



SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1992 BIRD REPORT

Including BIRDS OF SANDBACH FLASHES

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SECOS Recorder

This is the Bird Report for 1992 for the SECOS recording area. Although it is as much a record of the distribution of birdwatchers as birds, it does give an indication of the status of all species in the area.

If you read this and think that I have not reported some records that you know of, then next year let me have your records. I can only include what I am told about.

Thanks to the following people for their records, either given directly to me or via the Flashes Oak Tree, and also to those people identified only by their initials or by indecipherable signatures!

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Abbreviations Used

EHF	Elton Hall Flash	ASQ	Arclid Sand Quarry
FF	Fodens Flash	DP	Doddington Pool
GF	Grobby Flash	ad	adult
PHF	Pump House Flash	juv	juvenile
RF	Railway Flash	pr	pair
WLF	Watch Lane Flash	m	male
SF	Sandbach Flashes	f	female
CAWOS	Cheshire & Wirral Ornithological Society	c.	approximately

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

A poor year at SF where only 1 pr at RF and possibly 1 pr at GF but a good year at DP where 3 prs bred with 2 broods each of 2 juvs. No records from ASQ.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

At least 7 prs bred at SF including 3 prs at WF. Around 9 young fledged from a minimum of 14 juvs.

At DP 3 prs bred but no juvs were seen.

Rode Pool 2 prs, no juvs; Winterley Pool 1 pr, 2 juvs.

ASQ 5 or 6 prs but no juvs.

A poor year for breeding success away from SF, possibly due to predation by mink which are common at ASQ and Rode Pool.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Still increasing in numbers in winter. Max. counts were PHF/EHF 21; DP 34; Rode Pool 17.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common in low numbers throughout the area in most months. Counts at local heronies (1991 counts): Combermere 28(21); Rode Pool 26(29); DP 0(4); Church Minshull 1(0).

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

A bad year at SF where only 2 prs bred – GF 4 juvs. FF abandoned. Elsewhere at Winterley Pool 2 prs with 4 juvs and 3 juvs; Alsager Mere, 5 juvs; Astbury Mere 4 juvs.

A wintering herd again formed at Winterley Pool with 28 in Jan and 41 in Dec, the largest in Cheshire.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

c. 50 flew over EHF going west on 6 Dec.

Pinkfooted Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

c. 50 over EHF on 6 Oct. c. 150 over ASQ on 11 Jan.

Whitefronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

1 with Canada geese at ASQ on 2 Oct.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

1 with the Canada geese around SF in Feb. and Nov. 4 regular with the Canada geese at DP and 1-3 at ASQ in autumn.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Wintering flocks in most areas with max of ASQ 520; SF 270; DP 215; Winterley Pool 210; bred at several sites, but not SF.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

2 at DP on 16 Mar. Not as common as usual. 1 regular at ASQ from April to June.

Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla*)

2 at EHF on 8 Nov.

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

Reported as usual from DP where 1 on 11 Jan and 26 May. Also 1 at ASQ in Sept.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

At PHF/EHF up to 20 in early winter and 26 in late winter but no proved breeding. Up to 9 prs at DP in early Spring where 1 pr finally had 6 juvs.

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

1 m at EHF on 25 Oct and 1 m at Winterley Pool on 9 April.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

The usual good winter flocks at PHF/EHF with max. 336 in Feb and 239 in Dec. Occasionally up to 10 at other sites.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Uncommon locally with singles at PHF 19 Jan and 27 Mar, and EHF 22 and 23 Aug.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

At PHF/EHF up to 460 in early winter and also late winter. 17 at DP on 19 Oct was typical, but max. 14 at ASQ was lower than usual.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Numbers slightly lower at SF with around 150 in early winter and 350 in autumn. Max. 310 at DP and 170 at ASQ, both in Sept. Breeds commonly throughout.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Numbers continue to decline at SF with max. 16 in early winter and 16 in late winter. The only other record was 5 at ASQ on 14 Nov.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

2 f/imm at EHF from 18 to 22 July.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

At PHF/EHF max. 13 in April and 10 in Dec. A very high count of 44 at DP as numbers built up there in Dec.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Max. 9 in Jan and 6 in Dec at PHF/EHF where the water is generally too shallow for diving ducks. At DP 74 in Jan and 96 in Oct were typical. At ASQ numbers were well down (as they are for all water birds) with only 3 singles recorded.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Very low max. of only 6 in early winter and 2 in late winter. At DP 54 in March and 64 in Nov were typical. 1 pr bred here with 3 juvs.

Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)

1 f at Astbury Mere in early Jan.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

1 f at WLF on 19 Sept was only the 10th record for SF.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

2 f at EHF from 13 to 20 Dec. Up to 6 regular at DP both early and late winter. Also 2 at Astbury Mere in Jan. and 1 or 2 at ASQ in Dec.s

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

1 f at EHF on 22 Nov. 1 m and 2 f flew over Swettenham on 11 April.
At ASQ 3 in Feb and 1 in Oct and Dec.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

1 m resident at PHF all year has a damaged right wing and cannot fly.
Prs at GF, RF, MGP in summer. At DP 5 m 2 f in summer and up to 15 in
winter.
No proved breeding anywhere.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

1 m at WF on 6 April and from 16 to 19 April.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

1 f over WLF on 17 April was only the 4th record for SF. (The 3rd was
a f at WLF on 15 April 1991).

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

1 pr bred near the old farm opposite EHF. Fairly common throughout the
area.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

1 at EHF on 31 May. 2 seen regularly (occasionally 3) around River
Dane at Swettenham. Occasional sightings of 1 around Coppenthal, Crewe,
Aug-Dec. Becoming more regular in the area.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Fairly common throughout the area.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

A good series of records from SF with 1 at WLF 19 April; 1 m PHF 19
Oct; 1 m EHF 4 Nov.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

1 at EHF on the late date of 7 Oct.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

First recorded back on the usual electric pylon at RF on 23 Aug and
resident all winter.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Recorded near Haslington and Barthomley. Not common nowadays.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Very common where reared for shooting e.g. DP, Crewe Hall, but not
common elsewhere.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Singles in winter from EHF and PHF but usually under recorded. 1 at
Crewe GC on 26 Dec after 7 days' freezing weather.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Up to 30 at EHF/PHF. A common resident throughout the area on streams
and small ponds.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Probably around 150 total at SF. Common resident throughout the area on larger waters, e.g. up to 320 at DP in Sept.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Present at EHF or WLF in 1s and 2s in Spring and Autumn passage. Also up to 3 at ASQ in Spring.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

1st at EHF on 29 March, last on 13 Sept with max. of 8. 1 definite + 1 probable pr bred at EHF. At ASQ 1st birds were on 3 April. At least 2 prs bred and 2 broods were seen.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Only 4 records of 1 or 2 during May, June, July, and 5 on 28 Aug.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Early winter flock was around 100 except for early March when there was a max. of 438. Up to 50 in late winter.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

The usual winter roost built up at EHF with max. of around 2500. No breeding records from here. At ASQ at least 6 prs attempted breeding with at least 2 juvs seen.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

1 at EHF from 3rd to 5th Sept.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

2 at PHF on 27 Sept.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

1 at EHF on 9 Aug still in summer plumage.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Recorded at SF in all months but numbers lower than usual with max. 14 in March and 6 in Oct.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

A wintering flock at EHF/PHF with higher than usual numbers. Max. 30 in early winter and 42 in late winter.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyrtus minimus*)

3 at RF on 8 Nov. An under recorded species.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Present in low numbers at most flashes in winter, e.g. on 14 March 10 at WLF, 16 at EHF, 38 at RF.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

1 or 2 on 21 March, 2 April, 20 April, 28 July from EHF or PHF.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

1 over WLF on 5 May and 1 at EHF on 9 Aug.

Curlew (*Numenius arquate*)

A late evening roost built up at EHF in winter with max. 108 in March and 115 in Nov.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Up to 12 at EHF/PHF from Jan to mid April. Singles during July on passage. Up to 12 from Oct to Dec.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

1 at EHF on 13 May, 2 at PHF on 14 June. Then 1 or 2 at EHF/PHF during August on return passage.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Return passage started early with 1 at EHF on 7 June and continued through to Sept with max. 12. Winter records from EHF, RF and Barthomley.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

At EHF/PHF Spring passage mid April to mid May. Autumn passage from 30 June to 30 Aug, with max. of 4. 1 late bird on 3 Oct. At ASQ 2 prs summered but no proved breeding this year. Max. number was 6 and latest record on 9 Oct.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

1 ad in winter plumage at EHF on 29 Oct was only the 4th record for SF.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

1 ad in summer plumage at PHF on 25 July and 1 juv at EHF on 20 Aug.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Up to 1500 in winter feeding on Maw Green Tip where most roosted on EHF. Around 8000 max. in the DP roost.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Up to 30 at PHF and up to 250 at DP in the winter roost.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Up to 1500 in winter feeding on Maw Green Tip but most move away from SF to roost. Around 500 max. at DP in the winter roost.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Up to 1000 in winter feeding on Maw Green Tip but most move away from SF to roost. Around 50 max. at DP. Yellow legged gulls (probably *michahellis*) at PHF in July, Aug and Sept.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*)

1 ad at PHF on 31 Dec.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Up to 10 in winter at Maw Green Tip and usually 2 or 3 at DP.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

3 at DP on 18 May. 3 at EHF and 1 at CF on 30 May. 1 at PHF on 20 June and 1 at EHF on 1 Aug. 3 at ASQ also on 20 June.

"Commic" Tern

5 at WLF on 11 Sept

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

5 at DP on 18 May. 1 at ASQ on 9 Aug. Up to 4 juvs at EHF/WLF/CF on 11 to 15 Sept.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

At Quaker's Coppice probably 8 prs used 13 nest boxes and laid 24 clutches. These totalled 49 eggs of which 29 hatched and 26 fledged.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

1 m calling at Doddington on 8 July and 23 Aug but breeding not proved.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

1st heard on 22 April at EHF and Haslington.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Common in more open farmland.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common in wooded areas.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

1st of the year on 30 April at WLF, with mass arrival on 8 May.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

A pr at EHF from July to Oct and 1 or 2 regular at ASQ. A poor year.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Records from Brereton and Rode Hall.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus major*)

Breeds commonly in woodland throughout the area.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*)

Not common and the only record was from FF.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Some passage movements over EHF and ASQ in late Sept.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

1st of year was 2 at PHF on 19 March. 200 at DP on 22 April. Numbers in the breeding colony at ASQ were lower than usual with c. 40 holes.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

1st of the year was at PHF on 5 April with the last at WLF on 11 Oct. Small roost of up to 300 at WLF in Aug and c. 300 at ASQ in Sept.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

1st of the year at WLF on 19 April with the last at WLF on 9 Oct.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Some passage movement over EHF in late Sept/early Oct and over ASQ in Spring and Autumn.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

1st of the year at WLF on 26 April. Probably bred at RF and certainly bred at DP where a total of 31 on 27 June included ads feeding juvs.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Up to 4 around EHF in Sept, Oct, Nov. At ASQ 1 pr bred successfully and there was also a winter roost of up to 8 birds.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

1 imm at FF on 28 July.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

2 at RF on 13 Dec.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

1st of the year at Barrow on 30 March. Only 1 or 2 at EHF/WLF during April.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

1st of the winter on 25 Oct at EHF.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

1st of the winter on 4 Oct at WLF.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

1 singing m at ASQ on 5 May was not heard again.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

A survey of singing males on 15 May gave 3 at RF and 6 at GF.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

1 pr bred in reed bed at WLF where 2 prs last year.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

1 at EHF on 8 Sept. 1 pr bred near ASQ.

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

1 m recorded in a Haslington garden on 26 April.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

The only flock of 25+ was at EHF in Oct.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

Recorded from FF, DP, Rode Pool and ASQ.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

At Quaker's Coppice 8 prs bred using nest boxes, laid 83 eggs and fledged 67 young.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

At Quaker's Coppice 3 prs bred using nest boxes, laid 27 eggs and fledged 26 young.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

The usual 8 rookeries counted in the Crewe/Alsager area held a total of 405 nests (346 in 1991 and 333 in 1990). A new rookery was established in the wood at FF which held 14 nests. The rookery at Arclid Hollow held 47 nests (70 in 1991).

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

On 31 Aug 3 circled slowly over EHF and drifted off to the south-east. This is the first record for SF.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

70 at WLF in Dec.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

2 at Crewe GC on 26 Dec with chaffinches, and 1 at ASQ in Dec with chaffinches.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common breeder. Flock of 150 in Quaker's Coppice in March.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Up to 12 at WLF in Winter. c.50 at Crewe G.C. in Dec. 10+ at ASQ in Jan and Nov/Dec.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Autumn flocks of 120 (mixed with greenfinch) at WLF; 67 near Barthomley; 31 near Haslington; 50 (with meadow pipits) at ASQ..

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

Not common. Records of 3 regular at Crewe G.C. and 6 at WLF in April with 15 in Dec.

Lapland Bunting (*Calcarus lapponicus*)

1 at Maw Green Tip on 30 and 31 Oct.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Survey of singing males on 15 May gave 2 at EHF; 5 at RF; 6 at GF.

Corn bunting (*Millaria calandra*)

4 prs at DP in June; also at Haslington Hall; Basford.

Also recorded but no significant data

Woodpigeon	Pied Wagtail
Wren	Dunnock
Robin	Blackbird
Song Thrush	Mistle Thrush
Lesser Whitethroat	Whitethroat
Garden Warbler	Blackcap
Chiffchaff	Willow Warbler
Goldcrest	Spotted Flycatcher
Coal Tit	Nuthatch
Treecreeper	Jay
Magpie	Jackdaw
Crow	Starling
House Sparrow	Chaffinch
Goldfinch	Bullfinch
Yellowhammer	

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