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NEWSLETTER

THE OBSERVER

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



Harlequin Duck – Paul Hill

"Icelandic Birding"

Paul Hill

Friday 13th November

In 2025, Paul Hill made three visits to Iceland as a Guest Lecturer for Fred.Olsen Cruise Lines, as part of the Ocean Wildlife Encounters Team. His shore days were spent surrounded by breeding waders, wildfowl and terns. Whilst cruising around Iceland, he was torn between seabirds and cetaceans.

Field Trip

Wirral – Sunday 22nd November

Join us for a November birding tour of the Wirral's premier hotspots: Parkgate, Thurstaston Beach, Hoylake and Leasowe. We begin beside Parkgate's sweeping salt marsh, an internationally important wetland supporting impressive numbers of waders and wildfowl, before exploring the peninsula's varied coastal habitats in search of seasonal specialities and rarities.



Parkgate and Saltmarsh - Sue Adair

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 two new members to SECOS this month.

Nigel Hall, Jane Burdett-Smith

OCT Highlights from the SECOS Area

Wigeon numbers begin to build

Wigeon counts are starting to increase at the Sandbach Flashes as birds arrive from their breeding grounds in Northern Europe to spend the winter here. Look out for them grazing on the short grass around the Flashes, and listen for their distinctive whistling call. The table below shows the maximum numbers recorded month by month.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2022	960	500	500	10	2	2	0	1	59	360	670	710
2023	1120	640	360	16	3	1	1	3	56	520	520	930
2024	1220	680	730	22	6	0	3	3	73	450	710	800
2025	1080	820	360	30	1	3	0	1	40	350	320	300
2026	1260	380	350	30	2	1	1	2	23	140		

Pied wagtail gathering

On the 19th, an impressive 183 pied wagtails gathered on the cleared site between Aldi and Howdens in Congleton. They were assembling before heading to their night-time roost.

Notable vismig counts at MGT

During the month, vismig counts at Maw Green Tip included: 500 pink-footed goose, 368 woodpigeon, 491 meadow pipit, 27 skylark, 37 redwing, and 50 linnet.

Highlights Summary

1st Bar-headed Goose*, Great White Egret, Little Egret; 2nd Mandarin Duck; 4th Cattle Egret, Snipe; 5th Pintail; 7th Black-tailed Godwit, Cetti's Warbler, Chiffchaff, Common Sandpiper, Goosander, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Pochard; 8th Crane, Egyptian Goose, Jack Snipe, Raven, Redshank, Yellowhammer; 11th Pink-footed Goose, Redwing, Siskin; 12th Curlew; 15th Red-legged Partridge; 16th Dipper; 17th Fieldfare, Tawny Owl; 19th Common Gull, Green Sandpiper; 21st Woodcock; 30th Scaup

* Bar-headed Goose is a BOU Category E species (escapee).

Sandbach Flashes Sightings - OCT

Elton Hall Flash + Pump House Flash + Railway Flash + Maw Green Tip

Wildfowl	Count
Canada Goose	regular, max 160+
Greylag Goose	regular, max 110+
Pink-footed Goose	c500, 18th, over
Mute Swan	regular, max 2
Shelduck	regular, max 7
Shoveler	regular, max 41
Gadwall	max 5, 28th
Wigeon	regular, max 140+
Mallard	regular, max 65
Pintail	1, 5th
Teal	regular, max c190
Tufted Duck	max 7, 11th
Goosander	1, 7th
Moorhen	regular, max 14
Coot	regular, max 73
Little Grebe	max 2. 17th



Little Grebe - Dennis Swaby

Raptors & Owls	Count
Peregrine	regular, max 1
Buzzard	1, 8th



Carrion Crow & Buzzard - Dennis Swaby



Peregrine - Dennis Swaby

Sandbach Flashes Sightings - OCT

Elton Hall Flash + Pump House Flash + Railway Flash + Maw Green Tip

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max c250
Common Gull	max 3, 28th
Herring Gull	regular, max 18+
Great Black-b Gull	max 5, 17th
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 43

Herons & Egrets	Count
Little Egret	1, 17th
Great White Egret	max 2, 29th
Cattle Egret	1, 4th, 5th, 6th
Grey Heron	regular, max 4



Cattle Egret - Dennis Swaby

Waders	Count
Lapwing	regular, max 110
Curlew	regular, max 18
Snipe	3, 4th
Common Sandpiper	1, 7th, 8th
Green Sandpiper	max 3, 19th
Redshank	1, 8th



Black-headed Gull - Dennis Swaby



Curlew - Dennis Swaby

Trip Reports

Pennington Flash - 6th October



Ten members enjoyed a day at Pennington Flash.

Bird species seen/heard: Canada goose, pink-footed goose, mute swan, shoveler, gadwall, wigeon, mallard, teal, tufted duck, woodpigeon, water rail, moorhen, coot, little grebe, great crested grebe, oystercatcher, lapwing, black-headed gull, herring gull, lesser black-backed gull, cormorant, little egret, great white egret, grey heron, buzzard, kingfisher, great spotted woodpecker, jay, magpie, jackdaw, carrion crow, coal tit, blue tit, great tit, Cetti's warbler, long-tailed tit, chiffchaff, goldcrest, wren, nuthatch, treecreeper, blackbird, robin, dunnock, bullfinch, goldfinch, reed bunting

Trip Count = 47 species **2026 SECOS Field Trips Total = 167**

Thanks to Ian and Lydia Taylor for leading the trip.

Sightings Elsewhere - OCT



Meadow Pipit - Dennis Swaby

Sandbach Flashes:
EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: Cormorant, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Raven, Skylark, Cetti's Warbler, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Redwing, Fieldfare, Stonechat, Meadow Pipit, Bullfinch, Greenfinch, Linnet, Goldfinch, Siskin, Reed Bunting

Alsager: Woodcock
Alsager - Fanny's Croft: Skylark, Stonechat, Meadow Pipit, Greenfinch, Linnet, Yellowhammer
Alsager - Treatment Works: Kestrel, Grey Wagtail, Meadow Pipit

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Pochard, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron, Bullfinch, Greenfinch

Brereton Heath - Brereton Heath LNR: Redwing, Siskin

Congleton - Congleton Link Road West: Little Egret
Congleton - Dane-in-Shaw: Sparrowhawk, Tawny Owl, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Nuthatch, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Siskin
Congleton - Lower Heath: Grey Wagtail
Congleton - River Dane: Mandarin Duck, Great White Egret, Kingfisher, Goldcrest, Treecreeper, Dipper, Grey Wagtail

Sightings Elsewhere - OCT

Crewe - Basford: Redwing
Crewe - Crewe Hall: Bullfinch
Crewe - Weston: Redwing

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Bar-headed Goose (escapee), Egyptian Goose, Pochard, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Lapwing, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Song Thrush, Redwing, Grey Wagtail

Gawsworth - Gawsworth Hall: Kestrel

Haslington: Tawny Owl

Holmes Chapel: Crane (over)

Nantwich: Sparrowhawk

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Shoveler, Great Crested Grebe, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Grey Wagtail

Sandbach - Elworth: Redwing
Sandbach - Fields Farm: Jack Snipe, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kestrel, Raven, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting

Scholar Green: Great White Egret



Long-tailed Tit - 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/

Diary Dates



13th November 7.30 pm
Indoor Meeting

Icelandic Birding
Speaker: Paul Hill

22nd November 10:00 am
Sunday Field Trip

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/**