



# THE OBSERVER

## SECOS Newsletter

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

### "Birding on the Doorstep"

Chris Galvin

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December

Chris says: "In recent years, there has been a move towards a greener and more sustainable way of birding. This talk concentrates on 'local' birding utilising public parks, gardens and beaches, and provides one or two surprise birds within."

## December 2024



Great Crested Grebe - Chris Galvin

### Field Trip - Carsington Water

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December

With nearly 8 billion gallons of water, Carsington Water is the ninth largest reservoir in England! With open waters, muddy shorelines and native woodland, it is home to a wide variety of birds – including waterfowl, waders and raptors, making it a fantastic location for winter birdwatching.



Carsington Water - John M

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

## November Highlights (first reports this month)

1<sup>st</sup> Barnacle Goose, Common Gull, Curlew, Fieldfare, Hawfinch, Little Egret, Little Grebe, Pink-footed Goose, Pochard, Redwing; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cetti's Warbler, Goldeneye, Lesser Redpoll, Marsh Harrier, Common, Snipe, Whooper Swan, Yellow-legged Gull; 3<sup>rd</sup> Garganey, Golden Plover, Great White Egret, Kingfisher, Muscovy Duck, Siskin, Water Rail, Yellowhammer; 4<sup>th</sup> Brambling, **Caspian Gull**, Mandarin Duck, Raven, Tawny Owl; 5<sup>th</sup> Redshank; 6<sup>th</sup> Chiffchaff, Common Scoter, Dipper, Oystercatcher; 7<sup>th</sup> Merlin, Pintail; 8<sup>th</sup> Egyptian Goose; 9<sup>th</sup> Black-tailed Godwit, Dunlin; 10<sup>th</sup> Jack Snipe, Woodcock; 11<sup>th</sup> Ring-necked Parakeet; 12<sup>th</sup> Goosander; 13<sup>th</sup> Green Sandpiper; 19<sup>th</sup> **Green-winged Teal**; 22<sup>nd</sup> Barn Owl; 29<sup>th</sup> Sand Martin

## Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Nov

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 62
Wigeon	regular, max c710
Gadwall	regular, max 22
Teal	regular, max c290
<b>Green-winged Teal</b>	regular, max 1
Mallard	regular, max c240
Pochard	max 3, 17 <sup>th</sup>
Shoveler	regular, max 35
<b>Pintail</b>	max 3, 8 <sup>th</sup>
Tufted Duck	regular, max 12+
<b>Goldeneye</b>	1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Garganey</b>	1, 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Mandarin Duck	1, 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Goosander	5, 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Greylag Goose	regular, max 51
Canada Goose	regular, max c320
<b>Pink-footed Goose</b>	regular, max c330
G C Grebe	regular, max 7
<b>Little Grebe</b>	regular, max 1
Coot	regular, max c160
Moorhen	regular, max 10
Mute Swan	regular, max 6
<b>Whooper Swan</b>	max 8, 13 <sup>th</sup>

Whooper Swans - Dennis Swaby



Pink-footed Geese - 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

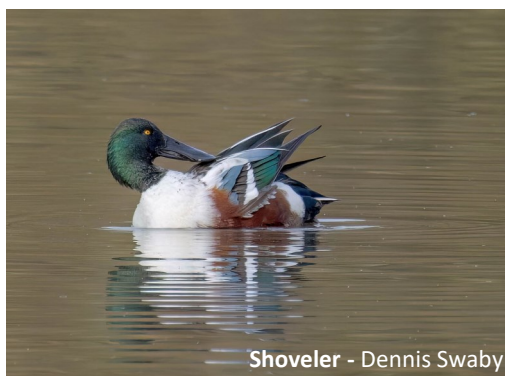
WLF = Watch Lane Flash

**Blue text** indicates place first seen.

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

# Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Nov

Waders	Count
Water Rail	1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup>
Redshank	max 2, 5 <sup>th</sup>
Lapwing	regular, max c455
Golden Plover	max 22, 15 <sup>th</sup>
Dunlin	max 2, 9 <sup>th</sup>
Common Snipe	regular, max 27
Jack Snipe	1, 10 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup>
Curlew	regular, max 29
Woodcock	1, 25 <sup>th</sup>
Black-tailed Godwit	max 2, 13 <sup>th</sup>
Green Sandpiper	1, 13 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup>



Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c300
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 110
Great Black-b Gull	regular, max 5
Herring Gull	regular, max c135
Common Gull	regular, max 3
Caspian Gull	regular, max 1
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 30 <sup>th</sup>

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 4
Little Egret	regular, max 1
Great White Egret	regular, max 2

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	regular, max 1
Buzzard	regular, max 3
Marsh Harrier	1, 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Kestrel	regular, max 2
Merlin	1, 7 <sup>th</sup>
Peregrine	1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup>

# Pennington Flash - 5<sup>th</sup> November



12 members travelled the short distance to Pennington Flash on a dry, cloudy day.

## **Car Park**

Close to the shore, several species were ticked: Canada goose, black-headed gull, moorhen, coot, mute swan and mallard. Part way across the water, we spotted lesser black-backed gulls, great black-backed gulls, a female goldeneye and a great crested grebe. Several cormorants were on the water towards The Spit. A 'white blob', which revealed itself to be a great egret was resting on the far bank.

## **Pengy's Hide**

A short walk brought us to the small Pengy's Hide, overlooking Pengy's Pond. There were small numbers of gadwall and tufted duck. A grey heron stood hunched at the edge of the pond.

## **Bunting Hide**

Another short walk brought us to the Bunting Hide, with its many feeding stations. Many grey squirrels were munching the mixed seed on the tree stumps. A sparrowhawk flew through, which scattered the birds. It was quiet for about 10 minutes, after which the birds started to return. Close views were had of willow tit (2), nuthatch (2), bullfinch (male and female) and coal tit on the tree-stump feeders. In the trees at the back of the feeding arena, and on the ground, blue tit, great tit, chaffinch (male and female), blackbird, robin, dunnock and moorhen were seen.

## **Charlie Owen Hide**

At the Charlie Owen Hide (named after a founding member of Leigh Ornithological Society), overlooking Teal Scrape, we added teal (obviously), goosander (2 females), little grebe (2) and a wren working its way through the vegetation in front of the hide.

As we walked further along the path, a small flock of long-tailed tits moved through. Around 15 goldfinches were spotted feeding at the top of some birch and willow trees. As we turned towards the Leeds Liverpool Canal, one member heard a water rail. A kestrel (female/juvenile) was perched near the top of a tree, and a single redwing landed in a higher tree behind the kestrel. A jay flew over.

## **Ramsdale Hide**

We stopped for lunch at the spacious Ramsdale Hide, overlooking Fox Scrape. The leader failed to follow his own instructions to bring lunch, so had to hare back to the car to collect it! From the hide we watched little egrets (4), gadwall, teal, shoveler, great crested grebe (3) and a grey heron.

continued >>

# Pennington Flash (continued)

## Tom Edmondson Hide

A little further along the path, we came to the Tom Edmondson Hide. A great egret was showing well for a few minutes before it walked sedately out of view. Little egrets (2) were busy feeding. A few gadwall and teal were on the water, and there were glimpses of a bullfinch (male) low down in the vegetation.

## Horrocks Hide

Lapwing (20), cormorant (50), a few herring gulls and a single oystercatcher were resting on The Spit. Earlier in the day, one member had seen a kingfisher. A common gull perched on a buoy. We had difficulty deciding whether another gull perched on a buoy was lesser black-backed or great black-backed. We couldn't even agree on whether its legs were pink or yellow. We did agree that gulls are tricky!

We gathered for a hot drink and a natter in the wildlife-themed lakeside café called The Hide Coffee House, before setting off home.

*Mike Tonks*

**Trip Count = 48 species**

# Willington Wetlands - 17<sup>th</sup> November



Kingfisher (female) - Kirsty Crutchley

8 members travelled to Willington Wetlands, near Burton-upon-Trent. It rained most of the way there and back, but on the reserve it was dry and sunny. What luck! Thank you to Ian & Lydia for leading.

Species seen/heard were: Canada Goose, Egyptian Goose, Mute Swan, Shoveler, Mallard, Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Water Rail, Lapwing, Common Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black

-backed Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Raven, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Cetti's Warbler, Wren, Starling, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Goldfinch

**Trip Count = 39 species**

**2024 SECOS Field Trips Total = 167 species**

## Sightings Elsewhere - Nov

**EHF/PHF/MGT/RF:** Raven, **Kingfisher**, Stonechat, Fieldfare, Redwing, Mistle Thrush, Coal Tit, Goldcrest, Treecreeper, **Cetti's Warbler**, Chiffchaff, Brambling, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, **Lesser Redpoll**, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Reed Bunting, Skylark, Yellowhammer,

**FF:** Woodcock, Yellowhammer

**FFF:** Kestrel, Fieldfare, Redwing, Mistle Thrush, Greenfinch, Lesser Redpoll, **Siskin**, Reed Bunting, **Yellowhammer**

**WLF:** Whooper Swan, Pochard, Little Grebe, Water Rail, **Green Sandpiper**, Cetti's Warbler,

**Alsager:** **Barn Owl**, **Ring-necked Parakeet**

**Alsager - Alsager Treatment Works:** Grey Wagtail, Redwing, **Sand Martin**

**Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows:** Bullfinch, Kestrel, Lesser Redpoll, Siskin

**Alsager - Fanny's Croft:** Skylark, Snipe, Yellowhammer

**Astbury - Astbury Mere CP:** **Chiffchaff**, **Common Scoter**, Gadwall, Goldeneye, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Pochard, Shoveler, Whooper Swan, Woodcock

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

**Brereton:** Fieldfare, Hawfinch, Nuthatch, Redwing

**Brereton - St Oswalds Church:** **Fieldfare**, **Hawfinch**, Kestrel, Nuthatch, **Redwing**

**Brereton Green:** **Brambling**, Golden Plover, Hawfinch, **Mandarin Duck**, Sparrowhawk



Coal Tit - Dennis Swaby

**Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath LNR:** Coal Tit, Fieldfare, Mistle Thrush, Nuthatch, Redwing, **Tawny Owl**, Treecreeper

**Church Lawton:** Golden Plover, Mandarin Duck, **Woodcock**

**Congleton - Giantswood Lane:** Shoveler, Tufted Duck

**Congleton - Mossley:** Fieldfare, **Raven**, Sparrowhawk

**Congleton - River Dane:** **Dipper**, Golden Plover, Grey Wagtail, Kingfisher, Mandarin Duck

**Crewe:** Peregrine

**Doddington - Doddington Pool:** **Barnacle Goose**, Chiffchaff, Common Gull, **Egyptian Goose**, **Fieldfare**, Golden Plover, Goldeneye, Greenfinch, Kestrel, Little Grebe, Mandarin Duck, Merlin, Oystercatcher, Peregrine, Pink-footed Goose, **Pochard**, Raven, **Redwing**, Shoveler, Snipe, Sparrowhawk, Stonechat

**Eaton, nr Congleton:** Goldcrest, Jay, Long-tailed Tit, Redwing

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/>

Greenfinch - Dennis Swaby



 SECOS Website: [www.secos.org.uk](http://www.secos.org.uk)

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 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](http://www.sandbachflashes.co.uk)

## Sightings Elsewhere - Nov

**Kidsgrove - Kidsgrove Treatment Works:** Grey Wagtail, Kingfisher, Raven

**Rode Heath - Rode Pool:** Egyptian Goose, Fieldfare, **Goosander**, Great White Egret, Kingfisher, Little Egret, Mandarin Duck, Nuthatch, **Oystercatcher**, Raven, Redwing, Shoveler

**Shavington:** Peregrine

**Swettenham - The Quinta:** **Siskin**

**Walgherton - Lea Forge:** Pink-footed Goose

**Wheelock - Forge Fields:** Chiffchaff, Greenfinch, Kingfisher, Mandarin Duck, Mistle Thrush, Redwing

**Winterley & Winterley Pool:** **Muscovy Duck**



### Sandbach Flashes Bird Food

Thank you to SECOS and all individual birders for their generous donations to the bird food fund for the feeding station at Elton Hall Flash.

*Dave Robinson & Chris Ladley*



### RSPB Sales

The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group sold Christmas cards at the November indoor meeting. The total sales for the evening was £67. Thank you to SECOS members for your generous support.

*Ian & Lydia Taylor*

## Diary Dates



**13<sup>th</sup> Dec 7.30 p.m.**

Indoor Meeting

**"Birding on the Doorstep"**

Speaker: Chris Galvin

**15<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.00 a.m.**

Sunday Field Trip

**Carsington Water**

Leader: Mike Tonks

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