



**SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

1989 BIRD REPORT

Including BIRDS OF SANDBACH FLASHES

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SECOS Recorder.

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	SQ	Sand Quarry
OF	Oaktree Flash	GC	Golf Course
PHF	Pump House Flash	CBC	Common Bird Census
RF	Railway Flash		
SF	Sandbach Flashes		
WF	Warmingham Flash		
WLF	Watch Lane Flash		

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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 errors or omissions, please let me know.

Although this report is as complete as possible from the records submitted I am sure that there are blank spots in the area covered and in some species reports. If you do not usually submit records but are aware of such shortcomings in the report please make the effort and put notes in the box at Sandbach Flashes or let me have records for 1990 by February 1991 using the CAWQS recording form.

Colin Lythgoe.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Present in spring / autumn / winter at SF (PHF/EHF/WLF/CF/WF) with max. of 5 at PHF on 15 Feb. No breeding season records although 4 ads. + 1 juv. at PHF in Aug.

Prs. also bred at Haslington Hall, Rode Pool & probably Huime Walfield.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

As usual at SF the wintering birds were at WLF with a max. of 12 here in March. Other wintering flocks at Doddington Pool (max.24), Arclid (max.16), Rode Pool (max.8), Astbury SQ (max.12).

Breeding records from FF, CF, MGP, WF, Doddington Pool, Rode Pool, Winterley Pool and Arclid SQ where 4 prs. raised 6 young.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

1 ad. in summer plumage at WLF on 25 April. Only the 3rd record for SF.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Recorded in low numbers (max.7) during Jan.- April and Aug.- Dec. from PHF/WLF/CF.

The main site for this species is now Doddington Pool with an early winter max. of 16 in Feb. and a late winter max. of 26 in Dec.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Recorded in low numbers at SF all year but no breeding. The Rode Pool heronry continues to increase with 21 nests this year (17 in 1988 and 8 in 1987). The Doddington Pool heronry had 2 prs. nesting this year (1 in 1988 and 1 unsuccessful in 1987).

Recorded in ones and twos throughout the area all year.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

The main wintering flock in the SF area in the early winter was around CF and had a max. of 32 (with 1 Whooper). Pairs bred at RF, FFF, Winterley Pool, Alsager Mere and Astbury. This is an increase over recent years and it would seem that the future of the Mute Swan is looking better. Approx. 230 Mute Swans throughout Cheshire have been ringed with blue darvic rings in the last two years by the Cheshire Swan Ringing Group.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

1 bird was with the Mute Swan flock at CF from 5 Feb. to 15 April when it moved to EHF and was last seen on 24 April.

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

2 ads. + 1 imm. at WLF on 15 March.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

14 at EHF on 8 Jan. Otherwise 1 or 2 occasionally with the Canada Goose flock at WLF in Jan., Feb. and May. On 1 Jan. a flock of 170 flew over Middlewich.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

1 at Doddington Pool on 15 Jan. presumed to be from Bridgemere Wildlife Park.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

The early winter flock at WLF peaked at 125 birds in Feb. Other early winter flocks were of 102 at Doddington Pool, 75 at Arclid & 45 at Winterley Pool.

Prs. bred successfully at all main sites and also on many smaller ponds.

Autumn / late winter flocks recorded were 398 at Arclid SQ, 230 at Doddington Pool, 174 at Winterley Pool & 166 at WLF.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Resident at SF with a max. of 29 in March. 1 pr. bred at RF and had 8 juvs. 1 pr. also bred at Doddington Pool and hatched 6 juvs. 1 pr. at Arclid SQ in March & April but no breeding attempted.

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

The breeding population continues in the Crewe Hall area with 2 definite and 1 possible breeding prs., with f.+ 6 juvs., f.+ 2 juvs. and 1 pr. with no juvs.

Various records of singles in winter from Winterley Pool, Haslington Hall and Alsager Mere are probably dispersal records from the breeding population.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Average numbers at SF with 227 in Jan. and 150 in Dec. At Doddington Pool 20 on 21 Jan. and 16 on 23 Dec. Up to 4 at Arclid in autumn.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Only 2 records this year. 1m.2f. at PHF on 10 Sept. and 2 at Arclid SQ from 15 to 18 Nov.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

200+ in Jan. and 350 in Dec. at SF, 453 at Doddington Pool in Dec., 290 at Arclid SQ in Sept. were typical numbers for wintering flocks. Breeds commonly on all waters.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

550 in Jan. at SF was an average total but low numbers in late winter with only 350 in Dec. 1 pr. at PHF in summer but no breeding. Low numbers elsewhere in winter with 6 at Doddington Pool and 2 at Rode Pool. Up to 10 regularly at Arclid SQ in late winter.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Regular in winter at SF with max. of 30 in Jan. but only 9 in Dec.

Also recorded from Arclid with 2 on 21 Sept. and 3 on 8 Oct.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

1 m. at RF on 15 May, 1 pr. at PHF on 26 May and 1 f/juv. at PHF from 17 Aug. to 7 Sept.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

A poor year at SF with only ones or twos during the year, except for April when 3 or 4.

Winter visitor to Rode Pool with max. of 6 in early winter and 11 in late winter. 1 or 2 occasionally at Doddington and 1 or 2 in autumn at Arclid SQ.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Winter visitor to SF with max. of 27 at PHF/EHF and 11 at WLF.

As usual a large winter flock at Doddington Pool with a max. count of 264 on 23 Dec., the highest number recorded here. 10 at Rode Pool on 3 March. Only 1 or 2 at Arclid SQ although 1 pr. ultimately bred here and had 1 juv. which disappeared after a few days.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Winter numbers down at SF with a max. of only 21 in Jan. Prs. present in summer at WLF, FF and PHF but no breeding proved.

Also present in winter at Arclid (max.21), Rode Pool (max.5), Doddington Pool (max.21), Haslington Hall (max.8). Prs. summered at all sites but no breeding proved anywhere this year.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

1 f. at WLF on 29 Oct. was the only record for SF.

1 f. also at Doddington Pool on 3 March. 1 m. & 1 f. at Arclid SQ on 15 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

1 f. at WLF on 2 Oct. was only the 4th record for SF.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

1 f. at CF on 20 & 21 March. Singles at Arclid SQ on 22 Jan. and 2 Dec.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

At SF, recorded from GF, WLF, CF, WF, MGP in spring. Unfortunately no records after May.

Breeding season records from Doddington Pool, Rode Pool, Winterley Pool & Arclid SQ but no breeding proved.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Regular sightings from many areas throughout the year.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

An unconfirmed report of 2 birds near Crewe Hall in July.

1 definite record in this area on 14 Sept.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Widespread records throughout the area but less than sparrowhawk.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

1 f. flew past PHF on 24 March.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

1 juv. over PHF on 6 Aug. was only the 13th record for SF and 1 juv. at EHF on 27 Aug. was the 14th.

A bird was seen hunting swallows at dusk above the roost at Sandbach Heath on 17 Sept. The last record for the area was in Sept. 1985.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

The bird resident from 1988 was regularly seen in the PHF/EHF/RF area until 7 April.

The 1st bird in the autumn was seen at PHF on 5 Sept. and regularly thereafter.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

The only record was of an injured bird near Arclid SQ on 12 April.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Slightly more records than usual. Recorded from Swettenham (where 12-15 birds), Bagmere, Haslington, Alsager and south of Congleton.

Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

This year saw an exceptional influx of quails throughout England. In our area there were records of 11 singing m. from 6 sites, with proved breeding at 1 site involving 2 or 3 families.

- 1) south of Alsager 3m. and breeding proved here.
- 2) Bagmere 3m. between 2 and 9 June.
- 3) Barthomley 1m. on 23 June.
- 4) Near Sandbach 1m. on 28 June.
- 5) Swettenham 2m. on 9 July.
- 6) Near Wybunbury 1m. on 23 July.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Occasional records from FF. Common where reared for breeding i.e. Crewe Hall, Doddington, Rode Pool, Taxmere and occasional elsewhere.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Winter records of singles at EHF, FF and WLF. Also at Taxmere in winter. 1 heard calling at Bagmere on 21 May.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

On 15 Jan. a coordinated count of all the 15 flashes at SF gave a total of 152 at 11 of the flashes with the highest count being 59 at EHF.

Very common on all waters, large & small.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

On 15 Jan. a coordinated count of all the 15 flashes at SF gave a total of 141 at 5 of the flashes with 65 at PHF & 58 at WLF. These are lower than average totals.

At Doddington Pool the winter max. was 185 on 12 Feb.

Breeds commonly on all larger waters.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

No pair resident at EHF this year. Records of 1's or 2's from 11 March to 24 June at EHF and WLF. Also occasional records from Arclid SQ over the same period and 2 at Doddington on 24 March.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

1st record was of 2 at EHF on 26 March with 2 at Arclid on 27 March. Last record was on 31 Aug. from Arclid SQ.

Bred at RF, EHF (2 juvs. on 18 June), Foden's Test Track (3 juvs. on 19 May). An exceptional year at Arclid where 5 or 6 prs. bred and there were 7 nesting attempts. 4 failed and from the other 3, 9 young fledged. 2 prs. at Browlow SQ, Congleton in June.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

3 records from EHF during the winter with 1 on 29 Jan., 1 on 25 Feb. and 1 from 6 to 8 March.

Spring passage from late April to late May with 17 at RF/EHF on 9 May and 5 there on 18 May. Few records of autumn passage at SF except for 15 at EHF on 19 July but a good series of records at Arclid from 16 July to 1 Sept.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

The 1988 winter flock of 200 at SF broke up early in Jan. 1989 (max. of 51 on 1 Jan.) and has not reformed. In late winter max. of 29 at WLF on 5 Nov. The usual Byley roost held 357 on 2 March. The Middlewich roost was much lower than usual with only 200 max. on 1 Jan.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

The regular roost at EHF held 4000+ birds in early winter but most departed by mid March. Other large winter flocks were 800 at Wybunbury and 600 at Doddington.

Breeding records from PHF, Arclid, Malkins Bank, near Haslington.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 9 May in transitional plumage. Recorded from Arclid SQ where 2 on 10 April, 1 on 9 & 10 May and 1 juv. on 30 July.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

No records of this species this year where previously regular.

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)

An ad. which appeared at EHF on 27 Dec. 1988 stayed there through to 11 April, although usually very difficult to see. This is the 7th record for SF.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Recorded in every month from SF. Up to 4 or 5 in Jan./ Feb. but numbers built up to 19 in mid March. Main return passage during July & August with up to 12 birds.

At Arclid SQ spring passage from 7 April to 27 May (max.8) and autumn passage from 25 July to 27 Oct. but max. of only 2.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Recorded in each month except June & Aug. No evidence of passage birds. Early winter flock had a max. of 19 and the late winter flock was 15.

3 at Arclid SQ on 27 Aug.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

In early winter 1 at EHF on 1 Jan., 1 at WLF on 11 Jan. & 1 at WLF on 11 March.

In late winter at WLF as usual with 1 on 1 Oct., 3 on 2 Oct. and 1 on 8 Oct.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Recorded at SF in all months except May & June. Winter numbers peaked at 200 in March with 160 in Dec. Also regular at Middlewich where 100 in Jan.

Occasional winter records from Arclid & Stowford.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Up to 3 at FF in Feb. Other winter records from Swettenham, Arclid & Stowford.

2 breeding season records with 1 roding regularly over Crewe Hall Woods in May and 1 in Quakers Coppice in June.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

In spring, 10 arrived at RF on 9 May and stayed to 11 May with 2 at EHF on 13 May.

In autumn, several records from PHF with 2 ads. + 1 juv. on 17 Aug., 1 on 28 Aug., 3 on 2 Sept., 1 on 3 Sept. and 1 on 9 Sept.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

1 at EHF on 28 Aug. and 1 at PHF on 1 Sept.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

The only record this year was of 1 at Arclid SQ briefly on 25 July.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Recorded at SF in all months except June. The roost at EHF saltpan held up to 36 birds in early winter (Jan.) and up to 47 in late winter (Oct.). Also recorded from Stowford and Arclid on passage. This species is under recorded and more field work / observations would probably prove breeding in our area.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

All records in autumn from EHF / PHF with 1 on 3 July, 1 on 6 Sept., 1 on 23 Sept., 1 on 1 & 2 Oct. and finally 1 on 29 Oct.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Wintering numbers at SF were similar at both ends of the year with 12 in Feb. and 13 in Dec. Recorded during spring & summer with 2 prs. displaying at EHF during March & April but no evidence of breeding.

Occasional records from elsewhere during passage.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

At SF no distinction between spring & autumn passage with 1 at RF on 9 May, 1 at RF on 29 June, 1 or 2 at EHF / PHF from 8 to 17 July, 1 at PHF on 10 Aug. and 2 at PHF on 12 Aug.

3 records of 1 or 2 from Arclid SQ on 3 July, 25 July and 28 Aug.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Wintering records from Stoeftord in Jan. / Feb. and Dec., Middlewich in Jan. and Feb., and Betchton, Sandbach in Dec.

Light spring passage with singles only at EHF / WLF from mid March to mid May.

Heavy autumn passage from 21 June to 29 Sept. with up to 17 at SF in early Aug.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

At SF up to 5 on spring passage from 12 April to 23 May and up to 6 on autumn passage from 28 June to 18 Aug.

At Arclid SQ one bird overwintered from 1988 until spring passage which was from 19 April to 27 May with up to 8 birds. Autumn passage was from 24 June to 21 Sept. with up to 6 birds. 1 juv. bird overwintered & remained up to the year end.

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

1 bird at Arclid SQ on 28 Aug.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

1 juv. was seen at Arclid SQ on 7 Oct.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Large numbers as usual at the Doddington Pool roost with 8000 in Jan. and 11000 in Dec. Up to 500 at Arclid during the year except during summer. First juvs. seen at SF on 26 June. A few birds from the Mersey oil spill on 19 Aug. were recorded at Arclid & SF.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Up to 75 in March and 300 in Dec. in the Doddington Pool gull roost. Up to 5 regularly at SF except for mid April to mid June when none. Slight passage from mid March to mid April with up to 25.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Up to 100 in Jan. and 350 in Dec. in the Doddington Pool gull roost. Regular at Maw Green Tip with up to 150 in early winter & 330 in July. Birds move regularly, to RF / PHF to bathe & drink, from Maw Green Tip where they feed.

Alsager Tip has now closed & been grassed over and this may

affect behaviour / numbers both at SF and Arclid SQ.
At Arclid SQ around 400 max.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

As usual very low numbers in the Doddington Pool roost with only 2 in Jan. & 40 in Dec. Up to 150 at the Maw Green Tip where birds of a yellow-legged race were recorded on 1 July, 8 July and 2 Sept. Yellow-legged birds also recorded at Arclid SQ on 31 July & 17 Aug.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)

One 2nd year bird seen briefly at RF on 24 March.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Up to 3 at Maw Green Tip in winter. 1 at Doddington Pool in Dec. 2 on 8 Jan. & 1 on 21 Jan. at Arclid SQ.

Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

One ad. at Arclid SQ on 25 Aug.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

No spring records at SF but 3 at PHF on 9 July and 6 ad. + 1 juv. at PHF on 20 Aug. 11 'commic' terns over WLF on 23 April.

At Arclid SQ 1 on 13 May, 1 on 15 Aug., 1 on 25 Aug., 1 on 5 Sept.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

Two records from Arclid, both on 27 Aug., 1 ad. in morning & 1 juv. in evening.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

2 records of summer plumaged birds at WLF, with 3 on 4 May & 1 on 21 May.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Several flocks in the country and in Crewe Town, but no records submitted.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Largest flocks were at SF with 34 on 2 April and 33 on 4 Nov. Widespread but thinly distributed in summer. At Quakers Coppice 4 prs. bred in nestboxes; 9 clutches laid, totalling 20 eggs and 11 young fledged.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Very common with flocks of 100+ at CF, Swettenham and Taxmere.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Now very common all year. The only regular roost site recorded is at Wheelock where up to 15 noted. 24 at Sandbach Heath on 26 Feb.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

Two records of this increasingly scarce summer visitor. 1 near Congleton on 21 May and 1 calling at Doddington Pool on 3 June.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

1st of the year on 24 April with 1 at WLF and 1 at RF. Also recorded from FF, Haslington, Sandbach, Alsager, Swettenham and Taxmere but not as common as usual.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

The usual Crewe Hall pr. bred & fledged 3 young.

Near Alsager 1 was seen regularly Sept. to Dec. at the site where 3 were released last year.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Commonly recorded in open countryside from many sites. Proved breeding at Swettenham where 3 young fledged.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common in more wooded areas. 1 pr. bred at FF and fledged 3 young. At Quakers Coppice 1 pr. laid 2 eggs in a nestbox but they failed to hatch. 1 pr. bred on the Haslington CBC plot & fledged 2 young.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

1st of the year was at Sandbach Heath on 23 April and regular thereafter. Latest record was of 1 at WLF on 29 Aug.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Winter only records from EHF, PHF, RF, Crewe GC, Stowford. Regular at Swettenham, Middlewich, Lawton Hall and bred at Rode Pool, Wheelock and Arclid.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Another good year with records from Swettenham, Stowford, Quakers Coppice, Crewe GC, Crewe Hall.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*)

By far the commonest woodpecker with records from all areas.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*)

Few records this year. Only recorded from WLF, Haslington, Doddington Pool, Wistaston, Arclid SQ.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Under recorded with the only winter flock being 30 near Arclid on 18 Jan. 3 prs. bred near Arclid SQ.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

1st recorded on the early date of 12 March at EHF. Single records then on 20 & 26 March & then common thereafter with the last record on 17 Sept.

More widespread breeding records especially along the R.Dane with 30 nests at Middlewich, 8 near Middlewich, 15 at Holmes Chapel and 30 at Swettenham (where mink were seen taking young from the nest holes).

Approx. 60 prs. at Wybunbury SQ and a large increase at Arclid SQ where up to 350 prs.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

1st records of the year were on 1 April with 2 at PHF and 1 at Sandbach Heath. Common thereafter, with widespread breeding records. Last record was of 2 near Middlewich on 12 Oct.

In the autumn a very large roost built up at Sandbach Heath with up to 10,000 birds present. Unusually this roost formed in a field of maize instead of the usual reed beds. At the same time just to the west of Sandbach there was a second roost also holding up to 10,000 birds.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

1st record on 27 April with 2 at RF.

Widespread breeding bird. The last record was of 24 at WLF on 15 Oct.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Only one record of 1 at EHF on 18 April.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

The only winter flock was of 30 birds at EHF on 1 Jan. No proved breeding records received. Evidence of autumn passage at Arclid SQ in mid. Sept. with 65 birds recorded in an hour on 15 Sept.

Rock/Water Pipit (*Anthus petrosus/spinoletta*)

On 7 April 1 bird in flight around RF.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

2 early records were of 1 at Arclid SQ on 30 March and 2 at EHF on 31 March. The main arrival was from mid April.

The only proved breeding was from Arclid SQ where the last of the year was on 10 Sept. there and also 1 at WLF on the same date.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Non-breeding records from EHF, WLF, Middlewich, Swettenham, Wheelock, Lawton Woods & Crewe GC where 1 pr. during March.

At Arclid SQ a roost built up during Oct. with 23 birds present on 1 Nov. However, ringing efforts showed that few birds were ever re-trapped and so presumably much larger totals were involved. This could be one of the largest recorded grey wagtail roosts in England.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)

Common & widespread all year. During Aug. & Sept. a roost of 100-150 birds formed at Arclid SQ but this dispersed by early Oct.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

A poor recorded spring passage with records from PHF/EHF on 18 and 19 March, 25 April & 3 May. One at ASQ on 16 April was only the 2nd record there since 1980.

Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)

1 on the R.Dane at Swettenham on 22 Jan. and 1 seen on the R.Dane in west central Congleton.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident throughout the year.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

Very common resident. 1 pr. in a Haslington garden hatched 3 young by 9 April.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Very common resident.

Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*)

1 unconfirmed report of a singing bird near Crewe Hall during the summer.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

1m. at WLF on 18 and 19 Aug.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Few records this year. At EHF 3 on 18 Aug., 1 on 23 Aug., 2 on 28 Aug. and 2 on 17 Sept. At Arclid SQ 1 on 5 Sept. and 1 on 15 Sept. and near Middlewich 1 on 13 May and 1 on 23 Sept.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

1m. wintered at the end of the year near Maw Green Tip.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Regular spring passage noted at SF, Middlewich Lime Beds and Arclid SQ from 19 March to 12 May.

Very little autumn passage with singles only on 19 Aug. at Arclid SQ, 25 Aug. at EHF and 2 Sept. at EHF.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant everywhere.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Mixed flock of over 1000 birds (with Redwings) near Arclid SQ in Feb. 230 at PHF on 14 March, 100+ at Stowford on 12 Feb. and 200 at Haslington in Feb. Last early year record was 1 at Sandbach on 3 May.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Fairly common and possibly a small increase. 3 or 4 breeding pairs at Arclid SQ as usual.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Mixed flock of over 1000 birds (with Fieldfare) near Arclid in Feb. and 300 in Dec.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Fairly common as a resident and breeding bird. One autumn flock of 23 birds recorded near Weston on 14 Sept.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

2 singing males recorded at Bagmere in early June.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

1st. record of the year was of 1 at WLF on 17 April. Recorded in 3 out of 41 tetrads during the BTO New Atlas Survey.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

1 at FF on 29 April was the earliest record. At least 4 prs. bred at SF with 1 each at FF, WLF, RF and GF. Also bred at Rode Pool. Recorded in none of the 41 tetrads during the BTO New Atlas Survey.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

1st record was a singing m. at Arclid SQ on 22 April. Probably 3 prs. bred at SF and 2 prs. at Arclid SQ. Recorded in 14 of the 41 tetrads during the BTO survey.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Singing males recorded at both FF and Arclid SQ on 29 April. A good year at Arclid where probably 6 prs. bred.

Recorded in 18 of the 41 tetrads during the BTO survey.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

1st record of the year was at Doddington on 29 April. 1 singing m. at FF and probably 3 prs. bred at Arclid SQ.

Recorded in 9 of the 41 tetrads during the BTO survey.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Only one record of an over-wintering bird this year with 1m. in a Wistaston garden on 18 Jan. 1st summer record was on 31 March at FF. Recorded in 28 of the 41 tetrads during the BTO survey.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Recorded earlier than usual this year with 1 near Sandbach on 8 March and 1 at Quakers Coppice on 11 March. Thereafter common with probably 4 breeding prs. at Arclid SQ.

Recorded in 26 of the 41 tetrads during the BTO survey.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Widespread arrival on 1 April with records from SF, Arclid SQ and Haslington.

Abundant everywhere and recorded in 33 of the 41 tetrads during the BTO survey.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Winter records from numerous sites but no breeding season records.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Few breeding records but one unusual one from Crewe Hall where one pair bred in the cab of an electric milk float. Possibly one of the 2 prs. which did the same last year.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalus caudatus*)

Breeding records from various sites. Winter flocks of 10+ from Stowford (22) and Arclid SQ (18).

Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*)

The most uncommon local tit. Only 1 record with 1 singing m. on River Dane near Swettenham on 5 March.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

Slightly more common than Marsh Tit. Breeding season records from FF and Crewe GC and other records from Arclid SQ, Basford and Swettenham.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

Fairly common in suitable habitat. Records from Arclid SQ, Crewe GC, Swettenham, Quakers Coppice and Haslington.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Abundant everywhere. At Quakers Coppice 9 prs. used nestboxes and fledged 61 young. At Doddington 12 prs. used nestboxes and fledged 91 young.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Very common everywhere. At Doddington 3 prs. used nestboxes and fledged 27 young.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Not uncommon in suitable woodland habitat but few records.

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Again not uncommon in suitable woods but few records.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Thinly spread over the area. No large flocks recorded.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Very common everywhere. No record of any large winter roosts but 27 at EHF in March.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

A common resident breeding in country houses and woods. Winter flock of c.80 at Doddington and large numbers at Maw Green Tip with crows.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Totals from local rookeries were 60 at Arclid, 219 from 5 rookeries near Crewe Hall and 91 at Lawton Hall.

Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Common throughout the area. Large numbers at Maw Green Tip with jackdaws totalled c.400.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Very common. 3000 over EHF on 7 March.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Very common around all types of habitation.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Not very common locally but breeding season records from Arclid SQ, PHF, RF & Rode. Winter flocks of 100 by EHF on 14 Jan. and 34 at Swettenham.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Breeds commonly throughout the area. Flock of 30 in Dec. at Arclid.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Very scarce at both ends of the year although one flock of 50+ in Lawton Hall Woods on 22 April.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident and breeding bird. 46 on 20 Feb. in the WLF roost.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Fairly common resident. Winter flocks of 30+ on 2 Dec. at Arclid, 65 on 6 Sept. at Minshull, 20 on 23 Sept. near Crewe, 23 on 14 March near Maw Green Tip.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

In early winter recorded regularly in 2 Haslington gardens in Jan. (1 pr.), Feb. (7), March (5). Also at Holmes Chapel, 1 pr. 5 March; Lawton Hall Woods 5+ 22 April. In late winter flocks of 30 at Basford in Dec. and 20 at Arclid in Nov.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Breeds thinly in the area. In March a flock of up to 80 around PHF and in Sept. a flock of up to 75 at Arclid.

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

Few records as usual. 2 over Middlewich on 28 Jan., 5 over Sandbach on 23 March, 1 over Hassall on 9 April, 4 at Arclid on 18 Oct. and 1 there on 29 Oct.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Regular but thinly distributed. Breeding records from Arclid, Doddington, Crewe GC (2 prs.) and FF. 6 at Stowford on 19 Feb.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

1 singing m. at Stowford on 29 Jan. Winter flocks of 60 near Wybunbury in Feb. and 53 at Arclid in March.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoenicus*)

Fairly common breeding bird with c.8 prs. at SF and 5 prs. at Arclid.

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)

Generally uncommon. Probably 6 prs. at the usual site near Alsager. Breeding season records also from Basford, near PHF and EHF.

ESCAPES

Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)

1 appeared at PHF on 7 March and stayed there or at RF until it was last seen on 18 May.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

6 at Doddington Pool in Feb. and March with 2 on 12 Aug. and 2 on 23 Dec. All presumed to be from Bridgemere Wildlife Park.

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

1 on 28 Feb. and 1 on 12 Aug. at Doddington Pool. Presumed to be from Bridgemere Wildlife Park.