



THE OBSERVER

SECOS Newsletter

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

December 2025



Golden Eagle - Gary Jones

"Birds of Prey"
Gary Jones
Friday 12th December

Gary says: "I am a full time wildlife photographer, based in North Wales close to the beauty and ruggedness of the Welsh coast and Snowdonia. I have a real passion for nature and its wildlife, especially raptors".



Fisher's Mill Pond - Mat Fascione

Field Trip
Middleton Lakes RSPB
Sunday 14th December

Join us for a visit to a nature reserve forged from an old gravel pit into a rich tapestry of wetlands, meadows, reedbeds and woodland, in the heart of

the River Tame valley. Trails provide easy access to all parts of the reserve.

November Highlights (first reports this month)

2nd Cetti's Warbler, Chiffchaff, Great White Egret, Pink-footed Goose, Pochard, Raven, Redwing, Siskin, Snipe, Tawny Owl, Water Rail, Woodcock, Yellowhammer; 6th Curlew, Fieldfare, Little Egret, Little Grebe, Ruff; 7th Goosander; 9th Red Kite; 11th Caspian Gull, Kingfisher, Mandarin Duck; 12th Jack Snipe; 14th Goldeneye; 16th Pintail; 18th Yellow-legged Gull; 21st Blackcap; 24th Common Gull, Green-winged Teal

Sightings EHF/PHF/MGT/RF - Nov

Wildfowl	Count
Shelduck	regular, max 15
Wigeon	regular, max c320
Gadwall	regular, max 4
Teal	regular, max 53
Green-winged Teal	1, 24 th , 26 th
Mallard	regular, max 71
Shoveler	regular, max 22
Tufted Duck	regular, max 9
Pintail	2, 16 th
Goosander	1, 17 th
Greylag Goose	regular, max 26
Canada Goose	regular, max c450
Pink-footed Goose	195, 2 nd (over)
Little Grebe	2, 24 th
Coot	regular, max 86
Moorhen	regular, max 10+
Mute Swan	regular, max 1



Green-winged Teal (centre bird) - Dennis Swaby



Ruff - Dennis Swaby

Waders	Count
Water Rail	2, 2 nd
Lapwing	regular, max 150+
Curlew	regular, max c25
Woodcock	1, 11 th
Snipe	max 3, 25 th
Ruff	1, 6 th , 14 th , 17 th

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/MGT/RF - Nov

Gulls & Terns	Count
Black-headed Gull	regular, max 80
Lesser Black-b Gull	regular, max 29
Great Black-b Gull	1, 14 th , 16 th , 17 th , 24 th
Herring Gull	regular, max 13
Common Gull	2, 24 th
Caspian Gull	regular, max 1
Yellow-legged Gull	1, 18 th



Little Egrets - Dennis Swaby

Herons & Egrets	Count
Grey Heron	regular, max 5
Great White Egret	regular, max 2

Raptors & Owls	Count
Red Kite	1, 13 th
Peregrine	1, 2 nd



Lapwing - Dennis Swaby



Peregrine - Dennis Swaby



Snipe - Dennis Swaby

Chelford Sand Quarries - 4th November

17 members attended on a damp but rewarding day. In the morning, we explored Mere Farm Quarries North, South and East. In the afternoon, we visited Acre Nook Quarry, Parklands Mere and Lapwing Hall Pool.



42 bird species were recorded: Canada goose, pink-footed goose, mute swan, shoveler, gadwall, wigeon, mallard, teal, pochard, tufted duck, goldeneye, pheasant, woodpigeon, moorhen, coot, little grebe, great crested grebe, lapwing, black-headed gull, lesser black-backed gull, cormorant, great white egret, sparrowhawk, buzzard, kestrel, great spotted woodpecker, jay, magpie, carrion crow, blue tit, great tit, long-tailed tit, Cetti's warbler, starling, blackbird, tree sparrow, dunnock, robin, pied wagtail, chaffinch, goldfinch, siskin

Carsington Water - 23rd November

Twelve members enjoyed a visit to Carsington Water, enjoying sunny intervals throughout the day. With the reservoir sitting at around 50% capacity, large grassed areas were exposed around the edges – a striking sight, but one that resulted in noticeably fewer water birds than usual and not a single wader.



Our first stop was the **Paul Stanley Hide**, reached via a short woodland walk where bullfinch and chaffinch were noted. From the hide, the very low water level was evident. Only a handful of water birds were present: a few mallards and cormorants, plus a single little grebe. Two distant red kites drifted around. The return walk through the woodland provided treecreeper, goldcrest, blue tit and goldfinch.

At the **Sheepwash Hide**, the range of species improved. We recorded a few goldeneye, wigeon, gadwall, tufted duck, great crested grebe and good numbers of teal. A single pochard was seen – a stark contrast to our 15th December 2024 visit when over 200 pochard were present, with an impressive 924 on 10th December 2024. Black-headed gulls and lesser black-backed gulls were also noted. Around 30 meadow pipits and eight pied wagtails were actively foraging on the grass at the water's edge, and a low-flying kestrel gave a brief but welcome appearance.

A stop at the **Visitor Centre** added dunnock, robin and house sparrow to our list.

En route to the **Wildlife Centre**, small numbers of coot and Canada geese were seen, and a flock of around 50 goldfinches passed overhead. Very few birds were visible from the hide itself and, with no food on the feeders, activity was limited. However, a single redwing perched prominently at the top of a tree across the water.

Carsington Water (continued)

Our final stop, **Stones Island**, offered decent numbers of greylag geese and lesser black-backed gulls on the water. A lone oystercatcher was seen among the moored boats.

Some members rounded off the outing with a well-earned hot drink in the café.

Thank you to Anthea Gater for leading an enjoyable day.

Mike Tonks

Trip Count = 38 species

2025 SECOS Field Trips Total = 167 species

Sightings Elsewhere - Nov

Sandbach Flashes

EHF/PHF/MGT/RF: Kingfisher, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, **Raven**, **Cetti's Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Fieldfare, Greenfinch, Reed Bunting

Alsager - Borrow Pit Meadows: Redwing

Arclid: Stonechat, **Yellowhammer**

Astbury - Astbury Mere CP: Shoveler, **Pochard**, Tufted Duck, **Goldeneye**, Great Crested Grebe, **Woodcock**, **Tawny Owl**, **Redwing**, Grey Wagtail, **Siskin**

Checkley: **Red Kite**

Congleton - River Dane: Goosander, Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail

Congleton - Treatment Works: Buzzard, Grey Wagtail

Crewe - Basford: Grey Wagtail



Redwing - Dennis Swaby

Doddington - Doddington Pool: Pink-footed Goose, Shoveler, Teal, Pochard, Tufted Duck, **Little Grebe**, Great Crested Grebe, Lapwing, Snipe, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Raven, Skylark, Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Mistle Thrush, **Fieldfare**, **Siskin**

Gawsworth - Gawsworth Hall: Tufted Duck, Goosander

Hassall Green, SE of Sandbach: Great White Egret

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/>



Meadow Pipit - Dennis Swaby

Sightings Elsewhere - Nov

Rode Heath - Rode Pool: Mandarin Duck, Shoveler, Teal, Tufted Duck, Goosander, Great Crested Grebe, Little Egret, Great White Egret, Grey Heron, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Kingfisher, Jay, Raven, Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Siskin

Sandbach: Nuthatch

Sandbach - Elworth: Blackcap

Sandbach - Malkins Bank: Jack Snipe, Snipe

Spen Green, SW of Astbury: Pink-footed Goose, Great Spotted Woodpecker

Walgherton - Lea Forge: Pink-footed Goose, Buzzard, Redwing, Fieldfare



Goldcrest - Dennis Swaby



RSPB Sales

The RSPB Macclesfield Local Group sold Christmas cards at the November indoor meeting. The total sales for the evening was £83. Thank you to SECOS members for your generous support.

Ian & Lydia Taylor

Diary Dates



2nd Dec 10.00 am

Tuesday Field Trip

12th Dec 7.30 pm

Indoor Meeting

14th Dec 10.00 am

Sunday Field Trip

Sandbach Flashes & Xmas Lunch

Leader: Jean Harrison

"Birds of Prey"

Speaker: Gary Jones

Middleton Lakes

Leader: Mike Tonks



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/>