

SANDBACH FLASHES 2014 BIRD REPORT



Garganey

Editorial (Andy Firth)

The year 2014 gave us 142 species compared with 156 in 2013 and 161 in 2012; it was in numbers terms disappointing. The extremely poor wader passage was also unwanted and particularly the return passage with water levels looking perfect, the best for many years but all of the month of September produced very little despite these perfect conditions and excellent observer coverage. The highlights and maybe a sign of the future were the appearances of both *Great White Egret* and *Glossy Ibis* both seemingly will eventually become regular in the region. The other rarities were the *Lesser Scaup* and *Common Crane*.

A brief *Turtle Dove* seen by just one observer was probably the most disappointing miss for the regulars as the heady days of this species being not uncommon at the flashes are long gone. Similarly a flyover *Common Crane* would have been a flashes tick for some. No *Little Owl* was seen in the recording area and disappointingly no *Grasshopper Warblers* were recorded. But as somebody said to me when I was lamenting the poor year "it's only a pond between Sandbach and Crewe and not *Minsmere*", maybe therefore too much is expected especially after the previous two mega years.

One thing is for certain we will all be trying just as hard in 2015. Thanks to all the birders especially Dennis Swaby for his excellent images used throughout the report and to Dave Robinson for keeping the flashes year list up to date throughout on line an invaluable reference for double checking the report.

At the back of this year's report I have included a piece of work from the 1930's and 1940's by the pioneers of birding in the area "Notes on the birds of Sandbach". This has not reproduced brilliantly but is a fascinating read.

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 prior to the Sandbach Flashes report standing alone and not including other SECOS records as I don't have specific Sandbach Flashes information.

Species	<i>ARRIVALS</i>		<i>DEPARTURES</i>	
	Date in 2014	Earliest Ever SECOS	Date in 2014	Latest Ever SECOS
Little Ringed Plover	23-Mar	05-Mar-00	29-Jul	16-Oct-85
Sand Martin	14-Mar	11-Mar-08	30-Sep	24-Nov-72
Swallow	02-Apr	10-Feb-07	13-Oct	30-Nov-74
Willow Warbler	06-Apr	21-Mar-09	25-Aug	27-Sep-08
House Martin	05-Apr	25-Mar-95	30-Sep	05-Nov-77
Yellow Wagtail	07-Apr	29-Mar-81	08-Sep	27-Oct-06
Lesser Whitethroat	15-Apr	21-Mar-00	21-Sep	08-Oct-13
Reed Warbler	18-Apr	10-Apr-11	07-Sep	04-Oct-98
Common Whitethroat	20-Apr	11-Apr-09	07-Sep	22-Sep-11
Sedge Warbler	19-Apr	10-Apr-11	07-Aug	01-Oct-78/11
Swift	17-Apr	05-Apr-82	31-Aug	03-Nov-78
Cuckoo	05-May	16-Apr-96	NR	01-Oct-86
Garden Warbler	28-May	16-Apr-09	18-Aug	09-Sep-83
Hobby	22-Apr	27-Mar-94	25-Sep	08-Oct-00
Grasshopper Warbler	NR	15-Apr-09	NR	25-Sep-10

NEXT NEW BIRD FOR THE FLASHES SWEEPSTAKE

Should there be enough interest I would like to carry on with the "next bird for the flashes" sweepstake. Looking at the names below most of the individuals still bird the flashes to some extent or another so it may be possible. It was last won with Hawfinch. I will see how much interest there is in the early part of 2015 and take it from there.

Name	Species
Andy Firth	Woodlark
Bryan Perkins	Dipper
Colin Lythgoe	Bluethroat
John Wakefield	Caspian Tern
Russ Stonier	Rose Coloured Starling
Chloe Jones	Black Throated Diver
Paul Hill	Storm Petrel
Dave Norbury	Bonaparte's Gull
Ian Barber	Blue Winged Teal
Dave Meakin	Ring Necked Duck
Mark Stubbs	Cetti's Warbler
Noel Stubbs	Long Billed Dowitcher
Peter Swallow	Little Auk
Tim Halliday	Whiskered Tern
Janet Jones	Common Rosefinch
Joyce Griffith	Ross's Gull
Allan Perkins	American Golden Plover
Ian Marshall	Dotterel
Alan Battersby	Collared Pratincole
Linda Battersby	Ferruginous Duck
Alan Booth	Rough Legged Buzzard
Peter Lunt	Shag
Angela Goodwin	Cattle Egret
Andy Goodwin	Arctic Skua
Robert Brown	Little Bittern

A BLAST FROM THE PAST 2001

Grey Phalarope at Railway Flash, 13th to 16th Oct, by Andy Goodwin.

While walking around one of the outlying flashes I located a phalarope swimming on the second shallow pool of Railway Flash. Its forehead and lore's were white, fore crown white with pencil thin black lines on the sides. Rear crown, centre of nape and centre of rear neck were black. Broad black eye stripe extending onto ear coverts separated from black crown by white supercillium. Sides of neck, throat and breast white. Small wash of yellow buff on upper breast and lower throat. Rest of under parts white except for rather prominent grey breast side patches. Mantle, scapulars and closed wings plain clean light grey. Bill just shorter than width of head, all black. A strong flier when hassled by Black-headed Gulls showing prominent white wing bar contrasting with dark wings and grey back.

Red-necked Phalarope considered but eliminated by bill length and shape, the overall size of the bird and the uniform back colour.

I ran back to Elton Hall Flash to get other local birders and fortunately the bird stayed for four days allowing many locals to see it. This is the second record for Sandbach Flashes with the first being a juvenile at Elton Hall Flash on 3rd Sep 1997.

Red-rumped Swallow, at Watch Lane Flash, 16th May by Andy Goodwin

Arriving at Watch Lane Flash at 11:40 to do a couple of hours local patch birding I was confronted with 200+ hirundines feeding low over the water. I had just started to do a complete scan of the water and was checking the front edge of a distant reed bed when a Red-rumped Swallow appeared in my field of view.

After recovering from the initial shock I watched the bird flying away over the water it showed a large square buffy red rump patch, jet black long tail, blue back quite dark and a narrow chestnut collar still visible in my binoculars at 150 yards. It glided to the left banked and then glided right in front of the reed bed showing pale buffy underling coverts and white under parts also washed buff. I lost the bird as it went up the inlet only partly visible from where I stood.

I wanted to double check all the features so I started to check through all the hirundines again. I still had not found the Red-rumped Swallow after a good five minutes of searching. It was only when I looked at the reed bed adjacent to the inlet I re-found it. It was hunting with large numbers of Barn Swallows and House Martins. I looked again at the long dark tail and under tail coverts sharply demarcated from the buff belly. The wings were long and broad based, blacker than the back. It lacked the black throat gorget of Barn Swallow being buff like the rest of the under parts with a chestnut face.

Happy with getting a good description of the bird I went to nearby Elton Hall Flash. Luckily A Firth was there and he returned with me at approximately 12:10, where after a frantic ten minutes searching we located the bird in its favourite inlet. We were later joined by five other local birders. We learnt that the best way to get good views was to set up the telescopes and train them on a fishing platform along the bank of the inlet. The bird would then pass through our field of view every thirty seconds or so. Using the telescopes we could at last see the narrow grey/buff streaking on the breast and belly. Also the edges of the rump patch were paler than the centre, almost pinkish at long range.

The weather improved rapidly at 13:20 and as we expected the hirundines all rose up and were gone, taking the first Red-rumped Swallow for the SECOS area with them.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2014

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Fairly common resident.

Bred again this year after last years blank, four cygnets on EHF on 2nd Jun. Regular throughout with 24 on EHF on 20th Apr.



Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Rare winter visitor.

In the first winter period two were seen over EHF on 14th Jan with presumably the same birds over MGT on 19th Jan. In the second winter period two were on EHF on 13th Oct with five consisting of two adults and three juveniles also on EHF on 30th Oct.

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant or feral.

Again a little hit and miss with three skeins over in the first winter period and the odd bird infrequently with the Canada Goose flock. The first autumn skein was over EHF on 15th Oct but few after that.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Rare visitor or feral.

Regularly seen throughout the recording area but unusual were the 40 that flew over EHF on 14th Jun

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Common resident.

Wintering numbers up to a maximum of around 800 the same as last year once again a successful breeding season with the first brood seen on 8th Jun.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Rare visitor or feral.

Odd birds as usual regular with the Canada Geese. Fewer sightings than in previous years.

Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)

Rare visitor.

One was on PHF between 8th and 11th Apr.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Uncommon resident and winter visitor.

The first brood fledged on 20th May with another two broods following. The first returning post moult bird recorded on 23rd Sep.



Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*)

Scarce visitor.

As in 2013 a difficult species to find but odd individuals after the first on 2nd May until an unprecedented nine consisting of four drakes and five females on WLF on 6th Nov, these birds presumably disturbed from elsewhere by the previous nights fireworks.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Common winter visitor.

The largest count in the first winter period was of 770 covering EHF and PHF on 9th Feb. This count was not bettered all year.



Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Scarce in 2014 with individuals and pairs recorded on EHF, PHF and RF.

Common Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

Seemingly on the decline at the flashes perhaps due to the high water levels which have become the norm, counts between 200 and 350 in the first winter period, similar numbers in the second winter period.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common resident. Abundant in winter.

The first young were noted on EHF on 13th Apr two weeks later than in 2013. The usual late summer build up peaked at 1250 between EHF and PHF on 23rd Aug.

Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

The wintering numbers continue to decrease at a pace with just odd birds seen in the first winter period. A maximum of three in the second winter period.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Scarce summer visitor.

After last year's poor showing one or two drakes showed extremely well around EHF and PHF from 12th May to 26th May

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Uncommon winter visitor, scarce in summer.

Regular from EHF with a superb count of 88 on 27th Sep.

Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Fairly common winter visitor.

At least seven were on EHF in late November an excellent count for the flashes.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Scarce breeder.

No breeding reported this year, 37 were counted on EHF and PHF on 11th Feb.

Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*)

Very rare visitor

A drake spent two days 16th and 17th May on EHF, spending its time down the side lane.



Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Very rare visitor and passage migrant.

A drake commuted between EHF and PHF on 14th May. A female was also on EHF on 30th Oct.



Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

In the early winter period a female was on EHF on 2nd Feb, the only other recorded was also on EHF on 31st Oct.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Regular winter visitor.

The fall in numbers continues presumably because of the amount of suitable habitat elsewhere, a couple of double figure counts in both winter periods.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Rare except where locally released.

Presumably none were released for shooting as just the one recorded in fields by CF on 3rd Nov.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Scarce resident except where locally released.

Upwards of 20 were in the CF set aside on 16th Nov.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Fairly common resident.

Bred on the MGT run off pool with three juveniles fledged, regular throughout maximum six on CF on 7th Nov.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Common resident.

Regularly recorded and bred on EHF, WLF CF and WF.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Rare in summer.

Increasingly recorded throughout the recording area, 34 were on EHF and PHF on 4th Mar.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Scarce visitor.

The first was seen on EHF on 16th Apr, then regular throughout in one's and two's, however five flew over PHF on 27th Sep and could this be a sign of things to come.



Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Very rare visitor

Hopefully the two recorded this year the second and third flashes records will be the start of an increase in sightings. One alighted briefly on EHF on the evening of 18th Jul. The second spent two days around EHF on 5th and 6th Oct. Both were photographed although the less said about the images of the Jul bird the better.



Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common resident.

Regularly recorded throughout.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

Very rare visitor.

The third for the flashes was one on PHF on 6th Aug.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Scarce visitor.

First recorded with one over EHF on 25th May. Subsequently singles over PHF on 25th Jun and again on 5th Jul also PHF. A disappointing return.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Scarce visitor.

The only record from 2014 was a "cream crown" over EHF on 16th Aug.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Common resident.

Regular throughout with breeding recorded.

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Common resident.

Common again throughout with 26 in view from MGT on 24th Aug. A bird was seen feasting on a Moorhen at EHF on the same date.



Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Scarce migrant.

As in 2013 just the one sighting, a bird spent ten minutes in the dead tree at EHF on 20th Mar.

Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Common resident.

No breeding recorded this year but still seen frequently around the recording area.



Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

The first winter period produced singles on 10th Jan from EHF and 15th Jan from PHF. The second winter period found one at EHF on 15th Nov and again on 24th Nov.

Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

The first record was from EHF on 22th Apr then regular throughout

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Scarce resident and winter visitor.

Seen regularly particularly around EHF/PHF and MGT.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Regularly heard and occasionally seen especially but not exclusively in the RF and PHF area.



Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout the recording area.

Common Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common resident and variable winter visitor.

First fledged young seen on EHF on 15th Apr, numbers stable.

Common Crane (*Grus grus*)

Very rare visitor.

The second for the flashes was seen flying high to the north over EHF at 18:05 on 10th Mar.

Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Scarce winter visitor and uncommon summer visitor.

Regularly recorded through the spring and summer months.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Scarce summer visitor. Uncommon spring/autumn migrant.

Numbers very disappointing in the spring passage after the first at EHF on 23rd Mar. The first returning juvenile was on EHF on 21st Jun with a flock of 12 consisting of adults and juveniles on 26th Jun also on EHF. Passage peaked with 18 on EHF on 3rd Jul.

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

An extremely poor year with the first on 6th May and a maximum of 6 on 31st May.

European Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

The decline in sightings continues with five by PHF on 8th Feb the only sighting in the first winter period. Difficult to catch up with in the second winter period with one on 29th Oct, two on 24th Nov on EHF

Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and abundant winter visitor.

On 11th Jan 1135 were counted on EHF and PHF. On a positive note a pair bred by PHF with two juveniles on 21st Jun.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

As with all other waders very infrequent after the first at EHF on 11th Feb. A pitiful four on EHF on 31st Jul the biggest count.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

As in 2013 just four birds wintered in the first winter period, a male in full breeding plumage was seen on EHF on 19th Jun. Odd adults and juveniles then through the autumn passage.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Singles from the MGT area on 12th Jan, 12th Mar and 17th Oct.

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Uncommon winter visitor and migrant.

Again very difficult to judge numbers present as difficult to count but present in both winter periods at all flashes.

Eurasian Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Scarce winter visitor.

The usual scattering of records around FF in Jan as the year lists begin. Very few other reports received.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Common non breeding resident.

Numbers reduced again with 44 on 20th May at EHF the maximum.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

The first was on EHF on 2nd May but one of the best sights of the year were the sixteen that dropped onto EHF the following day

Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor.

On 28th Jan 53 were on EHF, slightly fewer in the second winter period.

Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Uncommon visitor and migrant.

Seemingly on the decline with a maximum of four in the first winter period, five the maximum in the second winter period.

Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

Not a vintage year by any means after the first on 5th May with just another six sighted.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Scarce winter visitor. Uncommon passage migrant.

Several spring records after the first on 10th Mar return passage peaked in early Jul in terms of numbers with low double figure counts on several dates.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Scarce passage migrant.

As in 2012 and 2013 this species just made the report with a rather splendid single on Hancock's Flood on 29th May.



Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Fairly common passage migrant.

The first was on EHF on 12th Apr.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

Scarce visitor.

Between Jan and Mar ten sightings with three together on EHF on 24th Mar noteworthy, the first passage juvenile was recorded on 27th Jul also on EHF. Total for the year approximately 25.

Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)

Rare visitor.

Just one recorded with a 1st w on EHF on 4th Apr

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Abundant autumn and winter visitor.

Once again the 2012 breeding not repeated the first returning juvenile was on EHF on 18th Jun. On 2nd Oct a minimum of 900 carpeted the salt pan.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Once again no large counts recorded this year in either passage periods. The first returning juvenile was on EHF on 23rd Jul.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.

Seen in every month even mid-summer, up to 600 regular commuting between EHF, PHF and MGT in both winter periods.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)

Regular passage migrant.

Regular from EHF and PHF.

Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*)

Scarce visitor.

Between Jan and Apr at least three records with a 1st w, a 3rd w and an adult on and off mainly from PHF. Another five or so recorded for the rest of the year.



Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.

Up to 500 were regular around MGT however total numbers could be much more.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)

Scarce winter visitor.

In the early winter period it was difficult to bird around EHF and PHF without seeing an Iceland Gull, three (an adult, 1st w and 2nd w) were together on 18th Jan. On 14th Nov an immature was on PHF, a very early record for the second winter period.



Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

On 19th Jan 194 were on PHF. Counts just below 100 regular in November and December on PHF.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

Not a tern year at the flashes with just this species noted, however less than ten sightings after the first on 4th May.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident.

Regular around EHF throughout.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon resident.

Common throughout especially in the fields around EHF.

Common Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed. The best visible migration count was 791 over MGT on 11th Oct.

Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

Very rare visitor

The first flashes record since 3rd May 2000 was one seen by Watch Lane Farm for 15 minutes on 20th May.

Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Calling birds only with birds heard from EHF on 5th and 20th May.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

Very rare visitor

On 12th Jan what was presumably the bird from 2013 was found roosting in the same area of hedgerow it was present until 27th Feb at least. On 16th Nov the bird was seen again and stayed until the end of November.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Scarce resident.

Just one record with a bird seen while a local nest box was being checked by the Barn Owl group

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common resident.

Calling birds heard and seen at FF but once again a showy individual adjacent to EHF stole the show, first seen on 24th Feb.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

A minimum of 130 were over EHF on 25th May

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Uncommon resident.

Records from EHF, PHF, RF, CF and WLF.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Uncommon resident.

Heard only records this year with birds at EHF calling on 12th Apr and 11th May.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Common resident.

Commonly recorded throughout and regular on the EHF feeders, bred in the willows adjacent to EHF.



Common Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Fairly common.

On 17th Oct thirty-five were seen on and over MGT, breeding suspected again at MGT.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

Birds seen prospecting the nest site used in previous years but no confirmed breeding. Obvious visual passage over EHF on 27th Aug with 300 counted moving south in just over an hour.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common summer visitor.

The first was on 2nd Apr and then common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Common summer visitor.

The first on 5th Apr then regular throughout

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Very rare passage migrant.

Two were found on MGT on 8th May.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Regular on passage from MGT with the best visible migration count being 290 on 13th Sep.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

The first record came from EHF on 7th Apr. A vintage return passage with four juveniles on 15th Jul potentially local. An impressive 11 around EHF on 17th Aug.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Regular in the autumn and winter periods particularly around EHF and PHF.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Fairly common resident.

Commonly recorded throughout the year, "White Wagtails" first seen on 23rd Apr.

Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

Common resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Abundant resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

Scarce migrant.

On 16th and 17th Jul one was in bushes behind the salt pan, the second and final bird was one by GF on 30th Aug.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Scarce migrant.

The MGT area once again produced the goods with birds on 8th May, 10th May, 16th May, 7th Sep and 9th Sep.

Common Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Scarce winter visitor.

After last year's blank an excellent return from MGT starting with a female on 26th and 27th Feb. From 11th Oct one or two were present to the year end.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

The first was seen on 21st Mar, 11 were on MGT on 7th May and most could well have been "Greenland" race birds. Return passage very light with two on MGT on 30th Aug the first.

Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Common throughout the area. Breeding confirmed.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Common winter visitor.

In the first winter period the last recorded was from EHF on 29th Mar. Autumn passage started on 15th Oct with 100 or so over EHF.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Fairly common resident.

Regular throughout though not commonly recorded.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Common winter visitor.

As with Fieldfare the first returning birds were noted on 15th Oct. On 17th Oct 513 were noted over EHF.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Fairly common resident.

Breeding recorded. Largest count was 11 on 11th Sep.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

Regular around MGT/RF/EHF/WLF, several records of recently fledged young received.

Eurasian Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

Breeding was confirmed from MGT/RF once again and also from WLF.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

Regular throughout the recording area with breeding proven. The first singing bird recorded on 30th Mar

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

Incredibly just one spring record with a showy individual around EHF between 28th May and 3rd Jun. Not a lot better on return with just odd singles.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

First recorded on 15th Apr from EHF.

Common Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor.

Regular throughout after the first on 20th Apr, interestingly the same date as 2013.

Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor, very rare winter visitor.

Regular throughout though under recorded. A bird recorded into Dec was unusual.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common summer visitor.

Again under recorded but little change suspected.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Under recorded with odd singles from the well watched EHF area and FF.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

A strange year with no spring records, no breeding season records but then a very healthy return passage with at least eight sightings from a variety of areas.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

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.

Regular throughout.

European Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Common resident.

Regular around FF but just occasional singles elsewhere.

Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common resident.

Common again in all suitable habitats. Breeding confirmed from FF.

Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Uncommon resident.

Regularly recorded from EHF and FF, numbers could well be on the increase.

Common Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common resident.

Common throughout, breeding proven.

Eurasian Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

Very commonly recorded particularly from MGT with flocks of several hundred not uncommon this year.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Common resident.

The rookery still 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*)

Regular visitor and resident.

Recorded in every month, bordering on common!



Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Common resident and regular winter visitor.

A best estimate of the flock around MGT in late November was c 1,500, slightly fewer than in 2013.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Common resident.

Seen around EHF but only in small but increasing numbers.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Fairly common resident.

Breeding confirmed again around EHF.

Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

Common throughout again. Breeding confirmed.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Scarce winter visitor.

A female was briefly seen by the EHF feeders on 26th Oct.

European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident.

No large counts received this year.

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Fairly common resident.

On 12th Oct at least 80 were feeding on MGT. Breeding proven.

Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and scarce resident.

Regular around FF particularly in the first winter period, odd flyovers elsewhere.

Common Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Fairly common resident.

Bred again adjacent to MGT with 81 on 10th Oct the largest recorded count.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Odd flyover singles only recorded.

Common Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Uncommon resident.

Recorded regularly again throughout the area, particularly from the FF and GF areas.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Uncommon resident.

The usual smattering of singing birds behind the railway line otherwise odd flyovers until a flock of twenty plus were located in December feeding in a stubble field behind the railway and visible at times from within the recording area boundary when perching in trees.

Common Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Uncommon resident.

Common around MGT/RF. Breeding confirmed.



All images courtesy of Dennis Swaby