



SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1987 BIRD REPORT

Including BIRDS OF SANDBACH FLASHES

Compiled by C. Lythgoe, assisted by A & P. 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.

The 'Log Book' situated in the box on the oak tree at Elton Hall Flash is there for anybody to record their sightings of birds. It is not just for the regular watchers or rare birds only, so if you have any interesting records please note them in the Log Book for inclusion in future Annual Reports.

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Abbreviations Used

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------|---------------------------|
| CF | Crabmill Flash | ad. | adult |
| EHF | Elton Hall Flash | juv. | juvenile |
| FF | Foden's 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 |
| QC | Quakers Coppice | WGBS | Winter Garden Bird Survey |
| RF | Railway Flash | | |
| SF | Sandbach Flashes | | |
| WLF | Watch Lane Flash | | |
| WP | Winterley Pool | | |
| DP | Doddington Pool | | |
| RP | Rode Pool | | |

List of Contributors

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Also various people identified only by their initials in the log book.

LITTLE GREBE (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Present all year at SF (RF/PHF/GF/WLF) with a max. of 7 on 13 Sept. Probably 2 prs. bred. 1 at RF and 1 at GF.

The only proved breeding was at Haslington Hall where 1 ad. with 2 small juvs. on 23/7. Also at DP in spring and autumn. Only 3 winter records at Arclid SQ.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*)

No records in Jan., Feb. and Dec. at SF. Numbers build up in spring to a max. of 16 at end of Mar. (highest count for SF) At least 3 prs. bred on FF, MGP and RF.

Unprecedented numbers at Arclid SQ. Numbers began to build up in Feb. and ultimately there were 10 prs. 6 of which bred successfully raising 13 young. By end of July there were 31+ birds.

Also at DP where a max. of 20 on 28 April and 3 prs. bred successfully, RP where 5 prs. (but only 1 juv. seen), WP where 1 pr. + 2 juvs. on 29 May, Astbury SQ with max. of 7 on 3 May and Middlewich where 1 pr. with 3 juvs. on the canal on 4 July.

Altogether a very successful year.

SLAVONIAN GREBE (*Podiceps suritus*)

1 ad. in winter plumage at WLF on 12 Oct. is the first record for SF.

CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Normally present in low numbers (up to 7) at SF in winter (Jan. to Mar. and Sept. to Dec.). Usually at RF and PHF. 1 on 16 Mar. and 1 on 23 Mar. were of the continental race. (*P.c. sinensis*).

Also regular at DP usually up to 10 but 27 on 29 Nov. and 30 on 4 Dec. were exceptional. 17 flying west over Arclid SQ on 15 April and 39 flying east over Wybunbury Moss on 17 Oct.

GREY HERON (*Ardea cinerea*)

Uncommon in winter but more regular in summer with max. of 12 on 1 Aug., a high number for SF.

2 established heronries with 5 nests near Alsager and 8 nests at RP. Also one nest at DP where eggs taken from nest.

Frequent at Arclid SQ where max. of 7 in Aug.

Also 5 at Stowford on 25 Jan.

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*)

The wintering flock at the beginning of the year reached a max. of 26 in Jan.

Although ads. were present in Apr. and May there is no recorded breeding attempt for the first time ever in the SF records.

At DP 1 pr. hatched 4 young in mid May but none survived. At RP only the pen remained from last year but she did not find a mate.

At WP 3 of last year's 5 young were present in Jan. but finally only 1 survived. The pr. bred. this year and fledged 1 young.

This is the only known breeding success this year and reflects the parlous state of the Mute Swan.

BEWICK'S SWAN (*Cygnus colombianus*)

9 ad. + 2 imm. at DP on 8 Mar.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Birds with the Canada Goose flock at SF were 1 during early Jan., 3 on 27 Nov. and 4 on 5 Dec. presumed to be feral. A small flock of 13 were feeding in the field by ERF on 24 Jan. As usual the only large flocks were of birds flying over: 70 on 3 Jan and 140 on 9 Dec.

The Jan. bird and Canada Goose flock also visited Arclid SQ. in Jan.
A large flock of 120 flew south over Crewe Hall on 12 Jan.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*)

3 ads. of the European race *A.a. albifrons* at ^{RF} on 11 Dec. was the first record since 1983.

GREYLAG GOOSE (*Anser anser*)

1 at RF on 8 May, probably the same at WLF on 9 May and WLF on 14 June.
1 at DP on 29 May, also in June and Nov. 5 at Arclid SQ with the Canada Geese from 28 Aug. to 3 Oct.
Approx. 10 heard calling over Alsager in thick fog on 22 Jan.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*)

At SF present in low numbers early in the year. Although present in summer no breeding proved. Numbers rapidly built up in autumn to a peak of 328 on 23 Sept., the highest ever count for SF. The winter flock remained at around 150.

Exceptionally large numbers at Arclid SQ where the autumn flock peaked at 485 on 7 Sept. 4 prs. bred here and raised 18 young. At DP the autumn max. of 238 was the highest ever count. 2 prs. bred here and raised 19 young. Also at RP, WP where 190 on 3 Oct. was unprecedented, Boden Hall, Astbury SQ.

EGYPTIAN GOOSE (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)

1 appeared at CF on 23 Mar. and then moved to WLF on 26 Mar. where it stayed until 6 April.

A free flying bird was at Boden Hall with the Canada Geese.

SNOW GOOSE (*Anser caerulescens*)

1 appeared at WLF on 23 Sept. with the Canada Geese flock. It stayed until 19 Nov. except for a brief visit to WP on 3 Oct. 1 bird, presumably the same, was at Arclid SQ in mid Sept.

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*)

Various records of up to 5 at DP in Feb., April, May and Nov. 1 bird was at Arclid SQ in early Sept. with the Canada Geese.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE (*Anser indicus*)

Various DP records where 1 pr. present throughout May but not seen after 29 May until Oct.

SHELLUCK. (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Present from the beginning of the year with a peak count of 20 on 22 Feb. Numbers dropped in summer to 4 prs., one of which bred at RF and reared 10 young. Was absent as usual from mid July to mid Oct. and then 4 or 5 to the year end.

Also resident at DP where max. of 9 and 1 pr. reared 7 young. Only 2 records from Arclid SQ.

MANDARIN (*Aix galericulata*)

1 m. at EHF on 11 Jan. 1 f. at EHF from 13 to 26 Aug.

Single m. also at Arclid SQ on 17 Jan. (the first there), WP on 23 Jan. and 21 Feb., and Alsager Mere on 4 April and throughout Dec.

In summer 1 pr. bred near Haslington and fledged 12 young. This is the first known breeding of a pair in the wild in this area.

WIGEON (*Anas penelope*)

The wintering flock numbered about 150 at the beginning of the year but increased to about 350 by the end of Jan., the highest ever count for that month. Not present in summer although 1 pr. lingered at EHF until mid May. The first returning bird was on 2 Aug. and by year end the flock was about 50.

An occasional winter visitor to other local sites i.e. DP, Arclid SQ and Astbury SQ.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*)

The 1986 record (EHF 7 Oct. to 6 Dec.) was accepted by BBRC as "age and sex indeterminate".

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

1 m. at EHF on 21 June and a further 1 at EHF from 31 July to 18 Aug. and 23 Sept.

1 pr. was at DP on 10 April.

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Abundant during winter although numbers were down this year with a max. of 348 on 26 Sept.

Breeds commonly on all flashes.

Very common elsewhere with max. of 412 at DP, 200 Arclid SQ, 80 at RP, 40 at WP, except for Astbury SQ where uncommon with a max. of 10.

TEAL (*Anas crecca*)

Again, although still abundant during winter, numbers were down this year with a max of 350 in Jan. and 340 in Oct. A few prs. present during summer but no breeding.

Low numbers, up to 10, in winter at Arclid SQ and DP except for 35 at DP on 18 Jan.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

The 1986 record (1 m. at EHF from 30 March to 19 April) has been accepted by BBRC.

PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*)

Present all winter but in lower numbers with max. of 17 on 30 Jan. and 18 on 30 Nov.

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*)

1 m. at EHF on 23 April. 1 (probably f.) at RF/EHF from 14 to 18 July.

SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

Present all winter in low numbers with a max. of 5 in Feb/April and 3 in Oct. except for 8 on 1 Sept.

Frequently present in winter at DP but only 1 m., RP where 6 on 3 Jan. and 2 f. on 1 Sept.

A disappointing year at Arclid SQ where only 2 records in Aug. and 1 in Nov.

POCHARD (*Aythya ferina*)

Normally present in winter with max. of 22 on 6 Jan. and 16 on 20 Nov. One pr. was present at RF/PHF in May and June but no attempt at breeding was noted.

Good numbers at DP in the early winter with a max. of 66 on 14 Feb. but a more normal 19 on 14 Nov. Also regular at Arclid SQ and RP. At RP a pair was seen with 2 juvs. on 25 July. Uncommon at WP but 2 m. on 3 Oct. Good numbers at Astbury SQ with 40+ on 3 Jan. and 90 on 27 Dec.

TUFTED DUCK (*Aythya fuligula*)

Present all year but uncommon in summer. Max of 40 on 6 Jan. and 20 on 7 Nov. Lower numbers in summer when at least one pair bred with a f. and 6 large young on PHF on 18 July.

Also bred at Winterley Pool where a f. + 4 juvs. on 25 July, Haslington Hall where a f. + 2 juvs. on 23 July and Arclid SQ where 2 prs. had broods of 4 and 5. Regular in low numbers in winter at these sites and DP where max. of 52 on 14 Feb.

SCAUP (*Aythya marila*)

One f. was present from 17 Nov. to 2 Dec., usually at PHF but at WLF on 18 Nov.

GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala clangula*)

An average year with 1 f. at PHF from 7 to 12 Nov. and 1 m. + 3 f. at PHF/RF from 13 to 21 Nov.

1 or 2 at Astbury SQ in early Jan. and 1 m. at DP on 1 Jan.

GOOSANDER (*Mergus merganser*)

Irregular visitor to DP where formerly regular.

1 m. 1f. on 14 Feb., 5 on 25 May, 1 m. on 27 Dec. Also recorded at Arclid SQ with 1 f. on 7 Feb. and 2 over on 16 Mar. and RP with 1 f. on 1 Jan.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Low numbers during summer, first seen on 29 March, last seen on 17 Nov., max. of 5 m. 2 f. at GF on 5 May. 2 prs. probably bred, 1 pr. successfully with a f. + 6 young at RF from late July.

Breeding records also from RP 1 f. + 5 juvs., WP 1 f. + 4 juvs, Arclid SQ 1 pr. + 2 juvs.

Other records from DP with 8 m. 7 f. on 17 April and present in summer but breeding not proved.

SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*)

Numerous records of single birds, mainly at EHF but also recorded at PHF, WLF, FF AND CF. Records from all months except mid May to end of July.

A similar pattern of scattered records from other sites - Doddington, Quakers Coppice, Arclid, Rode, Haslington, Middlewich and Stowford. A f. at PHF on 24 Jan. was seen attempting to take a small bat but it gave up after several attempts.

BUZZARD (*Buteo buteo*)

Second hand reports received of 1 or 2 near Crewe Hall from 19 April to 7 May but unfortunately not confirmed.

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

1 at FF on 5 April was seen to take a fish at the second attempt and then headed north. This is the 7th record for the flashes.

KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Records of single birds - both m. and f. - in most months including summer but no evidence of breeding. Recorded from all flashes.

Again scattered records from various sites throughout the area, but no positive breeding.

PEREGRINE (*Falco peregrinus*)

The m. resident from 1986 stayed at RF until the late date of 8 April.

The first bird back in the autumn was an imm. f. at EHF/RF on 10 Aug. What was considered to be the regular wintering m. was first seen on 23 Sept. at RF and thereafter both birds were seen up to the year end.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE (*Alectoris rufa*)

1 on 4 Feb. at WLF - where previously seen - was either this species or chukar or hybrid.

A small colony exists at Doddington where 7 in Jan., 5 in Mar. and 2 in May. 2 also seen near Weston on 22 April and 1 near Haslington in spring.

GREY PARTRIDGE (*Perdix perdix*)

The only records are from Wybunbury/Hough near Crewe and Barthomely. Are these the only areas where this species now occurs in S.E. Cheshire?

PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*)

1 m. near Maw Green tip on 21 Feb. was the only record outside the usual area of FF/NGP.

Common where reared for shooting E.G. Crewe Hall, Doddington and Rode but uncommon elsewhere.

WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Present all winter with records from RF, EHF, WLF and FF. All records of singles except for 15 Jan., 1 at WLF and 2 at FF - and 15 Oct. - 3 at FF.

1 seen at Little Taxmere, Arclid on 8/9 Nov. probably wintered.

MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*)

No full counts this year but at least 92 in Jan. and 77 in Dec.

Common on large and small waters throughout the area. 6 prs. bred at RP, 3 prs. at WP, 3 prs. at DP etc.

COOT (*Fulica atra*)

The wintering flock at PHF numbered 236 on 9 Jan. and 150 on 14 Dec. However the total number for the flashes would be much higher since there are also flocks at other flashes, e.g. 77 at CF and 57 at WLF on 24 Oct.

No full count of breeding pairs but at least 15 nests noted.

Wintering flock at DP peaked at 100 in Jan. and 167 in Dec. Several prs. bred here and at RP, WP and Arclid SQ.

OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

A pr. was first seen at EHF on 14 March and stayed throughout the spring. Courting behaviour was noted thereafter, including copulation on 10 May. During June only 1 bird was seen at EHF but frustratingly no birds were seen after 28 June. As in 1985 and 1986 the pair gave typical breeding behaviour but no positive proof of breeding was seen.

On 1 July 1 bird (one of the above pair?) was seen feeding in fields near WP.

1 or 2 birds were also reported occasionally from Arclid SQ from 2 March to 10 June.

4 were at DP in the evening of 29 and 30 May.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius dubius*)

First birds of the year seen at EHF on 27 March and the last on 26 Sept. Autumn passage noted with between 5 and 17 birds in July. Probably bred at PHF and Fodens.

Well documented at Arclid SQ where 1 pr. had 2 breeding attempts. The first failed when the young died due to bad weather and the second hatched 4 of which 2 fledged.

RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Small spring passage with up to 7 birds in May. Earliest bird was at EHF on 26 Feb.

Stronger autumn passage with up to 15 birds at end of Aug. and early Sept. Last bird was one on 27 Sept.

Also recorded on autumn passage from Arclid SQ where all juvs. 3 on 2 July, 1 on 18 Aug., 1 on 4 Sept. and Middlewich Lime Beds where 2 on 17 Sept. and 1 on 20 Oct.

GOLDEN PLOVER (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

All records at EHF. Up to 6 in Jan. & Feb. First autumn record was 43 on 4 Sept. Thereafter up to 10 to year end except for an increase in mid Nov. peaking at 127 on 18 Nov., and a peak of 79 in mid Dec.

A large flock formed at Middlewich Lime Beds in autumn with 111 on 17 Sept. increased throughout Oct. and peaking at 504 on 21 Nov.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*)

1 was seen at Middlewich Lime Beds from 20 Oct. to 24 Oct. Record submitted to BBRC.

LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Numbers at the EHF roost lower this year with a recorded max. of 550 on 30 Oct. 4 prs. seen displaying and 1 pr. with 1 juv. at PHF.

At Arclid SQ 1 pr. bred but no young were raised. At the year end numbers increased up to a max. of 2,000 on 5 Dec.

KNOT (*Calidris canutus*)

4 records. 2 at EHF on 31 July in summer plumage. 1 at EHF on 16 Oct., 1 at EHF on 7 Nov. with 2 at PHF on 8 Nov.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*)

2 birds were present at Arclid SQ on 28 Sept.

LITTLE STINT (*Calidris minuta*)

A very poor year with only one record of 2 at EHF on 17 May.

1 at Arclid SQ on 29 May was the first recorded there.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris ferruginea*)

A single bird was at Arclid SQ on 22 Aug.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*)

Recorded in all months except June. The resident wintering flock numbered 16 on 11 Jan. but numbers dropped in Feb. to 5.

Up to 3 birds at Arclid SQ in April, June, July and Oct.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*)

A good year with highest ever counts in Jan. (24), Feb. (20), March (21), April (20), Oct. (15), Nov. (17) & Dec. (18). Also recorded in lower numbers in June to Sept.

1 at Arclid SQ on 29 Sept. was the third record there.

JACK SNIBE (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

In the first half of the year 1 at EHF on 8 Mar., 1 at RF on 26 Mar., 1 at WLF on 5 April. Then an early bird at WLF on 27 Sept., 2 at RF on 1 Oct., 1 on 3 and 4 Oct., 1 on 11 and 19 Dec.

SNIBE (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Recorded in all months except May & June. Early year max. of 149 on 4 Jan. and end of year max. of 140 on 10 Oct. Lower numbers in spring and autumn.

1 feeding along the stream at Crewe GC on 10 Jan. in very hard weather.

A poor year at Arclid SQ with only occasional winter records.

Also recorded at Stowford with max. of 10 in Jan. and 13 in Oct.

WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*)

1 at FF in early Jan.

Other winter records from Church Lawton, Haslington, Arclid SQ and Crewe Hall. 1 roding bird at Quakers Coppice in May.

In March a Woodcock was collected by H. Dean after colliding with wires. Although it had lost some head feathers it recovered and was released.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*)

3 spring passage records, all at EHF. 2 on 1 April, 9 (the highest number ever recorded) flew over on 11 April, 1 on 1 May.

1 autumn passage record of 1 on 11 July.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*)

1 at EHF on 8 & 11 May. In autumn 1 stayed at EHF from 22 July to 9 Aug. 1 also at EHF on 26 Aug. and 6 Sept.

1 flew over Dingle Farm, Sandbach on 25 July. 1 at Arclid SQ on 21 May.

CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*)

Has become more common in the last few years and was recorded in every month this year. The wintering flock uses the salt pan to roost and numbered up to 45 in Feb. and 80 in Oct.

Singles were recorded in May & June and there was an autumn passage in July & Aug. with up to 35 birds.

Occasional records from Arclid SQ from March to Sept.

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*)

1 juv. at EHF on 30 Aug. & 2 Sept. 1 at PHF from 3 to 5 Sept.

REDSHANK (*Tringa totanus*)

Resident in winter with max. of 18 in Jan. and 20 in Dec. Regular in ones and twos in May, June and July but as usual only 1 record in Aug. and Sept.

GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularia*)

No spring records but common on autumn passage from 12 Aug. to 17 Sept. with a max. of 6 on 21 Aug.

Exceptional year at Arclid SQ where up to 3 recorded regularly from 15 Aug. to 11 Sept.

Also 1 at DP on 18 Aug. (rare here).

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*)

As usual uncommon in spring with 3 in Mar. and 2 in April. Much more common in autumn from 24 June through to Oct. with a max. of 9 on 4 July. Two wintering records with 1 on 2 Jan. and 1 on 11 Dec.

2 autumn records from Arclid with singles on 18 and 21 Aug.

As usual birds overwintered at Stowford with 1 or 2 present in Feb., Mar., Nov. & Dec.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*)

Probably 5 birds in autumn. 1 at EHF on 20 & 21 July, 1 at EHF on 28 Aug., 1 at EHF on 2 to 4 Sept., 1 at EHF on 8 Sept. and 1 at RF on 26 & 27 Sept.

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Uncommon in spring but regular in autumn throughout July, Aug. and Sept. with the last record on 6 Oct. Max. of 5 on 28 Aug.

Widely recorded elsewhere e.g. Arclid SQ - where a pair present in early summer, DP, RP and Church Lawton.

TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

6 at EHF/RF on 3 Sept. was the highest number ever recorded at SF. 1 was still present on 4 Sept.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL (*Larus melanocephalus*)

1 2nd winter bird was seen flying around Maw Green Tip and RF for 15 mins. on 5 Dec. and then drifted away over Crewe.

This is the 4th record for SF.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus ridibundus*)

Regular all year with around 150 in summer - and 4 juvs. on 5 July - increasing to 800 in autumn.

The other main sites are Arclid SQ - up to 1,000, Astbury SQ - up to 2,000 and DP where numbers seemed reduced but still 8 to 10,000 max. in the winter roost.

COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*)

Uncommon at SF but recorded in all months except May, usually up to 10 but 50+ on 11 April.

Also uncommon elsewhere except for DP where up to 100 in the winter roost.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*)

Low numbers at EHF early in the year but in autumn numbers started building up at RF/Maw Green Tip and peaked at 500 in mid Nov.

Also up to 750 at Arclid SQ, 400 at Astbury SQ and 250 at DP.

HERRING GULL (*Larus argentatus*)

Much lower numbers than Lesser Black-Backed. 250+ on 4 Feb. was exceptional.

Also up to 300 at Astbury SQ, 50 at DP and only 9 at Arclid SQ.

Yellow-Legged gulls of the race *L.a. michahellis* were recorded at EHF on 4 Sept., RF on 17 Nov. and at Astbury SQ in early Jan. which was possibly the same bird in late Dec.

ICELAND GULL (*Larus glaucooides*)

1 1st winter bird at RF on 11 Jan. later moved down to Maw Green Tip.

Good records from Astbury SQ where an ad. on 7 & 8 Jan., a 1st winter also on 8 Jan. and a 1st winter on 27 Dec.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*)

Recorded in Jan., Feb. and Dec. from EHF/RF/Maw Green Tip with a max. of 11 on 7 Jan.

Up to 40 in the roost at DP and 10 at Astbury SQ.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*)

First record was 4 at EHF on 21 June and then 1,2 or 3 occasionally through to 17 Sept.

At Arclid SQ a pr. arrived on 5 July and showed some nesting behaviour during their stay up to 11 July.

Also recorded at DP where 3 on 25 May.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*)

2 ads. over EHF on 18 April, 1 at RF on 3 Sept. A party of 16 at EHF on 19 Sept. was the highest number ever recorded.

A good year for this species with records also from Arclid SQ with 2 on 24 May and 1 on 26 May and DP with 2 on 17 Sept.

FERAL PIGEON (*Columba livia*)

A large flock of c. 500 near Shavington feeding on newly sown cereal. A flock of c. 200 in Crewe Town.

20 at DP with Woodpigeons.

STOCK DOVE (*Columba oenas*)

The winter flock at SF numbered around 50 at each end of the year and was usually around EHF/PHF. No other winter flocks.

At QC 3 prs. bred, 2 prs. used nestboxes successfully.

At DP 3 prs. used nestboxes but all failed.

WOODPIGEON (*Columba palumbus*)

Very common but under recorded. The only winter flock of note was 80 at PHF in Sept.

COLLARED DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common and still increasing. Recorded in 15 out of 17 gardens in the WGBS.

CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*)

1 st bird of the summer at FF on 19 April, where a singing m. recorded to mid June.

Also from QC, Haslington and Arclid SQ but not particularly common locally.

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*)

1 pr. bred in Crewe Hall and fledged 2 young.

1 seen near Gorsty Hall on 5 Oct.

LITTLE OWL (*Athene noctua*)

Common in open countryside and villages. Records from Haslington, Crewe GC, Alsager Tip, Alsager GC, Barthomley, DP, Wybunbury, Middlewich Lime Beds, Maw Green, Crewe. Also EHF, FF and RF.

TAWNY OWL (*Strix aluco*)

Common in more wooded areas e.g. only FF at SF. Records from Arclid SQ, Rode Woods, Barthomley and DP possibly reflecting its more nocturnal habits than the Little Owl.

LONG-EARED OWL (*Asio otus*)

Reports, unfortunately unconfirmed, of 1 bird in Crewe Hall Woods in May/June.

SWIFT (*Apus apus*)

1st of the year was of 1 near Crewe on 29 April. Next was 4 at WLF on 30 April. The only high count was of 50 at DP on 10 May. No positive breeding records.

Regular over water e.g. EHF, DP in August, by the end of which most had gone. However the last sighting was over Alsager on 13 Sept.

KINGFISHER (*Alcedo atthis*)

Recorded in winter from EHF, WLF and FF. Also from WP, RP, DP, Stowford and Shavington but the only confirmed breeding was at Lawton Hall Woods.

GREEN WOODPECKER (*Picus viridis*)

1 calling on 4 July near PHF/RF. Not common locally and the only other records are from Church Lawton, Stowford, Crewe GC, Crewe Hall and Wybunbury.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos major*)

By far the commonest woodpecker and regular in most suitable woods.

In June a pair could be seen feeding young at the entrance to the nest along Warblers Walk at FF.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopos minor*)

Not common even allowing for the fact that it is under recorded. Isolated records from EHF, WLF, Dingle Farm, Sandbach and Brereton Heath.

SKYLARK (*Alauda arvensis*)

Common and widespread breeding on open farmland. Some passage noted in October at SF and Arclid SQ.

SAND MARTIN (*Riparia riparia*)

1st record of the year was of 1 at EHF on 28 March and 1 at Arclid SQ on 31 March. The general influx was in the second week in April. Numbers definitely increased this year with in the order of 125 pairs at Arclid SQ and 60 pairs at Hough Mill SQ. Probably also bred along the R. Wheelock with 44 at PHF on 4 July including many juvs.

SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

First records were at DP on 7 April, EHF on 8 April and RP on 9 April. Common thereafter with many breeding records. The only big autumn flock was of 200 at WLF on 26 Sept.

1 all white bird was roosting at Micklewright's Flash on 17 Aug.
Last record was of 3 over Haslington on 17 Oct.

HOUSE MARTIN (*Delichon urbica*)

First records were at Rode Heath on 20 April, and Haslington on 21 April. A common breeding bird. Last record was on 25 Oct. at Alsager.

TREE PIPIT (*Anthus trivialis*)

1 at Haslington on 10 May.
1 over EHF on 28 Aug.

1 at Arclid SQ on 2 Sept.

1986:- 1 singing m. at Arclid SQ from 28 April to 4 May.

MEADOW PIPIT (*Anthus pratensis*)

A few isolated winter records but mainly a spring and autumn passage migrant.

36 at Arclid SQ on 4 April was max. in spring. At end of Sept/early Oct. there were 50+ at Arclid SQ and max. of 83 at SF.

ROCK PIPIT (*Anthus petrosus*)

1 at EHF on 10 Oct. was either this species or Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*).

1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 4 Oct. and 11 Oct.

YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla flava*)

First of the year was 1 at EHF on 6 April. Regular thereafter until the last date of 2 Oct. but only in low numbers. 18 at DP on 19 May.

1 pr. bred on the Haslington CBC plot.

1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 21 Oct. was a very late record.

GREY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Generally a winter visitor and fairly widespread in winter. 1 pr. at Crewe GC through to end of May.

PIED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba*)

An existing roost at Arclid SQ increased during the early winter to a max. of 300 on 18 March. Several breeding records.

80 at EHF on 6 Oct. and 50 at Arclid SQ.

WHITE WAGTAIL (*Motacilla alba alba*)

Records from DP on 7 April and 15 May and EHF 27 and 28 March and 7,11, 12 April.

DIPPER (*Cinclus cinclus*)

Records of a single bird at Crewe GC on 6 June and 4 July and then along a stream near Crewe Hall on 31 Dec. These are the first records for this area.

WREN (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Very common with 15 prs. on the Haslington CBC and 8 prs. on the Q.C. CBC.

DUNNOCK (*Prunella modularis*)

Very common. 5 prs. on the Haslington CBC and 3 prs. on the Q.C. CBC.

ROBIN (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Very common. 6 prs. on the Haslington CBC and 7 prs. on the QC CBC. 2 prs. at Doddington raised broods in old paint cnas.

REDSTART (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

1 f. at FF on 25 April.

WHINCHAT (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Several autumn records at SF in Aug. & Sept. Also 1 at Arclid on 26 & 27 Aug.

WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

A poor year with only 2 April records and 7 May records from 5 to 16. These included birds of the Greenland race on the 6 & 10.

No autumn records from SF and only 3 at Arclid.

BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant throughout. 15 prs. on the Haslington CBC and 6 prs. on the QC CBC.

FIELDFARE (*Turdus pilaris*)

Generally low numbers early in the year although 250 at EHF on 9 Jan. The first record in autumn was 24 Oct. and again numbers were fairly low. 300 at EHF on 5 Dec. was typical but 500 at Arclid in mid Nov. was exceptional.

SONG THRUSH (*Turdus philomelos*)

Becoming uncommon. On the Haslington CBC breeding pairs have declined from 11 in 1975 to nil in 1987.

REDWING (*Turdus iliacus*)

Widespread but in much lower numbers than Fieldfare. Max. of 100 at SF. in Nov.

MISTLE THRUSH (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Generally common and widespread but thinly distributed. Usually under recorded.

SEDGE WARBLER (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

1st of the year at WLF on 17 April. Probably 7 prs. bred around SF. Numbers have decreased recently throughout the area.

REED WARBLER (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

1st of the year at WLF on 29 April. 1 at WLF on 27 Sept. was the latest ever record. Bred at FF, WLF, RF and GF. Also 2 prs. at RP.

LESSER WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia curruca*)

1st records were on 26 April at WLF and Arclid SQ with the last at EHF on 16 Sept. Probably 3 prs. bred at SF with 2 prs. breeding at Arclid SQ. Generally under recorded.

WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia communis*)

The earliest bird was at Arclid SQ on 17 April. Generally common with about 10 prs. at SF and 3 - 4 prs. at Arclid SQ. No records after mid August.

GARDEN WARBLER (*Sylvia borin*)

1st record from Arclid SQ on 1st May. Rare at SF but common in the right habitat. 2 prs. Arclid, 2 prs. at DP, 1 pr. Crewe GC.

BLACKCAP (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

1st record from Arclid SQ on 20th April.
Common breeding bird throughout the area. No records of overwintering birds.

WOOD WARBLER (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

1 singing m. near Alsager on 29 April is the only local record.

CHIFFCHAFF (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

1st record from FF on 29 March where 2 prs. probably bred. Last record was from WLF on 15 Oct. No records of over-wintering. Fairly common throughout in woodland.

WILLOW WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

1st record was on 9th April and large numbers were present by 14th. Abundant throughout the area in all habitats.

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*)

Regular at SF on autumn passage throughout Oct. Thinly spread in winter with low numbers from DP, QC, Arclid SQ, Shavington and FF.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa striata*)

All birds seemed to arrive together on 15th/16th May. Breeding records from Arclid SQ (2), DP (3), Crewe GC, Lawton Woods and Haslington CBC.

PIED FLYCATCHER (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

1 f. at Crewe GC on 22 April.

LONG-TAILED TIT (*Aegithalus caudatus*)

Scattered breeding season records. Winter flocks of 10+ were at Crewe GC (26), Arclid (25), Middlewich Lime Beds (11), Crewe Hall (10) and RF (10).

MARSH TIT (*Parus palustris*)

Winter records of single birds from DP, Crewe GC and Wybunbury.

WILLOW TIT (*Parus montanus*)

More common than Marsh Tit with records from FF, Brereton Heath, Sandbach, Crewe GC, QC etc. but no proved breeding.

COAL TIT (*Parus ater*)

Breeding records from QC, RP, DP, Oakhanger, Arclid Hall. Fairly common in winter in tit flocks.

BLUE TIT (*Parus caeruleus*)

Abundant throughout with 20 prs. on the Haslington CBC. 5 prs. in nest boxes at QC fledged 56 young and 5 prs. in nest boxes at DP fledged 50 young.

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*)

Very common throughout with 9 prs. on the Haslington CBC plot. 2 prs. in nest boxes at DP fledged 19 young and 1 pr. in a nest box at QC fledged 8 young.

NUTHATCH (*Sitta europaea*)

Fairly common and widespread. Records from Crewe GC, Doddington, Crewe Hall, Dingle Farm, Sandbach, Arclid & QC.

TREECREEPER (*Certhia familiaris*)

A common resident in suitable habitat.

Recorded in 4 out of 18 gardens in Oct. - Dec. in the WGBS.

JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*)

No large influx this year. A fairly common resident with breeding pairs at QC, Crewe Hall and Doddington. 2 or 3 prs. at Taxmere. 4+ at WLF on 15 Oct.

MAGPIE (*Pica pica*)

A very common resident e.g. 6 prs. on the Haslington CBC and approx. 40 birds in the area around Maw Green Tip on 21 Feb.

Max. number for the regular winter roost at FF was only 60 this winter.

JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*)

The resident flock at Doddington Hall numbered about 30. Breeds throughout the area but under-recorded. 65 flew SE over Arclid on 27 Sept.

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Counts at 6 rookeries in the Crewe Hall area gave a total of 218 nests compared to 216 in 1986 and 193 in 1985.

The Arclid Hollow rookery contained 81 nests compared to 67 in 1985.

100 at Maw Green Tip on 13 Jan.

CROW (*Corvus corone*)

Common resident throughout the area. 2 at EHF on 11 Jan. were seen to kill a m. Teal.

Numbers of this species - and corvids in general - are building up at Maw Green Tip e.g. 70 on 21 Feb.

STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Common but no numbers recorded.

An egg of this species was found on the ground at Crewe Hall on 21 Feb.

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*)

Very common around all types of habitation.

TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*)

Not common locally but breeding season records from RF, EHF, Arclid, Rode and Wybunbury.

Small winter flocks recorded at Wybunbury with approx. 30 on 28 Dec. and at Maw Green Tip with 15 on 8 Jan. and 17 on 28 March.

CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Breeds commonly throughout the area, e.g. 18 prs. on the Haslington CBC.

The only recorded winter flocks were 60 on 18 Jan. at Doddington and 40 on 17 Oct. at Arclid.

BRAMBLING (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Reasonable numbers in the first winter period with 16 at Maw Green Tip on 13 Jan. and 33 there on 17 Jan. Also 15 at Doddington on 18 Jan. with the Chaffinch flock.

Recorded in 11 out of 18 gardens in the WGBS in the period Jan. to March and lingered on into April.

However, no records from the second winter period.

GREENFINCH (*Carduelis chloris*)

Fairly common as a breeding bird but less common in winter.

A flock of 60 at Doddington on 19 Sept. were feeding in stubble.

GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*)

3 prs. breeding in road-side trees in Crewe.

Winter flocks were 30 at Maw Green Tip on 3 Jan., 25 at Crewe GC on 13 April, 18 at Stowford on 25 Jan. and 35 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 4 Oct.

SISKIN (*Carduelis spinus*)

Flocks in the first winter period were 40 at Crewe GC on 10 Jan., 40 at Arclid on 17 Jan. and 25 there on 28 Feb., mixed flock of 40+ with Redpolls at Alsager on 29 March.

Recorded in 10 out of 18 gardens in the period Jan. to March.

As usual much more scarce in the second winter period. Winter numbers were usually less than 10 - except for 25 at Crewe GC in Dec. - and the WGBS had only 1 record in the Oct. to Dec. period.

LINNET (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Autumn flocks were recorded at Arclid with up to 100 at the end of Aug., Middlewich Lime Beds with 50 on 17 Sept. and PHF with 45 on 30 Sept.

REDPOLL (*Carduelis flammea*)

Generally not common but various records from S.F. Also Crewe GC, Stowford and Alsager.

BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Various breeding season records from Arclid, Doddington, Crewe GC, Stowford

and SF where 1 pr. with 2 juvs. seen near MGP on 14 June.

YELLOWHAMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*),

Scattered widespread records. Wintering flocks were recorded at Alsager with 50+ in Jan. and Wybunbury Moss with 20 on 3 Nov.

6 prs. were recorded on the Haslington CBC.

REED BUNTING (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

A common breeding bird with at least 12 prs. at SF and 7 prs. at Arclid SQ.

In the Jan. to March period recorded in 6 out of 18 gardens in the WGBS.

CORN BUNTING (*Miliaria calandra*)

Not common but often found in small breeding groups e.g. 3 prs. at Doddington and several prs. near Alsager on the Staffs. border.