



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

October 2023

"The Mersey Area"

Mike Roberts

Friday 13th October

This talk covers the mid to lower Mersey area for a look at the birds and other wildlife of Fiddlers Ferry, Moore Nature Reserve and Hale village.



Bittern - Mike Roberts



Eric Morecambe Hide - Pauline E, Geograph

RSPB Leighton Moss lies in a wooded valley, which was formerly an inlet to Morecambe Bay. With its wetlands, reed beds, and wooded areas, it's a haven for a wide range of wildlife including bearded tits, marsh harriers, egrets, otters and red deer. The trails through the reserve offer a chance to see birds up close from the 7 well-placed hides and the Skytower viewpoint.

Field Trip

RSPB Leighton Moss

Sunday 15th October



Skytower - Ian Taylor, Geograph

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

Sightings - September

Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Barnacle Goose, Common Sandpiper, Curlew, Great White Egret, Green Sandpiper, Little Grebe, Yellow-legged Gull; 2nd Black-necked Grebe, Dipper, Kingfisher, Pochard, Raven, Siskin; 3rd Hobby, Spotted Flycatcher, Whinchat, Yellowhammer; 5th Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck; 6th Little Egret, Ruff, Snipe, Water Rail; 9th Common Gull; 11th Pintail; 12th Black-tailed Godwit, Tawny Owl; 13th Knot; 16th Cetti's Warbler; 17th Pink-footed Goose; 18th Wheatear; 24th Red-legged Partridge

EHF/PHF

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 2
Mandarin Duck	1, 12 th , 16 th , 17 th
Wigeon	regular, max 56
Gadwall	regular, max 20
Teal	regular, max c110
Mallard	regular, max c480
Pintail	regular, max 3
Shoveler	regular, max 58
Tufted Duck	regular, max 7
Pink-footed Goose	2, 28 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max c350
Canada Goose	regular, max c285
Barnacle Goose	regular, max 20
G C Grebe	regular, max 1
Little Grebe	regular, max 3
Coot	regular, max 73
Moorhen	regular, max 18
Mute Swan	regular, max 7



Great White Egret - Dennis Swaby



Curlew— Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c560
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max c325
Herring Gull	regular, max 42
Common Gull	1, 9 th
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 9 th , 10 th , 30 th
Great Black-b Gull	1, 17 th , 24 th , 30 th

Waders	Count	Common Snipe	max 21, 16 th
Water Rail	1, 9 th	Black-tailed Godwit	max 4, 12 th
Lapwing	regular, max c220	Curlew	regular, max 24
Knot	1, 13 th	Common Sandpiper	regular, max 2
Ruff	regular, max 5	Green Sandpiper	regular, max 3

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 - September

EHF/PHF

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	1, 10 th , 16 th , 24 th
Common Buzzard	regular, max 4
Kestrel	max 4, 9 th
Hobby	1, 9 th , 10 th , 12 th



Common Buzzard - Dennis Swaby



Wren - Dennis Swaby

Hérons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 8
Little Egret	max 2, 10 th
Great White Egret	regular, max 3

Sightings Elsewhere

Whinchat - Maw Green Tip - Rob Black



EHF/PHF: Kingfisher, Jay, Cetti's Warbler, Reed Warbler, Blackcap **GF:** Hobby

MGT: Pink-footed Goose, Water Rail, Snipe, Hobby, Skylark, Whinchat, Siskin

RF: Great White Egret, Cetti's Warbler

Alsager - Fanny's Croft: Hobby, Yellowhammer

Arclid: Red-legged Partridge, Wheatear

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Pochard, Raven, Siskin

Brownlow Heath, Astbury Mere CP: Wheatear

Congleton - River Dane: Kingfisher, Dipper

Crewe, Coppenhall: Pink-footed Goose

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Egyptian Goose, Little Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Great White Egret, Tawny Owl, Kingfisher, Raven

Malkins Bank: Spotted Flycatcher

Mow Cop: Stonechat, Wheatear

Rode Heath - Rode Hall: Egyptian Goose, Raven

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Egyptian Goose, Mandarin Duck, Great White Egret, Sparrowhawk, Kingfisher, Raven

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/>

Attenborough NR - 17th September



Eleven members made the trip to Attenborough Nature Reserve on a bright, dry and warm Sunday morning. The weather forecast was rain but we were lucky and enjoyed a pleasant walk around the reserve.

The reserve has paths and bridges across the water, which has filled the old sand and gravel workings on the site. The reserve is managed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and has about half a million visitors a year – it is a very popular place. The bird list for the day reflects the amount of water as gulls and wildfowl were present in good numbers. We visited two hides and seven screens as we walked around the reserve going first to the Sand Martin Hide behind the visitor centre. No hirundines were present, perhaps a little late in the year, but gadwall, tufted ducks and great crested grebes were numerous. We made our way towards the Clifton Pond Tower Hide taking time to check out the two screens on route where Canada geese, coot, shoveler and a little grebe were added to the list. Moving on along the path, a couple of observers saw a kingfisher make a dash across the lake to immediately go out of sight in the overhanging trees edging the water. The site is famed for kingfisher sightings and another was seen later in the day crossing the Main Pond by the Weir. Eventually, after searching for a Cetti's warbler that was heard but only brief glimpses were seen, we arrived at the Clifton Pond Tower Hide. Looking towards the sun tested our bird silhouette skills but patience persevered and everybody had good views of a spotted redshank, coming out of breeding plumage, feeding as it walked around the legs of the greylag and Canada geese. Lapwings, black-headed, herring and lesser black-back gulls were all admired together with wigeon, more tufted ducks and some teal. All the wildfowl were challenging to identify because most were in eclipse plumage and looked fairly scruffy.

We moved on along the Wet Marsh Path and at a screen a long debate on whether a duck was a teal or a garganey took place – on balance nobody was prepared to add garganey to the day list. However, at the next screen a great white egret's identification was not in doubt, shame some missed it debating the garganey!

>> continued



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

Attenborough NR (continued)



As we exited the Wet Marsh Path we took a wrong turn, well it was wrong for ten but fine for Colin who was heading back at this stage. After retracing our steps, we headed just past the Weir to reach the Delta Hide to eat our lunch. Disaster – the hide was locked and the spider webs and nettles suggested it hasn't been used in a while. We trudged back to the Main Path, the route Colin had taken. At this point lunch was needed and all but Ian set about their sandwiches as he went to find Lydia on a bench at Corbett's Meadow. We all met up after lunch and shared that a chiffchaff was seen and Cettis' warblers continued to call. We walked back to the visitor centre looking at cormorants, geese and great crested grebes on Church Pond as we passed. On returning to our cars, eight of us decided it was tea-time and headed for the café, seeing an Egyptian goose before travelling home. The rain did indeed stay away despite some grim weather warnings.

Species seen/heard: Canada goose, Egyptian goose, greylag goose, mute swan, gadwall, mallard, shoveler, teal, tufted duck, widgeon, great crested grebe, little grebe, coot, moorhen, cormorant, lapwing, spotted redshank, black-headed Gull, herring gull, lesser black-backed gull, grey heron, great white egret, kingfisher, carrion Crow, jackdaw, jay, magpie, stock dove, woodpigeon, robin, Cetti's warbler, chiffchaff, great tit, starling.

Ian and Lydia Taylor

2023 SECOS Field Trips Total = 162 species

Diary Dates



13th Oct 7.30 p.m.

Indoor Meeting

15th Oct 10.00 p.m.

Sunday Field Trip

7th Nov 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday Field Trip

The Mersey Area


Speaker: Mike Roberts


RSPB Leighton Moss


Leader: Mike Tonks

Pennington Flash NR

Leader: Derek Owen

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