

SANDBACH FLASHES 2011 BIRD REPORT

Andy Firth



Little Ringed Plover
Bob Brown

Editorial

Welcome to the Sandbach Flashes annual bird report for 2011. Unlike previous incarnations this report focuses solely on the birds recorded at Sandbach Flashes and not the whole SECOS recording area as Colin Lythgoe who collated all the records for the area as a whole has retired from production of an annual report after many years sterling work and I do little or no birding away from the flashes so do not have the interest to pursue records. I have produced the report based on the contents of the log book which is located at Elton Hall Flash. After Colin's retirement I thought hard about whether to continue compiling the Sandbach Flashes records with all the time and effort involved and decided that a site which has many years of bird recording historically was well worth the effort.

The year 2011 was in many ways a strange year as the only real flashes mega was a Bee Eater recorded by an ecologist doing survey work in the Crabmill Flash area; the same individual also recorded the first Quail for many years. The year saw an impressive 153 species recorded with the well watched Elton Hall Flash/Pump House Flash area being responsible for the vast majority of these. Maw Green Tip and the Railway Flashes area were also well watched but continue to disappoint.

Please note that should any observer wish to have their records of local or national rarities considered by the relevant bodies these should be submitted by the individual observer(s). Species reported this year which require a description for county status are Green-winged Teal, Goshawk, Caspian Gull and Bee-eater. A comprehensive list of species requiring a description can be found at www.cawos.org/rarities.htm.

Thanks to Bob Brown for the images provided. Many thanks to all the birders who provide their records and keep the feeders well stocked.

Andy Firth

Common Terns breeding at Watch Lane Flash a Sandbach Flashes first.

Background:-

Common Tern has historically been no more than a scarce passage migrant and occasional summer visitor with the well watched Elton Hall Flash being the most productive site.

2011:-

On 1st July a pair of Common Terns was seen copulating on the area of redundant brickwork on Watch Lane flash. On 10th July two juveniles were seen but after heavy rain only one remained on 20th July. By the 1st August the remaining juvenile was seen exercising its wings vigorously. This young bird was then seen in flight on 3rd August. Throughout August the bird was regularly seen commuting between Watch Lane Flash and Elton Hall Flash with the adults. The last sighting was on 28th August over Elton Hall Flash. The year 2011 turned out to be an exceptional year for Common Terns at Sandbach Flashes and other than the breeding pair up to six other individuals were seen one of which bore a ring.

I am not over familiar with other sites within Cheshire but could this be a first breeding record inland for the county.

Thanks to Andy Goodwin and Janet Jones for monitoring the birds and providing the dates and sightings information from Watch Lane Flash and any other observers who recorded sightings from Elton Hall Flash.

Andy Firth

Bee-eater a new bird for Sandbach Flashes.

In the summer of 2010 I took part in a number of surveys along the proposed route of a gas storage pipeline near Warmingham in Cheshire, as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment for that project. During the course of the breeding bird survey there was little evidence of migratory birds other than a single Little Ringed Plover and a flock of Eurasian Curlew near Crabmill Flash.

In 2011 I spent several weeks working on a Great Crested Newt rescue along the pipeline route. On 15/04/11 I had just put on my boots and was about to set off for the days trap round when I heard a bee-eater. I immediately looked up and was surprised to find I couldn't see the bird which sounded fairly low. It called again twice as it flew over me and on to the west. Shortly after the third call I finally saw the bird tracking west with typically shallow undulations at a height of c. 80 feet. I had only my old Trinovids in the car, which was locked and never considered 'going for them' as the encounter was clearly looking like a brief one, so I only saw it with the naked eye.

Not knowing any locals, I phoned a couple of my friends at home, asked them to 'put it out' and continued with the task at hand. It is interesting to note that the sky was overcast and as I walked up the pipeline route I saw my first Northern Wheatear on that site. By the time I turned round and came back it was raining and there were 5 Northern Wheatears in the fields by the road. It is tempting to speculate that the bird dropped ahead of the approaching weather but I guess it's just as likely I happened to catch it as it gained height having left an overnight roost somewhere nearby. If it is any consolation to local birders they didn't miss much with regard to the views!

On my next visit to the site in May I heard a Common Quail singing at 23.30 on 12/05/11 whilst spotlighting for newts. This bird was in fields to the south of Crabmill Flash and was heard in the same area the following night by the ecologist who took over from me.

Tim Marlow

EARLY AND LATE DATES FOR SUMMER VISITORS

The table has been arranged in date order for the '10 year average' arrival dates for the SECOS recording area as I don't have specific Sandbach Flashes information.

Species	ARRIVALS		DEPARTURES	
	Date in 2011	Earliest Ever SECOS	Date in 2011	Latest Ever SECOS
Little Ringed Plover	15-Mar	05-Mar-00	05-Aug	16-Oct-85
Sand Martin	16-Mar	11-Mar-08	18-Sep	24-Nov-72
Swallow	29-Mar	10-Feb-07	23-Oct	30-Nov-74
Willow Warbler	02-Apr	21-Mar-09	08-Sep	27-Sep-08
House Martin	10-Apr	25-Mar-95	06-Oct	05-Nov-77
Yellow Wagtail	13-Apr	29-Mar-81	18-Sep	27-Oct-06
Lesser Whitethroat	16-Apr	21-Mar-00	04-Sep	01-Oct-98
Reed Warbler	10-Apr	10-Apr-11	18-Sep	04-Oct-98
Common Whitethroat	13-Apr	11-Apr-09	22-Sep	22-Sep-11
Sedge Warbler	10-Apr	10-Apr-11	01-Oct	01-Oct-78/11
Swift	30-Apr	05-Apr-82	07-Sep	03-Nov-78
Cuckoo	04-May	16-Apr-96	NR	01-Oct-86
Garden Warbler	02-May	16-Apr-09	08-Sep	09-Sep-83
Hobby	29-Apr	27-Mar-94	02-Oct	08-Oct-00
Grasshopper Warbler	24-Apr	15-Apr-09	NR	25-Sep-10

The Sedge Warbler and Reed Warbler records were both the earliest ever for the SECOS recording area and the Sedge Warbler departure record also the joint latest ever. Additionally the Common Whitethroat is the latest ever SECOS record so all in all quite a remarkable year.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2011

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Fairly common resident.

Successful breeding at RF with six juveniles accompanying two adults on 31st May also bred at CF, wintering numbers maximum 12 on EHF on 22nd Jan.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Rare winter visitor.

Two flew low over PHF on 8th Nov. On 5th Dec 12 consisting of ten adults and two juveniles were on EHF.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant or feral.

Three on RF on 1st Jan got the year off to a good start; these were up to seven the following day. On 29th Jan a skein of 150 passed over PHF. A skein of 245 went over EHF on 31st Oct with 20 over EHF on 6th Dec. Seven settled on PHF on 9th Dec.

Greater White-Fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Very rare winter visitor

Two adults of the European race were found on PHF on 13th Nov, these stayed into late Dec being recorded from most flashes.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Rare winter visitor or uncommon feral.

Regularly seen throughout at EHF, PHF and RF.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Common resident.

Breeding records from RF, CF and WLF. Up to 800 regular in winter.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Rare visitor or feral.

Regular with the Canada Geese but eight not associating with the Canada's on 20th Mar by WF was slightly more encouraging.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Uncommon resident and winter visitor.

Three pairs successfully bred at EHF/PHF with broods of five, eight and nine.

Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*)

Scarce visitor.

No recorded breeding this year but still regular although not quite as many records as in 2010, the MGT/RF area still the most productive site.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Common winter visitor.

Maximum counts of approximately 1000 on EHF/PHF in the early winter period. Two or three birds summered.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

A better year than 2010 and regular throughout on EHF in small numbers.

Common Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

No change in status this year in both winter periods. Counts of 500 plus the maximum.

Green-winged Teal (*Anas carolinensis*)

Rare visitor

A drake was impressively picked out in flight on 11th Apr over EHF and stayed until 20th Apr.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common resident. Abundant in winter.

No change in status with approximately 900 on EHF on 30th Sep the largest count.

Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Seemingly smaller numbers wintering year on year, ten on 30th Mar the largest count, this from EHF.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Scarce summer visitor.

Two drakes recorded both on EHF one on 14th May and one on 28th Jun; this individual was in quite heavy moult.

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Uncommon winter visitor, scarce in summer.

Slightly reduced numbers than recent years but 40 plus were recorded on EHF throughout Nov.

Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Fairly common winter visitor.

Infrequently seen on EHF/PHF in the both winter periods.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon in summer.

Two broods successfully fledged (five and six) on the typically late date of 6th Aug on RF.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Several records in 2011 of this less than annual visitor with females on EHF on 10th Feb and one on WLF on 25th Feb. In the second winter period a female on EHF on 14th Nov perhaps relocated to CF the following day and stayed until early Dec.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Winter visitor.

The maximum count in the first winter period was 55 on EHF on 21st Jan, 45 were then on FFF on 23rd Nov.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Rare except where locally released.

Presumably fresh releases for shooting as recorded commonly in the first winter period with records from EHF/PHF away from the usual site at CF.

Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

Rare visitor

On the nights of 12th and 13th May one was heard singing in fields adjacent to CF by two ecologists carrying out survey work. This is the first record since Jun 1989 and is included even though the bird was not seen as the species is rarely seen without being flushed which is not acceptable with a possible breeding bird. See separate article.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Scarce resident except where locally released.

Infrequently seen but no reason to believe a change in status.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Fairly common resident.

No breeding recorded in 2011 but still noted regularly particularly on GF and CF.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Common resident.

Still seemingly declining with the only breeding from WLF, WF and CF but no more than four pairs. A pair on WF nested where Common Carp were actively spawning and the incubating birds had to sit tight at times.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Rare in summer.

Recorded regularly throughout excepting the summer months. A total of eighteen over RF was the highest count on 27th Nov.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Scarce visitor.

First recorded at EHF on 4th Apr with subsequent records on 26th May, 1st Jul, 13th Jul, three on 30th Jul, 19th Aug, 7th Sep, 8th Sep, 10th Sep and 14th Oct. A total of thirteen individuals of this expanding species.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common resident.

Regularly recorded throughout particularly from EHF.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Scarce visitor

Recorded over PHF on 4th Jun, then over EHF on 15th Jun, 3rd Aug and FF on 7th Sep.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Scarce visitor

A "cream crown" flew over EHF on 28th Oct, this was the sole record.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Rare visitor

A male was seen at FF on 25th Mar, a female then flew over EHF on 20th Jul with it or another on 30th Jul. An excellent return as if suspected there are no breeding birds locally.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Common resident.

Regular throughout but the only breeding recorded in the small copse behind FF.

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Common resident.

By far the commonest raptor again with a count of 20 on 10th Apr perhaps involving migrating birds.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Scarce migrant.

The sole record was one over EHF early on 16th Sep.

Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Common resident.

Bred again at MGT and also by WF.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

A female flew over EHF on 11th Jan with further birds seen on 2nd and 5th Feb also at EHF.

Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

The first record was from EHF on 29th Apr then regular throughout until the last over MGT on 2nd Oct. Successful hunting was witnessed at EHF on several occasions. Breeding though suspected not proven.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Scarce resident and winter visitor.

Seen regularly particularly around EHF/PHF and MGT.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Recorded in the first winter period at FF and WLF and in the second winter period at RF, EHF and FF. Successful breeding at RF with juveniles seen and birds still calling into Jul.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Common resident.

No change in status, breeding records from all the main flashes.

Common Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common resident and variable winter visitor.

Approximately 200 were on EHF/PHF in Jan, breeding records from EHF, PHF, WLF, CF and WF.

Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Scarce winter visitor and uncommon summer visitor.

Four on 23rd Feb at EHF were the first then throughout summer with breeding not proven.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Scarce summer visitor. Uncommon spring/autumn migrant.

After the first on 15th Mar regular throughout with an impressive 26 on EHF on 5th Jul, no breeding again.

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A much better year than 2010 with 20 at EHF on 18th May the biggest count.

European Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

A difficult species to catch up with in the early part of the year with singles on several dates but none lingering for long. In the second winter period much better with eight on 8th Nov, 29 on 16th Nov, 79 on 21st Nov, six on 22nd Nov, 25 on 9th Dec

Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and abundant winter visitor.

Only breeding recorded by CF with wintering numbers up to 1200.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

An adult on EHF on 6th Sep with another adult on 21st Sep also on EHF.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Scarce passage migrant

Two records with a single at EHF on 22nd May and an impressive five together also on EHF on 30th May.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

Scarce passage migrant

Two juveniles were on EHF from 25th to 28th Aug.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Scarce passage migrant

After a barren run of records two juveniles were found on EHF on 19th Sep, both birds stayed until 26th Sep when one moved on overnight its partner followed the next day.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

A good year with ten over EHF over 14th Jan and 24 at EHF on 18th May particularly noteworthy.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Typical numbers from EHF though only several wintering birds.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

Scarce winter visitor

One was reported from RF on or around 30th Nov but no more details and no log book entry.

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Uncommon winter visitor and migrant.

35 were present at RF on 23rd Jan, this was the largest count.

Eurasian Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Seen in Jan around FF and also several times by MGT.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Common non breeding resident

Present in varying numbers throughout with 279 at EHF on 21st May, a colour ringed bird at EHF on 31st May was ringed as a pullis on 03/07/2006 in north west Iceland. Does the fact that a four year old bird is still in Britain on the last day of May suggest that some birds arrive on the Icelandic breeding grounds as late as mid-June.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Another very poor year with singles on 23rd Apr at CF, 8th Jul EHF, 27th Aug EHF and 31st Aug EHF.

Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor.

Numbers once again peaked at around 60 throughout the winter periods mainly recorded from EHF.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Scarce passage migrant

A juvenile was on EHF on 9th Aug with another juvenile also on EHF from 24th Aug to 26th Aug.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Uncommon visitor and migrant.

A maximum of seven in the early winter period and six in the latter winter period.

Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

An excellent year with regular sightings from EHF recorded in Apr, May, Jul, Aug and Sep

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Scarce winter visitor. Uncommon passage migrant.

The first was recorded on EHF on 15th Mar with several further sightings on spring passage. Common on return passage.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Scarce passage migrant.

One was on EHF between 9th and 12th Aug; this was the only record of a disappointing year for this species.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first was on EHF on 6th Apr then infrequently throughout

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

Scarce visitor.

Approximately 20 records after the first on 29th Jan, a juvenile was present on EHF from 11th Aug.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

Rare visitor.

An adult was at CF on 5th Jul, this was the only record until an incredible 27 flew over EHF on 11th Nov by far the biggest ever occurrence of this rare visitor.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Abundant autumn and winter visitor.

No change in 2011 with numbers peaking at approximately 2000 at EHF.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

A poor spring passage with no counts above 50 recorded. Smaller numbers on return passage.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.

No change with up to 800 recorded at RF/MGT, intermedius birds occasional on EHF

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)

Regular passage migrant.

Regular from EHF and PHF with 13 adults in the gull roost on 2nd Nov the biggest count.

Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*)

Scarce visitor

Hard to be sure of exact numbers but perhaps six individuals in the first winter period with two adults, two 1st w and two 2nd w. A juv/1st w on 19th Sep, other adult(s) on 21st Oct, 14th to 20th Nov.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.

No change with a maximum of 450 recorded at MGT/RF in Feb

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Recorded from 1st Jan to 7th Apr in the early winter period on most days with perhaps three individuals consisting of two 1st w and one 2nd w. A 1st w was then present from 22nd Dec on EHF.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

Scarce winter visitor

Two records from EHF/PHF between 28th Feb and 18th Mar with a 1st w and a 2nd w.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

On 13th Jan 94 were on EHF this was the biggest count in the first winter period, 215 were then on PHF on 17th Dec.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

Scarce passage migrant.

An adult was at EHF on 9th Mar with another adult also on EHF on 9th Aug. An excellent return of this less than annual species.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Three stunning adults in summer plumage graced EHF on the afternoon of 23rd Apr.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

A remarkable year with the first breeding recorded in the Sandbach Flashes recording area, this could possibly be the first breeding record for inland Cheshire. (see separate article). Nine were flying around EHF on 13th Aug.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident

Regular around EHF throughout.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon resident.

A staggering 192 were recorded from EHF on 14th Feb.

Common Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout with counts of over 100 regular. At least 3000 moved over MGT on the morning of 15th Oct part of a countrywide movement that day.

Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident.

Again common throughout the year from all areas.

Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Scarce passage migrant

By recent year's standards fantastic with one opposite CF on 4th May and one at EHF on 31st May, also calling birds around the sighting of the second bird.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Scarce resident.

The only sighting this year was from the observer's car over Crabmill Lane on 2nd Dec but breeding confirmed at two withheld sites by the local Barn Owl group.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Common resident.

The decline continues unabated with just one record on 24th Feb perched in the entrance to a nesting box used subsequently by Barn Owls.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common resident.

Calling birds heard and seen at FF with a perched bird in daylight near WF on 4th May being mobbed noteworthy as was one seen on the track leading from WLF to CF on 9th Jul.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

The first on 30th Apr and then regular throughout.

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Uncommon resident.

Perhaps the recent bad winters have had an impact on this species as only ten or so sightings from the recording area this year.

European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)

Vagrant

On the 15th Apr one flew over the head of the observer calling several times by CF this is the first ever for the Sandbach Flashes recording area. See separate article.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Uncommon resident.

One was by CF on 10th Jun, with one on the track from WLF on 22nd Oct and then one around MGT from 3rd Nov to 11th Dec.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Common resident.

Commonly recorded throughout and regular on the EHF feeders. Breeding confirmed.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus minor*)

Uncommon resident

Two records this year both from the WLF area one on 16th Mar and one on 30th Sep.

Common Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Fairly common.

MGT again the only reliable area with singing birds regular in Apr, May. Breeding suspected.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

Commonly seen after the first on 16th Mar.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common summer visitor.

The first was on 29th Mar and then common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Common summer visitor.

The first on the 10th Apr then regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

A poor year with only small numbers on passage, as usual from MGT.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

The best year in memory for records particularly on return passage this appears to be the case throughout the North West. Ten together on 31st Aug being the biggest single count at EHF.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

As with Kingfisher a poor year could the harsh past two winters be taking a temporary toll.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Fairly common resident.

Commonly recorded throughout the year. Single "White Wagtails" in May and Aug.

Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulous*)

Very rare winter visitor

An excellent early winter period with seven over RF on 7th Jan, one EHF on 11th Feb, four Red Lane Tip on 20th Apr and five WLF on 23rd Apr.

Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Duncock (*Prunella modularis*)

Common resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Abundant resident

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

Scarce migrant and rare summer visitor.

An adult male on 24th Jun by PHF with another in the same hedgerow on 13th Aug. Another male in bushes bordering RF from 4th Sep completed the year's sightings.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Scarce migrant.

An excellent year after the first on 7th May with a further seven recorded from EHF and MGT. Four together on MGT was an excellent return on 4th Sep.

Common Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Scarce winter visitor.

A male was on MGT on 21st Oct and what could have been the same bird was seen intermittently into Dec.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

The first was at EHF on 24th Mar then regularly throughout spring passage. Ten on MGT on 11th Sep was the biggest count on return passage.

Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Common throughout the area. Breeding confirmed.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Common winter visitor.

On 14th Oct at least 600 passed over EHF in the first major movement of the winter.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Fairly common resident.

Regular throughout with a notable influx recorded on 9th Oct with ten feeding adjacent to MGT. Breeding Confirmed.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Common winter visitor.

Flocks of well over 100 were over EHF on 14th Oct and around GF the following day.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Fairly common resident.

Breeding recorded at WLF and WF, a flock of 27 near EHF on 5th July was of particular note. Breeding confirmed.

Common Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Rare summer visitor

A very disappointing year again with just one recorded between 24th and 30th Apr by RF.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

The earliest was on 10th Apr by RF which is the earliest ever for the SECOS recording area, the latest was on 1st Oct which equals the latest ever. GF hosted at least eight singing birds on 1st May. Breeding confirmed.

Eurasian Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

As with Sedge Warbler the earliest record was exceeded with two in the reed bed at WLF on the 10th Apr, seemingly increasing with Fowle Brook holding many singing birds. Breeding confirmed.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

The first singing bird noted on the relatively late date of 1st Apr then regular throughout the area. Breeding confirmed.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

Again a remarkably difficult species to catch up with after the first on 2nd May and no territory holding birds were found, less than ten records all year.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

First recorded on 16th Apr and then regular though never common.

Common Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor.

First recorded on 13th Apr and then commonly recorded. Breeding confirmed.

Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor, very rare winter visitor.

The first singing bird was heard on 14th Mar. Breeding confirmed.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common summer visitor.

After the first on 2nd Apr a reasonable year with singing birds throughout spring and early summer. Breeding confirmed.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Few records received but probably because of lack of coverage of the best sites around FF.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

None on spring passage and no breeding records so just two individuals seen in 2011 with one by Green Lane on 10th Jul and another in willows by RF on 21st Aug.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout with flocks of post breeding birds numbering thirty noted. Breeding confirmed.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)
Scarce resident

Just one record of this seemingly declining species with a vocal bird seen well on the morning of 9th Jul at EHF.

Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)
Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)
Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*)
Fairly common resident.

A very good year and now regular at the EHF feeders.

European Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)
Common resident.

Regular around FF with odd birds heard and seen by EHF.

Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)
Common resident.

Common in all suitable habitat. Breeding confirmed.

Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)
Uncommon resident.

Under recorded but no reason to presume a change in status.

Common Magpie (*Pica pica*)
Common resident.

Typically numbers increased in Sep/Oct. Breeding confirmed.

Eurasian Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)
Common resident and winter visitor.

Still a large roost in FF and numbers on and around MGT in the hundreds.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)
Common resident.

The rookery still thriving in FF and also commonly seen on MGT.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)
Common resident.

Common throughout the area once again. Breeding confirmed.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)
Scarce visitor and resident.

The remarkable rise continues with birds seen on many occasions and now feeds regularly around EHF.

Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
Common resident and abundant winter visitor.

Common in both winter periods particularly on and around MGT.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
Common resident.

Seen around EHF but only in small numbers.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Fairly common resident.

Numbers undoubtedly down on the last few years but still seen regularly at EHF with 80 at CF being the biggest single count on 27th Jan, several seen visiting nest boxes but no surveying carried out.

Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

Common throughout again. Breeding confirmed.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Scarce winter visitor.

One was briefly at EHF on 1st Jan with another also at EHF on 5th Mar. Autumn passage noted with birds over WLF on 17th Oct, MGT 22nd Oct, CF on 23rd Nov

European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident.

Regular particularly around WLF. Breeding confirmed.

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Fairly common resident.

Common with a flock of over 200 at Green Lane on 27th Sep. Breeding confirmed.

Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and scarce resident.

The biggest count was 20 at WLF on 20th Apr.

Common Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Fairly common resident.

Flocks of 40 plus in fields behind EHF with smaller numbers by MGT where small numbers bred. Over 50 were at Green Lane on 27th Sep. Breeding confirmed.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

A mobile flock of 25 around WLF on 28th Feb was the largest count.

Mealy Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

Very rare winter visitor

One was picked out with Lesser Redpolls on 28th Feb by WLF with two also with Lesser's on 4th Mar also by WLF.

Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

Very rare visitor

Several records of flyovers with the first over Tetton Lane on 4th Nov, three over MGT on 19th Nov, two over WLF on 24th Nov.

Common Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Uncommon resident.

A very productive year with records from throughout the area. Breeding confirmed.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Uncommon resident.

Still holding on with singing birds recorded along the length of the track behind the railway line and also from MGT.

Common Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Uncommon resident.

Recorded on every visit to RF and MGT, but also regular from elsewhere. 32 were on MGT on 16th Oct. Breeding confirmed.

Category E Species – Introductions or Escapes

Ringed Teal (*Callonetta leucophrys*)

Seen several times on RF.

White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)

A free flying escaped bird seen intermittently around MGT.

Orinoco Goose (*Neochen jubatus*)

On 4th Sep two were on RF and were free flying from a local collection.

Northern Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*)

One was seen throughout Sep and was presumably from the same collection as the Orinoco Geese.



Reed Bunting PHF



Magpie PHF



Garden Warbler PHF



Red Kite PHF