11th October

David is the founder of Discover the Wild, a natural history company. His talk tells the story of his travels to many places around the UK, including The Lizard and Shetland, and the different species he encountered on his travels.



Dotterel - David Winnard



Parkgate - Sue Adair

Field Trip

Wirral

Sunday 20th October

This month, we explore the Wirral, visiting some top birdwatching locations like Parkgate, West Kirby, Hoylake, and Leasowe. Our day begins at Parkgate, where the RSPB manages the salt marsh as part of the Dee Estuary Nature Reserve—one of the largest and most vital wetlands globally. Along with the birdlife, Parkgate is also known for its locally renowned homemade ice cream!

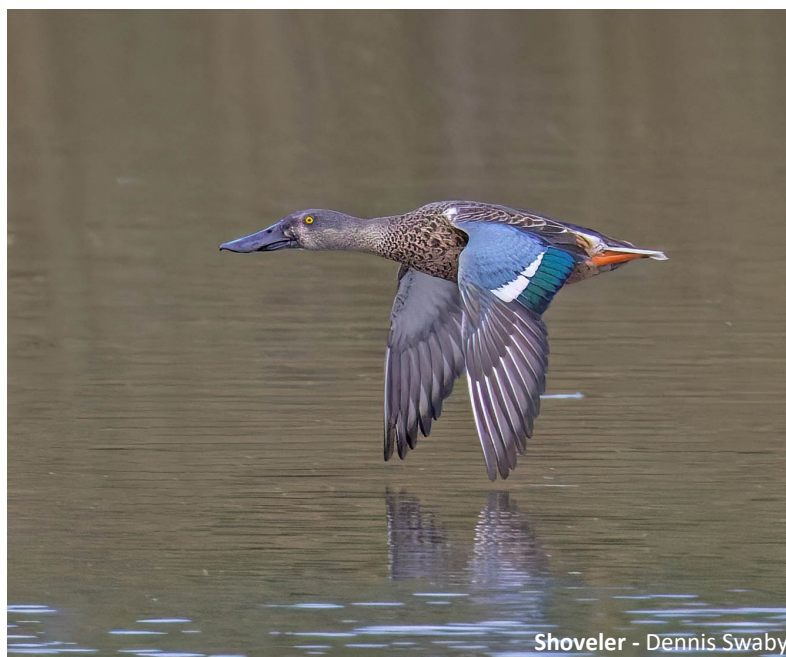
For trip details, refer to the Chairman's Note email, visit the SECOS website or contact the trip leader.

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Sep

September Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Black-tailed Godwit, Caspian Gull, Common Sandpiper, Curlew, Dipper, Goosander, Green Sandpiper, Hobby, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Little Ringed Plover, Raven, Snipe, Wheatear; 2nd Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck; 3rd Barn Owl; 4th Little Egret, Yellow-legged Gull; 5th Greenshank, Marsh Harrier; 8th Whinchat; 9th Firecrest; 13th Great Egret, Pochard, Redstart, Tawny Owl; 16th Black-necked Grebe; 18th Pink-footed Goose; 20th Ruff; 21st Common Gull, Pintail; 22nd Oystercatcher, Swift; 24th Golden Plover, Water Rail; 25th Barnacle Goose, Redwing; 27th Hen Harrier; 28th Garganey, Siskin

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 6
Wigeon	regular, max 73
Gadwall	regular, max 34
Teal	regular, max c250
Mallard	regular, max c290
Pochard	regular, max 4
Shoveler	regular, max 78
Tufted Duck	regular, max 28
Pintail	1, 21 st , 30 th
Garganey	1, 28 th , 29 th
Mandarin Duck	2, 2 nd
Goosander	11, 4 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 72
Canada Goose	regular, max c1100
Barnacle Goose	1, 25 th
Pink-footed Goose	c190
Egyptian Goose	regular, max 3
G C Grebe	regular, max 1
Little Grebe	regular, max 6
Coot	regular, max 83
Moorhen	regular, max 11
Mute Swan	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

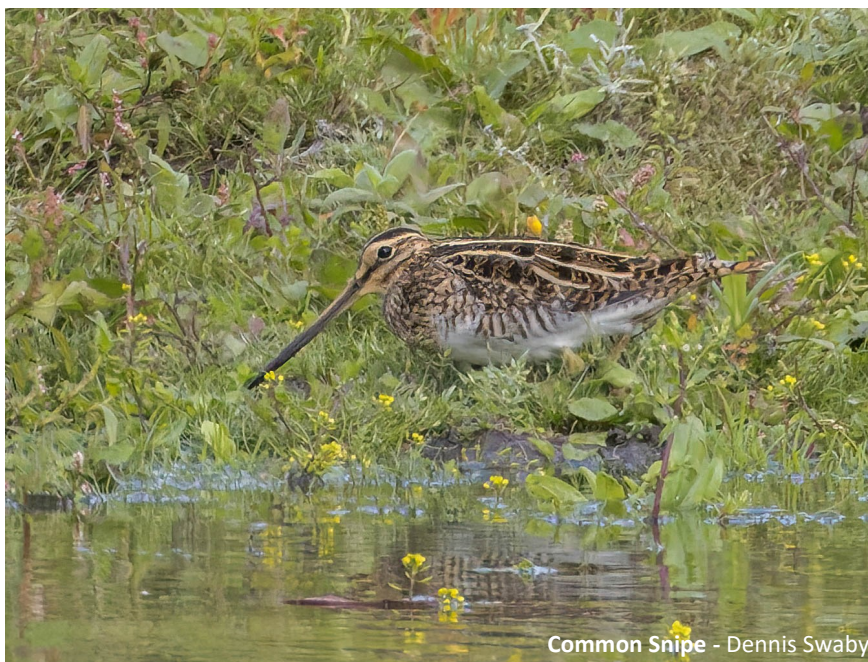
WLF = Watch Lane Flash

Blue text indicates place first seen.

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

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Sep

Waders	Count
Water Rail	1, 25 th
Oystercatcher	2, 22 nd
Golden Plover	7, 25 th
Lapwing	regular, max c250
Little Ringed Plover	1, 1 st , 4 th
Curlew	regular, max 15
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 2
Common Snipe	regular, max 7
Common Sandpiper	1
Green Sandpiper	regular, max 3
Ruff	1, 20 th



Common Snipe - Dennis Swaby

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 4
Little Egret	2, 20 th
Great Egret	1, 13 th , 15 th , 28 th



Green Sandpipers - Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	regular, max 2
Marsh Harrier	1, 28 th
Hen Harrier	1, 27 th
Buzzard	regular, max 5
Kestrel	regular, max 4
Peregrine	1, 24 th



Curlew - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c380
Common Gull	1, 21 st
Caspian Gull	1, 1 st , 2 nd
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 75
Herring Gull	regular, max 40
Yellow-legged Gull	regular, max 1
Great B-backed Gull	regular, max 2

Middleton Lakes - 15th September

Attendees and Weather:

16 members travelled to Middleton Lakes RSPB. The morning was mostly dry with sunny intervals. The afternoon brought showers, adding variety to our experience.



Start of the Walk:

As we left the car park, the sounds of greenfinches greeted us from the hedgerows. We crossed a lane and made our way onto an elevated walkway. Here, moorhens and mallards were seen on the pool near the reedbed, while blue tits, great tits, and goldfinches visited the feeders.

Through the Woodland:

Continuing through the woodland, we heard a chiffchaff, chaffinch, robin and wren. On reaching an open field, carrion crow, woodpigeon, and lapwing were added to the day's list. A lucky few caught a fleeting glimpse of a kingfisher, and a great spotted woodpecker was heard.

At Fisher's Mill Pool:

Crossing the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal at Fisher's Mill Bridge, we set up scopes to observe Fisher's Mill Pool. The dominant species here was tufted duck, accompanied by several coots. A highlight was a green woodpecker flying across the pool, its unmistakable yellow rump earning it a year-tick for most of us. Shoveler, mute swan, great crested grebe, and grey heron were noted, along with flyovers by a lesser black-backed gull and a solitary swallow.

At the Viewing Screen:

At the viewing screen overlooking West Scrape and Jubilee Wetlands, a stately great white egret was a focal point, wading through the shallow water. Greylag geese and a few Canada geese rested on the grassy banks. Gadwall, teal, and wigeon were present in small numbers, and on a nearby muddy patch, three ringed plovers were busy feeding.

Unplanned Route Change:

A brief moment of confusion occurred when the group was mistakenly led along the Seasonal Trail instead of heading to The Lookout hide. However, this fortunate detour rewarded us with excellent views of a greenshank feeding and bathing, and a black-tailed godwit.

Lunch at Dosthill Nature Reserve:

After crossing the footbridge into Dosthill Nature Reserve, we reached a viewing screen where we paused for lunch - although it wasn't as comfortable as The Lookout hide! Mallards, coots, and a few great crested grebes were observed on the water.

Return Journey:

Following lunch, we walked the track toward Cliff Lakes, but bird activity here was minimal, with just a few mallards sighted. On the way back through the woodland, we had an enjoyable close-up encounter with a nuthatch, watching as it gathered food from a pile of mixed seed.

End of the Day:

Some members of the group took the opportunity to relax at Middleton Hall courtyard for refreshments before heading home, concluding a day filled with memorable sightings and companionship.

Sightings Elsewhere - Sep



Whinchat - Dennis Swaby

EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: Kingfisher, Raven, Skylark, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, **Cetti's Warbler**, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, **Redwing**, **Whinchat**, Stonechat, **Wheatear**, Grey Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, **Siskin**, Reed Bunting
FFF: Kingfisher, Raven, Swallow, House Martin, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, **Redstart**, Greenfinch

Alsager: **Swift**

Alsager - Alsager Treatment Works: Hobby, Swallow, House Martin

Arclid Green: **Hobby**

Astbury: Sparrowhawk, Peregrine

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: **Black-necked Grebe**

Barthomley, SE of Crewe: **Pink-footed Goose**

Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath LNR: Nuthatch, Treecreeper

Church Lawton - Lawton Gate Treatment Works: Grey Wagtail

Congleton - Giantswood Lane: **Barn Owl**

Congleton - Radnor: Mandarin Duck, Swallow

Congleton - River Dane: **Goosander**, Kingfisher, **Firecrest**, Goldcrest, **Dipper**, Grey Wagtail

Congleton Treatment Works: Grey Wagtail

Crewe: Raven

Crewe - Oakhanger: **Pink-footed Goose**

Crewe - Quaker's Coppice: Kingfisher, Reed Warbler

Crewe - Weston: **Tawny Owl**

Dane Valley - Hillmoor Farm to Colley Mill: **Green Sandpiper**, **Kingfisher**, **Raven**, Swallow, Grey Wagtail

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Shoveler, Wigeon, Mallard, Teal, Tufted Duck, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Lapwing, Snipe, **Greenshank**, Sparrowhawk, **Marsh Harrier**, Kingfisher, Raven, Swallow, House Martin

Doddington - Lemon Pool: Kingfisher

Gawsworth - Gawsworth Hall: Swallow

Haslington: Swallow

Kidsgrove - Kidsgrove Treatment Works: Grey Wagtail

M6 - Between J16 & J17: Green Sandpiper

Mow Cop: Pink-footed Goose, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear

Nantwich: Treecreeper

Rode Heath: Hobby

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, **Water Rail**, Raven, Swallow, Grey Wagtail



Willow Warbler - 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/>

 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 - Sep



Swallow - Dennis Swaby

Sandbach - Bradwall Green: Pink-footed Goose

Sandbach - Elworth: Barnacle Goose, Swallow

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Mandarin Duck, Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Kingfisher, Swallow, House Martin, Greenfinch

Winterley & Winterley Pool: Swallow



Kestrel - Dennis Swaby

SECOS at Hassall Green Nature Reserve Open Day

On 14th September, SECOS had the pleasure of attending the Hassall Green Nature Reserve Open Day, an event organized by the Green Angels, led by Project Officer, Rebecca Mooney.

Our volunteers were on hand to share information about SECOS, speak with visitors about what we offer, and distribute flyers. We were delighted to meet so many people interested in birds and conservation, with several visitors providing their email addresses to receive more information about our society and upcoming events.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers, and we look forward to welcoming new faces to our society!

A special thank-you goes to the Green Angels for their warm hospitality and invaluable help in setting up and taking down our stall. We would also like to express our gratitude for their generosity – the Green Angels sold refreshments at the event and kindly donated £110.68 to SECOS.

Diary Dates



11th Oct 7.30 p.m.
Indoor Meeting

14th Oct 7.30 p.m.
Team Meeting

20th Oct 10.00 a.m.
Sunday Field Trip

Bird Photography Around the UK
Speaker: David Winnard

Membership Drive Team
Chair: Mike Tonks

Wirral
Leader: Tom Graham

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