



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

November 2023

Field Trip Pennington Flash Tuesday 7th November

Pennington Flash is a 70-hectare (170-acre) lake created at the turn of the 20th century by coal mining subsidence, mainly from Bickershaw Colliery. Over 230 bird species have been recorded on the site including osprey, kingfisher, marsh harrier and spoonbill.



Pennington Flash - ronsaunders4, Flickr



Yorkshire's Wild Beauty



"Yorkshire's Wild Beauty"

John Gardner

Friday 10th November

Yorkshire's diverse landscapes and habitats provide a birdwatcher's paradise. From the rugged cliffs of the coast to the tranquil moorlands, the region boasts a remarkable range of bird species. In the serene Yorkshire Dales, there are peregrine falcons and red grouse amid heather-covered hills. Along the coast, there are thousands of seabirds such as puffins and kittiwakes. The ancient woodlands are home to many species including warblers and owls.

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

Field Trip

Wirral

Sunday 19th November



The Boat House & Salt Marsh, Parkgate - rlbwilson, Flickr

This month, we take a trip around the Wirral. There are some excellent sites to visit including Parkgate, West Kirby, Hoylake and Leasowe. We start at Parkgate, where the salt marsh is managed by the RSPB as part of the Dee Estuary Nature Reserve, one of the largest and most important wetland sites in the world. In addition to birds, Parkgate boasts regionally famous homemade ice cream!

October Highlights (first reports this month)

1st Cetti's Warbler, Common Gull, Common Sandpiper, Curlew, Little Grebe, Pintail, Common Snipe; 2nd Little Egret; 4th Siskin; 7th Golden Plover; 8th Green Sandpiper; 9th Red-legged Partridge; 10th Dipper, Goosander, Kingfisher, Redwing; 12th Merlin, Ruff; 13th Cattle Egret, Great White Egret, Jack Snipe; 14th Pink-footed Goose; 15th Barnacle Goose, Brambling, Lesser Redpoll; 16th Pochard, Whooper Swan; 17th Raven; 18th Egyptian Goose, Goldeneye; 19th Dunlin; 21st Common Crossbill, Common Tern, Red Kite; 22nd Fieldfare, Yellowhammer; 23rd Arctic Tern, Water Rail; 25th Tawny Owl; 26th Redshank

Sightings EHF/PHF - October

Waders	Count
Water Rail	1, 23 rd , 30 th
Lapwing	regular, max c360
Dunlin	1, 19 th , 31 st
Ruff	1, 12 th
Redshank	1, 26 th
Common Snipe	1, 1 st ; 2, 13 th
Curlew	regular, max 49
Common Sandpiper	1, 1 st , 8 th
Green Sandpiper	max 2, 27 th



Curlew - Dennis Swaby

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 EHF/PHF - October

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 15
Wigeon	regular, max c520
Gadwall	regular, max 12
Teal	regular, max 77
Mallard	regular, max c250
Pintail	regular, max 2
Shoveler	regular, max 31
Tufted Duck	regular, max 15
Goldeneye	regular, max 1
Goosander	max 9, 30 th
Pink-footed Goose	max c130, 22 nd
Greylag Goose	regular, max 195
Canada Goose	regular, max 158
Egyptian Goose	2, 18 th , 19 th
Barnacle Goose	1, 15 th
G C Grebe	max 4, 15 th
Little Grebe	regular, max 7
Coot	regular, max c140
Moorhen	regular, max 14
Mute Swan	regular, max 6
Whooper Swan	6, 16 th ; 3, 21 st



Cattle Egret - Dennis Swaby

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c270
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max c210
Herring Gull	regular, max 28
Common Gull	1, 1 st , 29 th
Great Black-b Gull	regular, max 6

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 5
Little Egret	regular, max 6
Cattle Egret	regular, max 3
Great White Egret	1, 18 th ; 3, 19 th



Peregrine- Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Sparrowhawk	2, 28 th
Common Buzzard	1, 28 th , 29 th
Kestrel	1, 1 st , 29 th
Merlin	1, 12 th



Sparrowhawk - Dennis Swaby

Sightings Elsewhere - October



Fieldfare - Dennis Swaby

EHF/PHF: Stock Dove, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Skylark, Swallow, **Cetti's Warbler**, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Fieldfare, Greenfinch, Siskin

GF: **Jack Snipe**, Stonechat

MGT: Pink-footed Goose, Egyptian Goose, **Jack Snipe**, Common Snipe, Cattle Egret, Great White Egret, Little Egret, **Red Kite**, Peregrine, Skylark, Cetti's Warbler, **Fieldfare**, Stonechat, **Brambling**, **Lesser Redpoll**, **Common Crossbill**, Siskin, **Yellowhammer**

RF: Pink-footed Goose, Pintail, Pochard, Cattle Egret, **Great White Egret**, Little Egret, **Raven**, Redwing, Stonechat, **Common Crossbill**

WLF: Great Crested Grebe, Sparrowhawk, Kingfisher, Raven, Skylark, Cetti's Warbler, Siskin

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Swallow, Goldcrest, **Siskin**

Arclid Green: Jack Snipe, Stonechat

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Pochard, Goldeneye

Church Lawton: Pink-footed Goose

Congleton: Blackcap, Redwing

Congleton - River Dane: **Goosander**, **Kingfisher**, **Dipper**

Crewe: Grey Heron, Rook, **Tawny Owl**

Doddington - Doddington Pool: **Pochard**, Goldeneye, **Red-legged Partridge**, **Common Tern**, **Arctic Tern**, Great White Egret, **Raven**, Swallow,

Doddington - Lemon Pool: Pink-footed Goose, Raven

M6 Near Sandbach: Lapwing, **Golden Plover**

Mow Cop: Stonechat

Sandbach - Bradwall Green: Pink-footed Goose, Skylark

Swettenham: Pink-footed Goose

Swettenham - Swettenham Meadows: Jay, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Mistle Thrush

Swettenham - The Quinta: Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Nuthatch, Redwing, Grey Wagtail

Walgherton - Lea Forge: **Kingfisher**, Jay, **Redwing**, Bullfinch

Winterley & Winterley Pool: Nuthatch, Greenfinch



Little Grebe - Dennis Swaby



Egyptian Geese - 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/>



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

Doxey Marshes NR - 3rd October



8 members travelled to Doxey Marshes on a fine day, meeting in the car park at the end of Wooton Drive. Our target bird for the day was cattle egret. We walked along the grassed track to the elevated viewpoint overlooking Cresswell Flash. A single barnacle goose was spotted amongst a large flock of canada geese. Common water birds were logged, including greylag goose, mallard, moorhen, coot, cormorant, black-headed gull, lesser black-backed gull, lapwing and grey heron. 2 distant kestrels were seen.

Continuing along the path, we soon arrived at another elevated viewpoint overlooking Boundary Flash to the north and reedbeds to the south. The flash yielded 3 great crested grebes and a Cetti's warbler was heard. 8 common snipe flew over. A little egret was located in the reedbed and a great white egret was spotted near the wind turbines adjacent to the M6. Several stonechats were active over the bullrushes.

Next, we took the footpath through the reedbed to the small octagonal hide, overlooking Lily Pool and Doxey Pool, noting 3 little egrets, 4 grey herons and 1 great white egret on the way. From the hide, we added shoveler, 3 common buzzards, teal and gadwall. On a couple of occasions, a flock of lapwing took to the air, accompanied by a flock of common snipe.

We continued along the path to the large rectangular hide overlooking Tillington Flash, adding mute swan on the way. Time for lunch! The flash had many shovelers, together with small numbers of black-headed gulls, lesser black-backed gulls and lapwings. A little egret was perched in the tree on the island. A great white egret landed at the back of the flash.

Approaching the churchyard, a group of bullfinches flew across the path and a few house martins passed overhead.

Returning to the car park, we passed close to a herd of cows and we hoped to see our target bird. Sadly, the cows were lying down and there were no cattle egrets.

Back at the car park, a sparrowhawk flew over.

We decided to try our luck in the hunt for cattle egrets in the fields on the other side of the M6. When the fields flood, tens of thousands of birds may be present. On this occasion, the fields were dry and the only birds seen were a male and female stonechat.

Thank you to everyone who attended and made this an enjoyable day.

40 bird species were seen/heard during the trip.

Mike Tonks



SECOS Website: www.secos.org.uk



SECOS Blog (to read/record local sightings): www.secos.org.uk/sightings



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Leighton Moss RSPB - 15th October



10 members travelled to RSPB Leighton Moss on a bright sunny morning.

On arrival, we found the car park to be almost full, with many people attracted by the fine weather and the possibility of seeing bearded tits. Fortunately, the small overflow car park in front of the visitor centre had been reserved for us.

We headed down the Causeway, hoping to see bearded tits on the grit trays. The viewing platform was crowded with birdwatchers and photographers, but there was no sign of the bearded tits, although their 'pinging' contact calls could be heard. After twenty minutes, we moved on.

From the Causeway Hide, we saw small numbers of common water birds – moorhen, coot, cormorant, gadwall, mallard, shoveler, black-headed gull. A group of mute swans were feeding in the back of the pool. Later, 11 whooper swans flew in to join the 'mutes'. A marsh harrier was seen hunting over the distant reedbed.

Further along the Causeway, three red deer swam or walked across the deep water channel, followed by two more a few minutes later. As we continued along the Causeway and proceeded along the path to the Lower Hide, Cetti's warbler, common pheasant and treecreeper were added to the day's list. At the Lower Hide, there were good views of a cream-headed hunting marsh harrier.

On the return walk, a marsh tit was seen taking food from a gate post at the end of the Causeway. On arrival back at the grit trays, this time we were lucky. There were excellent views of a male and female bearded tit.

Lunch was taken in the shelter at the back of the visitor centre, where we watched the birds on the hanging feeders – blue tit, great tit, marsh tit, coal tit, nuthatch, robin, chaffinch, bullfinch and dunnock. A sparrowhawk flew through!

A single siskin was spotted with a small flock of goldfinches on the top of a conifer at the entrance to the car park. A grey heron was seen from Lilian's Hide.

Next, we headed to the Tim Jackson hide, where we observed a few teal and greylag geese, together with a single little grebe. A male pintail splashed vigorously in the water as it preened.

continued >>

Leighton Moss RSPB (continued)



Later in the afternoon, we drove the short distance to the New Road site, along a deeply rutted track to the small car park.

From the Eric Morecambe Hide, we looked out over the pools on the edge of Morecambe Bay. A different habitat and different species – singles of grey plover and black-tailed godwit, a few common shelduck, several groups of resting common redshank, and a few turnstone. A single knot was present in a group of redshanks, which eventually emerged to give good views. Six greenshanks were spotted resting on an island. Six birds were swimming some distance away and we debated whether they were goosanders or red-breasted mergansers, eventually deciding they were goosanders. Five little egrets were seen feeding in the distance, and two wigeons were spotted. A single curlew was seen feeding nearby on the grass bank.

48 bird species were seen/heard during the trip – Leighton Moss never disappoints!

Mike Tonks

2023 SECOS Field Trips Total = 165 species

Diary Dates



7th Nov 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday Field Trip

10th Nov 7.30 p.m.

Indoor Meeting

19th Nov 10.00 a.m.

Sunday Field Trip

Pennington Flash

Leader: Derek Owen

Yorkshire's Wild Beauty

Speaker: John Gardner

Wirral

Leader: Mike Tonks

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