

SANDBACH FLASHES 2015 BIRD REPORT



THE Sandbach Birder

Editorial
(Andy Firth)

Ever since my first visit to Sandbach Flashes in 1998 one constant has been the pleasure of birding with Dave Norbury. His friendship and knowledge always present. Unfortunately due to ill health Dave has not been able to spend time at the flashes this year excepting the first week of January and his presence has been sorely missed by all of the regular flashes birders.

The year 2015 gave us 144 species compared with 142 in 2014, 156 in 2013 and 161 in 2012. A note from the 2014 report that the Lesser Scaup was present on 16th and 17th June and not 16th and 17th May as listed in last year's report. Two Rock/Water Pipit's were over MGT on 29th Oct this year but as these could not be assigned to species they are not included in the systematic list but are a very notable record whichever species they were.

From a listing point of view the Cetti's Warbler present around PHF in October was the highlight and a first for the flashes. Two other outstanding sightings were the first Wood Warbler and first Corn Bunting for many years. These birds coupled with the female Red-necked Phalarope meant for a relatively productive year rarity wise.

It is essential for anybody that wishes their finds and or sightings of scarce/rare birds in a Cheshire or national context to appear in the CAWOS report and be considered for national acceptance that the rarity form and/or images are submitted to the county recorder. Particularly descriptions and images of Caspian Gull's would be invaluable in this respect. I will continue to document what is recorded in the log book but unless submitted to the relevant authorities in a county and national context rarities not submitted will be lost.

Thanks to H J Lea Oaks for once again providing food for the EHF feeders this is welcomed by the local Tree Sparrow population and many other species. Thanks also to the individual birders who also stock the feeders. Finally thanks to all for entering their sightings in the log book to allow the bird life of the Sandbach Flashes area to continue being documented, very few sites will have records as thorough as our local patch.

EARLY AND LATE DATES FOR SUMMER VISITORS

The table has been arranged in date order for the '10 year average' arrival dates for the SECOS recording area prior to the Sandbach Flashes report standing alone and not including other SECOS records as I don't have specific Sandbach Flashes information.

Species	<i>ARRIVALS</i>		<i>DEPARTURES</i>	
	Date in 2015	Earliest Ever SECOS	Date in 2015	Latest Ever SECOS
Little Ringed Plover	27-Mar	05-Mar-00	05-Aug	16-Oct-85
Sand Martin	11-Mar	11-Mar-08	17-Sep	24-Nov-72
Swallow	29-Apr	10-Feb-07	17-Oct	30-Nov-74
Willow Warbler	10-Apr	21-Mar-09	25-Aug	27-Sep-08
House Martin	10-Apr	25-Mar-95	28-Sep	05-Nov-77
Yellow Wagtail	12-Apr	29-Mar-81	04-Oct	27-Oct-06
Lesser Whitethroat	19-Apr	21-Mar-00	13-Sep	08-Oct-13
Reed Warbler	16-Apr	10-Apr-11	05-Sep	04-Oct-98
Common Whitethroat	20-Apr	11-Apr-09	14-Sep	22-Sep-11
Sedge Warbler	16-Apr	10-Apr-11	24-Aug	01-Oct-78/11
Swift	03-May	05-Apr-82	04-Sep	03-Nov-78
Cuckoo	24-Jun	16-Apr-96	16-Sep	01-Oct-86
Garden Warbler	18-Apr	16-Apr-09	15-Aug	09-Sep-83
Hobby	12-May	27-Mar-94	01-Oct	08-Oct-00
Grasshopper Warbler	NR	15-Apr-09	NR	25-Sep-10

NEXT NEW BIRD FOR THE FLASHES SWEEPSTAKE

As there was little interest shown in the "next for the flashes" sweepstake I didn't continue with it for a reward however I will keep it running for a bit of fun. Mark Stubbs correctly predicted Cetti's Warbler.

Name	Species
Andy Firth	Woodlark
Bryan Perkins	Dipper
Colin Lythgoe	Bluethroat
John Wakefield	Caspian Tern
Russ Stonier	Rose Coloured Starling
Chloe Jones	Black Throated Diver
Paul Hill	Storm Petrel
Dave Norbury	Bonaparte's Gull
Ian Barber	Blue Winged Teal
Dave Meakin	Ring Necked Duck
Mark Stubbs	Cetti's Warbler
Noel Stubbs	Long Billed Dowitcher
Peter Swallow	Little Auk
Tim Halliday	Whiskered Tern
Janet Jones	Common Rosefinch
Joyce Griffith	Ross's Gull
Allan Perkins	American Golden Plover
Ian Marshall	Dotterel
Alan Battersby	Collared Pratincole
Linda Battersby	Ferruginous Duck
Alan Booth	Rough Legged Buzzard
Peter Lunt	Shag
Angela Goodwin	Cattle Egret
Robert Brown	Little Bittern

A Blast from the past 1993

Alpine Swift at Elton Hall Flash, 9th Oct 1993, by Peter Swallow.

The only flashes record of Alpine Swift was a bird found by Dave Norbury on 9th Oct 1993, Peter Swallow wrote a summary of the events of that day this is reproduced below.

A visit to Sandbach Flashes wasn't planned for that Saturday morning and it was late morning when I arrived at Elton Hall Flash to find Dave Norbury and Peter Lunt already there.

Overnight there had been a heavy thunderstorm but Saturday 9th October 1993 was dry, sunny and quite warm, with a mainly light but occasionally fresh SSE wind. The wind had been in the east for several days. Because of overnight rain the water level was higher than normal and most of the wildfowl were in the open water making an accurate count easier than normal. At about 12:15 and halfway through the count Dave Norbury who had been looking skywards watching a small flock of Starlings apparently catching insects overhead suddenly exclaimed "there's a Swift up there". Abandoning the wildfowl count and just as I was thinking this must be my latest date for an inland Swift Dave stated "its white underneath" and followed this with "it's a @#?'?# Alpine Swift".

Searching above the Starlings against a blue sky and patchy white cloud Peter Lunt and I soon located the bird flying at about 500 feet within a fairly confined area, It's flight, although typical Swift, was slower and more laboured with long intermittent glides. The white under parts were most clearly seen as the bird banked to one side and the dark band between belly and throat became visible. We could hardly believe our luck, the bird almost seemed to be displaying for our benefit as we continued to watch its aerial manoeuvres, after some three or four minutes it widened its area slowly eastwards and then almost in straight flight we watched it out of sight as it disappeared over the railway embankment.

Note:-

This bird was submitted to Tony Broome the county recorder at the time, was accepted and became the first Cheshire record of this species.

Cetti's Warbler at PHF a first for the flashes by Ian Mumford

The morning of Sunday 4th October was extremely foggy so I didn't visit EHF until 9:30am. Not surprisingly I was the only person present. The fog had not lifted from EHF so I just walked along the road to PHF. I stopped at the gate on PHF and within a couple of minutes I heard the unmistakable song of a Cetti's Warbler. Knowing this was a long overdue first for the area a series of phone calls and texts to all the birders was done in double quick time. The Cetti's was in the willows and remained out of sight but then sounded much closer and had flown to the roadside hedgerow and brambles. I walked to the end of the hedge as the bird moved along singing all the time.

Finally it showed for about ten seconds in a dead hawthorn. The dark reddish brown upperparts, the buff under parts an off white super cilium and rounded tail were all noted before it went back the way it had come.

Andy Goodwin was the first to arrive and heard the bird immediately, but it was no longer close. Most of the local birders managed to hear the bird, which sang and called until around 11:45am. That evening the Cetti's Warbler reappeared between 5-6pm allowing most people to catch up with this elusive first for the area.

The bird stayed for around a week and could be very elusive. I heard it on three more occasions, but never saw it again.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2015

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Fairly common resident.

Bred at EHF and PHF. On 16th Apr 26 were on EHF.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Rare winter visitor.

In the first winter period ten were on EHF (seven adults and three juveniles), on 22nd Jan, five overflew Tetton Lane on 14th Apr.



Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant or feral.

An excellent return with at least at least five skeins over in the first winter period, a single was on PHF on 4th May. In the second winter period at least twelve skeins noted particularly over MGT.

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Rare winter visitor

Two Eurasian birds were on Hancock's Flood on 28th Dec.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Rare visitor or feral.

Regularly seen throughout the recording area again this year. On 31st Oct 17 flew over MGT and landed on EHF.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Common resident.

Wintering numbers up to a maximum of around 700, several pairs bred with the first goslings on 11th May.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Rare visitor or feral.

Odd birds regularly with the Canada Geese.



Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Uncommon resident and winter visitor.

On 7th Feb an excellent count of 91 was recorded on PHF/EHF, the first juveniles were seen on EHF on 8th May and two or three pairs bred.

Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*)

Scarce visitor.

As in the last two years a difficult species to catch up with, one was on WLF on 1st Jan with another on EHF from 21st May to the month's end. Odd records from EHF to the year end.

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Common winter visitor.

The largest count in the first winter period was of 906 covering EHF and PHF on 3rd Jan. On 6th Dec 677 were on and around EHF/PHF.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Five on 22nd Feb on RF were the highest first winter period count. Bred for the first time at the flashes with two pairs on EHF raising three and nine young respectively. A welcome addition.

Eurasian Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

As in 2014 numbers seemingly well down, 200 the highest early winter period count, no count above 200 from EHF/PHF in the second winter period.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common resident. Abundant in winter.

The first young were seen on EHF on 7th Apr. On 16th Aug 920 were counted on EHF.

Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

The decline continues unabated with a maximum of three in the first winter period. Just three again was the best count in the second winter period.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Scarce summer visitor.

Just one recorded this year on EHF and also RF between 16th and 22nd Sep.

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Uncommon winter visitor, scarce in summer.

On EHF 45 were present on EHF on 27th Jan.

Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Fairly common winter visitor.

Odd individuals in the first winter period particularly from RF, again in the second winter period just odd singles.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Scarce breeder.

On EHF/PHF 51 were counted on 7th Feb, the increasing water levels presumably to their liking, unusually bred on PHF with nine juveniles on 25th Jun. A pair later bred on EHF.

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

Very rare visitor and passage migrant.

A female/immature was briefly seen on CF on 30th July but was flushed by a dog.

Note from 2014 the second bird on 30th Oct 2014 was from WLF and not EHF as listed in last year's report.

Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

On 22nd Nov a female was on PHF, a drake was on RF on 29th Dec, this bird presumably located to PHF on 31st Dec.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Regular winter visitor.

Just a count of 22 the largest in the early winter period, scarce again in the second winter period with just two or three double figure counts from FFF and EHF. On 6th Dec 23 were on EHF.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Scarce resident except where locally released.

Regularly seen and heard particularly around FF. Breeding proven.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Fairly common resident.

Three were regular on EHF in the first winter period. Bred on EHF and on the MGT run off pool. Seven were on EHF/PHF on 8th Oct.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Common resident.

On WLF 22 were recorded on 15th Jan. Bred on EHF with two recently fledged juveniles on 12th Jun, also bred on WLF.

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Rare in summer.

On 21st Jan 27 were counted around EHF/PHF. On 3rd Nov 37 were counted on and around PHF.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Scarce visitor.

2015 was perhaps the year this species became less noteworthy, one or two present commuting between all the well watched areas throughout the year excepting a lull in midsummer.



Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Very rare visitor

One was seen on EHF for a few hours on 25th Aug.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common resident.

Regularly recorded throughout 2015 especially around EHF.

Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Scarce visitor.

The first was over FF on 26th Mar with another on 22nd Oct over MGT.

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

Scarce visitor.

On 22nd Aug a cream crown flew through EHF, another cream crown flew over the observer while walking the footpath between PHF and RF on 11th Sep.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Common resident.

Regular throughout but breeding not proven this year.

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Common resident.

Several double figure counts. One feasting on a Coot on 17th Jun by EHF.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Scarce migrant.

One flew over MGT on 9th Apr the only record.

Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Common resident.

No breeding recorded again this year but still seen fairly regularly around the recording area.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

A brief male flew through RF on 30th Apr. One was seen over EHF on 15th Nov. On 7th Dec a male flew over MGT. A good return for this difficult species.

Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

An awful year and hopefully a one off, less than ten records after the first on 12th May. The last was seen on 1st Oct.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Scarce resident and winter visitor.

Seen intermittently particularly around EHF/PHF and MGT.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Regularly heard and occasionally seen with individuals seen well around EHF in the first winter period

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout the recording area.

Common Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common resident and variable winter visitor.

On 21st Jan 128 were counted on EHF/PHF. The first young were recorded from Green Lane on 14th Apr. On 16th Aug a total of 420 were counted on EHF/PHF/WLF and CF.

Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Scarce winter visitor and uncommon summer visitor.

The first returning birds were by EHF on 12th Feb, then regular throughout spring/summer with a maximum of six.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Scarce summer visitor. Uncommon spring/autumn migrant.

On 26th Apr eight were on EHF, the largest count in total being 16 on 11th July on EHF/PHF.

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

First recorded on 15th Apr with a brief seven on EHF on 28th May the best count. Odd singles on return passage.

European Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Again quite difficult to find around the flashes the first was over RF on 28th Feb. On 14th Aug a superb summer plumage adult could be viewed with the summer plumaged Grey Plover, a flashes one off. Odd singles then particularly over MGT.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Rare visitor and passage migrant.

On 14th Aug a superb adult in full summer plumage was by EHF. On 12th Sep in heavy rain two flew around EHF but did not stay around.

Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and abundant winter visitor.

The fact that over 100 were back at EHF on 28th Jun suggests breeding attempts by departing birds were short lived. Around 1000 to 1300 were present around EHF and PHF in both winter periods.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Scarce passage migrant

A juvenile was on EHF on 12th Aug.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Just odd birds on spring passage and in the summer period. On return passage again just odd individuals with occasional birds seen through to December.



Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

As in 2013 and 2014 just four birds wintered in the first winter period. The first returning breeding adult was on EHF on 22nd July with the first juvenile on 9th Aug also on EHF. Seven juveniles were on EHF on 26th Aug. A maximum of seven around EHF in the second winter period.

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyrtus minimus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Two were flushed from the GF area on 16th Jan. On 30th Sep one showed well on PHF and was much appreciated. One was seen on MGT on 29th Oct.

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Uncommon winter visitor and migrant.

An excellent count of 86 was made in and around the stubble fields between Plant Lane and Crabmill Lane on 18th Mar.

Eurasian Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Scarce winter visitor.

The usual scattering of records around FF in Jan as the year lists began. One was seen on MGT on 11th Dec.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Common non breeding resident.

The biggest count in the log book was 21 on EHF on 21st Aug. Otherwise seen regularly around EHF/PHF.

Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor.

Just a maximum count of 43 in the first winter period on 11th Jan, similar numbers present in the second winter period.

Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Uncommon visitor and migrant.

Seven were recorded on 10th Jan from EHF/PHF; up to seven were also present intermittently through Nov/Dec.

Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

A very poor year with regulars resorting to twitching this normally reliable passage migrant, one was on EHF on 13th Apr, with another also on EHF on 29th Aug.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Scarce winter visitor. Uncommon passage migrant.

The first passage bird was from FFF on 26th Mar, another was at EHF on 10th Apr, and birds present in June could possibly have been returning failed breeders. On 5th Aug 12 were on EHF.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Just a single with a bird on EHF on 9th July.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Fairly common passage migrant.

First recorded on 8th Apr on EHF. Six were on EHF on 20th July. The final sighting was from EHF on 12th Sep.

Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

A beautiful female and the first for the flashes since a two day bird found on 14th Aug 2006 was down the side lane from EHF on 30th May. This was the fifth flashes record.



Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

Scarce visitor.

Between Jan and Mar just three sightings (ten in 2014), one more on 12th May with odd individuals after that, a juvenile on EHF on 12th Aug was notable. Odd singles from then to the year end.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Abundant autumn and winter visitor.

Up to 2000 were counted combining MGT/EHF and PHF on 23rd Nov.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

A rather under recorded species this year with just odd counts of twenty or so birds in the log book.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.

On MGT 700 were counted on 15th Oct. Approximately 3000 were around MGT/RF on 25th October

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)

Regular passage migrant.

Regularly seen throughout excepting May, June and July with birds from EHF/PHF and RF.

Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*)

Scarce visitor.

What was presumably the same adult was seen intermittently between 1st Jan and 7th Mar around EHF. A 1st w was seen on PHF on 2nd Jan. An adult was seen on PHF on 25th Nov.



Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Fairly common winter visitor. Uncommon summer visitor.

Several thousand reported regularly from MGT in both winter periods.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*)

Scarce winter visitor.

At least one adult and one 1st w commuted between MGT and EHF/PHF in the first winter period with an adult and 1st w also present from 10th Dec to at least the 14th Dec in the same area.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

A 1st w commuted between MGT and PHF on 27th Feb and 3rd Mar

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

On 5th Jan a splendid count of 281 on and around PHF, this total was not bettered all year.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Two records this year with one on EHF on 12th Sep with a different individual also on EHF on 15th Sep.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

Two were on WLF on 8th May; these birds attempted to breed but were not successful, after that odd birds were seen particularly around EHF with six on 20th Aug.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

Scarce passage migrant.

After last year's blank one flew through EHF on 6th May, with others through PHF on 18th Jun and another through EHF on 21st Jun.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident.

Regular around EHF throughout.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon resident.

Common throughout especially in the fields around EHF. On 15th Jan 141 were present. Breeding recorded.

Common Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed. Visible migration from MGT throughout October peaked with 2815 on 31st Oct,

Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

One was heard calling on 24th Jun from EHF. On 16th Sep a juvenile flew over PHF.

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

Very rare visitor

On 1st Jan what was presumably the bird from 2013 and 2014 was seen in the hedgerow around GF, it was seen until at least 15th Mar. On 11th Sep one was back in the same area, one or two were then present to the year end.

Short-eared Owl (*Asia flammeus*)

Scarce passage migrant, winter visitor.

A welcome return for this species with all records from MGT singles on 1st Oct and 16th Oct with two reported together but no entry made in the log book sometime in late October.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Scarce resident.

Bred in the MGT area and all sightings from this immediate location.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common resident.

Other than a roosting bird in the unusual location of MGT on 10th Dec just occasional birds in flight or calling.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

On 11th May well over 100 were over EHF in drizzle. The last was over EHF on 4th Sep.

Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Uncommon resident.

Regularly seen around EHF.



Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Common resident.

Commonly recorded throughout and regular on the EHF feeders. One high over MGT on 27th Sep with Meadow Pipits could have been a migrating continental bird?

Common Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Fairly common.

Breeding proven from MGT. On 26th Sep 23 were over MGT. Visible migration peaked on 9th Oct with 36 flying over.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

No breeding site reported but arguably more regular than in recent years around EHF.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Common summer visitor.

Bred once again and regular throughout, 98 flew over MGT on 1st Oct.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Common summer visitor.

Breeding not recorded but regular throughout.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Very rare passage migrant.

One was on MGT on 4th Aug.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Regular on spring passage from MGT with 45 on 15th Mar. 288 were over MGT on 26th Sep. The highest count was 294 over MGT on 1st Oct.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

An average year with nearly all records from EHF. A juvenile was on EHF on 4th Sep. Visible migration from MGT produced several flyovers in October.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Regular in the autumn and winter periods particularly around EHF and PHF.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Fairly common resident.

Commonly recorded throughout the year with 39 on 4th Mar around EHF, "White Wagtails" first seen on 15th Mar. The maximum from visible migration counts was 42 on 20th Oct.

Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

Common resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

European Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Abundant resident.

Regular throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Scarce migrant.

A bumper year at MGT with at least eight sightings on spring passage after the first two on 19th Apr. The first returning birds were also from MGT with three on 23rd Aug. Two more in Sep from MGT with another on 1st Oct.

Common Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Another excellent year from the MGT area, seen in Jan, Feb and Mar with a peak of three on 14th Mar. Regular again in the second winter period with one's and two's regular.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

The first was seen on 14th Mar on MGT (one week earlier than 2014); fifteen were on MGT on 30th Apr. On return a maximum of five on 22nd Sep from MGT.

Common Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Common throughout the area. Breeding confirmed.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Common winter visitor.

In the first winter period the largest count was 55 on 1st Feb around EHF. In the second winter period 220 were over MGT on 29th Oct.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Fairly common resident.

Regular throughout though not commonly recorded.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Common winter visitor.

In the first winter period 95 were around EHF on 1st Feb. In the second winter period 358 were over MGT on 14th Oct.



Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Fairly common resident.

Breeding recorded. Largest count was 11 on 11th Sep.

Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*)

Vagrant

The long overdue first for the flashes was seen between 4th and 11th Oct around PHF, see the separate article.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

Bred in the RF/MGT/GF area but no reports from elsewhere.

Eurasian Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

Breeding confirmed from MGT/RF area and also WLF.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

Regular throughout the recording area with juveniles seen confirming breeding.

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Fairly common summer visitor.

A slightly better showing on spring passage with one at EHF and two by GF on 8th May. Breeding suspected from the EHF area.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

After the first on 19th Apr not many records but seen at most well watched sites within the recording area.

Common Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor.

Not as commonly recorded as in previous years after the first on 20th Apr.

Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor, very rare winter visitor.

One around EHF in Jan otherwise no change in numbers with records from throughout the recording area. One also in December around EHF.

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

Very rare visitor.

One was down the side lane at EHF on 24th July; this was just the third flashes record after one on 3rd July 1976 and one on 27th Apr 1983. Interestingly the bird on 3rd July 1976 was considered "an unusual date for this species", with two of the three records having occurred in July maybe this date was not so unusual after all.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common summer visitor.

The first singing bird was found on 10th Apr then regularly recorded throughout though never common.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Fairly common resident and winter visitor.

Recently fledged juveniles seen in July around EHF may suggest breeding nearby.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

Once again no spring records but several on return passage, the first on 13th Aug.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

Uncommon visitor, has bred

Two were found in FF on 25th Feb and were still present until at least 15th Mar. On 22nd Jun a juvenile was seen in the hedgerow by FFF, hopefully this was a bird raised from the two seen earlier in the year at FF.

Blue Tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Common resident.

Common throughout. Breeding confirmed.



Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*)

Fairly common resident.

Regular throughout.

European Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Common resident.

Regular around FF but also recorded regularly from around EHF.

Eurasian Treecreeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common resident.

Common again in all suitable habitats. Breeding confirmed.

Eurasian Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Uncommon resident.

Regularly recorded from EHF and FF, numbers could well be on the increase.

Common Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common resident.

Common throughout, breeding proven. A count of 43 was recorded on stubble by RF on 4th Sep.

Eurasian Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

Very commonly recorded particularly from MGT with flocks of several hundred not uncommon this year.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Common resident.

The rookery still in FF and also commonly seen on MGT throughout the year.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Common resident.

Common throughout the area once again. Breeding confirmed.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Regular visitor and resident.

Recorded in every month, six were over MGT on 21st Feb.

Common Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Common resident and regular winter visitor.

On 20th Nov around 2000 were counted around MGT, juveniles were regularly seen on MGT so breeding nearby was suspected.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Common resident.

Seen around EHF but only in small numbers.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Fairly common resident.

Breeding confirmed again around EHF.

Common Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

Common throughout again. Breeding confirmed.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Scarce winter visitor.

The second winter period produced flyover birds from MGT on 12th Oct and 14th Oct. One was seen on and around the EHF feeders between 28th and 31st Oct.



European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident.

Odd birds around the EHF feeders but under recorded or declining elsewhere.

European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Fairly common resident.

Breeding proven, at least 220 were on MGT on 31st Aug.

Eurasian Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and scarce resident.

Just odd singles in the first winter period but regular in the second winter period; on 6th Sep birds were back feeding in FF.

Common Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

Fairly common resident.

Bred around MGT, on Oct 29th 60 were on MGT.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

As with Siskin just odd individuals in the first winter period but regular throughout the second winter period, regularly noted over MGT with 26 on 17th Oct.

Common Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Uncommon resident.

Seen around EHF regularly but up to six were around FF in early January.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Uncommon resident.

On 11th Jan 12 were feeding in a stubble field behind the railway and visible at times from within the recording area boundary when perching in trees. Four were over MGT on 10th Oct.

Common Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Uncommon resident.

Regular and bred MGT, odd individuals and pairs around EHF.

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria Calandra*)

Very rare visitor. Formerly Bred.

An amazing record considering the abject decline of this species was the first Sandbach Flashes record since 1991 with one over MGT on 25th Oct, just reward for the finder after hours of visible migration watching at this location.

All images courtesy of Dennis Swaby excepting the Little Egret by Bob Brown and the front cover by Brian Carthy.