

More birds of Fletcher Moss



Swallows come every year to nest and breed in the Fletcher Moss area. They migrate each April from southern Africa, a journey of some 5000 miles, and they often return to the same nest sites they have used in previous years. You will mostly see them over the river where they hunt for insects. They make the return journey to Africa around late September time, gathering in flocks



One of the most memorable sights and sounds of the summer are the fast flying **Swifts** with their wild and dramatic cries as they hunt for insects along the river. At dusk, when there are large numbers, they provide a magical experience. Swifts are one of the latest 'migrant' birds to arrive here, and one of the first to depart, arriving in early May and leaving in late August. Unlike



You will see **Sand Martins** along the river in the Fletcher Moss area, but they are most concentrated near where they are nesting, which is in the sandbanks along the river opposite the Galleon and further up towards Stockport, opposite Burnage Rugby Club. There is nothing like the sight of a large number of sand martins flying in and out of their nesting holes, particularly when they are feeding their young. They are similar in size, but not in colour, to House Martins. They



One of our resident birds which can be seen at most times of the year is the brightly coloured **Goldfinch**. Like all members of the 'finch' family it has a broad strong bill which it uses to feed on nuts and seeds such as thistles, teasels, dandelions and ragwort. Goldfinches have a very pleasing, tinkling call, and you can often hear them before you see them. In autumn and winter they are mostly found in small flocks, feeding together.



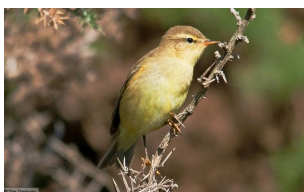
A bird that is sometimes hard to spot but quite well established in Stenner Woods is the **Treecreeper**. It is aptly named as it creeps up trees picking out small insects from the fissures in the bark. When it gets to the top of the tree it flies down, or to another tree, and starts all over again, unlike the Nuthatch which feeds going up and going down. It's brown/neutral colour makes it harder to spot than the Nuthatch, but be patient and you might see one.



The **Goosander** is a bird you will only see on the river, and you are more likely see it in the winter months, as resident birds are sometimes joined by others which migrate from north-east Europe and Russia. You will mostly see the male and female together (this is the female that is illustrated, the male has a dark bottle-green head) as the pair of them fly up and down their 'own' patch of the river. They are beautiful birds and one of the great sights on the Mersey in this area.



A bird which can be found in many of the woodland places in the Fletcher Moss area is the brightly coloured **Nuthatch**. It is resident all the year round, and it is often easier to hear it than to see it—it has a loud 'tuit-tuit' call and a 'pee-pee-pee' trill. Like the Tree creeper (above) it mainly feeds on insects which live in the bark of trees. It is very agile and works its way up and down trees and often feeds hanging upside down.



Another bird it is often easier to hear than to see is the **Chiffchaff**, one of our summer visitors from Africa, and one of the first to arrive each spring. It has a distinctive 'chiff-chaff' call which you can't fail to hear if you walk around Stenner Woods in the early summer. It arrives in this area from the Mediterranean and north Africa in early April and leaves in mid-September. There are usually a number nesting and breeding in Stenner Woods.