

BIRD SPECIES SEEN AT MIDDLETON HALL SINCE 2010

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

Bird sequence is from "RSPB Britain's
Birds: 2nd Edition 2020"

(Updated 30/09/2022)



BIRD LIFE AT MIDDLETON HALL



Middleton Hall has a superb range of birds, thanks to its wide variety of habitats. Since 2010, an impressive 97 different species have been recorded.

In the Winter months, the feeders at the Bird Hide, next to the allotments are one of the main attractions. 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 Snipe during most Winters and a Green Sandpiper has also wintered nearby, in the last 2 years

In 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 morning and 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!



Ian Thomson, Middleton Hall resident