



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

Promoting and fostering an interest in ornithology by observation, research and record-keeping

Field Trip

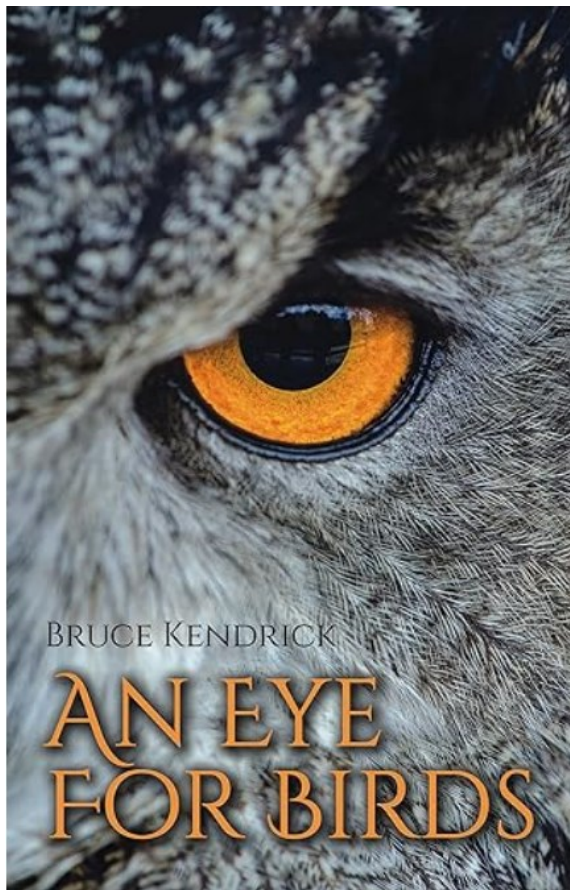
January 2024

Tittesworth Reservoir Tuesday 9th January

Tittesworth Reservoir, near Leek, is the second -largest reservoir by volume in Staffordshire. It provides great opportunities for birdwatching, both from the two hides and around the water's edge and the site trails. One of the hides has been replaced recently by an improved, larger hide.



River Churnet near Tittesworth Reservoir - Richard Vince



"An Eye For Birds"

Bruce Kendrick

Friday 12th January

Bruce recounts his childhood battle with tuberculosis, spending six months in isolation at a Cheshire sanatorium. Birdwatching became a solace during recovery, evolving into a lifelong passion. The narrative follows his teenage years, blending birding adventures with football, girls, politics, and music. Reflecting on those formative years, the book explores nature's enduring impact, forming the author's ethical and moral framework. Revisiting old haunts prompts deeper questions about nature's inspiration and healing power, culminating in a mature reflection on a life intertwined with the natural world.

For trip details, refer to the Chairman's Note email, visit the SECOS website or contact the trip leader.

Field Trip

WWT Martin Mere

Sunday 21st January

Martin Mere is a renowned wetland nature reserve. Spanning over 800 acres, it's a haven for birdwatchers, boasting diverse habitats and an array of migratory birds. There are more than a dozen hides



Flamingo Lake - David Dixon Geograph Britain

December Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Fieldfare, Goldeneye, Goosander, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Mandarin Duck, Pochard, Redwing;
 2nd Common Gull, Curlew, Pintail, Snipe; 3rd Dipper, Dunlin, Great White Egret; 5th Barnacle Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, Little Egret, Siskin, Tawny Owl; 6th Pink-footed Goose, Raven; 11th Yellowhammer;
 15th Black Swan, Common Scoter, Red-legged Partridge; 16th Golden Plover; 22nd Cetti's Warbler;
 25th Cattle Egret; 27th Lesser Redpoll; 28th Blackcap; 31st Mediterranean Gull, Water Rail, Waxwing

Sightings EHF/PHF - December

Waders	Count
Water Rail	1, 31 st
Lapwing	regular, max c490
Golden Plover	c400, 24 th , 25 th
Black-tailed Godwit	1, 5 th
Dunlin	1, 3 rd , 5 th
Common Snipe	max 2, 2 nd
Curlew	regular, max 30

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 4
Cattle Egret	3, 29 th
Great White Egret	1, 3 rd



Golden Plovers - Dennis Swaby

CF = Crabmill Flash

EHF = Elton Hall Flash

FF = Fodens Flash

FFF = Fields Farm Flash

GF = Groby Flash

MGT = Maw Green Tip

OTF = Oak Tree Flash

PHF = Pump House Flash

RF = Railway Flash

WF = Warmingham Flash

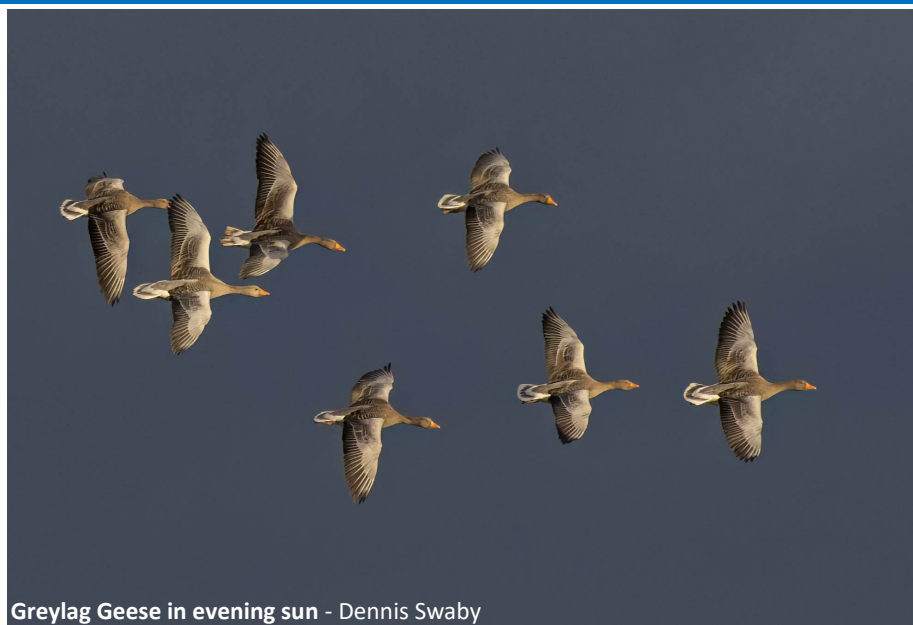
WLF = Watch Lane Flash

Blue text indicates place first seen.

Underline indicates high flock count (see Feb 2020 Newsletter, page 8).

Sightings EHF/PHF - December

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 72
Wigeon	regular, max c980
Gadwall	2, 3 rd
Teal	regular, max c180
Pochard	regular, max 2
Mallard	regular, max c190
Pintail	max 2, 3 rd
Shoveler	regular, max 23
Tufted Duck	regular, max 30
Goldeneye	regular, max 1
Goosander	regular, max 2
Pink-footed Goose	47, 16 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 174
Canada Goose	regular, max c900
Barnacle Goose	1, 5 th
G C Grebe	regular, max 1
Little Grebe	regular, max 3
Coot	regular, max 205
Moorhen	regular, max 18
Mute Swan	regular, max 5



Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c270
Mediterranean Gull	1, 31 st
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 35
Herring Gull	regular, max 68
Common Gull	regular, max 3
Great Black-b Gull	regular, max 15

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 2 nd , 3 rd , 31 st
Common Buzzard	regular, max 2
Kestrel	regular, max 1
Peregrine	1, 26 th , 29 th

Sightings Elsewhere - December



Redpoll - Tom Davies

EHF/PHF: Raven, Skylark, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Redwing, Fieldfare, Greenfinch, **Lesser Redpoll**

FF: **Lesser** Redpoll, Yellowhammer

FFF: Goosander, Tawny Owl, Kingfisher, Raven, Redwing, Fieldfare, Greenfinch, Siskin, **Yellowhammer**

MGT: **Cattle Egret**

RF: Snipe, **Cetti's Warbler**, Redwing, Fieldfare

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Redwing, Siskin

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Gadwall, **Pochard**, **Goldeneye**, Goosander, **Little Grebe**, Chiffchaff

Church Lawton - Lawton Hall: **Mandarin Duck**, **Goosander**, **Little Grebe**, **Kingfisher**

Congleton - River Dane: **Black Swan**, Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Kingfisher, **Dipper**

Crewe: **Cattle Egret**, Peregrine



Greenfinch - Dennis Swaby

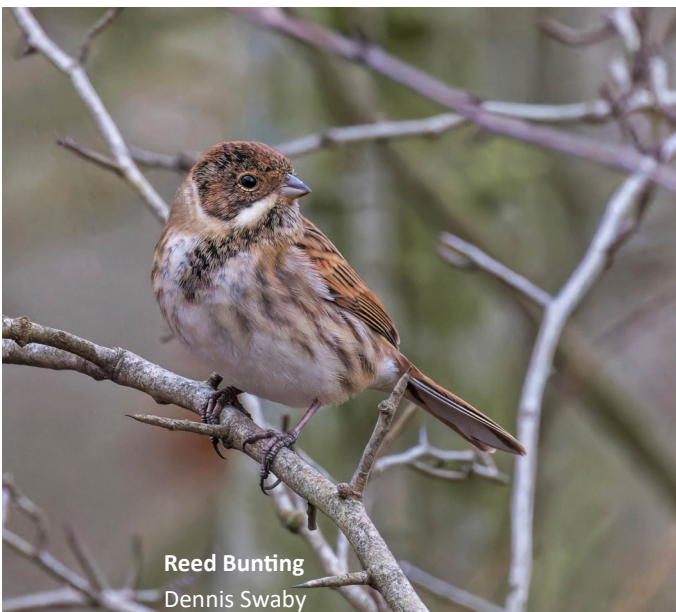
Doddington - Doddington Pool: Pink-footed Goose, **Common Scoter**, Goldeneye, Goosander, **Red-legged Partridge**, Little Grebe, Common Gull, Great White Egret, **Little Egret**, Kingfisher, Peregrine, **Raven**, Redwing, Fieldfare

Ettiley Heath - Crabmill Old Farm: Little Egret, Fieldfare


This is a small selection of species seen in the SECOS Recording Area.

A full listing is on the website:


<https://www.secos.org.uk/sightings/>



Reed Bunting
Dennis Swaby

 SECOS Website: www.secos.org.uk

 SECOS Blog (to read/record local sightings): www.secos.org.uk/sightings

 Sandbach Flashes: This medium does not do justice to the images that Dennis Swaby captures at Sandbach Flashes. Some of the images have been uploaded to www.sandbachflashes.co.uk

Haslington: [Siskin](#)

Marton: Pink-footed Goose, [Tawny Owl](#),
[Redwing](#), [Fieldfare](#), Bullfinch, Greenfinch

Middlewich: [Waxwing](#)

Moston: Kingfisher

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Goosander, Great
White Egret, Little Egret, Raven

Sandbach - Elworth: Yellowhammer

Swettenham - Swettenham Meadows:
Bullfinch

Swettenham - The Quinta: Mandarin Duck

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Goosander,
Kingfisher, Raven, [Blackcap](#), Redwing,
Fieldfare, Greenfinch

Winterley & Winterley Pool: [Pink-footed
Goose](#), Goosander, Greenfinch



Sandbach Flashes - 5th December



I was anticipating our SECOS annual Sandbach Flashes field trip with a certain amount of trepidation. The weather during the previous weekend had been bitterly cold, the forecast for the trip was not good, and the thought of standing outside for a couple of hours at the Flashes was not enticing. It turned out that we need not have worried. The day of the trip started bright and sunny and the temperature had warmed considerably, although recent heavy rain meant that Clay Lane was flooded, adding some excitement to the journey to the Flashes viewpoint.

At 10 am, 6 'early bird' members met, this number increasing to 21 members as the morning progressed. We initially scanned Rosemary's Flood and the fields adjacent to Pump House Flash, where several curlew were visible through the scopes. In addition to various species including teal, shoveler, wigeon, tufted duck and shelduck, the single drake goldeneye was still present. This bird has been a regular at the flashes for some time. A single little grebe and a great crested grebe were spotted.

Crossing the lane to the Elton Hall Flash viewpoint, the usual woodland species were seen on the feeders, but we were pleased to also catch sight of a treecreeper winding its way around the trunk of one of the nearby trees. The trees and bushes surrounding the pools yielded a great spotted woodpecker, winter thrushes (redwing and fieldfare), and a mistle thrush in the field at the far side of EHF, where there was also a solitary snipe at the water's edge. In the water, there were some pochard and a single barnacle goose swimming amongst the numerous Canada geese. The side lane was flooded, so we were unable to view EHF from there or visit the feeders situated at the end of the lane.

continued >>

Sandbach Flashes (continued)



We walked down Clay Lane to scan Pump House Flash and Hancock's Flood. The regular lapwings gave an impressive aerial display, and we added black-tailed godwit and dunlin.

Whilst there were not huge numbers of birds, we managed to see a total of 50 species in 2 hours, yet again proving how fortunate we are to have such a special place as the Flashes within our recording area.

At around midday, we adjourned to The White Lion for our annual Christmas Lunch where we were joined by an extra 5 members giving a total of 26, the highest number for several years. It was lovely that the event was so well supported, and that the anxiety of COVID seemed a thing of the past. Jackie and the team at The White Lion did us proud as usual, and a really enjoyable lunch in good company was a great start to the festive season. Thanks to everyone who was able to support this event.

Jean Harrison

2023 SECOS Field Trips Total = 167 species



Supporting Shorebird Conservation

At the December indoor meeting, money collected for the Wader Quest charity, from sales and donations totalled £105.

Rick and Elis Simpson, co-founders of Wader Quest, would like to thank SECOS members for their generous support.

Diary Dates



9th Jan 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday Field Trip

12th Jan 7.30 p.m.

Indoor Meeting

21st Jan 10.00 a.m.

Sunday Field Trip

Tittesworth Reservoir

Leader: Ian Taylor

An Eye For Birds

Speaker: Bruce Kendrick

WWT Martin Mere

Leader: Ian Taylor

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