



SOUTH-EAST CHESHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1995 BIRD REPORT

including Birds of Sandbach Flashes

SECOS Recorder
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This is the annual report of birds in the SECOS area, including the birds of Sandbach Flashes. It is as full a report as possible from the records submitted and considers all species in the area in 1995.

Again I have given a one-line definition of the status of species. As well as its seasonal status I have given an indication of abundance throughout the SECOS area, using the following terms :- vagrant, rare, scarce, uncommon, common, abundant. There are no rigid numeric limits for each term, I have merely used them to give an indication of relative abundance.

For those readers of this report who are not familiar with the whole of the SECOS area, I have included a map and brief notes on the major sites.

I would like to thank Joan and Keith Tilbrook for their assistance in typing and collating this report.

Colin Lythgoe.

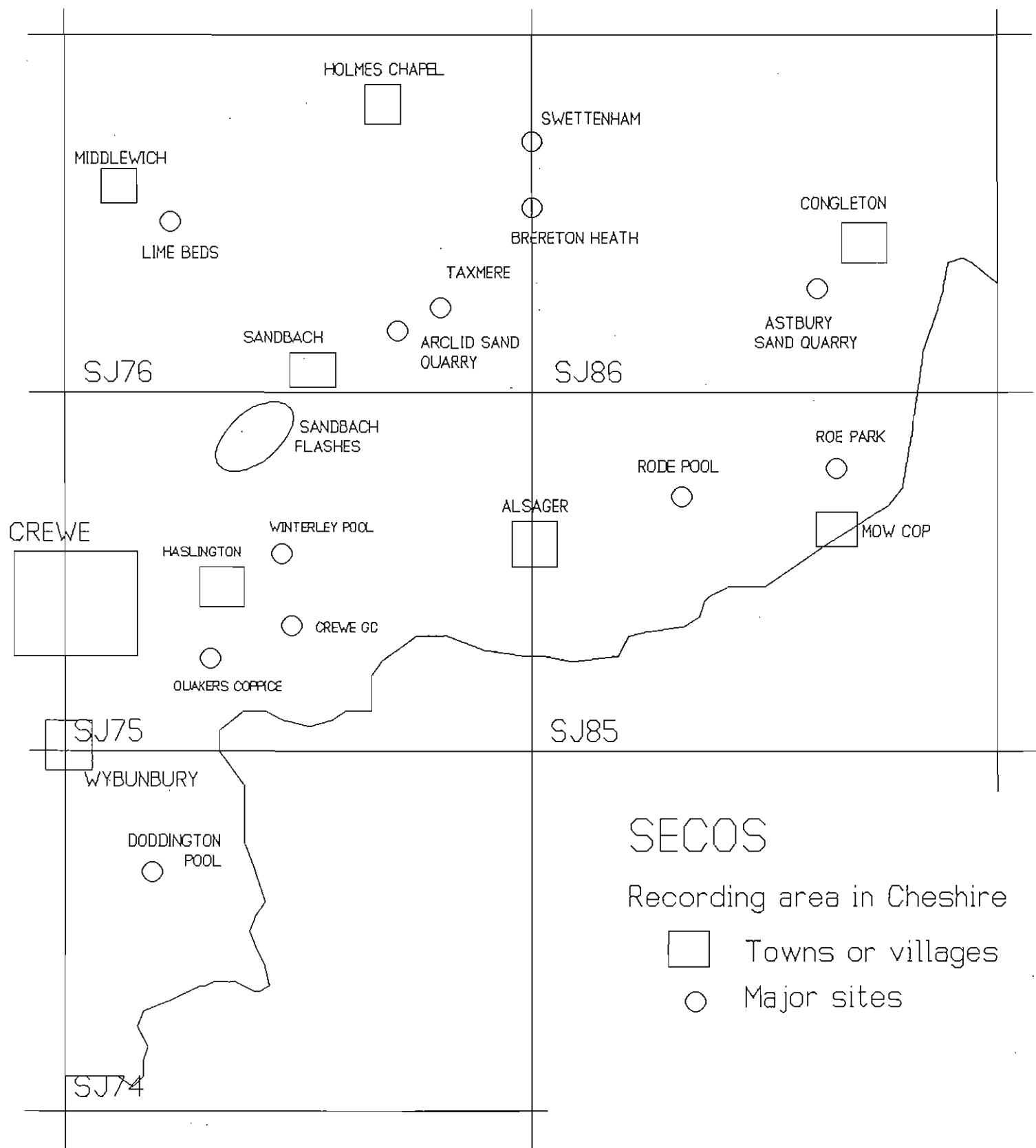
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Abbreviations Used

CF	Crabmill Flash	juv	juvenile
EHF	Elton Hall Flash	1stW	1st Winter
FF	Foden's Flash	2ndW	2nd Winter
FFF	Fields Farm Flash	3rdW	3rd Winter
GF	Groby Flash	imm	immature
MGP	Market Garden Pool	ad	adult
OF	Oak Tree Flash	m	male
PHF	Pump House Flash	f	female
RF	Railway Flash	c	approximately
SF	Sandbach Flashes	max	maximum
WF	Warmingham Flash	SQ	Sand Quarry
WLF	Watch Lane Flash		



SECOS

Recording area in Cheshire

- Towns or villages
- Major sites

BIRDING SITES

I have listed below some of the more major sites for birding in the SECOS area, including a brief summary of the site and a grid reference of its approximate centre.

Doddington Pool SJ714464

Includes the large lake, woodland, the Hall and neglected grounds.

Quaker's Coppice SJ724546

A wood of six hectares on the south side of Crewe. Owned by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and operated as a Local Nature Reserve.

Crewe Hall SJ735544

A very extensive area of mixed woodland and farmland.

Crewe Golf Course SJ744546

Situated at Haslington. It also includes the Valley Brook and surrounding woods.

Rode Pool SJ815575

A 1300 metre-long lake with islands and extensive reed beds, surrounded by woods.

Lawton Woods SJ825559

Large area of woodland including a lake.

Roe Park SJ858583

Large area of mixed woodland on the side of Mow Cop, like Welsh hill valley habitat.

Sandbach Flashes

An all-embracing term used to describe the various flashes in the area to the west and south of Sandbach, and north of Crewe. These started forming in the 1930's after land subsidence following brine extraction. All flashes are now privately owned and there is no public access. However, most are watchable from public roads and tracks. Most of the flashes' area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are currently around fourteen flashes, but the most important are:-

Elton Hall Flash SJ727596

In two parts, with the River Wheelock flowing through the well-vegetated part, and very little vegetation on the salt pan.

Pump House Flash SJ723595

The site of the old brine pumping mechanism. Now silting up rapidly.

Railway Flash SJ718585

Currently is two separate flashes with a marshy area between.

Maw Green Tip SJ717577

Not strictly in the flashes' area but inextricably linked for gulls and corvids. It is being greatly expanded and now butts right up to Railway Flash. Just north of Crewe.

Watch Lane Flash SJ727606

Heavily disturbed by fishermen but with two small reed beds.

Foden's Flash SJ730613

Includes a large bed of bulrushes and the wood around the flash.

Warmingham Flash SJ719619

Heavily disturbed by fishermen at weekends.

Middlewich Lime Beds SJ711653

The raised settling beds owned by British Salt.

Arclid Sand Quarry SJ778623

Extensive area of water formed by the quarry workings.

Taxmere SJ780625

Area of farmland just North of Arclid Sand Quarry.

Bagmere SJ796643

An overgrown old mere still with some water and reed beds.

Briereton Heath SJ798651

A Cheshire County Council Country Park comprising a water-filled quarry and surrounding mixed woodland.

Swettenham SJ801675

A small mixed woodland with Swettenham Brook flowing through it. A Cheshire Wildlife Trust Local Nature Reserve.

Astbury Sand Quarry SJ849624

Extensive area of water formed by the quarry workings.

When out in the countryside, either general birdwatching or carrying out specific fieldwork, then observe the birdwatcher's code of conduct:-

1. The welfare of birds must come first.
2. Habitat must be protected.
3. Keep disturbance to birds and their habitat to a minimum.
4. When you find a rare bird think carefully about who you should tell.
5. Do not harass rare migrants.
6. Abide by the bird protection laws at all times.
7. Respect the rights of landowners.
8. Respect the rights of other people in the countryside.
9. Make your records available to the local bird recorder.

Red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 was seen briefly at WLF on 9 Dec. This is the 1st record for SF.

Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 imm arrived at WLF on 5 March. It was seen by a lot of people and stayed until 10 March when it was chased off the water by a fisherman in a boat! This is the 1st record for SF.

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Uncommon resident.

At SF the max was 3 at PHF in March. No breeding records.

At Doddington Pool at least 3 and possibly 4 prs bred although only 3 broods recorded. Max of 39 on 18 Aug. Singles at Arclid SQ on 8 Jan. and 27 Dec. were the first there since 1989.

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)

Common resident.

The usual wintering flock at WLF totalled up to 15 in Dec. No breeding season records!! (But probably bred at WF, CF, GF and MGP).

Bred at Doddington Pool (3 prs, 5 juvs), Rode Pool (2 prs, 2 juvs), Winterley Pool (1 pr, 2 juvs), and Arclid SQ (9 prs, 7 juvs).

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Common winter visitor. Rare in summer.

At PHF a max of 13 in Feb. and 24 in Dec. Also recorded at Doddington Pool (20), Winterley Pool (2); Swettenham (2) and Arclid SQ (5).

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Common resident.

Regular in low numbers (max 6) all year at SF and most other waters in the area. The herony at Rode Pool held 32 nests this year (30 in 1994 and 25 in 1993), steadily increasing due to the run of mild winters.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Common resident. Uncommon breeder.

Further increases in numbers this year. In April there were 21 at WLF and 18 at PLF. In Oct. a very high count of 43 at WLF. Prs nested at FFF, EHF and GF, where 5 juvs were fledged.

Winterley Pool continues to hold the largest non-breeding herd in Cheshire. Monthly max are:- 87; 84; 86; 76; 83; 77; 80; 77; 63; 46; (8/35); 92. 2 prs bred here with broods of 4 and 3.

In late Oct. the local landowner started an intensive campaign against the mute swans on Winterley Pool, using various bird scaring techniques. This resulted in the death of at least 5 swans and numbers being reduced to under 10. Following a public outcry the campaign has ceased (temporarily?). Numbers have gradually increased back to normal and indeed in Jan. 1996 reached a record high of 102.

At Doddington Pool 2 prs bred (broods of 9 and 8) and in Dec. there was a high total of 42. Breeding also noted at Haslington Hall (1 pr, 5 juvs).

Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

Rare winter visitor.

2 at EHF on 5 Feb. Also 8 at Doddington Pool on 22 Dec.

Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

Rare winter visitor.

2 ads at PHF on 3 Dec. were seen to fly off north but there were 7 ads at EHF on 4 Dec.

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

Escape from captivity.

The bird which was present at Winterley Pool from 25 Dec. 94 remained there through to 11 Feb. It was then seen briefly at PHF on 19 Feb.

Pinkfooted Goose (*Anser Brachyrhynchus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant or feral.

Some movement of large flocks on 3 Jan. with 180 over RF and then landed in fields nearby. Also 300+ grey geese (probably this species) over very high going south. A flock of 150+ going NE over Alsager on 30 Jan. Up to 3 birds with Canada Geese at SF in Jan., Feb., Aug. and Oct. with 13 on 3 Dec.

Elsewhere singles at Doddington Pool in Feb., Winterley Pool in Feb., Arclid SQ in Jan. and Aug., all with Canada Geese.

White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Rare winter visitor or feral.

17 presumed to be wild birds were at EHF on 30 Nov. Usually feeding in a hollow in the fields, they were not always easy to see but were present until at least 12 Dec. when 7 were seen.

16 were present at Doddington Pool on 9 Dec. when 9 were also seen at EHF. It is not clear whether these 16 were the EHF birds gone for a day out! Also 2 at Doddington Pool on 15 Dec. and 2 at Arclid SQ on 2 Dec.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

Rare winter visitor or feral.

1 with Canada Geese at WLF on 1 Jan. 7 at Doddington Pool on 17 March. 1 at Arclid SQ on 3 to 11 Jan.

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Common resident.

As usual several large flocks around the area with max at SF of 267 in Oct. Also at Doddington Pool (190), Winterley Pool (290) and Arclid SQ (475).

Breeds in low numbers at most sites. 1 presumed Canada/Egyptian Goose cross was at EHF on 19 Feb.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Rare winter visitor or feral.

Singles with Canada Geese in Jan., Feb. and July at SF. Also at Winterley Pool in Feb., and Arclid SQ in late Jan. and early Feb. with Canada Geese.

Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*)

Feral birds.

A single at Doddington Pool from 18 Feb. to 3 March.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

Scarce resident and winter visitor.

High numbers at EHF in early winter with 33 in Feb. and 40 in March. 1 pr bred with 4 juvs. Max of 11 in Dec.

Only recorded at Doddington Pool in March (9) and April (6) and did not breed this year. 1 at Rode Pool in March. Singles at Arclid SQ on 9 Feb. and 18 March.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

At EHF the early winter max was around 600 in Jan. and the late winter max was 619 on 26 Dec., higher numbers than usual.

Also at Doddington Pool with lower than usual numbers of 4 in Nov. and 2 in Dec., and at Arclid SQ with 1 in Aug., 14 in Nov. and 11 in Dec.

Chiloe Wigeon (*Anas sibilatrix*)

Escape from captivity.

1994 record.

In the 1994 Cheshire Bird Report one was reported from SF on at least 19 Nov.

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

Scarce winter visitor.

At EHF only 2 in Feb. with 1 in early Dec. and 3 in mid Dec.

5 at Doddington Pool on 10 Dec. and 1 pr on 4 April. 1 pr at Astbury SQ on 7 Dec.

Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Common winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

At EHF/PHF an early winter max of 620 in Jan. with 320 in Nov. and Dec. 5 birds summered but no signs of breeding.

Also at Doddington Pool where 3 in Jan. and 19 in Dec. Scarce at Arclid SQ but 17 in the cold weather of Dec.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Common resident and breeder. Abundant in winter.

Numbers at the main sites reduced this year with only 90 in Jan. and 235 in Dec. at EHF (450 and 315 in 1994).

Max of 382 at Doddington Pool in Nov. (700 in 1994). 150 regular at Arclid SQ with max of 200 in Dec.

Still breeds commonly on most waters.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Max of 29 in early winter and a low max of only 5 in late winter at EHF.

7 at Doddington Pool on 19 Jan. and 1 on 14 March.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Scarce summer visitor.

1 f at EHF from 20 to 23 July. 3 f at WLF on 11 and 12 Aug. with 1 f at PHF on 13 Aug.

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Scarce winter visitor.

At EHF max of 17 in early winter and 5 in late winter, when only recorded in Dec.

29 at Doddington Pool on 21 Jan. and 20 on 17 Nov.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

High numbers in early winter with 36 during Feb. at EHF but only 8 in Dec.

Recorded all year at Doddington Pool with 110 in Jan. and 95 in Dec. 1 pr summered here but no evidence of breeding. In winter also at Winterley Pool (20) and Arclid SQ (10).

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*)

Vagrant, presumed escapes.

A 1stW bird was at Arclid SQ on 2 Feb. 1 m in eclipse plumage was at Doddington Pool on 26 and 29 July.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Uncommon winter visitor. Scarce in summer.

Only recorded in the early winter period at EHF in the usual low numbers, max of 7. However, up to 20 regular at CF.

At the main site of Doddington Pool the wintering numbers were slightly lower with 78 in May and only 36 in Oct. However, it was an excellent breeding season with 10 broods seen, totalling 72 juvs. Also in winter at Winterley Pool (20), Rode Pool (15) and Arclid SQ (5).

Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 at Astbury SQ from 4 Dec. to at least 7 Dec.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

The SF records were 1 at PHF on 7 Jan., 2 at PHF on 10 Jan., 1 at WLF on 25 Feb., 1 at WLF on 21 Oct. and 1 at EHF on 24 Dec.

Regular all winter at Doddington Pool with 15 in Jan and 7 in Dec. At Arclid SQ 2 on 24 Jan., 1 on 5 Nov. and 1 on 30 Dec.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

Scarce winter visitor.

1 f at WLF on 16 Sept. and 1 at EHF on 1 Dec. 1 f was at Doddington Pool on 21 Jan., 4 flew over on 22 Jan., and another one was there on 3 Nov. A good year at the usual spot on the R. Dane at Swettenham where 1 m on 29 March, 13 f on 9 April and 6 m + 5 f on 11 Dec.

5 records from Arclid SQ, 1 on 24 Jan., 2 on 4 Feb., 2 on 21 Oct., 1 on 25 Nov. and 1 on 3 Dec.

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Uncommon resident.

1 or 2 at PHF, RF, WLF, GF and MGP during the summer. Also at Doddington Pool with max of 14 in April, Rode Pool (2) and Astbury SQ (2).

No evidence of breeding from any site.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

Escape from captivity.

1 m was at Doddington Pool on 21 Oct.

Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*)

Vagrant.

1 seen in flight over EHF on 10 Aug. Awaiting ratification by Rarities Committee. If accepted this will be the first record for SF.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)

Common resident.

A pr bred at EHF where 3 juvs were seen in early Aug.

Prs also regular at Doddington, Crewe Town Centre, Crewe Hall, Willaston, Swettenham, Quakers Coppice, Shavington, Basford, Arclid SQ, Stowford and Holmes Chapel.

Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)

Rare resident and autumn/winter migrant.

At SF 2 records in spring with 2 over EHF on 8 April and 1 over WLF on 7 May. In the autumn period there were 8 separate records of singles over SF from 5 Aug. to 5 Nov.

Summer records from Swettenham and Alsager, and other records from Crewe Golf Course, Quakers Coppice, near Betley, Doddington, near Rode Heath (6 in the air together) and Stowford where 17 separate sightings.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Common resident.

Recorded from Swettenham, Doddington, Haslington, Weston, Crewe NW, Crewe N, Arclid SQ and Stowford.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Singles at EHF or WLF on 12 March, 7, 12 & 19 April, 5 Nov. and 6 Dec.

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Rare passage migrant and summer visitor.

Another excellent series of records from SF and surrounding areas leading to the possibility that a pr has bred in the north of the SECOS area, or just outside.

16 separate records at SF from 14 May to 10 Sept. with a juv seen on 3 Sept. Also 1 at Holmes Chapel on 28 June, 1 near Sandbach on 24 July, 1 at Bradwall on 16 Aug. and 1 near Sandbach on 3 Sept.

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

Scarce autumn migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded in all months except June from the usual RF/EHF area, with dispersing birds overlapping with the winter visitors. 2 at WLF on 4 Dec. were watched "mock stooping" on crows and gulls. 1 m was regular near Alsager from late June to mid July. 1 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 8 Oct.

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

Rare except where locally released.

1 near Weston on 2 June and 15 June. 1 near Doddington on 16 June and 19 Sept.

Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*)

Scarce resident.

1 near Weston on 15 June. 1 pr and 1 single near Alsager.

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Scarce resident except where locally released.

Very common where reared for shooting at Crewe Hall, Doddington, Rode Hall, Swettenham, Taxmere, etc., no records from elsewhere.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

Scarce winter visitor.

As usual at SF the regular site is FF with at least 1 bird present in Jan., Feb., March, Nov. and Dec. 1 was walking along the frozen over Valley Brook, Haslington in the freezing period of 29 Dec. Singles at Taxmere on 3 Jan. and 23 Dec.

Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*)

Rare autumn visitor.

1 was located in the stand of bulrushes (*Typha*) near the road on EHF saltpan in the evening of 5 Aug. It stayed in residence there until 4 Sept. where a lot of people saw it - usually briefly and after a long wait!

This is the sixth record for SF.

Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Common resident.

Widespread in low numbers on most smaller waters but with around 70 at SF and 30 at Doddington Pool.

Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common resident and variable winter visitor.

Common on most larger waters with typical figures being 80 at WLF, 40 at CF and 30 at EHF/PHF. Doddington Pool held the highest numbers as usual with 230 in early winter and max 472 in late winter.

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

Rare winter visitor and rare summer visitor.

Winter records from SF with 3 at WLF in Feb., 2 at WLF in March, 1 at EHF in Nov. and Dec. Some evidence of passage movement with 2, 3 or 4 from 1 April to 12

May, and 1 to 5 from 28 June to 13 July.

At Doddington Pool 1 pr was present from 14 Feb. It nested in April and laid 3 eggs but failed to hatch again. Winter records of 1 bird in Nov. and Dec.

Also at Middlewich Lime Beds on 29 Aug. and 4 records in July at Arclid SQ.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Scarce summer visitor. Uncommon spring/autumn migrant.

The 1st bird was 1 at EHF on 20 March. Continuously present then with max of 12 on spring passage; 3 prs bred with broods of 4, 4 and 2; autumn passage up to max of 6 birds with the last birds on 8 Sept.

At Arclid SQ 2 prs had 3 nesting attempts; 1st was 3 juvs of which 2 fledged but 1 had a broken wing and did not survive; 2nd was predated; 3rd fledged 4 juvs.

1 was at Doddington Pool on 18 April.

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Spring passage extended from 2 April, with 4 at EHF, through to mid June, with a normal max of 7, although on 20 May there was an incredible 30 together (in 1994 there was a similar influx of 20 on 15 May).

Autumn passage from mid Aug. to 19 Sept. with a max of 4.

1 at Arclid SQ on 30 Aug.

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Early winter max of around 200. 1st bird in autumn was on 22 July and numbers built up in late winter to a max of 280 in Nov.

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Uncommon irregular visitor.

2 at RF on 6 Jan., 5 at EHF on 15 Jan. and 1 at EHF on 22 July. It normally occurs as a spring or autumn migrant.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

Common resident and abundant winter visitor.

Around 2500 in the usual EHF roost at each end of the year. 2 prs also bred at EHF.

3 prs bred at Doddington, 4 prs at Haslington Hall and 1 pr at Arclid SQ where up to 500 in autumn.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

Uncommon irregular visitor.

1 at EHF on 4 Sept.

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Scarce passage migrant.

A good spring passage with singles at EHF on 23 April, 7 May (in summer plumage), 8, 20 & 30 May, and 1 returning on 22 July.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

Scarce passage migrant.

A good concentration of records in mid Sept. with up to 7 present from 6 to 17 Sept.

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)

Rare visitor.

1 located at EHF on 4 Aug. stayed until 6 Aug.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Rare passage migrant.

2 at EHF on 1 Sept. and 1 stayed until 5 Sept.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Recorded in all months at EHF with a max of 23 in early winter; spring passage max of 10; up to 3 on autumn passage and max of 5 in late winter.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Again recorded in all months at EHF with a max of 31 in early winter; up to 3 on spring passage; autumn passage started early with 2 on 28 June and peaked at 6 in July; late winter numbers built up to 21.

Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)

Uncommon winter visitor and migrant.

Max of around 90 in autumn/winter at SF; 10 at Maw Green Tip; 6 to 10 regular at Arclid SQ in winter. 1 or 2 at Stowford.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)

Rare resident. Scarce winter visitor.

SF records from FF as usual with 1 on 25 Nov. and 2 flushed from by the path on 8 Dec.

2 regular in winter from the usual site south east of Alsager. A single record from Arclid SQ on 3 Nov.

Blacktailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Scarce migrant.

A good series of records with up to 6 recorded on 7 days in April and May. Then regular in mid July with 15 on 13 July, and on 14 July the 4 residents were joined by another 16 which dropped down during heavy rain.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

1 spring record of 2 on 8 May. 4 autumn records of 1 or 2 on 17, 18, 22 & 23 July.

Also 6 over Arclid SQ on 29 July and 1 over Middlewich Lime Beds on 29 Aug.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

The usual evening roost at EHF held up to 120 in early winter and 50 in late winter.

Recorded in most months from Stowford and 2 prs reported to have bred here, 1 on each side of the A500.

Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)

Scarce passage migrant.

2 records of singles at EHF on 17 and 24 Sept.

Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Recorded at SF in all months with wintering, passage and summering all merging. Max 10 in early winter and 7 in late winter.

1 at Arclid SQ on 16 July.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

Scarce passage migrant.

A scarcity of records with 1 on 22 March, 1 on 11 July, 2 on 20 Aug. and 1 on 6 Sept.

1 at Arclid SQ on 13 Sept.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

Rare winter visitor. Scarce spring migrant. Uncommon autumn migrant.

Spring passage max of 3 in April. Autumn passage from mid June to mid Sept. with a max of only 6, much lower than usual.

Also 1 at Oakhanger in April, 2 at Middlewich Lime Beds on 29 Aug., 1 at Doddington Pool on 5 Aug, and 1 at Arclid SQ on 25 July and 17 Aug.

Winter records from RF in Jan., FFF in Nov., Arclid SQ in Nov. and Dec., and Maw Green Tip in Jan.

Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

Scarce passage migrant.

1 at EHF on 12 & 17 July.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant.

Poor spring passage with only 3 records during April. Good autumn passage from 8 July to 14 Sept. with max of 6.

At Arclid SQ 2 or 3 in April/May and 1 or 2 in July/Aug.

1 at Winterley Pool on 3 May.

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Scarce migrant.

1 ad in summer plumage was at EHF on 23 July.

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)

Rare visitor.

1 ad at EHF on 4 Feb. and 2 ads there on 5 March. These are the 5th and 6th records for SF, the last being 1 ad at EHF on 29 Oct 1992.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

Abundant autumn and winter visitor.

At Maw Green Tip up to 1500 in early winter and 1400 late winter feed here. Up to 1000 use EHF for bathing and roosting.

At the Doddington Pool roost there were 8000 in early winter and 9000 in late winter. During the heavy frost at the end of Dec. numbers were down to only 500, but by mid Jan. 1996 had increased to 11500.

Around 250 regular at Arclid SQ in autumn/winter.

Ring Billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 2ndW bird in the mixed gull flock between Maw Green Tip and RF on 5 Feb. was the first record for SF.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 180 using Maw Green Tip and roosting at EHF. Numbers down at the Doddington Pool roost with max of around 100.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Uncommon winter visitor. Uncommon summering non-breeder.

Max of 950 in early winter and 1500 in late winter at Maw Green Tip. Only 200 in early winter in the Doddington Pool roost but numbers up to 650 in late winter.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Common winter visitor. Uncommon summering non-breeder.

Around a max of 1600 at Maw Green Tip at both ends of the year. Most of these larger gulls do not roost locally but fly off to the north west.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus (argentatus) cachinnans/michahellis*)

Rare late summer visitor.

17 bird days recorded in the usual "late summer" period at PHF/EHF and 1 at Maw Green Tip in April.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucopterus*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 ad at RF on 6 Jan.; 1 ad at Maw Green Tip on 8 Jan.; 1 ad at EHF on 5 & 19 March; 1 3rdW at Maw Green Tip on 4 & 6 April; 1 2ndW at EHF on 20 & 26 April.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Scarce winter visitor and rare summer visitor.

Max of 58 in early winter and 45 in late winter in the Maw Green Tip/RF area.
Up to 5 in the Doddington Pool roost.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 2ndW at Maw Green Tip on 8 Jan.; 1 2ndW at Maw Green Tip on 4 April.; 1 2ndW at PHF on 30 Nov.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor.

1 at WLF on 24 May and 1 at EHF on 4 June. Then 6 bird days recorded in July and Aug.

1 at Doddington Pool on 18 Aug. and 1 at Arclid SQ on 13 June.

Commic Tern (*Sterna hirundo or paradisea*)

At Arclid SQ 3 birds on 25 April and 1 on 6 May could not be specifically identified.

Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*)

Scarce passage migrant.

2 were briefly at EHF on 5 May. This is the 8th record for SF and the first since 1985.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident.

Only one record received but flocks of up to 200 in most towns. Max of 21 at Arclid SQ.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon resident.

In Quakers Coppice 10 prs laid 35 clutches totalling 71 eggs - 34 young hatched and 26 fledged. A 48% hatching success rate and 37% fledging success rate (70% and 54% in 1994). Overall a very poor year.

A flock of 20 reported from Alsager.

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Common resident.

Few records received but 200 at Rode Hall, 250 at Crewe Hall and 150 at Haslington.

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident.

The only records received were of 2 or 3 regular around Arclid SQ and 22 in my garden in Haslington in Dec.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

Uncommon summer visitor and migrant.

The first record was of 1 at WLF on 15 April. Other breeding season records from Bagmere, Haslington, Alsager (3), Swettenham, Maw Green Tip and Arclid SQ.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

Rare resident.

A barn near Oakhanger has been used regularly as a roost during the early part of the year.

Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)

Common resident.

Common in open farmland areas. At least 4 prs around Haslington Hall. Also at Maw Green Tip, PHF, FF, WLF, Swettenham, Arclid SQ and Stowford.

Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Common resident.

Records of this woodland species received from EHF, Oakhanger, Doddington, Swettenham, Quakers Coppice and Arclid SQ.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

Rare winter visitor.

I was at FF on 12 Oct.

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

The first was over WLF on 2 May and the last over Arclid SQ on 31 Aug.

During the early summer a survey of breeding swifts throughout Cheshire was organised by CAWOS. The results for the SECOS area are:-

Area	No. of birds	No. of colonies
Shavington	25	1
Willaston	16	1
Wistaston	30	1
Crewe South	208	10
Crewe North East	55	4
Crewe North West	537	6*
Haslington	121	2
Alsager	34	5
Sandbach	not counted	
Holmes Chapel	15	?
Middlewich	81	?
Congleton	248	?

* including the largest in Cheshire with 450 birds.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Uncommon resident.

Single records from WLF, PHF, Crewe Golf Course, Wybunbury, Swettenham (2), Wheelock and Arclid SQ (2). On the R. Dane at Holmes Chapel 1 pr regular in summer but no juvs seen.

Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*)

Uncommon resident.

Records from Swettenham and Rode Hall, and a juv at Arclid SQ in Aug.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*)

Common resident.

By far the commonest woodpecker. Recorded from many sites but only confirmed breeding at Swettenham and Taxmere.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*)

Uncommon resident.

Recorded from Quakers Coppice, Alsager (in a local garden), Crewe Town Centre (along an old disused railway line), Doddington and Hough Common.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Common? resident and autumn passage migrant.

Breeding season records of 5 prs at Doddington, 2 prs at Mow Cop, 2 prs at Stowford and 2 prs at Arclid SQ.

A winter flock of 100 near Alsager and up to 10 at Maw Green Tip and Middlewich Lime Beds.

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

The first record was 2 over EHF on 24 March and the last was 1 over EHF on 17 Sept.

Breeding records from Swettenham, R. Dane at Twemlow Viaduct, Holmes Chapel (5 or 6 prs), and Arclid SQ where between 20 and 45 occupied holes.

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Abundant summer visitor.

The first record was 2 on 24 March and the last was 3 at EHF on 15 Oct. Breeds commonly throughout the area.

The usual autumn roost in maize fields near Arclid SQ peaked at around 1000 birds in late Aug./early Sept.

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Common summer visitor.

The first record was 1 at PHF on 25 March and the last was 1 at EHF on 16 Oct. Breeds commonly with for example 200 nests in Holmes Chapel being typical.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)

Rare summer visitor.

All sightings from Mow Cop with 2 on 20 Aug., 1 on 21 Aug., 1 over on 27 Aug. and another over on 12 Sept.

Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)

Uncommon resident and autumn passage migrant.

Breeding season records of 3 prs at Mow Cop. Wintering flocks of 40 at WLF, 25 at Arclid SQ, and 20 at Haslington. Passage noted during Oct. with 50 over EHF, 60 and 120 over Mow Cop, and 80 over Middlewich Lime Beds.

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)

Scarce resident and uncommon passage migrant.

The first record was of 1 at EHF on 6 April with light spring passage during April. 2 prs bred here and other breeding records were 3 prs at Doddington and 2 prs at Haslington Hall. A good autumn passage with up to 12 at EHF in Sept., 10 at Doddington, 13 at Arclid SQ and 18 at Middlewich Lime Beds.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

Breeding records from Doddington Pool (3 juvs), Arclid SQ (4 juvs), Haslington and Holmes Chapel. Occasional winter records from a few sites. The winter roost at Arclid SQ was re-established in Sept. and peaked in Nov. with a total of 18. Of 11 birds trapped for ringing, 2 had previously been ringed, both at Arclid SQ, 1 in 1994 and 1 in 1993.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Common resident.

Breeds commonly around the area. A very large roost was found in Crewe Town Centre with around 500 birds spending the night on the roof of the B&Q Store. The usual roost also formed at Arclid SQ with a max of around 175.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

Scarce passage migrant.

Singles were at Arclid SQ on 16 and 21 April, and also on 5 and 7 June.

Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*)

Rare resident.

The f of the pr which bred along the Valley Brook near Haslington last year was present in early winter but the m had disappeared. The f finally moved away on 1 April. A bird was seen here again on 29 Dec.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Abundant resident.

Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

Abundant resident.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

Abundant resident.

Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

Rare summer visitor.

1 m at PHF on 8 July, 1 f at EHF on 12 July, 1 f at Mow Cop on 27 Aug. and 1 at Mow Cop on 12 Sept.

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

Rare summer visitor. Scarce passage migrant.

The only record was 1 at PHF on 8 Sept.

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*)

Rare winter visitor.

1 at Mow Cop on 19 March and 1 m there on 9 Oct.

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Scarce passage migrant.

First of the year was 1 at EHF on 22 March. Light spring passage here and Arclid SQ to 21 May. The autumn records were from Mow Cop with up to 4 from 20 Aug. to 8 Oct.

Ring Ousel (*Turdus torquatus*)

Rare passage migrant.

At least 4 records from Mow Cop in mid April.

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Common winter visitor.

No 1st record for late winter period recorded. Flocks of 500 in the R. Dane valley at Holmes Chapel, elsewhere only up to 100.

Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)

Uncommon resident.

7 m singing at Bagmere on 29 May. 4 prs bred at Arclid SQ. Increasing in some areas.

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Common winter visitor

The 1st record was 2 at EHF on the very early date of 23 Sept. The biggest flock was of 200 along the R. Wheelock, but several records of around 100.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Uncommon resident.

Breeds throughout with, for example, 2 prs at Arclid SQ and 2 prs near Nantwich Road, Crewe.

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

Scarce summer visitor.

1 m seen and heard reeling in spring at the usual site at Bagmere.

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

1st record was from Arclid SQ on 29 April. Breeding season records from EHF, WLF, FFF, GF, RF, Bagmere (4) and Arclid SQ.

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

1st record was of 1 at WLF on 13 April. 3 prs bred at WLF where 1 brood of juvs seen. Also at GF, OF and Rode Pool.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

Uncommon summer visitor.

1st record was from WLF on 27 April. Breeding season records from FF, EHF, FFF, WLF, CF, Mow Cop and Arclid SQ.

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common summer visitor.

1st record was from WLF on 23 April, with 1 at Arclid SQ on 24 April. Singing m at Bagmere (6), Arclid SQ (7-9), Doddington (3), EHF (3) and FF (4).

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Common summer visitor.

1st record was of 2 singing birds at Arclid SQ on 28 April. 6-7 prs bred here, but only one record from SF where it is scarce.

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

Common summer visitor. Scarce winter visitor.

1st date records shared between FF and Arclid SQ on 14 April (3 days earlier than 1994 when again at both sites). 6 prs at Arclid SQ and 2 at Quakers Coppice.

Winter records from Crewe (South) in Feb., FF in Oct., EHF in Nov. and Haslington in Dec. [I am sure that Blackcaps winter more commonly than this. Please let me have all records for 1996].

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

Common summer visitor.

The bird present at FF in Dec. 1994 stayed through until Feb. 1995. 1st record was of 1 singing at Alsager on 12 March. 3 prs at Arclid SQ, 10 prs at Rode Hall, and 3 prs at Crewe Golf Course, etc.

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common summer visitor.

1st record was from EHF on 9 April. Still the commonest warbler with, for example, 12 prs at Arclid SQ.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

Records of 2-4 birds in winter from WLF, Doddington, Rode Hall, Crewe Golf Course, Mow Cop and Arclid SQ, where also one singing m recorded on 14 May.

Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*)

Rare winter visitor.

3 birds were discovered in Quakers Coppice on 24 Feb. and stayed until 6 March with at least 1 until 15 March.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

Scarce summer visitor.

Good records this year, including the traditional but under-recorded site of Crewe Cemetery/St. Michael's Churchyard. At this site probably 4 prs and at least 2 broods of juvs. Also from Betchton (pr + juvs), Dingle Farm (pr + juvs), Cranage (pr) and Arclid SQ (pr but no juvs). Up to 3 at EHF/FFF from 12 Aug. to 8 Sept.

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

Scarce summer visitor.

Continuing the expansion of this species in East Cheshire there were 3 records from the area. 1 pr were in and around a nest box near Crewe Golf Course for 2 weeks but finally abandoned. 2 singing m were in Quakers Coppice by different nest boxes but could not attract a f.

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Common resident.

Continuing in high numbers with flocks of 24 at Stowford, 22 at Crewe Golf Course, 15 at Arclid SQ and common at Swettenham.

Willow Tit (*Parus montanus*)

Scarce resident.

Probable breeding prs at FF, Arclid SQ, Crewe Golf Course, Quakers Coppice and Dingle Lake, Sandbach.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

Uncommon resident.

Records from Quakers Coppice, Doddington, Arclid SQ and Swettenham.

Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)

Abundant resident.

At Quakers Coppice 9 prs used nest boxes, laid 85 eggs and fledged 64 juvs (8; 71; 50 in 1994).

Great Tit (*Parus major*)

Common resident.

At Quakers Coppice 2 prs used nest boxes, laid 18 eggs and fledged 13 juvs (1; 8; 6 in 1994).

Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*)

Common resident.

At Quakers Coppice 1 pr used a nest box, laid 9 eggs and fledged 8 juvs (1; 7; 6 in 1994).

Tree creeper (*Certhia familiaris*)

Common resident.

2 prs at Arclid SQ and 1 pr at Doddington.

Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*)

Uncommon resident.

No change in its status.

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common resident.

The only records of winter flocks received was of up to 18 at Stowford. Still very common.

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Common resident and winter visitor.

A winter roost of at least 250 in Crewe Hall Woods and 150 near Haslington.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

Common resident.

A count at 9 rookeries in the Crewe/Alsager area totalled 412 nests (422 in 1994 and 445 in 1993). The rookery in Arclid Hollow held 52 nests (65 in 1994 and 57 in 1993), and that at Fodens Flash held 55 nests (not counted in 1994). A new rookery at Groby Flash held 14 nests.

A winter roost at Crewe Hall was in the high hundreds.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*)

Common resident.

Around 200 feeding on Maw Green Tip in winter.

Raven (*Corvus corax*)

Rare visitor.

2 passed over Mow Cop going east on 27 Aug.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

No records of roosts received.

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Abundant resident.

Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*)

Uncommon resident.

Resident at Maw Green Tip where up to 50 in July. 62 at Tetton Lane Marsh in Aug. 3 separate flocks of c30 gave a total of c100 south of Alsager.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Abundant resident and winter visitor.

No records of winter flocks.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

Scarce winter visitor.

Records of 7 at Bradwall, Sandbach; 10 at Doddington and 10 at Lawton Woods in early winter. No late winter records.

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident.

Flocks of c70 at WLF, 80 at Quakers Coppice and 130 roosting in Leylandii at ABB Works in Crewe.

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

Common resident.

Flocks noted were 30 at FFF, 30 at Swettenham and 20 at Maw Green Tip.

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Uncommon winter visitor.

The only winter flock was from Crewe Golf Course where numbers were down to only 20 in early winter, and none in late winter. Recorded from a number of gardens in Feb. and March.

Linnet (*Acanthis cannabina*)

Common resident.

An exceptional winter flock of 400 was regular in Jan. south of Alsager. Other flocks were 50 at EHF and 15 at Doddington.

Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*)

Rare resident. Uncommon winter visitor.

Records of up to 10 birds from WLF, EHF, FF, Crewe South, Arclid SQ and Crewe Golf Course.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Uncommon resident.

Widespread but not often recorded. Records from FF, WLF, Crewe Golf Course, Crewe South, Crewe Hall, Arclid SQ, Wheelock and Quakers Coppice.

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)

Uncommon resident.

25 at WLF in Sept. Other records of flocks up to 10 from Wheelock, Stowford and Arclid SQ.

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)

Uncommon resident.

Breeding season records from Bagmere (8 prs), Arclid SQ (9 prs), Maw Green Tip and Stowford.

Corn Bunting (*Miliaria calandra*)

Uncommon resident.

At least 3 prs from the usual site south of Alsager where previously up to 8 prs. Also 3 prs at Cranage, 2 prs at Doddington, 2 prs at Basford and 3 prs at Brereton Heath. Other records were 8 near Brereton Heath in July.