

## Red-breasted Flycatcher

*Ficedula parva*

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

4 records,  
4 birds

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

Breeds across mid-latitude Europe from eastern Germany eastwards through Russia and Siberia to Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island, and south-east into the Balkans to Iran. Winters in southern Asia, from Pakistan and India east to southern China.

*Kent status (KOS 2022):*

It is a scarce autumn migrant in the county, which is very rare in spring.



Red-breasted Flycatcher at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Kent (KOS) records to end 2020: 145

The Red-breasted Flycatcher was first noted in Britain in 1863 when one was shot in Cornwall, with a further nine being logged by the end of the nineteenth century. It was then sighted with some regularity in the first half of the twentieth century and when Harrison (1953) documented the first record for Kent it was the 87<sup>th</sup> British example (Naylor 2021).

Harrison added a further three in 1951, whilst Taylor *et al.* (1981) wrote that “during the 25 years under review [1952-76] the Red-breasted Flycatcher has gradually established itself as a regular migrant of almost annual autumn occurrence, with 45 individuals between the 22<sup>nd</sup> August and the 1<sup>st</sup> November”. There had also been three in spring and one in July.

The first local record occurred during this period, when a male was seen briefly by Roger Norman at Hythe Ranges on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1958. The record was not submitted at the time due to the brevity of the views and incompleteness of description, but the red breast and tail pattern were noted and the observer has since become certain of the identification, especially following subsequent experience of the species abroad (pers. comm.). It would constitute the earliest arrival date in the county by nearly three weeks however Naylor noted that there was a small “spring passage [in Britain] during mid-April into June”.

White & Kehoe (2022) considered that there was no trend in the frequency of its occurrence at a national level, with annual means per annum of 79 in the 1970s, 115 in the 1980s, 88 in the 1990s, 94 in the 2000s and 125 in the 2010s. However numbers in Kent appears to have declined significantly with 31 records in the 1970s, 37 in the 1980s and 29 in the 1990s, decreasing to 9 in the 2000s and 8 in the 2010s (KOS no date).



Red-breasted Flycatcher at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

The second local record occurred in 1998, when Dale Gibson found one in Folkestone Warren, in the trees below the Capel-le-Ferne Clifftop Café, on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1998, which was the latest arrival date at the time in the county (although one has since been recorded at Dungeness on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021), whilst the third area record was found at the same site by the same observer the following year, on the more typical date of 14<sup>th</sup> October.

A fourth area record occurred 16 years later, when Mark Kennett found one at Samphire Hoe on the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015. It remained until dusk, allowing several observers to catch up with this first record for the site.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

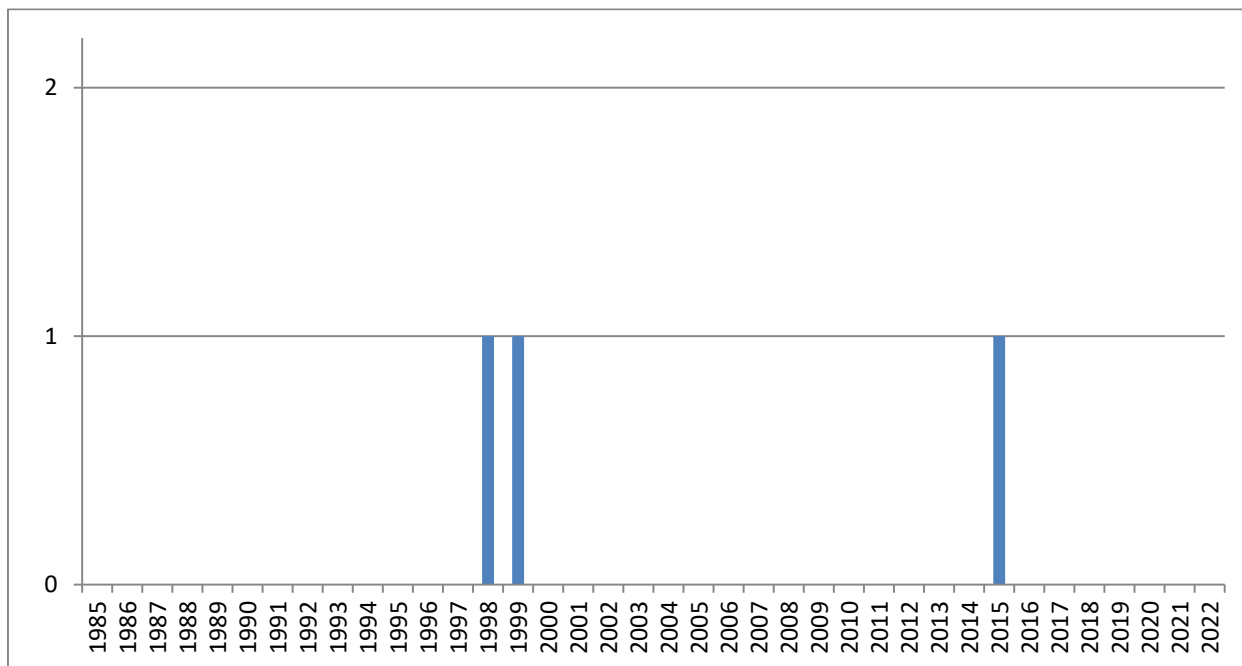


Figure 1: Red-breasted Flycatcher records at Folkestone and Hythe

The records by week are given in figure 2.

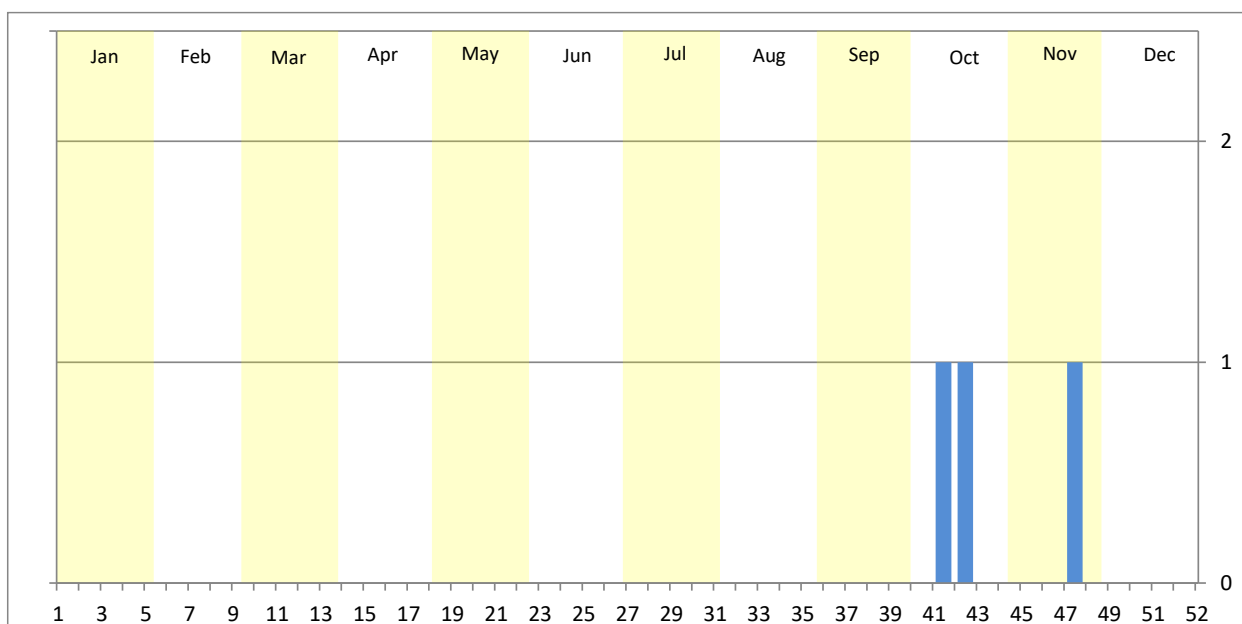


Figure 2: Red-breasted Flycatcher records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad.

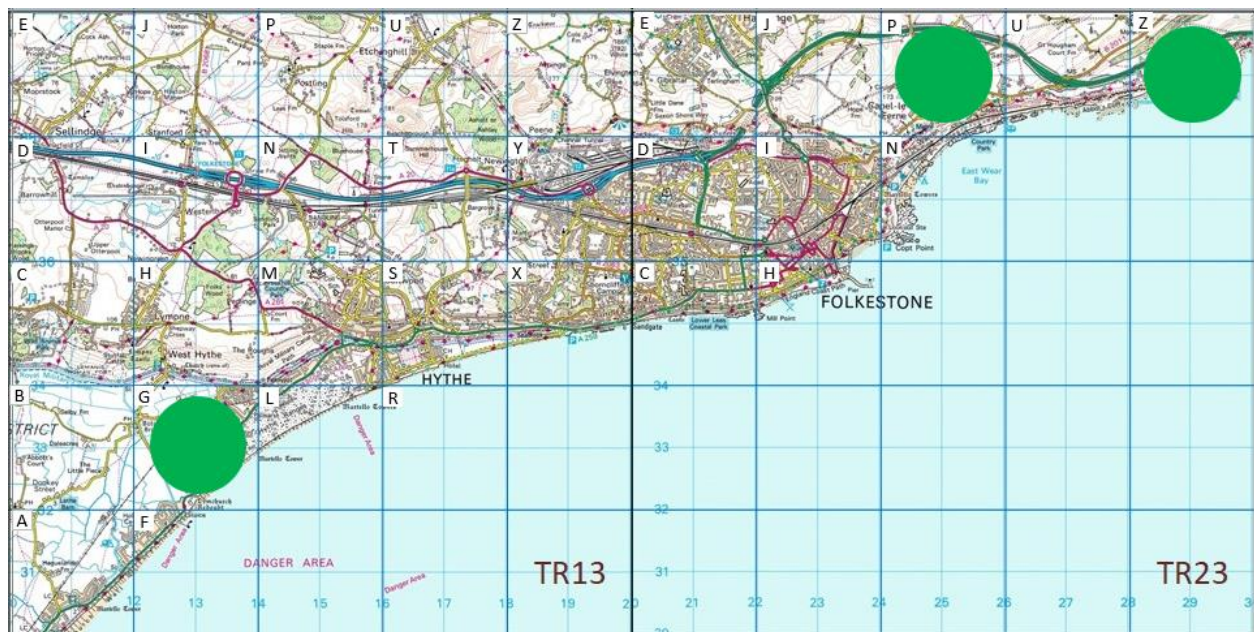


Figure 3: Distribution of all Red-breasted Flycatcher records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

**1998** Folkestone Warren, immature/female, 19<sup>th</sup> November (D. A. Gibson *et al*)

**1999** Folkestone Warren, immature/female, 14<sup>th</sup> October (D. A. Gibson)

**2015** Samphire Hoe, immature/female, 20<sup>th</sup> October, photographed (M. D. Kennett, P. Holt, P. R. Smith *et al*)

### References

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Snow, D. & Perrins, C.M. 1998. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press.

Taylor, D., Davenport, D. & Flegg, J. 1981. *Birds of Kent*. Kent Ornithological Society.

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### Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](https://get-a-map.service.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/).

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