



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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



Pennington Flash - Ron Saunders

October 2025

Field Trip

Pennington Flash

Tuesday 7th October

Pennington Flash, near Warrington, is one of the northwest's top birding sites. The 70-hectare lake was formed in the early 20th century by mining subsidence from Bickershaw Colliery and now sits within a 200-hectare country park. Over 230 bird species have been recorded, including osprey, kingfisher, marsh harrier and spoonbill. The reserve features accessible paths, bird hides and varied habitats including open water, reedbeds and woodland.

"The Ascent of Birds: How Modern Science Is Revealing Their Story"

Professor John Reilly

Friday 10th October



Yellow-headed Picathartes - Professor John Reilly

When and where did the ancestors of modern birds evolve? What enabled them to survive the meteoric impact that wiped out the dinosaurs? How did these early birds spread across the globe and give rise to the 10,600-plus species we recognise today? Based on the latest scientific discoveries and enriched by personal observations, this talk sets out to answer these fundamental questions.

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

Field Trip

Wirral

Sunday 26th October

We travel to the Wirral, where we'll visit premier birdwatching hotspots including Parkgate, Thurstaston Beach, Hoylake and Leasowe. Our day begins at Parkgate salt marsh, a sweeping wetland of international importance, hosting vast numbers of waders and wildfowl.



Parkgate - RLB Wilson

September Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Dipper, Green Sandpiper, House Martin, Kingfisher, Little Egret, Mandarin Duck, Raven, Ruff, Snipe, Swallow; 2nd Tawny Owl; 3rd Blackcap, Cetti's Warbler, Wood Sandpiper, Yellow-legged Gull; 4th Osprey, Wheatear; 5th Common Gull, Little Grebe, Sand Martin; 6th Barn Owl, Hobby, Red Kite; 7th Common Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper; 8th Swift; 9th Egyptian Goose, Great White Egret, Jack Snipe; 11th Pintail, Yellow Wagtail; 13th Siskin; 14th Ruddy Shelduck, Spotted Flycatcher; 16th Redstart; 17th Red-legged Partridge; 18th Glossy Ibis, Yellowhammer; 19th Caspian Gull; 21st Barnacle Goose, Pink-footed Goose; 22nd Pochard, Whinchat; 24th Goosander; 28th Water Rail; 29th Redpoll

Sightings EHF/PHF - Sep

Waders	Count
Water Rail	1, 28 th
Lapwing	regular, max c160
Curlew	regular, max 20+
Snipe	regular, max 7
Ruff	regular, max 4
Black-tailed Godwit	regular, max 1
Common Sandpiper	2, 8 th
Green Sandpiper	regular, max 6
Wood Sandpiper	1, 3 rd
Curlew Sandpiper	5, 7 th , 8 th



Ruff - Dennis Swaby

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 - Sep

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 1
Wigeon	regular, max 40+
Gadwall	regular, max 42
Teal	regular, max c140
Mallard	regular, max c160
Shoveler	regular, max 37
Tufted Duck	3+, 30 th
Pintail	2, 29 th
Reddy Shelduck	regular, max 1
Mandarin Duck	regular, max 3
Greylag Goose	regular, max 23+
Canada Goose	regular, max c250
Barnacle Goose	5, 21 st
Pink-footed Goose	32, 27 th
Coot	regular, max c100
Moorhen	regular, max 14
Mute Swan	regular, max 4



Glossy Ibis - Dennis Swaby



Glossy Ibis - Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	2, 21 st
Buzzard	regular, max 6
Osprey	1, 4 th
Peregrine	1, 21 st , 28 th
Kestrel	2, 12 th



Ruddy Shelduck - Dennis Swaby

Herons & Ibis	Count
Little Egret	2, 1 st
Great White Egret	1, 9 th , 12 th , 13 th
Glossy Ibis	1, 18 th , 22 nd , 23 rd

Gulls & Terns	Count
Common Gull	regular, max 1
Caspian Gull	1, 19 th , 27 th , 30 th
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 3 rd , 25 th , 26 th
Great Black-b Gull	6, 30 th

Welcome!

A warm welcome to our new members Benji Cathro and Alan Mawson. We're pleased you've joined SECOS and hope you'll enjoy birding with us, and attending indoor meetings and field trips.

Marshside & Hesketh Out Marsh

28th September



Twenty-two members attended our first trip of the new SECOS season, held in fine autumn weather with sunny intervals, a gentle breeze, and temperatures of 13-15°C.

Marshside

On arrival at Marshside RSPB, a skein of pink-footed geese flew in 'V' formation over the car park – a promising start to the day.

A brief stop at the gate viewpoint produced gadwall, mallard, shoveler, moorhen, cormorant, grey heron, lapwing and pied wagtail. From Sandgrounders' Hide we had excellent views across Sandgrounders' Pool and Polly's Pool, adding Canada goose, greylag goose, shelduck, wigeon, teal, coot, herring gull and lesser black-backed gull. Two female pintails showed well close to the hide, and a great black-backed gull stood out in the sunshine. Two redshank were feeding and a single black-tailed godwit dropped in. A flock of meadow pipits were feeding across the grassland. A Cetti's warbler gave itself away with its loud song. Raptors were also active: a kestrel hunted over the marsh and another perched on a post, while a peregrine caused a commotion among the geese. On Crossens Marsh, a distant flock of golden plover gathered, and a few members were lucky enough to spot a cattle egret.

At Junction Pool, a single snipe was found, along with a black swan. A stonechat also showed near the viewpoint. At Nel's Hide, there were hundreds of resting black-tailed godwits, occasionally stretching to reveal their white wing bars. Waders here also included a ruff and three curlew sandpipers. There was a common gull at Fairclough's Viewpoint. On the marsh, on the opposite side of the road to the visitor centre, cattle egret, reed bunting, skylark and merlin were recorded. At Marine Pool, off Marine Drive, mute swan, little grebe and great crested grebe were added to the day's list.

Hesketh Out Marsh

In the afternoon we travelled the short distance to Hesketh Out Marsh RSPB, carefully negotiating the mile-long potholed track to the car park. From Karen's Viewpoint on the west seawall, we enjoyed superb elevated views across the marsh and the Ribble Estuary.

continued >>

Marshside & Hesketh Out Marsh

A greenshank and two redshank foraged close by, while a curlew sandpiper fed along the muddy margin and a curlew worked the far bank. Ruff were present in good numbers. Little egrets were scattered across the pools, joined briefly by a great white egret.

Two marsh harriers quartered the marsh, three buzzards circled overhead, and amongst a group of resting redshank we picked out a spotted redshank, its longer legs and bill pattern confirming the identification.

A few members walked onto the north bank, where a peregrine gave a final flourish to the day's sightings.

With many species recorded, fine weather, and good company, this was a thoroughly enjoyable start to the season.

Mike Tonks

Trip Count = 55 species

2025 SECOS Field Trips Total = 164

Sightings Elsewhere - Sep



Swallow - Dennis Swaby

Sightings Elsewhere - Sep

EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: **Water Rail**, Kingfisher, **Raven**, Sand Martin, **Swallow**, **House Martin**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Blackcap**, Stonechat, **Wheatear**, **Yellow Wagtail**, Grey Wagtail, **Siskin**

FFF: **Jack Snipe**, Common Sandpiper, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Kingfisher, **Sand Martin**, **Swallow**, House Martin, Blackcap

WLF: Kingfisher, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, **Redpoll**

Arclid Area SQs: **Pink-footed Goose**, Barn Owl, **Spotted Flycatcher**, Wheatear

Arclid Green: Wheatear



Raven - Dennis Swaby



Kingfisher - Dennis Swaby

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Gadwall, Tufted Duck, **Little Grebe**, Great Crested Grebe, Raven, **Swallow**, **House Martin**, Grey Wagtail

Mow Cop: **Redstart**, **Whinchat**, Stonechat

Rode Heath: Pink-footed Goose

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Pink-footed Goose, **Egyptian Goose**, Ruddy Shelduck, Mandarin Duck, Shoveler, Little Grebe, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Sparrowhawk, **Barn Owl**, Kingfisher, Raven

Scholar Green: Buzzard, Hobby, **Yellowhammer**

Wheelock - Forge Fields: Little Egret, Sparrowhawk, **Tawny Owl**

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/>

Bridgemere: **Red Kite**, **Hobby**

Checkley: Red Kite

Congleton - Little Moreton Hall: Red Kite

Congleton - River Dane: Pink-footed Goose, Mandarin Duck, **Goosander**, Little Egret, **Kingfisher**, Hobby, **Dipper**, Grey Wagtail

Crewe - Coppenhall Moss: Kestrel

Crewe - Macon Meadows: Pink-footed Goose, Red Kite

Crewe - Wrinehill: **Red-legged Partridge**, Sparrowhawk

Doddington - Doddington Park: **Swift**

SECOS at Hassall Green Nature Reserve Open Day



On 21st September, SECOS had the pleasure of attending the Hassall Green Nature Reserve Open Day for the second successive year. The event was organised by the Green Angels, led by Project Officer, Rebecca Mooney. A site record 650 visitors enjoyed the sunny day.

Our volunteers shared information about SECOS. The children had a fantastic time taking part in our Bird Trail, with the 'Star Birder' certificates and sweets proving to be a great incentive! Thank you to our wonderful volunteers.

A special thank-you goes to the Green Angels for their warm hospitality and invaluable help. We would also like to express our gratitude for their generosity – the Green Angels sold refreshments at the event and kindly donated £202 to SECOS.

Diary Dates



7th Oct 10.00 am

Tuesday Field Trip

10th Oct 7.30 pm

Indoor Meeting

22nd Oct 6.30 pm

Masonic Hall, Sandbach

26th Oct 10.00 am

Sunday Field Trip

Pennington Flash

Leader: Anthea Gater

"The Ascent of Birds"

Speaker: Professor John Reilly

"Birds of East Cheshire"

Speaker: Mike Tonks

Wirral

Leader: Tom Graham



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/>