



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

May 2026

Field Trip

Goyt Valley Tuesday 12th 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.

Summer Walk

Wybunbury Moss Wednesday 20th May

Wybunbury Moss is both a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is a rare example of a schwingmoor – a floating peat bog, in places only about a metre thick, resting on a water-filled basin over 12 metres deep.



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

Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome the following new member to SECOS this month:

Arthur Bowyer

Field Trip - Leighton Moss - Sunday 24th May



Leighton Moss boasts the largest area of reedbeds in northwest England.

Its wetlands, reedbeds and woodland support an array of wildlife - bearded tits, marsh harriers, bitterns, otters, and red deer. Many paths lead to 7 hides and the 9-metre-high Skytower.

April Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Blackcap, Dipper, Egyptian Goose, Goosander, Ruddy Shelduck, Sand Martin; 2nd Black-tailed Godwit, Great White Egret, Green Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Oystercatcher, Shore Lark; 3rd Golden Plover, House Martin, Little Egret, Little Ringed Plover; 4th Swallow; 5th Common Gull, Common Sandpiper, Jack Snipe, Osprey, Redstart; 6th Wheatear, Willow Warbler; 7th Fieldfare; 8th Raven, Red Kite, Sedge Warbler, Willow Tit; 9th Redpoll, Reed Warbler, Whitethroat; 10th Green Woodpecker, Lesser Whitethroat, Yellow Wagtail, Yellowhammer; 12th Swift, Whimbrel; 13th Curlew, Mandarin Duck; 14th Pink-footed Goose; 16th Bar-tailed Godwit, Ring Ouzel; 18th Barn Owl; 20th Avocet, Cetti's Warbler, Dunlin, Yellow-legged Gull; 27th Wood Sandpiper

Sightings
EHF/PHF/MGT/RF
Apr

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max 50
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 50
Herring Gull	regular, max 11
Common Gull	max 10, 5 th
Great Black-b Gull	regular, max 1
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 20 th

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

TLF = Tetton Lane 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/MGT/RF - Apr

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 49
Wigeon	regular, max 30
Gadwall	regular, max 8
Teal	regular, max 72
Mallard	regular, max 84
Shoveler	regular, max 13
Tufted Duck	max 10, 6 th
Goosander	max 4, 3 rd
Greylag Goose	regular, max 6
Canada Goose	regular, max 40
Pink-footed Goose	1, 14 th , 23 rd
Egyptian Goose	1, 21 st
G C Grebe	regular, max 2
Coot	regular, max 15
Moorhen	regular, max 4
Mute Swan	regular, max 4



Great White Egret - Dennis Swaby



Egyptian Goose - Dennis Swaby



Goosanders - Dennis Swaby



Great Crested Grebe - Dennis Swaby

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 2
Little Egret	1, 3 rd
Great White Egret	regular, max 1

Raptors & Owls	Count
Buzzard	1, 10 th

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Apr

Waders	Count
Avocet	1, 20 th
Oystercatcher	regular, max 2
Lapwing	max 2, 6 th
Golden Plover	6, 3 rd
Little Ringed Plover	regular, max 6
Dunlin	2, 20 th
Curlew	1, 13 th
Whimbrel	1, 12 th
Bar-tailed Godwit	regular, max 1
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 14
Common Sandpiper	regular, max 5
Green Sandpiper	regular, max 4
Wood Sandpiper	1, 27 th



Whimbrel - Dennis Swaby



Dunlin - Dennis Swaby



Common Sandpiper - Dennis Swaby



Bar-tailed Godwit - Dennis Swaby



Green Sandpiper - Dennis Swaby

Woolston Eyes - 14th April



Twenty SECOS members met at the Thelwall Lane barrier to be admitted to the Woolston Eyes Conservation Group area. In the morning, we walked to the Tower Hide overlooking No.4 Bed. After a little searching we were rewarded with views of the black-necked grebes playing hide-and-seek amongst the reeds. After we walked back to our cars, we had lunch, then walked around No.3 bed. We spent most time in the John Morgan Hide where we encountered more views of the grebes together with a male marsh harrier and a pair of Mediterranean gulls potentially nesting on one of the rafts in the water.

Bird species seen/heard: Canada Goose, Barnacle Goose, Greylag Goose, Mute Swan, Shelduck, Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Pheasant, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Moorhen, Coot, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, Marsh Harrier, Buzzard, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Sand Martin, Swallow, Cetti's Warbler, Long-tailed Tit, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Goldcrest, Wren, Nuthatch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch

Ian & Lydia Taylor

Trip Count = 61 species 2026 SECOS Field Trips Total = 117

Editor: Thank you to Ian and Lydia Taylor for organising and leading a productive and enjoyable day.

£45 was collected from non Woolston Eyes members and has been sent to Woolston Eyes Conservancy Group. Thank you for your support.

Sightings Elsewhere - Apr

EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: Kingfisher, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Cetti's Warbler, Willow Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, Redstart, Stonechat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, Redpoll, Reed Bunting

CF: Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail

FFF: Kestrel, Blackcap, Reed Bunting

TLF: Great White Egret

WF: Kingfisher

WLF: Sedge Warbler, Blackcap

Alsager: Osprey, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Yellowhammer

Alsager - Alsager Mill: Willow Warbler, Wheatear

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Whitethroat

Alsager - Fanny's Croft: Red Kite, Lesser Whitethroat, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, Yellowhammer

Alsager - Mosshouse: Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, Yellowhammer

Alsager - Treatment Works: Swift, Raven, House Martin, Grey Wagtail

Arclid Area SQs: Common Sandpiper

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Goosander, Great Crested Grebe, Sand Martin, Swallow, Willow Warbler, Blackcap

Barthomley: Skylark, Blackcap

Sightings Elsewhere - Apr



Blackcap - Dennis Swaby

Blakenhall, S of Crewe: Yellow Wagtail

Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath LNR: Great Crested Grebe, **Green Woodpecker**, Willow Warbler, Blackcap

Bridgemere - Bridgemere Farm: Blackcap, Whitethroat,

Bridgemere - Bridgemere Garden Centre: Blackcap

Congleton: Blackcap

Congleton - Congleton Link Road West: Wheatear

Congleton - Mossley: Jack Snipe, Blackcap

Congleton - Newsbank, Acre Dell Pools: Egyptian Goose

Congleton - River Dane: Goosander, Sparrowhawk, **Kingfisher**, Raven, **Dipper**, Grey Wagtail

Crewe: Swift, Grey Wagtail

Crewe - Macon Meadows: Wheatear

Crewe - Wychwood Park, Weston: Osprey

Doddington - Doddington Park: Barn Owl

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Swift, **Little Grebe**, Great Crested Grebe, **Oystercatcher**, Common Sandpiper, Raven, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Whitethroat

Ettiley Heath, W of Sandbach: Swift

Gawsworth - Gawsworth Hall: Goosander

Gorsty Service Res. and environs, SE of Crewe: Little Ringed Plover

Hollinsgreen, SE of Middlewich: Yellowhammer

Holmes Chapel - River Dane: Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail

Mow Cop: Swift, Skylark, **Shore Lark (present from 16 January to 05 April)**, Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, **Ring Ouzel**, **Wheatear**

Rode Heath: Ruddy Shelduck

Rode Heath - Rode Hall: Blackcap

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, Great Crested Grebe

Sandbach - Malkins Bank: Wheatear

Swettenham - The Quinta: Blackcap, Fieldfare

Walgherton - Lea Forge: Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Mandarin Duck, Blackcap, Bullfinch

Wybunbury - Wrinehill Road: Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Oystercatcher, **Red Kite**, **Raven**, **Willow Tit**, Swallow, House Martin, Blackcap, **Whitethroat**, Mistle Thrush



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/>



Rode Pool Herony Survey - Colin Lythgoe & John Triner - John Thompson

Rode Pool has the 2nd largest heronry in Cheshire, with 54 nests in 2025.

Colin Lythgoe first counted the heronry nests in 1986, and has missed only two years since - 2001, due to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, and 2021, due to the COVID pandemic.

In recent years, vegetation in the area around the pool has made it difficult to obtain a clear view of the heronry.

So, this year Colin joined John Triner in a rowing boat to count the heron nests from the water. John Thompson remained on Peg 1 at the water's edge to identify and count birds flushed by the boat - 4 Egyptian geese, 6 little egrets and 3 mandarin ducks. Great crested grebes and coots were also seen nest-building.

Note the implement in Colin's hand - he spent much of the "voyage" bailing out water that had seeped into the boat, a reminder that counting herons isn't always easy!

Diary Dates



10th May 10.00 am

Tuesday field trip

Goyt Valley

Leader: Chris Parry

20th May 10.00 am

Summer Walk

Wybunbury Moss

Leader: Mike Tonks

24th May 10.00 am

Sunday field trip

Leighton Moss

Leader: Jean Harrison



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/>