



# THE OBSERVER

## SECOS Newsletter

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

### Field Trip

### RSPB Leighton Moss

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

Nestled near Silverdale on the fringes of Morecambe Bay, Leighton Moss boasts the largest expanse of reedbeds in northwest England. Its wetlands, reedbeds and woodland support an array of wildlife, including bearded tits, marsh harriers, bitterns, otters, and red deer. Several trails wind through the reserve, leading to 7 hides and the 9-metre-high Skytower.



RSPB Leighton Moss - Pauline E, Geograph

### Field Trip

### Goyt Valley

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May

Situated a few miles northwest of Buxton, the Goyt Valley is renowned for its rich industrial heritage and diverse wildlife. In May, the valley oakwoods come alive with bird migrants, including pied flycatcher, redstart and willow warbler; and ring ouzel breed on the moorlands.



Derbyshire Bridge, Goyt Valley - Philip Halling, Geograph

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

# Summer Walk

## Biddulph Grange - Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May



Join us for a scenic walk through Biddulph Grange's rich landscapes. Our route includes The Clough, the tranquil Baileys Wood (a Woodland Trust reserve), and a stretch of the Biddulph Valley Way. We'll also explore Biddulph Grange Country Park, a 73-acre haven of woodlands, meadows, and a Victorian-era lake with a

restored stone boathouse. Expect a delightful mix of natural beauty and historical charm - perfect for birdwatching and a peaceful summer walk.

### April Highlights (first reports this month)

1<sup>st</sup> Barnacle Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, Cetti's Warbler, Green Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Little Ringed Plover, Oystercatcher, Red Kite; 2<sup>nd</sup> Mandarin Duck, Swallow, Yellow-legged Gull; 3<sup>rd</sup> Goosander, Great White Egret, House Martin; 4<sup>th</sup> Dipper, Fieldfare, Yellowhammer; 5<sup>th</sup> Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Yellow Wagtail; 6<sup>th</sup> Common Sandpiper, Little Grebe, Sand Martin, Tawny Owl; 7<sup>th</sup> Common Snipe; 9<sup>th</sup> Egyptian Goose, Reed Warbler; 10<sup>th</sup> Osprey, Common Whitethroat; 12<sup>th</sup> Grasshopper Warbler, Water Rail, Wheatear; 13<sup>th</sup> Sedge Warbler, White Wagtail (alba); 14<sup>th</sup> Pochard; 15<sup>th</sup> Little Egret, Raven; 16<sup>th</sup> Red-legged Partridge, Redstart; 17<sup>th</sup> Swift; 18<sup>th</sup> Lesser Whitethroat, Whinchat; 19<sup>th</sup> Greenshank; 20<sup>th</sup> Marsh Harrier; 22<sup>nd</sup> Whimbrel, Woodlark; 23<sup>rd</sup> Garden Warbler, Siskin, Tree Sparrow; 26<sup>th</sup> Cuckoo; 27<sup>th</sup> Common Tern, Hobby; 29<sup>th</sup> Dunlin; 30<sup>th</sup> Barn Owl, Ruff

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 - Apr

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 40
Wigeon	regular, max 30
Gadwall	regular, max 19
Teal	regular, max c160
Mallard	regular, max 56
<b>Pochard</b>	1, 14 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup>
Shoveler	regular, max 18
Tufted Duck	1, 24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Goosander</b>	regular, max 3
Greylag Goose	4, 1 <sup>st</sup>
Canada Goose	regular, max 21
<b>Barnacle Goose</b>	1, 1 <sup>st</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup>
G C Grebe	2, 12 <sup>th</sup>
Coot	regular, max 20
Moorhen	regular, max 5
Mute Swan	regular, max 4



Little Ringed Plovers - Dennis Swaby

Waders	Count
<b>Oystercatcher</b>	regular, max 4
Lapwing	regular, max 18+
<b>Little Ringed Plover</b>	regular, max 4
<b>Dunlin</b>	1, 29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Ruff</b>	1, 30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Snipe</b>	1, 7 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Greenshank</b>	1, 19 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Whimbrel</b>	2, 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Black-tailed Godwit</b>	regular, max 11
Common Sandpiper	regular, max 3
<b>Green Sandpiper</b>	regular, max 3



Dunlin - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max 25
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 59+
Herring Gull	regular, max 17+
<b>Yellow-legged Gull</b>	1, 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Common Tern</b>	1, 27 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup>



Oystercatcher - Dennis Swaby

# Sightings EHF/PHF - Apr



Osprey - Dennis Swaby



Osprey - Dennis Swaby

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 6
Little Egret	1, 24 <sup>th</sup>
Great White Egret	1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup>



Whimbrel - Dennis Swaby



Common Sandpiper - Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup>
Buzzard	regular, max 3
Osprey	1, 10 <sup>th</sup>
Red Kite	1, 13 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup>
Marsh Harrier	1, 20 <sup>th</sup>
Hobby	1, 27 <sup>th</sup>



Sedge Warbler - Dennis Swaby



# Macclesfield Forest & Bottoms Reservoir, Langley 8<sup>th</sup> April



On a bright and warm spring morning, 18 members met by the Visitor Centre at Trentabank Reservoir in Macclesfield Forest. The water level in the reservoir was low but disappointingly we didn't see any waders taking advantage of the exposed mud. The heronry in the trees opposite the viewing point now has mainly cormorants nesting with just a few grey herons visible. On the water mandarin ducks were swimming up an inlet together with several noisy Canada geese,

We took the trail towards Shutlingsloe, an uphill walk with steep climbs in places to the accompaniment of chiffchaffs, song thrushes, blackbirds, great tits and coal tits. Willow warblers were soon heard together with chiffchaff and several tit species (great, blue, coal and long-tailed). A welcome seat brought a stop where goldcrests were heard and seen moving across the trail followed by chaffinches.

As Shutlingsloe came into view, we took the trail to the right and after a short uphill climb the path opened out to give beautiful views over the forest. Here we watched four or possibly five common buzzards soaring on the thermals in the distance. After some refreshments we started the walk back down to the Visitor Centre, with a possible crossbill sighting. The willow warblers and chiffchaffs continued to sing together with the blue, great and coal tits. At another stopping point a robin, dunnoek and wren were added to the day list. On reaching the car park, some elected to take lunch while others set off for Bottom's Reservoir in Langley.

The afternoon was a linear walk along the road in front of Bottom's Reservoir. No hirundines were seen feeding over the water or grey wagtails in the culvert but the water level was low and the weeds growing in the wall suggested it had been like this for a while. We did see a coot and tufted ducks.

Walking along the road, it seemed we were too early for pied flycatchers or common redstarts although a few reports were starting to come into BirdGuides of their arrival in Derbyshire. Willow warblers and chiffchaffs were again heard and seen together with a nesting treecreeper. A nuthatch was calling but despite all efforts could not be found. Common buzzard continued to soar over Tegg's Nose and a green woodpecker could be heard yaffling. A brown hare was spotted in a field with brimstone and orange tip butterflies observed on the wing. As we returned along the same route, the mandarin ducks were seen on Tegg's Nose Reservoir, really close to the bank for the photographers.

## **Trentabank Reservoir and Macclesfield Forest Sightings:**

Cormorant, grey heron, Canada goose, Mandarin duck, mallard, goosander (female), common buzzard, curlew (heard), common pheasant, woodpigeon, great spotted woodpecker, wren, dunnoek, robin, song thrush, blackbird, chiffchaff, willow warbler, goldcrest, great tit, coal tit, blue tit, long-tailed tit, siskin, raven, carrion crow, chaffinch

continued >>

# Macclesfield Forest & Bottoms Reservoir

## Tegg's Nose and Bottoms Reservoirs sightings:

Canada goose, tufted duck, mallard, Mandarin duck, coot, lapwing, common pheasant, woodpigeon, common buzzard, stock dove, green woodpecker (heard), blue tit, chiffchaff, blackcap (heard), goldfinch, carrion crow, treecreeper, nuthatch (heard), magpie, jackdaw, rook, raven

Plus a red kite was seen in the morning on the approach road to the forest.

*Ian and Lydia Taylor*

**Trip Count = 39 species    2025 SECOS Field Trips Total = 96 species**

## Sightings Elsewhere - Apr



Redstart (male) - Dennis Swaby

**EHF/PHF/MGT/RF:** Kingfisher, **Sand Martin**, Swallow, House Martin, **Cetti's Warbler**, Willow Warbler, **Sedge Warbler**, Reed Warbler, **Grasshopper Warbler**, **Blackcap**, **Garden Warbler**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, Common Whitethroat, Fieldfare, **Redstart**, **Whinchat**, **Wheatear**, Yellow Wagtail, **White Wagtail (alba)**, **Siskin**

**Alsager:** Swallow, Yellow Wagtail

**FFF:** Kingfisher, Kestrel, **Swallow**, **Willow Warbler**, Sedge Warbler, Blackcap, **Fieldfare**, **Yellowhammer**

**GF:** **Water Rail**, Grasshopper Warbler

**Red Lane Pool:** **Reed Warbler**

**Tetton Lane Flash:** **Red Kite**

**WLF:** Water Rail, **Kingfisher**

**Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows:** Willow Warbler, Common Whitethroat

**Alsager - Fanny's Croft:** Common Snipe, Wheatear, **Yellow Wagtail**, Yellowhammer

**Alsager - Mosshouse:** **Blackcap**, Yellowhammer

**Arclid Area SQs:** Oystercatcher, Little Ringed Plover, **Common Sandpiper**, Wheatear

**Astbury:** **Red-legged Partridge**, Red Kite, Yellowhammer

**Astbury - Astbury Mere CP:** Red Kite, **Tawny Owl**, **Sand Martin**, Willow Warbler, Blackcap

**Blakenhall:** **Woodlark**, Swallow

**Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath LNR:** Mandarin Duck, Swallow, Willow Warbler, Blackcap

**Bridgemere - Acorn Coppice:** **Swift**



Redstart (female) - 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/>

## Sightings Elsewhere - Apr

**Congleton:** Swallow, Lesser Whitethroat  
**Congleton - Bullsmoor:** Cuckoo, Lesser Whitethroat  
**Congleton - Congleton Link Road West:** Fieldfare  
**Congleton - Giantswood Lane:** Barnacle Goose, Swallow  
**Congleton - Mossley:** Common Snipe, Tawny Owl, Swallow, Blackcap, Common Whitethroat, Fieldfare  
**Congleton - River Dane:** Kingfisher, Dipper, Grey Wagtail  
**Cranage:** Blackcap, Fieldfare  
**Crewe:** Swift  
**Crewe - Weston:** Tree Sparrow  
**Crewe - Wychwood Park, Weston:** Willow Warbler, Common Whitethroat  
**Doddington - Doddington Pool:** Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, Common Snipe, Common Sandpiper, Osprey, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Blackcap  
**Eaton, N of Congleton:** Sand Martin, Swallow, Blackcap, Dipper  
**Gawsworth - Gawsworth Hall:** Swallow  
**Middlewich:** Osprey  
**Moston Green, W of Sandbach:** Swallow  
**Mow Cop:** Wheatear



Swallow - Dennis Swaby

**Newsbank, nr Congleton:** Barnacle Goose, Little Ringed Plover  
**Rode Heath:** Swallow, House Martin, Yellowhammer  
**Rode Heath - Rode Pool:** Barnacle Goose, Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Oystercatcher, Little Egret, Kingfisher, Raven  
**Sandbach - Elworth:** Swift, Wheatear, Yellowhammer  
**Scholar Green:** Yellowhammer  
**Smallwood:** Barn Owl  
**Wheelock - Forge Fields:** Mandarin Duck, Tawny Owl, Swallow, Blackcap, Bullfinch

## Diary Dates



**11<sup>th</sup> May 10.00 am**

Sunday Field Trip

**20<sup>th</sup> May 10.00 am**

Tuesday Field Trip

**28<sup>th</sup> May 10.00 am**

Wednesday Summer Walk

**Leighton Moss**

Leader: Mike Tonks

**Goyt Valley**

Leader: Chris Parry

**Biddulph Grange**

Leader: Peter Durnall



SECOS Website: <https://www.secos.org.uk>



SECOS Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/SECOS1964>



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 <https://sandbachflashes.co.uk/>