

# BIRD SPECIES SEEN AT MIDDLETON HALL SINCE 2010

1. Little Grebe
2. Cormorant
3. Grey Heron
4. Mute Swan
5. Pink-footed Goose
6. Graylag Goose
7. Canada Goose
8. Mallard
9. Tufted Duck
10. Pochard
11. Goosander
12. Rough-legged Buzzard
13. Buzzard
14. Sparrowhawk
15. Kestrel
16. Grey Partridge
17. Pheasant
18. Quail
19. Moorhen
20. Oystercatcher
21. Lapwing
22. Curlew
23. Snipe
24. Woodcock
25. Black-headed Gull
26. Herring Gull
27. Great Black-backed Gull
28. Lesser Black-backed Gull
29. Common Gull
30. Stock Dove
31. Woodpigeon
32. Collared Dove
33. Cuckoo
34. Tawny Owl
35. Little Owl
36. Barn Owl
37. Swift
38. Kingfisher
39. Green Woodpecker
40. Great Spotted Woodpecker
41. Skylark
42. Swallow
43. House Martin
44. Meadow Pipit
45. Yellow Wagtail
46. Grey Wagtail
47. Pied Wagtail
48. Wren
49. Dunnock
50. Robin
51. Redstart
52. Wheatear
53. Song Thrush
54. Redwing
55. Mistle Thrush
56. Fieldfare
57. Blackbird
58. Garden Warbler
59. Blackcap
60. Lesser Whitethroat
61. Whitethroat
62. Sedge Warbler
63. Willow Warbler
64. Chiffchaff
65. Goldcrest
66. Spotted Flycatcher
67. Great Tit
68. Coal Tit
69. Blue Tit
70. Marsh Tit
71. Long-tailed Tit
72. Nuthatch
73. Tree Creeper
74. Magpie
75. Jay
76. Jackdaw
77. Rook
78. Carrion Crow
79. Starling
80. House Sparrow
81. Tree Sparrow
82. Chaffinch
83. Brambling
84. Linnet
85. Lesser Redpoll
86. Goldfinch
87. Greenfinch
88. Siskin
89. Bullfinch
90. Reed Bunting
91. Yellowhammer
92. Ring-necked Parakeet



Bird sequence is from “Fieldguide to Birds of Britain and Europe” AA Publishing.

(Updated 31/03/20)

## BIRD LIFE AT MIDDLETON HALL



Middleton Hall has a superb range of birds, thanks to its wide variety of habitats. Since 2010, an impressive 92 different species have been recorded.

In the winter months, the feeders at the main hide and at Middleton Oaks are the main centres of attraction. Close views can be had of Great Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Blue, Great and Coal Tits, Tree and House Sparrow, Dunnock, Robin, Yellowhammer, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, and the occasional Brambling, Siskin, Goldcrest, Song Thrush and Blackbird. The pond has Moorhen, Reed Bunting and also Snipe during some winters.

Over winter, the Waterside lake is often visited by a variety of Geese - Canada, Graylag, Pink-footed Geese, the occasional Cormorant, Grey Heron, Pied and Grey Wagtail and Kingfisher. The Moorhen are very active as the ice melts and are quick to breed, often producing 3 broods.

As spring approaches, the Tawny Owls pair up and Middleton Hall's "avian stars" the Barn Owls check out their regular nest box. The elegant white adult birds can often be seen quartering the small fields West and North of the Waterside in the early evening in March. Early breeders like Mistle Thrush are active in the large meadow and Rooks return to their tree top nests. The harsh, raucous call of the Jay "skaaak, skaaak" can be heard in the broad-leaved woodland near the bowling green and they can be seen retrieving acorns hidden last autumn along with the Magpies and Carrion Crows, who are taking up breeding territories.

The woodland areas begin to resound to Robin and Wren singing heartily to attract mates and defend their breeding territories. Great Spotted Woodpecker can be heard drumming near the Waterside lake. In late February, the resident Mallards are often joined by a pair of Goosander (of the Sawbill family, with the male appearing black and white at a distance, but actually with a dark green head and the female a stunning red head), who are feeding up on their annual migration from the coast to upland tributaries of the Tees and Wear.

A small group of 6 Grey Partridge overwinter with Pheasants in the hedgerows and copses on the estate. The resident pair of Kestrels are regularly seen hovering to catch voles and mice. The Sparrowhawk is usually darting over the hedgerow or through the wood near the feeders.

Early migrants start to return from late March. Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Garden Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher join the Yellowhammers, Finches and Tits in the hedgerows and wood edges. In most years, a Cuckoo can be heard calling from a copse or wood edge across the large meadow. The large broods of Blue Tits and Great Tits raised in the many nest boxes in the woods around the Middleton Hall site have some of the very best brood sizes recorded anywhere in the UK by the British Trust for Ornithology.

During April, Swallows and House Martins return and finally Swifts by early May. All are seen chasing insects over the open meadows and fields. Buzzards soar above the mature trees on spring and summer thermals. Large flocks of Stock Doves and Starlings continuously fly over the estate as do wandering Common, Herring, Black-headed, Lesser Black-backed and Greater Black-backed Gulls moving to and from the coast.

As the habitat diversity of the Middleton Hall estate evolves in the years ahead, so too the number of new bird species will increase and will add to the great visual and sound experience of being outdoors in the estate environment - sheer pleasure!



**Thanks very much to Middleton Hall resident Ian Thomson for this account.**