



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

April 2023

Annual General Meeting & Members' Evening

Friday 14th April

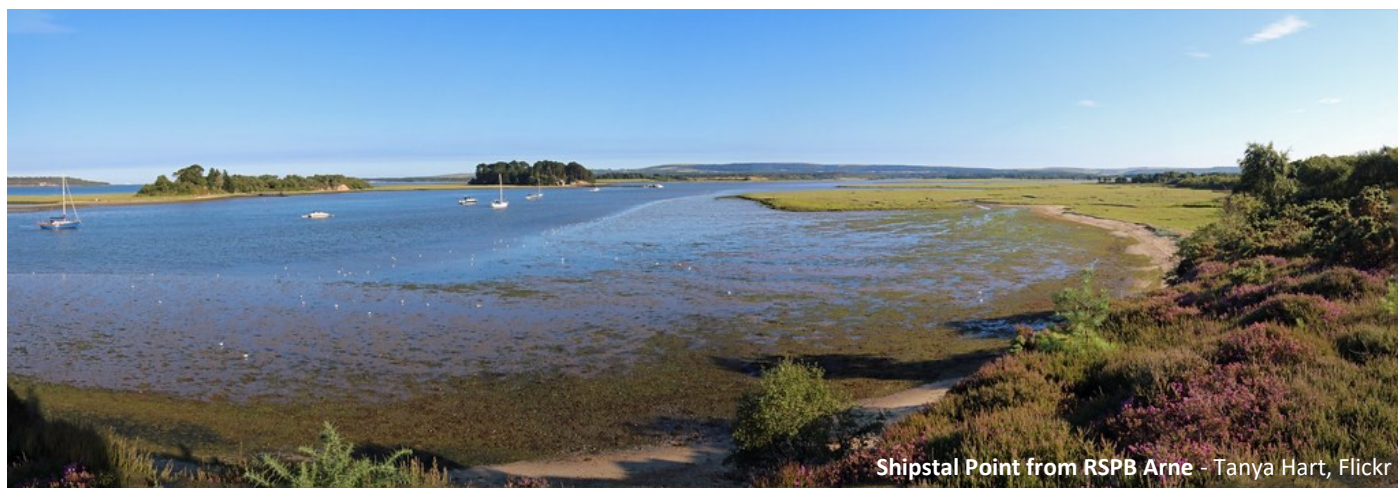
At the Members' Evening ...

Ian Taylor will show his photos of '[Australian Birds](#)'.

Peter Durnall will present two short videos: '[Rosanna's Nature Reserve](#)' and '[Rode Pool](#)'.

And there will be the ever-popular quizzes to challenge your avian knowledge!

There will be a raffle, and refreshments will be served.



Shipstal Point from RSPB Arne - Tanya Hart, Flickr

Long Weekend Trip

21st - 24th April

Dorset

An itinerary has been sent to members who have booked the trip. It includes RSPB Radipole Lake, RSPB Lodmoor, Morden Bog NNR & Gore Heath, RSPB Arne, Portland Bill, Chesil Beach & Fleet Lagoon, and RSPB Ham Wall.

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

Sightings - March

Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Great White Egret, Little Egret, Green Sandpiper, Whooper Swan, Fieldfare, Redwing, Oystercatcher, Pintail; 2nd Dipper, Egyptian Goose, Goosander, Kingfisher; 3rd Green Woodpecker; 5th Mediterranean Gull, Cetti's Warbler; 6th Goldeneye, Pochard; 8th Yellowhammer; 11th Red Kite, Golden Plover; 14th Common Snipe, Tawny Owl; 15th Little Ringed Plover; 16th Wheatear; 17th Sand Martin, Marsh Harrier; 19th Jack Snipe, Stonechat; 24th Swallow; 25th Willow Warbler; 29th Blackcap, Lesser Redpoll

EHF/PHF

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 22
Wigeon	regular, max c360
Teal	regular, max 56
Mallard	regular, max 40
Pintail	max 3, 1 st
Shoveler	max 18
Tufted Duck	regular, max 9
Goosander	1, 30 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 11
Canada Goose	regular, max 41
G C Grebe	1, 12 th & 15 th
Coot	regular, max 32
Moorhen	regular, max 6
Mute Swan	regular, max 3
Whooper Swan	regular, max 4



Black-tailed Godwit - Dennis Swaby



Whooper Swan - Dennis Swaby

Waders	Count
Oystercatcher	regular, max 2
Little Ringed Plover	regular, max 4
Lapwing	2, 12 th
Common Snipe	1, 12 th & 15 th
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 9
Green Sandpiper	regular, max 1

CF = Crabmill Flash

EHF = Elton Hall Flash

FF = Fodens Flash

FFF = Fields Farm Flash

GF = Groby Flash

MGT = Maw Green Tip

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).

Regular means 4+ days per month.

Sightings - March

EHF/PHF

Gulls & Terns	Count
Mediterranean Gull	1, 5 th
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c165
Lesser Black-b Gull	max 22
Herring Gull	max 23
Common Gull	max 6, 12 th



Green Sandpiper - Dennis Swaby



Greylag Geese - Dennis Swaby

Hérons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	1, 22 nd
Little Egret	max 4, 23 rd
Great White Egret	1, 1 st

Raptors & Owls	Count
Common Buzzard	2, 15 th
Red Kite	1, 23 rd



Little Ringed Plover - Dennis Swaby

Sightings Elsewhere

EHF/PHF: Blackcap, Cetti's Warbler, Sand Martin, Willow Warbler, Fieldfare, Redwing, Wheatear, Whooper Swan

FFF: Lesser Redpoll, Fieldfare, Yellowhammer

MGT: Common Snipe, Wheatear, Jack Snipe, Red Kite

RF: Stonechat, Whooper Swan, Jack Snipe, Cetti's Warbler, Great White Egret, Oystercatcher, Common Snipe, Wheatear

Alsager: Swallow, Wheatear **Fanny's Croft:** Wheatear

Alsager Mere: Goosander **Salt Line:** Blackcap

Alsager: Borrow Pit Meadows: Bullfinch, Yellowhammer

Arclid Area SQs: Little Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher

Astbury Mere: Red Kite, Sand Martin

Brereton Green: Marsh Harrier

Brereton Heath: Yellowhammer, Fieldfare, Redwing



Lesser Redpoll - Dennis Swaby



Common Buzzard - Dennis Swaby

Congleton: Bent Farm Quarry: Red Kite

Congleton: River Dane: Dipper, Goosander, Kingfisher

Crewe: Red Kite

Doddington: Golden Plover, Goldeneye, Pochard, Sand Martin, Fieldfare, Little Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Red Kite, Redwing

Lea Forge: Fieldfare, Kingfisher, Redwing

Middlewich: Lime Beds: Green Sandpiper

Rode Hall / Pool: Egyptian Goose, Green Woodpecker, Goosander, Little Egret, Kingfisher, Common Snipe

Rode Heath: Green Woodpecker

Sandbach: Tawny Owl, Red Kite



Tatton Park - 7th March

Start was hampered by a road closure and the parking area exceptionally busy, forcing some participants onto side roads. To compensate, a mobile snack unit was a bonus for anyone wishing refreshment, and the fine weather was ordered far enough in advance to be granted.

First sighting: magpies nesting in fledgling public orchard beside car park; then, when all thirteen members were gathered, a stroll to Dog Wood, the hindmost, before entry, enjoying a pair of sparrowhawks displaying in the skies above the town. The mosey through Dog Wood predictably produced more dogs than birds, but arrival at Tatton Mere brought the wildfowl, with good numbers of goldeneye and a grey heron flapping low over the surface, perhaps the one later seen standing on the spit south end of Melchett Mere. North section of Tatton Mere showed the anticipated cormorants on buoys, and nice to see a few pochard among the 'tufties'.

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Tatton Park (continued)

As we turned for 'Melchett' five buzzards were mewing above Old Hall (NE) not visited today, and a 'great spot' drilled loudly close by. Lunch either al fresco on a seat south end of 'Melchett' or in nearby Allen Hide. During al fresco lunch, John Thompson uncovered snipe while, from hide, trees each side revealed a tree creeper; well-stocked feeders luring blue and great tits aplenty.

On northerly, to round Melchett Mere, a solitary starling spotted by John who also alerted us to gadwall. Star bird of the day had to be green woodpecker, with two at extreme north end of 'Melchett' holding our rapt attention. A blessing to see only a small pocket of Canada geese tucked in at the spit. No bird calls from grove towards end of west bank, so not explored, and return to *terra firma* through squelchy ground south of mere, for a gentle stroll back; seven stalwarts surviving to the finish.

47 species were seen/heard during the trip. Thanks to all my supporters. Hilary Clowes

Burton Mere Wetlands - 26th March

On a dry bright morning, nineteen SECOS members met for a walk around the RSPB reserve at Burton Mere Wetlands. Meeting in the Visitor Centre, we began searching through the numerous black-headed gulls on the Mere looking for the Mediterranean gull seen in the early morning - without success. We did see shoveler, common shelduck, teal, Canada goose, a few wigeon, several avocets, two black-tailed godwits and two oystercatchers. Then, accompanied by their usual noise, were about fifteen thousand (according to the warden) pink-footed geese coming down to graze on the reserve.



Moving on to the Reedbed Screen, we heard chiffchaffs calling and we saw about a dozen grey herons flying around checking out potential nesting sites on the 'heronry' trees, before hearing then seeing the elusive Cetti's warbler. Walking on to the Marsh Covert hide, we found our first little grebes, reed bunting, gadwall and pintails of the day but we had much better views of the pintail at the Bridge Screen.

We followed the boardwalk around to the Border Hide, which replaced the Inner Marsh Hide, to see a mixed flock of waders. Now the fun began as we worked our way through to find amongst the knot, godwit and common redshank several spotted redshank just coming out of winter plumage plus a well-hidden North American vagrant, a long-billed dowitcher. When the dowitcher wasn't obscured by black-tailed godwits and a black-headed gull which settled close by, it was easy to describe the location but all this took some time!

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Burton Mere Wetlands (continued)



After lunch, we retraced our steps to walk back via the view at Burton Point where we found our first great white egret of the day and heard a great spotted woodpecker in the trees behind us. Walking back, a water rail was heard squealing in the reedbed and, as we entered the Visitor Centre, about six whooper swans took off from the Mere.

Walking down via the Bunker Hide to the bird feeders added greenfinch and goldfinch to the day list but no sign of the whooper swans or the little owl that once roosted in the old buildings across the fields.

In total was saw/heard 59 species, which are listed below:

Canada goose, greylag goose, pink-footed goose, barnacle goose, mute swan, whooper swan, ruddy shelduck, common shelduck, shoveler, mallard, gadwall, wigeon, pintail, teal, tufted duck, pheasant, little grebe, woodpigeon, water rail (H), moorhen, coot, avocet, oystercatcher, lapwing, black-tailed godwit, knot, ruff, long-billed dowitcher, common snipe, spotted redshank, common redshank, black-headed gull, common gull, great black-backed gull, grey heron, great white egret, little egret, marsh harrier, common buzzard, great spotted woodpecker (H), magpie, jackdaw, rook, carrion crow, raven, blue tit, great tit, Cetti's warbler, long-tailed tit, nuthatch, wren, blackbird, robin, dunnoek, chaffinch, greenfinch, goldfinch and reed bunting.

Ian and Lydia Taylor

2023 SECOS Field Trips Total = 115 species

Diary Dates



14th Apr 7.30 p.m.

AGM & Members' Evening

21st - 24th Apr

Long Weekend

Dorset

Leader: Mike Tonks

🕸 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