



# THE OBSERVER

## SECOS Newsletter

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

**Field Trip** **April 2024**

**Woolston Eyes NR Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

Woolston Eyes Nature Reserve is a SSSI designated wildlife oasis just 4 km east of Warrington town centre. It's sandwiched between the River Mersey on its north boundary and the Manchester Ship Canal on its south boundary. It comprises four separate beds (deposit grounds for dredging from the Manchester Ship Canal), which contain 400 hectares of freshwater pools, reedbeds, willow scrub and rough vegetation. 248 bird species have been recorded on the reserve.



**Annual General Meeting & Members' Evening**  
**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April**

Peter Durnall will present "[The Amazing Lives of Great Crested Grebes](#)" - a moody film depicting the lives of Great Crested Grebes during their breeding season. Recorded at Greenway Bank Country Park, taking over 200 hours to film. Accepted by the British International Amateur Film Festival 2024.

Ian Taylor will show his 2024 photos of "[Australian Birds](#)".

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

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

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



Lake Vyrnwy - Ray Jones

# Field Trip Lake Vyrnwy Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April

"Set against the slopes of the Berwyn Mountains and fringed with trees, Lake Vyrnwy may look like a triumph of nature, but it's actually a man-made reservoir. As well as supplying the people of Liverpool with fresh water, the surrounding moorland, woodland and meadows are a haven for wildlife." *RSPB*

## March Highlights (first reports this month)

1<sup>st</sup> Cetti's Warbler, Egyptian Goose; 2<sup>nd</sup> Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Kingfisher, Oystercatcher, Pochard, Yellowhammer; 3<sup>rd</sup> Avocet, Chiffchaff, Fieldfare, Great White Egret, Lesser Redpoll, Redwing, Short-eared Owl, Siskin, Snipe; 4<sup>th</sup> Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Red Kite; 5<sup>th</sup> Dipper, Goosander, Mandarin Duck; 7<sup>th</sup> Barn Owl, Common Gull, Raven, Tawny Owl; 8<sup>th</sup> Green Sandpiper, Little Gull, Red-legged Partridge, Redshank; 9<sup>th</sup> Little Egret, Pintail; 10<sup>th</sup> Water Rail; 12<sup>th</sup> Green Woodpecker; 15<sup>th</sup> Barnacle Goose; 18<sup>th</sup> Little Ringed Plover; 20<sup>th</sup> Brambling, Common Scoter; 21<sup>st</sup> Cattle Egret, Garganey, Sand Martin; 22<sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean Gull, Woodcock; 23<sup>rd</sup> Blackcap; 24<sup>th</sup> Wheatear; 26<sup>th</sup> Redstart, Scaup; 27<sup>th</sup> Swallow, Willow Warbler; 30<sup>th</sup> Golden Plover; 31<sup>st</sup> Brent Goose

## Sightings EHF/PHF - March



Black-tailed Godwits - Dennis Swaby

Waders	Count
Oystercatcher	regular, max 4
Avocet	1, 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Lapwing	regular, max 45
Golden Plover	1, 30 <sup>th</sup>
Little Ringed Plover	max 2, 24 <sup>th</sup>
Curlew	7, 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Redshank	1, 8 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup>
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 30
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

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 - March

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 49
Wigeon	regular, max c730
Gadwall	max 4, 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Teal	regular, max 92
Mallard	regular, max 76
<b>Pochard</b>	regular, max 2
Shoveler	regular, max 6
Tufted Duck	regular, max 25
<b>Garganey</b>	2, 21 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Pintail</b>	max 2, 20 <sup>th</sup>
Goldeneye	1, 13 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup>
Goosander	1, 13 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup>
Brent Goose	1, 31 <sup>st</sup>
Greylag Goose	regular, max 7+
Canada Goose	regular, max 46
G C Grebe	1, 13 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup>
Little Grebe	1, 9 <sup>th</sup>
Coot	regular, max 45
Moorhen	regular, max 13
Mute Swan	regular, max 4



Garganey - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max 175
<b>Little Gull</b>	regular, max 1
<b>Mediterranean Gull</b>	2, 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 22+
Herring Gull	regular, max 18+
Common Gull	1, 13 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Great Black-b Gull	1, 23 <sup>rd</sup>



Brent Goose - Dennis Swaby



Little Gull - Dennis Swaby



Black-tailed Godwit showing rhynchokinesis - Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Buzzard	1, 7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Red Kite</b>	1, 4 <sup>th</sup>

Hérons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 1
<b>Little Egret</b>	Max 2, 24 <sup>th</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup>
Great White Egret	2, 26 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Cattle Egret</b>	1, 21 <sup>st</sup>



## Sightings Elsewhere - March

**EHF/PHF:** Sand Martin, Swallow, **Willow Warbler**, Blackcap, Redwing, Fieldfare, **Brambling**, Siskin

**FF:** Lesser Redpoll

**FFF:** Goosander, **Snipe**, Great Black-backed Gull, Sparrowhawk, Kingfisher, Raven, **Redwing**, **Fieldfare**, Brambling, **Lesser Redpoll**, **Siskin**, Yellowhammer

**MGT/RF:** **Brent Goose**, **Egyptian Goose**, Gadwall, Goosander, **Water Rail**, Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, Little Ringed Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, **Snipe**, Mediterranean Gull, Common Gull, **Great White Egret**, Little Egret, Sparrowhawk, **Short-eared Owl**, Raven, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, Willow Warbler, Blackcap, **Redwing**, **Fieldfare**, Stonechat, **Wheatear**

**Astbury - Astbury Mere CP:** **Scaup**, **Common Scoter**, **Sand Martin**, **Swallow**, **Willow Warbler**, Blackcap, Siskin

**Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath CP:** Tawny Owl, Willow Warbler, **Blackcap**, Redwing, Lesser Redpoll, Siskin

**Congleton - Mossley:** Snipe, Sparrowhawk, **Barn Owl**, **Tawny Owl**, **Raven**, Redwing

**Congleton - Newsbank:** **Barnacle Goose**, Mandarin Duck, Oystercatcher

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

**Congleton - Tommys Brook:** Mandarin Duck, Dipper, Grey Wagtail

**Congleton - West Heath:** Redwing, Siskin

**Cranage:** Redwing, Fieldfare, Grey Wagtail

**Doddington - Doddington Park:** **Redstart**

**Doddington - Doddington Pool:** **Goldeneye**, **Red-legged Partridge**, **Little Grebe**, Oystercatcher, **Little Gull**, **Common Gull**, Sparrowhawk, Raven, **Sand Martin**, **Redstart**



Sparrowhawk - Dennis Swaby

**Hollinsgreen, SE Middlewich:** **Yellowhammer**

**Holmes Chapel:** **Kingfisher**

**Moston Green, W of Sandbach:** Bullfinch, Lesser Redpoll

**Rode Heath:** Oystercatcher, Green Woodpecker, Yellowhammer

**Rode Heath - Rode Pool:** Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Little Egret, Sparrowhawk, **Green Woodpecker**, Blackcap, Siskin

**Sandbach - Stannerhouse Lane Meadows:** Red Kite

**Sandbach - Stud Green Meadow:** **Little Ringed Plover**, **Wheatear**

**Scholar Green:** Red Kite

**Shavington - Casey Lane:** Yellowhammer

**Swettenham - Swettenham Meadows:** Raven, Siskin

**Swettenham - The Quinta:** Tawny Owl

**Walgherton - Lea Forge:** Little Grebe, **Woodcock**

**Wheelock - Forge Fields:** Sparrowhawk, Fieldfare, Lesser

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/>




Greenfinches - Dennis Swaby

 SECOS Website:

[www.secos.org.uk](http://www.secos.org.uk)

 SECOS Blog (to read/record local sightings): [www.secos.org.uk/sightings](http://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](http://www.sandbachflashes.co.uk)

# Northwich Woodlands - 12<sup>th</sup> March



13 members travelled the short distance to Northwich Woodlands (Marbury Country Park, and Neumann's and Ashton's Flashes).

The weather was fine and dry, contrary to the forecast.

49 bird species were recorded including **bittern**, bullfinch, common gull, gadwall, goosander, great spotted woodpecker (pair), kingfisher (several close views), oystercatcher, redshank (single) and siskin.

The bittern proved hard to locate in the reedbed. A photographer told us that it was "at 5 o'clock from the grey heron perched in the bush". Armed with this information, it still took some time to locate it. We were eventually rewarded with partial views of a squatting bird, which occasionally moved slowly to reveal its presence. Nigel commented that "it's never going to win Bittern's Got Talent". A short video of the bird, recorded by Nick, has been posted on the SECOS Field Trip WhatsApp group.

*Mike Tonks*

**2024 SECOS Field Trips Total = 119**

Black Swan - Dennis Swaby



Mistle Thrush - Dennis Swaby

## Diary Dates



**2<sup>nd</sup> Apr 10.00 a.m.**

Tuesday Field Trip

**Woolston Eyes NR**

Leader: Mike Tonks

**12<sup>th</sup> Apr 7.30 p.m.**

AGM & Members' Evening

**21<sup>st</sup> Apr 10.00 a.m.**

Sunday Field Trip

**RSPB Lake Vyrnwy**

Leader: Mike Tonks

🕸 SECOS Website: [www.secos.org.uk](http://www.secos.org.uk)

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