

Site Guide to the SECOS Recording Area



Your local birdwatching group

Produced by John Thompson, SECOS Recorder

June 2021

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The SECOS website and/or the SECOS Annual Reports have Ordnance Survey grid references for some of the sites in the Recording Area, along with a comment on accessibility to each site. I have produced this document updating the list. Where possible, I have used the descriptions from both resources mentioned above. Only those with public access are included in this document. Access to some sites involved long and delicate negotiations and may be withdrawn if access is abused! At all times, please observe **The Countryside Code** and **The Birdwatchers' Code**. Some birders are tolerated when they trespass on private land, but it is not advised.

At the time of writing, many of the sites listed here have dedicated web pages, some with background information, photographs, and maps / leaflets - removing the need for me to include maps in this document. Those web pages may suggest places to park. However, in case a link is broken, I have included a list of where I have parked to access the sites. It includes: -

- postal address of nearby property
- Ordnance Survey grid references
- Satellite co-ordinates

to aid those unfamiliar with the sites to navigate the Recording Area.

There are public footpaths allowing alternative views of the sites but take care not to annoy other birders as you are likely to flush the wildlife. Some of the maps included in this document are the ones I created for the acclaimed **"The Birds of Sandbach Flashes 1935 to 1999"** by Andrew Goodwin and Colin Lythgoe and may be out of date - footpaths can be altered, so please double-check before heading out.

Please check beforehand if you are concerned about wheelchair access or if a car park may be locked after hours, etc.

"Likely species" refers to records between 2010 and 2019 (circa 250 species recorded during the decade) and are listed only as an indication, showing what might be seen at the right time of year and in the appropriate conditions, etc. **'Sensitive' species and/or those vulnerable to disturbance if breeding and/or roosting are not included.**

My interpretation of the likely species/status is based on the volume and frequency of sightings, etc. in the decade. Please treat the lists as a guideline only – as ever, in birdwatching, there are no guarantees!

I am grateful to Colin Lythgoe, SECOS Chairman and the former Recorder for his input to this document. My thanks also go to Kathy Beresford, along with the new members who have recently moved to this area, for inspiring me to produce this to help them to find and visit the sites unaccompanied.

If you would like to suggest a site to be considered for inclusion on the SECOS website and in this document, please let me know.

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SECOS Recorder
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Section One of this document covers probably the best watched sites in the SECOS Recording Area, Sandbach Flashes, aka “The Flashes”.

Most, if not all, of this area is a Natural England designated SSSI and privately owned.

I have included the maps I created for “The Birds of Sandbach Flashes 1935 to 1999”. Apologies for the quality, they are copies and not my originals!

Most of the flashes are fished, some have restricted access.

Most can be viewed from the roads that criss-cross the area, parking either on tarmac laybys, pull-ins, hardcore carparks or soft verges.

Many of the roads are narrow and caution navigating them is advised.

The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the area and a towpath is accessible at most bridge crossings which can give elevated views, if restricted in places, of some areas covered in this document.

Local birders deliberately avoid some sites at certain times of the day – depending on your location and time, bright sunshine can hamper visibility.

Section Two covers the remaining, accessible, sites within the SECOS Recording Area in alphabetical order.

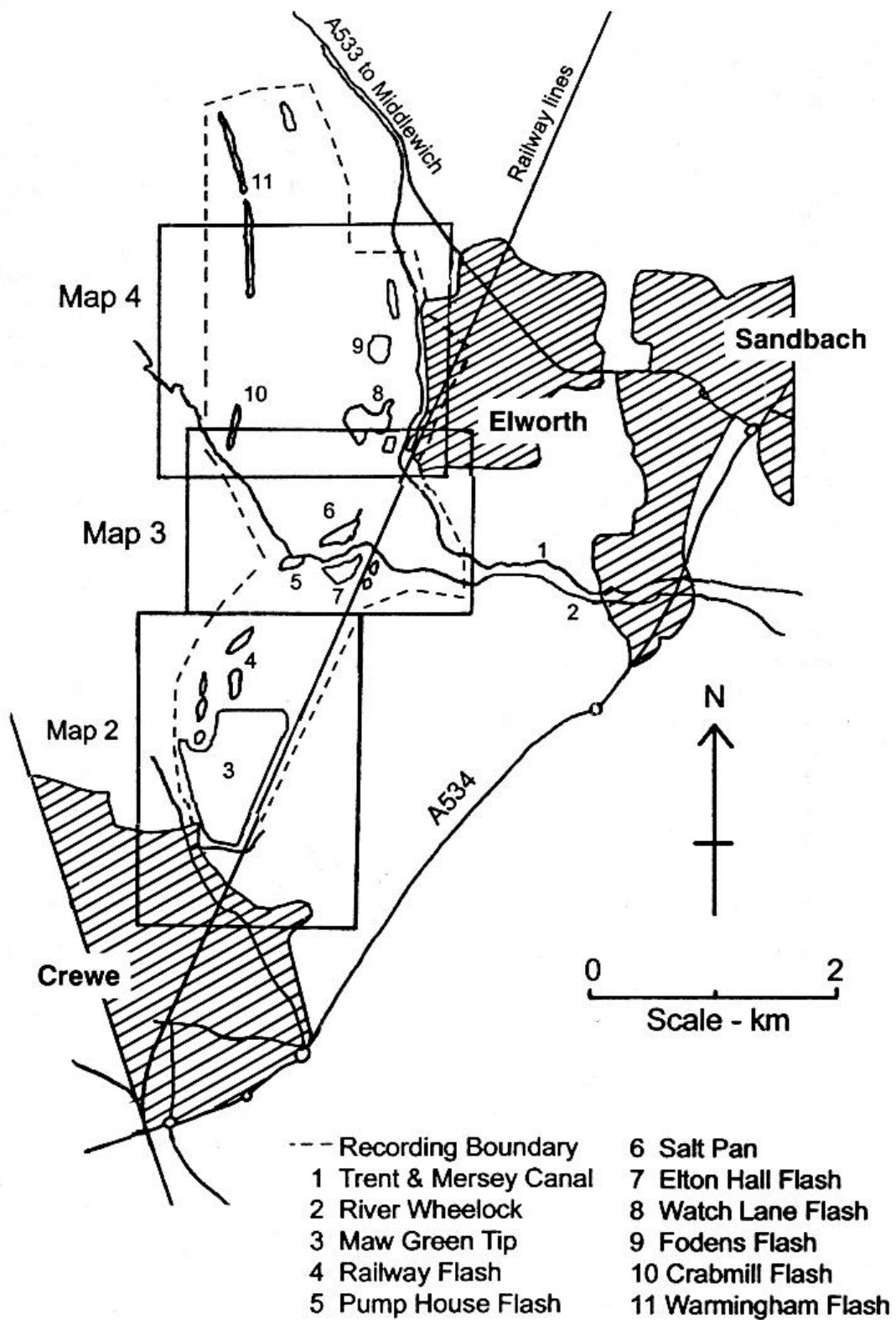
Section Three is

- an index of the ‘notable’ species
- a list of the sites and where you can park (left blank if none designated)

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SECTION ONE – Sandbach Flashes

Map 1 - Sandbach Flashes



Working from the North southwards ...

Warmingham Flash

aka Moston Flash or Moston Long Flash, heavily fished.

Three roads allow you to view part of the water and bordering fields

1. Tetton Lane - small pull-in gives views of small pool on one side of the road and a marshy area on the other side
2. Dragons Lane - layby and views both north and south along the flash. The footpath northwards is also an option
3. Green Lane - small pull-in near the flash but depending on the time of year, views are restricted by roadside vegetation

Green Lane Set-aside

In winter, stubble field can attract large numbers of a variety of sparrows, finches and buntings.

Accessed using footpath north alongside Ryecroft Cottage

Likely species:

All year - Great Crested Grebe, Kingfisher, Kestrel, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

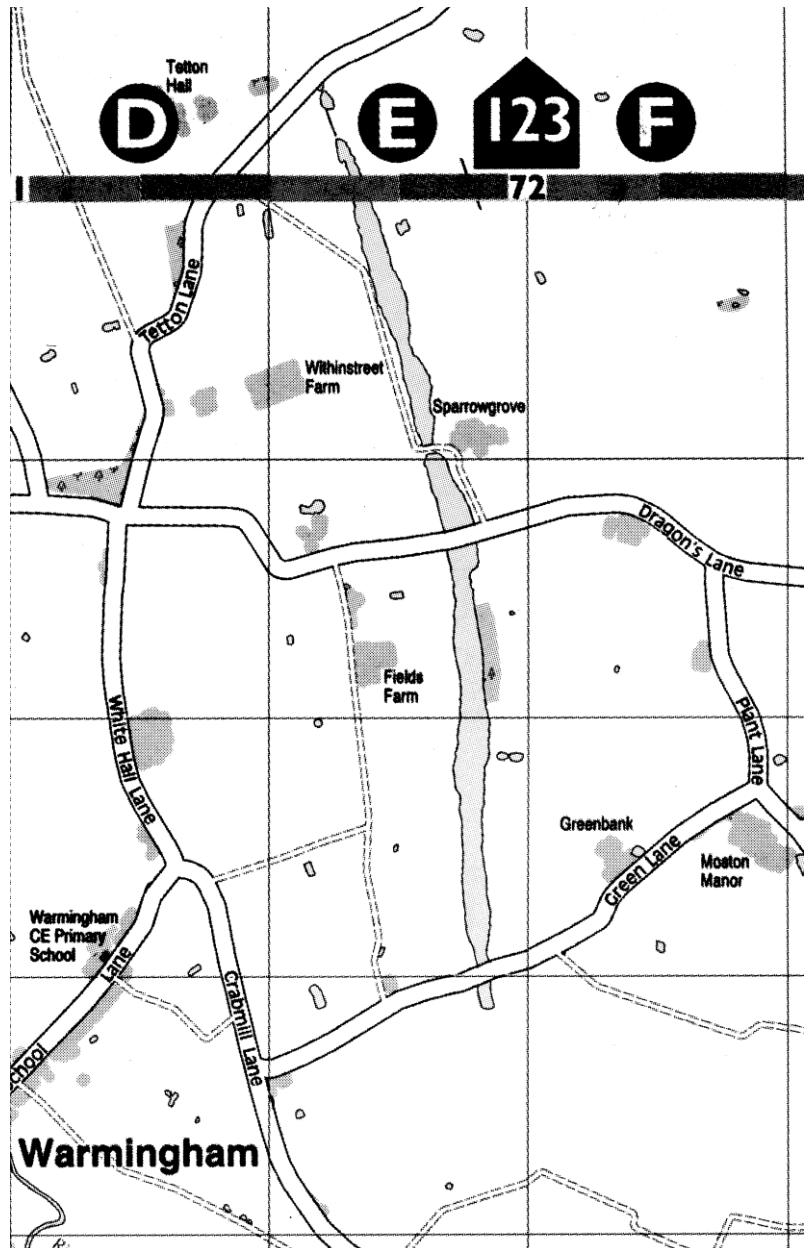
Winter - Goosander, Stock Dove, Golden Plover, Snipe, Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Merlin, Tree Sparrow, Brambling, Linnet, Siskin, Yellowhammer

Spring - Tawny Owl, Little Owl

Summer - Water Rail, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Bullfinch

Autumn - Water Rail, Hobby, Willow Warbler, Linnet

On passage - Green Sandpiper, Greenshank, Grasshopper Warbler, Garden Warbler



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Plex Flash

aka Market Garden Pool - no public access but can be viewed from Oakwood Lane or the canal towpath

Fodens Flash (aka The Moat), Fodens Wood

and canal towpath

Fodens Flash

a small water with reedbed
surrounded by water-
logged/damp woodland
a small roadside parking /
viewpoint

Fodens Wood

An, often muddy, footpath through the woods to the north of the flash can be productive

Canal towpath

hardcore off road parking (aka Red Shale car park)
where road crosses the canal. Walk under bridge north for elevated views of vegetation on both sides of the canal

Likely species:

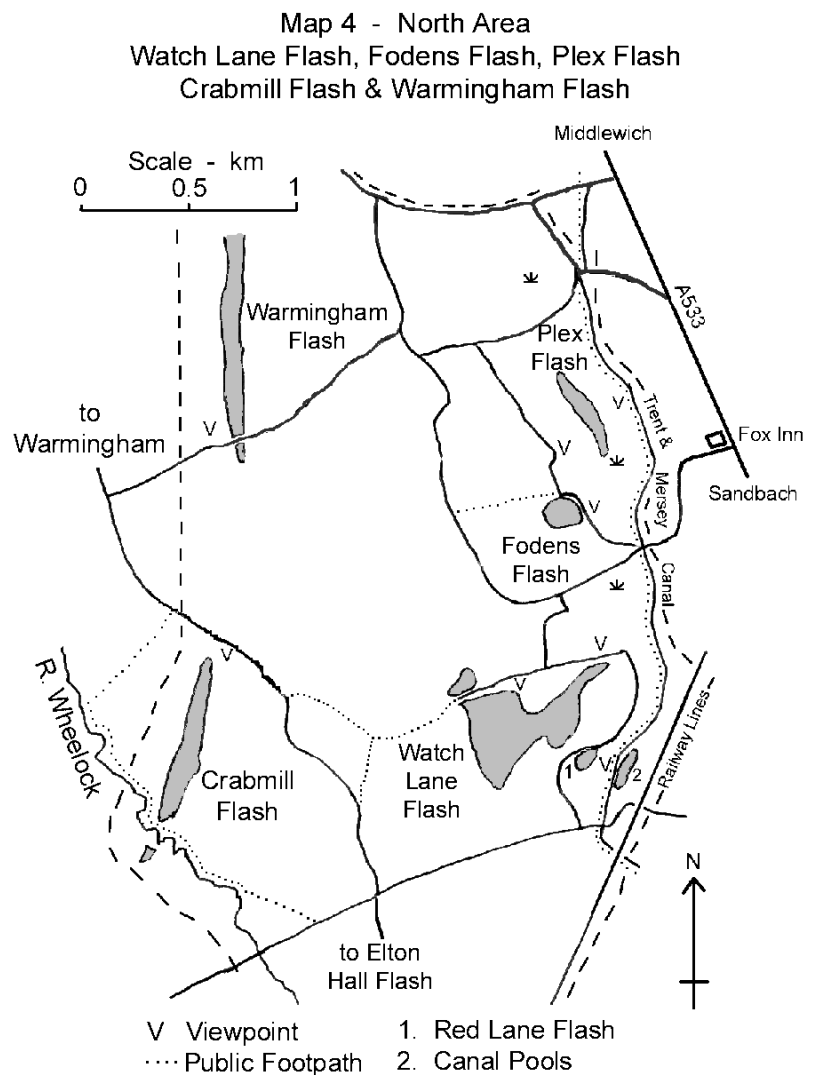
All year - Goosander, Tawny Owl,
Rook, Redpoll, Siskin
Winter - Little Grebe, Woodcock,
Snipe, Kingfisher
Summer - Barn Owl
Autumn - Water Rail

Crabmill Flash

A deep flash with reeds and rushes along one edge – relatively secluded.

Likely species:

All year - Little Grebe
Winter - Pochard, Scaup, Goldeneye, Goosander, Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Great White Egret, Tawny Owl, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Tree Sparrow, Brambling, Greenfinch
Spring - Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, warblers
Summer - Green Woodpecker
On passage - Quail, Cuckoo, Whimbrel, Wheatear



Watch Lane Flash

Larger, fished water with reed beds, viewable from both north and south of the water but restricted access due to fishing activity. Gated car park is for fishermen only, please park sympathetically where allowed. The footpath to the north can also be productive

Likely species:

all year round: - Great Crested Grebe,
Kingfisher, Cetti's Warbler

Winter - Pochard, Goldeneye, Water
Rail, Curlew, Woodcock, Brambling,
Redpoll, Crossbill, Siskin

Early Spring - Oystercatcher

Summer - nesting Common Tern,
warblers

On passage - Ruff, Dunlin, Common Sandpiper, Osprey, Yellow Wagtail, Tree Pipit

Red Lane Tip

Dense area of vegetation viewed from the roadside at various points

Likely species:

Winter - Brambling, Siskin
Summer - Wood Warbler, Garden
Warbler

Red Lane Flash/Pool

Small pool surrounded by reedbed,
viewed from road verge opposite a pull-in

Likely species:

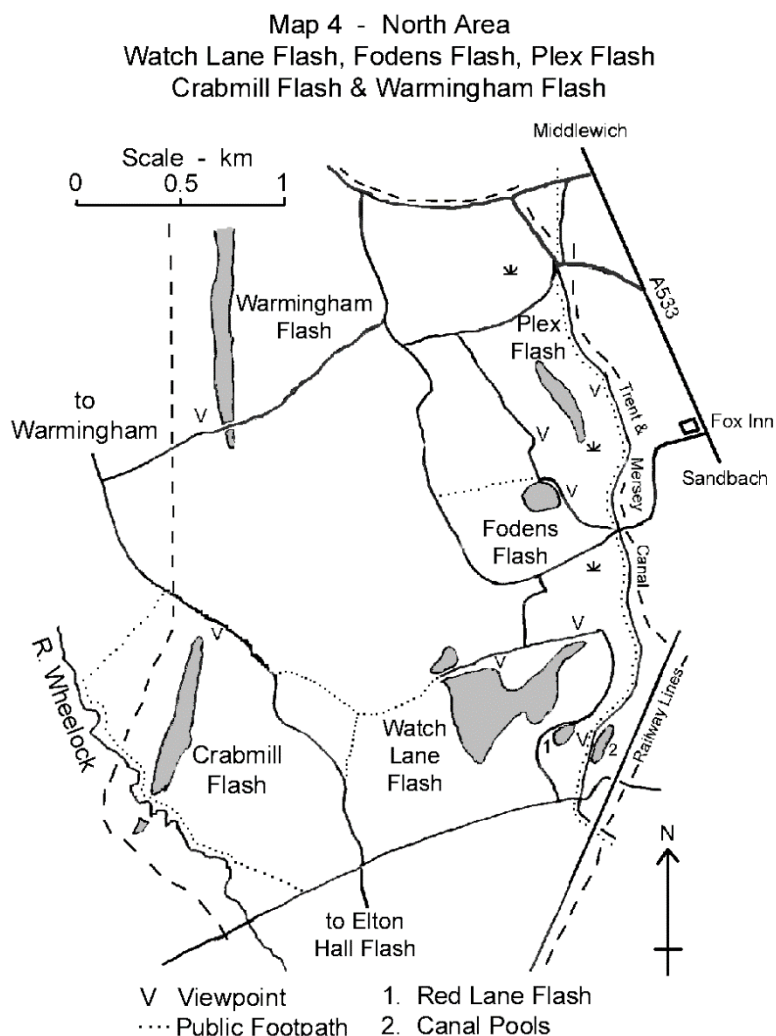
Summer - Cetti's Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Reed Bunting
On passage - Grasshopper Warbler, Willow Warbler

Rookery Bridge / canal towpath

Accessed from Hall Lane close to road bridge over the canal – drive under ‘goal posts’ to car park.
Popular with the factory workforce on their breaks and dog walkers

Likely species:

Winter - Red-legged Partridge, Skylark, Meadow Pipit, finch flocks can hold Tree Sparrow, Brambling, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting
Spring - Yellowhammer
On passage - Willow Warbler, White Wagtail



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Elton Hall Flash and Pump House Flash

including Rosemary's Flood and Hancock's Flood

Perhaps the best watched of the local flashes. Views from a sheltered viewpoint, roadside and the side lane gives views of the back pool. Pull-in parking available. Local roads are heavily pot-holed and subject to flooding after heavy rain

Likely species:

all year round - Mandarin Duck, Stock Dove, Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Dunlin, Snipe, Redshank, Common Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Kingfisher, Peregrine, Tree Sparrow, Yellowhammer

Winter - Pintail, Goldeneye, Water Rail, Golden Plover, waders, Glaucous Gull^①, Iceland Gull^①, Merlin, Brambling

Spring - Garganey, Cuckoo, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper, passage waders, Common Tern, Hobby, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail, White Wagtail

Summer - Garganey, Little Ringed Plover, Common Tern, Hobby, hirundines, warblers, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail

Autumn - Pintail, Water Rail, Golden Plover, passage waders, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail

On passage - Cuckoo, Osprey, Willow Warbler, Redstart, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear

Fields Farm Flash & railway embankment

Two small pools lying on the eastern side of the railway lines. A track continues along side the railway embankment northwards up to the canal.

Likely species:

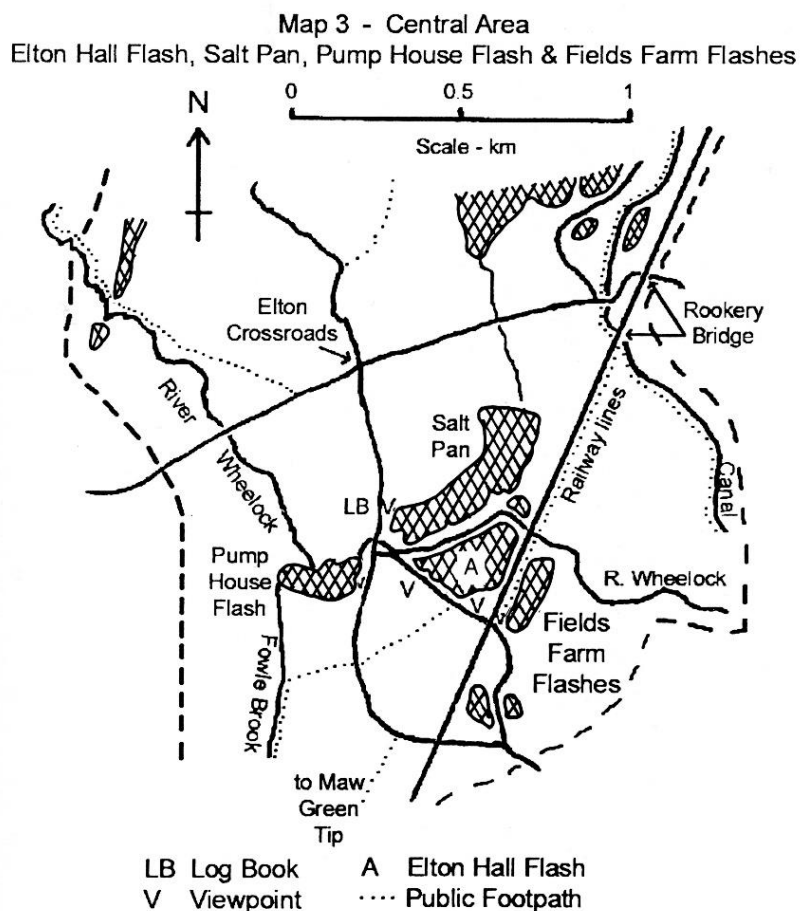
all year round - Yellowhammer

Winter - Goosander, Black-tailed Godwit, Meadow Pipit, Reed Bunting

Spring - Skylark, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat

Summer - Kingfisher, warblers

On Passage - Cuckoo, Common Sandpiper, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, White Wagtail



① the frequency of sightings of these species are likely to decrease due to the planned decommissioning of the nearby landfill site

Maw Green Tip and Railway Flash

For the purposes of this document, this area also includes Groby and Oaktree Flashes, the footpath is very frequently extremely muddy and therefore 'heavy going'!

If you exclude The Cloud, Mow Cop, etc. the plateau on Maw Green Tip is probably the highest point in the Recording Area and some birders use this elevated position for visible migration watches – particularly in Autumn

Likely species:

all year round - Mandarin Duck,
Gadwall, Water Rail, Little Grebe,
Barn Owl, Kingfisher, Green
Woodpecker, Peregrine, Skylark,
Cetti's Warbler, Tree Sparrow,
Meadow Pipit, Reed Bunting

Winter - Goldeneye, Golden
Plover, Woodcock, Jack Snipe,
Snipe,

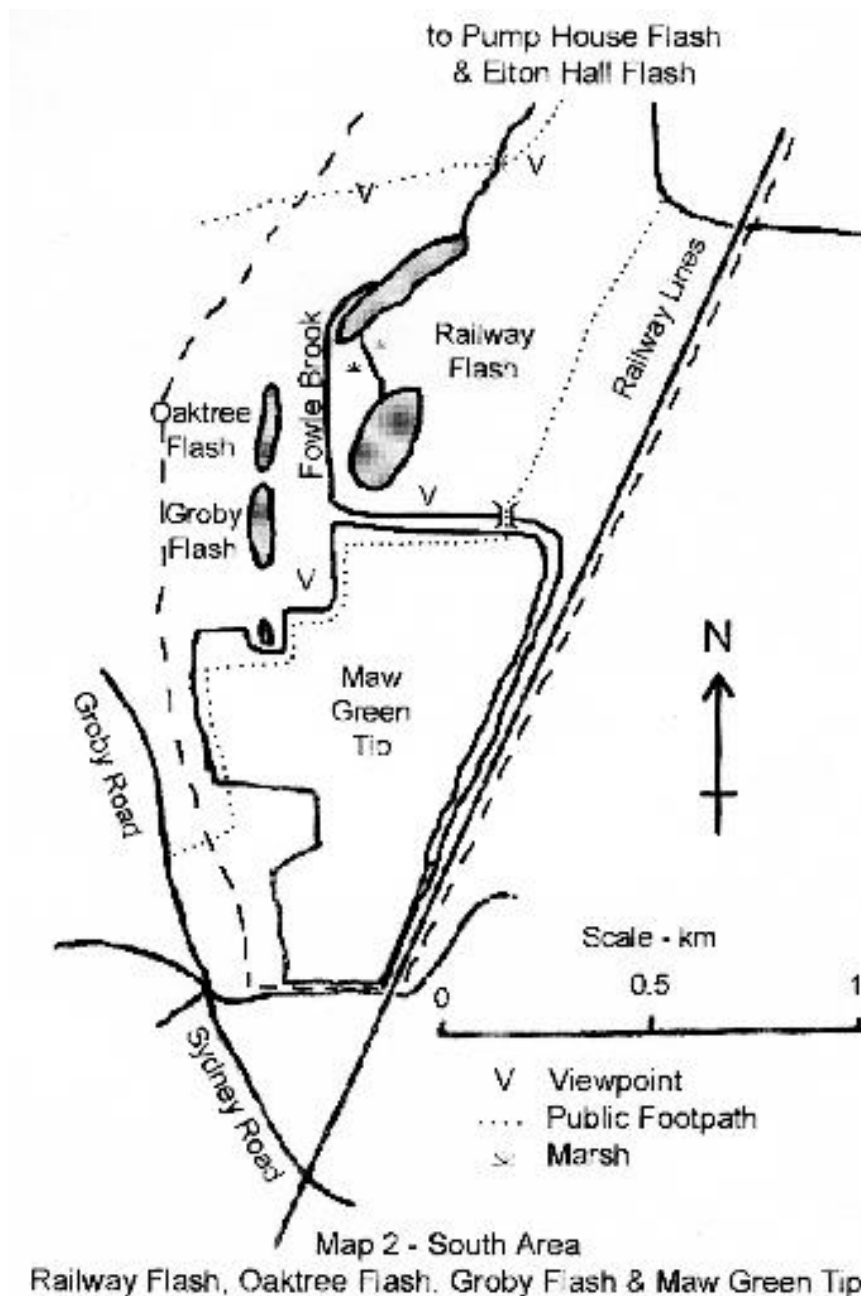
white-winged
gulls[®], Tawny Owl, Merlin,
Stonechat

Spring - Garganey, Cuckoo

Summer - Garganey, Common
Sandpiper, Hobby, warblers

Autumn - Golden Plover, Tawny
Owl, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart

On passage - Whinchat,
Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, White
Wagtail, Tree Pipit



② The frequency of these birds are likely to decrease when the landfill closes

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SECTION TWO - Other Sites in the SECOS Recording Area: -

in alphabetical order

Astbury Mere Country Park

Extensive area of water formed by old quarry workings and now run as a trust and used for water sports and angling. Coin-operated carpark. Very popular with dog walkers and joggers

Nearby: - The Cloud / Timbersbrook

Local birder Steve Seal has a blog and it includes a comprehensive record of sightings

Bagmere SSSI

An overgrown mere still with some water and reed beds and a designated SSSI.

No access to the mere but can be viewed from roadside vantage points.

Limited roadside parking (double yellow lines) on Brereton Heath Lane

Nearby: - Brereton Heath LNR

Likely species:

all year round - Water Rail, Reed Bunting

Winter - Woodcock, Snipe, Starling murmuration

Summer - warblers

On passage - Whinchat, Yellow Wagtail

Borrow Pit Meadows

A 16-hectare site of mixed habitat adjacent to the Salt Line, managed by Cheshire East Council.

Nearby: - Salt Line

Likely species:

all year round - Kestrel, Willow Tit

Winter - Goosander, Tawny Owl

Spring - Green Woodpecker

Summer - warblers

On passage - Cuckoo

Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve

A Cheshire East Council LNR comprising a water-filled quarry and surrounding mixed woodland, also a heath. Coin-operated and patrolled car park, very popular with dog walkers and horse riders, some fishing

Nearby: - Bagmere SSSI

Likely species:

all year round - Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Tree Sparrow

Winter - Goosander, Little Grebe

Spring - Oystercatcher

Summer - Oystercatcher, warblers, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail

On passage – Whinchat

(The) Cloud / Timbersbrook

A small (but important in a SECOS context) area of upland moorland and conifer forest.

Nearby: - Astbury Mere CP

Likely species:

all year round - Green Woodpecker, Kestrel, Raven

Spring - Meadow Pipit

Summer - Wood Warbler, warblers, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Tree Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Crossbill, Siskin

On passage - Wheatear

Crewe Business Park

Primarily a Business Park but managed very sympathetically for wildlife. Adjacent to Quakers Coppice.

Nearby: - Quakers Coppice

Likely species:

all year round - Tawny Owl

Winter - Green Sandpiper, Waxwing, Redpoll, Siskin

Spring - Reed Bunting

Summer - Hobby, warblers

Crewe Golf Course

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

Nearby: - Winterley Pool

Likely species:

Winter - Linnet, Redpoll, Siskin

Spring - Green Woodpecker

On passage - Willow Warbler, Yellow Wagtail

Doddington

Includes two large lakes, woodland, the Hall and grounds.

Historically, SECOS members had arrangements with the Doddington Estate to access to the bird hide.

As the hide is no longer viable, members should only view the area from public footpaths, roads, etc.

Nearby: - Wybunbury Moss

Likely species:

All year round – game birds, wildfowl, Stock Dove, Little Grebe, Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Kestrel, Peregrine, Linnet, Reed Bunting

Winter – Whooper Swan, Pintail, Scaup, Goldeneye, Goosander, Water Rail, Jack Snipe, Snipe, Common Gull, Brambling, Redpoll, Siskin

Spring – Oystercatcher, warblers, Yellow Wagtail

Summer – Cuckoo, Oystercatcher, Little Ringed Plover, Common Sandpiper, Common Tern, Hobby, Spotted Flycatcher, Yellow Wagtail

Autumn – Green Sandpiper

On passage – Dunlin, Redshank, Osprey, Whinchat, Stonechat, Wheatear, White Wagtail

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Lawton Woods and Lake

Large area of woodland including a lake. Footpaths criss-cross the area - also churchyard, outlying farm buildings and fields, canal. Very popular with dog walkers

Limited parking by church but also accessible from the northeast, in Scholar Green – various entrances from the housing development

Nearby: - Rode Pool **** Restricted Access ****

Likely species: (this list includes farmland adjacent to the site)

all year round - Mandarin Duck, Kingfisher, Green Woodpecker, Dipper, Grey Wagtail

Winter - Goldeneye, Goosander, Little Grebe, Woodcock, Snipe, Tawny Owl, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Brambling

Spring - Cuckoo

Summer - warblers, Spotted Flycatcher

Autumn - Hobby

Meremoor Moss - marked on Ordnance Survey maps as Monneley Mere

An area of wet meadows between the A500 and the railway line. This area had deep drains installed during 2018 and is probably now destroyed. Restoration work has taken place. We wait to see if it recovers.

The area can be accessed from various points including using the Crewe and Nantwich Circular Walk footpaths and a permissive footpath.

Likely species: (the list includes the fishery and farmland adjacent to the site)

all year round - Stock Dove, Kingfisher, Kestrel, Raven, Meadow Pipit, Linnet, Reed Bunting

Winter - Golden Plover, Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Stonechat, Siskin

Spring - Oystercatcher, Skylark, Wheatear

Summer - Oystercatcher, warblers

On passage - Quail, Marsh Harrier, Short-eared Owl, Hobby, Willow Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Whinchat, Yellow Wagtail

Mow Cop

A sandstone ridge of moorland habitat giving extensive views over the Cheshire Plain and which forms the Cheshire / Staffordshire border. Also contains dis-used quarries which are sometimes used for organised off-road events. Roadside parking in a couple of places

Nearby: - Roe Park

Likely species:

all year round - Little Owl, Kestrel, Skylark, Meadow Pipit

Winter - Snipe

Spring - Cuckoo

Summer - warblers, Stonechat, Wheatear

On passage - Marsh Harrier, Hobby, Ring Ouzel, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Tree Pipit

Quakers Coppice

A wood of six hectares on the south side of Crewe owned by Cheshire East Council.
Limited parking weekdays and very popular with dog walkers - barbeques in summer

Nearby: - Crewe Business Park

Likely species:

all year round - Stock Dove

Winter - Tawny Owl

Summer - warblers, Spotted Flycatcher

Roe Park

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

Nearby: - Mow Cop

Likely species:

Spring - Green Woodpecker

Summer - warblers, Spotted Flycatcher

Salt Line

A well surfaced trail along the old railway line towards Alsager, managed by Cheshire East Council.
Tree-lined, popular with dog walkers and joggers

Nearby: - Borrow Pit Meadows

Likely species:

see Borrow Pit Meadow

Swettenham / Meadows and The Quinta

Farmland and mixed woodland by the River Dane.

Accessed from various places with a couple of footpaths

Nearby: - Bagmere and Brereton Heath LNR

Likely species:

all year round - Tawny Owl, Kingfisher, Raven, Skylark, Linnet

Winter - Goosander, Tree Sparrow, Brambling, Hawfinch, Redpoll, Siskin, Yellowhammer

Spring - Goosander, Willow Warbler

Summer - warblers, Spotted Flycatcher

On passage - Hobby, Yellow Wagtail

Timbersbrook / The Cloud

see (The) Cloud above

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Westlow Mere, Congleton

Previously known as Hulme Walfield Sand Quarry, now a, members only, trout fishery.

Nearby: - Astbury Mere CP and (The) Cloud / Timbersbrook

No records for 2010 – 2019

Winterley Pool

Large fished, lake with roadside parking, one or two benches and an interpretation panel

Nearby: - Crewe Golf Course

Likely species:

Not many sightings between 2010 - 2019

Wybunbury Moss

The Moss is a Natural England nature reserve and lies within a hollow left at the end of the last ice age, but salt subsidence has since played a part.

Visiting is limited to way marked paths through a smallish section of woodland and a circular walk around the Moss. Various access points. Paths are often muddy and soft underfoot so good boots or wellies are advised.

There is parking in the village. Rare plants that live in this unusual but dangerous mossland habitat.

Nearby: - Doddington

Likely species:

all year round - Tawny Owl, Green Woodpecker, Raven, Linnet, Reed Bunting

Winter - Redpoll, Siskin

Spring - warblers

Summer - hirundines, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Tree Sparrow

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Points of Interest – Parking (for guidance only)

Location	Address & Post Code	OS grid ref	satellite co-ordinates
Astbury Mere CP	Visitors Centre, Sandy Lane, Congleton CW12 4FP	SJ 84607 62695	53.161334, -2.231892
Bagmere	Bagmere Ln x Brereton Heath Ln, Brereton Heath CW11 1RU	SJ 79668 64859	53.180769, -2.307804
Borrow Pit Meadows	see Salt Line		
Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve	Davenport Lane, Brereton Heath CW12 4SU	SJ 79536 65282	53.184672, -2.307557
Cloud, The	Tunstall Road, Congleton CW12 3QB	SJ 89665 63012	53.164311, -2.155979
Crabmill Flash	Crabmill Lane, Warmingham CW11 3QR	SJ 71820 60850	53.144135, -2.423127
Crewe Business Park	Electra Way, Crewe CW1 6ZF	SJ 71988 54988	53.091422, -2.419933
Crewe Golf Course			
Doddington			
Dragons Lane - Warmingham Flash	Dragons Lane, Moston CW11 3QH	SJ 71873 62353	53.157552, -2.422300
Elton Hall Flash & Pump House Flash	Clay Lane, Moston CW11 3QY	SJ 72442 59527	53.132172, -2.413363
Fields Farm Flash	Fields Farm, Brook Farm Lane, Sandbach CW11 3QX	SJ 72802 59192	53.129211, -2.407880
Fodens Flash (The Moat) & Wood	Oakwood Lane, Moston CW11 3PR	SJ 73053 61283	53.148066, -2.404362
Green Lane set-aside	Green Lane, Moston CW11 3QG	SJ 71730 61438	53.1493056, -2.4241848
Green Lane - Warmingham Flash	Green Lane, Moston CW11 3QG	SJ 71918 61503	53.1498602, -2.4214951
Lawton Woods - Church	Church Lane, Church Lawton ST7 3DD	SJ 82165 55720	53.098391, -2.267835
Maw Green Tip / Landfill	Groby Road, Crewe CW1 4NA	SJ 71275 57407	53.113205, -2.430700
Meremoor Moss			
Mow Cop viewpoint	Congleton Rd/Mow Lane, Mow Cop ST7 3PP	SJ 86818 58701	53.124962, -2.198754
Pump House Flash	see Elton Hall Flash		
Quakers Coppice	Mallard Way, Crewe CW1 6ZQ	SJ 72446 54884	53.090402, -2.412847
Red Lane Flash / Pool	Red Lane, Moston CW11 3PF	SJ 73065 60502	53.140990, -2.404125
'Red Shale' car park / canal tow path	Plant Lane/Oakwood Lane, Moston CW11 3PJ	SJ 73246 61151	53.146952, -2.401384
Roe Park	New Road, Acker's Crossing, Moreton CW12 3PA	SJ 84754 58924	53.127299, -2.229304
Salt Line	Car park & Ranger's Office, Alsager Rd, Sandbach CW11 4XT	SJ 77529 58240	53.120691, -2.337035
Swettenham	Park sympathetically in the village		
Tetton Lane - Warmingham Flash	Tetton Lane, Moston CW10 0HH	SJ 71595 63236	53.1656181, -2.4261916
Timbersbrook (Picnic area)	Weathercock Lane, Congleton CW12 3PP	SJ 89415 62798	53.162078, -2.160001
Watch Lane Flash	Watch Lane, Moston CW11 3PD	SJ 72838 60733	53.142905, -2.408128
Westlow Mere	Giantswood Lane, Congleton CW12 2HH	SJ 85601 64432	53.176890, -2.216978
Winterley Pool	Crewe Road, Winterley CW11 4QZ	SJ 74728 57082	53.110362, -2.379047
Wybunbury Moss	Park sympathetically in the village		