



Your local birdwatching group

**South East Cheshire  
Ornithological Society**

**Bird Report 2020**

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Table of Contents

<b>Review of the Year</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Systematic List</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Local Rarities</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>Early and late dates for summer visitors</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>South Cheshire Barn Owl Report 2020</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>Garden Bird Survey</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>Birds of Conservation Concern</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)</b> .....	<b>44</b>

The Systematic List that makes up the bulk of this document is a compilation from the Sightings Section of the Society's monthly newsletter. The inclusion of detailed observations from the fieldworkers covering the SECOS Winter and Breeding Bird Survey [ SWaBBS ] patches have boosted the records and will no doubt improve the depth of our understanding of our local avifauna, especially records of breeding activity and success.

A consequence of the restrictions of movement, etc. at various times of the year, inevitably will have led to some birds being missed.

1. I would like to acknowledge the input by Colin Lythgoe to this document. He has helped me hugely in proof-reading it and offering me feedback.
2. The inclusion of tables has only been partially successful - maxima for all months not known and I believe the inclusion of '0' would make the table look busy!
3. Andy Livermore, the CAWOS Systematic List Editor has given me a list of the species ( with counts ) that the county would consider a flock of birds as 'significant' – see individual species below for the details
4. my thanks to all those who added their sightings to the various log books, blogs, etc. or sent them directly to me by email / text ( or to a distribution list I'm a 'member' of )
5. sightings entered in logbook(s) retrospectively may not be included
6. my database, Wildlife Recorder®, sorted the Systematic List / sequence used in this summary - the sequence used by the International Ornithologists' Union - IOC 11.1 - Jan 2021. *Ducks, Geese and Swans change places with the Pheasants.*
7. inevitably, errors and omissions will have crept in, along with incomplete records i.e. where I didn't note count, gender, age, breeding status, etc.
8. unless previously recorded at that site, details of breeding have been omitted for 'sensitive' species
9. local birders continue the policy to withhold details of those rarities where it is thought that 'protecting' the site might encourage these birds to establish territories
10. the SECOS Recording Area is hectads SJ74, 75, 76, 85 and 86 within Cheshire ( see next page )
11. some locations included are just outside the SECOS Recording Area as our policy is to share sightings that occur where overlapping the boundary

Where the phrase "breeding confirmed" is used it refers to fledglings recorded. I acknowledge that SWaBBS fieldworkers record specific breeding activity, i.e. nests with young, nest with eggs, adults carrying food/faecal sacs and occupied nests - those records are identified using the same description.

In 2019 I was granted access to the BTO's BirdTrack and WeBS databases and the BTO also send me local records for BBS, GBW and other specific surveys such as heronries, etc.

Please let me know of any errors, etc. that you see, or any sightings not included, so I can update/correct the records.

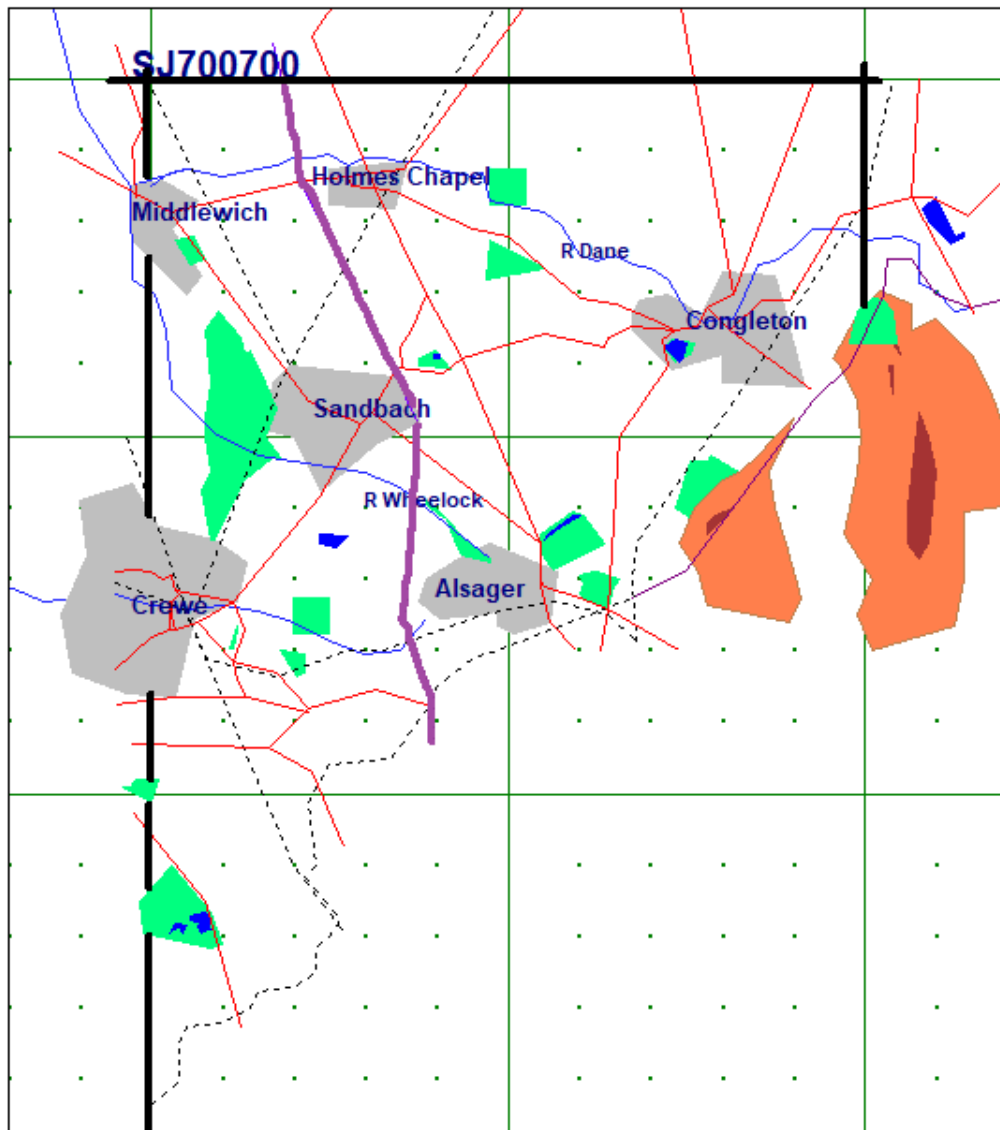
John Thompson, SECOS Bird Recorder

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

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## SECOS Recording Area & main birding sites

### Map of the Recording Area



Produced using DMAP®

Key: -

Black, thick	Edge of Recording	Black, dotted	Railway tracks
Blue	Water courses	Brown, dark	Over 300 metres above sea level
Dotted line	County border	Brown, light	Over 200 metres above sea level
Green	Main birding locations	Grey	Areas of conurbation
Purple, thick	M6 Motorway	Red	Roads

In 2020, I produced an update to list of the main birding sites accessible to the public. It can be viewed and downloaded from the SECOS website.

Also available on the website is a Checklist and a Gazetteer.

## Review of the Year

What follows is a summary of the notable records for 2020. Surveys aren't "everyone's cup of tea" but I've included some to illustrate what opportunities SECOS members could participate in at a local level and satisfying one of the aims of the Society.

### **Winter 2019/2020 – 12% wetter, compared to 60 years ago**

**Jan** Two internal surveys, the Winter Garden Bird Survey and the SECOS Wintering and Breeding Bird Survey (SWaBBS), run throughout the winter months. Mandarin recorded at Doddington, Lawton Lake & Rode Pool; Water Rail at Bagmere & Sandbach Flashes; Oystercatcher first returning to Doddington, then soon after at Sandbach Flashes; Woodcock noted at Congleton, Fodens Flash & on Salt Line. Both Mediterranean Gull and Iceland Gull recorded at Sandbach Flashes. Great (W) Egret records were restricted to Sandbach Flashes, whereas Little Egrets were recorded at various sites. Both Barn Owl and Tawny Owl were reported at various locations, two Merlin sightings both at Sandbach Flashes. The Bagmere Starling murmuration continued into next month. Dippers maintaining territories in Congleton & Lawton Woods and the scrub at Rookery Bridge was attracting Tree Sparrow, Brambling and Yellowhammer - Yellowhammer were also noted elsewhere in the Recording Area. The Long-eared Owl winter roost on MGT was a cause for concern – some visitors were ignoring the welfare of this locally scarce species!

**Feb** **named Storm Dennis and the wettest February on record:** Brereton Heath LNR hosted White-fronted Goose; Water Rail noted at Sandbach Flashes; Oystercatcher are now widespread; Woodcock reported at Fodens Flash, Mow Cop & the Salt Line and Common Sandpiper noted at Sandbach Flashes. Kumlien's Gull, Caspian Gull, Great W Egret and Little Egret seen at Sandbach Flashes; the latter also regular at Rode Pool/Scholar Green. Reports of Barn Owl were widespread, as were Tawny Owl – a nest box in Quakers Coppice had a bird sitting on 3 eggs. Green Woodpecker noted in the Scholar Green / Rode Pool area; Dippers are active in Congleton & Lawton Woods. Tree Sparrow recorded in the Astbury area and at Sandbach Flashes. Yellowhammer continue to be seen throughout and Brambling still reported at Sandbach Flashes.

**Mar** **Covid-19 Lockdown announced 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Sandbach Flashes hosted Garganey, LR Plover, Jack Snipe, Common Sandpiper, Mediterranean, Caspian, Kumlien's Gull, Merlin, Sand Martin, Cetti's Warbler, White Wagtail, Brambling and Yellowhammer. LR Plover also recorded at Astbury, also there were Little Gull & Short-eared Owl. Mow Cop held Jack Snipe, Eaton Hall SQ recorded Common Sandpiper, an Osprey over Middlewich, Red Kite at Hassall, another Short-eared Owl – this time at Wildboardclough, Green Woodpecker heard at Scholar Green, Swallow seen in Holmes Chapel, singing Willow Warbler at Arclid, and a Black Redstart in Sandbach

### **Spring – sunniest Spring since records began, previous highest was in 1948**

**April** **Lockdown 'relaxation' begins wc 11<sup>th</sup> allowing us to venture out further than an hours exercise**

SWaBBS begins its Spring / Summer season. a Red Kite seen in Alsager, a Pied Flycatcher was reported on the canal at Middlewich & also at EHF/PHF. More Spring migrants arrived this month [ first reports listed ]: - Redstart (Marton, 10<sup>th</sup> & later at Mow Cop), Grey-headed Wagtail (Bathvale) 10<sup>th</sup>, Yellow Wagtail (EHF/PHF) 11<sup>th</sup>, Reed Warbler (WLF) 12<sup>th</sup>, Garden Warbler ( Weston, then widespread) 14<sup>th</sup>, Whinchat (Arclid, + later Alsager) 16<sup>th</sup>, Lesser & Common Whitethroat (both Railway embankment) 17<sup>th</sup>, Sedge Warbler (WLF) 18<sup>th</sup>, Grasshopper Warbler (Joey The Swan) 19<sup>th</sup>, Ring Ouzel (Mow Cop – up to 6) 19<sup>th</sup>, Hobby (Mow Cop) 23<sup>rd</sup>, Tree Pipit (The Cloud) 24<sup>th</sup>, Common Tern (WLF) 26<sup>th</sup>, Swift (EHF/PHF) 27<sup>th</sup>, Cuckoo (Marton) 30<sup>th</sup>. Wheatear are now widespread, a Short-eared Owl on Coppenhall Moss, Dunlin at EHF/PHF, Jack Snipe on Mow Cop and Mediterranean Gull at EHF/PHF and juvenile Dippers seen on the stream at Lawton Woods

## SECOS Bird Report 2020

**May**            **officially the warmest May since records started and the driest since 1884:** a Pied Flycatcher was heard in an inaccessible part of Lawton Woods; singing Tree Pipit (The Cloud) 3<sup>rd</sup>; another very productive site, MGT/RF held Whinchat on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Cetti's Warbler a day later and a Marsh Harrier on the 10<sup>th</sup>. A Honey-Buzzard was reported at Buglawton on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Cuckoo were heard in the area around Brereton Heath LNR from the 9<sup>th</sup> and regularly for the rest of the month suggesting breeding may have occurred. Many ventured out to see the Corn Bunting at Alsager, the area also hosted Willow Tit. 2 Whimbrel were noted at EHF/PHF on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Golden Oriole (Marton) 13<sup>th</sup>, Red Kite (Lea Forge) 14<sup>th</sup>, Redstart (The Cloud) 15<sup>th</sup>, Merlin (Danebower) 16<sup>th</sup>, Garganey (EHF/PHF) 19<sup>th</sup>. Barn Owl, Green Woodpecker and Wheatear reported in the Church Lawton/Scholar Green area, and juvenile Dippers were seen on the River Dane in Congleton

**June**            **Unfortunately we have had another incident where visiting birders were not putting the welfare of the birds first;** this time at Astbury where Quail have been heard and occasionally seen – there were also sightings at nearby Smethwick where a Green Woodpecker was also heard, a Cuckoo was heard at Weston. EHF/PHF held Mediterranean and Yellow-legged Gull, a Red Kite over Astbury, a Hobby at Alsager, Dipper continue to be sighted at Congleton, the confiding Corn Bunting remained at Alsager and nearby in Scholar Green, Siskin and Crossbill were noted

**July**            **31<sup>st</sup> was the third hottest day on record in the UK!** At Sandbach Flashes (EHF/PHF), Mediterranean Gull, Gannet, Crossbill, Golden Plover, Great W Egret, Little Egret, Hobby were reported, while at nearby MGT/RF, Wheatear were noted. Also reported this month: Chough (Shavington), Quail (Weston), Common Scoter (Astbury Mere), Tree Pipit (Cloud), Ring-necked Parakeet (Crewe), Spotted Flycatcher (Wybunbury Moss), Stonechat (Mow Cop), Yellow Wagtail (Hassall), Red Kite & Dipper (Congleton), Barn Owl (Astbury), Little Owl (Bradwall) and Yellowhammer (Wallhill)

**August**        **Heat Wave! Unprecedented high temperatures plus storms Ellen & Francis incl. highest August winds since the late 90's, plus the coldest August Bank Holiday Monday since the '70s - Sunday morning registered 0°C!** The well-watched Sandbach Flashes (EHF/PHF) accounted for most of this month's highlights: Golden & Grey Plover, Whimbrel, Mediterranean Gull, Little Egret, Osprey, Red Kite and Cuckoo. A good month too at nearby MGT/RF: Great W Egret, Cetti's Warbler, Whinchat and Crossbill were reported. At Tetton Lane, Little Owl was noted. Alsager had a good month; at Fanny's Croft the following were noting: Hobby, Willow Warbler, Redstart, Tree Sparrow, Yellow Wagtail, Tree Pipit and Yellowhammer. Elsewhere in Alsager, Ring-necked Parakeet. In Congleton a Grasshopper Warbler was heard reeling, while in nearby Astbury: Red-legged Partridge and a Shag were reported. Other sightings include Spotted Flycatcher at Wybunbury Moss, a Marsh Harrier at Meremoor Moss, Turnstone at Doddington,

**September**    **This month we experienced heavy rain, high winds and frosty nights plus 'an Indian Summer'. Globally, the hottest September ever recorded!** Yellowhammer continue to be noted at Alsager and Wallhill; an Osprey was recorded over Arclid SQ & Astbury; the August juvenile Shag at Astbury Mere CP lingered until the 11<sup>th</sup>, also holding Common Scoter, Tawny Owl, a Cetti's Warbler and ( possibly ) our first local Redwing of the season; at Lea Forge a pair of Spotted Flycatchers were noted; the Mow Cop area held Red Kite, a Greenland Wheatear was noted amongst it's more common cousins. The regulars at Rode Pool reported Egyptian Goose, Mandarin, Pintail and Green Woodpecker, over Haslington an adult & juvenile Peregrine were seen flying south and on his ringing patch, Wayne noted Sparrowhawk, Kingfisher, Whinchat & Yellow Wagtail. At the Flashes, the following were recorded: Cuckoo, Water Rail, juvenile Spotted Redshank, Mediterranean Gull, Great (W) & Little Egret, Hobby and Tree Sparrow; while just outside the Flashes area on Clay Lane a Barn Owl was seen

**October** The Winter Garden Bird Survey started this month. **French Met Office named storm Alex hit the UK in the first weekend, Saturday 3 October was the wettest day for UK-wide rainfall since records began in 1891, Met Office researchers have said.** The place to be this month was on MGT/RF which held a Short-eared Owl, a Merlin and Jack Snipe. A Barn Owl was seen at Arclid, a Peregrine at Astbury, Yellow-browed Warblers in Middlewich and Congleton on consecutive days. A Hoopoe was reported in a Wistaston garden, a Little Gull was photographed at Brereton Heath LNR and a Richard's Pipit was reported as a flyover in Crewe. ( I suspect that a report of 4 Cattle Egret in Rode Heath, Alsager is probably an error in reporting or a misidentification )

**On Halloween, Irish Met Office named storm, Aiden hit the UK**

**November 1<sup>st</sup> - The remnants of Hurricane Zeta brought further weather fronts**

**November** SWaBBS begins its Winter season. A couple of 'late' summer visitors were noted: a Hobby at Wrinehill and a Swallow at Rode Heath ( Alsager ), both on the 1<sup>st</sup>. During the month, EHF/PHF held Water Rail, Golden Plover and Dunlin. At MGT/RF: Woodcock, Great W Egret and Cetti's Warbler also a flock of 15 Meadow Pipit. A Cetti's Warbler was also heard at WLF. The first of the Woodcocks was recorded at Wybunbury Moss, which also recorded the first of this month's Brambling, coincidentally another bird was noted in a garden in Alsager. An early morning walk on The Cloud by one birder noted Tawny Owl, a roost of 15 Raven, 15 Meadow Pipit and a Crossbill was also heard. A walk round the Fanny's Croft/SW Alsager was rewarded with high numbers of Skylark, Fieldfare, Chaffinch, Linnet & Yellowhammer. At Doddington, high numbers of Fieldfare & Linnet were noted as was the resident Little Owl. At Astbury Mere CP a flock of 16 Lesser Redpoll were reported and in the nearby village a Black Redstart was seen between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Other birds noted this month: Knot, Tree Sparrow and Reed Bunting at Arclid SQ; another Little Gull at Brereton Heath LNR; Green Woodpecker at Bradwall; Dipper in Congleton; Yellowhammer at Rookery Bridge; Little Egret at Rode Heath, Alsager. Other flocks of significance: 40 Skylark at Checkley; c100 Linnet at Basford and 70 Linnet at Green Lane, Warmingham Flash

**December 'Blink and you missed it' - a White Christmas ( for some! ) Storm Bella; the last weekend of the year .....**

Highlights this month include a Dusky Warbler ( Astbury MCP ), Cetti's Warbler ( Bagmere ), Woodcock ( Church Lawton ), Dipper ( Lawton ), Whooper Swan ( Middlewich Canal ), Barn Owl ( Oakhanger ), Little Egret ( Rode Pool ), Golden Plover, Mediterranean Gull, Great W Egret & Tawny Owl ( Sandbach Flashes ), Tree Sparrow, Brambling & Yellowhammer ( Smethwick )

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Systematic List

### Key:

♀ - female	♂ - male	BP - Business Park
c - circa		CP - Country Park
1 <sup>st</sup> cy - first calendar year	1 <sup>st</sup> w - first winter	GC - Golf Club
ad - adult	imm - immature	LNR - Local Nature Reserve
juv - juvenile(s)	nc - noted, but no count	EHF - Elton Hall Flash
		MGT - Maw Green Tip
		PHF - Pump House Flash

Between 2011 and 2017, sightings of local birds were mainly confined to Sandbach Flashes, Doddington and Rode Pool with, comparatively, few from the wider SECOS Recording Area.

Until we have sufficient data to establish the local status of 'our' birds, I have included the species status according to CAWOS, from their 2018 Bird Report.

Definitions used in the status statement, on the line following each species' name, are as follows:

Numbers of birds / Pairs for breeding species		Temporal status	
rare	1 to 5	resident	resident breeding and recorded throughout the year but winter and summer populations may not be the same individuals
very scarce	6 to 10		
scarce	11 to 100		
uncommon	101 to 500		
fairly common	501 to 1000	summer visitor	breeding annually but not present in winter
common	1001 to 5000		
very common	5001 to 25,000	winter visitor	not present in breeding season
abundant	25,000+		
<b>Distribution</b>		migrant	recorded on passage
Locally	occurs in up to 10% of tetrads	vagrant	does not normally occur
thinly	from 11 % to 50% of tetrads	irregular	occur less than annually
widespread	in more than 50% of tetrads	visitor	occurs at any time of year, but does not breed

Species for which county Biodiversity Action Plans have been written ( Cheshire BAPs) are listed in the Appendix, as are those on the Birds of Conservation Concern 4, 2015 ( BoCC ) Red and Amber Lists.



## Ducks; Geese and Swans ( Anatidae )

### **Canada Goose ( *Branta canadensis* )**

CAWOS very common widespread resident

recorded in every month throughout the Recording Area and seen at all the larger water bodies

Maximum monthly count: -

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Arclid SQ	116	123	127	98	87	208	225	1285	1128	1165	467	61
Astbury Mere CP		38	9							100		
Doddington	214	166			164	96	180	210	5	600	370	200
EHF		200			20	40		300	c500	300		300
Newsbank Pool	162	318	130			110	220	65	500		350	
Queen's Park	95	72	70		5	200	195	7	67	126	109	
Rode Pool	31	40	22		2	27			13	17	9	24
Winterley Pool		15			83	62	2	22	25			62

Occupied nest at Holmes Chapel and juveniles seen at Arclid SQ, Borrow Pit, Queen's Park and Rode Pool

### **Barnacle Goose ( *Branta leucopsis* )**

CAWOS scarce feral resident

One, occasionally two, birds seen associating with Canada Geese flock at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Sandbach Flashes and Queen's Park, Crewe [ occasionally a yellow spiral ring is noted on one leg ]

### **Greylag Goose ( *Anser anser* )**

CAWOS fairly common resident

recorded in every month and seen at some of the larger water bodies

Highest count of 470 at Doddington

Fledglings seen / breeding confirmed at Borrow Pit and Rode Pool

### **Pink-footed Goose ( *Anser brachyrhynchus* )**

CAWOS common winter visitor to Dee estuary

recorded during all months apart from May-Aug

Seen on the ground or on the water at Doddington and Sandbach Flashes – all noted counts less than 10.

Many records are flyovers – highest skein was c300 over an Alsager garden

### **White-fronted Goose ( *Anser albifrons* )**

CAWOS Rare winter visitor. Some feral birds

One was reported ( on BTO's BirdTrack ) at Brereton Heath LNR in Feb

### **Black Swan ( *Cygnus atratus* )**

Escaped or Feral - Australian species

Two were recorded at Sandbach Flashes

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Mute Swan ( *Cygnus olor* )

CAWOS fairly common resident, thinly distributed

recorded in every month and seen at all the larger water bodies

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Doddington	10	20	0	9	37	59	65	61	16	16	18	8
EHF	29	17	21	8	12	5	7	17	23	16	23	13
Middlewich Canal	62	17	17		12	15			13	28	5	66
Newsbank Pool	79	80	79	62	64	64	56	67	63	61	73	64
Rode Pool	3									2		

Fledglings seen / breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Middlewich Canal, Sandbach Flashes [ MGT ], Somerford, Winterley Pool & Wychwood Park

SECOS member David Cookson leads the Cheshire Swan Study Group. See their website for reports of ringing, etc.: - <https://cheshireswanstudygroup.wordpress.com/>

## Whooper Swan ( *Cygnus cygnus* )

CAWOS scarce winter visitor

Singles, unless stated otherwise, recorded at Middlewich Canal, Middlewich Lime Beds and Sandbach Flashes ( 5 ) [ EHF/PHF ]

I have no details of the bird at Middlewich Canal to say if it is either of the two ringed birds from 2019: "White, BLS" and "Yellow, V9J"

Highest count of 5 at Sandbach Flashes [ EHF/PHF ] also 11 flying over Elworth

## Egyptian Goose ( *Alopochen aegyptiaca* )

CAWOS scarce visitor and rare breeder. Presumed escaped or feral birds

[Escaped or Feral - an African species](#)

Recorded at a few sites, usually in ones or twos but 4 birds were seen at Rode Pool ( Apr )

## Shelduck ( *Tadorna tadorna* )

CAWOS very common visitor to estuaries, uncommon thinly spread breeder inland

Seen throughout the area and recorded in every month except Jul & Aug

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Doddington		1	7							1	2	
EHF	52	60	67	40	38	28	21		2	26	62	67

Juveniles were seen at Arclid SQ & Sandbach Flashes [ EHF/PHF ]

## Muscovy Duck ( *Cairina moschata* )

[Escaped or Feral - native to Mexico and Central and South America](#)

Recorded at Meremoor Fisheries

**Mandarin Duck ( *Aix galericulata* )**

CAWOS uncommon feral resident

Breeds in East Asia, feral population established in Britain

recorded during all months

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Lawton Lake	4		6		1							
Rode Pool	9	6	6		4	1	5	2	14	12	11	32

Nests recorded at Alsager GC, Barthomley, Marshfield Bank, Rode Pool and Wychwood Park. See the Rode Pool Bird Report for details of their nest box occupation. Ducklings seen at Congleton Park and Middlewich

**Garganey ( *Spatula querquedula* )**

CAWOS Scarce migrant, rare breeder

1 recorded at Sandbach Flashes [ EHF/PHF ] ( Mar &amp; May )

**Shoveler ( *Spatula clypeata* )**

CAWOS locally common winter visitor and migrant, rare breeder

Seen throughout the area and recorded during all months

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Astbury Mere CP					2						6	3
Doddington	4	10				1	2	5	5	1	6	14
EHF	37	22	23	2	4		5	21	41	20	25	22
Rode Pool	2	9	6						4	20	21	20

Birds were observed displaying at Sandbach Flashes [ MGT/RF]

**Gadwall ( *Mareca strepera* )**

CAWOS uncommon resident

recorded in all months except Jul

Only seen at Astbury Mere CP, Doddington, Sandbach Flashes and Warmingham

Highest count of 14 at Sandbach Flashes - MGT/RF &amp; EHF/PHF

**Wigeon ( *Mareca Penelope* )**

CAWOS fairly common inland, rare in summer

Seen throughout the area and recorded during all months

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Astbury Mere CP											4	10
Doddington	37	2					2		5	8	17	6
EHF	543	433	412		7		1	32	211	221	433	443
Rode Pool	4		5						5			

## SECOS Bird Report 2020

### **Mallard** ( *Anas platyrhynchos* )

CAWOS common widespread resident, very common in winter

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Arclid SQ	198	147	65	33	54	164	192	296	213	243	283	300+
Astbury Mere CP	64		29									178
Doddington	600	150			250	200	300	250	500	400	700	400
EHF	213	512	443		322	50	108	411	539	461	322	112
Newsbank Pool	160		95			120	90		110		210	
Queens Park	34	63				61	59	106	71	42		
Rode Pool	40	7	13			18	2		4	62	70	76
Winterley Pool					30	35	2					40

### **Pintail** ( *Anas acuta* )

CAWOS common winter visitor to Dee estuary, scarce elsewhere

recorded during all months apart from Apr-Jul and rarely other than at Sandbach Flashes

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Doddington	1	2	3									4
EHF	6	4	3					3		14	4	4

### **Teal** ( *Anas crecca* )

CAWOS scarce resident, very common winter visitor to estuaries, fairly common inland

recorded in every month

Other than those in the table below, seen at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Crewe Hall, Lawton Lake, North Rode, WLF and Wistaston

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Doddington	2	2				1			6		4	4
EHF	112	211	241		3	15	4	70	134	123	106	134
MGT						9		85				
Rode Pool	20	8	6						5	33	60	38

### **Yellow-billed Teal** ( *Anas flavirostris* )

Escaped or Feral – from South America

1 recorded at EHF/PHF in Aug

### **Red-crested Pochard** ( *Netta rufina* )

Escaped or Feral - a regular vagrant to Britain, especially in Autumn and Winter

1 recorded at Redesmere in Nov

### **Pochard** ( *Aythya farina* )

CAWOS scarce resident, locally common winter visitor

recorded during all months apart from May & Aug and preferring deep water

Seen at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Doddington, Eaton Hall SQ, Rode Pool and Sandbach Flashes  
Highest count of 16 at Astbury Mere CP

**Tufted Duck ( *Aythya fuligula* )**

CAWOS fairly common resident. Common widespread winter visitor and migrant

recorded in every month

Other than those in the table below, seen at Eaton Hall SQ, Lawton Lake, MGT, Meremoor Moss, North Rode, Queens Park, Winterley Pool and Wychwood Park

Maximum monthly count: -

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Arclid SQ	49	30	31	40	16	13	73	88	82	55	36	29
Astbury Mere CP	76	54	41			20			29	81	132	c200
Doddington	103	139	173		33	35	44	61	93	78	123	104
EHF	28		28		4	2	3	12	21	2	7	12
Newsbank Pool	31		42				7	2	7		22	
Rode Pool	17	12	9							9	11	12

Breeding confirmed at MGT &amp; Wychwood Park

**Common Scoter ( *Melanitta nigra* )**

CAWOS abundant coastal winter visitor, very scarce migrant inland

recorded in Marton as a flyover ( 1, Apr ); Astbury Mere CP ( 6♂,3♀ Jul &amp; 2♀, Sep ) and Doddington ( 5, Jul )

**Goldeneye ( *Bucephala clangula* )**

CAWOS uncommon winter visitor. Rare non-breeder in summer

recorded during Jan-Mar &amp; Oct-Dec

Seen at Astbury Mere CP, Doddington, Lawton Lake and Sandbach Flashes ( MGT/RF )

Highest count of 27 at Doddington

**Smew ( *Mergellus albellus* )**

CAWOS rare visitor

1 recorded at Rode Pool ( Jan-Feb )

**Goosander ( *Mergus merganser* )**

CAWOS uncommon winter visitor inland. Very scarce breeder

recorded in every month of the year

Other than those in the table below, seen at Alsager Mere, Borrow Pit Meadows, Bosley, Brereton Heath LNR, Congleton, Doddington, Eaton Hall SQ, Fields Farm ( Sandbach ), Middlewich Canal, North Rode, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green and Wheelock/Malkins Bank

Maximum monthly count: -

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Arclid SQ	14	12	10							2	13	11
Astbury Mere CP	3	3	2									
Congleton Park			1	2			1			2		1
EHF	7	11	9	6	1	1	5	7	5	4	18	29
Lawton Lake		2	2		1							
Queens Park	1									2	10	
Rode Pool	7	11	4								2	8

Juveniles seen at Congleton Park / R Dane

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Pheasants and allies ( Phasianidae )

### **Californian Quail** ( *Callipepla californica* )

Escaped or Feral

Singles were seen at 3 sites in Apr: Haslington, Red Lane Tip and Wheelock

### **Red Grouse** ( *Lagopus lagopus* )

CAWOS uncommon resident in eastern hills

recorded at Danebower

### **Red-legged Partridge** ( *Alectoris rufa* )

CAWOS common thinly distributed resident supported by releases

locally, usually, the only sightings are where bred and released for shooting. Recorded in every month of the year except Dec

Seen at Albion Lock, Alsager, Astbury, Brereton, Brownlow, Checkley Lane, Doddington, Eaton, Goostry, Lea Forge, Marton, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes, Swettenham, Twemlow, Wallhill and Wrinehill

Highest count of 8 at MGT

### **Grey Partridge** ( *Perdix perdix* )

CAWOS uncommon locally distributed resident

8 birds, possibly of this species, were seen at MGT in Jul

### **Quail** ( *Coturnix coturnix* )

**County Rarity** ( non-calling birds )

CAWOS rare migrant, summer visitor

Local birders reported incidents of encroachment by visiting photographers at a couple of the sites  
1s & 2s heard singing at Astbury, Smethwick and Weston in Jun & Jul

### **Pheasant** ( *Phasianus colchicus* )

CAWOS very common widespread feral resident supported by releases

common locally, recorded in every month of the year – probably overlooked / under-recorded

Highest count of 12 at Swettenham

### **Nightjar** ( *Caprimulgus europaeus* )

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Rare, irregular summer visitor

2 birds seen in Jun. Location withheld: *see page 3, point 9*

### **Alpine Swift** ( *Tachymarptis melba* )

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

A bird showing features consistent with this species was noted on 7<sup>th</sup> Jul over the A34 at Eaton

### **Swift** ( *Apus apus* )

CAWOS common summer visitor and migrant, thinly distributed breeder

Locally numbers appear to be declining

Highest count of 150 at Doddington

**Cuckoo ( *Cuculus canorus* )**

CAWOS scarce summer visitor and migrant, thinly distributed

10 records ( 2 last year ) all of singles except for 2 reported at Marton ( Apr ) & Brereton Heath LNR ( May ). Records from the latter site show that at least 1 bird lingered for up to 2 weeks. Did they breed?

**Pigeons; Doves ( *Columbidae* )**

**Feral Pigeon ( *Columba livia* )**

CAWOS very common resident, widely distributed in urban areas

common locally and under-recorded

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ

**Stock Dove ( *Columba oenas* )**

CAWOS common widespread resident

fairly common locally and under-recorded

Highest count of c20 at Arclid SQ

Breeding confirmed at Quakers Coppice and Rode Pool

**Woodpigeon ( *Columba palumbus* )**

CAWOS abundant widespread resident and migrant

common locally and under-recorded

Highest count of 100 feeding at Alsager ( Fanny's Croft )

Breeding confirmed at Holmes Chapel

**Collared Dove ( *Streptopelia decaocto* )**

CAWOS very common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 78 at Doddington ( Aug ) - attracted by supplementary food

Breeding confirmed at Scholar Green

**Rails; Crakes and Coots ( *Rallidae* )**

**Water Rail ( *Rallus aquaticus* )**

CAWOS Uncommon winter visitor and migrant, scarce breeder

recorded Jan-Apr & Sep-Dec

this cryptic, secretive bird is difficult to see at the best of times, but even more so during their breeding season; recorded at Astbury Mere CP, Bagmere, Doddington, Macon Meadows, Rode Pool and throughout Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 5 at Sandbach Flashes [ WLF ]

## SECOS Bird Report 2020

### **Moorhen** ( *Gallinula chloropus* )

CAWOS very common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Maximum monthly count: -

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Arclid SQ		3		2								
Doddington	1	4			2	2	5	3	1		3	
EHF					8	6				3		
Macon Meadows	11				5						11	
Newsbank Pool	14		4			3	5	4	3		3	
Queens Park	3	2	2			3	4	6	4	10	8	
Rode Pool	4	2	6			3				2	1	5

Highest count of 32 at Fields Farm, Sandbach

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Borrow Pit Meadows, Macon Meadows, Sandbach Flashes ( MGT ) and Taxmere

### **Coot** ( *Fullica atra* )

CAWOS common resident and migrant, widely distributed

common locally, recorded in every month

Maximum monthly count: -

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Arclid SQ	13	12	4	10	11+11j	14+4j	14+5j	25	21	19	16	18
Astbury Mere CP	65	40	32									
Doddington	178	145			133	262	400	628	693	680	435	375
EHF		61			20	4			39	10		
Newsbank Pool	120		65			70	110	60	80		120	
Rode Pool	6	6	4			6	2			3	3	4
Winterley Pool					8	2	1					21

Although I don't have data for all CAWOS sites, Doddington consistently ranks as one of the highest concentrations of this species in the county

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Borrow Pit Meadows, Crewe GC, Doddington, Queens Park, Sandbach Flashes ( MGT ), Winterley Pool and Wychwood Park

### **Grebes ( Podicipedidae )**

#### **Little Grebe** ( *Tachybaptus ruficollis* )

CAWOS uncommon resident, thinly distributed

recorded in every month

Seen at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Doddington, Eaton Hall SQ, Lawton Lake, Queen's Park, Rode Pool, Sandbach Flashes and Wychwood Park

Maximum monthly count: -

	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>
Astbury Mere CP	2	1	2	2					nc	2	4	5
Doddington	10	10	nc		4	9	10	16	22	12	10	11
EHF	5	2	1					1	4		4	2
Lawton Lake											8	8
Rode Pool	3	2	1							3	3	2

Breeding confirmed at Doddington and Sandbach Flashes ( MGT )



### Great Crested Grebe ( *Podiceps cristatus* )

CAWOS uncommon resident inland

recorded in every month

Other than those in the table below, seen at Alsager Mere, Brereton Heath LNR, Sandbach Flashes and Winterley Pool

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Arclid SQ	3	3	5	7	9	12	13	11	9	7	2	
Astbury Mere CP	6	6	3			6		9				3
Doddington	1	2	nc		10	11	59	61	59	15	nc	
EHF	2	2	3		2	2		1		1	2	
Rode Pool	2	6	4	2	4	3					2	2
Watch Lane Flash		10	8	12						10	10	

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Doddington, Rode Pool and Sandbach Flashes

### Oystercatcher ( *Haematopus ostralegus* )

CAWOS fairly common breeder inland

common locally; recorded between Jan-Aug

Seen throughout the Recording Area including flyovers

Highest count of 7 at Doddington

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Doddington and Mere Moor Fishery

### Plovers ( Charadriidae )

#### Lapwing ( *Vanellus vanellus* )

CAWOS very common winter visitor, migrant and widespread breeding species

common locally, recorded in every month

**Flocks of 500+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Arclid SQ	25	49	23	12+	14+	18+	90+	320	260+	250	92	31
Doddington	85		30							1	55	27
Eaton Hall SQ	100		nc									
EHF	c750	c300			nc		c120	nc	197	c200	265	100

Breeding confirmed / juvs seen at Arclid SQ, Church Lawton, Crabmill Flash, Sandbach Heath and Scholar Green

Birds displaying or agitated behaviour at Barthomley, Holmes Chapel, Mow Cop and Swettenham

#### Golden Plover ( *Pluvialis apricaria* )

CAWOS Fairly common winter visitor and migrant. Very scarce breeder in the eastern hills

recorded at Danebower ( May & Jul ) and Sandbach Flashes ( Mar, Jul-Aug & Oct-Dec )

Highest count of 9 at Sandbach Flashes

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

#### Grey Plover ( *Pluvialis squatarola* )

CAWOS Common winter visitor and migrant to estuaries, rare inland

Single reported in flight at EHF/PHF on 31<sup>st</sup> Aug

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Ringed Plover** ( *Charadrius hiaticula* )

CAWOS Uncommon winter visitor and common late summer migrant to coast, otherwise scarce.  
Scarce breeder

Singles, unless noted otherwise: all records from EHF/PHF - Apr, May [3], Jun, Aug [5] & Sep

## **Little Ringed Plover** ( *Charadrius dubius* )

CAWOS Scarce migrant and summer visitor

Seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Betchton, Church Lawton, Eaton Hall SQ, Marton, Sandbach Heath, and Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 6 at Arclid SQ

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ

## **Sandpipers; Snipes** ( *Scolopacidae* )

### **Whimbrel** ( *Numenius phaeopus* )

CAWOS Very scarce migrant inland

Recorded at EHF/PHF in May (2), Jul (1) & Aug (1)

### **Curlew** ( *Numenius arquata* )

CAWOS Common winter visitor and migrant, uncommon summering non-breeder on estuaries.  
Scarce migrant elsewhere

recorded in every month of the year

Seen at Meremoor Moss, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes, Somerford, Wallhill and Wrinehill plus flyovers at various other sites

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
EHF	33	30	21			1	20	39	c30	38	42	40

Breeding season records from the Eastern Hills

### **Black-tailed Godwit** ( *Limosa limosa* )

CAWOS Scarce migrant away from the coast and estuaries

recorded in every month except Sep, other than a single at Doddington ( Jul ), only noted at Sandbach Flashes

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
EHF	4	6	13	22	2	20	7	9		1	3	2

### **Turnstone** ( *Arenaria interpres* )

CAWOS Fairly common coastal winter visitor and migrant. Rare migrant elsewhere

A bird was photographed at Doddington, present from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> Aug

### **Knot** ( *Calidris canutus* )

CAWOS Very common winter visitor and migrant to coastal waters. Rare inland

Single seen at MGT/RF on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug, 'flew from PHF', and 2 flew over Arclid SQ on 8<sup>th</sup> Nov

### **Ruff** ( *Calidris pugnax* )

CAWOS Scarce migrant and winter visitor

Only reported at Sandbach Flashes - EHF/PHF: Aug (2), Sep (3) & MGT/RF Aug & Sep ( singles )

**Dunlin ( *Calidris alpina* )**

CAWOS Inland, scarce winter visitor and migrant

Singles, unless noted otherwise; seen at Arclid SQ in May (2), Jun &amp; Aug and EHF/PHF in Apr, May, Jul (2), Aug, Sep (4), Oct-Nov and MGT/RF Sep (4)

**Woodcock ( *Scolopax rusticola* )**

CAWOS Scarce breeder, thinly distributed with bias to the east. Uncommon winter visitor

recorded Jan-Feb &amp; Nov-Dec

Seen at Alsager ( Fanny's Croft &amp; Salt Line ), Arclid SQ, Congleton, Lawton Woods, Lea Forge, Middlewich, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes and Scholar Green

Highest count of 4 at Sandbach Flashes

**Jack Snipe ( *Lymnocyptes minimus* )**

CAWOS Scarce winter visitor and migrant

Singles, unless noted otherwise noted at Meremoor Moss, Mow Cop (7), Sandbach Flashes and Wybunbury Moss

**Snipe ( *Gallinago gallinago* )**

CAWOS Uncommon winter visitor and migrant. Very scarce breeder

recorded in every month except May &amp; Jun

Other than the table below; max. seen at Alsager (3), Chorlton (12), Fields Farm, Sandbach (2), Lea Forge (3), Meremoor Moss (1), Mow Cop (10), Scholar Green (1), Weston Hall (6), Wrinehill (1) and Wybunbury Moss (3)

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Arclid SQ			1								1	5
Doddington	1								1	2		
EHF	25	10	12	4			4	17	14		12	6
MGT	14	15	13	4				2	6	13	4	10
Rode Pool	11									1	2	1

**Grey Phalarope ( *Phalaropus fulicarius* )**

CAWOS Rare migrant

**County Rarity**A bird was briefly seen at Doddington on 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. A Rarity Form has been submitted.**Common Sandpiper ( *Actitis hypoleucos* )**

CAWOS Scarce migrant and rare breeder, rare irregular winter visitor

recorded between Feb-Sep

Seen at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Betchton, Doddington, Eaton Hall SQ, Middlewich, Rode Pool and Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 13 at Middlewich

**Green Sandpiper ( *Tringa ochropus* )**

CAWOS Scarce autumn migrant, rare in winter and spring

recorded in every month except May &amp; Jun

Singles, unless noted otherwise, seen at Arclid SQ (2), Eaton, Lawton Lake, Meremoor Moss, Middlewich Lime Beds (3), Rode Heath, Rode Pool and Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 12 at Sandbach Flashes

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Redshank ( *Tringa totanus* )

CAWOS Scarce inland. Uncommon locally distributed breeder

records only from Sandbach Flashes

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Sandbach Flashes	1	1	4	1			3	2	3		1	

## Spotted Redshank ( *Tringa erythropus* )

CAWOS Scarce migrant on the Dee, rare inland and in winter

A juvenile was recorded at EHF/PHF on 15<sup>th</sup> Sep

## Greenshank ( *Tringa nebularia* )

CAWOS Rare spring, very scarce late summer and autumn migrant inland. Rare winter visitor

Singles, unless noted otherwise, recorded at EHF/PHF on 27<sup>th</sup> Jul and on 9<sup>th</sup> (2) & 20<sup>th</sup>

## Gulls; Terns and Skimmers ( Laridae )

### Black-headed Gull ( *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* )

CAWOS Abundant winter visitor and migrant. Common locally distributed breeding species

common locally, recorded in every month

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Arclid SQ	325+	430	19	0	2	3	128	260+	278	90+	250+	120
Doddington			nc					nc	nc	nc	200	8000
EHF	3250	1900			10	1				60		200
Rode Pool	9	92					1		4	115	110	240

Arclid SQ reported a ringed bird ( ringed in Poland in '18 ) – this bird was also seen in 2018 at Arclid SQ

Doddington is a winter roost site for Black-headed Gull and also for Common Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull

### Little Gull ( *Hydrocoloeus minutus* )

CAWOS Scarce coastal migrant, very scarce inland

Singles seen at Astbury Mere CP ( Mar ) and Brereton Heath LNR ( Oct & Nov ) – similar dates as 2019

### Mediterranean Gull ( *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* )

CAWOS Very scarce breeder and scarce visitor throughout the year

Singles, unless noted otherwise, all seen at Sandbach Flashes: Jan, Mar, Apr (3), Jun (4), Jul (2), Aug, Sept & Dec except Queen's Park ( Dec )

### Common Gull ( *Larus canus* )

CAWOS Common, widespread migrant and winter visitor. Scarce as summering non-breeder

recorded in every month

Highest count of 14 at MGT/RF

**Other than at landfill sites, inland flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

**Great Black-backed Gull ( *Larus marinus* )**

CAWOS Fairly common winter visitor on estuaries and uncommon resident. Has bred common locally, recorded in every month  
Highest count of 75 at MGT/RF

**Other than at landfill sites, inland flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

**Iceland Gull ( *Larus glaucoides* )**

CAWOS Very scarce winter visitor and irregular spring migrant

The closure of the local landfill has meant fewer sightings of ‘white-wingers’: 1 record - 8<sup>th</sup> Jan at MGT/RF

**Kumlien’s Gull ( *Larus glaucoides kumlieni* ) County Rarity**

CAWOS Very scarce winter visitor and irregular spring migrant

Singles reported at EHF/PHF and MGT/RF in Feb; EHF/PHF in Mar. Rarity Forms were submitted for the Feb sighting

**Herring Gull ( *Larus argentatus* )**

CAWOS Very common, widespread migrant and winter visitor, uncommon breeder

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 500 at MGT/RF

breeds on Crewe Industrial Estate

First recorded in 2012 but from the size of the colony it must have existed before then, a Seabird Count of the nesting sites on some of the roofs on Weston Road Industrial Estate has been monitored since then.

Colin Lythgoe’s report for 2019 is on the SECOS website

**Other than at landfill sites, inland flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

**Caspian Gull ( *Larus cachinnans* ) County Rarity**

CAWOS Rare non-breeding visitor

Singles recorded: 25<sup>th</sup> Feb; 6<sup>th</sup> Mar; 27<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Jul - all at EHF/PHF

\*\*\* *known to hybridise – if completing a Rarity Form, care is needed to eliminate doubt*

None of the sightings were submitted to CAWOS

**Yellow-legged Gull ( *Larus michahellis* )**

CAWOS Scarce non-breeding visitor

recorded in every month except Mar

Seen at Arclid SQ and Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 7 at EHF/PHF

**Lesser Black-backed Gull ( *Larus fuscus* )**

CAWOS Common widespread migrant and winter visitor, uncommon breeder

common locally, recorded in every month

Breeds on Crewe Industrial Estate

Maximum monthly count: -

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Arclid SQ	49	36	26	25	62+	38	280+	315+	373	626	518	28
Astbury Mere CP	12	31						18			nc	nc
Doddington								nc		nc	19	2400

**Other than at landfill sites, inland flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Little Tern** ( *Sternula albifrons* )

CAWOS Uncommon coastal migrant and non-breeding summer visitor, rare inland

1 recorded at EHF/PHF on 25<sup>th</sup> Apr

## **Common Tern** ( *Sterna hirundo* )

CAWOS Scarce inland. Rare breeder

Reported at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Doddington and Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 5 at EHF/PHF

Although copulation was observed, no juvs were noted

## **Gannet** ( *Morus bassanus* )

CAWOS Uncommon but regular coastal visitor

1 was seen at the back pool at EHF on 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Jul but died and 2 juvs were recorded flying over Arclid SQ on 18<sup>th</sup> Sep

## **Cormorant** ( *Phalacrocorax carbo* )

CAWOS Common visitor and uncommon breeder

recorded in every month

Seen at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, Barthomley, Doddington, Lea Forge, Meremoor Moss, Queens Park, Rode Pool, Wallhill and Wybunbury Moss

Highest count of 20 at Sandbach Flashes

1 with features of the continental subspecies [ *P.c. sinensis* ] were reported at Arclid SQ

## **Shag** ( *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* )

### **County Rarity**

CAWOS Very scarce coastal visitor, vagrant elsewhere. County Rarity inland

1 bird was noted in Astbury on 24<sup>th</sup> Aug. Probably the same bird lingered at Astbury Mere CP from 29<sup>th</sup> Aug to 11<sup>th</sup> Sep and described as a juv

## **Hérons; Bitterns ( Ardeidae )**

### **Grey Heron** ( *Ardea alba* )

CAWOS Scarce visitor on Dee estuary, rare elsewhere

common locally and recorded in every month

'best estimates' of nests in heronries: - Doddington 17 and Rode Pool 56

### **Great White Egret** ( *Ardea alba* )

### **County rarity** ( away from the coast )

CAWOS Scarce visitor on Dee estuary, rare elsewhere

recorded during all the months of the year except Apr-Jun

Singles, unless noted otherwise, seen at Arclid SQ, Bosley Res, Brereton and Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 2 at Sandbach Flashes

### **Little Egret ( *Egretta garzetta* )**

CAWOS Locally common resident and scarce breeder on the estuaries, scarce elsewhere

recorded in every month except Jun

Singles, unless noted otherwise, seen at Arclid SQ, Bosley, Brereton, Doddington, Joey the Swan, Middlewich, North Rode (2), Rode Heath (5) & Rode Pool, Sandbach Flashes [3], Scholar Green and Wheelock, plus flyovers at other locations

Highest count of 5 at Rode Pool

### **Osprey ( *Pandion haliaetus* )**

CAWOS Scarce migrant

Singles reported over Middlewich ( 25<sup>th</sup> Mar ), EHF/PHF ( 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug ), Astbury Mere CP and Arclid SQ ( both 6<sup>th</sup> Sep )

## **Kites; Hawks and Eagles ( Accipitridae )**

### **Honey Buzzard ( *Pernis apivorus* )**

### **County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

A bird described as an adult male was reported over Buglawton, Congleton on 7<sup>th</sup> May.

Note - “any description to the County Rarity Team does need to highlight both shape and plumage to eliminate Common Buzzard.” CAWOS Bird News No. 116, March 2021

### **Sparrowhawk ( *Accipiter nisus* )**

CAWOS Fairly common, widespread resident

common locally; recorded in every month

Highest count of 2 at 8 sites

Breeding confirmed at Winterley

### **Marsh Harrier ( *Circus aeruginosus* )**

CAWOS Scarce migrant and winter visitor, rare breeder

Singles recorded at MGT/RF on 10<sup>th</sup> May & 26<sup>th</sup> Aug, at EHF/PHF 26<sup>th</sup> Aug, at Meremoor Farm 9<sup>th</sup> Aug and at Taxmere on 21<sup>st</sup> Sep

### **Red Kite ( *Milvus milvus* )**

CAWOS Scarce visitor

recorded between Mar-Sep ( none suggest bird was perched or on the ground )

Singles seen at numerous sites, 2 recorded at Arclid SQ, Alsager, Marton, Mow Cop and Wybunbury

### **Rough-legged Buzzard ( *Buteo lagopus* )**

### **County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

A bird showing features consistent with this species was noted over Congleton on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb

### **Buzzard ( *Buteo buteo* )**

CAWOS Common, widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 12 at EHF/PHF & Mow Cop

Displaying birds seen at Mow Cop, Meremoor Moss and Roe Park

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Barthomley, Rode Heath and Wistaston

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Barn Owl ( *Tyto alba* )**

\*\*\* a Schedule One bird

CAWOS Uncommon local resident

recorded in every month

45 records from various locations

Breeding confirmed at many sites, some not disclosed

I am grateful to David Bromont, of the South Cheshire Barn Owl Group, for the report that can be found towards the end of this document

## **Owls ( Strigidae )**

### **Little Owl ( *Athene noctua* )**

CAWOS Uncommon thinly distributed resident

recorded in every month except Jan, Sep or Dec

singles, unless noted otherwise, seen at Balterley (2), Bradwall (2), Doddington (2), Marton, Mow Cop, Queens Park (2), Sandbach Flashes and Smethwick

Breeding confirmed/ juvs seen at Balterley, Bradwall, Mow Cop and Queens Park

### **Long-eared Owl ( *Asio otus* )**

CAWOS Very scarce localised resident

The winter roost on MGT was a cause for concern in previous years, **with some visitors ignoring the welfare of this locally scarce species by wanting to get closer views / photographs!** The absence of reports in this year suggest the 'damage has been done'!

Adults were seen in flight and juvs heard begging at a withheld location - *see page 3, point 9*

### **Short-eared Owl ( *Asio flammeus* )**

CAWOS Scarce winter visitor and migrant, has bred

Favouring the Eastern Hills where there were reports in Mar, May & Jun, single birds were also seen at Astbury, Coppenhall, Doddington and Sandbach Flashes

### **Tawny Owl ( *Strix aluco* )**

CAWOS Fairly common thinly distributed resident

recorded in every month

singles, unless noted otherwise, seen at Alsager, Astbury Mere CP, Borrow Pit Meadows, Congleton (2), Doddington, Eaton Hall SQ, Haslington (2), Marton (2), Moston (2), Quakers Coppice (4), The Cloud (2), Rode Heath, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green, Taxmere, Wallhill and Winterley (2)

Breeding confirmed at Doddington and Quakers Coppice

## **Hoopoe ( *Upupa epops* )**

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

A bird was reported at Wistaston on BirdGuides® on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct

## **Kingfisher ( *Alcedo atthis* )**

\*\*\* a Schedule One bird

common locally, recorded in every month - from 26 sites

Highest count of 3 at Arclid SQ, EHF/PHF & Lawton Lake in Jul/Aug - probably breeding nearby



## Woodpeckers ( Picidae )

### **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker ( *Dryobates minor* )**

CAWOS Scarce resident thinly distributed

1 heard at Wistaston

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker ( *Dendrocopos major* )**

CAWOS Common resident, widely distributed

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 4 at Arclid SQ & Fodens Wood

Breeding confirmed at Doddington, Middlewich, Quakers Coppice, Queens Park and Wybunbury Moss

### **Green Woodpecker ( *Picus viridis* )**

CAWOS Uncommon resident, thinly distributed

recorded in every month except Jan & Dec

Singles, unless noted otherwise, recorded at Alsager (2), Arclid SQ, Astbury, Bradwall, The Cloud, Crewe GC, Mow Cop, Rode Pool, Sandbach Flashes ( MGT/RF ), Scholar Green (2), Smallwood, Smethwick and Wychwood Park

Highest count of 4 at Rode Heath

## Caracaras; Falcons ( Falconidae )

### **Kestrel ( *Falco tinnunculus* )**

CAWOS Common, widespread resident and migrant

common locally; recorded in every month

Highest count of 4 ( a pair with 2 juvs ) Meremoor Moss

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Little Moreton Hall and Meremoor Moss

### **Merlin ( *Falco columbarius* )**

CAWOS Very scarce winter visitor, rare resident

Singles seen at Danebower Hollow and 3 sites within Sandbach Flashes

### **Hobby ( *Falco subbuteo* )**

\*\*\* **a Schedule One bird**

CAWOS Scarce migrant, summer visitor and breeder

53 records from 35 locations

Highest count of 2 at 7 locations

*The Rare Breeding Birds Panel guidelines suggest sightings within 2km of one another are counted as a single site.* Disregarding both early and late season sightings, if I calculate 2km from the centre of a cluster of sightings, I estimate there to be 8 breeding territories.

### **Peregrine ( *Falco peregrinus* )**

\*\*\* **a Schedule One bird**

CAWOS Very scarce breeding species, scarce migrant and winter visitor

recorded in every month

Seen at 18 locations plus 2 within Sandbach Flashes – a handful of reports of 2 birds together

A pair in immature plumage, showing normal breeding behaviour, were closely monitored ( but from a distance ) during the Spring but no evidence of successful breeding in that same area.

A bird with jesses was noted at Church Lawton

A juv was seen at Arclid SQ

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Ring-necked Parakeet ( *Psittacula kramera* )**

CAWOS Scarce visitor

3 records of birds flying over gardens: in Crewe and twice in a week in Alsager

## **Golden Oriole ( *Oriolus oriolus* )**

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

A 1<sup>st</sup> summer male was reported at Marton Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> May. A Rarity Form was submitted. On the 18<sup>th</sup> May, the 'brief song' was heard at nearby Astbury. Had this bird lingered?

## **Crows; Jays ( *Corvidae* )**

### **Jay ( *Garrulus glandarius* )**

CAWOS Common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month  
Highest count of 7 at Little Taxmere

### **Magpie ( *Pica pica* )**

CAWOS Very common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month  
Highest count of 76 at EHF/PHF

### **Chough ( *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* )**

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Rare visitor

A 'second-hand' report of 1 flying over Shavington on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jul

### **Jackdaw ( *Coloeus monedula* )**

CAWOS Very common widespread resident and winter visitor

common locally, recorded in every month  
Highest count of 350 at Sandbach Flashes [ MGT ]

**Flocks of 50+ ( not tips ) considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Other 50+ flocks recorded at Alsager, Chorlton, Fodens Wood, Brereton Heath LNR, Rode Hall and Holmes Chapel

Breeding confirmed at Barthomley, Borrow Pit Meadows, Doddington, Holmes Chapel, Quakers Coppice and Wistaston

### **Rook ( *Corvus frugilegus* )**

CAWOS Common resident thinly distributed

recorded in every month  
Highest count of 132 at Winterley  
**Flocks of 50+ ( not tips ) considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**  
Other 50+ flocks recorded at Alsager and Arclid Hollow  
Breeding confirmed at Arclid Hollow and Wistaston

**Carrion Crow ( *Corvus corone* )**

CAWOS Very common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 150 at Holmes Chapel during SWaBBS

**Flocks of 50+ ( not tips ) considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Other 50+ flocks recorded at Borrow Pit Meadows, Goostrey and MGT/RF

**Raven ( *Corvus corax* )**

CAWOS Scarce resident

recorded in every month

Highest count of a flock 15 at The Cloud

Breeding confirmed at Arclid Hollow and Rode Hall, nest building at Eaton Hall SQ and display birds noted at Roe Park and Swettenham

**Tits; Chickadees ( Paridae )**

**Coal Tit ( *Periparus ater* )**

CAWOS Common resident widely distributed

fairly common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 6 at Meremoor Moss and Roe Park during SWaBBS

Breeding confirmed at Macon Meadows, Meremoor Moss and Swettenham during SWaBBS and The Quinta

**Marsh Tit ( *Poecile palustris* )**

CAWOS Scarce resident, locally distributed

2 recorded at Wybunbury Moss

**County Rarity**

( away from proven breeding sites )

**Willow Tit ( *Poecile montanus* )**

CAWOS Scarce resident, locally distributed

recorded at Rode Heath and Merelake Way

**County Rarity**

( away from proven breeding sites )

**Blue Tit ( *Cyanistes caeruleus* )**

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Breeding confirmed at a number of sites

**Great Tit ( *Parus major* )**

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Breeding confirmed at a number of sites

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Skylark** ( *Alauda arvensis* )

CAWOS Common thinly distributed resident, migrant and winter visitor

recorded in every month

Seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Barthomley, Bradwall\*, Checkley\*, Chorlton, Cranage, Doddington, Lea Forge, Marton, Meremoor Moss, Middlewich Lime Beds, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes\*, Scholar Green, Smethwick, Swettenham, Wallhill\*, Weston, Winterley, Wrinehill and Wybunbury Moss

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c120 at Alsager

Other flocks of 10+ marked above with '\*\*'

Bird(s) displaying at Doddington and Meremoor Moss

## **Swallows; Martins ( Hirundinidae )**

### **Sand Martin** ( *Riparia riparia* )

CAWOS Common summer visitor, thinly distributed

common locally

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c250 at Arclid SQ

Other flocks 50+ at Astbury Mere CP, Doddington, Sandbach Flashes ( WLF ) and Wallhill

Breeding confirmed: Arclid SQ

### **Swallow** ( *Hirundo rustica* )

CAWOS Very common widespread summer visitor

common locally

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c50 at Basford

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Holmes Chapel, Wheelock & Malkins Bank and Wybunbury Moss

### **House Martin** ( *Delichon urbicum* )

CAWOS Common widespread summer visitor

common locally

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c90 at Sandbach Flashes at EHF/PHF

Other flocks of 50+ at Doddington and Sandbach Flashes at MGT/RF

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Borrow Pit Meadows, Hassall and Wheelock/Malkins Bank

### **Cetti's Warbler** ( *Cettia cetti* )

\*\*\* **a Schedule One bird**

CAWOS Scarce resident

recorded in all months except Jan & Jun-Jul

Originally only noted within Sandbach Flashes, but now recorded at Astbury Mere CP, Bagmere and Wrinehill

Highest count of 3 at MGT/RF

Initially, reports were withheld to allow the birds to establish territories - *see page 3, point 9*. This local policy appears to have been successful as they are expanding their range.

**Long-tailed Tit ( *Aegithalos caudatus* )**

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 20 at Swettenham during SWaBBS

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Eaton Hall SQ, Holmes Chapel, Macon Meadows, Meremoor Moss, and Swettenham

**Leaf warblers and allies ( Phylloscopidae )**

**Yellow-browed Warbler ( *Phylloscopus inornatus* )**

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Rare migrant

1 was reported in Middlewich ( BirdTrack® ) on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct.

The following day 1 was noted in Congleton – a Rarity Form has been submitted for the latter record

**Dusky Warbler ( *Phylloscopus fuscatus* )**

**County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

First noted on 20<sup>th</sup> Dec at Astbury Mere CP, the bird lingered into the New Year, although elusive and not recorded every day. A Rarity Form has been submitted

**Willow Warbler ( *Phylloscopus trochilus* )**

CAWOS Common summer visitor, widely distributed

common locally

Highest count of 12 at Astbury

**Chiffchaff ( *Phylloscopus collybita* )**

CAWOS Very common summer visitor widely distributed. Scarce winter visitor

common locally, recorded in every month except Feb

Highest count of c25 at Sandbach Flashes [ MGT/RF ]

Courtship noted at Swettenham

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Holmes Chapel, Meremoor Moss and Salt Line

**Reed warblers and allies ( Acrocephalidae )**

**Sedge Warbler ( *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* )**

CAWOS Common summer visitor, thinly distributed

common locally

Highest count of 6 ( singing ♂ ) at Sandbach Flashes [ MGT ]

Probable breeding at Alsager, Meremoor Moss, Sandbach Flashes and Weston

**Reed Warbler ( *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* )**

CAWOS Common summer visitor, thinly distributed

common locally

Highest count of 8 at Doddington

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Doddington, Rode Pool and Sandbach Flashes

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Grasshopper Warbler** ( *Locustella naevia* )

CAWOS Uncommon summer visitor, thinly distributed

Singles recorded at Joey the Swan ( Apr ), Great Moreton Hall ( May ), Sandbach Flashes [ MGT/RF ] ( Jun ) and Congleton ( Aug )

## **Sylviid Babblers** ( *Sylviidae* )

### **Blackcap** ( *Sylvia atricapilla* )

CAWOS Very common summer visitor, widely distributed. Uncommon winter visitor

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 21 at Arclid SQ

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Barthomley, Congleton Park and Macon Meadows; with courtship noted at Swettenham

### **Garden Warbler** ( *Sylvia borin* )

CAWOS Common summer visitor, thinly distributed

Highest count of 3 at Mow Cop

### **Lesser Whitethroat** ( *Curruca curruca* )

CAWOS Common summer visitor, thinly distributed

Highest count of 4 at Meremoor Moss

### **Whitethroat** ( *Curruca communis* )

CAWOS Very common summer visitor, widely distributed

Highest count of 8 at Sandbach Flashes [ MGT/RF ]

Breeding confirmed at Borrow Pit Meadows, Meremoor Moss, Swettenham and Weston

### **Goldcrest** ( *Regulus regulus* )

CAWOS Common resident and winter visitor, widely distributed

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 6 at Wybunbury Moss, Astbury Mere CP and Swettenham

Breeding confirmed at Meremoor Moss, Rode Heath Rise, Rode Pool and Wybunbury Moss

### **Wren** ( *Troglodytes troglodytes* )

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 16 at Salt Line

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Macon Meadows, Meremoor Moss, Holmes Chapel and Wistaston

### **Nuthatch** ( *Sitta europaea* )

CAWOS Very common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 5 at Roe Park, Swettenham and Wybunbury Moss

Breeding confirmed at Macon Meadows, Meremoor Moss, Quakers Coppice and Wistaston

### **Treecreeper** ( *Certhia familiaris* )

CAWOS Common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 3 at Brereton Heath LNR, The Cloud, Rode Pool and Swettenham

Breeding confirmed at Barthomley, Congleton Park and Macon Meadows

### **Starling** ( *Sturnus vulgaris* )

CAWOS Very common widespread resident and abundant winter visitor common locally,

recorded in every month

**Flocks of 500+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

A high count of c6,000 at Bagmere – a site used as an evening roost with occasional murmurations

Breeding confirmed at Holmes Chapel, Wheelock & Malkin's Bank and Wistaston

Murmurations recorded at Bagmere SSSI

### **Thrushes ( Turdidae )**

#### **Ring Ouzel** ( *Turdus torquatus* )

CAWOS Rare summer visitor to the Eastern Hills, scarce passage migrant

recorded at Cat & Fiddle, Cut-thorn Hill, Danebower and Mow Cop

#### **Blackbird** ( *Turdus merula* )

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident augmented in winter

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 34 at Astbury Mere CP

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Holmes Chapel, Roe Park, Macon Meadows, Meremoor Moss, Salt

Line, Swettenham and Wybunbury Moss

#### **Fieldfare** ( *Turdus pilaris* )

CAWOS Very common widespread winter visitor and migrant

common locally, recorded in Jan-Apr & Oct-Dec

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of 130 at Fanny's Croft

Other 50+ flocks at Arclid SQ, Basford, Chorlton, Doddington, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel, Sandbach

Flashes, Swettenham, Wheelock and Winterley

#### **Redwing** ( *Turdus iliacus* )

CAWOS Very common widespread winter visitor and migrant

common locally, recorded in Jan-Apr & Sep-Dec

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c200 at Fanny's Croft

Other 50+ flocks at Arclid SQ, Chorlton, Doddington, Holmes Chapel, Lawton Woods, Meremoor Moss,

Sandbach Flashes, Wallhill and Winterley

#### **Song Thrush** ( *Turdus philomelos* )

CAWOS Very common widespread resident and winter visitor

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 10 at Swettenham

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Meremoor Moss, Weston and Wistaston

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Mistle Thrush** ( *Turdus viscivorus* )

CAWOS Common widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 30 at Doddington

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ and Eaton Hall SQ

## **Chats; Old World Flycatchers ( Muscicapidae )**

### **Spotted Flycatcher** ( *Muscicapa striata* )

CAWOS Uncommon, thinly distributed summer visitor

Seen during the breeding season at Arclid SQ, Astbury Mere CP, The Cloud, Congleton, Lawton Woods, Rode Pool, Roe Park, Swettenham/The Quinta and Wybunbury. Also, presumably on passage, at Astbury, Brereton Heath LNR, Lea Forge, Macon Meadows, Marton, Quakers Coppice, Sandbach Flashes

Highest count of 3 at Congleton Park

Breeding confirmed at The Quinta and Wybunbury

### **Robin** ( *Erithacus rubecula* )

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident and winter visitor

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 22 at Wybunbury Moss

Breeding confirmed at seven locations

### **Pied Flycatcher** ( *Ficedula hypoleuca* )

CAWOS Scarce summer visitor and migrant

Seen at The Cloud ( May ), Lawton Woods ( May ), Middlewich ( Apr ) and Sandbach Flashes ( Apr )

Breeding confirmed - *see page 3, point 9*

### **Black Redstart** ( *Phoenicurus ochruros* )

CAWOS Rare winter visitor and migrant. Has bred **County Rarity** ( inland )

\*\*\* **a Schedule One bird**

recorded at Alsager ( Nov ), Astbury ( Nov ) and Sandbach ( Mar ). The finders at the latter two completed a CAWOS Rarity Form

### **Redstart** ( *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* )

CAWOS Scarce summer visitor and migrant

Seen at Alsager ( Aug ), The Cloud ( May ), Marton ( Apr ) and Mow Cop ( Apr )

### **Whinchat** ( *Saxicola rubetra* )

CAWOS Scarce summer migrant, has bred

Seen at Alsager ( Apr ), Arclid SQ ( Apr ), Derbyshire Bridge ( May ), Fields Farm [ Sandbach ] ( Aug ), Lea Forge ( Sep ) and Sandbach Flashes [ MGT ] ( Aug & Sep )



### **Stonechat** ( *Saxicola rubicola* )

CAWOS Scarce resident and migrant

recorded in every month

Seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, The Cloud, Danebower area, Doddington, Lea Forge, Meremoor Moss, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes, Rode Heath, Scholar Green, Winterley, Wrinehill and Wychwood Park

Highest count of 8 at Mow Cop

Breeding confirmed at The Cloud & Mow Cop

### **Wheatear** ( *Oenanthe oenanthe* )

CAWOS Uncommon migrant. Scarce summer visitor to the eastern hills

Seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Betchton, Danebower area, Church Lawton, Doddington, Lea Forge, Malkins Bank, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green and Weston

Highest count of 6 at Arclid SQ

A Greenland Wheatear ( *O.o. leucorhoa* ) was photographed at Mow Cop in Sep

### **Dipper** ( *Cinclus cinclus* )

CAWOS Scarce resident in the eastern hills

recorded in every month

favours the faster, clear rivers and streams; historically only usually recorded in 4 or 5 sites in Congleton area plus records from Bosley Locks, Church Lawton, Lawton Lake and Macon Meadows

Breeding confirmed on the R Dane at Congleton and Lawton Lake

Courtship observed at Dane-in-Shaw

## **Old World Sparrows; Snowfinches ( Passeridae )**

### **House Sparrow** ( *Passer domesticus* )

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 35 at Wheelock & Malkin's Bank

### **Tree Sparrow** ( *Passer montanus* )

CAWOS Uncommon thinly spread resident

recorded in every month

Highest count of c25 at Arclid SQ

Also seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Bagmere, Bradwall, Brereton Heath LNR, Fields Farm ( Sandbach ), Joey the Swan, Marton, Sandbach Flashes, Smethwick and Wallhill

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ

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

### **Dunnock** ( *Prunella modularis* )

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

Highest count of 11 at Wybunbury Moss

Breeding confirmed at Holmes Chapel, Rode Pool, Macon Meadows and Weston

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Wagtails; Pipits ( Motacillidae )

### **Western Yellow Wagtail ( *Motacilla flava* )**

CAWOS Uncommon and thinly distributed summer visitor and migrant

Seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Church Lawton, Cranage, Doddington, Elworth, Fields Farm, ( Sandbach ), Hassall, Marton, Sandbach Flashes, Sandbach Heath and Wallhill

Highest count of 4 at Doddington and Smethwick

Breeding confirmed at Fields Farm ( Sandbach ), Hassall and Smethwick

A **Grey-headed Wagtail** of unidentified sub-species was noted at Bathvale. A Rarity Form was submitted

### **Grey Wagtail ( *Motacilla cinerea* )**

CAWOS Fairly common resident and migrant

recorded in every month of the year

Seen at over 30 locations

Highest count of 15 roosted at Arclid SQ

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Congleton Park/R Dane, Doddington, Macon Meadows, and Wistaston

### **White Wagtail ( *Motacilla alba* )**

CAWOS Uncommon migrant

Seen at Arclid SQ, Bradwall, Doddington, Marton, Sandbach Flashes and Wistaston

### **Pied Wagtail ( *Motacilla alba yarrellii* )**

CAWOS Very common widespread resident

subspecies – common locally, recorded in every month

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of 150 at Congleton

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ, Doddington, Meremoor Moss, Rode Pool and Sandbach Flashes

### **Richard’s Pipit ( *Anthus richardi* )**

#### **County Rarity**

CAWOS Vagrant

1 was reported on BirdGuides® flying over Crewe on 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct

### **Meadow Pipit ( *Anthus pratensis* )**

CAWOS Common thinly distributed resident and migrant

recorded in every month

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

10+ flocks seen at Alsager, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Borrow Pit Meadows, The Cloud, Fields Farm ( Sandbach ), Holmes Chapel, Lea Forge, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green, Winterley and Wrinehill

Highest count of 212 at Sandbach Flashes [ MGT ] during a vismig

### **Tree Pipit ( *Anthus trivialis* )**

CAWOS Very scarce local summer visitor and migrant

Seen at Alsager, The Cloud, Mow Cop and Scholar Green

Highest count of 3 at The Cloud

## **Finches ( Fringillidae )**

### **Chaffinch ( *Fringilla coelebs* )**

CAWOS      Abundant widespread resident and winter visitor

common locally, recorded in every month

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of 200 at Alsager

Breeding confirmed at Holmes Chapel

### **Brambling ( *Fringilla montifringilla* )**

CAWOS      Uncommon winter visitor

recorded in Jan-Mar & Oct-Dec

Seen at Alsager, Astbury Mere CP, Church Lawton, Doddington, Sandbach Flashes, Smethwick and Wybunbury Moss

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of 3 at Alsager

### **Bullfinch ( *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* )**

CAWOS      Common widespread resident

fairly common locally, recorded in every month

Breeding confirmed at Quakers Coppice

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of 6 at Meremoor Moss

### **Greenfinch ( *Chloris chloris* )**

CAWOS      Very common widespread resident

fairly common locally but affected by *Trichomonosis*, recorded in every month

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of c94 at Sandbach

Breeding confirmed at Borrow Pit/Salt Line, Weston and Winterley

### **Linnet ( *Linaria cannabina* )**

CAWOS      Common widespread resident and migrant

recorded in every month

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of 250 at Sandbach Flashes [ Fields Farm set-aside ]

Flocks of 10+: - Alsager, Arclid SQ, Basford, Doddington, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel, Marton, Rode Hall, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green, Weston and Winterley

### **Lesser Redpoll ( *Acanthis cabaret* )**

CAWOS      Scarce resident and fairly common winter visitor, thinly distributed

recorded in all months except Apr, Jun & Jul

Seen at Alsager, Astbury Mere CP, The Cloud, Doddington, Elworth, Mow Cop, Salt Line/Borrow Pit Meadows, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green, Shavington, Swettenham, Taxmere & Wybunbury Moss

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as ‘significant’**

Highest count of 16 at Astbury Mere CP

### **Red Crossbill ( *Loxia curvirostra* )**

CAWOS      Irruptive, rare irregular breeding species, otherwise scarce

All records are of birds heard and/or in flight: -

recorded at Breerton, The Cloud, Elworth, Mow Cop, Sandbach Flashes and Scholar Green

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## **Goldfinch** ( *Carduelis carduelis* )

CAWOS Abundant widespread resident

common locally, recorded in every month

**Flocks of 50+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c125 at Arclid SQ

Breeding confirmed at Macon Meadows, Swettenham, Winterley and Wybunbury Moss

## **Siskin** ( *Spinus spinus* )

CAWOS Common winter visitor and migrant, Very scarce breeder

recorded in every month

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of c40 at Buglawton

Other 10+ flocks at Lea Forge and Rode Pool

## **Buntings ( Emberizidae )**

### **Corn Bunting** ( *Emberiza calandra* )

CAWOS Rare resident

1 bird was first reported at Fanny's Croft on 24<sup>th</sup> May. It was last reported on 14<sup>th</sup> Jul

### **Yellowhammer** ( *Emberiza citronella* )

CAWOS Fairly common widespread resident

recorded in every month

Seen at Albion Lock, Arclid SQ, Astbury, Balterley Green, Bradwall\*, Brereton/Heath LNR, Chorlton\*, Fanny's Croft\*, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel\*, Lea Forge, L Moreton Hall, Malkins Bank, Middlewich, Sandbach Flashes, Scholar Green\*, Smethwick, Twemlow, Wallhill/Brownlow\*, Wheelock and Winterley

**Flocks of 5+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of 15 at Fanny's Croft

Flocks of 10+: - \* indicates locations above

Breeding confirmed at Fanny's Croft and Scholar Green

### **Reed Bunting** ( *Emberiza schoeniclus* )

CAWOS Common widespread resident

fairly common locally, recorded in every month

**Flocks of 10+ considered by CAWOS as 'significant'**

Highest count of 15 at Bradwall

Flocks of 10+ at Arclid SQ, Bradwall and Sandbach Flashes [ MGT ]

Breeding confirmed at Arclid SQ and Meremoor Moss

## Local Rarities

If you find a rarity, I urge you to consider completing a Rarity Form. When I took on the role, I had some negative feedback about forms submitted in the past to the county and/or national rarity panels that rejected forms as not proven.

The forms now being used are standardised. They ask: -

- if the bird has been photographed and/or videoed – if possible send an image with the form
- your previous experience with the species

With plenty of room to add your account and description with a prompt to include: -

- circumstances of finding the bird
- plumage, bare parts etc and call
- the 'jizz'

On the form I've drafted for SECOS rarities, I've included comments: -

- submissions are often declined if the observer(s) has not included sufficient information on the form
- if the species looks similar to others, it is important that you are aware of the differences and document that you have seen them ( also where hybridisation is known, e.g. Hooded Crow or Caspian Gull )
- If you give the panel a reason to doubt the description, they often err on the side of caution

If, when preparing to fill in the Rarity Form, you consider all the points above and include all the relevant information, you will increase the probability of your form being accepted - i.e., leave no room for doubt.

## SECOS Bird Report 2020

### Early and late dates for summer visitors

The table below has been sorted in date order for the '10-year average' arrival dates for the SECOS Recording Area. I have used the 15 species listed in earlier local bird reports but added 2 new species ( in red ) that are also considered as locally breeding summer visitors.

Species	First Report in 2020		10-year average	Earliest Date
	Date	Location		
Sand Martin	9-Mar	EHF/PHF	14-Mar	1-Mar
Little Ringed Plover	23-Mar	Astbury and EHF/PHF	22-Mar	5-Mar
Swallow	23-Mar	Holmes Chapel	27-Mar	10-Feb
Willow Warbler	25-Mar	Sandbach Heath / Arclid ( tbc )	2-Apr	21-Mar
House Martin	6-Apr	Middlewich Canal	4-Apr	25-Mar
Yellow Wagtail	10-Apr	EHF/PHF	6-Apr	1-Apr
Reed Warbler	12-Apr	MGT/RF and WLF	11-Apr	16-Mar
Lesser Whitethroat	17-Apr	MGT/RF and Railway embankment/FFF	16-Apr	14-Apr
Sedge Warbler	18-Apr	WLF	16-Apr	4-Apr
Whitethroat	17-Apr	Railway embankment/FFF	17-Apr	11-Apr
Grasshopper Warbler	<b>14-Apr</b>	Joey the Swan	20-Apr	<b>14-Apr</b>
<b>Common Tern</b>	26-Apr	EHF/PHF	22-Apr	1-Apr
Hobby	23-Apr	Mow Cop	22-Apr	7-Apr
Garden Warbler	<b>14-Apr</b>	Weston	23-Apr	<b>14-Apr</b>
Swift	19-Apr	Arclid SQ	25-Apr	17-Apr
Cuckoo	24-Apr	Astbury	29-Apr	16-Apr
<b>Spotted Flycatcher</b>	24-Apr	Astbury	3-May	17-Apr

NB - dates in bold indicate that 2020 'improved/bettered' existing earliest records for that species

I am happy to consider any other species.

NB – I have been unable to find ( for each year ) probable first sightings for species Common Tern, Cuckoo, Grasshopper Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher, so to avoid skewing the average date, I have left some years blank. If you have records of these 4 species around the 10-year average for that bird, I'd be grateful if you'd let me have them so a more accurate average can be calculated.

## South Cheshire Barn Owl Report 2020

The year started well with the group members erecting several new boxes and repairing others, some of the boxes had been up since 2000 when the group started, we even changed some boxes completely, this came to a halt due to Covid 19 lockdown. We were told that with being a volunteering group we could carry on with self-distancing, but the decision was made we would stop all together. In May some of the other groups started to check boxes. Finding some owls on eggs, we decided still not to check boxes until at least June.

Starting to check boxes on 8<sup>th</sup> June we travelled in different cars to check the boxes on Wychwood Park and the boxes close to and around Wychwood, finding 3 pairs, one on eggs and 2 with 2 chicks each, another box had 2 adult barn owls in, after checking the female it had a brood patch, we thought it was either ready to lay or had a brood close to the box they were in. We carried on throughout the next weeks and months checking over 300 boxes around our area, we try to split the area up into blocks, so we cut down on travelling, this sometimes backfires when you forget one or two and you must double back on yourself. After finding several more pairs some with large chicks I arrange for a ringer to come and ring the chicks. The first ringing was on 22<sup>nd</sup> June we rung 27 chicks and 3 adult females, ringing again 17<sup>th</sup> July and 22<sup>nd</sup> July we rung another 29 chicks and 3 adults, the final ringing session on 21<sup>st</sup> August saw us ringing a total of 74 chick and 7 adults, we missed several chicks that we went to ring because they had flown before we could get to them, one in particular I went to check a box the day before the ringer was coming and found 4 big chicks in a box at Wardle, the next day the chicks had flown, disappointing but can't be helped.

In total as I mentioned before, 74 chicks and 7 adults were ringed, there were another 45 chicks identified but not rung, either missed or owners not wanting them rung, one of these that was not rung was a chick with a deformed wing, I sent a photo of this chick to Colin Shawyer (expert on barn owls) who thought the wing was broken when the chick was young and had grown deformed.

This year was the same as the last few years when we see clusters of breeding barn owls, some areas have clusters that are within a kilometre of each other, then there's areas where there are none within 10 or 15 kilometres, around the flashes there are 7 pairs within 3 kilometres of Elton flash. Other clusters 6 pairs at Wrenbury, 4 pairs towards Burland, 5 pair in Wychwood park area, 6 pairs between Buerton and Audlem, 3 pairs in Smallwood.

There were 55 known pairs of Barn owls in the South Cheshire area which is a record for us, there will be some more we do not know about and probably never know about.

Most before was in 2018 when we had 49 pairs.



*Figure 1 - Looking so shy*



*Figure 3 - Buff breasted female*



*Figure 2 Only a mother could love it. Ugly turns into beautiful*

## SECOS Bird Report 2020

119 chicks from 55 site = 2.16 average, some pairs had 4 chicks where others only had 1.

Other birds of note in boxes were 8 mandarin, 125 Jackdaws, 48 Stockdove, 1 Tawny owl, 1 kestrel, 1 little owl, also 4 boxes had squirrels.

3 pairs of barn owls nested in tree holes this year, one in a tree next to a box where a jackdaw had nested.

David Bromont

on behalf of South Cheshire Barn Owl Group



*Figure 4 Spotty female*



## Garden Bird Survey

A Stay-Safe-at-Home / Lockdown order came into force from the end of March and Trevor offered / agreed to run a summer survey. This was an ideal way for members to engage with Nature from the comfort of our homes during the pandemic.

“This first summer survey, perhaps unsurprisingly, shows that the same species are the most common visitors as in winter and that the ranking order remains substantially the same, with only slight variations. The only bird which significantly changed in the rankings is the chaffinch, normally a top ten bird, but now way down at seventeen. The wood pigeon phenomenon which has seen their rise to top spot over recent years has been perpetuated and would seem to be upheld throughout the year. Song thrush and great-spotted woodpecker records were proportionately greater when the reduced size of the survey is considered. Wood pigeon, robin, magpie and blackbird were recorded in every garden of the survey, with only one garden not seeing a blue tit or goldfinch. Fifteen members recorded a highest or joint highest count for one or more species with member 2055 again having a highest count for three species.”

“Bullfinch and stock dove occupied the top table positions ( *in the respective tables* ), which has been the case for numerous recent winter surveys, now perpetuated in this first summer survey.”

Trevor Clowes, Organiser

*Table 3 – ‘Ranking of Listed Species’ ( Report for Autumn-winter 2019 – 2020 )*

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of Bird/Week Records</u> <u>Out of 1087 [1183]</u>	<u>Number of Gardens Visited</u> <u>Out of 44 [47]</u>	<u>Highest Single Count</u>
1	[1] Wood Pigeon	1016 [1131]	44 [47]	39 [15]
2	[4] Blue Tit	1028 [1068]	44 [47]	14 [15]
3	[3] Robin	1020 [1075]	44 [47]	9 [8]
4	[2] Blackbird	995 [1100]	44 [47]	12 [15]
5	[5] Dunnock	867 [893]	43 [43]	14 [9]
6	[7] Great Tit	824 [776]	43 [45]	11 [14]
7	[9] Goldfinch	750 [721]	42 [39]	50 [54]
8	[8] House Sparrow	710 [760]	40 [41]	25 [28]
9	[6] Magpie	697 [786]	42 [45]	14 [13]
10	[10] Chaffinch	576 [609]	41 [40]	18 [16]

Brackets thus [ ], denotes figures corresponding to the previous [2018/19] survey for comparison.

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Acknowledgements

Apart from records from local or visiting birders, some of the data I have been given access to includes WeBS, BBS, and I append their relevant acknowledgements and terms and conditions for use: -

Data were provided by WeBS, a Partnership jointly funded by the British Trust for Ornithology, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Joint Nature Conservation Committee, in association with The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, with fieldwork conducted by volunteers. Although WeBS data are presented within this report, in some cases the figures may not have been fully checked and validated. Therefore, for any detailed analyses of WeBS data, enquiries should be directed to the WeBS team at the British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU ([webs@bto.org](mailto:webs@bto.org))

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey is a partnership jointly funded by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), with fieldwork conducted by volunteers.

## Appendix

### Birds of Conservation Concern

#### **BoCC4 Red list**

*BoCC4 is Birds of Conservation Concern and lists the population status of birds in the UK*

*The red list is species of most concern, needing urgent action*

*The amber list is species of concern needing monitoring closely*

White-fronted goose <b>g</b>	Ringed plover <b>a</b>	Golden oriole	Nightingale <b>a</b>
Pochard <b>a</b>	Dotterel <b>a</b>	Red-backed shrike	Pied flycatcher <b>a</b>
Scaup	Whimbrel	Willow tit	Black redstart <b>a</b>
Long-tailed duck <b>g</b>	Curlew <b>a</b>	Marsh tit	Whinchat <b>a</b>
Common scoter	Black-tailed godwit	Skylark	House sparrow
Velvet scoter <b>a</b>	Ruff	Wood warbler	Tree sparrow
Black grouse	Red-necked phalarope	Grasshopper warbler	Yellow wagtail
Capercaillie	Woodcock <b>a</b>	Savi's warbler	Grey wagtail <b>a</b>
Grey partridge	Arctic skua	Aquatic warbler	Tree pipit
Balearic shearwater	Puffin <b>a</b>	Marsh warbler	Hawfinch
Shag <b>a</b>	Roseate tern	Starling	Linnets
Red-necked grebe <b>a</b>	Kittiwake <b>a</b>	Ring ouzel	Twite
Slavonian grebe <b>a</b>	Herring gull	Fieldfare	Lesser redpoll
White-tailed eagle	Turtle dove	Song thrush	Yellowhammer
Hen harrier	Cuckoo	Redwing	Cirl bunting
Corncrake	Lesser spotted woodpecker	Mistle thrush <b>a</b>	Corn bunting
Lapwing	Merlin <b>a</b>	Spotted flycatcher	

KEY: a – species on the Amber list previously, g – species on the Green list previously

#### **BoCC4 Amber list**

Mute swan <b>g</b>	Manx shearwater	Common sandpiper	Stock dove
Bewick's swan	European storm petrel	Green sandpiper	Tawny owl <b>g</b>
Whooper swan	Leach's petrel	Spotted redshank	Short-eared owl
Bean goose	Gannet	Greenshank <b>g</b>	Nightjar <b>r</b>
Pink-footed goose	Bittern <b>r</b>	Wood sandpiper	Swift
Greylag goose	Spoonbill	Redshank	Kingfisher
Barnacle goose	Black-necked grebe	Snipe	Kestrel
Brent goose	Honey buzzard	Great skua	Shorelark
Shelduck	Marsh harrier	Black guillemot	House martin
Wigeon	Montagu's harrier	Razorbill	Willow warbler
Gadwall	Osprey	Guillemot	Dartford warbler
Teal	Spotted crane	Little tern	Short-toed tree creeper
Mallard	Crane	Sandwich tern	Dipper <b>g</b>
Pintail	Stone-curlew	Common tern	Common redstart
Garganey	Avocet	Arctic tern	Dunnock
Shoveler	Oystercatcher	Black-headed gull	Meadow pipit
Eider	Grey plover	Mediterranean gull	Water pipit
Goldeneye	Bar-tailed godwit	Common gull	Bullfinch
Smew	Turnstone	Lesser black-backed gull	Mealy redpoll <b>g</b>
Quail	Knot	Yellow-legged gull	Scottish crossbill
Red grouse	Curlew sandpiper <b>g</b>	Caspian gull <b>na</b>	Parrot crossbill
Black-throated diver	Sanderling <b>g</b>	Iceland gull	Snow bunting
Great northern diver	Dunlin <b>r</b>	Glaucous gull	Lapland bunting
Fulmar	Purple sandpiper	Great black-backed gull	Reed bunting

KEY: r – species on the Red list previously, g – species on the Green list previously, na – not assessed previously

# SECOS Bird Report 2020

## Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

### Species Action Plans

The list below details the species currently included on the Cheshire region BAP. The 'UK BAP Status' denotes whether each species is currently included on the revised (2007) UK List of Priority Species and Habitats. Those species not included on the UK list are referred to as local species.

The 'Action Status' determines whether the plan is currently 'active' or 'archived'. Active status is applied where current and future actions are required to achieve defined SMART targets. Archived status applies to those species where no current action is required in the region. The distribution of species included in archive plans is monitored closely by rECOrd. The archived plans may become active in the future if the distributions of the species changes or opportunities arise for conservation action.

### Cheshire region BAP Species

		UK BAP Status	Action Status
Birds			
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	Local	Active
Black-necked Grebe	Podiceps nigricollis	Local	Active
Nightjar	Caprimulgus europaeus	National	Archive
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata	National	Active
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	National	Active
Corn Bunting	Emberiza calandra	National	Active
Grey Partridge	Perdix perdix	National	Active
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	National	Active
Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	National	Active
Linnet	Carduelis cannabina	National	Active
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	National	Active
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	National	Active
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	National	Active
Starling	Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris	National	Active
Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	National	Active
Yellowhammer	Emberiza citronella	National	Active