



**SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE  
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**1996 BIRD REPORT**

**Including Birds of Sandbach Flashes**

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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 1996.

The use of a new location for the log book at Sandbach Flashes, together with the provision of a hardback book, has resulted in many more records for outside the SF area, but within the SECOS area. This is very encouraging, but please remember that I also need regular counts of common species at SF to be able to present a complete record of all birds in the area.

The status of species within the area is given in a one-line entry after the species heading. These have been redefined as follows:-

Abundant	Occurs in large numbers in suitable habitats and seasons.
Common	Occurs regularly or widely distributed in suitable habitat.
Fairly common	Occurs in moderate numbers in suitable habitat.
Uncommon	Occurs in small numbers.
Scarce	One or two records in each year, or restricted to specific habitats.
Rare	Occurs less than annually.
Very rare	Less than 10 records in the last 20 years.
Vagrant	Less than 2 records in the last 20 years.

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.

Many thanks to all contributors, without whose records there would not be a bird report. Thanks also to Joan and Keith Tilbrook for their assistance in typing and collating this report.

Colin Lythgoe

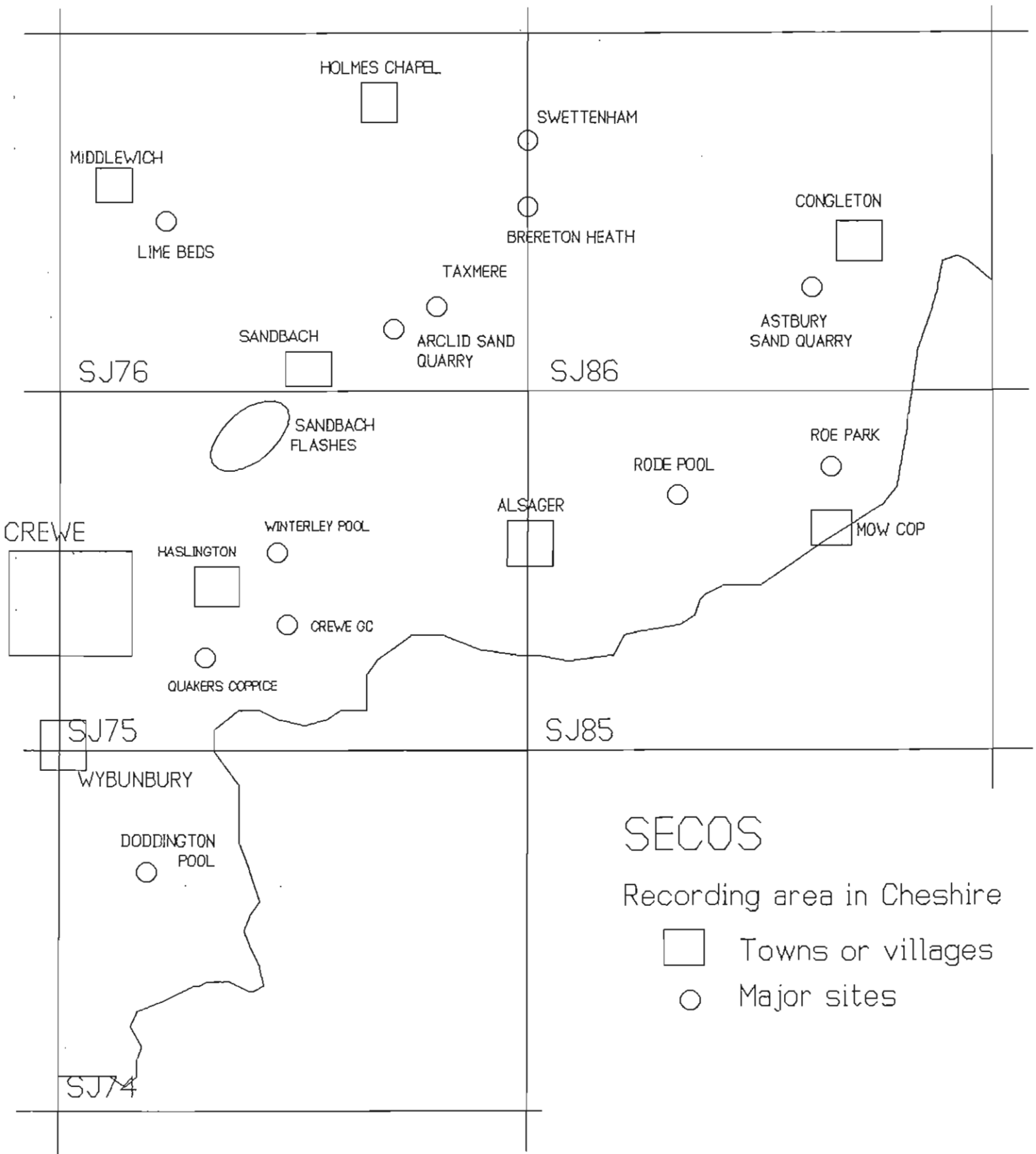
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## Abbreviations Used

CF	Crabmill Flash	juv	juvenile
EHF	Elton Hall Flash	1stW	1st Winter
FF	Foden's Flash	2ndW	2nd Winter
FFF	Fields Farm Flash	3rdW	3rd Winter
GF	Groby Flash	imm	immature
MGP	Market Garden Pool	ad	adult
OF	Oak Tree Flash	m	male
PHF	Pump House Flash	f	female
RF	Railway Flash	c	approximately
SF	Sandbach Flashes	max	maximum
WF	Warmingham Flash	SQ	Sand Quarry
WLF	Watch Lane Flash		



## 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.

### Quakers 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. It is being greatly expanded and now butts right up to Railway Flash. Just north of Crewe.

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.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST 1996

### Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

*Fairly common resident.*

At SF 1 juv seen at EHF so probably 1 pair bred on the R. Wheelock.

The main site is still Doddington Pool where probably 5 or 6 pairs bred with at least 5 broods. A low autumn max of 14 in Sept.

Also recorded at Astbury SQ, Bent Farm SQ, Winterley Pool, Arclid SQ.

### Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

*Common resident.*

The usual wintering flock at WLF had a max of 16 in March and 19 in Nov. Up to 22 wintered at Doddington Pool.

At SF several pairs bred but only 3 broods noted, from WLF, WF and CF.

At Doddington Pool probably 3 pairs bred with at least 3 broods. 5 pairs at Rode Pool where breeding success not known.

Also at Astbury SQ (max 13), Bent Farm SQ (1 pair + 2 juvs), Winterley Pool (max 3).

At Arclid SQ 6 pairs bred but with a poor success rate, only fledging 4 young. Max of 27 in Feb and 21 in Sept.

### Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

*Very rare winter visitor or migrant.*

1 was at Astbury SQ on 31 Jan. There have been three previous records at SF, the last being on 25 April 1989.

### Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)

*Vagrant in winter.*

1 was at Astbury SQ from 30 Jan to 1 Feb. The only previous record was of 1 at WLF on 12 Oct 1987.

### Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

*Common winter visitor. Rare in summer.*

Usual numbers in winter with 15 in Jan and 14 in Nov at PHF, and 22 in Jan and 17 in Nov at Doddington Pool.

Up to 3 at Swettenham on the R. Dane.

1 at PHF on 9 March was considered to be of the continental race, *P.c.sinensis*.

Now also regular at Arclid SQ where it was previously scarce. Max of 8 in Jan.

### Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

*Very rare visitor.*

Two records in 1996 were only the 3rd and 4th records ever at SF.

1 flew over EHF Saltpan on 31 March without stopping. 1 was at PHF on 22 June, where it stayed for several hours. Previous records were of 1 at EHF on 16 May 1982 and 1 at RF on 3 May 1984.

### Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

*Common resident.*

Regular in low numbers at most waters all year. The only breeding colony in the area, at Rode Pool, held 34 nests this year (32 in 1995; 30 in 1994).

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

*Fairly common resident.*

A poor year for breeding success. The only recorded successful pairs were at Astbury SQ (6 juvs), Doddington Pool (5 juvs), Middlewich (8 juvs).

Winterley Pool continues to be the main site in Cheshire. Monthly max were 110 : 91 : 85 : 87 : 83 : 54 : 49 : 48 : 53 : 48 : 53 : 116. The Dec. max of 116 is the highest total ever recorded. Since most birds are now ringed it is possible to uniquely identify each bird, and the total of different birds seen during the year at Winterley Pool was 325.

A large herd also built up at Doddington Pool where the monthly max were 29 : N/C : 8 : 8 : N/C : 28 : 29 : 34 : 41 : 51 : 76 : 84.

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

*Rare winter visitor.*

2 stayed for an hour at EHF on 21 Dec.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

*Rare winter visitor.*

2 flew over EHF on 14 Dec.

1 joined the Mute Swan herd at Doddington Pool on 25 Dec and stayed to the year end.

Pinkfooted Goose (*Anser Brachyrhynchus*)

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant or feral.*

33 over EHF on 3 Feb, 4 over EHF on 18 Nov, 25 over Arclid SQ on 14 Jan, and 80 over Moreton Hall on 31 Jan were probably wild birds. Also 1 with Canada geese at WLF on 30 April, and 2 at Winterley Pool on 3 April.

White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

*Rare winter visitor or feral.*

1 at RF on 28 Jan, 2 were at EHF and RF from 22 Dec to the year end. A flock of 16 birds of the Russian race were discovered on 12 Dec in a field by the Saxon Cross Motel, near Arclid SQ, where they stayed until the year end. Coincidentally 17 were resident around SF in early Dec 1995.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

*Rare winter visitor or feral.*

Either 1 or 2 at EHF, WLF, Doddington Pool, Winterley Pool and Arclid SQ, were with Canada geese and presumed to be feral birds.

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

*Feral birds.*

1 at WLF on 30 April with Canada geese. 1 at Arclid SQ on 21 April and 1 stayed to moult here from 18 June to 4 Aug.

Snow Goose (*Anser caerulescens*)

*Feral birds.*

2 at PHF and WLF on 27 and 28 May with Canada geese. Presumably the same 2 at Arclid SQ on 23 and 25 May.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

*Common resident.*

Slightly higher numbers than usual at most sites with max. of SF (520), Bent Farm SQ (47), Doddington Pool (280), Rode Pool (6), Winterley Pool (380), Arclid SQ (585).

Breeds in low numbers at most sites.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

*Rare winter visitor or feral.*

A single at Arclid SQ with the Canada geese on 11 June.



Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*)

*Feral birds.*

1 moved around the flashes from 1 Nov, usually with a Canada goose flock. It was at Arclid SQ on 10 Nov and was last seen at Winterley Pool on 31 Dec.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

*Uncommon resident and winter visitor.*

Lower than usual numbers at EHF with 17 in Jan and March and 12 in Dec. 1 juv was seen in July.

An excellent breeding year at Doddington Pool where 4 pairs bred successfully with broods of at least 6 : 12 : 7 : 7.

Also at Bent Farm SQ with 2 in June and at Arclid SQ where recorded in Feb, May and Nov.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

540 in March at EHF. First birds returned on 29 Aug and the late winter flock built up to 467 in Dec.

Also at Doddington Pool, usually under 10 but an exceptional 80 on 20 Jan. 6 at Astbury SQ on 14 Nov. 8 records from Arclid SQ with a max of 11 on 8 Dec.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

More than usual records with 2 at EHF on 14 Jan and up to 5 there from 17 Nov to the year end.

Up to 6 at Doddington Pool during the early and late winter.

Also 1 at Astbury SQ on 2 Feb and 3 Sept, 1 at Winterley Pool on 20 June.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

*Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.*

Numbers at SF were well down this year with max of around 400 in Jan and only 226 in Sept. Again a few pairs summered but no signs of breeding.

Also irregularly at Doddington Pool with a high max of 58 on 14 Dec and Arclid SQ with another high max. of 70 on 3 Feb.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

*Common resident and breeder. Abundant in winter.*

Still very common with, for example, max of EHF (350), Doddington Pool (384), Winterley Pool (60), Arclid SQ (195).

Breeds commonly on most waters. An exceptional breeding record was of a pair with 11 downy ducklings on a pool in Quakers Coppice on 18 Nov.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

Recorded at EHF in all months except June and July. Max of 26 in Jan, 16 in March and 10 in Dec.

2 at Doddington Pool on 21 Jan and 3 on 17 Feb. Recorded from Arclid SQ for the first time since 1992 with three records in Feb and a pair there on 6 April. At Astbury SQ 2 m and 4 f on 21 Feb.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

*Scarce summer visitor.*

2 m at EHF on 29 May. 2 in eclipse plumage at EHF from 11 to 14 Aug and 1 on 15 Aug.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

8 in March and April and 10 in Oct at EHF. 14 in Jan and 17 in Oct at Doddington Pool. Not recorded at Arclid SQ for the first time since 1985. At Astbury SQ 2 m and 2 f on 28 March.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

*Fairly common winter visitor.*

Continuing in low numbers at SF with 8 at WLF in Jan, and only 2 at EHF in Dec.

At Doddington Pool 70 in Jan and 154 in Nov. Also at Winterley Pool (39), Arclid SQ (12), Astbury SQ (46).

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

*Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon in summer.*

More records than usual from SF and pairs bred at CF and FFF/EHF.

Present all year at Doddington Pool where numbers peaked at 145 in May.

8 pairs bred here with 49 juvs seen.

Also 1 juv seen at Bent Farm SQ.

In winter at Winterley Pool (26), Rode Pool (1). Astbury SQ (30), Arclid SQ (10).

Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

*Rare visitor.*

1 m was at EHF on 30 Nov.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

*Rare visitor.*

4 records in 1996 for this species which is recorded less than annually.

8 m at Astbury SQ on 24 March and 1 there on 3 April. 2 m were at WLF in the afternoon of 6 July and 2 f were at Doddington Pool on 26 July.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

1 f was present at PHF/RF in mid-Dec.

Present at Doddington Pool in early and late winter with 5 in Jan and 4 in Dec.

Also regular at Astbury SQ with 5 in March and 10 in Nov, and Arclid SQ where more records than usual with 1 or 2 in Feb to April, Nov and Dec.

Smew (*Mergus albellus*)

*Rare winter visitor.*

Both records were as usual of 'redheads' with 2 f at Astbury SQ on 31 Jan and 1 f at Doddington Pool on 26 Dec.

Redbreasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

*Very rare visitor.*

2 m and 1 f were at Astbury SQ on 31 Jan and 1 Feb.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

1 at EHF/PHF on 13 Nov and 1 f at EHF on 22 Dec.

The highest number was the 17 at Astbury SQ on 2 Feb. 1 f was at Arclid SQ on 11 Feb. 5 f were on the R. Dane at Swettenham in April. 7 other records in Nov and Dec from Astbury SQ and Doddington Pool, where there were 11 on 30 Nov.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

*Uncommon resident.*

1 resident at RF from Jan to April and at PHF/RF from Oct to Dec.

The main site is Doddington Pool where it was recorded in all months with 15 in May and also in Oct. In Aug a small chick was seen, the first proved breeding at this site, although it is usually present in summer.

1 m was at Arclid SQ on 11 July. At Astbury SQ singles in Jan, Feb and Nov and 4 on 29 Nov.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

*Common resident.*

Recorded regularly throughout the area. One was seen to take and eat a collared dove in a Wistaston Garden.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

*Uncommon resident.*

16 separate records from SF during Feb, March, April, June, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec.

Also recorded from Arclid SQ, Bridgemere, Checkley, Congleton, Crewe Hall, Doddington (where 2 juvs seen in July), Middlewich, Mow Cop, Oakhanger, Quakers Coppice, R. Dane Holmes Chapel, Rode Pool, Sandbach, Stowford, Swettenham, The Cloud, Weston, Wheelock. These records cover all months of the year and cover up to 5 birds, and thus confirm the rapid and widespread expansion of the range of this species.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

*Rare migrant.*

1 passed over EHF on 7 April going north.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

*Common resident.*

Recorded regularly throughout the area.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

*Uncommon migrant and winter visitor.*

Singles at PHF/EHF/WLF on 9, 17, 30 March, 6, 7 April, 6, 13, 19, 22 Oct.

A further increase in records this year, with six in 1995 and only three in 1994.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

*Uncommon summer visitor.*

Once again a good number of records, and it must be assumed that a pair has bred near to the SECOS area. 14 records from SF, the first on 8 May and the last on 7 Sept, with a juv seen on 27 Aug and 1 Sept.

Single adults were also seen at Quakers Coppice, Bent Farm Quarry, Shavington and Winterley Pool within the above dates. One was briefly at Arclid SQ on 23 April.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

*Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.*

Recorded in all months except June from the usual RF/EHF area with dispersing birds overlapping with winter visitors. Probably 2 birds overwintered.

Also seen at Alsager, Doddington, Middlewich Lime Beds and Crewe where one was watched amongst the starling roost at the Crewe Arms Hotel and Rail House on 12 Oct.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

*Rare except where locally released.*

1 at WLF on 2 March and 1 at EHF on 24 March. 1 near Alsager on 4 April. Releases in the Checkley/Doddington area where several records with a max of 13 on 3 Dec and Weston New Golf Course with 11 in Dec.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

*Scarce resident.*

Pairs were recorded at PHF, RF, Alsager South and Mow Cop. 21 at Weston New Golf Course with 11 red-legged which were probably released.

The gamekeeper at Rode Hall reports 45 were released last year but not shot.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

*Scarce resident except where locally released.*

Very common where reared for shooting, e.g. Crewe Hall, Doddington, Swettenham.

The gamekeeper at Rode Hall reports 2000 released in autumn for the shoot.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

*Scarce winter visitor.*

The usual sites at SF with 2 at FF and 1 at WLF. The FF birds were particularly easy to see in the early winter.

1 in March and Dec at Little Taxmere, another traditional site.

Also 1 at Valley Brook, Haslington in Feb.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

*Common resident.*

Widespread in low numbers on most smaller waters but with around 70 at SF and 25 at Doddington Pool.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

*Common resident and variable winter visitor.*

Common on most larger waters with around 65 at WLF, 57 at RF, 50 at PHF, 40 at Winterley Pool etc. The largest numbers at Doddington Pool as usual with max of 380 in early winter and 722 on 14 Sept.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

*Rare winter visitor and rare summer visitor.*

Regular at SF from 2 March, when 1 at WLF, through to 31 July, when 2 at EHF. A two-week gap in mid-June separated spring and autumn passage. No winter records.

At Doddington 1 pair nested on the island and laid 3 eggs. As usual this nest failed. However, the pair then moved to the New Pool where two juvs were seen on 15 June, the first proved successful breeding in the area.

Also at Bent Farm Quarry, with 4 on 5 July, and Arclid SQ with 3 on 9 June and a pair through to 27 June.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

*Scarce summer visitor. Uncommon spring/autumn migrant.*

The first bird was 1 at EHF on 16 March, and the last record was 7 at EHF on 27 Aug.

A max of 8 on spring passage and 7 on autumn passage. Probably 3 pairs bred and fledged young.

Also at Arclid SQ where 2 pairs bred and fledged 3 juvs, Astbury SQ (2 on 16 May), Doddington (up to 4 in May, June and Aug).

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

At EHF spring passage from 6 April to 9 June (max 13), autumn passage from 21 Aug to 22 Sept (max 2) with a winter record of 1 at EHF on 25 Feb.

Also 2 at Doddington on 26 May.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

The wintering flock at EHF was present until mid-April (max 400 in Jan) and from mid-Sept to the year end (max of only 80). Much lower than 1995 when 280 in late winter.

2 were at Arclid SQ on 8 Oct.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

*Scarce irregular visitor.*

Singles at EHF on 19 May, 6 Oct and 28 Dec.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

*Common resident and abundant winter visitor.*

A max of 1100 recorded in the usual winter roost at EHF, where 2500 last year.

Winter roosts also at Middlewich Lime Beds (230), Stowford (c500), Arclid SQ (500).

At least 4 pairs bred around Doddington, but breeding attempts around Arclid SQ failed due to farming activities.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

Two records from EHF with 1 on 25 May and 1 on 24 July.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

As usual all records are in autumn and all from EHF.

1 lone individual on 24 July. Then an excellent series of records. Recorded daily from 14 Sept to 6 Oct with a max of 22, and finally 1 lone individual on 13 Oct.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

At EHF a good series of records coinciding with the Little Stint records. 5 appeared on 14 Sept, stayed until 18 Sept and then numbers slowly decreased to the last 1 on 27 Sept.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Recorded in much lower numbers than usual at EHF with a max of 5 in early winter and 6 in late winter. An extended spring passage from 17 March to 8 June had a max of 12, and autumn passage from 19 July to early Oct had a max of 7.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

At EHF recorded up to 6 April with a max of 20. A single on 24 July and then recorded daily from 12 Aug to the year end with a max of only 11.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

*Scarce winter visitor.*

Recorded up to 7 April and from 23 Oct with singles at RF, EHF, Canal Pool, Maw Green Tip, Mow Cop and Middlewich Lime Beds, where at least 2 in late winter.

A truer representation than usual of this under-recorded species.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

*Uncommon winter visitor and migrant.*

Recorded from most flashes at SF in low numbers with max of 30 at EHF. Also regular at Middlewich Lime Beds (48), Weston New Golf Course (27), and occasional in low numbers at a few other sites.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

*Rare resident. Scarce winter visitor.*

3 recorded in winter from the wood at FF as usual and 1 at MGP.

Also 2 regular in winter at the usual site south of Alsager.

At Arclid SQ there were 2 on 15 Nov, 1 on 7 Dec, and 1 on 22 Dec with 1 at Mow Cop in Dec.

Blacktailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

*Scarce migrant.*

Only 4 records from EHF. 1 on 20 June, 3 on 14 July and 2 on 24 July. However, on 24 Aug there was an incredibly high count of 81. The previous highest totals were 20 on 14 July 1995 and 11 on 3 July 1988.

5 overflew Arclid SQ on 11 July, the first record for that site.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

*Rare visitor.*

1 was at EHF on 3 Sept.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

Singles at EHF on 19 April, 11 and 21 May and 28 July.

6 overflew Arclid SQ on 23 May.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

*Uncommon resident and fairly common winter visitor.*

Recorded in all months at SF but there was a gap from 3 May to 23 June. Numbers are swelled in the evening roost which held a max of 132 in March and 53 in Sept.

62 at Bagmere in Feb. In summer pairs were displaying at Doddington, Mow Cop and Stowford where 2 pairs probably bred.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

1 at EHF on 23 Aug and an unusual winter record of 1 at EHF on 29 Dec.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

*Uncommon visitor and migrant (and resident?).*

Recorded at EHF in all months with winter visitors, migrants and summer visitors merging. Up to 6 in early winter and spring. 1 or 2 in summer. 2 or 3 in autumn increasing to 8 in Dec.

Also 1 at Astbury SQ on 8 April, 1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 1 Dec and 3 singles at Arclid SQ on 7, 13 and 14 April.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

At EHF only one spring record with 1 on 28 March. A good autumn passage with 1 on 20 June, 2 on 11 July, then up to 4 recorded on most days from 14 Aug through to 5 Oct.

Also 1 at Arclid SQ on 10 Sept.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

*Scarce winter visitor. Uncommon passage migrant.*

At SF 9 separate records on spring passage. As usual much more common in autumn. First recorded on 22 June and then virtually daily until 29 Sept. with a max of 9.

Also on autumn passage at Doddington Pool where 2 in July and Aug.

Winter records from Arclid SQ, Astbury SQ, Bathvale (Congleton), Middlewich Lime Beds and Stowford.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

1 at EHF on 13 and 14 May and 1 there on 9 June.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

Spring passage at EHF/WLF/RF with up to 6 from 14 April to 20 May. Also 2 or 3 at Arclid SQ during this time. 1 at Astbury SQ on 13 and 28 April and Doddington Pool on 28 April.

Autumn passage at SF with up to 3 from 30 June to 1 Sept. Also 1 at Doddington Pool on 23 July and 2 on 4 and 8 Aug, and 2 at Swettenham on 10 Sept. 2 or 3 at Arclid SQ and late singles on 10 and 22 Sept.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

*Rare visitor.*

1 second summer bird at PHF on 31 July. This is the 7th record for SF with the 5th and 6th being in 1995 and the 4th in 1992.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

*Scarce visitor.*

2 1stW birds were at Astbury SQ on 11 April.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

*Abundant autumn and winter visitor.*

Around 2000 on average in winter on Maw Green Tip, some using PHF and EHF to bathe and roost. The main roost site at Doddington Pool held around 11,000 birds in both early and late winter.

Around 250 in winter at Arclid SQ and lower numbers at several other sites.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

A sprinkling of records of up to 12 throughout the year from SF but 120 at Maw Green Tip on 13 March. Up to 5 at Arclid SQ.

Around 150 max in the roost at Doddington Pool.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

*Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.*

Around 1500 average in winter on Maw Green Tip where most fly off to the north-west to roost. Only around 400 in early winter in the roost at Doddington Pool but a high max of around 2000 in late winter.

On 2 June, 2 of the birds at EHF had colour rings. One was a 2nd year bird ringed in Bristol in 1994 and the other was ringed in Holland.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

*Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.*

Around 1000 average in winter on Maw Green Tip although 2500 on 29 Dec may have been due to the freezing weather.

Around 50 in the roost at Doddington Pool.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus argentatus cachinnans*)

*Scarce visitor.*

Singles at PHF on 29 May, 21 July (ad), 21 July (3rd summer), 30 July and Maw Green Tip 30 Oct.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

Records from EHF/Maw Green Tip in Jan, March and early April probably involve four birds, one each of 1st W, 2nd W, 3rd W and ad.

1 ad at Maw Green Tip on 29 Dec and 1 2nd W at Astbury SQ on the same day.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

A sprinkling of records in early and late winter with max of 59 at Maw Green Tip in Dec. Up to 4 in the roost at Doddington Pool.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

*Scarce winter visitor.*

1 ad at Maw Green Tip on 28 Jan and 1 1st W there on 28 Dec.

Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

*Rare visitor.*

Three records in one year for this species which is rare in our area.

At EHF 1 ad with Blackheaded Gulls on 3 March and 1 ad on 24 March. These are only the 4th and 5th records for SF. Previous records are 1 ad + 1 imm at EHF on 20/4/86; 1 over RF on 6/1/83 and 1 at WLF on 16/4/78.

Amazingly there were also 2 at Arclid SQ late in the afternoon of 16 March.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

Spring passage records of 1 at WLF on 19 April and possibly the same at EHF on 21 April. As usual more numerous on autumn passage with 10 records of up to 3 birds from EHF/WLF from 22 June to 14 July. Up to 4 at Doddington Pool from 28 July to 5 Aug. 1 at Arclid SQ on 9 and 11 June. A very late individual was recorded here on 25 October.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

*Rare passage migrant.*

At Doddington Pool 2 on 18 April and 1 on 28 July.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

1 at WLF on 23 May and 1 at Doddington Pool on 27 Aug.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

*Common resident.*

Only one record received; up to 40 at Arclid SQ; but flocks of up to 200 in most towns.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

*Uncommon resident.*

At Quakers Coppice 11 pairs used the nestboxes and laid 25 clutches but breeding success was low due to the bad weather in early spring.

1996 figures with 1995 in brackets:-

eggs laid 54 (71) hatched 28 (34); fledged 19 (26).

A pair also nested at Taxmere.

In Nov there were 20 with Woodpigeons at Bridgemere.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

*Common resident.*

The only records of winter flocks were of 800 feeding on recently cut maize stubble at Bridgemere in Nov and 250 around FF in Jan and Feb.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

*Common resident.*

2 pairs nested at Arclid SQ and one fledged young, the first successful breeding recorded there. In Haslington a total of 73 was counted on various TV aerials, chimneys and roof tops on 29 Oct.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

*Rare summer visitor.*

1 bird was recorded in Jerusalem Wood, Hough, near Crewe, on 22 July.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

*Uncommon summer visitor and migrant.*

The first record was of 1 at FF on 20 April. Also recorded at Alsager South, Arclid SQ, Bent Farm Quarry, Congleton, Doddington, Mow Cop and Stowford.

Ring-necked Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)

*Vagrant.*

1 was heard calling and seen flying east over EHF on 7 Sept.



Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

*Scarce resident.*

Although just outside the SECOS area, a pair bred and fledged 3 juvs at a site between Middlewich and Northwich. Maybe one of these was the bird seen along King St. Middlewich on 9 Nov.

There were a few reports of a bird in the Swettenham area, so possibly there is a pair there. Single records from Middlewich (east) and Crewe (north). The barn at Oakhanger previously used for roosting has not been used this year. Finally a bird was seen dead on the hard shoulder of the M6 near Alsager.

Collisions with vehicles are believed to be one of the major causes of death of Barn Owls.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

*Common resident.*

Common in open farmland areas. Recorded from 14 sites with proved breeding at WLF and Doddington. Unusually one was seen dead on the road at Wistaston in March.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

*Common resident.*

Common in more wooded areas. Recorded from 11 sites with juvs seen at Bent Farm Quarry, Rode Pool and Bradwall, Sandbach.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

*Rare winter visitor.*

1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 1 Dec where it was flushed from the top, flew around for 20 minutes harassed by crows, and then flew off up the railway track.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

*Fairly common summer visitor.*

The first record was of 1 over Wistaston on the very early date of 16 April. The last record was 3 over EHF on 25 Aug.

During certain weather conditions, usually cold, dull and overcast, there were huge concentrations of birds at Doddington Pool with c.4000 on 26 May and c.1400 on 29 June. Arclid Hospital, a known nesting site, was demolished in June. Nesting sites for Swifts are gradually becoming scarcer due to demolition and building improvements.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

*Uncommon resident.*

1 or 2 recorded from EHF, Arclid SQ, Bathvale Congleton, Valley Brook Crewe, Crewe GC, Doddington (1st here since 1993), R. Dane Holmes Chapel, Stowford, R. Dane Swettenham, Wheelock and Winterley Pool.

The vast majority of records are from late summer to winter with no proved breeding. Where do Kingfishers breed?

Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

*Very rare visitor.*

For me the undoubted bird of the year. 1 was located at the edge of WLF by the main car park at 15.45 on 11 May. It stayed in the area for the rest of the day but was not seen again after that.

This is the first record for SF. There have been 2 previous documented records in the area. On 28/4/78 a bird appeared in an Alsager garden and stayed for an hour. On 9/4/57 one was seen and heard in Crewe Hall Park. Within Cheshire 1 was on Hilbre on 27/4/92 and the previous record was at Pulford on 28/6/85.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Records from PHF, Crewe GC, Lawton Woods, Mow Cop, Oakhanger, Quakers Coppice, Rode Pool, Swettenham, The Cloud.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

*Common resident.*

By far the commonest woodpecker. Records from 18 sites, present at many more but proved breeding only at Arclid SQ, Swettenham, The Cloud.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*)

*Uncommon resident.*

More records than usual, with sightings at FF, PHF, Bradwall, Brereton Heath, Haslington, Quakers Coppice, Rode Pool, Stowford and Weston.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

*Common? resident and autumn passage migrant.*

Breeding season records of singing males with 5 at Doddington, 2 at Swettenham, several at Alsager South. Very little evidence of migration movements and no large flocks reported.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

*Fairly common summer visitor.*

The first record was of 2 at Arclid SQ on 22 March. Large numbers feeding were seen at Doddington with c.250 on 17 May and at Astbury SQ with c.225 on 26 May.

Breeding colonies at R. Dane Holmes Chapel (c.30 pairs), R. Dane Swettenham (?), Arclid SQ, with a new colony at the new quarry as the old colony fledged no young from c.24 pairs. The last record was of 1 at EHF on 15 Sept.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

*Abundant summer visitor.*

The first record was of 1 at PHF on 24 March. Breeds commonly throughout the area. As usual a roost built up in autumn in maizefields near Arclid SQ and peaked at c.1000. The last record was of 1 at EHF on 13 Oct.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

*Common summer visitor.*

The first record was of 1 at WLF on 14 April.

A large concentration of around 500 was feeding at Doddington Pool on 17 May. Breeds commonly. The last record was of 7 over Sandbach on 9 Oct.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

*Scarce passage migrant and possible summer visitor.*

Singles were seen at Arclid SQ on 21 and 28 April. 2 passed over Mow Cop on 15 Sept and 1 there on 22 Sept.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

*Uncommon resident and passage migrant.*

Spring passage noted with 70 an hour over EHF on 24 March and c.60 over Arclid SQ on 29 March.

Autumn passage noted at EHF from mid-Sept to mid-Oct, 104 over Mow Cop on 15 Sept, 40 at Arclid SQ on 8 Oct. Up to 35 at Middlewich Lime Beds and 6 at Maw Green Tip in winter.

Rock Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)

*Rare visitor.*

1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 22 Oct.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

*Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.*

The first birds were on 13 April at EHF, RF and Arclid SQ. Up to 5 on spring passage and 12 on autumn passage at EHF. Breeding season records from Bagmere, Basford, Brereton Heath, Doddington. The last bird was at EHF on 21 Sept.

(*M.f. flava*). Blue-headed wagtail. 2 records of this sub-species from EHF with singles on 28 April and 7 May.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

*Scarce summer visitor and scarce winter visitor.*

Breeding season records from Crewe GC, R. Dane Middlewich, Swettenham and Winterley Pool where 2 ads and 2 juvs in autumn. Winter records from 12 sites. The usual autumn roost built up at Arclid SQ with a max of 16.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

*Common resident.*

Breeds commonly around the area. A very large roost formed in Crewe town centre with around 400 birds on the roof of the B & Q Store. Around 100 roosting in a willow tree at Arclid SQ in July, but this was removed during quarrying and the roost broke up.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

*Scarce passage migrant.*

A good series of records with, at EHF, 1 on 13 April and up to 3 from 24 to 30 April.

Also 1 at Arclid SQ on 22 April, 1 at Brereton Heath on 28 April and 1 at Basford, Crewe, on 10 May.

Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)

*Rare winter visitor.*

There was a large irruption of waxwings in the early winter with many thousands in Britain from Northern Europe. There were so many that a few found their way over to Cheshire. The first local record was 2 at Radnor Park, Congleton, on 29 Jan, where a few were present until 6 Feb. Also in Congleton up to 20 fed regularly in gardens in Delamere Road. Elsewhere 9 were very briefly in Crewe Business Park on 4 Feb, and 4 were seen in Middlewich on 17 Feb.

1 bird which was late returning to Northern Europe was seen at Sandbach on 7 April.

Previous year totals for Cheshire starting with 1994 are 0; 7; 0; 35; 3; 0 and 83 in 1988 which included 1 at Wheelock on 11 Dec.

Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)

*Scarce resident.*

Winter records from Havannah Weir Congleton, Bathvale Congleton and Crewe GC, but no breeding records.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

*Abundant resident.*

Duncock (*Prunella modularis*)

*Abundant resident.*

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

*Abundant resident.*

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

*Scarce summer visitor.*

1 m was seen in Crewe Cemetery on 30 April.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

*Scarce migrant and summer visitor.*

1 pair at RF on 2 May with the f present on 3 May. 1 m on Electra Way, Crewe, on 21 May. In autumn 2 at Mow Cop on 21 Sept.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

*Scarce winter visitor.*

1 f along the railway line by Middlewich Lime Beds on 22 Nov.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

*Uncommon passage migrant.*

First of the year was 1 at RF on 27 March and up to 4 recorded at RF/EHF until 15 May.

Also at Alsager (6), Basford (6), Mow Cop (10), Stowford (2) in the same period.

Autumn records from EHF/RF (1), Middlewich Lime Beds (4), and Mow Cop where 1 on 22 Oct.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

*Abundant resident and winter visitor.*

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

*Common winter visitor.*

In the early winter period flocks of 200 to 300 were recorded from several sites. On 4 Feb a total of 1600 was counted along a 3-mile stretch of road from Maw Green Tip to PHF.

Much lower numbers in the late winter with only one flock of over 100 recorded.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

*Fairly common resident.*

Increased number of records of singing males with Arclid SQ (5), Bathvale Congleton (6), Swettenham (6), Haslington (3).

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

*Common winter visitor*

As with Fieldfare, there were much higher numbers in early winter than late winter. Typically 100 to 150 in early winter but only around 25 in late winter.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

*Fairly common resident.*

Breeds throughout the area with proved breeding at Arclid SQ, Quakers Coppice. No large autumn flocks recorded this year.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

*Scarce summer visitor.*

Recorded only from the usual site at Bagmere with 1 m reeling on 15 May and 1 on 1 June.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

*Uncommon summer visitor.*

The first record was of 1 at EHF on 20 April. Breeding season records from EHF, WLF, GF, OF, FFF, PHF, Bagmere, Doddington and Arclid SQ.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

*Uncommon summer visitor.*

First record on 20 April from WLF. Probably 2 or possibly 3 pairs bred in the phragmites here. Also along the canal at Middlewich (4), Bagmere (2), Rode Pool (?).

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

*Uncommon summer visitor.*

First record on 28 April at Astbury SQ. More records than usual with 14 sites recorded.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

*Common summer visitor.*

First record on 15 April at EHF. Quite common with, for example, singing males at FF (6), Arclid SQ (7-10), Bagmere (5). On 3 July an all white ad was seen with a normal plumaged family.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

*Fairly common summer visitor.*

First record on 20 April at EHF, though it is scarce at SF with 2 at FF and 1 at WLF.

5 pairs at Arclid SQ but the only other record was of 1 at Alsager South.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

*Common summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.*

First record was from Astbury SQ on 8 April. Several breeding records with, for example, 6 pairs at Arclid SQ.

Winter records from Coppenhall Crewe 1 m on 1 Jan and 1 f on 24 Feb, Haslington 1 m early Feb, Wheelock 1 mid-March, and Wistaston 1 m in Dec.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

*Common summer visitor, very rare winter visitor.*

First record was from MGP on 10 March. 3 pairs at Arclid SQ. In Oct, Nov and Dec there were various records of a single Chiffchaff at WLF, FFF, FF and EHF. It is not clear whether more than one bird was involved or whether it was just very mobile!

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

*Common summer visitor.*

First record was from Arclid SQ on 4 April. Still breeds throughout the area with, for example, 12-14 pairs at Arclid SQ.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

Winter records of 1 or 2 birds from FF, WLF, Quakers Coppice and Arclid SQ where singing birds were also heard on 13 and 23 June.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

*Uncommon summer visitor.*

The usual site at Crewe Cemetery/St. Michael's Churchyard was again good with 4 ads + 2 juvs at St. Michael's and 2 ads at Crewe Cemetery. Also at Tetton Lane, Sandbach (1 ad + 1 juv), WF (1 ad + 1 juv), FF, FFF, Swettenham, Wheelock, Arclid SQ.

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

*Scarce summer visitor.*

As in 1995, 2 separate males were singing by nest box 6 and nest box 30 in Quakers Coppice in late April/early May but no breeding attempt was noted.

On 23 April a m was at Crewe Cemetery, brought down temporarily by heavy rain.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

*Common resident.*

Numbers remain high with flocks in winter of Crewe Golf Course (25), Doddington (25), Rode Pool (20) plus many more. At Arclid SQ 5-7 breeding pairs but success was very low.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Breeding season records from FF, Arclid SQ and Bagmere. Winter records from these sites, and Crewe Golf Course, Lawton Woods, Quakers Coppice.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Very few records this year. Only from Arclid SQ and FF, although it is more common than that.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

*Abundant resident.*

At Quakers Coppice 8 pairs used nest boxes and laid 79 eggs, hatched 66 and fledged 54 young. A poor year due to the bad weather in April and May.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

*Common resident.*

At Quakers Coppice 2 pairs used nest boxes, laid 12 eggs, hatched 10 young but fledged only 4. One clutch of 6 starved to death in the bad weather.

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

*Common resident.*

At Quakers Coppice 2 pairs used nest boxes, laid 16 eggs, hatched 12 young and fledged 12.

Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

*Common resident.*

For example, 3 pairs at Arclid SQ, 2 pairs at Quakers Coppice.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Records of 1 or 2 from several sites.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

*Common resident.*

The largest winter flock recorded was 40 roosting at FF in Jan.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

*Common resident and winter visitor.*

Numbers seem to be increasing and an accurate count of the Crewe Hall corvid roost in Dec gave 2000. In Nov a flock of c.500 was feeding on maize stubble at Bridgemere.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

*Common resident.*

A count at 9 rookeries in the Crewe/Alsager area totalled 460 nests (412 in 1995 and 422 in 1994). The recently established rookery at FF was counted accurately for the first time and held 102 nests. Arclid Hollow rookery held 84 nests (52 in 1995 and 65 in 1994).

An accurate count of the Crewe Hall corvid roost in Dec gave 2500.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

*Common resident.*

Breeds commonly throughout the area.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

*Rare visitor.*

At Mow Cop there were 2 over on 29 Aug and 4 over on 2 Sept.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

*Common resident and abundant winter visitor.*

Up to 1000 regular at Maw Green Tip but no records received of winter roosts.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

*Abundant resident.*

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

*Fairly common resident.*

Breeding records from RF, EHF, Alsager South, Bagmere, Crewe Golf Course, The Cloud. Winter flocks of Winterley Pool (56), Maw Green Tip (28), Swettenham (22, where numbers have increased). Up to 21 regularly on the seed feeder at EHF.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

*Abundant resident and winter visitor.*

The largest winter flock recorded was only 60.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

*Scarce winter visitor.*

70 at Congleton in Feb. The only late winter record was of 1 at Bradwall on 22 Nov.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

*Common resident.*

Winter roosts of WLF (80 in a holly hedge), Quakers Coppice (40 in rhododendrons), Crewe Business Park (20 in a hawthorn hedge).

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

*Fairly common resident.*

Winter flocks at Middlewich Lime Beds (35), Weston New Golf Course (30), Crewe Golf Course (12).

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

The only large flocks in the early winter period were Crewe Golf Course (45) and Swettenham (45). More common in the late winter period although flocks were smaller. No records of birds on garden feeders.

Linnet (*Acanthis cannabina*)

*Common resident.*

The only breeding season records were of 12 at Doddington. Winter flocks were noted at WLF (200), EHF (50), Arclid SQ (40), Crewe Business Park (50), Doddington (153 on overhead wires), Middlewich Lime Beds (32), plus other smaller ones.

Twite (*Acanthis flavirostris*)

*Very rare visitor.*

1 was seen and heard at EHF on 30 Nov. The last record from the flashes was of one on 24/2/79. Also 1 at Mow Cop on 22 Nov.

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

*Uncommon winter visitor.*

Records of 1 to 9 birds from Jan to April and Oct to Dec from FF, EHF, WLF, Arclid SQ, Crewe Golf Course, Mow Cop and Stowford. Two records of birds considered to be of the Northern race *C.f. flammea* (Mealy Redpoll) with 2 at EHF on 17 Feb and 3 at FF on 3 March. This coincided with a national influx of Mealy Redpoll and Arctic Redpoll.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Widespread but underrecorded for such a colourful bird.

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)

*Vagrant.*

At Middlewich Lime Beds a f or imm was located at 10.40 on 17 Nov. It was seen by a lot of observers (but not by all), and was not seen after that day. This is only the second record for the area with the first also being a f or imm at WLF on 13/11/77.

Amazingly another bird of this species was seen briefly at EHF on 1 Dec.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Few records this year. The largest flock was of 8 at PHF in Dec. 2 pairs bred at Arclid SQ.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Breeding season records from Arclid SQ (4 proved and 5 probable pairs), Astbury SQ (2), Doddington Pool (3), EHF (2). Winter records at Maw Green Tip (9), Weston New Golf Course (8), etc. 5 birds brought into a Haslington garden by the snow in Dec.

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)

*Uncommon resident.*

Generally lower numbers at most sites with the following numbers of singing m. Alsager (2, usually 5 or 6), Bagmere (1), Basford (1), Brereton Heath (1), Doddington (1, usually 2 or 3), Winterley Pool (1).

Terrapin

The resident at PHF for the past four years was unfortunately found dead on 7 Sept.