

2018



Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report



Contents

Introduction.....	3
List of contributors.....	4
Review of the year	5
Systematic list.....	26
First and last dates for selected migrants	91
Year list.....	94
Ringing recoveries.....	99
The Folkestone and Hythe area	101
Gazetteer.....	104
References.....	107

Introduction

Welcome to the seventh annual Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report which covers the 199 species recorded in 2018, which was four more than the previous year. Whilst there were no additions to the area list there were many highlights to report, including the second area (and first modern) record of Baillon's Crake, the third record of White-tailed Eagle, the fourth and fifth modern records of Quail and the sixth record of Water Pipit. Sightings of Whooper Swan, Egyptian Goose (two records), Caspian Gulls (two records), Great White Egret (three records, the highest ever), Long-tailed Duck, Hoopoe, Goshawk, Iceland Gull, Hawfinch (three records), Red-rumped Swallow, Long-eared Owl, Richard's Pipit (two records) and Black-necked Grebe (three records) added further excitement.

The early winter period was notable for some exceptional counts of Cormorants (again exceeding previous records), a record winter influx and count of Great Skuas and a record count of Guillemots, whilst the spring produced a record count and another excellent year for Red Kite, a record count of Black-tailed Godwit and the second best ever year for Manx Shearwater (following a blank last year). There were earliest ever arrival dates of Sandwich Tern, Common Tern and Yellow Wagtail, and the latest ever spring record of Wigeon.

It is pleasing to be able to report on the continuing breeding success of Raven (with at least two, possibly three pairs nesting), whilst Little Ringed Plovers bred successfully for the first time since 2006 and Lapwings for the first time since 2011. At least one pair of Hobbies raised young and at least pair of Lesser Black-backed Gull also nested successfully.

Autumn saw the latest ever departure dates for Sandwich Tern and Reed Warbler, as well as the earliest arrival of Fieldfare.

There were welcome returns for Pochard, Manx Shearwater, Osprey, Crossbill and Snow Bunting, whilst Black Tern, Dartford Warbler, Nightingale and Lapland Bunting were the more surprising omissions this year.

A Wildlife Migration Day event held on the 14th October, coordinated by Paul Holt and the volunteers at Samphire Hoe, again proved to be very popular and a Richard's Pipit that flew west at Abbotscliffe was the highlight.

The BOU adopted the IOC World Bird List as the taxonomic basis for the British List, from the 1st January 2018 which led to some additions and removals to the national list (BOU, 2017). This affected the local list through the merging of Lesser and Common (Mealy) Redpolls into a single species, which reduces the list to 299. However a review of the area boundaries (see pages 101-103) has led to the addition of Glossy Ibis to the list, which restores it to 300.

If there are any local records which have not been included within this report I would be very thankful to receive them. The boundaries of the local area can be found on page 103 and my contact details are given below.

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30th January 2019

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Front cover: Little Ringed Plover at Donkey Street in May 2018 (Brian Harper)

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List of contributors

I have endeavoured to include all observers known to have contributed records or photographs for the year and their input has been very much appreciated. It is of course possible that there have been accidental omissions from the list below. It is hoped that should this be the case my apologies will be accepted for the oversight.

B Adams	D Lawie
S Ashford	M J Lawson
	S Lea
G Blackburn	R Lee
B Blackman	O Leyshon
M Bournat	S Lloyd
J Bowe	V Lloyd
A Brown	A Luckhurst
D Brown	
J Bunting	A Mackay
G J A Burton	D Mansfield
	S McMinn
D Clarke	
S Coleman	R K Norman
L Collins	C Nuttman
M Collins	
G Cooke	R O'Reilly
S Cutt	
	R Pearce
R Douthwaite	
	I A Roberts
P Edmondson	J A G Roberts
D Featherbe	Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory
K Featherbe	P J Sharp
B Findlay	D E Smith
N C Frampton	P R Smith
	T Swandale
A Gay	
D A Gibson	R Thorogood
C Gillard	J Tilby
D Gower	J Tomlinson
L Gower	S Tomlinson
B Green	J Tomsett
	P Trodd
K Harding	G Tutton
B Harper	
L Holman	M Vandoen
P Holt	M Varley
P Howe	
B Hubbard	M Whybrow
	J Wood
N Jarman	B Woolhouse
	D Wrathall
M D Kennett	

Review of the year

January

The year began unsettled, mild and windy at times before there was a quieter and colder spell from the 6th to the 12th with high pressure becoming more dominant. The remainder of the month however saw a return to unsettled conditions with westerly winds driving fronts across the country at regular intervals and it was generally mild.



Razorbills at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

The flock of 42 Mute Swans remained at Donkey Street from December and 42 Canada Geese were seen at the Willop Basin on the 2nd, whilst six Greylag Geese flew over Botolph's Bridge on the 26th. About 175 Brent Geese were seen moving east during the month, including counts of 18 past Samphire Hoe on the 6th, 20 past there the next day, 37 past Battery Point on the 8th, 30 past Samphire Hoe on the 13th and 28 past Hythe on the 21st. Small numbers of Shelduck were noted at the Willop Basin, Nickolls Quarry and Samphire Hoe, whilst at least five Mandarin were at Folks' Wood. Two Gadwall and 8 Wigeon flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th, with a single Wigeon flying west there the next day and on the 12th there was a single Wigeon at Nickolls Quarry and three at the Willop Basin.

Teal were noted from the Willop Basin (peak of 30) and Chesterfield Wood (peak of 60), whilst eight flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th and one was at Beachborough Park on the 11th. Nine Pintail flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 9th, with four flying west there on the 27th and a pair west the following day. A single Shoveler flew west over Beachborough Park on the 17th and the only Tufted Duck noted was at the Willop Basin on the 2nd. Common Scoter were present in low numbers, with a peak of 50 on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 4th, whilst a Red-breasted Merganser flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th.

Red-throated Diver counts were modest, with a peak of 68 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th and further counts of 43 flying east there the next day and 50 flying west on the 25th. There was a notable movement of 65 Fulmars east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th, with 29 east there the next day and several pairs were present on the

cliffs at either end of the site, whilst Gannets were present in good numbers throughout with a peak of 350 off Samphire Hoe on the 8th.

There were some exceptional counts of Cormorants, with a peak of 3,445 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th (which was more than double the previous record total). These birds originated from a roost site at Dungeness and were heading out into the Channel to feed, with some groups seen fishing off Folkestone Pier and Samphire Hoe, including a flock of 1,550 off the latter site on the 14th. Up to two Shags were seen at Samphire Hoe on several dates, with singles at Copt Point and Mill Point.

Little Egrets were present at West Hythe dam (2), Copt Point (2), Botolph's Bridge and Samphire Hoe and Little Grebes were reported from the Willop Basin, Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry and Beachborough Park. Great Crested Grebe counts peaked at just 12 off Folkestone Pier on the 2nd and 12 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th. An immature **White-tailed Eagle** was seen on the cliff edge at Abbotscliffe on the 14th and a Red Kite flew south over Beachborough Park on the 11th. Up to two Marsh Harriers continued to be noted in the Donkey Street area during the month, whilst roosting at Nickolls Quarry overnight. Away from the cliffs Peregrines were seen at Donkey Street and Hythe. Water Rails were wintering at West Hythe, Nickolls Quarry (at least two) and Beachborough Park (2).

The peak Lapwing counts were just 50 at the Willop Basin on the 4th and 26 at Capel-le-Ferne on the 12th, whilst the Ringed Plover roost at Folkestone Beach held 14 birds on the 7th. Purple Sandpipers were noted at the Willop Outfall, Hythe Redoubt (3), Hythe (2) and Battery Point (2), and there were up to five Sanderling at the Willop Outfall, whilst four Dunlin flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th.

Up to three Jack Snipe and 52 Snipe were counted at the Willop Basin and there were single Snipe at Samphire Hoe on the 17th and Beachborough Park on the 25th. There was a peak of six Woodcock at Kiln Wood on the 27th and a Curlew was seen on several dates at the Willop Basin whilst one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th.

Up to two Green Sandpipers remained in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street/Nickolls Quarry area and Redshank counts included six at Folkestone Harbour and 13 at the Willop Basin. There was an excellent series of Great Skua sightings off Samphire Hoe including a record winter count of seven flying east there on the 7th and six heading east there the next day. Kittiwakes were also present in good numbers, with counts including 304 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th and 103 flying east there on the 14th, whilst an adult Little Gull flew west there on the 25th.

A juvenile **Glaucous Gull** flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd and a 'Viking' Gull (Glaucous x Herring hybrid) was seen at the Willop Basin on the 4th. An unseasonable Sandwich Tern flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th and large auks were present in very good numbers, with counts including 830 Razorbills and 2,800 Guillemots flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th, 450 Razorbills flying east there on the 14th, 270 Guillemots and 2,000 Razorbills flying east there on the 27th and 715 Razorbills flying east there on the 28th.

A Short-eared Owl flew over Samphire Hoe on the 15th, Firecrests were noted at Beachborough Park, Saltwood, Seabrook and Enbrook Park (4) and two **Bearded Tits** were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 26th, whilst Marsh Tits were recorded from Bargrove Wood and Kiln Wood. Cetti's Warblers were noted at Botolph's Bridge and Nickolls Quarry (3). Chiffchaffs were wintering at Beachborough Park (2), Enbrook Park (2) and in a garden in Folkestone, whilst Blackcaps were noted at gardens in St. Hilda's Road and Lynton Road (2) in Hythe, in Brockhill Road and Quarry Road in Saltwood, at Seabrook and in East Cliff Gardens in Folkestone, and at Beachborough Park.

A Fieldfare flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 6th but wintering numbers were low with peak counts of just 20 at Botolph's Bridge on the 17th and 15 at Kiln Wood on the 27th, whilst Redwings were also in scant supply with the notable exception of 400 at Beachborough Park on the 11th. A Black Redstart was seen at Samphire Hoe on several dates, with two there on the 17th and there were two at Folkestone Downs on the 3rd and one in a garden in Hythe on the 4th. A Tree Sparrow flew over Beachborough Park on the 18th and Meadow Pipit counts included 57 at Botolph's Bridge and 20 at Samphire Hoe, whilst there were 22 Rock Pipits at the latter site. A Redpoll and up to 50 Siskins were seen at Kiln Wood, with a further five Siskins along the Hythe Canal and up to 9 at Beachborough Park, where 12 Redpolls were noted on the 10th.

February

The first week of the month was generally cold with predominately northerly or easterly winds, whilst the middle fortnight was often milder, with westerly and south-westerly winds, and it turned changeable in the second week. A settled spell followed but then from the 26th a very cold easterly airflow brought some severe overnight frosts leading to the Royal Military Canal icing over, whilst daytime temperatures were barely above freezing and there was some significant snowfall.



Fieldfare at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Small numbers of Brent Geese were noted moving east during February, including 25 passing Princes Parade on the 9th and 24 passing at Seabrook on the 18th, whilst the breeding pair of Canada Geese had returned to Nickolls Quarry by the end of the month. Four Wigeon flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, a drake Eider flew east there on the 5th, a Red-breasted Merganser flew east there on the 15th, two Wigeon flew east there on the 21st and six Pintail flew east on the 23rd. Elsewhere there were two Gadwall on the Willop Sewer on the 10th, a peak of 62 Teal at the Willop Basin on the 22nd and the Common Scoter flock in Hythe Bay increased to 105 by the 28th.

The cold spell at end of the month displaced a few wildfowl, with two Wigeon and ten Pintail flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 26th, when two Wigeon were seen on the sea off Seabrook and six were at the Willop Basin, 20 Pintail flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 27th and a pair of Pochard, a pair of Teal and seven Tufted Ducks seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th.

Red-throated Diver counts included 40 flying west past the Willop Outfall on the 3rd, 25 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th and a total of 174 flying east past Seabrook on the 27th, whilst Gannets remained in abundance throughout, including 320 seen off Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, 350 flying east there on the 5th and 200 seen off Princes Parade on the 26th.

Exceptional numbers of Cormorants continued to be seen having left the roost at Dungeness, with peaks of 2,355 seen off Samphire Hoe on the 3rd and yet another new record count of 3,535 flying east past Seabrook on the 6th.

A Shag was noted off Samphire Hoe on the 21st and 22nd and single Little Egrets were seen at Beachborough Park, Botolph's Bridge and Samphire Hoe. Great Crested Grebe numbers increased during February, with peaks of 46 on the sea off Samphire Hoe, 55 off Folkestone Pier, 106 off Seabrook and 150 off the Willop Outfall.

A Red Kite flew east over Samphire Hoe and Abbotscliffe on the 15th, up to two Marsh Harriers continued to frequent the Nickolls Quarry area and a Merlin was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 10th. Water Rails were noted at their usual haunts with a peak count of four at Princes Parade on the 4th.

Lapwing numbers increased during the month, with 180 at the Willop Basin on the 3rd, 150 in the Postling Wents area on the 10th and 207 at Hillhurst Farm the next day, whilst a flock of 39 Golden Plovers was also seen in the Postling Wents area on the 10th and at least 12 Ringed Plovers remained in the roost at Folkestone Beach, with a single at the Willop Outfall on the 22nd. The cold weather at the end of the month led to some displacement of waders with 14 Golden Plovers at Church Hougham on the 27th, a Lapwing at Samphire Hoe on the 28th, when two flew west along the beach at Hythe, and three Snipe at Samphire Hoe the same day.

Purple Sandpipers remained at Battery Point (2) and Hythe (at least 2), whilst up to 14 Sanderling were seen at the Willop Outfall, with up to two Curlew at the Willop Basin, a Woodcock at Scene Wood and up to two Green Sandpipers in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area, whilst one flew west over Beachborough Park on the 15th.

The excellent series of Great Skua sightings off Samphire Hoe continued, including three flying east there on the 3rd and four flying east on the 6th, whilst one lingered offshore between the 22nd and the 28th, and another was seen from Folkestone Pier on the 9th. Kittiwake counts included 100 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 5th, 112 east there on the 6th and 100 east there on the 23rd. Large auk numbers dwindled during February but still included notable counts of 275 Guillemot and 500 Razorbills flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th.

A Barn Owl was seen at Donkey Street on the 10th and a pair of Ravens appeared to be attempting to nest again at Samphire Hoe. Firecrests were noted at Beachborough Park, Mill Point, Paraker Wood, Hythe (2) and Enbrook Park (2), whilst two Chiffchaffs remained at the latter site, with one at Beachborough Park, and Blackcaps were frequenting gardens in Folkestone, Seabrook and Hythe (2). A flock of around 2,000 Starlings flew east over Hythe seafront shortly after dawn on the 21st.

Fieldfare numbers increased to up to 32 at Church Hougham, 55 at Beachborough Park, 70 in the Postling Wents area and 175 at Botolph's Bridge, whilst cold weather at the end of the month produced singles at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe, with seven in a garden in Hythe, but the only notable count of Redwings was a peak of 178 at Beachborough Park on the 14th.

Single Black Redstarts were seen at Battery Point, Hythe Ranges and Samphire Hoe during the month, whilst a flock of seven Stonechats near the Willop Sewage Works on the 18th and a peak count of 172 Meadow Pipits at Botolph's Bridge on the 10th were noteworthy. Up to 22 Siskins were noted along the Seabrook Stream at Horn Street and a stubble field at Abbotscliffe attracted 40 Yellowhammers, 50 Chaffinches and 200 Linnets.

March

The exceptionally cold easterly airstream persisted into early March and cold weather migrants on the 1st included a Golden Plover, a Woodcock, a Wigeon, a Shelduck, 3 Snipe and 4 Fieldfares at Samphire Hoe, a Lapwing flying over Park Farm Industrial Estate and 11 Bar-tailed Godwits flying east past Seabrook. At sea the next day a Little Gull, a Shag, 2 Great Skuas, 7 Wigeon, 23 Bar-tailed Godwits, 40 Fulmars, 60 Red-throated Divers, 120 Gannets, 155 Great Crested Grebes and 2,165 Cormorants flew east past Samphire Hoe, whilst on the 3rd a Shoveler, a Red-breasted Merganser, a Curlew, a Shelduck, 3 Bar-tailed Godwits, 22 Brent Geese, 67 Great Crested Grebes, 170 Red-throated Divers and 1,565 auks flew east there, whilst a Wigeon, a Shelduck, a Fieldfare and 2 Snipe remained, a Lapwing and 5 Shelduck flew past Seabrook and 2 Snipe, 3 Wigeon and 10 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin, where 44 Brent Geese flew east.



Egyptian Goose at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

A Wigeon was seen on the canal at Seabrook on the 4th, when 4 Shelduck and 61 Fieldfares were at Botolph's Bridge, five Dunlin were at the Willop Outfall and 20 Brent Geese, 26 Kittiwakes and 232 Red-throated Divers flew east past Samphire Hoe. The weather gradually turned milder from the 5th which was a particularly notable day, producing a **Goshawk** flying over Seabrook, a **Great White Egret** at West Hythe dam and a **Ruff** at the Willop Basin (remaining until the 7th), where a Dunlin, a Curlew, 5 Wigeon and 304 Lapwings were also logged. Also of note were a Black Redstart at the Hythe Redoubt and 12 Brent Geese and 90 Red-throated Divers flying east past Samphire Hoe, whilst a Black-throated Diver, a Great Skua and 47 Red-throated Divers flew past Samphire Hoe on the 6th, when a drake Pochard was at Botolph's Bridge.

A Marsh Harrier flew west over Beachborough Park on the 7th, when a Great Skua, a Golden Plover and a Curlew flew past Samphire Hoe and a Reed Bunting, a Snipe, 2 Grey Partridges, 23 Stock Doves and 40 Yellowhammers were counted at Abbotscliffe. On the 9th a Firecrest was seen along the canal at Palmars and a Tufted Duck was at Nickolls Quarry, with a Pochard at Botolph's Bridge the next day when 20 Common Scoter and 210 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe and day time temperatures finally reached double figures. Two **Ruff** were seen briefly at the Willop Basin on the 11th, when a Firecrest was at Samphire Hoe and 3 Red-breasted Mergansers and 670 Brent

Geese flew east there. A **Hawfinch** was a surprise visitor to feeders in a garden in Saltwood the following day, when a Red Kite flew west over Beachborough Park and three Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe. The 13th produced a Firecrest and 2 Black Redstarts at Samphire Hoe, the first migrant Chiffchaffs of the year in a garden in Folkestone and at Beachborough Park, where 80 Fieldfares and 465 Redwings flew west, whilst 2 Shoveler, 4 **Avocets**, 6 Sandwich Terns, 36 Red-throated Divers and 281 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe the next day and two **Egyptian Geese** flew west there on the 15th. A Marsh Harrier and a Merlin were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 16th, where 90 Brent Geese flew east, and single Black Redstarts were seen at Folkestone Pier, in a garden in Folkestone and at the Hythe Sailing Club.

This relatively mild spell came to an abrupt end when another exceptionally cold easterly from the 17th brought further snow, which meant that the first Sand Martin of the year at the Willop Basin was a rather incongruous sight but better suited the three **Barnacle Geese** there. A further two **Hawfinches** were seen in a local garden, this time in Folkestone, a Pochard, a Chiffchaff, 2 **Avocets**, 2 Gadwall, 4 Shoveler, 4 Shelduck and 5 Tufted Ducks were at Nickolls Quarry, a Firecrest and a Chiffchaff were at Botolph's Bridge, a Black Redstart, a Dunlin, 7 Shelduck, 8 Teal and 113 Brent Geese were seen at Samphire Hoe and a Little Gull, 4 Gadwall and 225 Brent Geese flew east past Hythe.

A pair of **Goosanders**, a Firecrest and 4 Chiffchaffs were at Botolph's Bridge the next day, when a Grey Plover and 3 Ringed Plovers were at Hythe Redoubt, four Greylag Geese flew over the Willop Basin, a Sandwich Tern, a Shelduck, 2 drake Eider, 3 Pintail, 100 Brent Geese and 100+ Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe, where 3 Golden Plover arrived in off the sea and three Chiffchaffs were at Nickolls Quarry. Eight Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 45 Brent Geese and 80 Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th, when 45 Lapwings and 53 Fieldfares were at Botolph's Bridge and two Firecrests were at Enbrook Park, whilst on the 20th the weather began to become milder again and a Firecrest and 4 Black Redstarts were at Samphire Hoe, where 30 Sandwich Terns flew east, a Black Redstart was seen at Hythe and a Blackcap (perhaps the first returning migrant) and 4 Sandwich Terns were present at Seabrook.

The 21st produced only the second area record (and the first for nearly 150 years) of **Baillon's Crake** at Beachborough Lakes. A very early Yellow Wagtail was also of note there, as were a Water Rail, a Chiffchaff, a Little Grebe, 2 Firecrests, 2 Teal and 3 Great Crested Grebes. Elsewhere a Black Redstart, a Firecrest and a Reed Bunting were at Samphire Hoe, where a Golden Plover flew north, a Barn Owl was at Nickolls Quarry, two Siskins were in a garden in Saltwood, four Firecrests were at Copt Point and 90 Redwings flew east at Folkestone Downs.

A Woodcock was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 22nd when 2 Grey Wagtails, 3 Siskins and 25 Chaffinches flew over Samphire Hoe, where c.120 Brent Geese flew east and 3 Firecrests were present, with further Firecrests at Botolph's Bridge and Beachborough Park. A total of 200 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd when a Red-legged Partridge made for an unusual sight in a garden in Cheriton. A south-easterly breeze on the 24th encouraged 9 **Avocets**, 10 **Black-tailed Godwits**, 2 Gadwall, 2 Teal, 3 Curlews, 5 Pintail, 18 Shoveler, 43 Sandwich Terns, 52 Red-throated Divers and at least 580 Brent Geese to head up-channel at sea, whilst the first Wheatear of the year was seen on the Hythe Imperial golf course and a Corn Bunting and two Jack Snipe were at Donkey Street.

A ring-tail **Hen Harrier** was at Botolph's Bridge the following day, whilst a 'blue phase' Fulmar, 2 Razorbills, 65 Kittiwakes, 70 Sandwich Terns and 215 Brent Geese were seen off Samphire Hoe, 3 Firecrests and 4 continental Coal Tits were at Folkestone Warren, where 100 Chaffinches flew east and a Black Redstart was singing at Hythe. Nine Siskins, 136 Sandwich Terns and 480 Chaffinches flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 26th, a Jack Snipe was at Beachborough Park and small numbers of Firecrests and Chiffchaffs continued to arrive. A **Slavonian Grebe** was seen on the sea off Princes Parade on the 27th, when a Red Kite flew west at Abbotscliffe and a male Brambling was seen in a garden in Lympe, whilst 2 Teal, 3 Shoveler and 300 Redwings were at Beachborough Park the next day. 19 Sandwich Terns and 570 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 29th when a Brambling was seen at Beachborough Park.

South to south-easterly winds on the 30th produced a good movement at sea, with an Arctic Skua, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 3 Teal, 4 Common Terns, 32 Shoveler, 38 Red-throated Divers, 72 Brent Geese, 98 Sandwich Terns, 279 Gannets and 643 Common Scoter flying east, whilst a flock of seven Eider were present offshore, a Jack Snipe was seen near the Willop Sewage Works and two Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe. The last day of the month saw two **Egyptian Geese** at Nickolls Quarry, a female Brambling in a garden in Lympe and 45 Brent Geese, 76 Sandwich Terns and 140 Common Scoter flying east past Samphire Hoe.

April

A cool north-westerly breeze on the 1st produced a Short-eared Owl, a Firecrest, a Redwing and 2 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Red Kite flew over Asholt Wood. A change to a south-easterly wind the next day encouraged a Curlew, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 8 Shelduck, 12 Sandwich Terns, 30 Red-throated Divers, 190 Gannets, 440 Brent Geese and 540 Common Scoter to head east past Samphire Hoe, where singles of Wheatear and Firecrest were present, with another Firecrest at Hythe and a Black Redstart in a garden in Folkestone.



Bearded Tit at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

There was little of note on the 3rd but in southerly winds the next day 34 Brent Geese, 39 Red-throated Divers, 52 Sandwich Terns and 61 Common Scoter east past Samphire Hoe, where two Wheatears were present, whilst 2 Bramblings and 21 Redwings flew over Beachborough Park. Another Brambling was seen in a garden in Cheriton on the 5th, when 19 Siskins flew east at Abbotscliffe and Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs continued to arrive. South-easterly winds on the 6th induced another movement at sea, with a Little Gull, 2 Black-throated Divers, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 4 Common Terns, 11 Shoveler, 13 Siskins, 55 Sandwich Terns and 255 Common Scoters passing east, whilst the first Swallow arrived in off the sea at Hythe and the first two Sedge Warblers were singing at Nickolls Quarry. The first Tree Pipit and a further Swallow were seen at Nickolls Quarry the following day.

A light northerly wind became established over the next five days bringing overcast conditions with drizzle and fog which made observations difficult at times. The first Ring Ouzel, a Black Redstart and a Swallow were at Creteway Down on the 8th, when a drake Red-breasted Merganser was seen off Battery Point, a Wheatear was at Hythe Ranges and Swallows were noted at Seabrook and Nickolls Quarry (2). A **Great Northern Diver** was found on the sea between Sandgate and Seabrook the next day, when a Short-eared Owl, a Black-throated Diver, a Wheatear, 2 Swallows and 5 Redwings were at Samphire Hoe, 2 Pochard, 3 Sand Martins and 38 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry, a Firecrest was at Folks' Wood and two Swallows flew east at Seabrook.

A **Long-eared Owl** spent the day roosting at Samphire Hoe on the 10th, where a Grey Plover, a Whimbrel, a Wheatear and five Siskins were also of note, whilst a Jack Snipe was noted at Donkey Street (being seen on several dates to the

21st) and five Siskins were seen along the canal at Palmarsh. The following day produced the Reed Warbler at Botolph's Bridge, whilst a Sand Martin was at Nickolls Quarry and a Yellow Wagtail, a Firecrest, a Brambling and five Shovelers were at Beachborough Park. Three **Slavonian Grebes** were seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 12th, when the first House Martins were at Beachborough Park and Nickolls Quarry (2), the first Common Sandpiper was at Hythe Ranges and ten Whimbrel flew past Samphire Hoe. Also of note were 2 White Wagtails and 2 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, a Red-breasted Merganser, a Tufted Duck and 2 Shoveler at Hythe Ranges, 3 Sand Martins and 48 Swallows at Nickolls Quarry, a Wheatear and a Gadwall at Donkey Street, 7 Swallows at Beachborough Park, 10 Redwings and 19 Fieldfares at Church Hougham and a Little Egret at the Willop Basin.

A further two **Slavonian Grebes** were on the sea off Folkestone Beach the following day, when two **Black-necked Grebes** were seen off Princes Parade and the first Lesser Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe and Botolph's Bridge. The first Garden Warbler was at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th, when the first Whitethroat was at Botolph's Bridge and both sites produced the first Willow Warblers. A Marsh Harrier and a Firecrest at Botolph's Bridge, a Yellow Wagtail at Donkey Street and a Ring Ouzel and 14 Siskins heading east at Samphire Hoe were also of note.

A change to southerly winds on the 15th led to some excellent offshore passage, with a **Great Northern Diver**, 2 **Long-tailed Ducks**, 5 **Black-necked Grebes**, a Mute Swan, a Greylag Goose, 2 Shovelers, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 7 Oystercatchers, 10 Common Terns, 30 Red-throated Divers, 42 Sandwich Terns, 170 Brent Geese and 650 Common Scoter going east at Samphire Hoe, where 2 Wheatears, 2 Yellow Wagtails and 5 Swallows were also seen. A **Great White Egret**, a Little Egret and 2 Common Sandpipers at Botolph's Bridge and 2 Red Kites over Folkestone Warren completed a very productive day.

The first Cuckoo was at Nickolls Quarry on the 16th when a Little Gull, a Little Egret, a Yellow Wagtail and 5 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe and two Wheatears were at Princes Parade. Temperatures then began to climb and exceeded 25°C on the 19th (with the national peak of 29°C making it the warmest April day since 1949). Two Arctic Skuas and 9 Great Skuas flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 17th, whilst two Arctic Skuas, 4 Shelduck and 110 Common Scoter flew past Folkestone Pier the following day, when a Red Kite flew over Saltwood and the first two Swifts of the year were seen over Sandling Station.

A **Serin** was reported singing near Folkestone Harbour on the 19th, when a **Black-necked Grebe** was seen off Mill Point, a Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe, where 2 Red Kites flew west and an Arctic Skua and 4 Little Gulls flew east, a Ring Ouzel and a Red Kite flew over Beachborough Park, and a Yellow Wagtail was at Church Hougham. The following day produced a record count of **15** Red Kites flying over Beachborough Park, with further sightings at Seabrook and West Hythe (2), whilst a Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe and a Yellow Wagtail flew over Copt Point.

A Manx Shearwater, an **Avocet**, 3 Whimbrel, 8 Great Skuas and 16 Oystercatchers flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st, whilst another Red Kite flew over there, with a further single seen over the Golden Valley in Cheriton, and a pair of **Bearded Tits** made a surprise appearance at Nickolls Quarry. The first Little Tern, an Arctic Skua, 3 Whimbrel, 8 Mute Swans, 80 Sandwich Terns and 155 Common Scoter flew east at sea the next day.

The 23rd was markedly cooler and produced a notable arrival of Wheatears with 4 at Samphire Hoe, 4 at Princes Parade and 18 at Hythe Ranges, whilst a further 3 Red Kites flew over the Park Farm Industrial Estate in Folkestone. Three Ring Ouzels were seen at Hythe Roughs on the 24th and three Great Skuas flew east past Samphire Hoe, with a Ring Ouzel at the latter site the following day. A Jack Snipe, a Reed Warbler and a Yellow Wagtail were at Beachborough Park on the 26th and a Great Skua, 2 Arctic Skuas, 11 Whimbrel, 32 Kittiwakes, 159 Common Scoter and 224 Sandwich Terns flew east at sea the next day, when a Reed Warbler was singing at Samphire Hoe there, a Willow Warbler was in Scene Wood and two Wheatears were at Princes Parade.

A Grasshopper Warbler was reeling at Hythe Roughs on the 28th, a Great Skua, 2 Black-throated Divers, 4 Mute Swans, 6 Manx Shearwaters, 12 Oystercatchers, 82 Sandwich Terns, 91 Gannets and 99 Common Scoter flew east past Samphire Hoe, where 2 Willow Warblers were seen, a Hobby was at Botolph's Bridge, two Swifts were at Nickolls Quarry and 3 Yellow Wagtails and 4 Swifts flew in off the sea at Hythe Ranges, where a flock of 29 Oystercatchers flew east. A Little Tern, an Arctic Skua, 11 Whimbrel, 55 Bar-tailed Godwits and 375 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 29th and the month ended with 5 Little Terns, 5 Brent Geese, 6 Greylag Geese and 111 Sandwich Terns flying past Samphire Hoe in extremely wet conditions.

May

There was a cool start to the month despite the influence of a southerly breeze but there was a significant arrival of Wheatears on the 1st, with a total of at least 23 across the area, including 4 at Botolph's Bridge and 13 at Samphire Hoe, where a Willow Warbler was also noted.



Glaucous Gull at Hythe (Ian Roberts)

The wind increased the next day, when 8 Great Skuas, 9 Manx Shearwaters, 15 Whimbrel and 70 Common Scoter flew past at sea. The 3rd was calmer and milder, with good visibility across the Channel which encouraged an arrival of a Swift, a Sand Martin, 2 Hobbies, 17 House Martins and 85 Swallows at Samphire Hoe, where a Ring Ouzel and a Reed Warbler were also of note but the following day produced just two Whimbrel and 17 Oystercatchers passing offshore.

Two **Little Ringed Plovers** were found at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th, when the last Brent Goose of the spring, a Manx Shearwater, 4 Little Terns and 27 Whimbrel passed at sea, whilst a particularly late pair of Wigeon were seen on the sea off Hythe. A Red Kite flew over Cheriton on the 6th and 6 Arctic Skuas, 29 Arctic Terns, 71 Whimbrel and 360 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe despite the northerly wind, whilst a Yellow Wagtail and a Redpoll arrived in off the sea there.

The daytime temperature exceeded 25°C on the 7th when 2 Manx Shearwaters, 5 Arctic Skuas, 6 Bar-tailed Godwits and 56 Whimbrel flew past Samphire Hoe, whilst another Yellow Wagtail flew in off the sea there, as did a Tree Pipit at Abbotscliffe, and the last Purple Sandpiper was noted at Hythe.

It remained warm on the 8th and with the wind switching to the south-east there was a decent movement offshore, including an Arctic Skua, a Red-breasted Merganser, a Mute Swan, 2 **Garganey**, 2 Sanderling, 2 Red-throated Divers, 8 Manx Shearwaters, 41 Whimbrel and 83 Common/Arctic Terns flying east and 16 Oystercatchers and a record total of around **150 Black-tailed Godwits** west past Samphire Hoe.

Elsewhere a female Marsh Harrier was seen at Nickolls Quarry and a Cuckoo took up residence in the Seabrook area, with at least two frequenting the area between Palmarsh and Donkey Street, whilst the latter site also hosted a pair of Corn Buntings and two pairs of Yellow Wagtails.

The 9th was fresher but the wind remained in the south and a Bar-tailed Godwit, a flock of 6 Manx Shearwaters and 10 Whimbrel flew east past Samphire Hoe, whilst seven Red Kites flew west there, a Yellow Wagtail, a Redpoll, 2 Swifts and 27 Swallows flew in off the sea and 293 Sandwich Terns were feeding offshore. A rather late Green Sandpiper and a Little Egret were seen at Donkey Street and a Red Kite, a Tree Pipit, a Yellow Wagtail and 2 Hobbies were at Beachborough Park.

The 10th was quieter with the wind changing to a northerly, but a Marsh Harrier flew north over Horn Street and another Red Kite flew over Beachborough Park.

A south-easterly wind on the 11th produced 2 Black-throated Divers, 3 Great Skuas, a flock of 6 Pomarine Skuas, 6 Arctic Skuas, 7 Manx Shearwaters, 18 Little Terns, 20 Whimbrel and 527 Common/Arctic Terns flying east past Samphire Hoe.

The following day saw just three Red-breasted Mergansers flying east at sea but a Common Sandpiper at the Hythe Redoubt and a Dunlin at Hythe Ranges were also of note. A Great Skua, 3 Pomarine Skuas, 4 Arctic Skuas, 6 Little Terns, 16 Whimbrel and 281 Common/Arctic Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th, with a Reed Warbler and 2 Willow Warblers also of note there, whilst a Common Sandpiper was seen at Seabrook.

A northerly airflow became established on the 14th and persisted until the month's end bringing cloudy conditions and showers, however it was generally rather warm. A Whimbrel and 7 Dunlin flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th, whilst an Arctic Skua, a Whimbrel and 5 Manx Shearwaters flew past there the next day, when a Spotted Flycatcher was at Brockhill Country Park and a Red Kite flew over Kiln Wood.

The 16th produced just a Sand Martin, 6 Swifts, 6 Swallows and 8 House Martins at Abbotscliffe whilst six Common Crossbills flew over Samphire Hoe the following day. The quiet spell continued with just a Yellow Wagtail and three Whimbrel of note at Samphire Hoe on the 18th and a Yellow Wagtail, a Sand Martin and 13 Swallows arriving in off the sea there the next day, when two migrant Reed Warblers were singing from atypical habitats at Peene.

A first-summer **Glaucous Gull** arrived at Hythe on the 20th, where it was seen intermittently until the 28th, and two Red Kites flew north over Cheriton on the 22nd, when a Manx Shearwater, 5 Dunlin, 5 Oystercatchers and 8 Whimbrel flew past Samphire Hoe. Further Red Kites were seen over Beachborough Park, Folkestone and Horn Street on the 23rd, when a Ringed Plover, 2 Whimbrel and 5 Turnstone flew past Samphire Hoe.

The 24th produced a superb adult **Long-tailed Skua** passing east close inshore off Hythe and Mill Point, whilst two Greenshanks were seen at Donkey Street and there was an arrival of Common Sandpipers with two at Donkey Street, three at Samphire Hoe and seven at Beachborough Park, where a late Snipe flew west.

Waders continued to pass through with a Turnstone and 29 Ringed Plovers flying east past Samphire Hoe the next day, whilst a Yellow Wagtail and a Reed Warbler were also of note there, and a Greenshank was at Donkey Street on the 26th, when 3 Whimbrel flew east at Hythe and a Wheatear was at Princes Parade.

A **Hoopoe** was seen and heard calling near the Grand Hotel in Folkestone on the 27th and lingered until the 30th, though was typically elusive throughout its stay. An Osprey flew in/west over Hythe on the 28th and was later seen over Donkey Street, where a **Little Ringed Plover** was also present, with a Redshank there the following day.

June

Migrants continued to arrive into June, including a Common Sandpiper at Samphire Hoe and a Reed Warbler singing from tamarisk bushes at Mill Point on the 3rd, a **Turtle Dove** at Nickolls Quarry on the 4th, a Garden Warbler at Beachborough Park on the 6th, and a **Red-rumped Swallow** at Beachborough Park and a Red Kite at Horn Street on the 7th.



Honey Buzzard at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)

A **Quail** was heard calling as it flew inland over Nickolls Quarry in the early hours of the 10th and a Honey Buzzard and 7 Barnacle Geese flew east at Samphire Hoe the next day, when the first three returning Lapwings were seen at Abbotscliffe. A single Lapwing flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 12th, when a Red Kite flew west over Beachborough Park and there was a small movement of 38 Swifts over West Hythe, with further counts of 102 flying west there on the 17th and 100 at Samphire Hoe on the 18th.

A Green Sandpiper was at Donkey Street on the 17th, when a Ringed Plover and 200 Common Scoters were noted at the Hythe Redoubt, and unseasonable wandering Coal Tits were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 18th and Hythe seafront on the 21st, whilst a Red Kite flew west over Beachborough Park on the 20th.

The second **Quail** of the month was heard calling at Beachborough Park on the 21st, whilst a flock of 8 Little Egrets flew over Donkey Street on the 23rd with a couple of singles noted there and at Hythe Ranges earlier in the month. A Garden Warbler was noted again at Beachborough Park on the 28th and a Lapwing was at Copt Point the following day.

Highlights of the breeding season included a pair of **Little Ringed Plovers** raising two young at Nickolls Quarry (the first nesting attempt there since 2006) and a pair of Lapwings raising three young at Donkey Street (the first successful breeding locally since 2011), where Cuckoo, Yellow Wagtails and Corn Buntings also appeared to be nesting. Ravens successfully fledged young at Samphire Hoe and further pairs were suspected to have bred at Capelle-Ferne and in the Beachborough area. At least one pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls nested successfully at Hythe and a pair also bred at Samphire Hoe, where a pair of Black Redstarts and Rock Pipits and up to 8 pairs of Stonechats also nested.

July

High pressure continued to dominate the weather and it was particularly warm (the second warmest July since 1910) with temperatures exceeding 30°C on several days from the 23rd (and even reaching 35.3°C at Faversham on the 26th). It was also particularly sunny (the second sunniest July since 1929), with virtually no rainfall until thunderstorms arrived on the evening of the 27th, marking the beginning of a more unsettled period.



Black Redstart at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Returning waders are a typical feature of July and included a Curlew at Samphire Hoe and 2 Green Sandpipers at Donkey Street on the 3rd, a Green Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th, a Common Sandpiper at Donkey Street on the 31st and several Oystercatchers at coastal sites, whilst the family party of four **Little Ringed Plovers** had wandered to Donkey Street on the 13th.

Single Honey Buzzards were seen over Horn Street on the 13th and Samphire Hoe the following day, whilst Hobbies bred successfully at Lypne Park Wood again and singles noted on several dates at Seabrook were perhaps also indicative of local breeding, with one seen at Abbotscliffe on the 30th. Seven Black Redstarts were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd (where the pair successfully raised a second brood) and a Mistle Thrush there on the 10th was an unusual record for the site.

A **Glaucous Gull** seen flying west past Hythe on the 17th was a very unseasonal record and presumably involved the individual seen there in late May, whilst an adult **Iceland Gull** reported at Sunny Sands (Folkestone) on the 27th was even more unusual.

Returning passerine migrants began to appear from mid-month and included a Garden Warbler at Samphire Hoe on the 16th, a Garden Warbler and a Willow Warbler there on the 24th, a Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Willow Warblers and 7 Lesser Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe on the 25th, a Sedge Warbler, 2 Reed Warblers and 8 Lesser Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe on the 26th and a Wheatear there on the 28th. A Black Redstart at Hythe on the 20th was also of note. Mediterranean Gull numbers started to increase, including a count of at least 300 hunting ants over Hythe on the 24th.

August

August began with a week of mostly warm, dry weather and daytime temperatures peaking in the region of 30°C. Slow-moving fronts brought a dull, wet day on the 9th, with further showers on the 10th, before a cooler and often cloudier period followed, though it was mainly dry. Further frontal systems brought more rain during the last week. Winds were predominately from the southerly sector throughout.



Whinchat at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Returning passerine migrants continue to move through, including a Garden Warbler, a Yellow Wagtail and 6 Willow Warblers at Beachborough Park and a Reed Warbler, 6 Willow Warblers, 9 Lesser Whitethroats and 15 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe on the 1st, a Yellow Wagtail, 5 Willow Warblers, 7 Lesser Whitethroats and 20 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe on the 6th, a Whinchat and a Wheatear there and 4 Yellow Wagtails and 10 Willow Warblers at Beachborough Park on the 8th, Wheatears at Copt Point and Samphire Hoe (2) on the 11th, a Sedge Warbler in a garden in Cheriton and three Wheatears at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, five Wheatears at the latter site the next day and a Garden Warbler, a Sedge Warbler, 5 Willow Warblers and 12 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe on the 15th.

The increase in Mediterranean Gulls also continued, with 283 flying east past Seabrook on the 2nd and a count of 820 at Copt Point on the 4th. A Sand Martin and 34 Swifts were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and the first trickle of Swallows along the coast was noted the following day, with 35 Sand Martins at Samphire Hoe on the 9th. Waders included a Green Sandpiper flying out to sea from Hythe on the 3rd, a Whimbrel at Samphire Hoe on the 8th, a Common Sandpiper at Folkestone Harbour on the 11th and seven Common Sandpipers at Samphire Hoe on the 14th. A Red Kite flew west at Mill Point on the 4th, with Hobbies noted at Cheriton on the 5th and Samphire Hoe on the 6th and a Honey Buzzard at Newington on the 14th, when an Arctic Skua was seen off Copt Point.

The second half of the month saw passage begin to intensify. On the 17th a Whinchat, a Reed Warbler and 8 Whitethroats were logged at Abbotscliffe, with two Redstarts at Samphire Hoe and 2 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe on the 19th, a Tree Pipit, a Sedge Warbler, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 7 Willow Warblers and 15 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe on the 20th and a Whimbrel and 3 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, 3 Whinchats at Princes Parade, a Curlew, a Goldcrest and 5 Willow Warblers at Abbotscliffe and a Ringed Plover at Hythe on the 21st, when an Osprey flew west over Folkestone and 3 Yellow Wagtails, 6 Willow Warblers and 16 Blackcaps were at Beachborough Park.

A Turtle Dove and 2 Common Crossbills flew over Beachborough Park on the 22nd, when a Common Sandpiper was at Hythe and 300 Mediterranean Gulls were seen near Capel-le-Ferne. A further Osprey flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, when a Spotted Flycatcher was at Beachborough Park.

The 24th produced a Redstart, a Grasshopper Warbler, a Whinchat, 5 Willow Warblers and 10 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe and a Garden Warbler, 2 Sand Martins, 11 Willow Warblers, 61 Swallows and 200 House Martins at Beachborough Park.

Three **Ring-necked Parakeets** flew over Cheriton on the 26th when an Arctic Skua and 2 Whimbrel flew past Hythe. A Redstart, 2 Wheatears and 3 Willow Warblers were at Abbotscliffe on the 27th and a Hobby flew over Folkestone, whilst small numbers of Swifts continued to be noted. A group of 16 Buzzards flying north over Hythe on the 28th was noteworthy, whilst a Whinchat was at Samphire Hoe.

The 30th produced a Whinchat, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Wheatears, 7 Blackcaps and 12 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe, a Tree Pipit, a Garden Warbler, a Stonechat, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Willow Warblers and 26 Blackcaps at Beachborough Park, a Whinchat and two Wheatears at Church Hougham, a Whinchat, a Wheatear and 7 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe and the month ended well with a **Wood Warbler**, a Pied Flycatcher, a Tree Pipit and 2 Garden Warblers at Beachborough Park and 2 Whinchats, 2 Wheatears and 150 Goldfinches at Abbotscliffe.

September

The month began warm and dry with a light south-easterly wind and the arrival of migrants continued. Four Whinchats and five Yellow Wagtails were noted at Donkey Street on the 1st, whilst on the 2nd a Garden Warbler and excellent counts of 4 Redstarts and 8 Spotted Flycatchers were seen in the Casebourne/Paraker Wood area, with a Spotted Flycatcher, a Firecrest, a Teal, 2 Common Sandpipers, 2 Wheatears, 3 Whinchats and 6 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe, where a Marsh Harrier flew out to sea, and a Hobby flew over Cheriton. A Garden Warbler and 3 Spotted Flycatchers were at Beachborough Park on the 3rd.



Spotted Flycatcher at Casebourne Wood (Brian Harper)

Two days of north or north-west winds followed, bringing cooler conditions and some rain on the 5th. It was quieter too, with just a Reed Warbler new in at Samphire Hoe on the 4th and a Snipe and 2 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe the next day, however the 6th was better, producing a Honey Buzzard flying west over Hythe, a Pied Flycatcher, a Spotted Flycatcher, 2 Wheatears, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 5 Whinchats, 6 Teal and 7 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe and a Shoveler, 2 Garden Warblers and 2 Spotted Flycatchers at Beachborough Park, where 20 Sand Martins, 300 House Martins and several hundred Swallows flew north.

The winds then set in the westerly quadrant for the next fortnight, bringing settled, dry and mostly mild conditions. A Wheatear, 2 Redstarts and 2 Whinchats were at Abbotscliffe on the 7th where the last Swift, a Grey Wagtail, 3 Yellow Wagtails, 16 Sand Martins and 4,500 House Martins flew west, whilst a Tree Pipit, 2 Garden Warblers and 2 Spotted Flycatchers were at Beachborough Park. An Osprey flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 10th, where a Reed Bunting, 4 Whinchats and 15 Blackcaps were also seen, and on the 11th there were 3 Whinchats and 3 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe and a Sedge Warbler and 5 Snipe at Beachborough Park.

A Short-eared Owl flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, where a Reed Warbler, 3 Teal, 5 Whinchats and 5 Wheatears were of note, whilst a Grasshopper Warbler was seen at Folkestone Downs, a Wheatear, a Garden Warbler and 3 Spotted Flycatchers were at Beachborough Park and 2 Grey Wagtails, 2 Yellow Wagtails and 19 Meadow Pipits flew west at Hythe. At least 10,000 hirundines were logged heading south over Beachborough Park during the day on the 14th, where a Pied Flycatcher and 4 Spotted Flycatchers were also seen, whilst the 15th produced a Redstart, a Whinchat, 2 Wheatears, 5 Blackcaps, 10 Chiffchaffs, 10 Robins and 1,000+ House Martins at Samphire Hoe, and 10 Blackcaps and 10 Chiffchaffs in the West Road/Horn Street area, whilst at least Canada Geese flew over Hythe.

A Firecrest and 3 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe on the 16th, with a Whinchat there the following day, when a Great Spotted Woodpecker, a Wheatear, 3 Whitethroats and 4 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe. A Little Grebe had returned to Beachborough Park on the 18th and at least 2,500 Swallows flew west at Hythe on the 19th, whilst 55 House Martins and 1500 Swallows over Beachborough Park on the 20th, when a Hobby, a Whinchat, 2 Spotted Flycatchers and 3 Yellow Wagtails were present and small numbers of Sand Martins continued to pass through.

The 21st brought a few showers and also the first two Fieldfares of the autumn at Beachborough Park, where a Tree Pipit, a Spotted Flycatcher, 5 Snipe and 7 Yellow Wagtails were also of note and 275 House Martins and 2,000 Swallows flew over, whilst at least 40 Meadow Pipits flew west at Hythe the next day. The first heavy rain of the month occurred on the 23rd and 5 Great Skuas, 21 Arctic Skuas, 200 Mediterranean Gulls and exceptional totals of c.800 Gannets and 1,000+ Sandwich Terns were seen off Hythe ahead of the advancing front.

The last week of September was more settled with lighter and variable winds, and dry conditions. A Whinchat, 2 Reed Buntings, 3 Siskins, 24 Blackcaps and 27 Chiffchaffs were at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, where 76 Meadow Pipits flew west, and a Red-throated Diver, a Dunlin and 12 Canada Geese were at the Willop Outfall, ten Shelduck flew east at Hythe and a Hobby flew over Cheriton. The first Water Rail of the autumn was noted at Beachborough Park on the 25th, with a Wheatear, 2 Garden Warblers, 4 Yellow Wagtails, 80 House Martins and 365 Swallows also noted there, whilst a Wheatear, a Reed Bunting, 12 Blackcaps, 20 Chiffchaffs and 20 Robins were at Samphire Hoe.

A Reed Warbler, 10 Blackcaps and 16 Chiffchaffs were at Nickolls Quarry on the 26th, when 2 Garden Warblers, 10 Blackcaps and 37 Chiffchaffs were at Beachborough Park, where 600 House Martins and 1,500 Swallows flew over, and three Spotted Flycatchers were seen at Lympne (increasing to four the next day). On the 27th a Redstart, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Reed Warbler, a Willow Warbler, a Kingfisher, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, 12 Blackcaps and 34 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe, a Common Sandpiper, a Spotted Flycatcher and a Garden Warbler, were at Beachborough Park, where two Common Crossbills, two Redpolls, 30 Siskins, 700 Swallows and 2,000 House Martins flew south and 200 Swallows and 8,000 House Martins flew west at Seabrook.

The 28th produced a Redwing, a Spotted Flycatcher, 14 Blackcaps and 65 Chiffchaffs at Beachborough Park and a flock of eight Greylag Geese flew east at Seabrook on the 29th whilst the final day of the month produced three Greylag Geese and 51 Canada Geese at Nickolls Quarry, a Snipe and 3 Wheatears at Hythe Roughs and a Yellow Wagtail, 15 Chiffchaffs, 21 Robins and 27 Blackcaps at Samphire Hoe.

October

The settled, mainly dry weather lasted into the first week of October and there was a quiet start to the month. A Redwing, a Siskin, 2 Reed Buntings, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 6 Golden Plovers and 13 Blackcaps were seen at Abbotscliffe on the 1st and a Yellow Wagtail and 33 Chiffchaffs were at Beachborough Park the next day. On the 3rd a Garden Warbler, a Yellow Wagtail, a Sand Martin, 2 Tree Sparrows, 2 Redpolls, 3 Redwings, 4 Bramblings, 113 Siskins and 700 House Martins were at Beachborough Park, whilst 3 Jays, 10 Siskins and 13 Blackcaps were at Abbotscliffe, where 18 Sky Larks arrived in off the sea.



Brambling at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

A Spotted Flycatcher, a Garden Warbler, a Yellow Wagtail, 3 Brambling, 7 Redwing, 8 Reed Buntings, 14 Jays, 15 Goldcrests and 18 Siskins were at Beachborough Park on the 4th, when a Lesser Whitethroat was at Samphire Hoe and 11 Sky Larks flew over Abbotscliffe. A Yellow Wagtail, 4 Redpolls, 5 Bramblings, 11 Jays, 20 Goldcrests, 26 Chiffchaffs and 39 Siskins were noted at Beachborough Park the following day, when a Great Spotted Woodpecker flew north over Princes Parade. A total of 50 Siskins flew west at Horn Street on the 6th and the next day saw the first Brent Goose movement with up to 64 noted moving east offshore from coastal watch-points between Folkestone and Hythe, whilst 12 Redwings flew west at West Hythe.

Southerly winds brought unseasonably warm weather in the second week, with daytime temperatures over 20°C, and also brought some interesting migrants. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found at Samphire Hoe on the 8th (to the 9th), when 2 Ring Ouzels, 2 Bramblings, 3 Redwings, 3 Siskins and 10 Chiffchaffs were also present, whilst a Brambling, 2 Blackcaps, 5 Song Thrushes and 8 Chiffchaffs were at Nickolls Quarry. The following day produced two Bramblings at Copt Point, three Yellow Wagtails flying east at Seabrook and 6 Chiffchaffs and 6 Goldcrests at Mill Point. A Brambling, a Snipe, 3 Redwings, 6 Reed Buntings, 30 Sky Larks and 120 Goldfinches were at Abbotscliffe on the 10th, when a Yellow Wagtail, 2 Brambling, 11 Siskins, 12 Goldcrests and 13 Chiffchaffs were at Beachborough and up to 77 Siskins were logged flying east along the coast.

A **Wood Lark** flew west over Seabrook on the 11th, when a Tree Sparrow and 7 Redwings were at Samphire Hoe and a Brambling and a Fieldfare were at Beachborough, with a Brambling, 14 Goldcrests and 16 Chiffchaffs at the latter site the next day. The 13th saw a late Reed Warbler and 2 Siskins at West Hythe and a Brambling at the Hythe Canal.

A **Richard's Pipit** flying west at Abbotscliffe was the highlight of this year's Wildlife Migration Day on the 14th, whilst a Brambling, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, 7 Redwings, 14 Reed Buntings, 20 Song Thrushes, 24 Siskins and 25 Sky Larks were also seen there, a Ring Ouzel, 2 Bramblings, 7 Redwings and 11 Song Thrushes were at Creteway Down, a Ring Ouzel, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, 15 Chiffchaffs, 18 Sky Larks and 26 Song Thrushes were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and a Wheatear and a Kingfisher were at Samphire Hoe, where 7 Little Egrets flew east.

A quiet spell of weather ensued and it remained mild and largely dry. Three Bramblings and 45 Redwings were seen at Beachborough Park on the 13th, with a Brambling, 2 Redpolls, 11 Redwings, 14 Chiffchaffs, 14 Goldcrests and 16 Siskins there the next day. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen at Horn Street on the 17th, when two Crossbills flew east there, a Ring Ouzel was at Abbotscliffe, a Ring Ouzel and a Brambling were at Samphire Hoe, where 15 Siskins flew east, and a further Ring Ouzel, a Brambling, a Water Rail, 2 Redpolls, 16 Chiffchaffs, 25 Redwings, 25 Goldcrests and 49 Siskins were at Beachborough Park.

A pair of **Hawfinches** at Horn Street were the highlight of the 18th, when 3 Bramblings, 3 Fieldfares, 3 Redpolls, 36 Siskins and 67 Redwings were at Beachborough Park and a Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe. Two Wheatears and 3 Ring Ouzels were at Abbotscliffe on the 19th, where visual migration included a Brambling, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 5 Reed Buntings, 31 Sky Larks, 200 Starlings, 205 Goldfinches and 517 Siskins. 15 Chiffchaffs, 15 Goldcrests and 30 Song Thrushes were at Beachborough Park, where 3 Bramblings, 3 Fieldfares, 23 Redpolls, 54 Meadow Pipits, 66 Redwings, 230 Siskins and 290 Starlings flew over.

A Short-eared Owl, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, a Fieldfare, 4 Ring Ouzels, 12 Goldcrests and 50 Sky Larks were at Abbotscliffe on the 20th, where 3 Reed Buntings and 84 Siskins flew over, whilst a Ring Ouzel was at Nickolls Quarry, a Merlin and a Golden Plover were at Donkey Street and 79 Siskins flew east over Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street. A further Short-eared Owl was found at Botolph's Bridge on the 21st (remaining until at least the 25th) and on the 22nd a Fieldfare, 3 Bramblings, 8 Siskins, 9 Common Crossbills, 13 Redpolls and 30 Redwings were seen at Beachborough Park.

The third **Yellow-browed Warbler** of the month, a Jack Snipe, 4 Common Crossbills, 5 Bramblings, 9 Fieldfares, 11 Redpolls, 20 Siskins, 31 Song Thrushes and 60 Redwings were at Beachborough Park on the 23rd, when two Marsh Harriers roosted at Nickolls Quarry. On the 24th a Great Spotted Woodpecker, 2 Bramblings, 3 Reed Buntings, 4 Fieldfares, 14 Redwings and 31 Siskins were at Abbotscliffe, 3 Jack Snipe, 4 Bramblings, 14 Siskins, 30 Redwings and 240 Fieldfares were at Beachborough Park and five Buzzards flew east at Seabrook.

The last week of October saw colder and wetter conditions. A Jack Snipe, a Brambling, 2 Snipe, 5 Siskins, 24 Redwings and 33 Fieldfares were at Beachborough Park and a Ring Ouzel, 2 Fieldfares, 2 House Martins, 6 Swallows and 16 Blackbirds were at Samphire Hoe on the 25th, whilst the second **Richards Pipit** of the month flew west at Seabrook the following day, when a Marsh Harrier flew west over Horn Street, 13 Common Crossbills, 28 Mistle Thrushes, 40 Stock Doves, 45 Song Thrushes, 110 Redwings and 113 Fieldfares flew over Beachborough Park and a late Common Sandpiper was at Samphire Hoe (and was still present on the 30th).

The 28th produced the best sea passage of the month, when a probable **Grey Phalarope** flew east past Samphire Hoe and totals from there, Mill Point and Hythe included 2 Little Gulls, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Pintail, 3 Teal, 3 Golden Plovers, 4 Grey Plovers, 6 Ringed Plovers, 7 Dunlin, 17 Knot, 26 Shelduck, 33 Wigeon and up to 740 Brent Geese. Single Merlins were seen arriving in off the sea at Mill Point and Samphire Hoe, with a Woodcock at the latter site, 13 Sandwich Terns on the beach at Hythe Ranges and a flock of 50 Wigeon on the sea there, and 12 Gadwall at Nickolls Quarry.

A quieter 29th saw a Curlew, 3 Greylag Geese, 3 Dunlin, 7 Shelduck and 30 Brent Geese flying east past Mill Point, with 10 Redpolls, 40 Siskins and 70 Goldfinches passing east overhead, 180 Starlings arriving in off the sea and two Swallows feeding along the coast. Two Bramblings, 2 Redpolls, 2 Siskins, 10 Goldcrests, 30 Redwings and 39 Fieldfares were at Beachborough Park, 7 Redwings and 20 Blackbirds were at Nickolls Quarry and a Golden Plover was seen at the Aldergate Bridge. The 30th produced just a Shag and 9 Shelduck at Samphire Hoe and 15 Ringed Plovers at Folkestone Beach. The month ended with a Ring Ouzel and 8 Siskins at Samphire Hoe and 10 Grey Wagtails, 11 Redwings, 27 Pied Wagtails and 210 Meadow Pipits flying over Beachborough Park.

November

There was a rather cool and dry start to the month and a Firecrest and a Shag were noted at Mill Point on the 1st, where 40 Starlings flew in off the sea. A **Water Pipit** was found at Donkey Street on the 2nd (where it was seen intermittently until to at least 16th) when four Corn Buntings were also present there, whilst a confiding Snow Bunting was at Abbotscliffe, where a Marsh Harrier, 2 Bramblings, 3 Reed Buntings, 29 Siskins, 95 Chaffinches and 130 Starlings flew over. The last House Martin of the year at Beachborough Park was also of note and 18 Common Crossbills, 55 Redwings, 68 Fieldfares and 149 Meadow Pipits flew over there. A Firecrest and 13 Goldcrests at Mill Point and three Green Sandpipers at Botolph's Bridge completed a very good day.



Short-eared Owl at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen along the canal near the Aldergate Bridge on the 3rd, whilst a probable **Rough-legged Buzzard** flew west over Abbotscliffe, and the first Purple Sandpipers of the winter were seen at Hythe the following day, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, when a Firecrest and 8 Goldcrests were also present and a Brambling, 2 Chiffchaffs, 22 Greenfinches, 30 Fieldfares and 113 Redwings were at Beachborough Park. The next day latter site produced 2 Firecrests, 2 Redpolls, 2 Bramblings, 2 Chiffchaffs, 10 Goldcrests, 11 Fieldfares and 90 Redwings, whilst a Ring Ouzel was seen at Samphire Hoe (where it remained until the 15th) and a Firecrest and at least 9 Goldcrests were at Nickolls Quarry.

After the chilly start the rest of the first half of November was mild and wet with mainly southerly winds and daytime temperatures exceeded 18°C in Kent. This airflow emanating from southern Europe produced an exceptional influx of Pallid Swifts into Britain, with possible, probable or confirmed sightings from nearly 50 sites, so it was disappointing that a swift species seen flying east over central Folkestone on the 7th did not linger long enough to be identified.

A Sandwich Tern was seen at Hythe the same day, whilst two Fieldfares, 3 Redpolls, 11 Siskins, 12 Goldcrests, 55 Redwings and 70 Blackbirds were at Beachborough Park. A Chiffchaff, 3 Firecrests and 20 Goldcrests were seen at Mill Point on the 9th, and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers flew east, whilst another Chiffchaff was at Abbotscliffe.

A juvenile **Long-tailed Skua** flew west past Hythe ahead of a large belt of rain in the early afternoon of the 10th, whilst the last Swallow was noted at Nickolls Quarry and a Firecrest was at Botolph's Bridge, with a Chiffchaff at Samphire Hoe. A Firecrest, 2 Stonechats, 5 Siskins, 8 Redpolls, 45 Redwings and 80 Fieldfares were at Beachborough Park on the 12th, whilst a Merlin was seen at Nickolls Quarry the next day, when a Purple Sandpiper, a Dunlin and a Sanderling were at the Willop Outfall and a Blackcap was seen in Folkestone.

A **Hen Harrier**, a Crossbill, 2 Mandarin Ducks, 2 Stonechats, 2 Chiffchaffs, 3 Fieldfare, 4 Brambling, 4 Little Grebes, 9 Redpolls, 11 Goldcrests, 16 Siskins, 33 Redwings and 700 Starlings were logged at Beachborough Park on the 14th, when a Blackcap was at Samphire Hoe and there was a significant movement of Redwings over Hythe after dark.

It turned more settled from mid-month due to a large Scandinavian high which brought cold easterly winds and a Short-eared Owl and 70 Starlings flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 15th, whilst a Mandarin Duck, a Firecrest, 2 Bramblings, 2 Redpolls, 3 Fieldfares, 19 Siskins and 80 Redwings were at Beachborough Park, where 160 Wood Pigeons, 200 Chaffinches and 300 Starlings flew over and a Sandwich Tern, 3 Eider, 5 Redshank and 27 Ringed Plovers were seen in the Folkestone Harbour area.

A Jack Snipe, a Golden Plover, a Blackcap and 4 Snipe were at Donkey Street on the 16th, when a Golden Plover, a Peregrine, a Brambling, 2 Stonechats, 3 Chiffchaffs, 12 Siskins and 55 Redwings were at Beachborough Park and three Firecrests were at Mill Point, whilst the following day produced a Woodcock and nine Crossbills at Abbotscliffe, a Chiffchaff at Capel-le-Ferne, a Great Skua off Hythe and three Firecrests at Paraker Wood. A **Great White Egret** flew east over Donkey Street on the 18th, when a Merlin and 2 Jack Snipe were also seen there, a Short-eared Owl was hunting at Nickolls Quarry and eight Firecrests were at West Hythe.

A strengthening easterly wind on the 19th made for some productive seawatching, when an Eider, a Sandwich Tern, a Wigeon, 2 Teal, 3 Velvet Scoters, 5 Red-breasted Mergansers and 14 Razorbills flew east past Mill Point and 2 Dunlin and 144 Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe, whilst the next day saw a **Goldeneye**, a Pintail, a Dunlin and a Fulmar flying east past Mill Point and a Little Gulls and 38 Kittiwakes east past Hythe.

On the 21st a Goosander, a Great Skua and 4 Red-breasted Mergansers flew east past Mill Point and the following day produced four Little Gulls and 60 Kittiwakes flying east past Samphire Hoe, whilst on the land a Woodcock, 3 Bramblings, 7 Siskins, 76 Redwings and 240 Fieldfares were notable at Beachborough Park, where seven Crossbills flew east and a Firecrest was at Nickolls Quarry. An Eider flew east past Mill Point on the 23rd, when two Shags were seen offshore and a Little Gull was seen from Folkestone Pier, whilst at Beachborough Park 22 Song Thrushes, 120 Fieldfares and 141 Redwings were counted.

An exceptionally late Reed Warbler was seen at Donkey Street on the 24th and the next day saw a Firecrest, two Goosanders (also present the next day) and 60 Fieldfares at West Hythe and a Little Gull and 4 Gadwall flying east past Hythe, whilst eight 8 Sky Larks arrived in off the sea there. Four Shags were seen on the sea off Sandgate on the 26th, when two Shoveler flew west at Beachborough Park and an excellent total of 1,200 Fieldfares flew east over Botolph's Bridge.

Mild, wet and windy weather returned from the 27th, when a Short-eared or Long-eared Owl flew over Abbotscliffe in the evening. Two Goosanders and 6 Fulmars flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th and winter thrushes continued to be seen in good numbers with 400 Fieldfares and 800 Redwings at Beachborough Park. The month ended with a Goosander, a Blackcap, 9 Shoveler, 41 Teal, 50 Redwings and 80 Fieldfares in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street area, a Firecrest, a Water Rail, 3 Redpolls, 18 Siskins, 350 Fieldfares and 1,200 Redwings at Beachborough Park and a Chiffchaff at Samphire Hoe.

December

The first third of the month was generally mild, wet and windy before it turned more settled and briefly colder due to a Scandinavian blocking high, but mild, wet weather returned from the 17th to 23rd. The last week of the year was quieter with high pressure dominant and a westerly flow maintained generally mild, cloudy weather during this period.



Caspian Gull at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

A **Whooper Swan** was seen flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 26th and up to 32 Mute Swans were noted at the Lower Wall Road area. Four Wigeon were present in the Botolph's Bridge area in the latter half of the month, whilst up to four Shoveler and 14 Teal were seen at Donkey Street, and single Tufted Ducks were at Beachborough Lakes and Nickolls Quarry. A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers flew west past the Willop Outfall on the 11th.

A Fulmar and 160 Gannets flew west past Mill Point on the 7th, whilst a Shag was seen from Abbotscliffe on the 22nd and Cormorant numbers began to increase, with 340 off Sandgate on the 13th, 1,020 flying east past Seabrook on the 25th and a staggering new record total of 7,000 off Hythe on the 23rd. A **Great White Egret** was found at Donkey Street on the 26th, with two there on the 28th. A male Merlin was seen at Seabrook on the 29th and Peregrines at Beachborough Park and Donkey Street were of note.

A Golden Plover was seen on several dates in the Donkey Street area and 15 Ringed Plovers were counted at Hythe Ranges on the 9th, whilst up to ten Sanderling were wintering at the Willop Outfall. Single Purple Sandpipers were seen at Battery Point and Hythe. Woodcock were noted from Paraker Wood (up to two) and Beachborough (up to three), whilst two Green Sandpipers were at Nickolls Quarry throughout and six Redshank were at Folkestone Harbour.

Two adult **Caspian Gulls** were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 15th December, with one there on the 28th, and a peak of 415 Mediterranean Gulls were logged at Beachborough Park. A Barn Owl was seen on three occasions in the Sene Golf Course/Summerhouse Hill/Newington area between the 10th and 20th, with another at Capel-le-Ferne on the 30th, and single Short-eared Owls were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 10th and Capel-le-Ferne on the 28th (perhaps the same bird).

Firecrests were wintering at West Hythe, Palmarsh (2), Nickolls Quarry, Beachborough Park, Paraker Wood and Pond Hill Road (2), whilst up to seven Chiffchaffs were wintering at Beachborough Park, with singles at the Aldergate Bridge, Nickolls Quarry, Palmarsh, Seabrook and Pond Hill Road and Blackcaps were noted from Hythe (up to three) and Seabrook (two). Winter thrushes remained in good numbers at the beginning of the month, including counts of 400 Fieldfares and 600 Redwings at Beachborough Park, before dwindling.

A Black Redstart was seen at Pond Hill Road on the 30th and a **Water Pipit** at Donkey Street on the 27th was presumably the individual previously seen there in November. Two Bramblings flew west over Beachborough Park on the 13th, whilst up to 8 Redpolls and 19 Siskins were wintering there.

Systematic list

The systematic list is based on the sequence and taxonomy followed by the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) (Gill & Donsker, 2017) and uses the vernacular names that are common use in Britain. The status of each species is described with reference to its frequency of occurrence, as summarised in the table below, and the time of year when it usually occurs. Any significant changes in status over time are also highlighted.

Status	Frequency of occurrence
Very rare	Has occurred locally on between one and 15 occasions
Rare	Has occurred locally on between 16 and 50 occasions
Scarce	Has occurred locally on more than 50 occasions but on less than ten occasions per year on average

The category given in parentheses after the status is based on the British Ornithologist's Union (BOU) categorisation (BOU, no date), adapted to reflect the status of species locally, as follows:

Category	Description
A	Species recorded locally in an apparently natural state at least once since 1 January 1950
B	Species recorded locally in an apparently natural state at least once between 1800 and 1949, but have not been recorded subsequently
C	Species that, although introduced, now derive from the resulting self-sustaining populations
D	Species that would otherwise appear in Category A except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state. The only species in this category that are on the local list are Falcated Duck and Great White Pelican
E	Species recorded locally as introductions, human-assisted transportations or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining

A species is usually placed in only one category, but some are placed in multiple categories, for example those species occurring in Category A which now have naturalised Category C populations (e.g. Red Kite).

The Folkestone and Hythe list comprises only those species in Categories A, B and C. Species placed in Category D and E are not included in the species total.

The BOU adopted the IOC World Bird List as the taxonomic basis for the British List, from the 1st January 2018 which led to some additions and removals to the national list (BOU, 2017). This affected the local list through the merging of Lesser and Common (Mealy) Redpolls into a single species, which reduces the list to 299. However a review of the area boundaries (see pages 101-103) has led to the addition of Glossy Ibis to the list, which restores it to 300.

Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A, C)

A flock of 42 had been present in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street area from mid-December 2017 and these remained until at least mid-January 2018, with 34 still present in early March.

As in previous years, there were a few records of birds seen offshore in the spring, with one off Samphire Hoe on the 15th April, a flock of eight flying east past Mill Point and Samphire Hoe on the 22nd April, five on the sea off Hythe on the 25th April, four off Samphire Hoe on the 28th April, one flying west past the latter site on 5th May and another flying east there on the 8th May.

At least four pairs bred again in the usual haunts along the canal and on the marsh.

In autumn three flew out to sea from Hythe on the 14th August and numbers began to increase again in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street area from October, with 41 there on the 20th and 50 on the 27th October, with up to 32 remaining until the years' end.

Very rare vagrant (A)

One flew east at Abbotscliffe at 09:30 on the 26th December (M. D. Kennett). The 10th area record.

A regular winter visitor and passage migrant, with most presumably relating to the increasing feral populations within the county. At least one early record, and possibly some others, relate to genuine wild birds. Having been recorded in recent summers in suitable habitat, breeding was confirmed for the first time in 2014. (A, C)

The only record from the early winter period was of six flying over Botolph's Bridge on the 26th January.

In March four were at the Willop Basin on the 18th and one which flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 26th was later seen on the golf course at the Hythe Imperial, whilst another was at Donkey Street. Further singles were at Samphire Hoe on the 15th April and Donkey Street on the 21st April, whilst two were seen on the shingle at Hythe Ranges on the 28th April and six flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 30th April. In May a further two flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 5th and two were at Donkey Street on the 29th.

In autumn eight flew high east over Seabrook on the 29th September, three were at Nickolls Quarry on the 30th September and three flew east past Mill Point on the 29th October.

Currently breeds almost annually but formerly more numerous. Otherwise can be a visitor at any time of year (C)

The only record from the early winter period was a flock of 42 at the Willop Basin on the 2nd January before the regular breeding pair had returned to Nickolls Quarry by the 28th February. They built a nest and laid two eggs but unfortunately the nest was destroyed before hatching.

In the latter half of the year a flock of at least 20 flew over Hythe on the 15th September, 12 were at the Willop Basin on the 24th September and 51 were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 30th September.



Mute Swan at West Hythe (Brian Harper)



Greylag Goose at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Rare migrant and winter visitor, feral birds also recorded (A, E)

Three were at the Willop Basin on the 17th March before flying off west (B. Harper) and a flock of seven flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th June (per D. E. Smith).

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The trend for birds to be moving east along the coast from as early as January continued, with a total of around 175 logged in January, including counts of 18 past Samphire Hoe on the 6th, 20 past there the next day, 37 past Battery Point on the 8th, 30 past Samphire Hoe on the 13th and 28 past Hythe on the 21st. Small numbers continued to head east during February, including 25 passing Princes Parade on the 9th and 24 passing at Seabrook on the 18th.

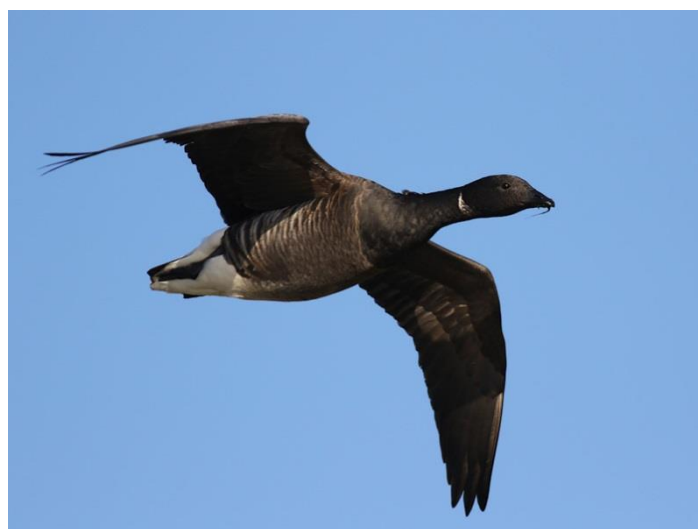
Spring passage gathered pace during March, with 210 heading up-channel past Samphire Hoe on the 10th, 670 east there on the 11th, 281 east there on the 14th, 200 east past Hythe on the 17th, 200 east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, 580 east there the next day, 215 east there on the 25th and 570 east there on the 29th. Passage continued into April, when 440 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd but numbers quickly dwindled and the last three figure count was 170 passing Samphire Hoe on the 15th. Small numbers were then noted until the last one flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 5th May. The total for the spring (including the early movement in January) was at least 4,400 which was the fourth highest ever.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Latest/Earliest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Departure	5 th May	8 th May	-3	3 rd May	+2	26 th May 1997*
Arrival	7 th Oct	23 rd Sep	+14	19 th Sep*	+18	11 th Sep 2014*

The first autumn birds, a total of 64 noted moving east offshore from Hythe/Folkestone on the 7th October, were relatively late. Very few were noted thereafter until a significant easterly movement of up to 740 was noted from coastal watch-points between Hythe and Samphire Hoe on the 28th October (there has only ever been one larger autumn count, when 916 passed Samphire Hoe on the 9th October 2011). A further 30 flew east past Mill Point the next day and only very small numbers were noted through November and December, with no sign of any early up-channel passage.



Canada Goose at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Brent Goose at Hythe Redoubt (Brian Harper)

Very rare vagrant (C)

Two flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 15th March (I. A. Roberts) and two were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 31st March (B. Harper), see photograph on page 9. These were only the tenth and eleventh records but there have now been sightings in seven of the last eight years as the species continues to become established in the county. All records have occurred between January and May.

Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

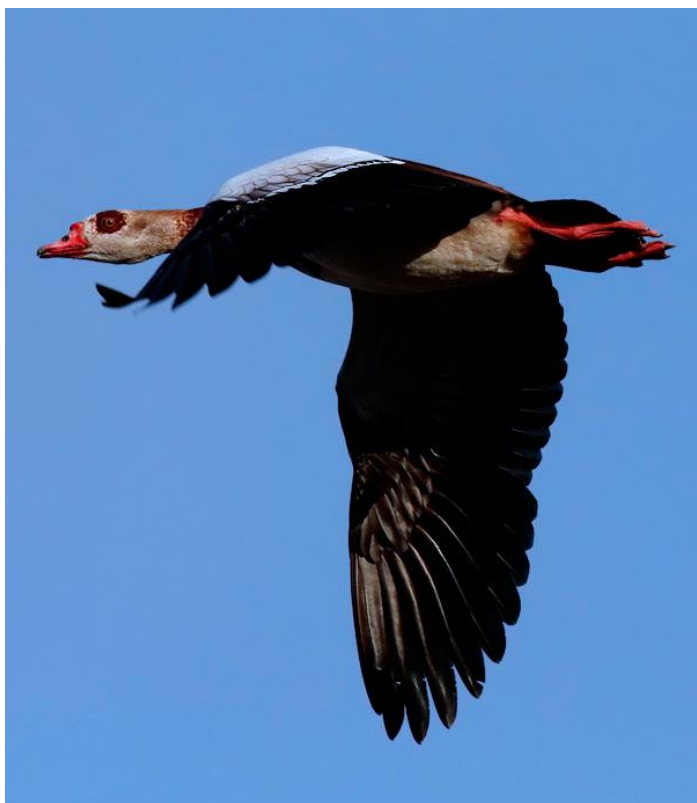
Winter visitor and passage migrant, may have bred on at least one occasion prior to 2004 (A)

In January one was seen at the Willop Basin on the 2nd, two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th, three flew west there on the 9th, two were at Nickolls Quarry on the 12th and one was at Samphire Hoe on the 21st.

Spring passage was noted from the 27th February when one flew east past Samphire Hoe, and this the first of a very good total of up to 74 seen heading up-channel. Noteworthy counts included 5 past Seabrook on the 3rd March, 7 past Samphire Hoe on the 17th March, 8 past there on the 2nd April, 9 past there on the 4th May and 12 east there on the 7th May, with the last two there on the 26th May. This total was significantly better than the mean for the previous decade of 39.

A long-staying individual was seen at Samphire Hoe on many dates between the 1st and 30th March and other lingering birds included 4 at Botolph's Bridge on the 4th March, 4 at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th March, 2 at the Willop Basin on the 26th March and 2 at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th March.

Autumn produced ten flying east past Hythe on the 24th September, four flying east past Mill Point on the 6th October, a good total of 26 flying east past Folkestone/Samphire Hoe on the 28th October, seven flying east past Mill Point the 29th October, nine flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 30th October and one at Samphire Hoe on the 18th November.



Egyptian Goose at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Shelduck at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident (C)

Most sightings again were from the woods in the Saltwood area but numbers appeared low with peak counts of just five at Folks' Wood and three at Chesterfield Wood. Elsewhere two at Beachborough Lakes on the 14th November and one flying south there the following day were the first records for the site.

Wigeon

Anas penelope

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In January a flock of eight flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th, with a female flying west there the next day and a female at Nickolls Quarry, with three (one drake, two females) at the Willop Basin on the 12th, whilst four flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 1st February and two flew east there on the 21st February.

A cold spell from the end of February into early March produced a small influx, with two east past Samphire Hoe, two offshore from Seabrook and six at the Willop Basin on the 26th February, a female on the west pond at Samphire Hoe from the 1st to the 3rd March, with seven offshore on the 2nd, three at the Willop Basin on the 3rd, increasing to five on the 5th, and one on the canal at Seabrook on the 4th March. There were no other sightings until the 5th May when a pair on the sea off Hythe on the 5th May constituted the latest ever spring record (the previous latest was a single at Nickolls Quarry on the 4th May 2015).

In autumn there was a notable movement on the 28th October, when a total of 33 flew east past Hythe/Folkestone and a flock of 50 were seen on the sea off Hythe Ranges, but otherwise very few were noted in the latter half of the year.



Mandarin at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)



Wigeon at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)

Gadwall

Anas strepera

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period a pair flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th January and pair were seen on the Willop Sewer on the 10th February. Spring produced two at Nickolls Quarry and four flying east past Seabrook on the 17th March, a pair flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th March and one at Donkey Street on the 12th April.

The only records from the late winter period involved 12 at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th October and four flying east past Hythe on the 25th November.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were peak counts of 60 at Chesterfield Wood on the 13th January and 62 at the Willop Basin on the 22nd February, with smaller numbers elsewhere including one flying south over Beachborough Lakes on the 11th January, two at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th February and eight flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th January.

A light spring passage comprised eight at Samphire Hoe on the 17th March, two flying east there on the 24th March, three there on the 30th March and two flying east there on the 6th April, whilst a pair were present at Beachborough Lakes between the 21st and 28th March, with one remaining until the 4th April.

Two drakes at Donkey Street on the 6th June were unusual as there have only been records in this month in seven previous years.

Up to six were at Samphire Hoe in September, with two there and up to two at Beachborough Lakes in October, whilst there were four at Nickolls Quarry and nine at Donkey Street on the 20th October and three flew east at sea on the 28th October. In the latter winter period there were up to 11 at Beachborough Lakes, 20 at Botolph's Bridge, 21 at Donkey Street and 31 at the Willop Basin, whilst coastal records comprised two flying east past Mill Point on the 19th November and four at Samphire Hoe on the 6th November.

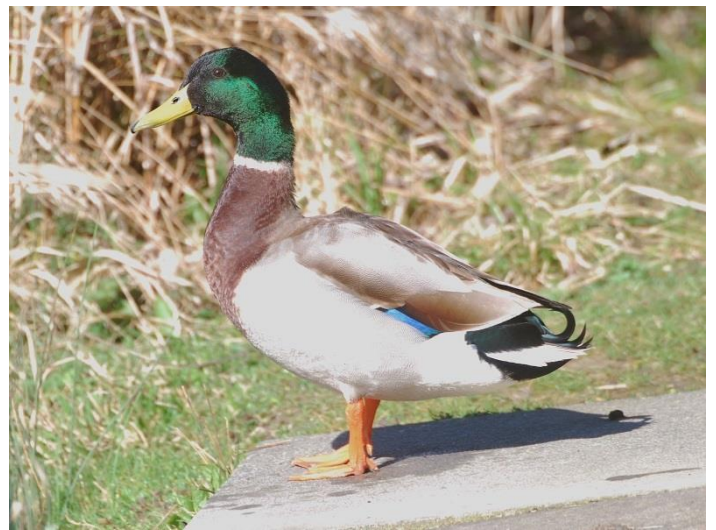
Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

Counts from the early winter period included up to 21 at Beachborough Lakes, 21 at Radnor Park (Folkestone), 30 at Chesterfield Wood, 30 on the canal at Hythe and 80 at the Willop Basin.

In the latter winter period counts of 123 at Botolph's Bridge on the 12th September, 75 there on the 6th October, 37 at Beachborough Lakes on the 22nd October, 100 at Donkey Street on the 2nd November, 58 at Nickolls Quarry on the 18th November and 100 at Botolph's Bridge on the 24th November were of note.



Teal at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Mallard at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)

Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In January nine flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 9th, with four flying west there on the 27th and a pair flying west the following day.

Spring passage involved a very good total of 44 passing east between the 23rd February and the 24th March, which was significant better than the mean for the previous ten years of 21. Counts included six past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd February, ten past there on the 26th February and 20 past there the following day.

In autumn two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th October and one flew east past Mill Point on the 20th November.

Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
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Rare migrant, mainly in spring, possibly bred in the past (A)

Two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th May (I. A. Roberts). The 28th area record.

Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only record from the early winter period related to one that flew west over Beachborough Lakes on the 17th January.

A drake flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd March was the first of an excellent spring passage, which also involved two east there on the 14th March, four at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th March, two off Princes Parade and 18 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th March and a good total of 32 flying east past the latter site on the 30th March. In April 11 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th, five were at Beachborough Lakes on the 11th, one flew west there the next day, when two were at Hythe Ranges and three flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th. The total of 84 was only surpassed in 2013 when 86 were logged.

In autumn one flew west over Beachborough Lakes on the 6th September, with one there on the 10th September before another two flew west there on the 26th November, and there were nine at Donkey Street on the 30th November, with up to four remaining until the 9th December.

Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

A pair were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th February, with a drake at Botolph's Bridge on the 6th and 10th March, and at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th March, and a pair at the latter site on the 9th April.

This was still a poor showing compared to the mean for the previous decade of 55 bird/days but was a welcome return after a blank year in 2017 (the first since regular recording began in 1985).

Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

One was on the Willop Sewer on the 2nd January, whilst at Nickolls Quarry there were seven on the 28th February, one on the 9th March and five on the 17th March. One on the sea off Hythe Ranges on the 12th April was an unusual record.

Up to four were seen at Beachborough Lakes on several dates between the 26th April and 27th June but there was no evidence of breeding noted.

In the late winter period up to two were present in the Beachborough Lakes and Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry areas in November/December.



Shoveler at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)



Pochard & Tufted Ducks at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
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Passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly summered but not since 2003 (A)

A drake flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 5th February, 2 drakes flew east there on the 18th March and a flock of seven were seen on the sea off Princes Parade on the 30th March.

Three were seen off Folkestone on the 15th November and singles flew east past Mill Point on the 19th and 23rd November.

Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

Two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April (M. Collins, B. Woolhouse). This was only the 12th area record. There were no sightings between 2000 and 2012 but there have been three since, at Samphire Hoe in 2013 and 2018 and Folkestone Harbour in 2017.

Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
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Non-breeding summer visitor, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Up to 50 were present in Hythe Bay during January and February, increasing to 86 on the 26th February and 105 on the 28th February before dispersing.

Spring passage was noted from the 10th March when small numbers began moving up-channel, and gathered passage from late March when 643 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 30th, with 140 east there the following day. April saw further counts of 540 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, 255 east there on the 6th, 650 east there on the 15th, 155 east there on the 22nd and 159 east there on the 27th. The spring total of at least 3,300 was the highest since 2005.

Summer records were few but did include a count of 200 on the sea off the Hythe Redoubt on the 17th June. Only small numbers were noted in the latter half of the year, with a peak of 65 off Samphire Hoe on the 31st August.

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only record related to three flying east past Mill Point on the 19th November.

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

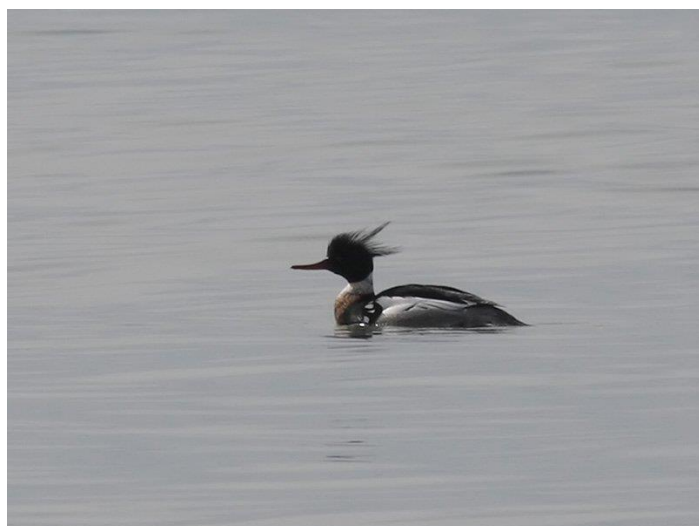
An immature/female flew east past Mill Point on the 20th November (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts). The 71st area record.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period one flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th January and another was noted there on the 15th February.

Spring passage involved one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd March, three east there on the 11th March, two east past Seabrook on the 30th March, two east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd April, one east past Seabrook and three at Samphire Hoe on the 6th April, one at Battery Point on the 8th April, one east past Hythe Ranges on the 12th April, two east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April, one east there on the 8th May and three east there on the 12th May. The total of 20 was considerably better than the mean for the previous decade of 11 and constituted the best tally since 2014.

Autumn produced two flying east past Mill Point on the 28th October, two east there on the 9th November, five east there on the 19th November, four east there on the 21st November and two flying west past the Willop Outfall on the 11th December, which was the best showing since 2013.



Red-breasted Merganser at Battery Point (Brian Harper)



Goosanders at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

A pair were seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 18th March.

A 'red-head' flew east past Mill Point on the 21st November, whilst two 'red-heads' frequented the West Hythe dam area on the 25th and 26th November (with one seen again on the 30th November) and two flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th November.

Another good year which continued the recent upward trend in sightings (see last year's report or the species account on the website for a chart of annual records since 1985).

Red-legged Partridge

<i>Alectoris rufa</i>

Breeding resident (C)

One in a garden in Laurel Close (Cheriton) on the 23rd March was an unexpected sighting. Two were present at Beachborough Lakes in March and April, with at least one noted there in May and June, and one was seen at Botolph's Bridge in April. This was another poor year which suggests that this partridge species may also be in decline locally.



Red-legged Partridge at Cheriton (Vincent Lloyd)



Pheasant at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Grey Partridge

<i>Perdix perdix</i>

Declining breeding resident (A)

Following the first sightings on the local section of the Romney Marsh for 12 years in 2017, there were another series of records this year involving a pair seen at Botolph's Bridge and Donkey Street in May, at the Willop Sewage Works in October and at Botolph's Bridge in November.

Elsewhere up to two were seen regularly at the usual haunt of Abbotscliffe between March and August and up to two were present in the Beachborough Park area between April and August.

Quail

<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>

Very rare vagrant (A)

One was heard calling as it flew over Nickolls Quarry at 01:00 on the 10th June (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts) and one was heard calling for about five minutes at Beachborough Lakes on the 21st June (S. Tomlinson). These were only the fourth and fifth modern records (i.e. since 1980).

Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
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Breeding resident (C)

As always very few counts of this species were received, with a peak of just 11 at Beachborough Park in October. It tends to be scarce at Samphire Hoe but there were records in March, October and November.

Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Numbers in the early winter period were relatively low, with counts of 68 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th January, 43 flying east there the next day, 50 flying west on the 25th January and 40 flying west past the Willop Outfall on the 3rd February.

Spring passage was noted from the 27th February, when 174 flew east past Seabrook, with 170 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd March and 232 heading east there the following day. Further counts in March included 90 east past Samphire Hoe on the 5th, 47 east there on the 6th, 52 east past Hythe on the 24th and 47 east past Samphire Hoe on the 29th. Numbers decreased during April but up-channel movements of 30 past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, 39 there on the 4th and 30 there on the 15th were of note.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Latest/Earliest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Departure	13 th May	10 th May	+3	2 nd May	+11	6 th June 2006
Arrival	24 th Sep	15 th Sep	+9	3 rd Oct	-9	7 th Sep 1997

Counts from the second half of the year were disappointingly low.

Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>
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Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring, and occasional winter visitor (A)

A single flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th March, whilst in April two flew east there on the 6th, one flew east there on the 9th and two flew east there on the 28th. A further two flew east there on the 11th May. The total of eight was a slight improvement on the previous ten years of 6.4.

Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>
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Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One was seen on the sea between Sandgate and Seabrook on the 9th April (N. C. Frampton) and one flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April (S. Cutt). The 33rd and 34th area records.

Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>
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Breeding visitor and passage migrant (A)

Birds had begun to arrive back at the cliffs from late 2017 and three or four pairs bred at both Capel-le-Ferne and Samphire Hoe.

There was a notable movement of 65 heading east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th January, with 29 east there the next day, and further counts of 20 flying east there on the 5th February and 40 east there on the 2nd March. Also of note was a 'blue phase' individual which was seen off Samphire Hoe on the 25th March. Very few were noted between July and late November when breeding birds began to return to the cliffs.

Scarce passage migrant (A)

One flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st April and six flew east there on the 28th April. In May at least nine were seen from Mill Point/Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, one flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 5th, two flew east there on the 7th, eight flew east there on the 8th, a flock of six flew east there the next day, seven flew east there on the 11th, five (2 east, 3 west) were seen there on the 15th and a final single at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd.

After a blank year in 2017 this was some recovery, with the total of 46 being the second best ever (only exceeded in 1999 when 89 were logged).



Red-throated Diver at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Fulmar at Folkestone Pier (Brian Harper)

Passage migrant and non-breeding visitor at all times of year (A)

Large numbers were present in the early winter period, including counts of 350 off Samphire Hoe on the 8th January, 320 there on the 3rd February, 350 there on the 5th February and 200 off Princes Parade on the 26th February. Spring saw 279 flying east past Princes Parade on the 30th March, 190 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd April and 100 flying west there on the 29th April.

Small numbers were noted offshore throughout the summer and there were no counts of note in autumn until an excellent total of c.800 were seen off Hythe ahead of an advancing frontal system on the 23rd September (there has only been one larger count, when 985 flew west past Mill Point on the 9th November 2012). Subsequent counts of 144 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th November and 160 flying west past Mill Point on the 7th December were also of note.

Non-breeding visitor at all times of year (A)

The exceptional events of last year were not only repeated but far exceeded. The winter roost at Dungeness continues to increase in numbers and dispersing birds are seen heading up-channel to their feeding grounds in the morning and later returning.

The peak count in January was a new record total of 3,445 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th (which was more than double the previous high of 1,471 set in February 2017). Some large groups congregated to feed off Folkestone Pier and Samphire Hoe during the month, including a flock of 1,550 off the latter site on the 14th.

February saw another new record count, when 3,535 flew east past Seabrook on the 6th. High numbers remained in early March, including 2,165 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and 1,438 east past Seabrook the next day, before slowly dwindling during the month.

Numbers increased again during December, with 340 off Sandgate on the 13th and 1,020 flying east past Seabrook on the 25th, before yet another new record count was set on the 23rd, when an incredible 7,000 were seen off Hythe.



Gannet at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Cormorants at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Passage migrant and winter visitor, with occasional summer records (A)

Two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th January, with one east there the next day, when a single was seen off Folkestone Beach and one was seen from Copt Point on the 11th January. Two were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 17th January, with further singles there on the 21st and 22nd February, and 2nd March.

A flock of six were present off Samphire Hoe on the 20th March, with singles offshore there on the 29th March, 18th to 19th May, 10th July and 21st August, before three were present on the 31st August, with two on the 6th September and further singles on the 11th September and 30th October.

Elsewhere there was one at Mill Point on the 1st November, with two there on the 23rd November, four off Sandgate on the 26th November and one off Abbotscliffe on the 22nd December.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Non-breeding visitor at any time of year, now regular in winter and on passage (A)

In the early part of the year there up to two at West Hythe, two at Copt Point and singles at Botolph's Bridge, Beachborough Park and Samphire Hoe. There were no sightings after 7th March until three singles were noted in April: at the Willop Basin on the 12th, Botolph's Bridge on the 15th and Samphire Hoe on the 16th April. There were further singles at Donkey Street on the 9th and 25th May, and Hythe Ranges on the 6th June before a flock of eight were seen at Donkey Street on the 23rd June.

Up to two were noted regularly on the shore between Copt Point and Samphire Hoe from the 24th August, with larger counts of three on the 23rd October and four on the 10th November, whilst an additional flock of seven flew east there on the 14th October. Elsewhere one was at Hythe Ranges on the 28th October, with one flying west over Beachborough Lakes on the 14th November, two flying east past Mill Point on the 19th November and up to two in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area in November and December.

Very rare vagrant (A)

Singles were seen at West Hythe dam on the 5th March (I. A. Roberts), Botolph's Bridge on the 15th April (B. Harper) and flying east over Donkey Street on the 18th November (I. A. Roberts), whilst one was present at the latter site from the 26th to the 28th December, when it was joined by a second individual (D. Brown, C. Gillard, B. Harper *et al*).

These were the only the 11th to 14th area records but the species has now been recorded in eight of the last nine years and 2018 was the first year to produce four sightings.



Little Egret at Donkey Street (Ian Roberts)



Great White Egret at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

At least 11 nests were occupied in Lympe Park Wood, where the population appears to be stable with 11 to 13 pairs noted in each of the last ten years.

There was little evidence of any passage, though one was noted arriving in off the sea at Copt Point on the 8th July and on the 14th October one flew out to sea from Abbotscliffe and two flew west at Capel-le-Ferne.

Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

In the early winter period there were sightings at the Willop Basin, West Hythe dam, Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry and Beachborough Lakes. One appeared at Samphire Hoe on the 17th April and was joined by a second bird on the 7th May but there were no signs of a breeding attempt and neither was seen after the 17th May when dry conditions had caused the pond to shrink.

One was seen regularly at Beachborough Lakes from the 18th September, increasing to two from the 12th October and four from the 14th November. At least five were present in the Botolph's Bridge area in the latter part of the year and two were seen on the canal at Seabrook on the 8th December.

Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

Very few were noted in January but numbers increased during February, with counts of 150 off the Willop Outfall on the 3rd, 55 off Folkestone Pier on the 9th, 46 off Samphire Hoe on the 15th and 106 off Seabrook on the 27th. In March 155 were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, 67 flew east there the next day, 144 flew east past Seabrook on the 11th and 90 were seen off Copt Point on the 16th March.

Up to three were noted at Beachborough Lakes from the 21st March raising hopes that might breed but they were last seen flying off to the east on the 29th March. Breeding probably occurred at Nickolls Quarry but no evidence was noted.

In the late winter period small numbers were noted offshore, with movements including six flying east past Mill Point on the 19th and 20th November, whilst one was seen on the canal at Seabrook on the 8th December and up to ten were present at Nickolls Quarry in the latter part of the year.



Grey Heron at Donkey Street (Ian Roberts)



Little Egret at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One was seen on the sea off Princes Parade on the 27th March (B. Harper), with three seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 12th April (S. Cutt) and two on the sea off Folkestone Beach the following day (O. Leyshon).

These were the 47th to 49th area records and this was the first year to produce three sightings since 2011.

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

Two were seen off the sea off Princes Parade on the 13th April (B. Harper), five drifted east at sea past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April (M. Collins) and one was seen on the sea off Mill Point on the 19th April (B. Harper).

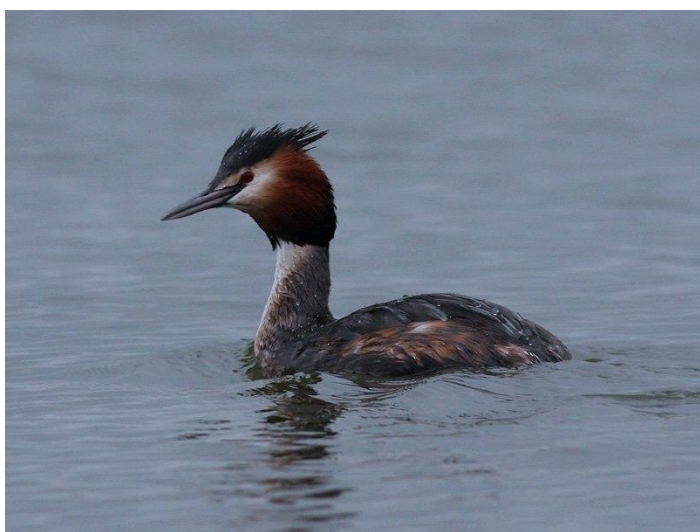
These were the 19th to 21st area records and 2018 was the first year to produce three records.

Scarce passage migrant (A)

One flew east over Samphire Hoe on the 11th June (see photograph on page 15), one flew west over Horn Street on the 13th July, one was seen over Samphire Hoe on the 14th July, one flew south over Newington on the 14th August and one flew west over Hythe on the 6th September.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	11 th Jun	17 th May	+25	19 th May	+23	3 rd May 2013
Departure	6 th Sep	-	-	4 th Sep	+2	15 th Oct 1995

A total of 135 have now been recorded in the area in the 29 years since 1990 (average of 4.7 per year).



Great Crested Grebe at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Black-necked Grebes at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Increasingly regular migrant, mainly in spring, but recorded in all months of the year (A, C)

The first of the year was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 11th January and one flew east over Samphire Hoe and Abbotscliffe on the 15th February, whilst in March singles flew west over Beachborough Lakes on the 12th and Abbotscliffe on the 27th.

One seen over Asholt Wood on the 1st April preceded a significant influx from mid-month, when two were seen over Folkestone Warren on the 15th, one was seen over Saltwood on the 18th, one flew north over Beachborough Park and two flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 19th and a record count of **15** flew north over Beachborough Park on the 20th, with further sightings at Seabrook and West Hythe (two). The 21st produced singletons over the Golden Valley in Cheriton and Samphire Hoe whilst three were seen over Park Farm, Folkestone on the 23rd April.

May produced one flying over Cheriton on the 6th, a flock of seven flying west over Samphire Hoe on the 9th, singles over Beachborough Park on the 9th and 10th, one over Kiln Wood on the 15th, two flying north over Cheriton on the 22nd, and singles over Folkestone and Horn Street on the 23rd, when two flew north over Beachborough Park.

There were further singles in June at Horn Street on the 7th, and Beachborough Park on the 14th and 20th but none in the latter half of the year.

The total of 28 records involving at least 54 birds was another excellent tally.

Very rare vagrant (A/C)

An immature was seen on the cliff edge at Abbotscliffe on the early afternoon of the 14th January before it took flight (J. Bowe). The third area record and the first since 2012.

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

A juvenile and a third-winter male roosted at Nickolls Quarry on the 1st January and a female appeared to be roosting there regularly, with sightings on several dates in January and February. Presumably the same sub-adult male was seen at Donkey Street on the 5th January and a male was also seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th February.

Spring migrants involved one flying west at Beachborough Lakes on the 7th March, one flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 16th March, one at Botolph's Bridge on the 14th April, one at Nickolls Quarry on the 8th May and one flying north over Horn Street on the 10th May.

Autumn migrants comprised one flying out to sea from Samphire Hoe on the 2nd September, one flying west over Horn Street on the 26th October and one flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd November. Two appeared to roost at Nickolls Quarry on the 23rd October but there were no further records there in the latter winter period.

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

A ring-tail was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 25th March (B. Harper) and one flew south over Beachborough Lakes on the 14th November (S. Tomlinson).

These were the 45th and 46th area records. Despite its national decline there have now been sightings in the last nine consecutive years.



Red Kite at Cheriton (Brian Harper)



Hen Harrier at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Very rare vagrant (A)

One flew south-west over Seabrook on the 5th March (P. Howe). This was only the 13th area record but the sixth in the last eight years. The increasing frequency of sightings is presumably related to the improving national position: the latest 'Rare breeding birds in the UK' report (Holling *et al*, 2018) gives a figure of "over 700 pairs which is by far the highest total ever reported".

Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Ones and twos were seen at many sites throughout the year. There was little evidence of any passage but one was seen arriving in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 4th May.

Common Buzzard

Buteo buteo

Formerly scarce, but has bred since 2001 and continues to increase, also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were widespread records throughout the year. In spring some coastal records may have been indicative of passage, including five at Folkestone Warren on the 25th March, three over Folkestone on the 5th April and four at Samphire Hoe on the 18th April and 3rd May.

A flock of 16 flying north over Hythe seafront on the 28th August was noteworthy, whilst five flying east at Seabrook on the 24th October and three heading east over Hythe on the 2nd November may also have been migrants.



Sparrowhawk at Shorncliffe Camp (Brian Harper)



Buzzard at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Scarce passage migrant (A)

One which flew in/west over Hythe on the 28th May was later seen over Donkey Street. In autumn singles were seen flying west over Folkestone on the 21st August, west past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd August and west over Abbotscliffe on the 10th September.

A welcome return after a blank 2017 and a slightly above average showing: there have now been 85 records in the area in the 29 years since 1990 (2.9 per year).

Kestrel

<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Widespread in small numbers. A female appeared to arrive in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 9th May, whilst a peak count of 13 there on the 16th September was noteworthy.



Osprey at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Kestrel at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Merlin

<i>Falco columbarius</i>

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A).

In the early part of the year singles were seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 10th February and hunting offshore of Samphire Hoe on the 16th March.

The latter winter period produced singles at Donkey Street on the 20th October, arriving in off the sea at Mill Point and Samphire Hoe on the 28th October, at Nickolls Quarry on the 13th November, at Donkey Street again on the 18th November and at Seabrook on the 29th December.

The previous decade saw a mean of 6.1 records per year so the total of eight was a little above average.

Hobby

<i>Falco subbuteo</i>

A summer visitor with breeding suspected in many years but not proven until 2014, also a passage migrant (A)

The first sighting was at Botolph's Bridge on the relatively date of the 28th April, with the next records on the 3rd May when two arrived in off the sea at Samphire Hoe and one was at Beachborough Park, with two at the latter site on the 9th May. There was a noticeable arrival from the 23rd May, when singles were at Horn Street and Folkestone Downs, with further singles at Beachborough Park and Church Hougham the next day, and one at Donkey Street on the 25th May.

A pair bred again in Lympe Park Wood, where at least one, probably two juveniles were seen on the 23rd August and these presumably accounted for summer records in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area.

There were regular sightings in the Beachborough Park area between June and September and a pair probably bred nearby (possibly in Asholt Wood where breeding has been suspected before), whilst a pair may also have bred in the Horn Street area (where breeding possibly occurred in the last two years) as there were several records from Seabrook and western Cheriton between July and September.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	28 th Apr	26 th Apr	+2	22 nd Apr	+6	9 th Apr 1998
Departure	24 th Sep	12 th Oct	-18	2 nd Oct	-8	22 nd Oct 2001

Sightings at Abbotscliffe on the 30th July, Samphire Hoe on the 6th August and Folkestone on the 27th August were likely to have been migrants. The last was seen at Cheriton on the rather early date of 24th September.

Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
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Resident breeder until 1960 and again from the 1990s, also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were regular records from the cliffs between Folkestone and Dover throughout the year, with two pairs present and both probably bred. One of the juvenile birds was seen flying out to sea towards France on the 17th October.

Away from the cliffs there were singles at Donkey Street on the 2nd January, Hythe on the 5th January, Willop Basin on the 17th February, Seabrook on the 3rd March, Botolph's Bridge on the 10th April and Horn Street on the 22nd May. In the latter part of the year there were further sightings at Horn Street on the 2nd October, Willop Basin on the 27th October, Mill Point on the 30th October, Beachborough Park on the 12th and 16th November, and 13th December, and Donkey Street on the 3rd and 27th December.

Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period at least four were present along the canal between Hythe and Seabrook, with at least two at Beachborough Lakes, Nickolls Quarry, and along the canal between Hythe and West Hythe. The first returning bird was at Beachborough Lakes on the 25th September and there were regular records there and in the Botolph's Bridge/ Nickolls Quarry area.

Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

One was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 21st and 22nd March (S. Tomlinson). Unfortunately attempts to arrange public access to the site did not prove possible. Although present for two days it was incredible elusive and only seen briefly on both.

This was only the second area record and the first for nearly 150 years. The first area (and third county) record was documented in the Zoologist (Gordon, 1871): "last month [October 1870] Baillon's Crake, three Grey Phalaropes and the Common Cormorant were taken in the Hythe Canal by Mr. F. Young".

Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
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Breeding resident (A)

There were widespread records but the only double-figure counts came from West Hythe (where 25 were noted on the 20th January), Seabrook (where there were 11 on the 8th March) and Beachborough Lakes (where there was a peak of 12 in December).

Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

In the early part of the year the peak counts were four in the Willop Sewer area, five at Beachborough Lakes and 13 at Nickolls Quarry.

A single pair bred at Beachborough Lakes and raised two broods (8 chicks fledged from the first and 6 from the second), whilst birds were also present at Nickolls Quarry and the Willop Sewer in spring/summer and may have bred.

Up to ten remained at Beachborough Lakes until the year end, whilst up to 11 were present at Nickolls Quarry and up to 12 were in the Willop Sewer area.



Peregrine at Samphire Hoe (Roger Pearce)



Moorhen at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)

Breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor (A)

Small numbers were seen regularly on the shore between the Hythe Redoubt and the Willop Outfall in January and February, with ones and twos occasionally flying past Samphire Hoe. A pair were again present at Nickolls Quarry from March and may have bred.

A light spring passage was noted in March and gathered pace in April, when counts included 18 passing Samphire Hoe on the 20th, 16 passing there the next day and a flock of 29 passing Hythe Ranges on the 28th, before further counts in May included 17 passing Samphire Hoe on the 4th and 16 passing there on the 8th. The total of around 150 was the best since 2003.

Returning migrants were noted in small numbers from July and birds were again wintering between the Hythe Redoubt and the Willop Outfall, with a peak count of 11 on the 11th December.

Scarce migrant (A)

Four flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th March, two were seen on the lake at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th March and nine (flocks of six and three) flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th March. A further single flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st April. The 67th to 70th area records.

Formerly a breeding summer visitor and scarce passage migrant. Now a very rare vagrant but bred again in 2018 (A)

A pair were found at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th May and were seen displaying on the 7th May. The female was later seen sitting on eggs and two chicks successfully fledged. One was seen at nearby Donkey Street on several dates in May and June, presumably the foraging male, and the entire family were seen there on the 13th July which was the last sighting (see front cover) (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts).

This was the first nesting attempt locally since 2006 and seems likely to be the very last as the area is being developed as housing.



Avocet at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Little Ringed Plover at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Occasional breeding species, also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period the regular roost at Folkestone Beach held a peak of 14 birds on the 7th January and small numbers were noted on the shore between the Willop Outfall and Hythe Ranges.

Spring migrants involved a single at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd May and 29 flying east there on the 25th May.

One was seen at Hythe Redoubt on 17th June which suggested that breeding may have been taking place on nearby Hythe Ranges though this could not be confirmed.

In autumn one flew past Hythe on the 21st August and six flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th October. The regular roost at Folkestone Beach held up to 17 in October, increasing to 27 from November and 15 were seen at Hythe Ranges on the 9th December.

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

A flock were wintering again in the Postling Wents area, with a peak of 39 there on the 10th February. Cold weather from the end of that month led to a small arrival elsewhere, with 14 at Church Hougham on the 27th February (with eight remaining the next day) and singles at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, 7th and 21st March, with three seen arriving in off the sea there on the 21st March.

Six were present at Abbotscliffe on the 1st October, one was seen in the Donkey Street area on several dates between 20th October and the end of the year, three flew east past Fisherman's Beach (Hythe) on the 28th October and one flew south over Beachborough Park on the 16th November.

Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
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Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor (A)

There was no repeat of the record numbers recorded in spring 2017 and the only sightings from the first half of the year involved singles at the Hythe Redoubt on the 18th March and at Samphire Hoe on the 10th April.

The only record from the latter half of the year involved four flying east past Mill Point on the 28th October.

Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
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Occasional breeding species (most recently in 2018, formerly numerous), also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Numbers were very low in January with a peak of just 50 at the Willop Basin on the 4th but increased during February and there were c.100 at Hillhurst Farm on the 2nd, 180 at the Willop Basin the next day, 150 near Postling Wents on the 10th and 207 at Hillhurst Farm on the 11th.

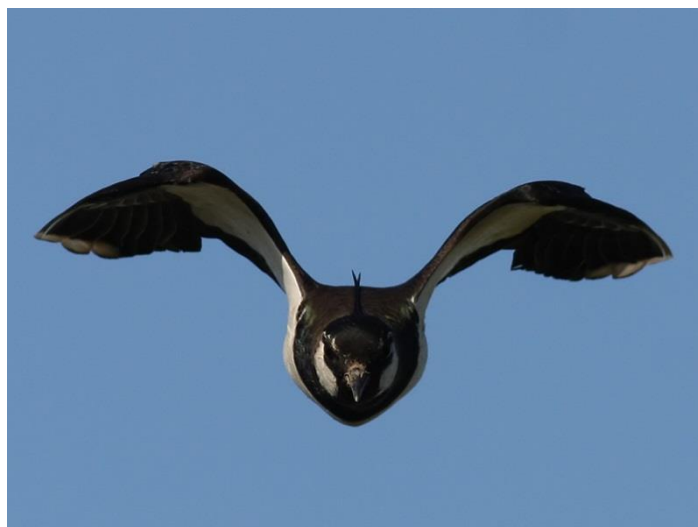
Cold weather from the end of the month led to a small displacement of birds, with one at Samphire Hoe and two flying west along the beach at Hythe on the 28th February one flying over Park Farm, Folkestone on the 1st March and one flying flew past Seabrook on the 3rd March, whilst "a fair number" were noted at Port Lympe and at the Willop Basin the flock increased to 304 on the 5th before gradually dispersing.

A pair were present in the Donkey Street area from late April until June and bred successfully, raising three young (the first successful breeding locally since 2011). The first returning birds were also seen in June, with three at Abbotscliffe on the 11th, one flying east at Samphire Hoe the following day and one at Copt Point on the 29th.

Up to 60 were present in the Donkey Street/Willop Sewer area from early November, increasing to a peak of 101 on the 24th November. Elsewhere there were 20 near Hope Farm (Capel-le-Ferne) on the 17th November and four flew east over Beachborough Lakes on the 19th November.



Golden Plover at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Lapwing at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Passage migrant (A)

In stark contrast to the record numbers recorded in spring 2017, there were no sightings at all in the first half of this year. The only records in autumn related to a total of 17 that flew east at sea on the 28th October (with eight past Hythe and nine past Mill Point).

Sanderling

Calidris alba

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Up to 14 were seen regularly at the Willop Outfall in the early winter period but the only migrants noted were two flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th May. Up to ten were present at the Willop Outfall again in November and December.

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period birds were noted at the Willop Outfall (one in January), Hythe Redoubt (three on several dates between January and April), Hythe (up to three regularly between January and April, increasing to four on the 27th April, with the last on the 7th May) and Battery Point (two on several dates between January and March, with three present on the 28th April).

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Departure	7 th May	9 th May	-2	5 th May	+2	10 th May 2009
Arrival	4 th Nov	25 th Oct	+10	30 th Oct	+5	30 th Sep 1984

The first returning birds were seen at Hythe and the Hythe Redoubt on the 4th November, with another at Samphire Hoe the next day. Numbers increased to three at Hythe by the 7th November and at least two remained until the year end, whilst there were others at the Willop Outfall on the 13th November and Battery Point on the 7th December.



Sanderling at the Willop Outfall (Brian Harper)



Purple Sandpiper at Hythe (Phil Smith)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Four flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th January but there were no further sightings until March when five were at the Willop Outfall on the 4th (with one remaining the following day) and one was at Samphire Hoe on the 17th. A very light spring passage comprised a total of 18 flying east past Samphire Hoe between the 4th and 22nd May, with a peak count of seven on the 14th, and a single at Hythe Ranges on the 12th May.

One was seen at the Willop Outfall on the 24th September, seven flew east past Mill Point on the 28th October, with three flying east there the following day, another was at the Willop Outfall on the 13th November, two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th November and one flew east past Mill Point on the 20th November.

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One was at the Willop Basin from the 5th to the 7th March (I. A. Roberts, R. K. Norman) and two were seen briefly there on the 11th March (B. Harper)

The 32nd and 33rd area records but the first since 2015. Seven of the last nine have been at the Willop Basin.

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Up to three were at the Willop Basin in January and two were found at Donkey Street on the 24th March, with at least one remaining until the 21st April. Away from the marsh there were singles at Beachborough Lakes on the 26th March and 26th April.

Beachborough Lakes produced further records in autumn, when up to three were present between the 23rd and 25th October, whilst up to two were wintering in the Donkey Street area.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There was a good count of 52 at the Willop Basin on the 12th January but numbers dwindled thereafter as the site began to dry up. Small numbers were noted at Botolph's Bridge, Donkey Street and Nickolls Quarry in the early winter period, whilst away from the marsh there were singles at Samphire Hoe on the 17th January and Beachborough Lakes on the 25th January. Another was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 7th February before cold weather at the end of the month led to an arrival of three there on the 28th (with at least two remaining until the 3rd March).

One was at Abbotscliffe on the 7th March and there were singles at Beachborough Lakes on the several dates between the 21st March and the 4th April, with singles at Samphire Hoe on the 26th March and 12th April, and one at Hythe Ranges on the 13th April. A notably late bird flew west at Beachborough Lakes on the 24th May (with the only later record being one at the same site on the 25th May last year).

In autumn there were three at Beachborough Lakes from the 3rd September, increasing to 5 between the 11th and 21st September, with up to two remaining until the end of the year. Single migrants were noted at Abbotscliffe on the 5th September, 10th October and 24th October, whilst numbers in the late winter period included up to six in the Donkey Street area and up to seven at Nickolls Quarry.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There was a peak of six at Kiln Wood on the 27th January and one was at Scene Wood on the 18th February. One at Samphire Hoe on the 1st March was part of a small cold weather displacement of waders and a spring migrant flew north at Abbotscliffe on the 22nd March.

Autumn migrants were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 28th October and Abbotscliffe on the 17th November, whilst singles were seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 22nd November, 6th December and 17th December, with three there on the 28th December, and two were seen at Paraker Wood on the 28th December.



Dunlin at Hythe Redoubt (Brian Harper)



Snipe at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)

Rare passage migrant (A)

A flock of ten flew that east past Samphire Hoe Point on the 24th March (I. A. Roberts) was only the fourth double-figure count so the total of approximately 150 that flew west there (and were also noted at Dungeness) on the 8th May (I. A. Roberts) was truly remarkable (the previous record count was 29 that flew west at Battery Point on the 6th May 2013). The 31st and 32nd area records.

Passage migrant, mainly in spring (A)

Early March saw some cold weather movement with 11 flying east past Seabrook on the 1st, 23 at Samphire Hoe flying east past on the 2nd and three flying east there the next day.

Spring passage involved a modest total of 72 moving up-channel between the 29th April and the 9th May, with a peak of 61 on the 29th April, and was well below the mean for the previous ten years of just under 190.

Passage migrant, mainly in spring (A)

Spring passage involved an excellent total of about 320 moving up-channel between the 10th April and 26th May, which was the best tally since 2001 and a significant improvement on the mean for the previous decade of 130.

Counts included 27 past Samphire Hoe on the 5th May, a very good total of 71 past there the next day (there have only been seven larger spring movements), 56 past there on the 7th, 41 past there on the 8th and 20 past there on the 11th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	10 th Apr	16 th Apr	-6	13 th Apr	-3	25 th Mar 2011
Departure	26 th Aug	11 th Aug	+15	28 th Aug	-2	12 th Nov 2013

Autumn passage was typically light and involved singles at Samphire Hoe on the 8th and 21st August and two flying east past Hythe on the 26th August.

Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Up to two were seen regularly in the Willop Basin area between January and March, whilst one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th January before cold weather led to subsequent sightings there on the 3rd and 7th March. Further records from Samphire Hoe of birds heading up-channel on the 15th March, 24th March (three), 25th March, 2nd April and 17th April may have related to spring migrants. There was also an April sighting at the Willop Basin, on the 3rd.

A returning migrant flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd July, whilst one flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 21st August, two flew east past Hythe on the 27th September, one was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 4th October and one flew east at Mill Point on the 29th October.

Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
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Passage migrant, occasionally overwinters, most recently in 2008 (A)

The first, one at Hythe Ranges on the 12th April, whilst a day later than last year still equalled the fourth earliest ever arrival and two at Botolph's Bridge on the 15th April were also relatively early. However there were no further sightings until May when there were singles at Nickolls Quarry on the 9th, Hythe Redoubt on the 12th and Seabrook on the 13th, before a significant arrival on the 24th involved two at Donkey Street, three at Samphire Hoe and seven at Beachborough Lakes. Further singles were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 25th May and the relatively late date of 3rd June (there have only been two later spring records, however returning birds have been noted from as early as 28th June). The spring total of 20 bird/days was somewhat better than the average for the previous ten years of 13.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	12 th Apr	11 th Apr	+1	20 th Apr	-8	4 th Mar 2013*
Departure	30 th Oct	11 th Aug	+80	18 th Sep*	+42	Several wintered

Autumn passage involved a total of at least 13 recorded between the 31st July and the end of September, including a count of seven at Samphire Hoe on the 14th August, and there was a notably late individual at Samphire Hoe between the 26th and 30th October. The total of 14 was an improvement on last year and more in line with the mean for the previous ten years of 17.

Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Up to two were wintering in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street/Nickolls Quarry area from 2017 until mid-April, with three at Nickolls Quarry on the 3rd March. There were subsequent singles at Donkey Street on the 21st April and the

particularly late date of 9th May (equalling the previous latest, at Nickolls Quarry in 1958). The only record away from the marsh involved one flying west over Beachborough Lakes on the 15th February.

Just 39 days after the late spring record the first returning bird was seen at Donkey Street on the 17th June, and was followed by two there on the 3rd July, one at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th July and one flying out to sea from Hythe on the 3rd August.

At the latter end of the year up to three were wintering in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area.

Greenshank

<i>Tringa nebularia</i>

Scarce passage migrant (A)

Two were seen at Donkey Street on the 24th May with one there on the 26th May.



Common Sandpiper at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Greenshanks at Donkey Street (Ian Roberts)

Redshank

<i>Tringa tetanus</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there was one at Botolph's Bridge, up to six at Folkestone Harbour and up to 13 at the Willop Basin. The only indication of spring passage involved one at Donkey Street on the 29th May.

A migrant was seen on the rock groyne opposite Stade Street (Hythe) on the 7th October, whilst up to eight were wintering in Folkestone Harbour from late October. Elsewhere one was note at Botolph's Bridge on the 24th November.

Turnstone

<i>Arenaria interpres</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Birds were present in the early winter period at the Willop Outfall, Hythe Redoubt, Hythe and Folkestone Harbour but there were no counts of note. A light spring passage involved five flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd May and one flying east there on the 25th May.

The first returning bird was noted at Hythe on the 3rd August and up to 12 were wintering there at the end of the year, with up to 31 at the Willop Outfall.

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring (A)

A flock of six flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th May and three flew east there on the 13th May, giving a total of nine for the spring. The mean for the previous decade was 17 but there is considerable variation between years, with 51 in 2017 but none at all in 2015. A good passage of "Poms" is very dependent on weather conditions being perfect at just the right time.

Passage migrant (A)

A notably early individual flew east past Hythe on the 30th March (only the fifth to be recorded in this month) and there were no further sightings until the 17th April when two flew east past Samphire Hoe, with two east past Folkestone Pier the next day and singles east past Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe on the 19th April. Four more were noted heading east past Samphire Hoe in April.

Counts in May included six east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th, five east there the following day, six east there on the 11th and four east there on the 13th. The total of 35 was the best since 2008 and a significant improvement on the mean for the previous ten springs of around 15.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	30 th Mar	29 th Apr	-30	15 th Apr	-16	14 th Mar 2016*
Departure	23 rd Sep	18 th Oct	-25	17 th Oct	-24	21 st Nov 2002

In autumn singles were seen from Copt Point on the 14th August and Hythe on the 26th August before a very good total of 21 flew west past Hythe on the 23rd September. This was the third highest ever count (after 30 west past Hythe on the 8th October 2014 and 22 east past Samphire Hoe on the 30th April 2008) and ensured that the autumn tally (23) was also in excess of the ten year mean of around 17.

Very rare vagrant (A)

A fine adult was watched as it chased terns and even landed on the sea briefly off Hythe on the evening of the 24th May (I. A. Roberts) before it was later seen heading east past Mill Point (B. Harper). Having previously been seen at Dungeness it was subsequently tracked along the east coast of Kent as it passed Kingsdown, Walmer and Deal.

A juvenile was seen heading west past Hythe ahead of a large belt of rain in the early afternoon of the 10th November (S. McMinn).

These were only the 9th and 10th area records and the first since 2006. The only previous year to produce two sightings was 1998.

Passage migrant (A)

Following the record winter count of six in December 2017, there were exceptional numbers of Great Skuas noted off Samphire Hoe between January and early March. These included a new record winter count of seven flying east on the 7th January, six heading east the next day, three east on the 9th January, three east on the 3rd February and four east on the 6th February. Elsewhere one was seen from Folkestone Pier on the 9th February.

The bird/day total for the period to 7th March was 42, though this did include one bird that lingered offshore between the 22nd and the 28th February. That the total number ever recorded in the months of January to March prior to this year was 28 puts this incredible influx into some context.

There was also a strong spring passage with a total of 34 heading east past Samphire Hoe between mid-April and mid-May, including counts of nine on the 17th April and eight on the 21st April and 2nd May. Only 2012 has produced higher numbers in this season (with 48).

In autumn five were seen off Hythe on the 23rd September, whilst singles flew past Hythe on the 17th November and Mill Point on the 21st November.

The total for the year therefore (83) was the highest ever and far exceeded the mean for the previous decade of 24.

Kittiwake

<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Very good numbers were present during the early winter period, including an excellent total of 304 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th January (there have only been three larger winter counts), a further 103 flying east there on the 14th January, 100 flying east there on the 5th February, 112 east there the next day and 100 east there on the 23rd February.

Spring passage included counts of 65 east past Samphire Hoe on the 25th March and 32 east there on the 27th April with small numbers noted until the end of May.

Autumn counts included 38 flying east past Hythe on the 20th November and 60 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd November.

Black-headed Gull

<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Large numbers were present in the early winter period but the highest count received was of 725 in fields around Capel-le-Ferne on the 1st February. In spring there were 130 at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th March and small numbers were noted moving up-channel between March and May, with a peak count of 30 past Samphire Hoe on the 9th May.

The only three figure count received from the latter half of the year involved 150 at Beachborough Lakes on the 6th December.

Little Gull

<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

An adult flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 25th January and a first-winter was seen offshore there on the 2nd March. Spring passage comprised an adult flying east past Hythe on the 17th March, an adult flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th April, another flying east there on the 16th April and four heading east there on the 19th April.

In autumn two flew east past Mill Point on the 28th October, one flew east past Hythe on the 20th November, four were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 22nd November, one was seen off Folkestone Pier the following day and one flew east past Fisherman's Beach (Hythe) on the 25th November.

The total of 18 was very close to the mean for the previous decade of 20.

Increasing winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in summer (A)

There were widespread records in the early winter period but the only notable count received was of 93 at Beachborough Park on the 31st January. There was some evidence of a small easterly passage in spring, between mid-March and mid-May, including a count of ten adults passing Samphire Hoe on the 20th April.

As usual very few were noted between mid-May and the end of June before numbers began to build again. At least 300 were hawking ants over Hythe on the 24th July, 283 flew east past Seabrook on the 2nd August, around 820 were at Copt Point on the 4th August and 300 were at Capel-le-Ferne on the 22nd August.

The largest counts from the late winter period came from Beachborough Lakes where 213 flew over on the 5th December and 415 flew over there the next day.

Colour-ringed birds from France, Belgium and Hungary were noted during the year, see pages 99-100 for further information.



Turnstone at Hythe (Ian Roberts)



Mediterranean Gull at Copt Point (Rob Lee)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were widespread records in the early winter period but the only notable counts received were from Beachborough Park, where there was a peak of 165 on the 25th January.

Spring passage was noted from early February until April, with counts including 65 east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th February, 50 east there on the 22nd February, 40 east there on the 26th February and 30 east there on the 14th March.

There were also widespread records in the late winter period but again the only notable counts received were from Beachborough Park, where there was a peak of 94 on the 6th December.

Breeding species, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Small numbers were noted in January and February and a light spring passage peaked with eight flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th March. At least one pair nested successfully at Hythe and a pair also bred at Samphire Hoe. There were no notable counts from the latter half of the year.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Large numbers were present across the area throughout the year, but the only three-figure counts received were from Beachborough Park, where there was an early winter peak of 261 on the 8th March and a late winter peak of 500 on the 4th December.

The only colour-ringed bird noted had been trapped in Greater London, see page 100 for further information.



Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Hythe Ranges (Ian Roberts)



Herring Gull at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Very rare vagrant (A)

Two adults were seen on the lake at Nickolls Quarry on the 15th December with a single, possibly one of the same individuals, there on the 28th December (B. Harper), see photograph on page 24. These were only the 11th and 12th area records but the species is now proving to be almost annual in occurrence, with sightings in eight of the last nine years.

Very rare vagrant (A)

An adult reported at Sunny Sands (Folkestone) on the 27th July (P. Edmondson) was an extremely unseasonal sighting, with the previous 12 records having occurred between November and April.

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

A juvenile flew west past Samphire Hoe on the afternoon of the 23rd January (P. Smith) and a first-summer arrived at Hythe on the 20th May, where it was seen intermittently until the 28th May (see photograph on page 13), with presumably the same individual also seen flying west there on the 17th July (S. McMinn, B. Harper, I. A. Roberts).

A first-winter 'Viking' Gull (Glaucous x Herring hybrid) was seen at the Willop Basin on the 4th January.

Winter visitor and passage migrant, with small numbers over-summering (A)

Counts included 72 at Samphire Hoe on the 19th November, 32 at Hythe Ranges on the 27th November and 32 on the Hythe Imperial golf course on the 7th December.

Colour-ringed individuals from Sweden, Denmark and France were recorded – see page 100 for further information.

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

Passage migrant mainly in spring, formerly bred (but not since 1968) (A)

A relatively early single off the Hythe Redoubt on the 22nd April preceded a decent spring passage with one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 29th April, five heading east there the next day, four east past the Willop Outfall on the 5th May, 18 east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th May and six east there on the 13th May. The total of 35 represented an improvement on the mean for the previous decade of 24.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	22 nd Apr	7 th May	-15	27 th Apr	-5	11 th Apr 2016
Departure	-	-	-	-	-	16 th Sep 1999

Sandwich Tern

Thalasseus sandvicensis

Non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, rare in winter (last record in 2000) (A)

One which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th January was the earliest ever spring arrival (bettering the one seen off Hythe on the 18th February last year). It was almost two months until the next appeared, when three flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 12th March. A further six went east there the next day then there were almost daily records from the 18th March and numbers rapidly increased. A total of 30 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th March, with 43 east past Seabrook on the 24th, 70 east past Samphire Hoe on the 25th, 136 east there the next day, a total of 98 east past various sites on the 30th and 76 east past Samphire Hoe on the 31st March.

Passage slowed in April, with the only notable counts being 52 east past Samphire Hoe on the 4th, 55 east there on the 6th, 64 east there on the 19th and 80 east there on the 22nd, before there was another surge of birds in late April and early May. Counts included 224 east past Samphire Hoe on the 27th April, 375 east there on the 29th (the fifth largest ever spring movement), 111 east there the next day, 360 east there on the 6th May, 110 east there on the 7th May and 293 east there on the 9th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	13 th Jan	18 th Feb	-36	19 th Mar	-65	13 th Jan 2018*
Departure	19 th Nov	31 st Oct	+19	4 th Oct	+46	19 th Nov 2018*

Small numbers were noted offshore throughout the summer and there were no counts of note in autumn until an exceptional total of 1,000+ were seen off Hythe ahead of an advancing frontal system on the 23rd September. This was the largest ever count (exceeding the 797 that flew east past Mill Point on the 19th April 2005). There were no further counts of note until late October, when 13 at Hythe Ranges represented a good total for so late in the season, and some unusually late records followed, with singles seen off Hythe on the 7th November, Folkestone Pier on the 15th November and Mill Point on the 19th November. These included the latest ever records (with the previous latest being on the 9th November 2010).

Passage migrant, formerly bred (but not since 1998) (A)

The first, four seen off Princes Parade on the 30th March, were the earliest ever and the first to be recorded in that month. Passage in April was very slow, with no counts of note, but numbers picked up in May when 83 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th, a very good total of 527 flew east there on the 11th and 281 flew east there on the 13th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	30 th Mar	8 th Apr	-9	12 th Apr	-13	30 th Mar 2018
Departure	31 st Aug	31 st Aug	0	24 th Sep	-24	30 th Oct 2007

There were no counts of note in autumn.



Glaucous Gull at Hythe (Brian Harper)



Sandwich Tern at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Passage migrant (A)

A total of 29 were identified during an easterly passage of 'commic' terns past Samphire Hoe on the 6th May and others may have been overlooked in spring due to the difficulty of identification at distance. There were no records in autumn.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Excellent numbers were seen in January and these included 705 large auks (of which most appeared to be of this species) heading east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th, a record count of around 2,800 (from a total of 3,630 large auks) that flew east there the following day, 325 east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st and 270 east past Samphire Hoe on the 27th. There was a further count of 275 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th February but numbers dwindled thereafter until there was another very good total of 1,565 large auks (of which most appeared to be of this species) heading east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd March.

Few were noted in in the late winter period.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

As with Guillemot, excellent numbers of Razorbills were also seen in January and these included 830 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 8th, 450 east there on the 14th, a very good total of 2,000 flying east there on the 27th (the fifth largest ever count, see photograph on page 5) and 715 flying east there on the 28th. Numbers dwindled during February but still included a count of 500 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th and very few were seen from March.

Few were noted in in the late winter period, with a peak count of 14 flying east past Mill Point on the 19th November.

Breeding resident (C)

A common and widespread species but as always few records were received, with the only count of note being 65 near the Hythe Redoubt on the 12th January.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

In the early part of the year there were up to 27 at Abbotscliffe and 31 at Beachborough Park in February, and up to 27 at Donkey Street and 43 at Botolph's Bridge in April. In the latter part of the year 40 flew over Beachborough Park on the 26th October and up to 21 were present there in December.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

The only counts of note came from Beachborough Park where 266 were counted on the 10th January, 290 flew over on the 8th March and 345 flew over (mainly heading south) on the 13th March. In autumn 140 flew over there on the 19th October and 160 flew over on the 15th November.



Stock Dove at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)



Wood Pigeon at Paraker Wood (Brian Harper)

Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

There were no counts of note of resident birds. Possible migrants involved singles at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, 6th and 13th May, and the 7th and 10th September.

Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
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Rare summer visitor and passage migrant, very rare in winter (A)

Singles were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 4th June (R. K. Norman) and flying south over Beachborough Park on the 22nd August (S. Tomlinson).

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	4 th Jun	16 th Jun	-12	21 st May	+14	10 th Apr 1993
Departure	22 nd Aug	2 nd Sep	-11	23 rd Aug	-1	24 th Oct 1981*

Ring-necked Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

A group of three flew over Cheriton on the 26th August (R. Thorogood). This was only the 23rd area record but the seventh in the last seven years.

Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
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Declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, at Nickolls Quarry on the 16th April, was relatively early, and at least two were frequenting the area between Palmarsh and Donkey Street into June, and breeding may have occurred. Elsewhere one took up residence in the Seabrook area for a few days in early May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	16 th Apr	29 th Apr	-13	21 st Apr	-5	27 th Mar 2001
Departure	-	6 th Sep	-	2 nd Aug	-	28 th Sep 1969

None were noted in autumn.

Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
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Scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (A)

In the early part of the year singles were seen at Donkey Street on the 10th February and Nickolls Quarry on the 21st March, whilst in December one was seen on three occasions in the Sene Golf Course/Summerhouse Hill/Newington area between the 10th and 20th, with another at Capel-le-Ferne on the 30th.

Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>
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Resident breeding species, possibly declining (C)

There were records from West Hythe, Hythe Roughs, Beachborough Park, Capel-le-Ferne and Church Hougham.

Breeding resident (A)

There were records from the Aldergate Bridge, West Hythe, Folks' Wood, Sandling, Heane Wood, Beachborough Park, Paraker Wood, Peene Quarry, Mill Point and Folkestone Warren.



Cuckoo at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Little Owl at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Very rare vagrant (A)

One spent the day roosting at Samphire Hoe on the 10th April (P. Smith, P. Holt, M. Kennett *et al*). The 16th area record.

Passage migrant (A)

One flew over Samphire Hoe on the 15th January and in spring one was seen flying in off the sea there on the 1st April, with another seen there on the 9th April.

Autumn produced singles flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 13th September and Abbotscliffe on the 20th October, before one was found at Botolph's Bridge on the 21st October and lingered until at least the 25th October (with perhaps the same bird at nearby Nickolls Quarry on the 18th November, see photograph on page 22). A further migrant was seen arriving in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 15th November, with another there on the 10th December and one at Capel-le-Ferne on the 28th December.

The total of up to ten constitutes a very good year, only 2015 produced more.

A Short or Long-eared Owl was also seen flying over the A20 at Abbotscliffe evening of the 27th November but could not be identified to species.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, two reported over Sandling Station on the 18th April, equalled the earliest ever arrival (in 2015) but there were no further records until two were seen at Nickolls Quarry and four flew in off the sea at Hythe Ranges on the 28th April. Sightings became widespread from early May and small numbers were noted arriving in off the sea, with counts increasing after mid-month when 25 were seen at Seabrook on the 21st May and 21 flew north over Beachborough Lakes on the 23rd May. The first three-figure counts came in June when a total of 102 flew west over West Hythe on the 17th and 100 were at Samphire Hoe the following day.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	18 th Apr	22 nd Apr	-4	23 rd Apr	-5	18 th Apr 2015
Departure	7 th Sep	17 th Sep	-10	13 th Sep	-6	16 th Nov 1957

There was a further count of 139 at Beachborough Lakes on the 6th July but no large autumn movements were noted. The last double-figure count involved 34 flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd August and numbers quickly dwindled but there were regular sightings into late August, with the last one seen flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 7th September.

An unidentified swift species, either Common or Pallid, was seen flying east over central Folkestone on the 7th November.



Long-eared Owl at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Swift at Hythe (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident, with dispersal to coasts and non-breeding areas in autumn and winter (A)

Resident birds were recorded from various points along the canal: at Aldergate Bridge, West Hythe dam, Palmars and between Hythe and Seabrook, and also from Donkey Street, Botolph's Bridge, Beachborough Park and Broadmead Village (Cheriton).

Dispersing birds were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 27th September and 14th October, and at Folkestone Harbour on the 8th December.

Formerly regular, bred on one occasion. Now a very rare vagrant (A)

One was seen and heard calling near the Grand Hotel in Folkestone on the 27th May and lingered until the 30th, though was typically elusive throughout its stay (D. Lawie, N. C. Frampton, C. Jeffreys *et al*). This was only the 12th modern record (i.e. since 1980), but there have now been seven in the last ten years.

Breeding resident (A)

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts received.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts received of resident birds. Up to a dozen probable migrants were noted between the 17th September and the 24th October, with eight at Abbotscliffe, two at Capel-le-Ferne and singles at Princes Parade and Samphire Hoe.

Breeding resident (A)

The largest counts received were 29 at Nickolls Quarry on the 21st January and 26 at Beachborough Park on the 8th March.



Hoopoe at Folkestone (Duncan Lawie)



Magpie at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Resident birds were widely recorded. A total of 17 that flew west over Beachborough Park on the 17th September were at least local migrants and there were further counts of 14 there on the 4th October, 11 the next day and 10 on the 10th October. There were also coastal records from Abbotscliffe (3 on the 3rd October and singles on the 13th and 14th October) and Capel-le-Ferne (two flying west on the 14th October) that appeared to involve migrants.

Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Counts in the early winter period included 700 flying north over Nickolls Quarry towards the roosting sites around Saltwood on the evening of the 10th January and 1,000 doing the same over Donkey Street on the evening of the 12th January. A peak of 260 in the Beachborough Park area on the 24th January was also of note.

At the latter end of the year 560 were seen flying south over Beachborough Park area on the 18th October, 480 flew north to roost over Botolph's Bridge on the evening of the 2nd November, 800 flew south-west over Beachborough Park on the 14th December and 300 flew out of a roost at Port Lympne on the morning of the 26th December.

Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

The only notable count received was of 435 flying south-west over Beachborough Park on the 14th December. Single migrants were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 18th February, 4th March and 9th May.

Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

The only counts of note were received from Samphire Hoe where there 41 on the 4th March and 70 on the 15th October, and from Beachborough Park where there 85 on the 22nd August, 190 on the 9th November and 600 flying south-west on the 14th December.

Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
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Bred until about 1890 but then not recorded until 1997 (when there were two records), with no further sightings until 2006. Since then it has become established and continues to increase and spread, with breeding first suspected in 2015 and then proven in 2016. Now recorded in all months of the year (A)

Recorded throughout the year. A pair bred, successfully fledging two young, at Samphire Hoe and another pair bred, raising four young, at Capel-le-Ferne. A further pair were suspected to have bred in the Beachborough Park area (where a pair with four young were seen on the 30th May and the 6th June).

At Lympne three were seen flying over on the 27th March and a flock of six (possibly a family group) flew west there on the 8th October, after which ones and twos were seen on numerous dates on the marsh between Nickolls Quarry and the Aldergate Bridge.

Elsewhere two flew north over Seabrook on the 5th March, two flew over Mill Point on the 10th March, one flew over Saltwood on the 16th April, one flew east over Hythe seafront on the 24th August, two flew south-west over central Folkestone on the 1st October, one flew east over Seabrook on the 14th October and one flew east over Horn Street on the 20th October.

Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Resident birds were widely recorded throughout the year, with a peak count from the early winter period of 15 at Beachborough Park on the 17th January. Ones and twos at a few coastal sites in March and April were the only evidence of any spring passage.

Autumn passage was more evident with counts including 15 at Beachborough Park on the 4th, 20 there the next day, 25 there on the 17th October and 12 at both Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe on the 20th October. In November there were 13 at Mill Point on the 2nd, 8 at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, 9 at Nickolls Quarry on the 6th, 12 at Beachborough Park on the 7th and 20 at Mill Point on the 9th.



Carrion Crow at Princes Parade (Martin Collins)



Raven at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Firecrest

Regulus ignicapilla

Passage migrant and winter visitor, bred in 2012 (A)

In the early winter periods there were records from Enbrook Park (4), Hythe (2), Saltwood, Hythe, Beachborough Park, Seabrook, Paraker Wood and Mill Point. A good spring passage comprising around 38 bird/days was noted between the 9th March and the 14th April, with a peak in the last ten days of March when there were counts of 7 (including 4 at Copt Point) on the 21st, 5 (including 3 at Samphire Hoe) on the 22nd and 4 (including 3 at Folkestone Warren on the 25th).

The first autumn migrant was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd September but very few were noted in September or October. November saw a marked increase in numbers with peaks of two at Beachborough Lakes on the 6th, three at Mill Point on the 9th and 16th, three at Paraker Wood on the 17th and eight at West Hythe on the 18th, with singles at Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry, Peene Quarry and Samphire Hoe. In December birds were wintering at Nickolls Quarry, West Hythe, Palmarsh (2), Beachborough Park, Paraker Wood and Pond Hill Road (2).



Goldcrest at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Firecrest at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>
Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)	
The only count of note was a total of between 65 and 80 at Beachborough Park (a site record) on the 30 th August. There was no evidence of any migration.	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)	
A flock of nine flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 25 th March may have been migrants. The highest count of resident birds was 29 at Beachborough Park on the 16 th November.	
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>
Breeding resident and passage migrant. The continental form <i>P. a. ater</i> is a scarce passage migrant in spring and autumn (A)	
A flock of four birds of the nominate continental form were noted in Folkestone Warren on the 25 th March.	
There were two unusual mid-summer records away from breeding sites involving singles at Samphire Hoe on the 18 th June and Hythe seafront on the 21 st June.	
There was no evidence of any autumn migration but a peak count of 11 at Beachborough Park on the 3 rd October and 12 th November was noteworthy.	
Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Breeding resident (A)	
There were records from the usual haunts of Bargrove Wood, Kiln Wood and Paraker Wood during the year, whilst one at Beachborough Lakes on the 1 st February was only the third record for the site.	
Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
Rare migrant and winter visitor, recently more regular, with birds having made prolonged stays in each of the last five winters (A)	
The flock of 12 that had been present at Nickolls Quarry from late October to early December last year did not linger into 2018 and the only record from the first quarter of the year involved two at this site on the 26 th January (M. Varley). The appearance of a pair at the same site on the 21 st April (B. Harper), see photograph on page 11, was therefore something of a surprise but unfortunately they quickly moved on.	
There were no records from the late winter period and the favoured area at Nickolls Quarry is becoming increasingly heavily disturbed.	
Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Rare passage migrant (A)	
One flew west over Seabrook on the 11 th October (P. Howe). The 34 th area record.	

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Numbers in the early winter period were disappointing with peak counts of just eight at Samphire Hoe in January and 12 at Abbotscliffe in February.

Autumn passage however was markedly improved on last year with counts including 18 arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 3rd October, 11 flying west there the next day, 30 present there on the 10th, 11 arriving in off the sea there and 18 in off at Capel-le-Ferne on the 14th, 31 in/west at Abbotscliffe on the 19th October, and counts of 50 there on the 20th and 48 on the 24th October. In November a flock of eight arrived in off the sea at Hythe on the 25th November.



Marsh Tit at Paraker Wood (Louise Gower)



Sky Lark at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Passage migrant, has bred but not since 2003 (A)

The first, one at the Willop Basin on the 17th March, equalled the second earliest ever arrival and was greeted by snow showers. However spring passage overall was poor with a total of just seven records involving 11 birds, which was well below the mean for the previous decade of just under 20. There were counts of three at Nickolls Quarry on the 9th and 12th April but other records involved singles, with the last on the 19th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	17 th Mar	29 th Mar	-12	10 th Apr	-24	5 th Mar 1995
Departure	3 rd Oct	5 th Oct	-2	4 th Oct	-1	4 th Nov 1963

Autumn passage was also below par with peak counts of just 35 at Samphire Hoe on the 9th August, 20 at Beachborough Lakes on the 6th September and 16 flying west at Abbotscliffe the next day.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, one at Fisherman's Beach (Hythe) on the 6th April, was the latest arrival since 2003 but there were daily records thereafter and numbers quickly increased with 38 counted at Nickolls Quarry on the 9th April and 48 there on the 12th April. Arrival continued throughout April and accelerated in early May when 85 were logged flying in off the

sea at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd and 27 flew in off the sea there on the 9th. Further counts in May included 10 in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 15th, 13 in off the sea there on the 19th, 18 flying north over Beachborough Park on the 23rd, 21 there on the 30th and 30 there on the 31st.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	6 th Apr	30 th Mar	+7	24 th Mar	+13	10 th Mar 1952
Departure	10 th Nov	10 th Nov	0	15 th Nov	-5	8 th Dec 1955

The first signs of autumn passage were noted in August and numbers began to increase in early September when “several hundred” were seen passing over Beachborough Park on the 6th and a “steady stream” were seen heading out to sea at Hythe that evening. The 14th September saw a significant movement over Beachborough Park where “at least 10,000 Swallows and House Martins headed south during the day, with many of the birds coming through constantly in their hundreds during the afternoon”. Further large counts in that month involved over 2,500 moving west at Hythe in around an hour on the 19th, 1,500 at Beachborough Park on the 20th, 2,000 there the next day and 1,500 there on the 26th, decreasing to 700 there on the 27th when 200 were at Seabrook.

October saw no counts of note as numbers dwindled quickly. The last, at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th November, matched the departure date last year.

House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first involved one at Beachborough Lakes and two at Nickolls Quarry on the 12th April, and numbers were low in April with a peak of 12 at Samphire Hoe on the 29th. In May 17 were seen arriving in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, 29 were at Beachborough Lakes on the 10th and 30 were at Samphire Hoe on the 15th, increasing to 60 there on the 22nd and at least 50 remained into June, with a minimum of 21 pairs breeding.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	12 th Apr	26 th Mar	+17	9 th Apr	+3	7 th Feb 2004
Departure	2 nd Nov	10 th Nov	-8	1 st Nov	-1	2 nd Dec 1974

An increase in autumn was noted from late August, when 200 were at Beachborough Park on the 24th, and the largest movements occurred in September. These included 450 at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, 500 there on the 3rd and 4,500 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 7th. The 14th September saw a significant movement over Beachborough Park where “at least 10,000 Swallows and House Martins headed south during the day, with many of the birds coming through constantly in their hundreds during the afternoon”, whilst 1,000 flew west at Samphire Hoe the following day. A further 2,000 flew over Beachborough Park on the 27th September, when 8,000 were seen heading west at Seabrook. Numbers decreased in October but 700 flew west at Beachborough Park on the 3rd, and 100 were seen at both Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe the next day. Few were noted in the second half of the month, with the last at Beachborough Park on the 2nd November.

Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

One flew west over Beachborough Park on the afternoon of the 7th June (S. Tomlinson). The 14th area record.

Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
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Not recorded until 1981 but now well-established as a breeding resident though remains vulnerable to population decline in colder winters (A)

In the early winter period up to three were noted at Nickolls Quarry and Princes Parade, with at least one at Botolph's Bridge, whilst one at Beachborough Lakes on the 21st February was only the second record for the site. At least three were holding territory at Nickolls Quarry in the spring, with at least two along the canal at Princes Parade.

In the latter part of the year birds were present at the Aldergate Bridge, Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry, West Hythe and Seabrook.

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

The largest counts of resident birds received related to 30 at Beachborough Park in January and 55 there in December. One was seen at Samphire Hoe, where the species is unusual, on the 12th April.

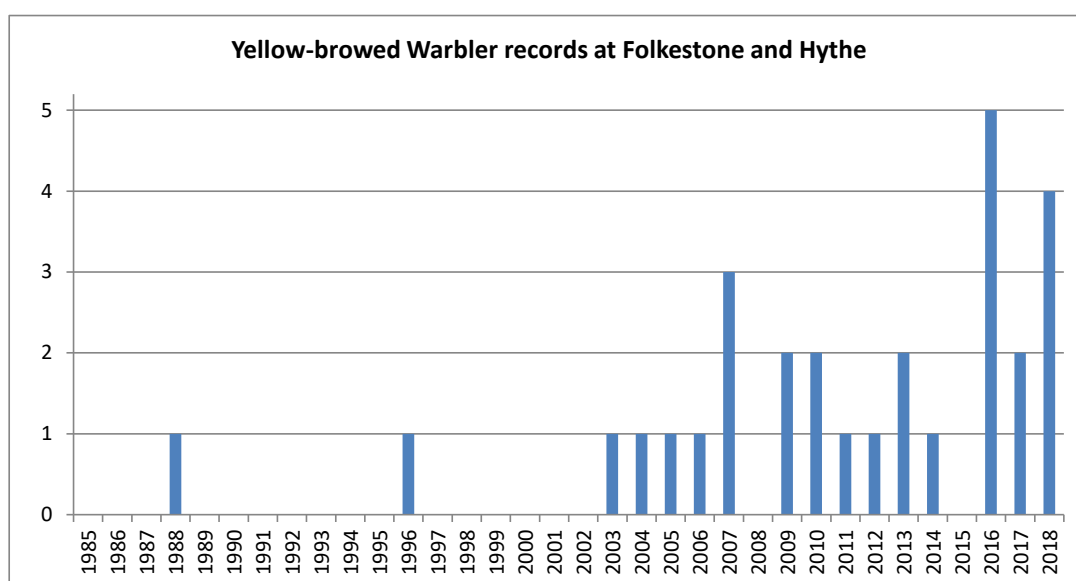
Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Rare migrant (A)

Singles were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 8th to the 9th October (P. Holt, P. Smith), Horn Street on the 17th October (P. Howe), Beachborough Park on the 23rd October (S. Tomlinson) and along the canal near the Aldergate Bridge on the 3rd November (D. Wrathall).

This species had only been recorded four times prior to 2003 but has occurred in 14 of the 16 years since, with the last three years having produced 35% of all records to date, as shown in the chart below.



Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Formerly regular, probably bred but not since 1973. Now a rare passage migrant (A)

One was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 31st August. The 23rd modern area record (i.e. since 1980).

Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with small numbers wintering. The Siberian form *P. c. tristis* is a very rare vagrant in late autumn and winter (A).

Up to two were wintering at Beachborough Park and Enbrook Park, with one in a garden in Folkestone.

One in another garden in Folkestone and a singing bird at Beachborough Park on the 13th March were probably the first arrivals of the spring and were quickly followed by the first records from Botolph's Bridge and Nickolls Quarry on the 17th March. There was an arrival of five at Nickolls Quarry on the 26th March, with three at Beachborough Park on the 28th, two at Samphire Hoe on the 29th and one at Folkestone Downs on the 30th March. Sightings were frequent and widespread thereafter, with counts of 9 at Beachborough Park on the 12th April and 18 there on the 26th April being of most note, and new birds continuing to be noted right through to early May.

Autumn migrants were noted from late August, with the first double-figure count being ten at Beachborough Park on the 6th September, increasing to 17 on the 12th September and 18 on the 14th September. There was a significant movement during the last week of September with 27 at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, 20 at Samphire Hoe and 29 at Beachborough Park the next day, 16 at Nickolls Quarry, 20 at Samphire Hoe and 37 at Beachborough Park on the 26th, 34 at Samphire Hoe on the 27th and 65 at Beachborough Park the following day.

Numbers dwindled during October but there were 33 at Beachborough Park on the 2nd, 26 there on the 5th and 16 there on the 12th, with 15 at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 14th. Beachborough Park also produced the last double-figure count of the autumn, when ten were present on the 24th October, and up to three remained throughout November, increasing to four on the 4th December, 6 on the 6th and 7 on the 11th. Migrants continued to be noted at Abbotscliffe and Mill Point until the 9th November, Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site until the 17th November and Samphire until the 30th November, whilst in December wintering birds were noted at the Willop Sewage Works, Aldergate Bridge, Nickolls Quarry, Palmarsh (2), Seabrook and Pond Hill Road.



House Martins at Samphire Hoe (Andy Luckhurst)



Cetti's Warbler at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

Breeding summer visitor, but now scarce (having declined in recent years), and passage migrant (A)

The first, singles at Botolph's Bridge and Nickolls Quarry on the 14th April, marked the latest arrival since 2010 and spring passage was poor. Further singles were seen at Beachborough Park on the 19th and 20th April, Scene Wood on the 27th April and Samphire Hoe on the 28th April. The latter site also produced one on the 1st May, two on the 13th May and one on the 14th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	14 th Apr	30 th Mar	+15	4 th Apr	+10	26 th Mar 1960
Departure	28 th Sep	14 th Sep	+14	24 th Sep	+4	19 th Oct 1986

The first returning bird was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 13th July, with small numbers at various sites from the 24th July. Counts in August included six at both Abbotscliffe and Beachborough Lakes on the 1st, ten at

Beachborough Park on the 8th, seven at Abbotscliffe on the 20th, six at Beachborough Park on the 21st and 11 there on the 24th. Small numbers were seen during September, with the last at Beachborough Park on the 28th.

The spring total of just 11 bird/days was the poorest since 2003 but the autumn total of 121 bird/days was slightly better than previous ten year mean of 98.



Long-tailed Tit at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Chiffchaff at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with small but increasing numbers wintering (A)

Wintering birds were noted in gardens in Saltwood (two), Seabrook (two), Folkestone (three) and Hythe (at least three), with others at Beachborough Park and along the canal near Palmarsh.

It is often difficult to distinguish the first spring migrant from over-wintering birds but a singing male at Samphire Hoe on the 6th April was the first of the year there and there was a marked arrival on the 8th April when several were at Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry and Seabrook. Counts in spring included ten at Beachborough Park on the 11th April and nine at Samphire Hoe on the 17th April.

Autumn migrants were noted from mid-August and numbers at Beachborough Park increased to 20 on the 20th August, with 26 there on the 30th August. In September there were counts of 22 at Beachborough Park on the 6th, 15 at Abbotscliffe on the 10th, 10 in the West Road/Horn Street area on the 15th, 24 at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, 12 at Samphire Hoe from the 25th to the 27th, 14 at Beachborough Park on the 28th and 27 at Samphire Hoe on the 30th. The last double figure count related to 13 at Abbotscliffe on the 3rd October and small numbers were widely noted through the month and into November, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 14th November probably being the last migrant individual.

At the end of the year birds were wintering at Botolph's Bridge, Hythe (three), Seabrook (two) and Folkestone.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

Breeding summer visitor, but now scarce (having declined in recent years), and passage migrant (A)

There were three spring records, a notably early one at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th April (the third earliest ever) and two late arrivals at Beachborough Lakes on the 6th and 28th June, but for the third consecutive year there were no signs of breeding.

Singles at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and 24th July marked the start of an excellent autumn passage. In August there were further singles at Beachborough Park on the 1st, 24th and 30th, with two on the 31st, whilst one was at Abbotscliffe on the 15th August.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	14 th Apr	5 th May	-21	1 st May	-17	10 th Apr 2001
Departure	4 th Oct	31 st Aug	+34	9 th Sep	+25	6 th Nov 1981

One was seen at Paraker Wood on the 2nd September, whilst at Beachborough Park there were a further eight records comprising 12 bird/days in September, with late singles on the 3rd and 4th October (there have been later records in only four previous years). The autumn total of 23 bird/days was the best since 1992.



Willow Warbler at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Blackcap at Seabrook (Louise Gower)

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first were seen at Abbotscliffe and Botolph's Bridge on the 13th April and the main arrival took place from the 19th when there singles at Beachborough Park and Samphire Hoe, and two at Abbotscliffe, with a count of four at Folkestone Downs the next day. Sightings were widespread thereafter.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	13 th Apr	10 th Apr	+3	16 th Apr	-3	8 th Apr 2007
Departure	4 th Oct	24 th Sep	+10	25 th Sep	+9	3 rd Nov 1994

Autumn passage was recorded from late July, when seven were at Abbotscliffe on the 25th, with eight at Samphire Hoe the following day. Nine were counted at Abbotscliffe on the 1st August and smaller numbers were noted at numerous sites during the month. Migration continued through September with peak counts of four at Samphire Hoe and five at Beachborough Park on the 6th. The last, at Samphire Hoe on the 4th October, was relatively late as there have only been October records in seven previous years, and just three later departure dates.

Common Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, at Botolph's Bridge on the 14th April, was the latest since 2013 and there were no further arrivals until the 19th April when there were singles at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe, and two at Beachborough Park.

Sightings were widespread though thereafter and numbers increased steadily, with a peak count of eight at Abbotscliffe on the 4th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	14 th Apr	8 th Apr	+6	9 th Apr	+5	30 th Mar 2002
Departure	28 th Sep	4 th Oct	-6	3 rd Oct	-5	19 th Oct 2016

Autumn migration was noted from early August when there were 15 at Abbotscliffe on the 1st, 20 there on the 6th and 15 again on the 20th, whilst 12 were at Samphire Hoe on the 30th. There were only single figure counts in September and the last was at Capel-le-Ferne on the 28th September.

Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>
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Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, bred until about the mid-1980s but now rare in spring (A)

A reeling male at Hythe Roughs on the 28th April was only the eighth spring record since 2000 but the second in the last three years at this site.

Autumn produced singles at Abbotscliffe on the 25th July and 24th August, and Folkestone Downs on the 13th September, which was a typical showing.

Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, two singing males at Nickolls Quarry on the 6th April, constituted the third earliest ever arrival date. Numbers of territorial males steadily increased there during April and early May and several pairs bred. Elsewhere a male was singing at the Willop Basin on the 25th April.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	6 th Apr	1 st Apr	+5	12 th Apr	-6	1 st Apr 2017
Departure	12 th Sep	17 th Sep	-5	23 rd Sep	-11	15 th Oct 1996

Breeding birds continued to be seen at Nickolls Quarry in August and September, whilst elsewhere returning migrants involved one at Samphire Hoe on the 26th July, one in a garden in Royal Military Avenue (Cheriton) on the 13th August, singles at Abbotscliffe on the 15th and 20th August, and singles at Beachborough Lakes on the 11th and 12th September.

Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first was at Botolph's Bridge on the 11th April, followed by arrivals at Nickolls Quarry on the 16th April, Donkey Street on the 25th April and Beachborough Lakes on the 26th April, and the other traditional sites along the canal were also occupied. Few counts of territories were received but seven were singing at Beachborough Lakes on the 21st June. Migrants away from typical habitat involved singles at Samphire Hoe on the 27th April, 3rd May, 13th May and 25th May, two at Peene on the 19th May and one at Mill Point on the 3rd June.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	11 th Apr	3 rd Apr	+8	11 th Apr	0	3 rd Apr 2016
Departure	24 th Nov	14 th Sep	+71	25 th Sep	+62	24 th Nov 2018

Two were at Samphire Hoe on the 26th July and other returning migrants away from the breeding sites (which were occupied until late September) involved singles at Abbotscliffe on the 1st and 17th August and Samphire Hoe on the 4th, 13th and 27th September. One at West Hythe on the 13th October equalled the fourth latest ever but this was eclipsed by one at Donkey Street on the 24th November, which was only the second November record (following one along the canal between Hythe and West Hythe on the 4th November 1984).

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Breeding resident (A)

There were records from West Hythe, Brockhill Country Park, Chesterfield Wood, Bargrove Wood and Beachborough Park during the year.

Eurasian Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris

Breeding resident (A)

There were widespread sightings which included the first record for Nickolls Quarry (on the 8th December) which was the 214th species to be recorded at this site.

Wren

Troglodytes troglodytes

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Widely recorded but there no counts of note.

Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only count of note from the first half of the year related to a flock of around 2,000 that flew east over Hythe seafront shortly after dawn on the 21st February.

A post-breeding flock at Samphire Hoe built up to 300 by the end of July and remained into October. Autumn passage included counts 200 flying in/east at Abbotscliffe and 290 flying over Beachborough Park on the 19th October, 160 flying west at the latter site on the 24th October and 180 arriving in off the sea at Mill Point on the 29th October. Further movements in November included 130 in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd, 700 over Beachborough Park on the 14th, 300 flying south there the next day, 300 at the Willop Outfall on the 18th and 800 flying east over Beachborough Park the following day, with a further 320 flying east there on the 14th December.

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Passage migrant, typically more numerous in autumn (A)

The first arrival was at Creteway Down on the 8th April, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 14th April, singles at Beachborough Park and Samphire Hoe on the 19th, and Samphire Hoe again on the 20th, with three at Hythe Roughs on the 24th April. Further singles at Samphire Hoe on the 25th April and 3rd May completed an above average spring showing of 10 bird/days (compared to the mean for the previous decade of 7).

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	8 th Apr	10 th Apr	-2	15 th Apr	-7	9 th Mar 1997
Departure	15 th Nov	2 nd Nov	+13	4 th Nov	+11	26 th Nov 2005

Autumn passage however was disappointing, with a total of just 23 bird/days from the 8th October, well below the previous ten year mean of 91 and the lowest tally since 2011. The peak count was just four at Abbotscliffe on the 20th October. There was however a notably late record of one that lingered at Samphire Hoe until the 15th November (there have been later records in only three previous years).



Sedge Warbler at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Starling at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The largest count from the early winter period concerned 40 at Beachborough Park on the 8th February and the only evidence of spring passage involved 24 flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 6th March.

Autumn passage included counts of 16 at Samphire Hoe on the 25th October, 20 at Nickolls Quarry on the 29th October, a very good total of 70 at Beachborough Park on the 7th November and 33 there on the 3rd December. Nocturnal movements were noted on several nights in October and November.

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

One flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 6th January but wintering numbers were low with peak counts of just 20 at Botolph's Bridge and 15 at Kiln Wood in January, however there was increase in February, when there were up to up to 32 at Church Hougham, 55 at Beachborough Park, 70 in the Postling Wents area and 175 at Botolph's Bridge (see photograph on page 7). Cold weather in late February/early March led to some displacement with two singles at Abbotscliffe, up to four at Samphire Hoe on several dates and seven in a coastal garden in Hythe on the 27th February, whilst on the 2nd March the woods and fields at Port Lympne were said to be "swarming with Fieldfares". Numbers increased at Beachborough Park in March to a peak of 80 on the 13th before slowly dispersing, whilst numbers at Botolph's Bridge decreased to 53 by the 29th March. The last sighting related to a flock of 19 presumed migrants at Church Hougham on the 12th April.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Departure	12 th Apr	1 st May	-19	11 th Apr	+1	5 th Jun 2016
Arrival	21 st Sep	27 th Oct	-36	16 th Oct	-25	21 st Sep 2018

The first returning birds, two at Beachborough Park on the 21st September, were the earliest ever (there had only been three previous records in September, with the previous earliest at Abbotscliffe on the 29th September 2007).

There were no further records until one was seen at the same site on the 11th October and small numbers were noted at various sites thereafter, with larger counts of 240 at Beachborough Park on the 24th October and 113 there (many of which were heading west) on the 26th October. In November counts included 68 at Beachborough Park on the 2nd, 80 there on the 12th, 240 there on the 22nd, an excellent total of 1,200 flying east over Botolph's Bridge on the 26th (the third largest ever count) and 400 at Beachborough Park on the 29th. In December 400 were again logged at Beachborough Park on the 3rd but numbers quickly dwindled.



Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Fieldfare at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Peak counts in the early winter period included 15 at Botolph's Bridge in January and 44 at Beachborough Park in February.

There was no indication of any spring passage but in autumn there was a significant arrival on the 14th October, when there were 11 at Folkestone Downs, 20 at Abbotscliffe and 26 at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, and subsequent counts included 26 at Beachborough Park on the 18th October, 30 there the following day, 31 there on the 23rd October and 45 there (many of which were heading west) on the 26th October. In November there was a peak of 22 at Beachborough Park on the 23rd. Nocturnal movements were noted on several nights in October and November.

Redwing

Turdus iliacus

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Very few were noted in the early winter period apart from at Beachborough Park where there was a peak of 400 on the 11th January. Spring passage included 270 flying west at Beachborough Park on the 12th March, 465 west there the next day, 90 flying east at Folkestone Downs on the 21st March and 300 flying west at Beachborough Park on the 28th March. Numbers dwindled quickly in April and the last were seen at Beachborough Park, Church Hougham and Samphire on the 12th April.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Departure	12 th Apr	10 th Apr	+2	3 rd Apr	+9	4 th May 1981
Arrival	28 th Sep	6 th Oct	-8	2 nd Oct	-4	7 th Sep 2016

The first returning bird was at Beachborough Park on the 28th September and there were regular records thereafter. Counts in October included 12 flying west over Port Lympne on the 7th, 45 at Beachborough Park on the 15th, 67 there on the 18th and 110 (many of which were heading west) there on the 26th.

In November there were 113 at Beachborough Park on the 5th and 21st, 141 there on the 23rd, 800 there on the 29th and 1,200 there the next day. Up to 600 remained at Beachborough Park until the 6th December but numbers dwindled thereafter. Nocturnal movements were noted on several nights between October and December.

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Breeding resident (A)

The highest counts again came from the Beachborough Park area where there were 15 on the 10th January, 16 on the 22nd February, 21 on the 18th October, 28 on the 26th October and 20 on the 11th December. One at Samphire Hoe on the 10th July was noteworthy as the species is unusual there. Singles at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and Folkestone Downs on the 14th October may have been (at least local) migrants.

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn, occasionally breeds (formerly more regular) (A)

The only record in spring was one at Brockhill Country Park on the 15th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	15 th May	12 th May	+3	14 th May	+1	19 th Apr 1961
Departure	4 th Oct	30 th Sep	+4	22 nd Sep	+12	11 th Oct 1999

The first of an excellent autumn passage was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 23rd August, followed by two there and two at Samphire Hoe on the 30th August. One was Samphire Hoe on the 2nd September when a very good total of eight were in the Casebourne/Paraker Wood area, which was the highest count since 1996 (see photograph on page 18). Up to three were seen regularly at Beachborough Park between the 3rd September and the 4th October, with four there on the 14th September, and singles were at Samphire Hoe on the 6th and 27th September with up to four at Lympe on the 26th and 27th September.

The autumn bird/day total of 45 was the highest ever and a marked improvement on the mean for the previous decade of 14.



Redwing at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Spotted Flycatcher at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The highest count from the first half of the year came from Beachborough Park where 26 were counted on the 31st January.

Autumn migrants were noted from early September with counts including 48 at Beachborough Park on the 3rd September, 20 at Samphire Hoe on the 25th September, 21 there on the 30th September and 30 there on the 16th October, whilst “a large increase in numbers” was noted at Abbotscliffe on the 20th October.

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn (A)

Singles were seen at Beachborough Park on the 31st August, Samphire Hoe on the 6th September and Beachborough Park again on the 14th September.

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were records from Samphire Hoe (at least two through January and February), Folkestone Downs (two on the 3rd January), a garden in St. Hilda's Road (Hythe) (one on the 4th January), Battery Point (one on the 14th February) and Hythe Ranges (one on the 17th February).

In March one was seen at the Hythe Redoubt on the 5th, whilst two at Samphire Hoe on the 13th included one that was considered to be a new arrival, and on the 16th there were singles at the Hythe Sailing Club, at Folkestone Pier and in a garden at Browning Place (Folkestone) (to the 19th), whilst a singing male lingered on Hythe seafront between the 20th and 25th. A total of four were reported at Samphire Hoe on the 20th and two singing males were present on the 30th March.

Singles were seen at Browning Place (Folkestone) on the 2nd April and Creteway Down on the 8th April, whilst at Samphire Hoe a pair took up territory and raised two broods, with at least seven birds present there in July and August (see photograph on page 16). Elsewhere one was seen in a garden in Ormonde Road (Hythe) on the 20th July and one was at Abbotscliffe on the 24th August. Numbers increased to a peak of nine at Samphire Hoe in September, with seven still present in October, three in November and at least one in December, with one at Pond Hill Road on the 30th December.

Common Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn (A)

There were none in spring but autumn produced two at Samphire Hoe on the 19th August, singles at Abbotscliffe on the 24th and 27th August, four in the Casebourne/Paraker Wood area on the 2nd September, two at Abbotscliffe on the 7th September and singles at Samphire Hoe on the 15th and 27th September.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	-	18 th Apr	-	13 th Apr	-	12 th Mar 1960
Departure	27 th Sep	27 th Sep	0	1 st Oct	-4	27 th Oct 1999

The total for the year of 12 bird/days was very much in line with the mean for the previous decade of 12.1.

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn. Has bred in the past but not since 1997 (A)

There were no spring records for the first time since 2010.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	-	25 th Apr	-	3rd May	-	11 th Apr 2011
Departure	24 th Sep	15 th Oct	-21	10 th Oct	-16	10 th Nov 2009

Autumn passage however, with a total of 64 bird/days, was a considerable improvement on last year and slightly better than the previous ten year mean of 54. The first was at Abbotscliffe on the 8th August, with another there on the 17th August, two on the 19th August and three at Princes Parade on the 21st August, with regular records thereafter (see photograph on page 17). Counts in September included four at Donkey Street on the 1st, five at Samphire Hoe on the 6th, four at Abbotscliffe on the 10th, five at Samphire Hoe on the 13th and four at Abbotscliffe on the 17th and 20th.

Stonechat

Saxicola rubicola

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant. The continental form *S. r. rubicola* is probably a scarce passage migrant (A).

In the early winter period a flock of seven were seen near the Willop Sewage Works on the 18th February, whilst there were at least six at Samphire Hoe and singles were noted at Nickolls Quarry, Hillhurst Farm, Postling Wents and Church Hougham. Up to eight pairs nested at Samphire Hoe.

In autumn passage migrants were noted at Beachborough Park on the 30th August, Abbotscliffe on the 26th September and Hythe Ranges (2) on the 30th September, whilst up to seven were present at Abbotscliffe in October, when at least 16 remained at Samphire Hoe. One was seen at Beachborough Park on the 22nd October and two were present there from the 12th November until the end of the year, with birds also wintering at Donkey Street (two), Botolph's Bridge and Nickolls Quarry.

A number of the colour-ringed birds from 2015 remained at Samphire Hoe throughout and several more were ringed in 2018.



Redstart at Casebourne Wood (Brian Harper)



Wheatear at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

A rare breeding summer visitor but common passage migrant (A)

The first, one on the Hythe Imperial golf course on the 24th March, was the latest arrival date since 2009. This was followed by a pair at Samphire Hoe on the 30th March and there were regular sightings in April, with counts including five at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and four at the Hythe Imperial golf course, four at Samphire Hoe and 18 at Hythe Ranges (the highest spring count since 2012) on the 23rd. There was another notable arrival on the 1st May, with a total of at least 23 across the area, including four at Botolph's Bridge and 13 at Samphire Hoe. There were a number of late records, with two at Samphire Hoe on the 15th May, one at Church Hougham on the 24th May and one at the Hythe Imperial golf course on the 26th May but no indications of breeding this year. The overall spring total of 107 bird/days was well above the mean for the previous ten years of 61 and the best since 2012.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	24 th Mar	18 th Mar	+6	18 th Mar	+6	8 th Mar 2015
Departure	19 th Oct	23 rd Oct	-4	30 th Oct	-11	4 th Dec 2016

Autumn passage however produced just 84 bird/days, the lowest total since 2007. The peak count was just five at Samphire Hoe on the 14th August and the 13th September.

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

There was an increase at coastal sites in the autumn, suggestive of passage, with a peak of 11 at Samphire Hoe on the 16th October.

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Declining breeding resident (A)

There were no counts of note received but there were a series of records from Samphire Hoe, where the species is unusual, with singles there on the 28th April, 9th May and 5th July and two on the 26th September and 17th October.

Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

Declining passage migrant. No longer breeds and now scarce in winter (A)

One flew west over Beachborough Park on the 18th January, two flew west there on the 3rd October and one was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 11th October.

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, one flying west over Beachborough Lakes on the 21st March, was the earliest ever (the previous earliest related to birds at the Willop Basin on the 28th March 1991 and Nickolls Quarry on the 28th March 2004). The next was at the same site on the 11th April, followed by one at Donkey Street on the 14th April, two flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 15th April, one arriving in off the sea there the next day, singles at Beachborough Park and Church Hougham on the 19th April and one arriving in off the sea at Copt Point on the 20th April. At least two were seen regularly in the Donkey Street area from the 21st April whilst migrants elsewhere involved one at Beachborough Park on the 26th April and one over Hythe Roughs and three flying in/west at Hythe Ranges on the 28th April.

Up to four were in the Donkey Street area in May, where at least one pair probably bred, and migrants continued to arrive, with a dozen noted during in May and late bird at Beachborough Park on the 13th June (perhaps indicative of breeding nearby).

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Arrival	21 st Mar	4 th Apr	-14	11 th Apr	-21	21 st Mar 2018
Departure	10 th Oct	20 th Sep	+20	29 th Sep	+11	20 th Oct 1984

Return passage produced a total of around 100 which was a significant improvement on last year and the ten year mean of 65. The only count over five related to seven at Beachborough Park on the 21st September and the last was seen there on the relatively late date of 10th October (there have been later departures in only five previous years).



Dunnock at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Yellow Wagtail at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Ones and twos were seen at numerous sites in the early winter period, including the Willop Sewage Works, West Hythe, Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry, Hythe, Enbrook Park, Folkestone and Folkestone Harbour.

There was a very slight spring passage with two in/west at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March and one in off the sea there on the 24th March. At least one pair bred along the Seabrook Stream in the Horn Street area, whilst single pairs probably bred at Cheriton and Enbrook Park.

Autumn passage was more pronounced and included a count of four west at Hythe on the 4th October and a peak of ten at Beachborough Park on the 31st October, with six still present there at the end of November. Small numbers were again wintering at numerous sites at the latter end of the year.

Pied/White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
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Pied Wagtail (*M. a. yarrellii*) is a breeding resident and passage migrant. White Wagtail (*M. a. alba*) is a scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring, that has bred once (in 2013) (A)

There were no counts of note from the early winter period. There was a small spring passage of Pied/White Wagtails noted between late March and early May, with ones and twos noted passing over coastal watch-points, whilst 16 were counted on the sports field at the Folkestone Academy on the 28th March.

Autumn passage was noted in October but was rather light, with counts including four flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 19th October, seven flying east there on the 20th October and a peak of 30 at Beachborough Park on the 24th October.

Counts from the late winter period included 15 at Botolph's Bridge on the 2nd November and 17 at Beachborough Park on the 21st November

The only confirmed record of White Wagtail involved two at Samphire Hoe on the 12th April.



Grey Wagtail at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Pied Wagtail at Mill Point (Ian Roberts)

Richard's Pipit

Anthus richardi

Rare passage migrant (A)

Singles were seen flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October (I. A. Roberts) and west over Seabrook on the 26th October (P. Howe). The 17th and 18th area records and the first since 2015.

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn (A)

In spring singles were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 7th April, flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 7th May and at Beachborough Park on the 9th May. The total of three constituted the best spring passage since 2012.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	7 th Apr	25 th Apr	-18	6 th May	-29	26 th Mar 1965
Departure	21 st Sep	27 th Aug	+25	26 th Sep	-5	20 th Oct 2001

Autumn passage comprised just five singles: at Abbotscliffe on the 20th August and at Beachborough Lakes on the 30th August, 31st August, 7th September and 21st September. This total was slightly lower than the mean for the previous ten autumns of 7.5.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The highest numbers in the early winter period were at Botolph's Bridge, where 57 counted on the 20th January increasing to 172 on the 10th February. Elsewhere there were up to 20 at Samphire Hoe and 30 at Beachborough Park in January. At the latter site numbers increased to a peak of 98 on the 8th March, probably including some migrants, but there was no other evidence of spring passage.

Autumn passage was noted from early September, with counts including 40 flying west at Hythe on the 22nd September, 76 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 24th September, 44 at Beachborough Park on the 4th October, 54 there on the 19th October, 210 (including 170 flying west) there on the 31st October and 149 flying south there on the 2nd November. In the late winter period there were up to 18 at Beachborough Park and 31 at Samphire Hoe.



Tree Pipit at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Meadow Pipit at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant. The Scandinavian form *A. p. littoralis* can only be identified when it begins to assume its summer plumage and is probably a regular winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The highest numbers in the early winter period were at Samphire Hoe, where there was a peak count of 22 on the 1st January. Males were seen displaying at Folkestone Harbour and Samphire Hoe in spring, and at least one pair bred successfully at the latter site.

At least 12 were present at Samphire Hoe between July and the end of the year, increasing to a peak of 21 on the 30th October, whilst at least three were seen between the Hythe Redoubt and the Willop Outfall on the 30th September, with up to two in the Folkestone Harbour area from mid-November and one at Battery Point on the 7th December.

Very rare vagrant (A)

One was seen intermittently at Donkey Street between the 2nd and 16th November, with presumably the same bird again there on the 27th December (B. Harper). It frequented the same area as last year's record (which also arrived in early November) prompting speculation that the same individual may have been involved. The sixth area record.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were peak counts of 50 in stubble field at Abbotscliffe on the 21st February and 67 at Beachborough Park the following day.

Spring passage was disappointing, with counts of just 25 east at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March, 100 flying east at Folkestone Warren on the 25th March and 480 flying east at Samphire Hoe the next day.

Autumn passage was also poor, with counts of 90 at Beachborough Park on the 23rd October, 95 arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd November and 200 at Beachborough Park on the 15th November.



Water Pipit at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Rock Pipit at Folkestone Pier (Brian Harper)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Spring passage comprised a male in a garden in Lympne on the 27th March, one at Beachborough Park on the 29th March, a female in the same garden in Lympne on the 31st March, two flying east over Beachborough Park on the 4th April, a male in a garden in Cheriton on the 5th April and singles at Beachborough Park on the 11th and 12th April. The total of 8 compared well against the mean for the previous decade of 4.8.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017				
Departure	12 th Apr	27 th Mar	+16	24 th Mar	+19	23 rd Apr 1958
Arrival	3 rd Oct	15 th Oct	-12	13 th Oct	-10	21 st Sep 1996

Four arrived at Beachborough Park on the 3rd October and up to five were seen almost daily there until the 22nd November, whilst a further three flew west there on the 15th October and two flew west there on the 13th December. Elsewhere in October one was at Nickolls Quarry and two were at Samphire Hoe on the 8th (see photograph on page 20), with two at Copt Point the following day, one at Abbotscliffe on the 10th, one at Hythe on the 13th, one at Abbotscliffe and two at Folkestone Downs the next day, one at Samphire Hoe on the 17th, one at Abbotscliffe on the 19th and two there on the 24th, with a further two at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd November.

The autumn total of 80 bird/days was the highest since 2005 but largely comprises the long-staying birds at Beachborough Park.

Rare passage migrant (A)

A male was reported singing near Folkestone Harbour on the 19th April (per BirdGuides). This was the 27th area record but only the fifth since 2005.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant, having declined in recent years (A)

There were no signs of spring passage but in autumn three flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October and five flew east there on the 19th October. A count of 22 at Beachborough Park on the 5th November was the first double-figure tally since 2015.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, widespread but less common in winter (A)

The only count of note in the early winter period was from, where 63 were present on the 22nd February. A light spring passage was noted between late March and early May with a peak count of ten flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 1st May.

Numbers at Abbotscliffe increased during August to a peak of 150 on the 31st, before further increasing in October to 205 on the 19th. Numbers also increased at Beachborough Park during October to a peak of 200 on the 26th. Elsewhere 70 flew east at Mill Point on the 29th October.



Bramblings at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)



Goldfinch at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were up to 50 in Kiln Wood, up to 22 at Horn Street Lake, up to nine in the Beachborough Park area and five along the canal between Hythe and Palmarsh.

A relatively light spring passage was noted between mid-March and early May with counts including 19 flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 5th April, 13 flying east at Samphire Hoe the next day and 14 flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 14th April.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Departure	14 th Apr	26 th Apr*	-12	17 th Apr*	-3	29 th May 2000*
Arrival	17 th Sep	20 th Sep*	-3	18 th Sep*	-1	2 nd Sep 1997*

Autumn passage was noted from the 17th September with counts including 30 at Beachborough Park on the 27th September, 113 flying over there on the 3rd October, 50 flying west over Horn Street on the 6th October, 46 flying east at Seabrook on the 10th October, 49 at Beachborough Park on the 17th October, 230 flying east there and 517 flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 19th October, 79 flying east at Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street and 84 flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 20th October and 40 flying east at Mill Point on the 29th October. In November 29 flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd and up to 19 were present at Beachborough Park from the 7th November until the end of the year, whilst two flew west over Hythe on the 10th December.

Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, less common in winter (A)

In the early winter period a stubble field at Abbotscliffe attracted a very good total of up to 200, whilst there were also around 40 at Beachborough Park. Spring passage between mid-March and late April included counts of 25 flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 5th April and 30 flying east there on the 21st April.

Autumn saw an increase in numbers, with 65 at Abbotscliffe on the 14th September, at least 120 there on the 26th September, 63 at Beachborough Park on the 4th October and 100 present with a further 100 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October.

Lesser Redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

One was seen amongst a flock of Siskins at Kiln Wood on the 3rd January and up to 12 were present at Beachborough Park in January. Spring passage comprised one flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 21st April, singles arriving in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 6th and 9th May, two at Beachborough Park on the 10th May and one there on the 30th May.

Autumn migrants were recorded in small numbers from the 17th September, with larger counts of five flying in/east at Abbotscliffe and 23 at Beachborough Park on the 19th October, 13 at Beachborough Park on the 22nd October, 11 there the next day and ten flying east at Mill Point on the 29th October. Up to nine remained at Beachborough Park until mid-December.

Common Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
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Passage migrant, with occasional summer irruptions, rare in winter (A)

Six flew over Samphire Hoe on the 17th May, two flew east at Beachborough Park on the 22nd August and two were seen there on the 27th September. In October two flew east over Horn Street on the 17th, nine flew west at Beachborough Park on the 22nd, four flew west there on the 23rd and 13 flew south there on the 26th October. Records continued into November when 18 flew west at Beachborough Park on the 2nd, with one there on the 14th, nine flying east at Abbotscliffe there on the 17th and seven flying east at Beachborough Park on the 22nd.

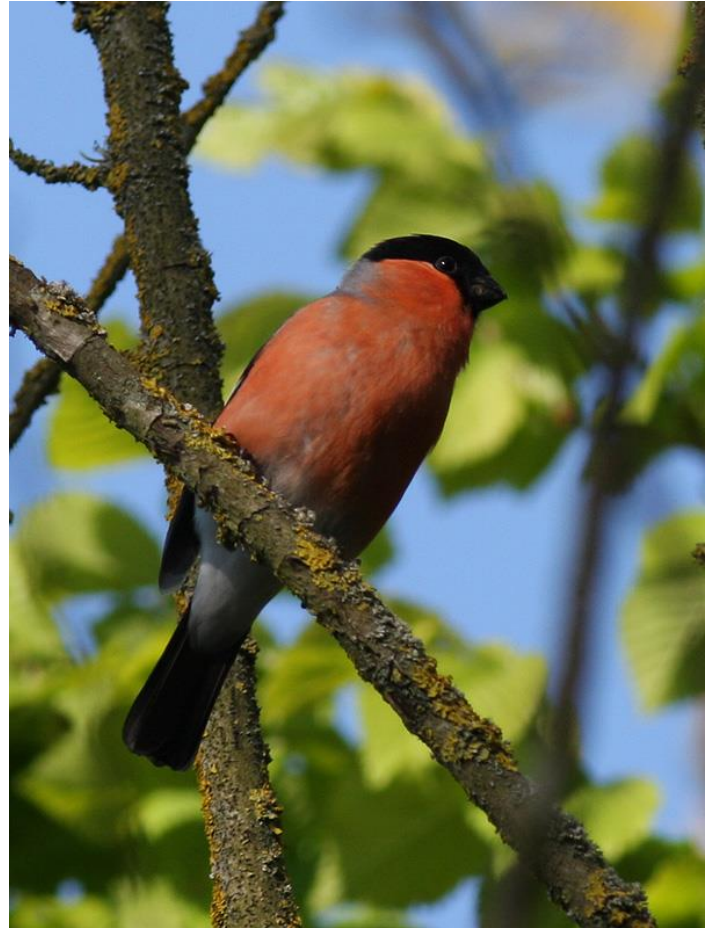
A welcome return, following a blank in 2017, and this proved to be a very good year, with the total of 73 constituting the highest tally since 2012.

Breeding resident (A)

There were records of resident birds from numerous sites including West Hythe, Nickolls Quarry, Bargrove Wood, Beachborough Park, Pond Hill Road and Folkestone Downs. Two at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October and three there on the 19th October may have been at least local migrants.



Siskin at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)



Bullfinch at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Very rare vagrant, perhaps formerly resident (A)

It was perhaps not surprising after the significant influx into Britain in autumn 2017 that there were a couple of spring records this year, with one at feeders in a garden in Quarry Road (Saltwood) on the 12th March (G. Cooke) and two in a garden at Ingles Manor (Folkestone) on the 17th March (J. Tomlinson). There was also an autumn record when two were seen in Horn Street on the 18th October (P. Howe). These were only the 13th to 15th area records.

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, has overwintered (A)

A confiding individual was present at Abbotscliffe on the 2nd November. There were only two blank years between 1996 and 2014 but two of the last four years have failed to produce sightings (2015 and 2017).

Breeding resident (A)

In the early winter period there were peak counts of 23 at Botolph's Bridge and 40 in a stubble field at Abbotscliffe, whilst one at Samphire Hoe on the 15th February was noteworthy as the species is now irregular there.

Autumn produced a peak of 19 at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October and in the late winter period counts included five at Beachborough Park, six at Botolph's Bridge and at least 12 in the Aldergate Bridge/Selby Farm area.



Snow Bunting at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



Yellowhammer at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no counts of note received from the early winter period. Spring migrants included one at Abbotscliffe on the 7th March and singles at Samphire Hoe on the 21st March, 25th March and 15th April.

Breeding records included three or four pairs at Nickolls Quarry and up to two pairs at Beachborough Lakes.

Autumn migrants were noted at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe from the 10th September, with ones and twos noted before six were counted at Abbotscliffe on the 10th October and 14 were seen there (including 11 flying west) on the 14th October. Five then flew east there on the 19th October, three flew west on the 20th October and three flew west on the 2nd November.

Declining resident, probably still breeding in most years (A)

There were no records from the early winter period but one was seen at Donkey Street on the 24th March and a pair were noted regularly there from the 21st April. The male held territory and the pair might have nested.

In the late winter period there were two at Botolph's Bridge on the 27th October and four at Donkey Street on the 2nd November.



Reed Bunting at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



Corn Bunting at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Category E species

Canary

Serinus canaria

Escapee. Native to Macaronesian Islands (E)

One seen in a garden in Folkestone on the 6th October (B. Hubbard) was thought to have originated from a nearby aviary.



Canary at Folkestone (Bev Hubbard)

First and last dates for selected migrants

The arrival and departure dates for selected summer and winter migrants are shown in the tables below. In cases where records appear to relate to over-wintering or over-summering individuals these have been excluded, and are indicated by an asterisk by the date. A negative difference in the table indicates that a species arrived or departed earlier than the previous year or ten year mean, whilst a positive difference indicates a later arrival or departure. Winter records of Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps have become so frequent in recent years that these species have been excluded due to the difficulty of determining the first arriving or last departing migrant.

Spring arrival of summer migrants was earlier than last year for 12 species and also later for 12 species. There were earliest ever arrival dates for Sandwich Tern (the first January record), Common Tern (the first March record) and Yellow Wagtail, whilst the arrival date for Swift equalled the earliest ever. There were also notable early arrival dates for Arctic Skua, Garden Warbler, Tree Pipit and Sand Martin, however Swallow and Willow Warbler were particularly late in their appearance.

Arrival dates of summer migrants

Species	Arrival date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest ever arrival
	2018	2017				
Honey Buzzard	11 th Jun	17 th May	+25	19 th May	+23	3 rd May 2013
Hobby	28 th Apr	26 th Apr	+2	22 nd Apr	+6	9 th Apr 1998
Whimbrel	10 th Apr	16 th Apr	-6	13 th Apr	-3	25 th Mar 2011
Common Sandpiper	12 th Apr	11 th Apr	+1	20 th Apr	-8	4 th Mar 2013*
Arctic Skua	30 th Mar	29 th Apr	-30	15 th Apr	-16	14 th Mar 2016*
Little Tern	22 nd Apr	7 th May	-15	27 th Apr	-5	11 th Apr 2016
Sandwich Tern	13 th Jan	18 th Feb	-36	19 th Mar	-65	13 th Jan 2018
Common Tern	30 th Mar	8 th Apr	-9	12 th Apr	-13	30 th Mar 2018
Turtle Dove	4 th Jun	16 th Jun	-12	21 st May	+14	10 th Apr 1993
Cuckoo	16 th Apr	29 th Apr	-13	21 st Apr	-5	27 th Mar 2001
Swift	18 th Apr	22 nd Apr	-4	23 rd Apr	-5	18 th Apr 2015
Sand Martin	17 th Mar	29 th Mar	-12	10 th Apr	-24	5 th Mar 1995
Swallow	6 th Apr	30 th Mar	+7	24 th Mar	+13	10 th Mar 1952
House Martin	12 th Apr	26 th Mar	+17	9 th Apr	+3	7 th Feb 2004
Willow Warbler	14 th Apr	30 th Mar	+15	4 th Apr	+10	26 th Mar 1960
Garden Warbler	14 th Apr	5 th May	-21	1 st May	-17	10 th Apr 2001
Lesser Whitethroat	13 th Apr	10 th Apr	+3	16 th Apr	-3	8 th Apr 2007
Common Whitethroat	14 th Apr	8 th Apr	+6	9 th Apr	+5	30 th Mar 2002
Sedge Warbler	6 th Apr	1 st Apr	+5	12 th Apr	-6	1 st Apr 2017
Reed Warbler	11 th Apr	3 rd Apr	+8	11 th Apr	0	3 rd Apr 2016
Ring Ouzel	8 th Apr	10 th Apr	-2	15 th Apr	-7	9 th Mar 1997
Spotted Flycatcher	15 th May	12 th May	+3	14 th May	+1	19 th Apr 1961
Nightingale	-	18 th Apr	-	23 rd Apr	-	10 th Apr 1981
Redstart	-	18 th Apr	-	13 th Apr	-	12 th Mar 1960
Whinchat	-	25 th Apr	-	3 rd May	-	11 th Apr 2011
Wheatear	24 th Mar	18 th Mar	+6	18 th Mar	+6	8 th Mar 2015
Yellow Wagtail	21 st Mar	4 th Apr	-14	11 th Apr	-21	21 st Mar 2018
Tree Pipit	7 th Apr	25 th Apr	-18	6 th May	-29	26 th Mar 1965

Departures of summer migrants were also fairly evenly balanced with 11 leaving earlier and 12 later. There were latest ever departure dates for Sandwich Tern and Reed Warbler, whilst the final dates were also notable for Lesser Whitethroat and Ring Ouzel (there have been later records in only three previous years), Garden Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher (later records in only four previous years) and Common Sandpiper (later records in only five years).

Departure dates of summer migrants

Species	Departure date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Latest ever departure
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Honey Buzzard	6 th Sep	-	-	4 th Sep	+2	15 th Oct 1995
Hobby	24 th Sep	12 th Oct	-18	2 nd Oct	-8	22 nd Oct 2001
Whimbrel	26 th Aug	11 th Aug	+15	28 th Aug	-2	12 th Nov 2013
Common Sandpiper	30 th Oct	11 th Aug	+80	18 th Sep*	+42	Several wintered
Arctic Skua	23 rd Sep	18 th Oct	-25	17 th Oct	-24	21 st Nov 2002
Little Tern	-	-	-	-	-	16 th Sep 1999
Sandwich Tern	19 th Nov	31 st Oct	+19	4 th Oct	+46	19 th Nov 2018*
Common Tern	31 st Aug	31 st Aug	0	24 th Sep	-24	30 th Oct 2007
Turtle Dove	22 nd Aug	2 nd Sep	-11	23 rd Aug	-1	24 th Oct 1981*
Cuckoo	-	6 th Sep	-	2 nd Aug	-	28 th Sep 1969
Swift	7 th Sep	17 th Sep	-10	13 th Sep	-6	16 th Nov 1957
Sand Martin	3 rd Oct	5 th Oct	-2	4 th Oct	-1	4 th Nov 1963
Swallow	10 th Nov	10 th Nov	0	15 th Nov	-5	8 th Dec 1955
House Martin	2 nd Nov	10 th Nov	-8	1 st Nov	-1	2 nd Dec 1974
Willow Warbler	28 th Sep	14 th Sep	+14	24 th Sep	+4	19 th Oct 1986
Garden Warbler	4 th Oct	31 st Aug	+34	9 th Sep	+25	6 th Nov 1981
Lesser Whitethroat	4 th Oct	24 th Sep	+10	25 th Sep	+9	3 rd Nov 1994
Common Whitethroat	28 th Sep	4 th Oct	-6	3 rd Oct	-5	19 th Oct 2016
Sedge Warbler	12 th Sep	17 th Sep	-5	23 rd Sep	-11	15 th Oct 1996
Reed Warbler	24 th Nov	14 th Sep	+71	25 th Sep	+62	24 th Nov 2018
Ring Ouzel	15 th Nov	2 nd Nov	+13	4 th Nov	+11	26 th Nov 2005
Spotted Flycatcher	4 th Oct	30 th Sep	+4	22 nd Sep	+12	11 th Oct 1999
Redstart	27 th Sep	27 th Sep	0	1 st Oct	-4	27 th Oct 1999
Whinchat	24 th Sep	15 th Oct	-21	10 th Oct	-16	10 th Nov 2009
Wheatear	19 th Oct	23 rd Oct	-4	30 th Oct	-11	4 th Dec 2016
Yellow Wagtail	10 th Oct	20 th Sep	+20	29 th Sep	+11	20 th Oct 1984
Tree Pipit	21 st Sep	27 th Aug	+25	26 th Sep	-5	20 th Oct 2001

Spring departures of winter visitors were generally similar to the previous ten year mean though there were relatively late dates for Red-throated Diver, Redwing and Brambling. In autumn the earliest ever arrival of Fieldfare was of particular note (there had only been three previous records in September) and there was also a September record of Redwing (which is less unusual but has only occurred in 12 previous years). The arrival of Brambling was also relatively early but Brent Goose and Purple Sandpiper were comparatively late.

Departure dates of winter migrants

Species	Departure date		Difference +/-	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Latest ever departure
	2018	2017				
Brent Goose	5 th May	8 th May	-3	3 rd May	+2	26 th May 1997*
Red-throated Diver	13 th May	10 th May	+3	2 nd May	+11	6 th June 2006
Purple Sandpiper	7 th May	9 th May	-2	5 th May	+2	10 th May 2009
Fieldfare	12 th Apr	1 st May	-19	11 th Apr	+1	5 th Jun 2016
Redwing	12 th Apr	10 th Apr	+2	3 rd Apr	+9	4 th May 1981
Brambling	12 th Apr	27 th Mar	+16	24 th Mar	+19	23 rd Apr 1958
Siskin	14 th Apr	26 th Apr*	-12	17 th Apr*	-3	29 th May 2000*

Arrival dates of winter migrants

Species	Arrival date		Difference +/-	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest ever arrival
	2018	2017				
Brent Goose	7 th Oct	23 rd Sep	+14	19 th Sep*	+18	11 th Sep 2014*
Red-throated Diver	24 th Sep	15 th Sep	+9	3 rd Oct	-9	7 th Sep 1997
Purple Sandpiper	4 th Nov	25 th Oct	+10	30 th Oct	+5	30 th Sep 1984
Fieldfare	21 st Sep	27 th Oct	-36	16 th Oct	-25	21 st Sep 2018
Redwing	28 th Sep	6 th Oct	-8	2 nd Oct	-4	7 th Sep 2016
Brambling	3 rd Oct	15 th Oct	-12	13 th Oct	-10	21 st Sep 1996
Siskin	17 th Sep	20 th Sep*	-3	18 th Sep*	-1	2 nd Sep 1997*



Cuckoo at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Year list

January

1	Mute Swan	1 st Jan
2	Brent Goose	1 st Jan
3	Mandarin	1 st Jan
4	Teal	1 st Jan
5	Mallard	1 st Jan
6	Common Scoter	1 st Jan
7	Pheasant	1 st Jan
8	Red-throated Diver	1 st Jan
9	Fulmar	1 st Jan
10	Gannet	1 st Jan
11	Cormorant	1 st Jan
12	Little Egret	1 st Jan
13	Grey Heron	1 st Jan
14	Little Grebe	1 st Jan
15	Great Crested Grebe	1 st Jan
16	Marsh Harrier	1 st Jan
17	Sparrowhawk	1 st Jan
18	Common Buzzard	1 st Jan
19	Common Kestrel	1 st Jan
20	Water Rail	1 st Jan
21	Moorhen	1 st Jan
22	Coot	1 st Jan
23	Oystercatcher	1 st Jan
24	Lapwing	1 st Jan
25	Purple Sandpiper	1 st Jan
26	Curlew	1 st Jan
27	Green Sandpiper	1 st Jan
28	Turnstone	1 st Jan
29	Great Skua	1 st Jan
30	Kittiwake	1 st Jan
31	Black-headed Gull	1 st Jan
32	Mediterranean Gull	1 st Jan
33	Common Gull	1 st Jan
34	Herring Gull	1 st Jan
35	Great Black-backed Gull	1 st Jan
36	Guillemot	1 st Jan
37	Razorbill	1 st Jan
38	Feral Pigeon	1 st Jan
39	Wood Pigeon	1 st Jan
40	Collared Dove	1 st Jan
41	Common Kingfisher	1 st Jan
42	Magpie	1 st Jan
43	Jay	1 st Jan
44	Jackdaw	1 st Jan
45	Rook	1 st Jan
46	Carrion Crow	1 st Jan
47	Goldcrest	1 st Jan
48	Blue Tit	1 st Jan
49	Great Tit	1 st Jan
50	Long-tailed Tit	1 st Jan
51	Wren	1 st Jan

52	Starling	1 st Jan
53	Blackbird	1 st Jan
54	Song Thrush	1 st Jan
55	Redwing	1 st Jan
56	Mistle Thrush	1 st Jan
57	Robin	1 st Jan
58	Stonechat	1 st Jan
59	Black Redstart	1 st Jan
60	Duncock	1 st Jan
61	House Sparrow	1 st Jan
62	Pied Wagtail	1 st Jan
63	Meadow Pipit	1 st Jan
64	Rock Pipit	1 st Jan
65	Chaffinch	1 st Jan
66	Goldfinch	1 st Jan
67	Linnet	1 st Jan
68	Reed Bunting	1 st Jan
69	Yellowhammer	2 nd Jan
70	Grey Wagtail	2 nd Jan
71	Sky Lark	2 nd Jan
72	Raven	2 nd Jan
73	Great Spotted Woodpecker	2 nd Jan
74	Green Woodpecker	2 nd Jan
75	Stock Dove	2 nd Jan
76	Redshank	2 nd Jan
77	Snipe	2 nd Jan
78	Jack Snipe	2 nd Jan
79	Peregrine	2 nd Jan
80	Tufted Duck	2 nd Jan
81	Shelduck	2 nd Jan
82	Canada Goose	2 nd Jan
83	Bullfinch	3 rd Jan
84	Lesser Redpoll	3 rd Jan
85	Siskin	3 rd Jan
86	Treecreeper	3 rd Jan
87	Nuthatch	3 rd Jan
88	Marsh Tit	3 rd Jan
89	Coal Tit	3 rd Jan
90	Woodcock	3 rd Jan
91	Blackcap	4 th Jan
92	Lesser Black-backed Gull	4 th Jan
93	Greenfinch	5 th Jan
94	Sanderling	5 th Jan
95	Firecrest	6 th Jan
96	Fieldfare	6 th Jan
97	Shag	6 th Jan
98	Ringed Plover	7 th Jan
99	Red-breasted Merganser	7 th Jan
100	Chiffchaff	8 th Jan
101	Dunlin	8 th Jan
102	Gadwall	8 th Jan
103	Wigeon	8 th Jan
104	Pintail	9 th Jan
105	Cetti's Warbler	10 th Jan
106	Red Kite	11 th Jan

107	Sandwich Tern	13 th Jan
108	White-tailed Eagle	14 th Jan
109	Short-eared Owl	15 th Jan
110	Shoveler	17 th Jan
111	Tree Sparrow	18 th Jan
112	Little Owl	20 th Jan
113	Glaucous Gull	23 rd Jan
114	Little Gull	25 th Jan
115	Bearded Tit	26 th Jan
116	Greylag Goose	26 th Jan

February

117	Eider	5 th Feb
118	Barn Owl	10 th Feb
119	Golden Plover	10 th Feb
120	Merlin	10 th Feb
121	Tawny Owl	18 th Feb
122	Pochard	28 th Feb

March

123	Bar-tailed Godwit	1 st Mar
124	Ruff	5 th Mar
125	Goshawk	5 th Mar
126	Great White Egret	5 th Mar
127	Black-throated Diver	6 th Mar
128	Grey Partridge	7 th Mar
129	Hawfinch	12 th Mar
130	Avocet	14 th Mar
131	Egyptian Goose	15 th Mar
132	Sand Martin	17 th Mar
133	Barnacle Goose	17 th Mar
134	Goosander	18 th Mar
135	Grey Plover	18 th Mar
136	Yellow Wagtail	21 st Mar
137	Baillon's Crake	21 st Mar
138	Red-legged Partridge	23 rd Mar
139	Corn Bunting	24 th Mar
140	Wheatear	24 th Mar
141	Black-tailed Godwit	24 th Mar
142	Hen Harrier	25 th Mar
143	Brambling	27 th Mar
144	Slavonian Grebe	27 th Mar
145	Common Tern	30 th Mar
146	Arctic Skua	30 th Mar

April

147	Sedge Warbler	6 th Apr
148	Swallow	6 th Apr
149	Tree Pipit	7 th Apr
150	Ring Ouzel	8 th Apr
151	Great Northern Diver	9 th Apr
152	Long-eared Owl	10 th Apr
153	Reed Warbler	11 th Apr
154	House Martin	12 th Apr
155	Common Sandpiper	12 th Apr
156	Whimbrel	12 th Apr
157	Lesser Whitethroat	13 th Apr
158	Black-necked Grebe	13 th Apr
159	Willow Warbler	14 th Apr
160	Whitethroat	14 th Apr
161	Garden Warbler	14 th Apr
162	Long-tailed Duck	15 th Apr
163	Cuckoo	16 th Apr
164	Swift	18 th Apr
165	Serin	19 th Apr
166	Manx Shearwater	20 th Apr
167	Little Tern	21 st Apr
168	Grasshopper Warbler	28 th Apr
169	Hobby	28 th Apr

May

170	Little Ringed Plover	5 th May
171	Arctic Tern	6 th May
172	Garganey	8 th May
173	Pomarine Skua	11 th May
174	Spotted Flycatcher	15 th May
175	Common Crossbill	17 th May
176	Greenshank	24 th May
177	Long-tailed Skua	24 th May
178	Hoopoe	27 th May
179	Osprey	28 th May

June

180	Honey Buzzard	4 th Jun
181	Quail	6 th Jun
182	Red-rumped Swallow	9 th Jun
183	Turtle Dove	11 th Jun

July

184	Iceland Gull	27 th Jul
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August

185	Whinchat	8 th Aug
186	Common Redstart	19 th Aug
187	Ring-necked Parakeet	26 th Aug
188	Pied Flycatcher	31 st Aug
189	Wood Warbler	31 st Aug

October

190	Yellow-browed Warbler	8 th Oct
191	Wood Lark	10 th Oct
192	Richard's Pipit	14 th Oct
193	Knot	28 th Oct

November

194	Snow Bunting	2 nd Nov
195	Water Pipit	2 nd Nov
196	Velvet Scoter	19 th Nov
197	Goldeneye	20 th Nov

December

198	Caspian Gull	15 th Dec
199	Whooper Swan	26 th Dec

Ringing recoveries

Details of birds ringed elsewhere and recovered in the Folkestone and Hythe area are given here. The code of the metal ring and colour rings are provided on the left. The distances and directions travelled are in relation to the ringing site in all cases.

Notable recoveries included Mediterranean Gulls from France, Belgium and Hungary, Great Black-backed Gulls from Sweden and Normandy.

I am grateful to Martin Collins and Phil Smith for passing on details of Mediterranean Gulls and to Glenn Tutton and Mark Varley for passing on details of Great Black-backed Gulls. I am also grateful to the coordinators of the various ringing schemes for providing the relevant information, with particular thanks to Paul Roper of the North Thames Gull Group.

Several new Stonechats were ringed at Samphire Hoe this year. Please continue to report sightings of these, making a note of the position and order of the rings, the date and location, by either picking up a form from the Rangers' Office at Samphire Hoe or by emailing pwjfindley@hotmail.com.

Mediterranean Gull				<i>Ichthyæetus melanocephalus</i>		
EZ09720	Ringed	05-Mar-2015	Adult	Copt Point		
Yellow 2E46	Read in field	21-Dec-2015	Adult	Folkestone Harbour	0km	
	Read in field	19-Jan-2017	Adult	Copt Point	0km	
	Read in field	12-Feb-2017	Adult	Copt Point	0km	
	Read in field	04-Jan-2018	Adult	Copt Point	0km	
	Read in field	30-Dec-2018	Adult	Copt Point	0km	
SH03761	Ringed	15-Jun-2016	Juvenile	Szeged, Hungary		
Red H4W0	Read in field	10-Oct-2016	1 st -year	Audresselles, France	1,444km	ENE
	Read in field	10-Feb-2018	Adult	Copt Point	1,479km	ENE
E943866	Ringed	20-May-2017	Adult	Antwerp, Belgium		
White 381F	Read in field	14-Aug-2017	Adult	Le Portel, France	202km	WSW
	Read in field	03-Mar-2018	Adult	Copt Point	217km	WSW
E943884	Ringed	21-May-2017	Adult	Antwerp, Belgium		
White 3YPJ	Read in field	03-Mar-2018	Adult	Copt Point	217km	WSW
FS72490	Ringed	11-Jun-2010	Juvenile	Conchil le Temple, France		
Green R29V	Read in field	27-Jan-2011	1 st -year	Folkestone Harbour	86km	NNW
	Read in field	08-Feb-2011	1 st -year	Copt Point	86km	NNW
	Read in field	14-Feb-2011	1 st -year	Folkestone Harbour	86km	NNW
	Read in field	16-Apr-2011	1 st -year	Titchfield Haven, Hampshire	210km	WNW
	Read in field	03-Aug-2011	2 nd -year	Boulogne-sur-Mer, France	40km	N
	Read in field	06-Dec-2011	2 nd -year	Copt Point	86km	NNW
	Read in field	01-Jul-2012	Adult	Paimpol, France	399km	SW
	Read in field	16-Mar-2013	Adult	La Flèche, France	323km	SSW
	Then seen at La Flèche regularly until					
	Read in field	17-Apr-2013	Adult	La Flèche, France	323km	SSW
	Read in field	18-Apr-2013	Adult	Montreuil-sur-Loir, France	340km	SSW
	Then seen at Montreuil-sur-Loir and La Flèche regularly until					
	Read in field	29-May-2013	Adult	Montreuil-sur-Loir, France	340km	SSW
	Read in field	06-Jun-2013	Adult	Barbâtre, Vendee, France	473km	SW
	Read in field	26-Jun-2013	Adult	Longué-Jumelles, France	352km	SSW
	Read in field	11-Mar-2014	Adult	Longué-Jumelles, France	352km	SSW

Then seen at Longué-Jumelles regularly until

Read in field	07-Apr-2014	Adult	Longué-Jumelles, France	352km SSW
Read in field	13-Apr-2014	Adult	La Flèche, France	323km SSW
Read in field	24-Apr-2014	Adult	Montreuil-sur-Loir, France	340km SSW
Read in field	02-May-2014	Adult	Montreuil-sur-Loir, France	340km SSW
Read in field	12-Apr-2015	Adult	Montreuil-sur-Loir, France	340km SSW
Read in field	23-Apr-2015	Adult	Montreuil-sur-Loir, France	340km SSW
Read in field	11-Feb-2017	Adult	Copt Point	86km NNW
Read in field	15-Mar-2017	Adult	La Flèche, France	323km SSW
Read in field	21-Apr-2017	Adult	Barbâtre, Vendee, France	473km SW
Read in field	23-Apr-2017	Adult	Vivy, Maine-et-Loire, France	360km SSW
Read in field	03-Mar-2018	Adult	Copt Point	86km NNW

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

GR75774	Ringed	16-Nov-2013	1st-year	Rainham Tip, Greater London	
Orange D3DT	Read in field	06-Feb-2017	4 th -year	Dungeness, Kent	86km SSE
	Read in field	19-Mar-2017	4 th -year	Dungeness, Kent	86km SSE
	Read in field	02-Feb-2018	Adult	Bexley Tip, Crayford, Kent	11km SSW
	Read in field	12-May-2018	Adult	Hythe	79km SE
	Read in field	04-Aug-2018	Adult	Hythe	79km SE

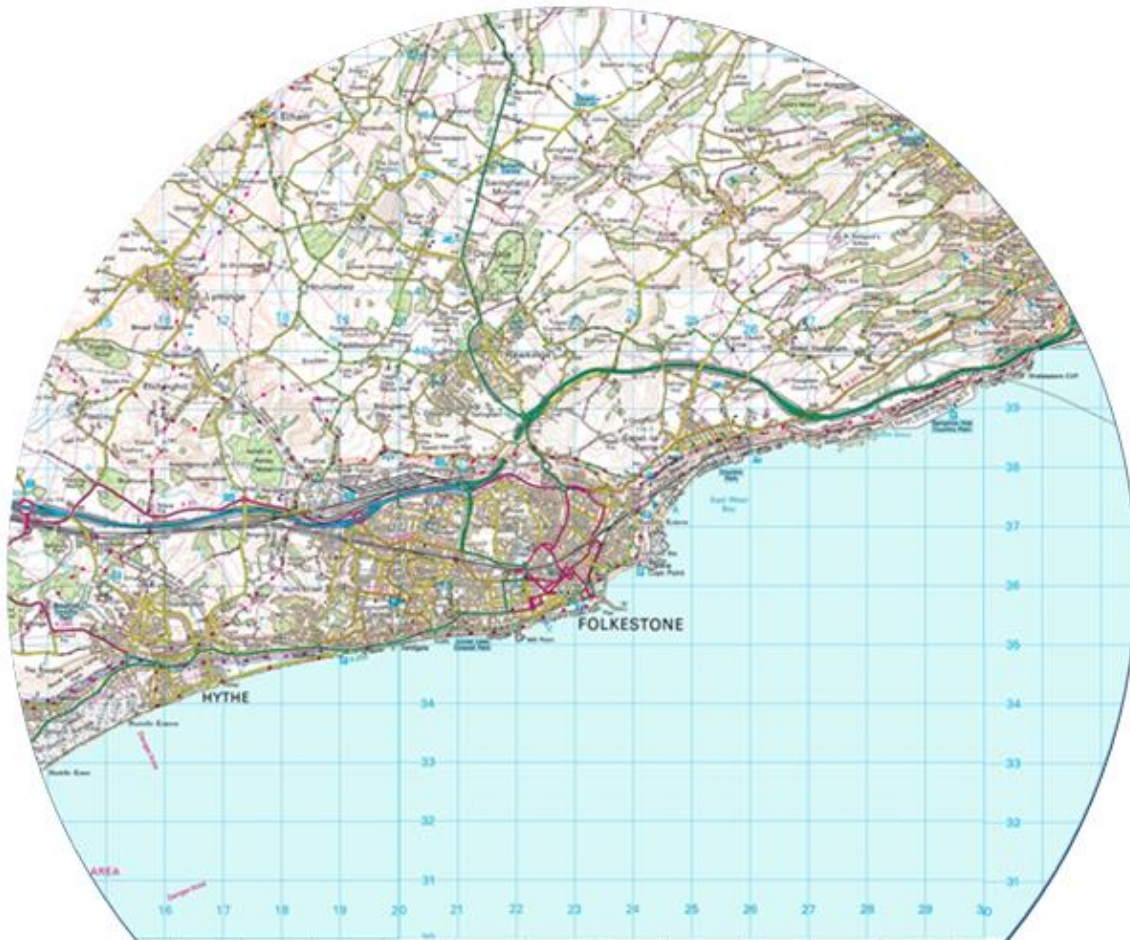
Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

9111897	Ringed	16-May-2016	Adult	Hållnäs, Uppland, Sweden	
Red 706	Read in field	28-Oct-2018	Adult	Hythe	1481km SW
DB115361	Ringed	02-Jul-2012	Juvenile	Le Harve, Normandy	
Black 80L	Read in field	29-Aug-2013	2 nd -year	Guersney	196km W
	Read in field	02-Sep-2014	3 rd -year	Looe Island, Cornwall	340km WNW
	Read in field	04-Nov-2015	4 th -year	Folkestone Harbour	192km NE
	Read in field	18-Dec-2015	4 th -year	Princes Parade	190km NE
	Read in field	23-Aug-2016	Adult	Princes Parade	190km NE
	Read in field	04-Mar-2017	Adult	Princes Parade	190km NE
	Read in field	21-Mar-2017	Adult	Princes Parade	190km NE
	Read in field	28-Jun-2017	Adult	Sandgate	191km NE
	Read in field	30-Oct-2018	Adult	Princes Parade	190km NE
3M1799	Ringed	08-Jul-2014	Juvenile	Græsholm, Denmark	
Black JZ399	Read in field	09-Feb-2015	1 st -year	Boulogne-sur-Mer, France	1,040km SW
	Read in field	19-Feb-2015	1 st -year	Boulogne-sur-Mer, France	1,040km SW
	Read in field	16-Mar-2015	1 st -year	Dungeness, Kent	1,066km SW
	Read in field	10-Oct-2015	2 nd -year	Dungeness, Kent	1,066km SW
	Read in field	11-Oct-2015	2 nd -year	Dungeness, Kent	1,066km SW
	Read in field	18-Mar-2017	3 rd -year	Camperduin, Netherlands	746km SW
	Read in field	31-Aug-2017	4 th -year	Dungeness, Kent	1,066km SW
	Read in field	23-Nov-2018	Adult	Folkestone Harbour	1,042km SW

The Folkestone and Hythe area

The first list of birds that had been recorded in the Folkestone and Hythe area to be published was included in Henry Ulyett's "Rambles of a naturalist round Folkestone" (Ulyett, 1880). This book also included lists of the area's plants, lepidoptera and molluscs. Like other naturalists of his time that had done similar work elsewhere, Ulyett confined his list to birds which had been noted within a radius of six miles from Folkestone Town Hall, which covers the area shown below:

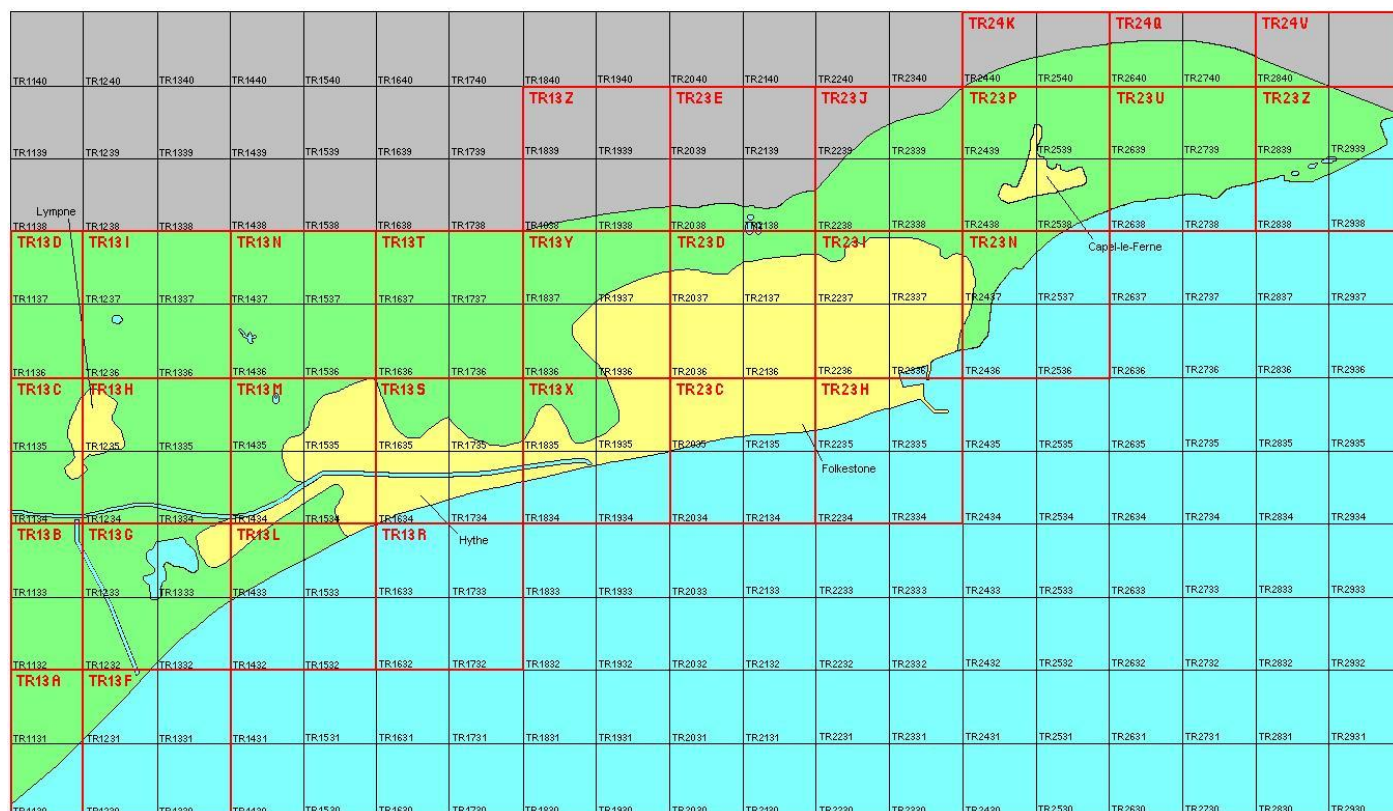


In 1931 A. M. Morley published an updated list of lepidoptera that had been recorded in the "neighbourhood" of Folkestone (Morley, 1931). He commented on Ulyett's delineation of the Folkestone area and considered that in being "so clear and definite", it had its "obvious advantages" but was "neither convenient nor scientific". Morley believed that the ideal would be to "map out a district which would fit in with similar districts around Dover, Canterbury and Ashford, which had certain characteristics of its own, and which would serve as a convenient unit for other surveys, particularly those relating to its geology and vegetation", however he considered that "the time [was] not yet ripe for the exact marking out of such an area".

For the purposes of his list, Morley, after consultation with the Committee of the Folkestone Natural History Society, described an area which was "roughly outlined" as follows: "its boundary in the Dover direction is near the Plough Inn. Thence it runs past Ewell Minnis and along the Dover-Canterbury road as far as Barham. From Barham it runs to Sellindge, and from Sellindge to Lympne and West Hythe. From this point it runs along the Hythe Canal and includes the greater part of Romney Marsh". This area is not dissimilar to the current Folkestone & Hythe District Council boundaries, apart from extending a little further east to encompass West Hougham, Ewell Minnis and Barham.

I first attempted to collate a Folkestone and Hythe bird list in 1996 and defined the area as being the coastline between the eastern end of Abbotscliffe (Round Down) to the Canal Cutting outfall (just to the west of the Hythe Redoubt), extending inland to cover Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone, Cheriton, Saltwood, Lympne and west to the dam at West Hythe. This was a similar area to that used by Ulyett but extended a little further to the west and much less to the north (there was no natural boundary to the north and this was marked by a rather arbitrary line).

In 2007 survey work for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Kent Ornithological Society (KOS) bird atlases commenced. The Kent survey aimed to record all species breeding or wintering within the 2km x 2km squares (tetrads) in the county, whilst local mapping was undertaken at the 1km square level. This prompted a review of the area and the western and part of the northern boundary was aligned to the 1km grid, however from Peene Quarry eastwards the original boundary was retained: this followed the top of the North Downs escarpment (as a clear natural feature) to Round Hill, before arcing around Capel-le-Ferne, Church Hougham and West Hougham to meet the sea just beyond Samphire Hoe. This map, as shown below, has since formed the basis of local recording.



I have never been completely happy with this northern boundary nor the half tetrads in the west, and have long considered fully aligning the recording to 2km tetrads, upon which basis the Kent Breeding Bird Atlas was published (Clements *et al*, 2015). However the national BTO bird atlas (Balmer *et al*, 2013) was mapped on 10km hectads and this methodology will also form the basis the forthcoming Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths (due in 2019), so there is a good rationale for aligning the area to the local 10km squares. The current area covers much of TR13 and almost all of TR23 but would require some extension to the north and west. Conversely there is little logic for continuing to include an extremely small part of TR24.

The area that Morley described is considerably larger (at over 350km²) than the current area, or that used by Ulliyett, and includes the greater Dungeness recording area (extending onto Romney Marsh) that is reported by Dungeness Bird Observatory. There does not seem to be a case for adopting this region for future reporting.

So, in an attempt to standardise local recording with the national systems, I have taken the decision to revise the recording area to encompass the entirety of the two local hectads, TR13 and TR23. As I often receive queries regarding the extent of the recording area this should also provide greater clarity for observers. This increases the recording area to incorporate:

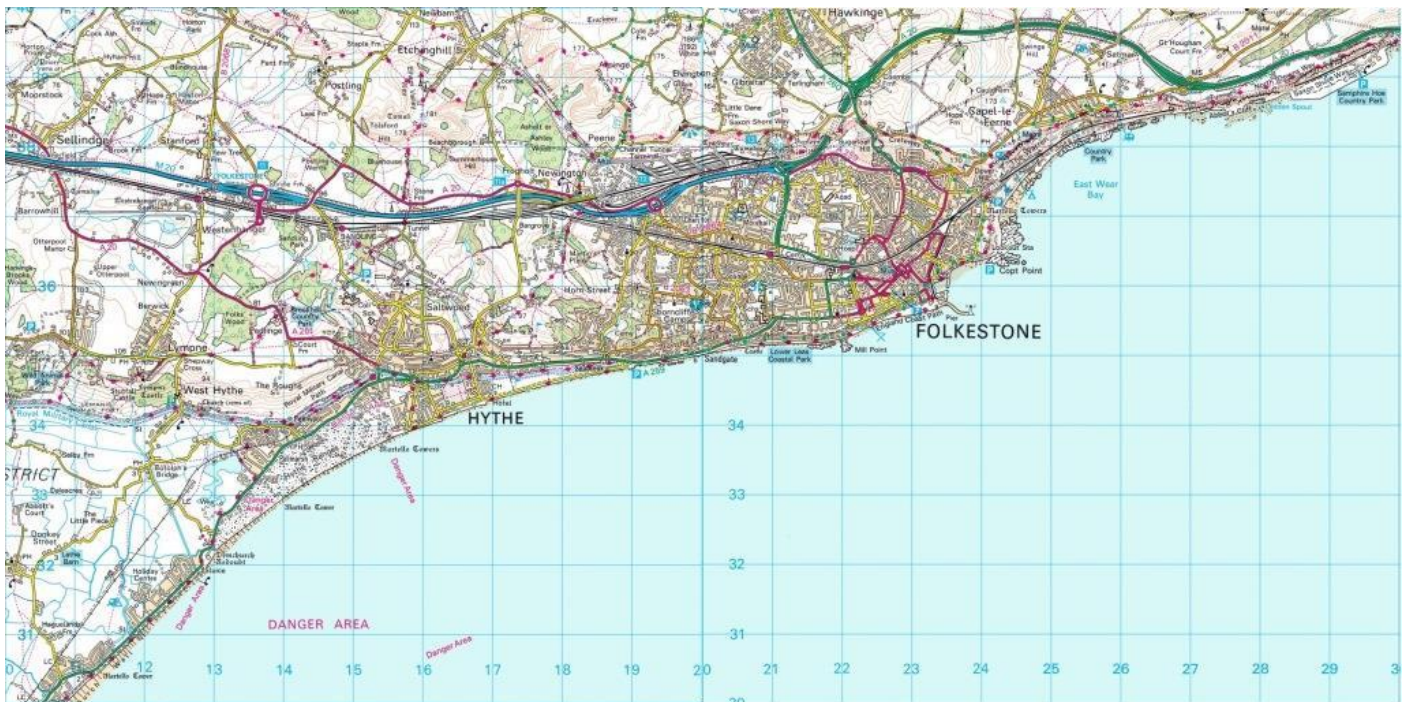
- The remainder of TR13 A and B (an additional area of Romney Marsh, including Burmarsh)
- The remainder of TR13 C (Royal Military Canal as far as Aldergate Bridge and Port Lympne Wildlife Park)
- The remainder of TR13 D (Harringe Brooks Wood and Barrowhill)
- TR13 E (Sellindge, Horton Priory and Gibbin's Brook)
- TR13 J (Stanford, Hayton Manor and Horton Park)
- TR13 P (Postling and Tolsford Hill)

- TR13 U (Etchinghill, Beachborough Park and Asholt Wood)
- The remainder of TR13 Z (Arpinge Range)
- The remainder of TR23 E (southern section of Hawkinge)
- The remainder of TR23 J (Coombe Wood)

It also reduces the recording area to exclude:

- TR24 K (Hockley Sole, Tumble Tye Farm and Capel Old Church)
- TR24 Q (West Hougham and Cherry Tree Farm Wood)
- TR24 V (West Down)

Work will now commence to update the tetrad guides on the website to reflect the new boundaries, to add guides for the new squares, to revise the species maps and to add or remove records as appropriate. The new Folkestone & Hythe area map is shown below, together with the tetrad layouts for ease of reference.



Gazetteer

The locations mentioned in this report are listed below together with the 2km square(s) or tetrad(s) in which they are located. The tetrads which form the Folkestone and Hythe area can be found on the map on the preceding page.

A map of some of the major sites listed together with the tetrads and 1km squares is available via Google maps on the 'where to watch' section of the website: www.folkestonebirds.com/wheretowatch.htm.

Site	Tetrad
Abbotscliffe	TR23 U/TR23 Z
Aldergate Bridge	TR13 C
Asholt Wood	TR13 T/TR13 U
Bargrove Wood	TR13 T
Bartholomew's Wood	TR13 N
Battery Point (Seabrook)	TR13 X
Beachborough Lakes	TR13 T
Beachborough Park	TR13 U
Botolph's Bridge	TR13 G
Broadmead Village (Cheriton)	TR23 D
Brockhill Country Park	TR13 M
Brockhill Road (Saltwood)	TR13 M
Browning Place (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Capel-le-Ferne	TR23 P
Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site	TR23 N/TR23 P
Casebourne Wood	TR13 Y
Cheriton	TR13 Y/TR23 D
Chesterfield Wood (Saltwood)	TR13 N
Church Hougham	TR23 U
Copt Point	TR23 N
Creteway Down	TR23 J
Donkey Street	TR13 B
East Cliff Gardens (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Enbrook Park (Sandgate)	TR23 C
Fisherman's Beach (Hythe)	TR13 L
Folkestone	TR23 C/TR23 D/TR23 H/TR23 I
Folkestone Academy	TR23 D/TR23 I
Folkestone Beach	TR13 H
Folkestone Downs	TR23 I/TR23 J
Folkestone Harbour	TR13 H/TR13 I
Folkestone Pier	TR23 H
Folkestone Warren	TR23 N/TR23 P
Folks' Wood (Pedlinge)	TR23 H
Golden Valley (Cheriton)	TR13 Y
Grand Hotel (Folkestone)	TR23 C
Heane Wood (Saltwood)	TR13 N
Hillhurst Farm (Westenhanger)	TR13 I
Hope Farm (Capel-le-Ferne)	TR23 J
Horn Street	TR13 X/TR13 Y
Horn Street Lake	TR13 X

Site	Tetrad
Hythe	TR13 M/TR13 S
Hythe Bay	TR13 L/TR13 R/TR13 X
Hythe Imperial golf course	TR13 S
Hythe Ranges	TR13 G/TR13 L
Hythe Redoubt	TR13 G (/TR13 F for records on sea)
Hythe Roughs	TR13 H/TR13 M
Hythe Sailing Club	TR13 S
Hythe seafront	TR13 S
Ingles Manor (Folkestone)	TR23 C
Kiln Wood	TR13 I
Laurel Close (Cheriton)	TR23 D
Lower Wall	TR13 B
Lympne	TR13 H
Lympne Park Wood	TR13 C/TR13 H
Lynton Road (Hythe)	TR13 S
Mill Point	TR23 C/TR23 H
Newington	TR13 Y
Nickolls Quarry	TR13 G
Ormonde Road (Hythe)	TR13 S
Palmarsh	TR13 G
Paraker Wood (Seabrook)	TR13 X
Park Farm	TR23 D
Park Farm Industrial Estate	TR23 D
Peene	TR13 Z
Peene Quarry	TR13 Z
Pond Hill Road (Cheriton)	TR13 Y
Port Lympne	TR13 C
Postling Wents	TR13 N
Princes Parade	TR13 S/TR13 X
Quarry Road (Saltwood)	TR13 M
Radnor Park (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Royal Military Avenue (Cheriton)	TR13 Y
Saltwood	TR13 M
Samphire Hoe	TR23 Z
Sandgate	TR23 C
Sandling	TR13 N
Sandling Station	TR13 N
Scene Wood	TR13 S
Seabrook	TR13 X
Sene Golf Course	TR13 S
Selby Farm	TR13 C
Shorncliffe Camp	TR13 X
St. Hilda's Road (Hythe)	TR13 M
Stade Street (Hythe)	TR13 S
Summerhouse Hill	TR13 T
Sunny Sands (Folkestone)	TR23 I

Site	Tetrad
West Hythe	TR13 H
West Hythe dam	TR13 C
West Road	TR13 Y
Willop Basin	TR13 A
Willop Outfall	TR13 A
Willop Sewer	TR13 A/TR13B
Willop Sewage Works	TR13 A/TR13 B



Cormorants passing Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

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Short-eared Owl at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)