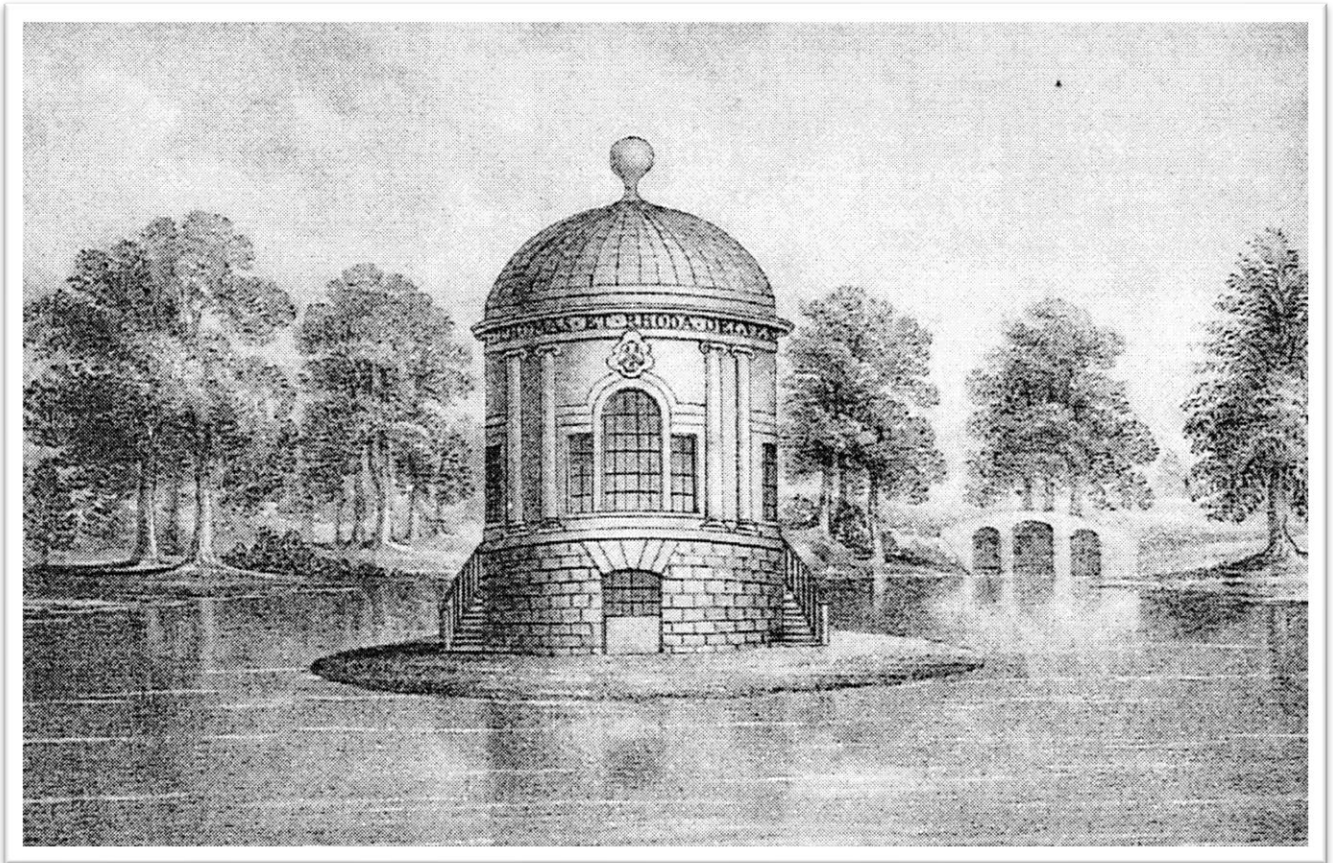


# The Bird Report 2024

## for the Doddington Estate



The Banqueting House in the Pool  
( 1676 to 1813 )



**South East Cheshire Ornithological Society**  
Your local birdwatching group

Readers of this report should note that access to the Estate is managed by water bailiff(s), etc. **All roads on the Estate are private** except for the road leading to the farm and units off Hunsterson Road.

*A big clue:* note the large metal gates at London Road/A51 end of the road to the units.

Those allowed to be on the Estate ( birdwatchers, etc. ) have been issued with a permit on a lanyard. These permits are expected **to be worn and visible from a distance** to avoid the need for Estate staff having to approach / challenge them.

A few dedicated SECOS members visit the site almost every week, and monthly there is a BTO WeBS Count – see Note 1. Also, there is the annual Heronry Survey – see Note 2, These records are added to the various British Trust for Ornithology's ( BTO ) databases. Their records are used by Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society ( CAWOS ) to produce their annual Bird Report. There are also some records that appear to have come from the Estate staff of birds seen in the area. The raw data is a combination of all the above.

There have been over 200 species recorded on the estate, many of them seen using the main pool. In addition to the usual morning visits, there are also late afternoon visits to count the gulls as they come into roost as this group of birds do gather in their thousands. The hide was useful for counting, as it allowed a degree of comfort while slowly working through the flocks. It is a shame that it is no longer viable.

I have offered to take on the task of preparing the report ( together with the WeBS Count ) as Colin is struggling with his mobility. This year's report is in a shorter format. My thanks to the Doddington Regulars for sharing their sightings. As our access is limited - to areas around the pools, this report concentrates on the waterbirds.

My thanks also go to the Estate for continuing to allow us access.

The Doddington Regulars: -

- Colin Lythgoe, Mike and Andy Warner, Sylvia Jarvis, David Cookson and John Thompson ( the report compiler )
- Dave Meakin contributed in the past

**We are grateful to our sponsor HJ Lea Oakes Ltd, who provides feed for some of the local feeding stations**

The report is in three sections

**Section 1:** a list of species recorded in 2024

**Section 2:** a list of species recorded pre-2024

**Section 3:** The History of the Doddington Estate

# The Bird Report 2024 for the Doddington Estate

**Section 1:** a list of species recorded in 2024. **116** species have been recorded this year

I've split the species into two groups: water birds and others.

## Water birds: -

Canada Goose	Common Scoter	Little Gull
Barnacle Goose	Goldeneye	Black-headed Gull
Snow Goose ( 25 )	Goosander	Common Gull
Greylag Goose	Moorhen	Herring Gull
Pink-footed Goose	Coot	Great Black-backed Gull
Mute Swan ( 97 )	Little Grebe	Lesser Black-backed Gull
Whooper Swan ( 16 )	Great Crested Grebe	Cormorant
Egyptian Goose	Black-necked Grebe	Little Egret
Shelduck	Oystercatcher	Great White Egret
Ruddy Shelduck	Golden Plover	Grey Heron
Mandarin Duck	Little Ringed Plover	Kingfisher
Shoveler	Lapwing	Sedge Warbler
Gadwall	Bar-tailed Godwit	Reed Warbler
Wigeon	Snipe	Grey Wagtail
Mallard	Common Sandpiper	Reed Bunting
Pintail	Green Sandpiper	<b>53 species</b>
Teal	Redshank	
Pochard	Greenshank	
Tufted Duck	Sandwich Tern	

*this list doesn't include the cross-bred or leucistic individuals seen*

## Others: -

Helmeted Guineafowl ( 3 )	Carrion Crow	Redwing
Pheasant	Raven ( 10 )	Blackbird
Red-legged Partridge	Coal Tit	Fieldfare
Swift	Blue Tit	Robin
Feral Pigeon	Great Tit	Redstart
Stock Dove	Skylark	Stonechat
Woodpigeon	Sand Martin	Wheatear
Collared Dove	Swallow	House Sparrow
Sparrowhawk	House Martin	Dunnock
<b>**Marsh Harrier ( 2 )</b>	Long-tailed Tit	Yellow Wagtail
Red Kite ( 2 )	Willow Warbler	Grey Wagtail
Buzzard	Chiffchaff	White Wagtail
Great Spotted	Blackcap	Pied Wagtail
Woodpecker	Garden Warbler	Meadow Pipit
Kestrel	Whitethroat	Chaffinch
Merlin	Goldcrest	Bullfinch
Hobby	Wren	Greenfinch
Peregrine	Nuthatch	Linnet
Jay	Treecreeper ( 20 )	Goldfinch
Magpie	Starling	Siskin
Jackdaw	Song Thrush	<b>63 species</b>
Rook	Mistle Thrush	

**\*\* a new species for the estate**

*Figures in brackets indicate where the count improves on previous years highest*

## **Section 2: a list of waterbird species recorded pre-2024**

I thought it might be timely to use this opportunity to look back over the past 26 years of records to see if things have changed, although the BTO's WeBS data goes back as far as 1954!

Initially, the WeBS Counts only cover the Autumn and Winter months but over time the coverage increased to now include all months of the year.

As in Section 1, I've split the species into two groups: water birds and others.

This section lists these species and includes the highest count. It includes over 200 species, an impressive total. Where the species was only recorded once, I have included the year. Some of the counts are from later in the year and include juveniles hatched and reared on the estate.

NB: those with an '\*' were thought to be feral, escapes, etc. There was a private collection nearby where some may have ventured from. Land near Bridgemere Hall were landscaped and stocked with waterfowl to form Bridgemere Wildlife Park. The park expanded into a zoo before its closure in 1992.

### Water birds: -

Brent Goose (Dark-bellied): 1	1998	Gadwall: 9	
Brent Goose (Pale-bellied): 1	1979	Wigeon: 208	
Canada Goose: 1215		Mallard: +1000	
Canada Goose (Todd's): 14		*Cape Teal: 2	1979
Barnacle Goose: 8		*White-cheeked Pintail: 1	
Cackling Goose: 11		Pintail: 15	
Cackling Goose (Taverner's): c17	1980	Teal: c300	
Cackling Goose (Richardson's): 1	2007	*Red-crested Pochard: 6	
*Snow Goose: 1	1988	Pochard: 271	
Bar-headed Goose: 4		Tufted Duck: 264	
*Emperor Goose: 1	1998	Scaup: 3	
Greylag Goose: 624		Common Scoter: 5	
Pink-footed Goose: 480		*Long-tailed Duck: 1	
Tundra Bean Goose: 1		Goldeneye: 66	
White-fronted Goose: 16		Smew: 2	
White-f Goose (Eurasian): 1		Goosander: 67	
White-f Goose (Greenland): 1	1983	Red-breasted Merganser: 1	
*Lesser White-f Goose: 1		Ruddy Duck: 54	
*Black Swan: 1		Water Rail: 4	
Mute Swan: 93		Moorhen: 50	
Bewick's Swan: 22		Coot: 1320	
Whooper Swan: 9		Crane: 1	1974
Egyptian Goose: 3		Little Grebe: 48	
Shelduck: 40		Red-necked Grebe: 1	1979
*Ruddy Shelduck: 3		Great Crested Grebe: 101	
*South African Shelduck: 1		Black-necked Grebe: 3	
*Muscovy Duck: 5		Oystercatcher: 12	
*Wood Duck: 1	1995	Black-winged Stilt: 6	2022
Mandarin Duck: 10		Avocet: 17	
*Ringed Teal: 1	2019	Grey Plover: 1	1993
Shoveler: 380		Golden Plover: 280	

## The Bird Report 2024 for the Doddington Estate

Ringed Plover: 2		Kittiwake: 1	1980
Little Ringed Plover: 9		Black-headed Gull: c14000	
Lapwing: 1300		Mediterranean Gull: 1	
Kentish Plover: 1	1979	Common Gull: c750	
Whimbrel: 1		Herring Gull: c900	
Curlew: 6		Yellow-legged Gull: 1	
Bar-tailed Godwit: 2		Great Black-backed Gull: c300	
Black-tailed Godwit: 11		Glaucous Gull: 2	
Jack Snipe: 3		Lesser Black-backed Gull: c4000	
Woodcock: 2		Iceland Gull: 1	
Snipe: 31		Black-throated Diver: 1	2022
Grey Phalarope: 2		Leach's Petrel: 1	1978
Common Sandpiper: 13		Fulmar: 1	1993
Spotted Sandpiper: 1	2022	White Stork: 1	2010
Green Sandpiper: 6		Cormorant: 85	
Redshank: 2		Bittern: 1	1979
Greenshank: 3		Little Egret: 3	
Turnstone: 6		Great ( White ) Egret: 1	
Ruff: 1		Cattle Egret: 1	2008
Sanderling: 3		Grey Heron: 52	
Dunlin: 5		Osprey: 3	
Little Stint: 1	1993	Kingfisher: 3	
Little Tern: 2	1980	Sedge Warbler: 3	
Black Tern: 13		Reed Warbler: 16	
Arctic Tern: 7		Grasshopper Warbler: 1	
Common Tern: 19		Grey Wagtail: 5	
Sandwich Tern: 6		Water Pipit: 1	2021
Little Gull: 2		Reed Bunting: 26	

**118** species

Other bird species: -

Helmeted Guineafowl	Jay	Blackbird
Grey Partridge	Magpie	Fieldfare
Pheasant	Jackdaw	Ring Ouzel
Quail	Rook	Spotted Flycatcher
Red-legged Partridge	Carrion Crow	Robin
Swift	Raven	Pied Flycatcher
Cuckoo	Coal Tit	Redstart
Feral Pigeon	Marsh Tit	Whinchat
Stock Dove	Willow Tit	Stonechat
Woodpigeon	Blue Tit	Wheatear
Turtle Dove	Great Tit	Tree Sparrow
Collared Dove	Skylark	House Sparrow
Sparrowhawk	Sand Martin	Dunnock
Hen Harrier	Swallow	Yellow Wagtail
Red Kite	House Martin	Yellow Wagtail (flava)
Black Kite	Long-tailed Tit	White Wagtail
Buzzard	Willow Warbler	Pied Wagtail
Barn Owl	Chiffchaff	Meadow Pipit
Little Owl	Grasshopper Warbler	Tree Pipit
Long-eared Owl	Blackcap	Chaffinch
Short-eared Owl	Garden Warbler	Brambling
Tawny Owl	Lesser Whitethroat	Hawfinch
Lesser Spotted	Whitethroat	Bullfinch
Woodpecker	Firecrest	Greenfinch
Great Spotted	Goldcrest	Twite
Woodpecker	Wren	Linnets
Green Woodpecker	Nuthatch	Lesser Redpoll
Kestrel	Treecreeper	Crossbill
Merlin	Starling	Goldfinch
Hobby	Song Thrush	Siskin
Peregrine	Mistle Thrush	Corn Bunting
Ring-necked Parakeet	Redwing	Yellowhammer

**94** species

Combining the two lists, waterbirds and others, reveals that **212** species / subspecies have been recorded on the Estate.

# The Bird Report 2024 for the Doddington Estate

## The History of the Doddington Estate

*NB: Most of the information in the section below was extracted from various sources on the internet. Some of it may not be correct! I am also grateful to Colin for giving me access to his files.*

### **The Estate**

- A tower dating from the 13th century lies to the north of the current hall on the site of a former moated manor house called Delves Hall aka Doddington Castle. The tower was initially free-standing but later incorporated into a range of domestic buildings which were known as Doddington Hall. The house was demolished c1777 leaving the tower as a landscape feature
- The manor of Doddington was purchased in 1352 by John de Delves, who three years later was to fight with distinction at Poitiers and in 1365 became a Justice of the King's Bench
- A Banqueting House stands on an island in the middle of the pool between 1676 and 1813
- Doddington Hall designed by Samuel Wyatt and built 1777-98  
Doddington Park is an extensive 18th-century landscape park with woodlands and lake designed by Capability Brown. It was the seat of the Delves Baronets from 1621 until 1710 when it was joined to the Broughton Baronets by marriage and became Delves Broughton
- Goudhurst College, ( a Ladies Boarding School ) established in Kent in 1875, was evacuated to Doddington Hall in 1946. It stayed at the hall until it closed in 1985
- In the 1940s the land in front of the mansion was requisitioned by the MOD and a very large army camp was built. The camp buildings obstructed the view of the tower which still stands at the far end of the field. The camp was built to house the Free French and then the American Army in preparation for the invasion of Europe
- Between 1946 and 1960, it was a Polish Resettlement Camp. The camp closed in 1960
- As of 2010 Doddington Hall is being restored by the Doddington Hall Trust

### **The Pools ( monitored by The Regulars )**

- Doddington Pool possibly originated as a natural mere. Another, Black Mere, lies 900m north of the Hall. New pools were created 200m north-west of the Hall in the 1990s. The pool is not shown on the Blaeu Atlas Map of 1665, so it may be manmade
- The surrounding countryside is generally level and well-watered, with numerous meres and mosses: Doddington Pool is presumably one such mere
- Doddington Pool, a roughly circular sheet of water c 600m in diameter, extends to within 100m of the east front of the Hall
- The Pool is used by the Nantwich and Border Counties Sailing Club, whose facilities include a clubhouse on the south-east side of the Pool. The Pool was already present by 1762, it may have been extended to the south. Until the early C19 the Temple, a domed rotunda or banqueting house, stood on an island in its centre
- Lemon Pool, situated to the west of the Hall, is a recent feature ( it doesn't appear on 1950's OS maps ). It has since been extended to its present 'L' shape
- A small hide was erected in the trees on the shore of the main pool for the students at the college. Colin was granted access to the Estate and to use the hide in 1986. It has fallen into disrepair and is no longer viable
- There are WeBS records for waterbirds from late 1954 – 1970 and 1979 onwards

## Notes: -

### 1. WeBS - the BTO's **W**etland **B**ird **S**urvey –

The Wetland Bird Survey ( WeBS ) monitors non-breeding waterbirds in the UK.



WeBS surveyors monitor the UK's internationally important non-breeding waterbirds. Following a tradition begun in 1947, wetland sites are counted once per month, providing data for population and trends in abundance and distribution. The network of sites legally protected for their importance to wintering waterbirds depends fundamentally on the WeBS counts. "Waterbirds" includes wildfowl (ducks, geese and swans), waders, rails, divers, grebes, cormorants and herons. Gulls and terns are optionally included. In a typical year over 220 waterbird species, races or populations are counted in WeBS, including non-native, feral and vagrant species. National trends are produced for the most numerous 110 of these.

### 2. Grey Heron

Heronries Census nest counts are made by BTO volunteers, including birdwatchers, reserve wardens, landowners and foresters. Help from people with special access to private or remote heronries is especially welcome.



Making a count of 'apparently occupied nests' ( AON ) at a heronry is often very straightforward but is tricky when the nests are obscured by foliage. No specialised ornithological knowledge or experience is required. Clues such as droppings or hatched eggshells under nests can help observers decide whether a nest is in use.

This national survey was first organised by the BTO in 1928 and its Grey Heron data represent the longest-running monitoring data set for any breeding bird in the world.

Changes in the numbers of nests over time are a clear measure of population trends. The more heronries that can be counted each year, the more certain we can be of population trends at national, regional and local scales.

The British Trust for Ornithology ( BTO ) is an organisation founded for the study of birds in the British Isles.

The BTO carries out research into the lives of birds, chiefly by conducting population and breeding surveys and by bird ringing, largely carried out by a large number of volunteers.



If you have any queries or want any more details, please contact me.

John Thompson  
[John@Janus-Systems.co.uk](mailto:John@Janus-Systems.co.uk)  
07966 539616