



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

"Crane Spotting"

Ashley Grove

Friday 8th March

The Lake Hornborga area of Sweden hosts one of the most incredible bird spectacles in Europe, with over 25,000 Common Cranes stopping here to feed on their journey to more northerly breeding grounds. This talk centres around these birds but includes other wildlife that make this area so special to visit in the early spring. All five European grebe species can be seen at this time and top birds like white-tailed eagle, hawfinch and capercaillie are other highlights.



Common Crane - Ashley Grove

Field Trip

Northwich Woodlands

Tuesday 12th March

Northwich Woodlands is located a short distance north of Northwich town centre. Created from what was once largely derelict land, the area now provides a rich and green environment, full of wildlife.



Hide at Neumann's Flash - David Dixon

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

February Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Curlew, Fieldfare, Goldeneye, Goosander, Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, Redwing, Tawny Owl, Yellowhammer; 2nd Common Gull, Great White Egret, Kingfisher, Lesser Redpoll, Siskin, Woodcock; 3rd Black-tailed Godwit, Golden Plover, Little Egret, Pink-footed Goose, Pochard, Redshank; 4th Black Swan, Cetti's Warbler, Common Redpoll (Mealy), Raven, Short-eared Owl, Water Rail; 6th Waxwing; 7th Dipper, Mandarin Duck; 11th Common Sandpiper, Dunlin, Snipe; 15th Egyptian Goose; 18th Chiffchaff; 22nd Green Sandpiper, Mediterranean Gull; 24th Barn Owl, Jack Snipe; 26th Brambling, Red-legged Partridge; 27th Blackcap, Red Kite

Sightings EHF/PHF - February

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 45
Wigeon	regular, max c680
Gadwall	max 4, 18 th
Teal	regular, max c130
Mallard	regular, max c150
Pochard	max 5, 3 rd
Shoveler	regular, max 19
Tufted Duck	regular, max 30
Goldeneye	1, 3 rd , 10 th
Goosander	2, 11 th
Pink-footed Goose	3, 11 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 10
Canada Goose	regular, max c300
G C Grebe	1, 4 th , 25 th
Little Grebe	max 3, 11 th
Coot	regular, max 108
Moorhen	regular, max 20
Mute Swan	regular, max 7



Mediterranean Gull - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c500
Mediterranean Gull	1, 22 nd , 29 th
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 13
Herring Gull	regular, max c50
Common Gull	regular, max 3
Great Black-b Gull	regular, max 4



Curlew - 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 - February

Waders	Count
Water Rail	max 3, 4 th
Oystercatcher	2, 22 nd
Lapwing	regular, max c300
Golden Plover	1, 3 rd
Dunlin	1, 11 th
Woodcock	1, 2 nd
Redshank	1, 3 rd , 27 th , 28 th
Common Snipe	max 3, 18 th
Curlew	regular, max 29
Black-tailed Godwit	max 7, 27 th & 28 th
Common Sandpiper	1, 11 th
Green Sandpiper	1, 22 nd , 27 th , 28 th



Water Rail - Dennis Swaby



Little Egret - Dennis Swaby

Hérons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 5
Little Egret	1, 9 th , 10 th
Great White Egret	regular, max 3

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 18 th
Common Buzzard	regular, max 4
Kestrel	max 3, 4 th , 25 th
Peregrine	1, 25 th
Red Kite	1, 27 th
Barn Owl	1, 25 th
Short-eared Owl	1, 4 th



Common Buzzard - Dennis Swaby

Sightings Elsewhere - February



Goldcrest - Dennis Swaby

EHF/PHF: Kingfisher, **Raven**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, Redwing, **Fieldfare**, Stonechat, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Siskin

FF: Goosander

FFF: **Goosander**, Snipe, Sparrowhawk, **Kingfisher**, Peregrine, **Redwing**, Blackbird, **Fieldfare**, Greenfinch, Lesser Redpoll, **Siskin**, **Yellowhammer**

MGT/RF: **Pochard**, Goldeneye, **Water Rail**, Oystercatcher, **Golden Plover**, Curlew, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Woodcock**, Snipe, **Redshank**, **Common Gull**, **Great White Egret**, Sparrowhawk, Barn Owl, **Short-eared Owl**, Kingfisher, Peregrine, **Raven**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, Redwing, Fieldfare, Stonechat, Bullfinch, Greenfinch

WLF: Oystercatcher, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Cetti's Warbler

Alsager: **Black Swan**, **Common Redpoll (Mealy)**

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Goosander, Siskin

Alsager - The Mere: Goosander

Arclid Area SQs: Oystercatcher, Snipe, Raven

Arclid Green: Fieldfare, Greenfinch



Raven - Dennis Swaby

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/>

Barthomley, SE of Crewe: **Little Egret**

Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath CP: BullfinchYellowhammer

Checkley: **Red-legged Partridge**, Chaffinch, **Brambling**, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Lesser Redpoll, Reed Bunting

Church Lawton: Mandarin Duck, Goosander

Church Lawton - Lawton Hall: Mandarin Duck, Goosander

Congleton - Buglawton: Pink-footed Goose

Congleton - Dane in Shaw: Bullfinch, Siskin

Congleton - Eaton: Raven

Congleton - Mossley: **Jack Snipe**, Sparrowhawk, **Barn Owl**, Tawny Owl, Redwing, Greenfinch, Siskin

Congleton - Newsbank: Pink-footed Goose, Oystercatcher

Congleton - River Dane: **Mandarin Duck**, Goosander, Redwing, **Dipper**

Crewe: Waxwing

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Pochard, **Goldeneye**, **Little Grebe**, **Oystercatcher**, Snipe, Common Gull, Sparrowhawk, Raven, **Redwing**, **Fieldfare**, Stonechat

Doddington - Lemon Pool: Little Grebe

Haslington: **Little Egret**, Redwing, Fieldfare

Holmes Chapel: **Waxwing**

Middlewich: Green Sandpiper, Waxwing, **Blackcap**

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

Rode Heath - Rode Hall: [Egyptian Goose](#), Goosander, Little Egret, Raven,

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: [Egyptian Goose](#), Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Great White Egret, Little Egret, Raven, Siskin

Sandbach: [Lesser Redpoll](#), [Siskin](#)

Shavington: Waxwing

Swettenham - Swettenham Meadows: Tawny Owl, Fieldfare, Greenfinch

Walgherton - Lea Forge: Fieldfare

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Sparrowhawk, [Tawny Owl](#)

Winterley & Winterley Pool: Goosander, Fieldfare, Greenfinch



Treecreeper - Dennis Swaby

**THANK
YOU**

At the SECOS 60th Anniversary Dinner, £63 was collected for [SavingSeabirdsGlobally](#). Jeff Clarke would like to thank SECOS members for their generous support.

On 20th February, Jeff handed over **£541** from his last 7 talks. Several conservation organisations will benefit, including BirdLife International, BirdLife Marine, Albatross Task Force and Gough Island Restoration.

North Wales Coast - 18th February



21 members travelled to the North Wales Coast, an excellent turnout.

At Llanfairfechan, the weather was calm so it was easy to keep the scopes steady enough for seawatching. Three turnstones probed among the rocks as a few curlew and oystercatchers fed nearby. Several great crested grebes were spotted on the sea. A sudden heavy shower then sent us scurrying for our cars. After a few minutes, we emerged to continue seawatching. A female eider was seen swimming near a derelict groyne. Further out, a flock of common scoters was just about visible in front of Puffin Island. The only gulls were herring and lesser black-backed. Later, a few people spotted red-breasted merganser, red-throated diver, gannet and common guillemot swimming in the sea. We took a short walk up the River Llanfairfechan and were rewarded with good views of goosander (female), dipper (carrying moss for nest building) and grey wagtail.

continued >>

North Wales (continued)

At The Spinnies, walking up the lane from the car park, greylag goose was added to the day's list. At the small hide, siskins visited the feeder and four common snipe rested on the far bank. A great spotted woodpecker was heard drumming in the distance. At the large beach hide, looking seaward, we added shelduck, goldeneye, pintail, pochard, gadwall, wigeon, little grebe, knot, dunlin, redshank, common gull and great black-backed gull. Looking inland, blue tit, great tit, coal tit, goldcrest, nuthatch, goldfinch, chaffinch, robin and wren were seen/heard at the feeding station and nearby.

At Penmaen-bach Point, a fulmar was seen flying around the tunnel entrance on the A55.

At RSPB Conwy, a few members took a welcome break in the new café, but most headed straight onto the reserve. At the feeding station, there were long-tailed tits. Shoveler, tufted duck and teal were added to the day's list of ducks. There were singles of little egret and meadow pipit, together with a small flock of pied wagtails. Cetti's warbler and greenfinch were heard. Our first raptors of the day were a peregrine, three circling common buzzards and a sparrowhawk being mobbed by corvids. The estuary was quiet, none of the expected shelduck and just a few oystercatchers. A nice non-avian species was an early common toad.

A few members stopped at Llanddulas on the way home and saw gannet, red-throated diver, red-breasted merganser, 30+ scoters, and a male and female eider. A great end to the day! An impressive 73 species were seen/heard during the trip.

Mike Tonks

2024 SECOS Field Trips Total = 87

Diary Dates



8th Mar 7.30 p.m.

Indoor Meeting

12th Mar 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday Field Trip

2nd Apr 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday Field Trip

Crane Spotting

Speaker: Ashley Grove

Northwich Woodlands

Leader: Mike Tonks

Woolston Eyes

Leader: Mike Tonks

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