

# Curlew Sandpiper

*Calidris ferruginea*

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

8 records,  
12 birds

*World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):*

Breeds in arctic Siberia, with some migrating through Europe to winter in sub-Saharan Africa and others migrating through Asia to the coasts of the Indian Ocean, south-east Asia and Australasia.

*Kent status (KOS 2022):*

It is a passage migrant in the county, scarce in spring but common in autumn.



Curlew Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

Ticehurst (1909) noted that it was “a regular visitor” to Kent’s coastline in autumn but “far less frequently met” with in spring, whilst Harrison (1953) made similar observations. Neither author made mention of any local occurrences and it was not included in Knight & Tolputt’s “List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood” (1871).

Little had changed by the time of Taylor *et al.* (1981) but they mentioned that marked influxes could occur depending on the breeding season success and the weather. It was during their review period (1952-76) that the first local record occurred, when Roger Norman found one at Nickolls Quarry on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1957 (Norman 2007).

Over thirty years elapsed until the next sighting in 1988, when Ian Roberts saw three flying east past Mill Point on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August, whilst the next record involved three seen flying east over Capel Battery on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1996 which were part of a major influx of Curlew Sandpipers and Little Stints to the eastern coast of Britain at this time, with a flock of three of the latter species seen flying over Abbotscliffe the day before.

It has occurred on five subsequent occasions, with all records coming from Nickolls Quarry between 1999 and 2004, when an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, attracting a range of migrant waders. This area was filled in shortly after and there have been no further sightings.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

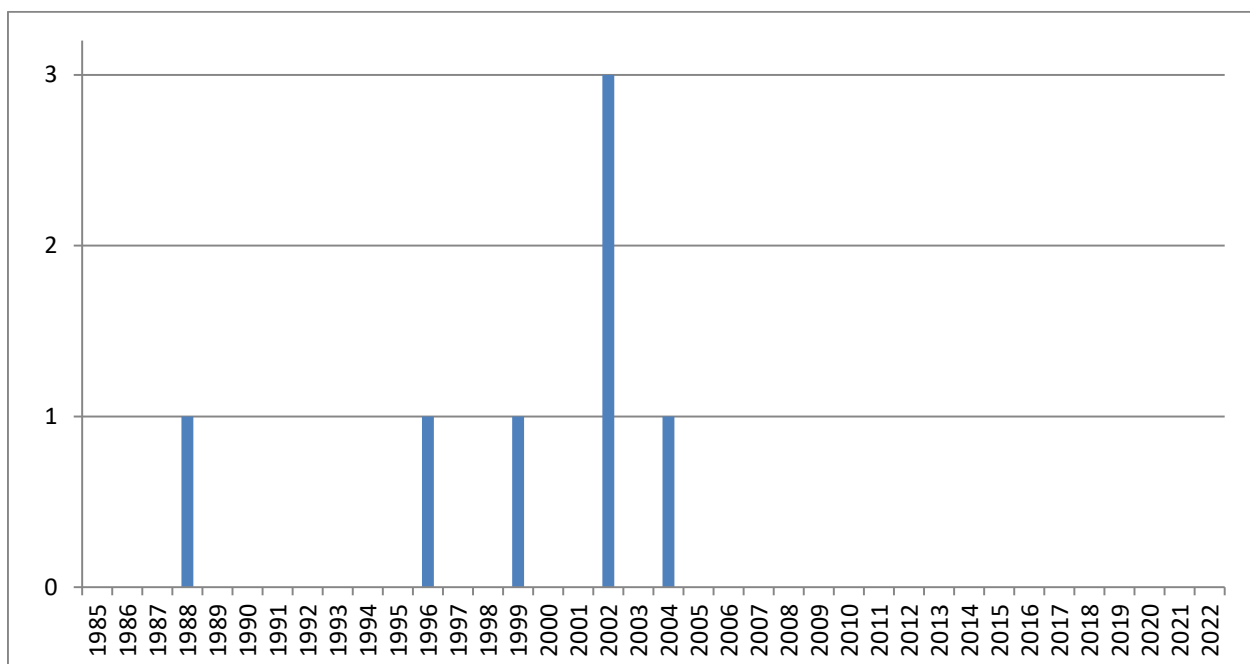


Figure 1: Curlew Sandpiper records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

Taylor *et al.* described how “migration tends to occur in two waves, the first in late July and early August involving adults, and the second in late August and early September involving immatures” and this appears to hold true locally, where records fall into two distinct arrival periods (as demonstrated by figure 2) with adults recorded on three occasions between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 2<sup>nd</sup> August (week 30-31) and juveniles on four dates between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September (weeks 36-39).

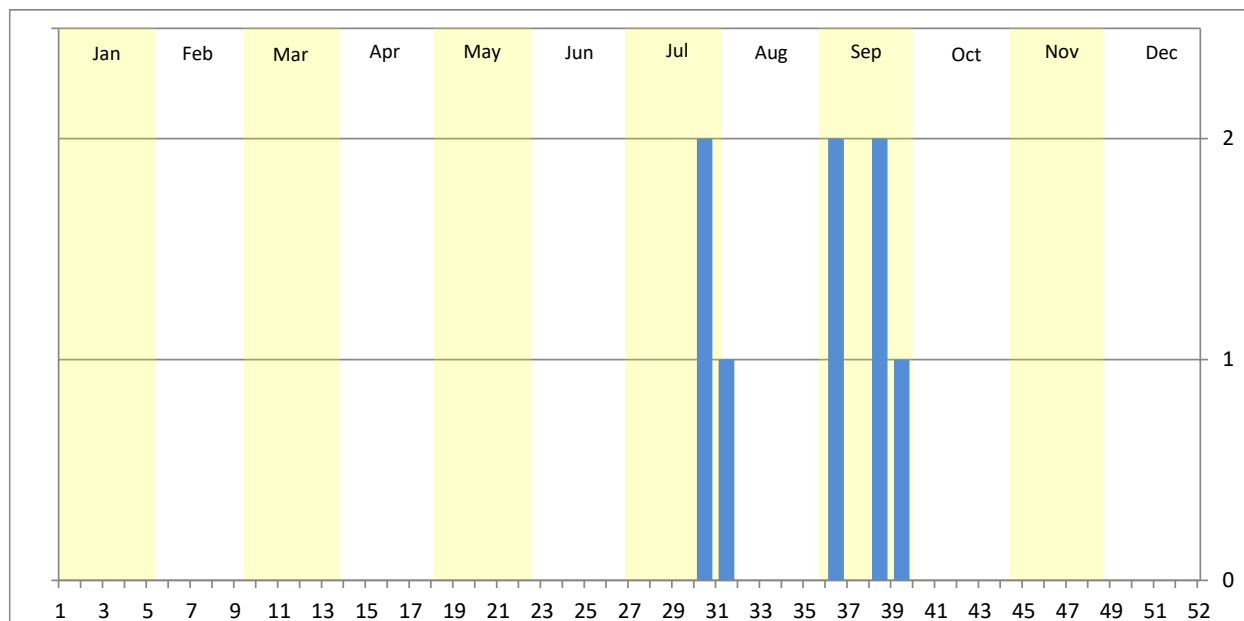


Figure 2: Curlew Sandpiper records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Curlew Sandpiper records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1957** Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 17<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1988** Mill Point, three adults flew east, 2<sup>nd</sup> August (I. A. Roberts)
- 1996** Capel Battery, three juveniles flew east, 22<sup>nd</sup> September (I. A. Roberts)
- 1999** Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 3<sup>rd</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, adult, 27<sup>th</sup> July (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 6<sup>th</sup> September, video-recorded (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 30<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)

**2004** Nickolls Quarry, moulting adult, 27<sup>th</sup> July (I. A. Roberts)

### ***References***

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Ticehurst, N. F. 1909. *A History of the Birds of Kent*. Witherby, London.

### ***Acknowledgements***

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#).

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