

# BIRD SPECIES SEEN AT MIDDLETON HALL SINCE 2010

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



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

(Updated 2/11/20)

## BIRD LIFE AT MIDDLETON HALL



Middleton Hall has a superb range of birds, thanks to its wide variety of habitats. Since 2010, an impressive 93 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 "skaak, skaak" 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.**