



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

June 2023

Field Trip

Sun - Mon

11th - 12th June

Anglesey

The itinerary includes three main sites: Gronant Dunes for the little tern colony, little ringed plovers and

possible reeling grasshopper warblers; RSPB South Stack for choughs, kittiwakes, fulmars, common guillemots, razorbills and puffins; and Cemlyn Bay for common, arctic, sandwich and, if we are lucky, roseate terns.

Trip Leader: Ian Taylor



Ellin's Tower & South Stack Lighthouse - Paul Harrop



The Swettenham Arms

Summer Walk

Wednesday 21 June

Swettenham Valley

Meet at 10 a.m.

Swettenham Valley is a hidden gem. It comprises a mosaic of habitats including ancient woodland, wildlife rich ponds, scrub and meadows intersected by numerous wet springs and flushes.

Trip leader: Mike Tonks

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

Sightings - May

Highlights (first reports this month) 1st Cattle Egret, Short-eared Owl, Dunlin, Garden Warbler, Little Ringed Plover, Swift, Whinchat; 2nd Hobby, Grasshopper Warbler, Dipper, Egyptian Goose, Grey Partridge, Whimbrel; 2nd Mandarin Duck; 3rd Cuckoo, Barnacle Goose, Goldeneye; 4th Black Tern, Ruff, Ringed Plover, Little Egret, Goosander, Willow Warbler; 5th Wheatear; 7th Garganey; 9th Quail; 11th Green Woodpecker; 13th Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Tree Sparrow; 14th Red Kite; 17th Avocet; 19th Kingfisher; 27th Spotted Flycatcher; 30th **(Black-crowned) Night Heron**; 31st Greenshank

EHF/PHF

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 38
Mandarin Duck	1, 25 th
Wigeon	regular, max 3
Gadwall	regular, max 5
Teal	2, 3 rd & 7 th
Mallard	regular, max 63
Garganey	regular, max 3
Shoveler	regular, max 7
Tufted Duck	regular, max 8
Goldeneye	regular, max 1
Goosander	1, 4 th , 7 th , 24 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 10
Canada Goose	regular, max 38
Barnacle Goose	1, 3 rd , 7 th , 18 th
G C Grebe	regular, max 7
Coot	regular, max 20
Moorhen	regular, max 6
Mute Swan	Regular, max 15



Waders	Count
Oystercatcher	regular, max 2
Avocet	regular, max 2
Little Ringed Plover	regular, max 6
Ringed Plover	regular, max 12
Lapwing	regular, max 6
Ruff	1, 4 th
Dunlin	1, 1 st , 19 th
Common Snipe	1, 4 th
Black-tailed Godwit	max 2, 24 th
Curlew	1, 2 nd
Whimbrel	1, 2 nd
Greenshank	1, 31 st
Common Sandpiper	regular, max 5



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.

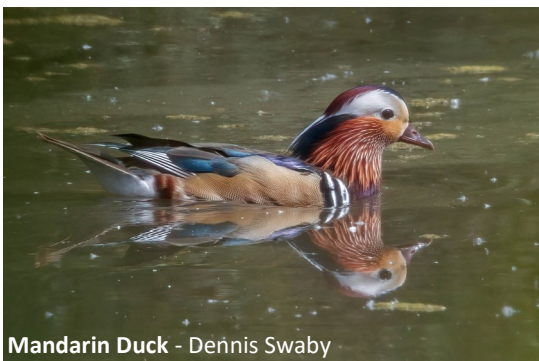
Sightings - May

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max 15
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max c350
Herring Gull	regular, max c50
Common Gull	1, 4 th
Common Tern	regular, max 2
Black Tern	max 5, 30 th



Mute Swan with cygnets - Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	max 2, 7 th
Common Buzzard	regular, max 5
Red Kite	1, 21 st
Kestrel	1, 5 th , 6 th , 24 th
Hobby	1, 5 th , 8 th



Mandarin Duck - Dennis Swaby



Avocets - Dennis Swaby

EHF/PHF



Common Tern - Dennis Swaby



Reed Warbler - Dennis Swaby

Herons/Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 4
Little Egret	1, 4 th
Night Heron	1, 30th - only 2nd report for Flashes - last 2nd June 1999



Pair of Garganey - Dennis Swaby

Sightings Elsewhere

EHF/PHF: **Garden Warbler**, **Swift**, **Wheatear**, **Kingfisher**
MGT: **Cattle Egret**, **Grasshopper Warbler**, **Short-eared Owl**
RF: Common Sandpiper
WF: **Hobby**
WLF: Garden Warbler
Alsager - **Fanny's Croft**: Quail
Alsager - **Borrow Pit Meadows**: Kingfisher, Whitethroat
Alsager - **Mosshouse Area**: Whitethroat, Yellowhammer
Alsager - **Oak Farm**: **Quail**
Alsager - **Wood Park**: **Willow Warbler**
Arclid Green: Tree Sparrow
Byley: **Red Kite**

Congleton: **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**, **Tree Sparrow**
Congleton - **River Dane**: **Dipper**, Goosander, Kingfisher
Crewe - **Coppenhall**: Peregrine **Crewe - Basford**: Red Kite
Doddington: **Grey Partridge**, Hobby, Mandarin Duck, Red Kite, Garden Warbler
Haslington - Oakhanger: Red Kite
Mow Cop - Cheshire's Close: Garden Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler
Rode Pool: **Egyptian Goose**, **Mandarin Duck**, Kingfisher
Scholar Green: **Cuckoo**, **Green Woodpecker**
Swettenham - The Quinta: Garden Warbler

Astbury Mere - 17th May

10 members had a pleasant evening walk around Astbury Mere. Species seen/heard were:

Tufted Duck, Mallard, Mute Swan, Coot, Great Crested Grebe, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Blackcap, Carrion Crow, Magpie, Woodpigeon, Sparrowhawk, Swift, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Robin, House Sparrow, Starling

Thanks to Ian Taylor for leading.

Goyt Valley - 9th May



14 members met at Errwood Hall car park on a fine, dry day. At the edge of the reservoir, two common sandpipers were perched on a fallen branch that had fallen into the water. Many Canada geese were nesting/resting in the dry bracken. Along the road, chiffchaff and many willow warblers were heard.

We took the path through the woodland to follow the line of the stream. There were good views of male and female pied flycatchers and, later, another pied flycatcher perched at the entrance to a nest box. A dipper was briefly seen flying along the stream and a grey heron stood in the stream. Two cuckoos flew above the distant hill. A treecreeper explored the upper branches of a moss-covered oak tree and a nuthatch was spotted high in another tree. At a feeder, there were long-tailed tits, chaffinches and a coal tit.

We returned along the lane and then took the track along the top of the woodland. A cuckoo flew across the valley. Colin, who was further along the track, watched a singing tree pipit rise from the top of a tree and then descend to the same tree. Colin posted on WhatsApp that he had scratched "TP" on the track to mark the spot. Unfortunately, by the time the rest of the group had arrived, the bird had flown! A singing male cuckoo was showing well, perched at the top of a tree. As we approached the car park, a blackcap was heard.

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Goyt Valley (continued)

We drove along the road to Derbyshire Bridge for lunch, during which a sparrowhawk circled above and two kestrels were seen. Curlews were heard and one flew across. Several common buzzards were spotted. Colin walked up the track to view the moorland and added skylark and meadow pipit.

After lunch, we drove the short distance to the lay-by at Danebower Quarries chimney. After much searching, John spotted a male



ring ouzel feeding below the chimney near the stream, amongst the dry bracken and grass tussocks. Stonechats were seen in the same area and a peregrine was spotted. On the other side of the road, a pair of meadow pipits were showing well on top of a wall.

We drove further down the road to Sparbent lay-by. In the upper field, there were at least four golden plovers in glorious breeding plumage. A rook perched on a distant wall, and singles of curlew and raven flew across the moor. A swallow was seen flying in and out of a stone barn. In the lower field, there were four lapwings.

Goyt Valley always provides a great day's birding. We saw many of our target birds – pied flycatcher, tree pipit, cuckoo, ring ouzel and dipper – but we couldn't find a redstart. The weather was kind to us, despite the dodgy forecast. 40 species were seen/heard during the trip.

Mike Tonks

RSPB Old Moor - 21st May



On a beautiful spring morning, 7 members met at the Old Moor RSPB reserve in the Dearne Valley. The trip got off to a great start as a barn owl was seen in the hedgerow by the car park. We made our way to the Family hide, which looked out over the Mere. As we passed the adventure play area, we could hear sedge, reed and willow warblers but very few black-headed gulls. 'Bird flu' had decimated the gull colony and there were several dead birds around the edges of the Mere and on the islands. Some wildfowl were present – gadwall, common pochard, common shelduck and mute swan.

From the Wader Scrape hide, about 20 avocets were seen. A few lesser black-backed and herring gulls were present and a common buzzard soared over the trees in the distance. A female marsh harrier patrolled the reed bed ditches. We saw a female marsh harrier several times during the day; was it the same bird?

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RSPB Old Moor (continued)

Walking towards the Wath Ings hide, we saw two hobbies acrobatically feeding high in the sky with swifts and some unidentifiable hirundines. No swallows, house martins or sand martins were present at low level – this was surprising!

At the Wath Ings and Field Pool hides we diligently searched for the reported ring-necked duck without success but did add shoveler and common tern to the list. On the way back to the visitor centre for lunch we found a flock of long-tailed tits and a brimstone butterfly enjoying the sunshine. After lunch, we checked out the tree sparrow farm area to add greenfinch, bullfinch, chaffinch great and blue tits to the list but sadly no tree sparrows. Our final destination was the reedbed at the Bittern hide. We could hear the bittern booming but only two members saw a quick flyby after we had waited patiently for about an hour – well that's birdwatching for you!

In total we saw 55 species which are listed below:

Greylag goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Common Shelduck, Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Pheasant, Little grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Woodpigeon, Swift, Moorhen, Coot, Water Rail (H), Avocet, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser black-backed Gull, Common Tern, Cormorant, Bittern, Grey Heron, Marsh Harrier, Common Buzzard, Barn Owl, Kestrel, Hobby, Carrion Crow, Magpie, Jackdaw, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler (H), Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Cetti's Warbler, Long-tailed Tit, Garden Warbler, Wren, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Chaffinch and Reed Bunting.

Ian and Lydia Taylor

2023 SECOS Field Trips Total = 155 species

Diary Dates



11th - 12th Jun 9.30 a.m.

Short Weekend Field Trip

Anglesey

Leader: Ian Taylor

21st Jun 10.00 a.m.

Summer Walk

Swettenham Valley

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