



SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1986 BIRD REPORT

Including BIRDS OF SANDBACH FLASHES

Compiled by C. Lythgoe, assisted by A. Robinson.

This Report has been compiled from records submitted to me and information from the Sandbach Flashes Log Book. If anybody has details of any significant omissions or errors, please let me know.

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Abbreviations Used

DP	Doddington Pool	ad.	adult
EHF	Elton Hall Flash	juv.	juvenile
FF	Fodens Flash	imm.	immature
FFF	Fields Farm Flash	m.	male
GF	Groby Flash	f.	female
MGP	Market Garden Pool	GC	Golf Course
OF	Oaktree Flash	SQ	Sand Quarry
PHF	Pump House Flash	CBC	Common Bird Census
RF	Railway Flash	WGBS	Winter Garden Bird Survey
SF	Sandbach Flashes		
WLF	Watch Lane Flash		

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Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Present all year at SF (EHF/PHF/RF) with max. of 10 on 8 March. 1 pair with juv. on PHF on 22 July.

1 pair resident on DP which reared 2 young.

Bred for the first time on a recently dug field pond in the Dingle Valley, Sandbach.

Also at RF, Wybunbury Sand Pit and Arclid SQ, although only 3 singles there where usually regular.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Recorded from all flashes at SF during the year. Max. of 13 on 29 March (9 on WLF, 2 on GF, 1 on RF, 1 on FF). Pairs present in summer at GF, RF, WLF, FF & MGF but breeding only proved from FF where 2 young reared.

Also bred at DP (3 prs. 4 young); RF with 17 ad. on 26 April and 9 ad. + 10 juvs. on 26 July; Arclid SQ (2 prs. 7 young); Taxmere (1 pr. but failed as usual); Brereton Heath Park (1 pr.).

At Shakerley Mere an almost completely white bird was hatched as part of an otherwise normal brood. It was fed & developed normally with the others.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Normally present at PHF and/or RF during the winter in low numbers (1, 2 or 3). 10 at EHF on 9 Feb was a very good number.

Recorded in 1's or 2's in winter from Arclid SQ, DP (but 5 on 29/11), RP. An exceptional record was 20 at the Dane Valley, Swettenham on 21/2.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Recorded daily from SF with max. of 7. Two heronries recorded in the area - 1 in the Alsager area with 5 nests and 1 at RP with 2 nests. Recorded in 1's or 2's throughout the year from Arclid SQ (but 5 on 25 Jan.), DP, Wybunbury Moss, Crewe G.C., Brereton Heath Park, Crewe Hall.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

The breeding success (and future prospects) of this species continues to decline in our area. There are insufficient young reaching maturity to replace the adults which are killed or die so that there is no hope at the moment of any increase in the population. All records of this species are valuable, especially breeding attempts.

At SF visitors swelled the winter population to around 15 with max. of 23 on 26 Feb. However, during the summer the only known breeding attempt was at H.F. where 1 pair nested but failed during incubation, possibly due to continual disturbance.

All other known breeding attempts were :-

DP - 1 pr. laid but failed during incubation.

Winterley Pool - 1 pr. successfully reared 3 young. Still present at year-end (but by early 1987 only 2 imms. present.

RF - 1 pr. reared 3 young but all died in the autumn. In Dec. the m. of this pair was found dead.

Brereton Heath Park - 1 ad. and 6 juvs. during Oct.

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

11 arrived at PHF on 13 Feb. together with a party of Mute Swans. They were present until 3 March.

11 flew SW over Crewe on 16 Feb.

Bewick's / Whooper Swan

3 ad. flew south over EHF on 13 Dec.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

1 at EHF with the Canada Goose flock from 28 Oct. to the year-end.

A large flock of at least 110 flew over Sandbach Town on 2 Nov.

1 at DP on 29 Dec. (presumed from Bridgemere Wildlife Park ?)

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

4 at WLF on 1 April. A flock of 30 flying NNW over EHF on 12 Oct. was by far the highest total ever recorded at SF.

1 at DP on 28 Mar. and until 1 June (presumed from Bridgemere Wildlife Park ?)

Snow Goose (*Anser caerulescens*)

1 at WLF on 2 Oct.

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

1 at EHF 12 June.

1 at Arclid SQ 15-19 June.

Present at DP at various times with a max. of 3.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

A large flock usually present at SF during the winter with max. of 136 on 15 Feb. and 193 on 12 Nov. The only proved breeding was at WLF where 1 pr. with 5 young on 4 May.

At Arclid SQ there was the usual post-breeding flock which peaked at 196 on 29 Aug. 3 prs. bred successfully and there was a non-breeding flock of 40 birds.

At DP there was a resident winter flock which peaked at 156 on 29 Nov. 6 prs. bred and there was a non-breeding flock of 40 birds.

Also present in small numbers at RP, Brereton Heath Park, Winterley Pool and Haslington Hall.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Present at SF as follows :- 1 at WLF 11 Jan., 2 at WLF 3 Apr., 1 at RF 23 Apr., 1 at WLF 17 Nov.

Present at DP in varying numbers with a max. of 8 in spring.

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)

1 at RF on 19 Aug.

1 at Arclid SQ 26 to 29 Aug.

1 at DP on 27 Sept.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Present at SF all year except for the moulting period of mid-July to Sept. Max. was 16 on 19 Mar. 1 pair bred at RF and

hatched 5.

Also resident at DP except for the moulting period with a max. of 8 on 27 April and 1 pair hatched 3 young.

Recorded occasionally at Arclid SQ and Winterley Pool where 1 pair on 28 March and 10 April.

Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

1 at Arclid SQ during the evening of 19 Sept.

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

1f. at EHF from 18 to 28 Oct.

1m. at EHF on 19 Nov.

1m. at DP from 27 Sept. to 31 Dec.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

The size of the wintering flock at SF continues to grow. The early year numbers reached 315 on 27 Jan. and 370 on 9 Feb. All birds had left by 3 May. The first bird in the autumn was on 6 Sept. and numbers increased to a max. of 106 on 4 Dec.

Also a regular wintering flock at DP with a max. of 9 on 1 Jan. and 8 on 29 Dec.

Recorded occasionally from Arclid SQ.

American Wigeon (*Anas americana*)

A f. of this species was discovered at EHF on 7 Oct. with a flock of 17 Wigeon. It stayed at SF (usually EHF) with the wigeon flock through to early Dec. when it was last recorded on the 6th. This is the first record for SF. Record submitted to BBRC.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Occasional visitor to the area with 1 pair at EHF on 19 Apr., 2 at EHF on 6 Aug. and 19 Sept., 1 m. at EHF from 8 to 22 Oct.

Also occasional at DP with a max. of 6 (3m, 3f.) on 29 Nov.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

At SF a max. early year count of 230 on 15 Feb. and late year count of 400 on 9 Nov. 2 separate pairs present in summer but no proof of breeding.

Winter visitor to DP with a max. of 44 on 16 Feb. and occasional at Arclid SQ with 9 on 25 Sept.

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

1 m. of this North American race was at EHF from 30 March to 22 April.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

At SF max. early year count of 167 on 2 Jan. and late year count of 150 on 1 Nov. No full breeding survey carried out but at least 2 pairs bred. A f.+ 8 young at EHF on 5 May and a f.+ 6 young at FF on 7 June.

At DP the winter flock reached 290 on 29 Dec. At least two pairs bred successfully.

At Arclid SQ the winter flock reached 164 on 26 Jan. At least 2 pairs bred successfully fledging 5 and 7.

Common elsewhere throughout the area e.g. Rode Pool, Winterley Pool, Brereton Heath etc.

Fintail (*Anas acuta*)

The wintering flock continues to decline at SF with max. of 28 on 2 Jan. and max. of only 12 on 27 Dec.

The only other record is of 1 at Arclid SQ on 17 Sept.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

1 f. at EHF on 5 May and 1 f. at EHF / PHF 13 to 24 Sept.

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*)

1 f. claimed at EHF on 1 April. Record passed to CBR for appraisal.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

This species continues to decline at SF with a max. of 4 on 3 April and only 5 at the year-end. Some evidence of an autumn passage in Sept./ Oct. with max. of 10 on 6 Sept.

An influx in autumn also indicated with a max. of 8 at Arclid SQ on 8 Oct. and 11 at DP on 25 Oct.

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*)

1 m. at PHF on 1 Dec. and 1 m. at WLF on 2 Dec. presumed to be the same bird and to be of dubious origin.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Winter visitor to SF with max. of 18 on 8 March and 22 on 27 Dec.

Also a regular wintering flock at DP with max. of 14 on 6 March. The late-year peak of 37 on 29 Nov. was a very good number.

Recorded occasionally at Arclid SQ and Rode Pool.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Winter numbers at SF peaked at 48 on 10 Feb. and 36 on 9 Dec. At least 2 pairs bred successfully at SF with a f.+ 8 young at RF on 2 Aug. and a f.+ 5 young at PHF on 2 Aug.

Also bred at Arclid SQ with a definite f.+ 1 young and a f.+ 7 young at a recently dug field pond in the Dingle Valley.

Present in summer at DP, Rode Pool, Wybunbury Sand Pit, but no proof of breeding.

A count of 60 at DP on 28 March was a very good number.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

1 f. at PHF on 3 May was the 9th record for SF.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Infrequent now at SF. 1 f. at RF from 5 to 27 Jan. 1 f. at WLF 3 to 5 Feb., 2 at WLF on 9 March. 1 f. at WLF on 5 April. The only late-winter record was 1 at WLF on 28 Dec.

Also recorded at DP in winter with a max. of 2 m. and 1 f. on 28 Dec.

1 imm. m. at Arclid SQ on 24 Dec.

Snew (*Mergus albellus*)

2 redheads appeared at Arclid SQ on 2 Feb. and stayed until 23 Feb. when the cold weather finally froze the water totally. They presumably then moved to PHF as 2 redheads were there from 23 Feb. to 7 March and 1 f. to 9 March.

Gosander (*Mergus merganser*)

1 m. at WLF on 27 Jan.

The species stronghold in the area is DP where it is still recorded regularly but in much reduced numbers. Max. in early winter was 6 f. on 12 Jan. and in late winter 1 m. and 1 f. on 27 Dec.

4 f. were at Boden Hall on 19 Apr.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

During the winter only 1 or 2 birds at SF. Pairs were present during the spring at FF, MGP, RF and GF but breeding was only proved at FF.

Also bred successfully at Rode Pool, where max. numbers were 10 m. and 5 f. on 26 July.

Present all year at DP where max. / of 10 on 20 May. Breeding probable but not proved.

Summer visitor at Arclid SQ where bred successfully with 5 young hatched and 2 fledged.

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

1 f. at Congleton Edge on 18 Nov.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Now fairly common and widespread.

1 m. and 1 f. all year in the EHF / PHF area. Increased numbers and sightings in Sept./ Oct. indicate dispersal of immatures. 1 f. at EHF was seen to take a moorhen on 10 Oct.

Also recorded regularly from Quakers Coppice, DP, Crewe Green, Lawton Hall, Alsager, Wybunbury, Brereton Heath, Barthomley, Holmes Chapel, Swettenham.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

1 over EHF saltpan on 22 Sept.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

1 flew south over RF on 9 Sept. being mobbed by Carrion Crows. This is the 6th record for SF.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Would appear to be less common than sparrowhawk in this area.

Frequent sightings from the SF area but none in the breeding season.

Bred successfully at Quakers Coppice where a pair fledged at least 1 young.

Also recorded at Arclid SQ, Barthomley, Crewe Green, Lawton Hall, Swettenham and Holmes Chapel where regular during the summer.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

In the early year the resident bird in the RF/PHF area was last seen in Jan. It arrived back as usual in Sept., being seen on its usual pylon on the 7th. It was recorded at various times in the area up to year-end.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Resident around Doddington Hall where 8 were seen on 25 Oct.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Only 1 record for SF where not common. 5 near PHF on 5 Oct.

Also occasional records from Barthomley, Bagmere, Stowford, Doddington, Wybunbury and Arclid.

3 pairs were present in summer around Alsager GC.

A covey of 12 birds at Betchton, Sandbach on 8 Nov. was the highest number seen together.

Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

1 bird heard calling at Barthomley on the evening of 20 June.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

The population at SF is concentrated at FF and MGF where 5m and 9f on 2 Oct.

Common where reared e.g. Crewe Hall and Doddington, otherwise scarce. The local population at Arclid SQ has been drastically reduced in the last 2 or 3 years.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Winter visitors to all flashes at SF where max. of 5 in early winter and probably 6 in late winter.

1 bird also present in the Arclid Brook area in late winter.

Spotted Drake (*Porzana porzana*)

1 reported from WLF on 21 Sept. Record submitted to the County Records Panel.

This is the 5th record for SF.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

A common breeding and wintering bird on all waters in the area. In early winter the numbers at PHF and EHF were 62 with 78 in late winter.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Breeds commonly on all larger waters in the area.

The early winter flock at SF was very large with a max. of 323 on 7 Jan. However numbers were much lower in the late winter with a max. of 131 on 22 Oct.

Other winter flocks were at Doddington Pool with 155 in Feb. and 106 in Dec. and Arclid SQ with up to 35.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

2 birds were present during the summer at EHF and were seen displaying in late April.

2 birds were recorded at Arclid SQ on 8 Aug.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

First bird back was 1 at EHF on 29 Mar. Numbers built up to 6 on 4 May where 1 pair each at PHF, EHF & WLF.

During July 3 juvs. were present at PHF and 3 juvs. at EHF.

1 pair bred at Arclid SQ. 2 young were hatched but unfortunately taken by a Carrion Crow.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

First record was of 2 on 12 Mar. Peak passage was during May where 16 on 11th was a high number.

As usual autumn passage was much lighter with max. of 3 on 21 Aug.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

A large flock built up during the autumn with a peak number of 62 on 4 Oct. Numbers dwindled down to single figures in Dec.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

1 at EHF on 24 and 25 Mar.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

c.1500 at EHF in Jan. but these moved out during the very cold spell in Feb. and numbers did not reach this peak when birds returned. The post breeding at SF was well over 2000 with c.2800 on 14 Aug. Late winter peak was c.1500 in Dec.

Displaying birds were seen in some areas but no proof of breeding. Definitely did not breed at Arclid SQ where usually successful.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Light spring passage with 1 at EHF 11 May, 4 at EHF 18 May and 1 at WLF 25 May.

1 at EHF on 24 Dec. was the first winter record.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

A very poor year with only 1 record. 1 ad. at EHF on 24 July.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Good numbers in the resident wintering flock at SF with 30 on 12 Jan. Regular passage birds in spring with max. of 18 on 20 April and the last record was 1 on 22 May. The first record of return passage was 4 on 8 July. However autumn passage was poor with max. of 6 on 23 July. Winter numbers built up to max. 10.

Spring passage also noted at Arclid SQ during May.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

An excellent year for SF. The resident winter flock was up to 10 in Jan. and 16 in Mar. Spring passage was through to 30 April.

First return bird was 1 on 24 June. Then recorded virtually daily through autumn passage (with max. of 12 in Aug.) to the end of the year max. of 12 in Dec.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

1 at EHF on 4 Jan. (not common at this site).
1 at RF on 4 Apr. 1 at WLF on 16-18 Oct.
1 at RF on 21 Oct. 1 at RF on 18 Nov.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

No regular accurate counts taken at SF but up to 50 in 1st half of winter. None during May and June. Numbers building up again from July with 70 on 19 Nov.

Very low numbers at Arclid SQ.

Occasional sightings in winter from other wet sites.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

1 at FF on 30 Nov.

The very cold weather in FEb. brought up to 6 birds to Arclid SQ and 1 was seen feeding on the lawn of a home in Calveley.

Also recorded at Crewe GC and a roding bird at Quakers Coppice.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

2 at EHF on 24 June.

1 at EHF on 10 July.

1 at EHF on 27 Aug.

1 juv. at RF from 2-14 Sept.

1 at EHF on 2 Dec. was the first Dec. record.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

3 at EHF on 12 Jan.

1 at EHF on 20 Dec. was only the second winter record.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

2 at EHF on 4 May.

1 at EHF on 4 July, stayed through to 3 Aug.

1 flew over Arclid SQ on 11 Aug.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

A regular roosting flock at EHF at each end of the year with max. early year count of 48 on 15 Mar. and max. late year count of 55 on 25 Dec. Present in every month but only odd one's in summer.

Up to 50 birds at Bagmere from the mid-Cheshire flock.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Records of birds on return passage were :-

1 juv. at RF on 15 Aug.

2 at RF/PHF from 17-23 Aug.

3 juvs. at EHF on 28 Aug.

1 at EHF on 2-3 Sept.

Quite good numbers.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Up to 13 at SF in the early part of the year.

1 or 2 present all summer but no reports of breeding.

Some evidence of return passage from late June to early

Sept. Numbers then built up in winter to a max. of 15 on 7 Dec.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

- 1 at EHF on 5 May.
- 2 at EHF on 5 July.
- 1 at PHF on 17 July.
- 1 or 2 at RF/EHF from 8-23 Aug.
- 2 at RF 2-7 Sept.
- Also recorded from Arclid SQ 9-11 Aug.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

- Spring passage at SF with 1 or 2 in late March and April.
- Return passage started on 23 June and continued to early Sept. with max. of 14 on 22 July.
- Sightings of 1 or 2 birds throughout the winter, but a survey along 5 miles of the River Wheelock on 12 Nov. produced 7 separate records.
- Birds also seen on return passage at Arclid SQ and Brereton Heath Park.
- 1 bird seen regularly in winter at Stowford.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

- Only 1 bird on return passage stayed at EHF from 5-8 Aug.

Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*)

- The first record in spring was 3 at EHF on 18 April.
- None in June and return passage started on 8 July with 2 at PHF. Last record of 1 on 11 Sept.
- Return passage also noted from DP and Wybunbury.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

- 1 1st summer bird briefly at PHF on 5 May.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

- Very common and becoming more so as Maw Green Landfill Site develops. Up to 2000 birds in this area and RF/PHF in winter.
- The large winter roost at DP held approx. 10,000 birds at each end of the year.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

- Low numbers (up to 20) present all year but a good spring passage in mid-April with up to 190 on 18 April at SF.
- Spring passage also noted at Arclid SQ with 21 on 6 April and 13 on 18 April.
- Up to 300 in the DP winter roost.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

- Low numbers at SF early in the winter. 1 pair at WLF in late Mar. Numbers built up in autumn to a very high peak of 300 in Nov.
- Large numbers also at Arclid SQ with up to 500 in Oct.
- Up to 300 in the DP winter roost.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

- Numbers at SF similar to Lesser Black-backed Gull,

increasing to up to 400 in Dec.

At Arclid SQ much less common than Lesser Black-backed with max. of only 7.

Only a few (up to 20) at DP winter roost.

Yellow-legged individuals of the race *L.a.michahellis* were noted at PHF on 10 Aug., RF on 15 Nov. and Arclid in mid-Oct.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

A 3rd winter bird at Maw Green Tip / RF on 9 Dec. was the 4th record for SF.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Only odd ones or twos during the year but then regular in Dec. at Maw Green Tip with up to 9 birds.

Up to 10 in the DP winter roost.

Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

1 ad. and 1 imm. together at EHF on 20 April were only the 3rd record for SF.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

1 at PHF on 18 May - later flew to WLF.

2 flew over RF on 17 Aug.

1 at Arclid SQ on 11 Aug.

3 at DP on 17 May with 2 still there (or 2 others) on 20 May.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

2 ads. were seen briefly at EHF in the evening of 28 Aug.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common throughout the area with flocks of up to 100 seen regularly.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Fairly common throughout the area although easily overlooked when with woodpigeon.

3 pairs bred in nestboxes in Quakers Coppice and raised 2 broods.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Although not many records it is very common everywhere. Winter flocks of 150+ were reported from FF and Basford.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Widespread. Largest flock was 43 at Sandbach Heath on 8 Nov. and 25 at basford on 27 Mar. Recorded in 16 out of 18 gardens in the SECOS WGGS.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

1 flew over EHF on 1 June.

1 pair bred along disused railway line near Alsager where usually 2 pairs.

1 at Barthomley on 5 July feeding on a drive.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

1st record of the year was at Haslington on 25 April but general arrival was about 2 May. Recorded from many areas but numbers generally seemed rather low. Last record was on 1 Oct.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

The only known pair reared 3 young in the Crewe hall area. 1 bird was seen twice in Dec. in the Rode heath area.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Widespread but easily overlooked. Recorded from all flashes at various times.

Also from Brereton Heath Park, Quakers Coppice, Crewe GC, Wybunbury and Barthomley.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Again widespread and easily overlooked. Recorded from FF, Dingle Farm, Taxmere, Crewe Green, Rode Pool, Brereton Heath Park and Shavington.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

1 flushed from the stream between PHF and RF on 12 Mar.

1 bird seen in the evenings of 8 & 9 April near WLF.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

1st record of the year was 2 at WLF on 3 May. Max. at SF was approx. 50.

Up to 300 birds over DP before they dispersed to breeding sites.

The last record was of 1 at WLF on 23 Aug.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Occasional records from all flashes at SF but no records in May, June or July.

Bred, or probably bred, at Wheelock, Crewe GC, Arclid SQ, Lawton Hall and Wybunbury.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

1 around WLF in Oct. Only 5 previous records for SF.

1 pair bred in the Crewe Hall / Crewe GC area and 1 pair probably bred at Brereton Heath Park.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*)

Easily the commonest woodpecker species with breeding season records from all areas.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*)

Uncommon and apparently becoming more so in certain areas.

Single records only from Arclid SQ, Dingle Valley Sandbach, Brereton Heath Park and Daisy Bank, Hassall.

However this species can easily be overlooked in the woods but not so in the garden where there were 2 records from Crewe and Holmes Chapel.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Common and widespread. The only winter flocks were recorded from SF with 40 in Jan. and 22 in Oct.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

The 1st record of the year was of 2 flying over Holmes Chapel on 22 Mar. However, this was very early and it was late April before birds were present on all waters.

Numbers of Sand Martins now seem to be increasing following the disastrous decrease of recent years. This is confirmed with increased numbers at breeding colonies with 120 occupied holes at Arclid SQ and 5 on the River Dane at Holmes Chapel.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

The 1st of the year was at Rode Pool on 15 April and widespread thereafter with up to 100 birds over DP in early May.

Also approx. 100 birds in late Aug at DP. Last birds of the year were on 19 Oct. at EHF and 1 at Arclid SQ.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

1st birds were seen at Holmes Chapel on 26 April and WLF on 27 April.

Approx. 200 birds at DP on 17 May.

Last record was two birds flying south over Shavington on 31 Oct.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

1 seen on 23 Aug. near WLF.

4 seen on 25 Mar. near Alsager.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

No details of spring passage at SF but noted at Arclid SQ with 90 on 4 April and 75+ on 6 April. Autumn passage was noted at SF with 50+ on 30 Sept. and 100 on 2 Oct.

The only wintering flocks of note were 40+ at Brereton Heath Park and 23 at Basford.

Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)

1 at WLF on 7 Oct. and 1 at RF from 11-15 Nov.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

1st record was of 6m. at EHF on 18 April. Present throughout the summer and probably bred.

Also bred at DP (3 prs.), Hough Mill SQ and Brereton Heath Park.

Last record was 1 at FHF on 17 Sept.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Recorded in winter from EHF, Lawton Hall, Alsager Tip, Barthomley, Swettenham, Crewe and Arclid SQ.

A survey along 5 miles of the river Wheelock on 12 Nov. produced 7 records.

At Arclid SQ there was an autumn roost with up to 5 birds present.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba varrellii*)

Present throughout the year at SF but not usually recorded. Numbers built up in autumn with 50 on 15 Oct.

A roost built up at Arclid SQ in the early year with 42 on 6 Mar., 65 on 11 Mar., and 80 on 4 April, after which numbers fell rapidly.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

Spring passage noted at SF with 1 or 2 birds from 25 Mar. to 2 May.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Widespread and common everywhere.

6 pairs on the Quakers Coppice CBC and 9 on a Haslington CBC.

Duncock (*Fringilla modularis*)

Widespread and common everywhere.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Again widespread and common everywhere. 10 pairs on the Haslington CBC and 8 pairs on the Quakers Coppice CBC.

Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

A single record of one seen feeding near Alsager on 11 June.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

1 spring passage bird at EHF on 24 April.

Then 1 pair near RF bred successfully and fledged 3 young.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

1st spring passage record was 3 at EHF on 2 April. Recorded regularly here and occasionally elsewhere until 16 May with a m. of the Greenland race on 8 May and 16 May.

Autumn passage was generally from 6 Aug. to 13 Sept. but one very late bird was seen at Arclid SQ on 24 Oct.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant everywhere.

A winter roost in Quakers Coppice of approx. 100 birds.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Very low numbers in the early winter period and even lower numbers at the end of the year. Max. at SF was 70 on 19 Dec.

1st birds of the autumn were on 27 Oct. flying over EHF.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Not particularly common and possibly decreasing. The Haslington CBC had 1 Song Thrush pair compared to 25 Blackbird pairs.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Even lower numbers than for Fieldfare, with a max. of 50 in Jan. and less than 10 in the late winter at SF. Low numbers also noted at Arclid SQ where max. count in late winter was only 6

birds.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Fairly common throughout the area.

Breeding records from Quakers Coppice, Doddington Pool and Arclid SQ.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Only two records, both of a m. "reeling", but presumed to be passage birds because each only heard once. One at Crewe Hall on 1 May and 1 at DP on 16 May.

Sedge Warbler (*Acricephalus schoenobaenus*)

1st record was from EHF on 2 May with 2 m. Last record was 1 at RF on 14 Sept.

Breeding was proved at Arclid SQ for the first time when a pair raised two broods.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

1st record was from WLF on 11 May. 1 pair bred at WLF and also possibly bred at RF and GF.

Singing m. also recorded from Taxmere and Wybunbury.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

1st record was from SF on 27 Apr. One pair definitely bred near FF and others were present around SF area.

At Arclid SQ there were 3 breeding pairs.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common throughout the area. First arrivals were on 28 Apr. with 1 at FF and 1 at Arclid SQ.

The last record was of 1 near WLF on 20 Sept.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

1st records were at WLF on 14 May and Arclid SQ on 15 May. Only records of spring and autumn passage from SF but breeds commonly in other more suitable habitat.

3 breeding pairs at Doddington Hall and 2 pairs at Arclid SQ.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Widespread and common throughout the area. First birds at FF and Doddington hall on 27 Apr.

At least 7 pairs at SF, 4 pairs at Doddington and 4 pairs at Quakers Coppice.

Records of overwintering birds were a m. at Holmes Chapel on 29 Jan., a m. at Alsager on 2 Feb., a pair at Holmes Chapel on 13 Feb., a m. at Sandbach Heath on 15 Feb. and a m. at Doddington on 21 Nov.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

1st records of the year were 1 at Lawton Hall and 1 at Arclid SQ on 5 Apr. with another at FF on 6 Apr. A singing m. was present at FF in May & June, but breeding not proved.

Widespread in the right habitat.

Late migrants / wintering birds were recorded from SF on 2, 9 & 16 Oct., Sandbach Heath 26 Oct. & 2 Nov. and at Arclid from 19 Nov. to 6 Dec.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Very common everywhere.

An early record was of 1 at Arclid on 5 Apr. but the main influx was on and just after 18 Apr. when birds arrived virtually everywhere.

Last record date was 14 Sept. with 1 at RF and a singing m. at Arclid.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Very few records and these are of wintering or passage birds. Recorded from FF, Doddington, Arclid, Crewe GC and Wybunbury.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

The first bird was recorded at FF on 14 May. This is an easily overlooked species and records are rather sparse.

Adults with young were noted at Crewe College, Crewe Cemetery, Wybunbury and Arclid where 2 pairs reared 3 broods totalling 14 young between them. A pair also present at Barthomley and 1 at Haslington.

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

1 m. at FFF on 15 Aug. was only the 3rd record for SF.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Breeding records from Arclid, Quakers Coppice, Doddington Hall and Crewe GC.

Wintering flocks of 10+ from FF / MGF (25), Crewe GC (15), Brereton Heath (15+) and Arclid (11).

Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*)

Not common in this area with records only from FF, Lawton Hall and Doddington Hall.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

More common than Marsh Tit but still very thinly spread, except in the Alsager area where several pairs bred. Breeding records also from FF and Quakers Coppice. Other records from Brereton Heath, Arclid GC, Crewe GC, Doddington, Wheelock and Sandbach Heath.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

Fairly common in suitable habitat. Breeding records from Quakers Coppice and Doddington Hall, where a pair fledged 11 young using a nestbox.

Wintering records from FF, EHF, Arclid and Brereton Heath.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Widespread and abundant. 24 territories recorded on a Haslington CBC plot. 6 pairs bred at Quakers Coppice, all using nestboxes. 2 pairs bred at Doddington in nestboxes where 1 pair

fledged 15 from a clutch of 16.

In the WGBS recorded every week in every garden from Oct. to Apr.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Widespread and common. 14 territories recorded on a Haslington CBC plot. 3 pairs bred at Quakers Coppice, 1 in a nestbox. 2 pairs bred at Doddington, 1 in a nestbox.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Fairly common. Breeding season records from Alsager, Doddington, Crewe GC, Quakers Coppice, Brereton Heath and Hassall.

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

A common resident and breeding bird in suitable habitat but easily overlooked.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

No unusual influx or large flocks this year. Breeding records from several localities.

A flock of 10 near Crewe on 23 Feb.

Maggie (*Pica pica*)

Widespread and common. Numbers still increasing and now a serious nuisance in some areas.

The winter roost at FF held at least 110 birds in Dec.

The winter roost at Arclid had max. number of 22 in Dec.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Present in small colonies of up to 20 birds in various locations e.g. Sandbach town centre, Doddington Hall, Crewe Hall and Crewe town.

A winter roost in the Crewe Hall area numbered in the low hundreds but no accurate count was possible.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

10 rookeries in the Holmes Chapel / Middlewich / Brereton area held 394 nests compared with 330 in 1985. 5 rookeries in the Crewe Hall area held 216 nests compared with 193 in 1985 and 153 in 1984. The Arclid Hollow rookery held 95 nests, the same as in 1985.

A winter roost in the Crewe Hall area numbered in the high hundreds but no accurate count was possible.

Carriion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Widespread and common. The Maw Green Landfill Site is attracting a mixed corvid flock of up to 150 birds.

At EHF on 16 July a pair of crows were seen to pull a black-headed gull out of the water, kill it and eat it.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Very common throughout the area. No large wintering flocks reported.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Very common around human habitation.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Not very common and also easily overlooked, so very few records. Only two flocks of any size were recorded, c.30 at Moston on 12 Apr. and c.20 at Stowford, Crewe during Feb. Few other records but recorded in 3 out of 18 gardens during the WGBS.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Very common and widespread. The Haslington CBC held 22 pairs. There were no very large winter flocks but there were flocks of 40 at Taxmere and 30 at Shavington.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Very few records for this species at either end of the year.
3 at Alsager - 2 Apr.
1 at CFF - 9 Mar.
3 at Crewe GC - 26 Oct.
1 at PHF - 6 Nov.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

A common breeding bird but apparently less common in winter. A flock of 30+ at WLF on 5 Oct.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Fairly common as a breeding bird and seems to favour breeding in suburban gardens. Less common in winter but flocks of 50 regular around EHF / RF.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

A good year for this species with early winter flocks of 50 at Redesmere, 40 at FF, 40 at Crewe GC, all in the first week of Jan. Numbers had not built up by the end of the year and 86/87 may not be such a good winter.

The incidence of birds feeding at peanut bags continues to increase. Recorded regularly in 10 out of 18 gardens in the WGBS during Mar. & Apr.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Common breeding bird but scarce in winter. Flocks of 70+ at EHF and 50 at Arclid formed in the autumn and a flock of 40+ overwintered around Crewe Industrial Estate.

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

Uncommon in winter and no records for the breeding season. The only flock was 25 at Alsager Mere in Jan.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Widespread but thinly distributed. Breeding season records from several localities.

At Arclid SQ 2 pairs bred and 7 birds were together in Nov.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Fairly common resident. Breeding season records from several areas including 7 territories in the Haslington CBC.

The only winter flock was of 22 at FFF on 20 Dec.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Fairly common resident and breeding bird not nowadays always associated with reeds or water.

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)

Thinly spread and not common. Breeding season records from EHF, Wheelock, Barthomley, Byley, Basford near Crewe and Wybunbury where numbers increased to 9 by Aug.

The wintering flock usually present at SF now seems to have disappeared.

Red-headed Bunting

A m. of this species arrived in a Swettenham garden on 23 Feb. during a cold weather spell and stayed until 22 Mar.