



**SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

1994 BIRD REPORT
including Birds of Sandbach Flashes

SECOS Recorder
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This is the annual report of birds in the SECOS area, including the birds of Sandbach Flashes. It is as full a report as possible from the records submitted and considers all species in the area in 1994.

This year I have attempted to give a one-line definition of the status of species. As well as its seasonal status I have tried to give an indication of abundance throughout the SECOS area, using the following terms :- vagrant, rare, scarce, uncommon, common, abundant. There are no rigid numeric limits for each term, I have merely used them to give an indication of relative abundance.

For those readers of this report who are not familiar with the whole of the SECOS area, I have included a map and brief notes on the major sites.

I would like to thank Joan and Keith Tilbrook for their assistance in typing and collating this report.

Colin Lythgoe.

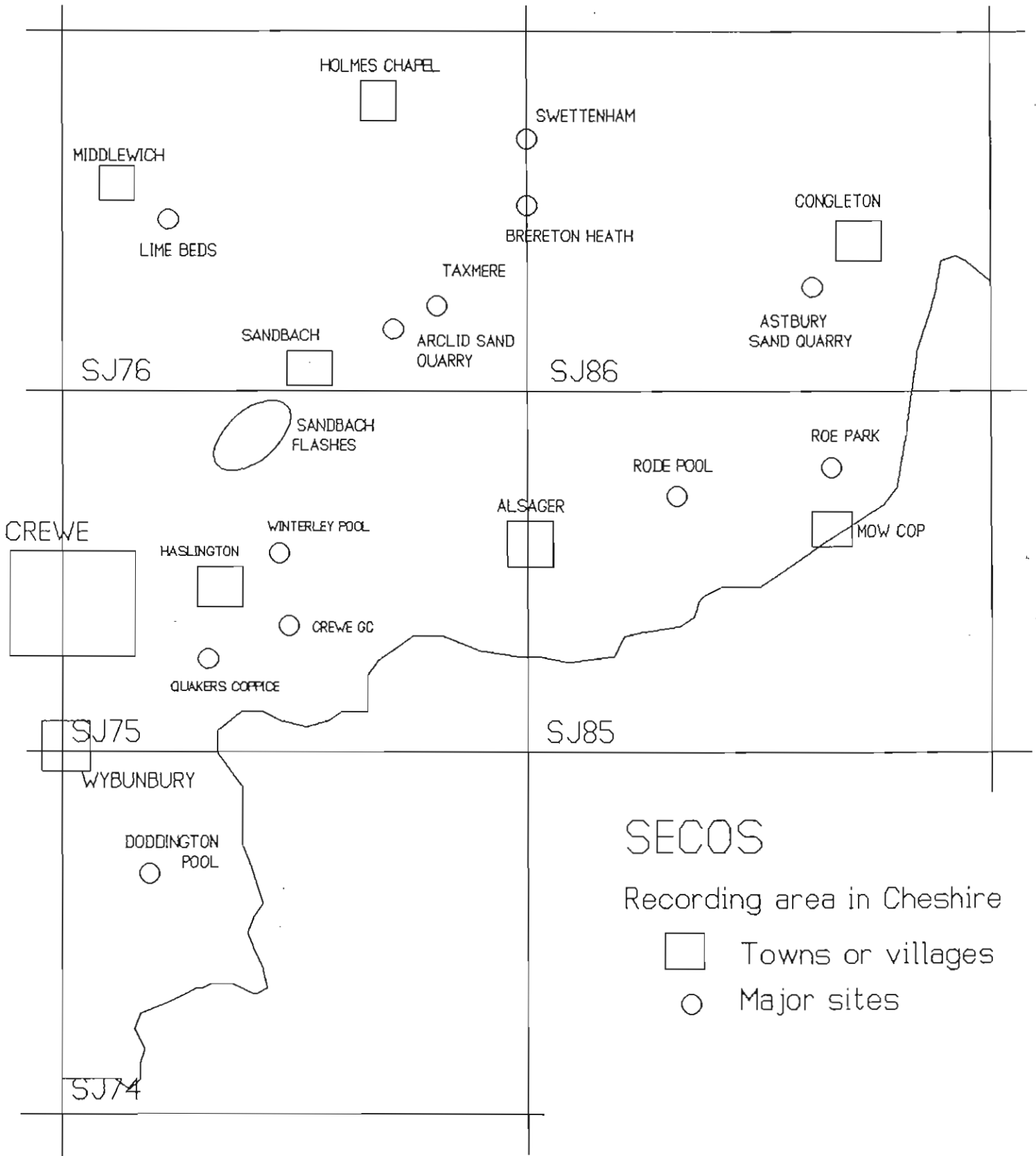
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Also other unknown contributors to Sandbach Flashes' Log. Fieldworkers of the British Trust for Ornithology.

Abbreviations Used

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------|---------------|
| EHF | Elton Hall Flash | juv | juvenile |
| FF | Foden's Flash | 1stW | 1st Winter |
| GF | Groby Flash | imm | immature |
| MGP | Market Garden Pool | ad | adult |
| PHF | Pump House Flash | m | male |
| RF | Railway Flash | f | female |
| WLF | Watch Lane Flash | c | approximately |
| SF | Sandbach Flashes | max | maximum |
| CF | Crabmill Flash | | |
| OF | Oak Tree Flash | | |



SECOS

Recording area in Cheshire

- Towns or villages
- Major sites

BIRDING SITES

I have listed below some of the more major sites for birding in the SECOS area, including a brief summary of the site and a grid reference of its approximate centre.

Doddington Pool SJ714464

Includes the large lake, woodland, the Hall and neglected grounds.

Quaker's Coppice SJ724546

A wood of six hectares on the south side of Crewe. Owned by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and operated as a Local Nature Reserve.

Crewe Hall SJ735544

A very extensive area of mixed woodland and farmland.

Crewe Golf Course SJ744546

Situated at Haslington. It also includes the Valley Brook and surrounding woods.

Rode Pool SJ815575

A 1300 metre-long lake with islands and extensive reed beds, surrounded by woods.

Lawton Woods SJ825559

Large area of woodland including a lake.

Roe Park SJ858583

Large area of mixed woodland on the side of Mow Cop, like Welsh hill valley habitat.

Sandbach Flashes

An all-embracing term used to describe the various flashes in the area to the west and south of Sandbach, and north of Crewe. These started forming in the 1930's after land subsidence following brine extraction. All flashes are now privately owned and there is no public access. However, most are watchable from public roads and tracks. Most of the flashes' area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are currently around fourteen flashes, but the most important are:-

Elton Hall Flash SJ727596

In two parts, with the River Wheelock flowing through the well-vegetated part, and very little vegetation on the salt pan.

Pump House Flash SJ723595

The site of the old brine pumping mechanism. Now silting up rapidly.

Railway Flash SJ718585

Currently is two separate flashes with a marshy area between.

Maw Green Tip SJ717577

Not strictly in the flashes' area but inextricably linked for gulls and corvids. Just north of Crewe. This is being greatly expanded and now butts right up to Railway Flash.

Watch Lane Flash SJ727606

Heavily disturbed by fishermen but with two small reed beds.

Foden's Flash SJ730613

Includes a large bed of bulrushes and the wood around the flash.

Warmingham Flash SJ719619

Heavily disturbed by fishermen at weekends.

Middlewich Lime Beds SJ711653

The raised settling beds owned by British Salt.

Arclid Sand Quarry SJ778623

Extensive area of water formed by the quarry workings.

Taxmere SJ780625

Area of farmland just North of Arclid Sand Quarry.

Bagmere SJ796643

An overgrown old mere still with some water and reed beds.

Brereton Heath SJ798651

A Cheshire County Council Country Park comprising a water-filled quarry and surrounding mixed woodland.

Swettenham SJ801675

A small mixed woodland with Swettenham Brook flowing through it. A Cheshire Wildlife Trust Local Nature Reserve.

Astbury Sand Quarry SJ849624

Extensive area of water formed by the quarry workings.

When out in the countryside, either general birdwatching or carrying out specific fieldwork, then observe the birdwatcher's code of conduct:-

1. The welfare of birds must come first.
2. Habitat must be protected.
3. Keep disturbance to birds and their habitat to a minimum.
4. When you find a rare bird think carefully about who you should tell.
5. Do not harass rare migrants.
6. Abide by the bird protection laws at all times.
7. Respect the rights of landowners.
8. Respect the rights of other people in the countryside.
9. Make your records available to the local bird recorder.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Uncommon resident.

Resident around SF with 5 on WLF in Feb. 1 pr bred on GF and 1 pr regular at PHF/EHF in autumn. The only other site recorded is at Doddington Pool. Probably 3 prs bred but breeding success was low. However on 23 Aug there were 39 present, a record count.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Common resident.

An average year for breeding success with at least 4 broods from 6 prs at SF. 3 juvs at WLF; 2 juvs at CF; 2 juvs and 4 juvs at WF; FF pr but no juvs; RF pr but no juvs. Also bred at Winterley Pool where 1 pr had 2 broods of 2; Doddington Pool 6 prs but few juvs; Rode Pool 7 prs but few juvs. Arclid SQ 5-6 prs and 5 juvs fledged. Present but no juvs seen at Astbury SQ and Wybunbury Pool.

Max. numbers were 21 at Doddington in May and 21 at Arclid SQ in July.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

Rare winter visitor.

An adult at Astbury SQ from 29 Oct to at least 6 Nov.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Common winter visitor. Rare in summer, increasing in numbers.

The increase in numbers seems to have levelled off this year. Max. at SF, was 21 in Feb. and 20 in Dec. Also recorded from Doddington Pool, where 20 in March, Astbury SQ, Rode Pool.

For the 1993/94 winter Elworth Anglers were granted a licence by MAFF to shoot cormorants at WLF. However, despite several attempts, no birds were shot. Bird scarers were also used, and these succeeded in temporarily scaring almost all species except cormorant.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common resident.

Regular at SF in low numbers (up to 15) all year. Also at a number of other widely distributed sites, including Stowford where 14 in Nov.

The Rode Pool heronry this year held 30 nests (25 in 1993 and 26 in 1992). 1 pr possibly bred at Doddington Pool as well.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Common resident. Scarce breeder.

Increased numbers this year with max of 20 at SF in March, a high max of 29 at Doddington Pool in Nov, and a few at other sites.

Winterley Pool continues to hold the highest number of swans in Cheshire and monthly max are 75; -; 44; 44; 72; 55; 46; 26; 41; 55; 55; 73.

Prs in the breeding season at GF 2 juvs; CF no juvs; Astbury SQ no juvs; Doddington Pool 5 eggs but predated.

Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus)

Rare winter visitor.

19 flew over EHF on 10 April. 1 at Doddington Pool on 12 Nov.

Black Swan

Escape from captivity.

1 seen at PHF on 21 Dec with Canada geese, turned up at Winterley Pool on 25 Dec.

Bean Goose (Anser fabalis)

Vagrant or feral.

1 at SF in Feb was with the Canada goose flock and was almost certainly an escaped bird.

Pinkfooted Goose (Anser Brachyrhynchus)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant or feral.

At EHF 2 in Jan and 1 on 6 Feb; 1 at WLF on 21 March. 5 flew over EHF on 5 Oct.

1 at Doddington Pool on 19 and 23 March.

Greylag Goose (Anser anser)

Rare winter visitor or feral.

1 at WLF on 26 and 27 March and 1 at EHF on 11 Dec. Also 2 at Doddington Pool on 10 April; and at Arclid SQ 1 on 28 and 29 Aug, 6 on 30 Aug and 3 on 3 Sept.

Canada Goose (Branta canadensis)

Common resident.

Several large flocks move around the area with up to 300 at PHF, 275 at WLF, 450 at Arclid SQ, 170 at Doddington Pool, 180 at Winterley Pool and lower numbers elsewhere. Breeds in low numbers at most sites.

Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis)

Rare winter visitor or feral.

1 with Canada goose flock at EHF from 17 Nov to 11 Dec, and 1 with Canada geese at Arclid SQ on several days in March, June and July and occasional to Nov.

Bar-headed Goose (Anser indicus)

Feral birds.

Singles at Doddington Pool on 21 Jan, 2 May, 9 Oct.

Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna)

Scarce resident and winter visitor.

At EHF max of 31 in Jan and 20 in Dec. 2 prs bred here with broods of 7 and 1.

Also at Doddington Pool where 2 prs bred with broods of 6 and 3. 1 bird was at Arclid SQ on 2 Feb.

Wigeon (Anas penelope)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Numbers in the wintering flock at SF increased with 410 in early winter, and in late winter 350 at EHF, plus an uncounted flock at CF.

Also at Doddington Pool where generally up to 20 but 42 in late Dec.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Scarce winter visitor.

A poor year at SF with 1 m in Feb and 2 at PHF in April. Regular at Doddington Pool in Oct, Nov and Dec with a max of 7. At Arclid SQ 1 f on 16 Feb and 1 m on 27 Feb.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

The usual large numbers at SF with max of 600 at EHF/PHF in early winter and 450 in late winter. 11 birds summered but no breeding proved.

Only recorded in Dec at Doddington Pool where 22 on 24 Dec.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common resident and breeder. Abundant in winter.

Max of 415 in early winter and 350 in late winter at SF. At Doddington Pool 450 in the autumn increased to 700 in Dec. Max in Sept of 180 at Arclid SQ.

Breeds commonly on most waters.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Numbers continue to decline with max of 23 in Jan and 17 in Dec. A pr were present at Doddington Pool on 4 Oct.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Scarce summer visitor.

A good year at SF where a f appeared at EHF on 5 Aug. Then other birds arrived and there were 4 present in early Sept.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Max of 9 in Jan and 8 in Dec at SF. Also at Doddington Pool with max of 9 in April and 18 in Nov, Rode Pool 4 in Nov, Wynbunbury Pool 7 in Dec, Arclid SQ 4 from 1 to 5 April.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Max of 8 in Jan/Feb and 3 in Nov/Dec at EHF and 7 at WLF in Nov.

As usual the largest flock was at Doddington Pool with max of 60 in Jan and 127 in Nov. Also at several other sites including Rode Pool (12) Astbury SQ (40) Arclid SQ (14), Winterley Pool (13) Wynbunbury Pool (2).

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*)

Vagrant, presumed escapes.

A f was at Doddington Pool from 29 Sept to at least 9 Oct.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Uncommon winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

The decline of this species at EHF/PHF now seems almost complete. The only records were of 5 in Jan, 5 in April and 1 in Dec. Also in low numbers at other flashes, e.g. 13 at

CF in Dec and 1 pr bred here with 6 juvs.

The main site was again Doddington Pool where present all year with a max of 80 in March and 86 in Oct. 6 prs bred successfully here with a total of 41 juvs seen. Also at a few other sites in low numbers.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Rare visitor.

1 was seen at SF on 13 Jan.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Only 2 records at SF with a m at WLF in late Feb and a f here on 6 Nov.

Regular at Doddington Pool with max of 5 in Jan and 7 in Dec. Also 5 at Astbury SQ in Dec, and at Arclid SQ 1 f on 5 Feb, 1 pr on 22 April, 1 m on 6 Nov, 1 f on 18 Nov and 1 f on 24 Dec.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Scarce winter visitor.

A f at EHF from 9 to 22 April. 3 f here on 28 Oct and a m on 9/10 Dec.

A poor year at Doddington Pool where only one record of a f briefly on 7 Nov.

2 m were on the River Dane at Swettenham on 10 April.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Uncommon resident.

2 or 3 present on most flashes in summer but no breeding proved, although 2 juvs were at WLF on 23 Aug.

Also at Doddington Pool with max 28 and Rode Pool with max 12. Although several m were displaying again breeding was not proved.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Common resident.

Bred at PHF for the second year in succession. On 23 Aug a m captured a snipe at EHF and proceeded to eat it whilst still alive. A pr bred at Arclid SQ but failed. Widespread throughout the area.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Rare resident and autumn/winter migrant.

Increased number of records reflect the improved status of this species. 1 pr bred successfully in the Alsager area. Recorded also at SF, Crewe Hall, Doddington Pool, R. Dane Swettenham, R. Dane Holmes Chapel, Wynbunbury SQ, Stowford.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Rare passage migrant.

1 briefly at WF on 27 June may have been the same bird which was regular at Arclid SQ from 21 June to 10 July. It usually caught a fish and flew off north-easterly. Also one here briefly on 17 May.

Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus)

Common resident.

Resident around EHF where probably bred. Only other records from Swettenham, Stowford, Wybunbury, Doddington Pool, Congleton and Arclid SQ where breeding was successful. (Please let me have records of all sightings for kestrel and sparrowhawk in 1995).

At Congleton a m was seen to take a chick from out of a blackbird's nest in a garden.

Merlin (Falco columbarius)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A f at WLF on 30 Jan; 1 m at WF on 28 Feb and 1 m at EHF on 29 April.

Hobby (Falco subbuteo)

Rare passage migrant and summer visitor.

An unprecedented series of records with an early bird at PHF on 27 March, then 9 separate sightings at EHF/PHF/WLF from 28 May to mid Sept. Also recorded at Haslington on 2 Aug and possibly a pr at Swettenham in late June. The possibility that a pr has bred in Cheshire is re-inforced by sighting of a juv with an ad chasing swifts at EHF on 28 Aug.

A single at Doddington Pool on 7 and 11 July, and one at Arclid SQ on 27 June.

Peregrine (Falco peregrinus)

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

Resident around RF/PHF/EHF at each end of the year as usual. 1 juv in Aug was probably a wandering bird. 1 was at Doddington Pool on 24 Feb and 1 at Arclid SQ on 23 April.

Red-legged Partridge (Alectoris rufa)

Rare except where locally released.

Records of singles only near Crewe Hall 11 March, near Doddington 10 April, 13 May and 13 Sept.

Grey Partridge (Perdix perdix)

Scarce resident.

The only record was of 2 at Stowford on 17 July confirming how scarce this species is.

Quail (Coturnix coturnix)

Scarce summer visitor.

1 was calling at Doddington from 7 to 23 July.

Pheasant (Phasianus colchicus)

Scarce resident except where locally released.

Very common where reared for shooting at Crewe Hall, Doddington, Rode Hall, etc. but no records from elsewhere.

Water Rail (Rallus aquaticus)

Scarce winter visitor.

Singles at WLF and FF in both early and late winter periods.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Common resident.

Widespread in low numbers on most smaller waters with around 55 at SF.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common resident and variable winter visitor.

Common on most larger waters with typical figures being 60 at EHF/PHF, 80 at Astbury SQ, 50 at Wybunbury SQ, etc. At Doddington Pool in autumn numbers increased to an incredible 922 in Nov. Almost overnight in late Dec numbers dropped from over 900 to under 100.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Rare winter visitor and rare summer visitor.

The first bird at EHF was on 10 March and there were 2 present, and occasionally 3, all summer, but no breeding behaviour noted. 1 was at EHF on 22 Nov.

At Doddington a pr were on territory from mid-March and, although displaying no nest was found; the pr moved off by late June. At Arclid SQ 2 birds were present from 9 March to 10 April and 2 on 25 May.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Scarce summer visitor. Uncommon spring/autumn migrant. First bird was at EHF on 22 March. Then up to 7 in May on spring passage and 15 in July on autumn passage. 1 pr bred at EHF with 4 juvs and 1 pr bred in the pools by the canal near WLF.

1 pr bred successfully at Arclid SQ with 3 juvs. This site is now declining in value for this species due to increasing vegetation.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Scarce passage migrant.

8 arrived at EHF on 30 April. Generally 2 or 3 through May up to mid-June except for 15 May when an exceptional influx of waders included 20 of this species. Scarcer in autumn with occasional 1 or 2 in Aug and Sept.

Also 1 at Doddington Pool on 24 May.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Around 250 in both early and late winter at EHF, maintaining good numbers.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and abundant winter visitor.

Around 1500 in early winter and 2500 in late winter in the usual EHF roost. 2 prs also bred successfully at EHF. Up to 500 birds at Arclid SQ where there were no breeding pairs for the first time in many years.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Scarce passage migrant.

In the 15 May wader influx there were 30 Sanderling, the max count ever for SF. Also singles at EHF on 16 May and 23 May.

On 15 May 1 was also at Arclid SQ.

1 at Doddington Pool on 10 May.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

Scarce passage migrant.

A poor year with only 1 juv at EHF from 9 to 15 Sept and a late bird there on 8 Nov.

Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*)

Rare passage migrant.

1 at EHF with the wader influx on 15 May was the first there for 9 years.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Present at SF in all months except July. Max of 13 in early winter; 6 on spring passage (except for 30 on 15 May); 10 on autumn passage; 10 in late winter.

Also 1 at Doddington Pool on 21 and 23 April.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Present in all months at SF where a single on 13 June broke the usual absence in this month.

Up to 37 in the early winter flock. Autumn passage started early with 2 on 1 July, and had a max of 15 in Sept. Late winter numbers built up to 24.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

Scarce winter visitor and migrant.

2 at RF on 20 April.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Uncommon winter visitor and migrant.

Although difficult to count there were around 75 at EHF/PHF in winter. Also 50 on Maw Green Tip, 9 on Mow Cop in Nov and singles at Stowford in Sept/Oct.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Rare resident. Scarce winter visitor.

1 at FF on 20 Nov; 1 at Mow Cop on 27 Nov; 1 at a usual site south east of Alsager. At Rode Hall during a shoot on 5 Nov 12 birds were flushed up and 5 were shot. 1 or 2 prs breed here.

Blacktailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Scarce migrant.

At EHF up to 3 in early July; 8 on 24 July; singles in early Aug and on 3 Oct.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

Scarce migrant.

1 at EHF in Sept.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

At SF 3 records in April and 3 in May of 1, 2 or 3 birds. Then 2 singles in July and 1 on 12 Sept.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Rare resident. Uncommon winter visitor.

Recorded in every month at SF. The usual winter evening roost held anything from 40 to 105 birds. Up to 3 in April, May and June.

At Stowford 2 prs regular in spring and possibly bred.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

1 summer plumaged bird at PHF on 21 July.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded at SF in all months except May. Up to 5 in the early winter and 8 in the late winter. Up to 4 on autumn passage.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Usual spring passage of 3 singles, one each in April, May and June. Then an excellent autumn passage with 1 or 2 regular from 12 July through to 18 Sept and up to 6 in Aug.

Singles were at Arclid SQ on 3 July and 16 Aug.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Rare winter visitor. Scarce spring migrant. Uncommon autumn migrant.

Only 1 spring record of 2 on 18 April. Then the usual heavy autumn passage with 1 on 16 June, and the last record of 1 on 26 Sept with max numbers of 14 in July and 12 in Aug.

2 at Doddington Pool in Sept. Wintering singles at RF/Maw Green Tip and Stowford.

Wood Sandpiper

Scarce passage migrant.

Again an excellent series of records. At SF 2 from 29 to 31 May; 2 on 7 June; 2 from 31 July to 2 Aug and 1 from 4 to 14 Sept.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant.

Spring passage at SF from 20 April to 29 May with max of 5. Autumn passage from 8 July to 1 Sept with max of 6.

Spring passage birds also at Doddington Pool with up to 5 in April and May, and singles also at Astbury SQ and Swettenham. At Arclid SQ the first bird was seen on 13 April and 1 pr bred successfully and fledged 2 juvs.

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Scarce migrant.

1 at EHF on 11 and 12 Sept.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

Rare visitor.

A good series of records with single juvs at EHF on 22 Aug, 10 Sept, 5 Nov.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Abundant autumn and winter visitor.

Up to 1500 use Maw Green Tip for feeding and up to 1000 use EHF for bathing and roosting.

Numbers down in the Doddington Pool roost with max of 8000.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 150 in the gull flock at Maw Green Tip and 300 in the Doddington Pool roost.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Uncommon winter visitor. Uncommon summering non-breeder.

Up to 500 in the gull flock at Maw Green Tip where a few roost locally, but most disappear to the north-west in the evenings.

An increase of up 1700 in the Doddington Pool roost.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Common winter visitor. Uncommon summering non-breeder.

Up to 1700 in the Maw Green Tip use RF for bathing and move off north-west to roost.

Only around 10 in the Doddington Pool roost.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus (argentatus) cachinnans/michahellis*)

Rare autumn and winter visitor.

An increase in records with occasional singles from June to Nov, and up to 3 regular in Aug.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 1stW on RF on 23 Jan, 1 on EHF on 20 Mar, 1 imm at RF on 20 April, and 1 1stW at Maw Green Tip on 29 Nov.

A leucistic bird, probably of this species, was at RF on 29 Dec.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Scarce winter visitor and rare summer visitor.

Up to 120 in the gull flock at Maw Green Tip in winter with a few imms summering.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor.

Singles at SF on 2 or 3 dates in May, June, July and 1 on 26 Sept. At Arclid SQ 5 records in mid-May and 6 records from 20 June to 5 July, max 4. At Doddington Pool 9 on 23 April and 2 on 8 July.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

Scarce passage migrant.

1 1stW bird at WLF on 4 Nov was the latest record here for any tern species. At Doddington Pool 3 on 23 April and 7 on 24 May.

Commic Tern (*Sterna hirundo* or *paradisaea*)

2 at EHF on 2 Aug and 7 at Doddington Pool on 24 May could not be specifically identified.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Singles at WLF on 23 April, RF on 15 May, and WLF on 23 Aug. At Doddington Pool 2 on 23 April (a good "tern" day!) and 1 on 6 June.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident.

No records received but flocks of up to 200 in most towns.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon resident.

Winter flock of up to 33 around PHF/EHF. At Quaker's Coppice 11 prs used the nest boxes, and laid 32 clutches with a total of 67 eggs of which 47 hatched, and 36 fledged. 1st egg laid 6 April and last juv fledged 4 Oct.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident.

Few records but 150 at WLF in April.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident.

No records received.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

Rare summer visitor.

2 birds were at Arclid SQ on 9 Aug.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Uncommon summer visitor and migrant.

1st record was of 1 at EHF and 1 at FF, both on 24 April. Breeding season records from here and Maw Green Tip, Haslington, Astbury and Arclid SQ.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Rare resident?

Possibly 1 pr at Doddington during the summer.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Common resident.

Common in farmland area as for example 5 or 6 prs in the Swettenham area and 4 prs around Haslington Hall.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common resident.

Only three records received. Several prs around Swettenham (where well wooded), 1 pr bred successfully at Taxmere and 1 pr at FF. Is this woodland species declining?

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

The first records were of 1 over WLF and 1 over Leighton, Crewe, on 24 April, and the last was 2 over Doddington on 28 Aug.

The largest flocks were 600 over Doddington Pool on 10 July and 100 at EHF on 13 July.

CAWOS are organising a Swift Survey in 1995 and counters are needed.

Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*)

1993 update. The record of one over EHF on 9 Oct has been accepted by BBRC and is the first record for Cheshire.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Uncommon resident.

Regular records from R. Wheelock/EHF and Arclid SQ where 2 juvs caught and ringed in Sept. Single records from Stowford 2 Jan; R. Dane Holmes Chapel 20 April; Macclesfield Canal Congleton 23 July.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Uncommon resident.

Either 1 or 2 recorded at Day Green 29 Oct; Arclid SQ 7 May; Swettenham regularly; Astbury 24 May; Odd Rode 29 July; Alsager regularly.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopas major*)

Common resident.

By far the commonest woodpecker. Recorded from most areas but only confirmed breeding at Swettenham.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopas minor*)

Uncommon resident.

Various sightings of this elusive woodpecker. FF; WLF; Quaker's Coppice; Rode Hall; Bagmere; Swettenham; Lawton Woods and Doddington where breeding confirmed.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Common? resident and autumn passage migrant.

2 or 3 breeding prs noted from Maw Green Tip, EHF, Doddington, Arclid SQ. Autumn passage noted with 40 over Arclid SQ on 29 Oct, and steady passage all morning over EHF on 6 Nov. At Alsager an early winter flock of 200 with 50 in late winter.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

First record was of 1 over Doddington Pool on 29 March and the last was 1 at WLF on 20 Sept.

Breeding colonies of 40-45 at Arclid SQ and 20+ at R. Dane, Swettenham.

Swallow (*hirundo rustica*)

Abundant summer visitor.

First record was of 1 over Doddington Pool on 7 April with the last being 2 over EHF on 23 Oct. Breeds commonly throughout the area. The only autumn roost was up to 5000 in maize near Arclid SQ.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Common summer visitor.

First record was of 1 over CF on 1 April, and the last was 1 over Wheelock on 9 Oct. Breeds commonly as shown by the record of 18 nests on one farmhouse at Brereton.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Rare summer visitor.

2 at Mow Cop on 2 Aug and 1 over EHF on 7 Aug.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Uncommon resident and autumn passage migrant.

No breeding records. Autumn passage over EHF with typically 116 over in 4 hours on 26 Sept. Winter flocks of 25 at Maw Green Tip and 27 at Mow Cop.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Scarce resident and uncommon passage migrant.

Spring passage at EHF from 20 April with max of 6. 1 pr bred here with 2 juvs and also 1 pr at Doddington. No records of autumn passage.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

Bred at Doddington and R. Dane Holmes Chapel. Summer records from Astbury SQ, Bent Farm SQ and Church Lawton. Winter records from Crewe GC, R. Wheelock, Sandbach, Winterley Pool, Stowford, Doddington and EHF.

As last year a roost formed at Arclid SQ from early Sept to mid-Nov where 19 birds were trapped and ringed.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarelliii*)

Common resident.

The only records were of a winter flock of 30 at Wheelock Sewage Farm.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

Scarce passage migrant.

1 at WLF on 16 April and 1 at RF on 24 April.

Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)

Rare resident.

1 bird seen near Jan near Haslington stayed to breed and fledged 2 juvs which were ringed. This is the first known successful breeding in the area. 1 was seen in the same area in Dec.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)
Abundant resident.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)
Abundant resident.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)
Abundant resident.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)
Rare summer visitor.

No proved breeding but a singing m at Mow Cop in May and one there in Aug. Autumn records from Swettenham 1 m on 22 July and PHF with 1 m from 24 to 31 July, 1 m on 18 Aug and 1 f from 18 to 31 Aug.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)
Rare summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant.
1 pr briefly at EHF on 4 May.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
Scarce passage migrant.

Spring passage with singles only at EHF on 27 March and 5 May, Arclid SQ on 1, 2 and 3 April, and Alsager on 8 May, except for Mow Cop where up to 4 from 1 to 11 May. 6 separate singles at SF from 23 Aug to 30 Sept on autumn passage.

Ring Ousel (*Turdus torquatus*)
Rare passage migrant.
At Mow Cop 1 m on 1 May and 2 m on 8 May.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)
Common winter visitor.

First record on 7 Oct with 20 at WLF. Late winter numbers were down with max recorded flock of only 100 at EHF.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
Uncommon resident.

Three observers commented that they seemed more common this year than in recent years.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)
Common winter visitor.

First record was of 1 at EHF on 9 Oct. As with Fieldfare the numbers seemed low and the max recorded flock size was only 80 at Haslington.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)
Uncommon resident.

At Crewe GC on 26 Aug, 34 were noted roosting together in an ash tree.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Scarce summer visitor.

1 m was reeling at Blakenhall on several days in mid-May and 2 were at Bagmere on 1 June.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

First record was of 1 at WLF on 1 May. Also at GF, RF, Bagmere and Hayes Chemicals Middlewich.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

Singing males were recorded at WLF (4), GF (4), RF (2), OF (1), Bagmere (3), Rode Pool (?).

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

First record was of 1 at EHF on 24 April. Probably 4 prs at SF. 2 prs at Arclid SQ. Also at Crewe Green and Astbury SQ where ad seen feeding 3 juvs on 12 June.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor.

First record was 1 at FF on 20 April. Around 12 prs at SF, 4-5 prs at Arclid SQ.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Common summer visitor.

First record was 1 at Arclid SQ on 30 April where probably 4-6 prs breeding. 3 prs at Mow Cop but only 1 pr at SF where it is scarce.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

First records were of 1 at FF and 1 at Arclid SQ on 17 April. 6-7 prs at Arclid SQ, 3 prs at SF.

Wintering records from Holmes Chapel in March and Dec and Wheelock in March.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor.

As usual the earliest warbler with 1 at EHF on 20 March and 1 at Arclid SQ on 26 March.

1 winter record with 1 at FF on 13 Nov.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common summer visitor.

First record was of 1 at WLF on 2 April. Still the commonest warbler with, for example, 10 prs at Arclid SQ.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Records of 2 to 4 birds from Doddington, Rode Pool, Crewe GC, Quaker's Coppice.

Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 was seen in a garden at Mow Cop on 6 Nov.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Scarce summer visitor.

A slightly better year with 1 pr with juvs at Flash Farm Elton, juvs at Arclid SQ and 2 prs at Blakenhall.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident.

Continuing in high numbers. Wintering flocks of 40 at EHF, 30 at Wybunbury, 30 at Crewe GC, 20 at Stowford.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

Scarce resident.

Pr probably bred at Arclid SQ, present in low numbers at Alsager, single records of 2 at Wheelock on 18 Dec and 1 at Quaker's Coppice on 29 Jan.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

Uncommon resident.

Recorded from FF, Crewe GC, Swettenham, Doddington.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Abundant resident.

At Quaker's Coppice 8 prs used nest boxes, laid 71 eggs from which 56 young hatched and 50 fledged.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Common resident.

At Quaker's Coppice 1 pr used a nest box, laid 8 eggs from which 6 young hatched and fledged.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Common resident.

At Quaker's Coppice 1 pr used a nest box, laid 7 eggs from which 6 young hatched and fledged. One pr plastering a nest hole at Arclid SQ were evicted by Starlings.

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common resident.

Few records received except for 4 prs at SF.

Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)

Rare winter visitor.

One was seen briefly at Wheelock on 21 Oct but despite intensive searching could not be relocated.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Uncommon resident.

3 prs bred around SF and an increase noted in the Swettenham area.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common resident.

No records of winter flocks received, but still very common.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

A roost of at least 250 in Crewe Hall Woods in winter.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Common resident.

A count at 9 rookeries in the Crewe/Alsager area totalled 422 nests (445 in 1993). The Arclid Hollow rookery held 65 nests (58 in 1993). The FF rookery was unfortunately not counted.

A winter roost at Crewe Hall was in the "high hundreds".

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Common resident.

Around 150 feeding on Maw Green Tip in winter.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Winter flocks of 1000 at Maw Green Tip and 1400 roosting in phragmites reeds at WLF.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Abundant resident.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Uncommon resident.

Winter flock of 80 at Maw Green Tip and others of around 20 at CF, Elworth, Stowford, Alsager, Swettenham. Did not breed at Arclid SQ for the first time in many years.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Winter flocks of 150 at Haslington and 80 at Maw Green Tip.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Very scarce at both ends of the year, the only records being 1 near Haslington on 1 Jan, and 3 at EHF in Feb and March.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident.

Winter flocks of 120 at CF, 120 roosting in ABB Works Crewe, 30 at Swettenham, 10 near Haslington.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident.

Winter flocks of 50 at Maw Green Tip, 40 at Wheelock and 30 in Clay Lane Crewe.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Scarce in early winter with 50 briefly at Arclid SQ, only 8 at Crewe GC and up to 5 in a Congleton garden. More common in late winter (although still lower numbers than usual), 25 at Crewe GC and up to 5 at EHF, FF, WLF, Haslington.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Common resident.

Winter flocks of 150 Maw Green Tip, 130 near Haslington, up to 75 at Arclid SQ, 65 at WLF.

6 males singing at Maw Green Tip on 9 May.

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

Rare resident. Uncommon winter visitor.

Flock of around 20 at Crewe GC in late winter and 4 at FF on 28 Sept.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Uncommon resident.

Few records received. 6 at Stowford on 27 Feb. 1 pr at FF and 1 pr at Crewe GC.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Uncommon resident.

Winter records of 2 separate flocks of 50 at Alsager, 20 R. Wheelock Sandbach, and 4 on Maw Green Tip. Prs in summer at Maw Green Tip, FFF (3), RF.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Uncommon resident.

Winter records of 20 at Alsager, 12 at SF, 5 R. Wheelock Sandbach. Breeding prs at Arclid SQ (3-4), Maw Green Tip (1), SF (3).

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)

Uncommon resident.

Probable breeding prs near Alsager (7), near Doddington (3), Cranage (3), Basford (1).

Winter flock of 21 near Alsager on 6 Jan.

Ring-necked Parakeet

Escape.

1 flew over WLF on 30 April.

Historical Update: Following a review by the British Birds Rarities Committee, the following previously accepted records have now been amended :-

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

1 m at WLF on 20 September 1970.

Now accepted as identified correctly, but not accepted on to the British List, so put into Appendix 3.

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)

1 was on EHF saltpan from 28 to 30 September 1975.

Now not accepted since the record is considered to be inadequately documented.