

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Category A

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

Breeds in middle and upper temperate and boreal latitudes of Europe discontinuously east through southern Siberian to Sakhalin island and Japan, and from the Himalayas east to central China. European populations winter within the south of the breeding range, and vacate entirely only the extreme north of the range in Fenno-Scandia and Russia.



Goldcrest at Samphire Hoe (Shelagh Wright)

Kent status (KOS 2021):

In Kent it is a widespread resident and passage migrant.

The Goldcrest was included in Knight and Tolputt's "List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood" (1871). This list covered an area of six miles radius from Folkestone town hall, therefore extending further inland than the current Folkestone and Hythe area, so this does not provide conclusive evidence of its occurrence here. However, Ticehurst (1909) considered that it was "fairly numerous and generally distributed throughout the county wherever there are larch and fir trees" and "often also in gardens where there are coniferous trees" so there can be little doubt that it was to be found locally.

Breeding atlas distribution

Figure 1 shows the breeding distribution by tetrad based on the results of the 2007-13 BTO/KOS atlas fieldwork.

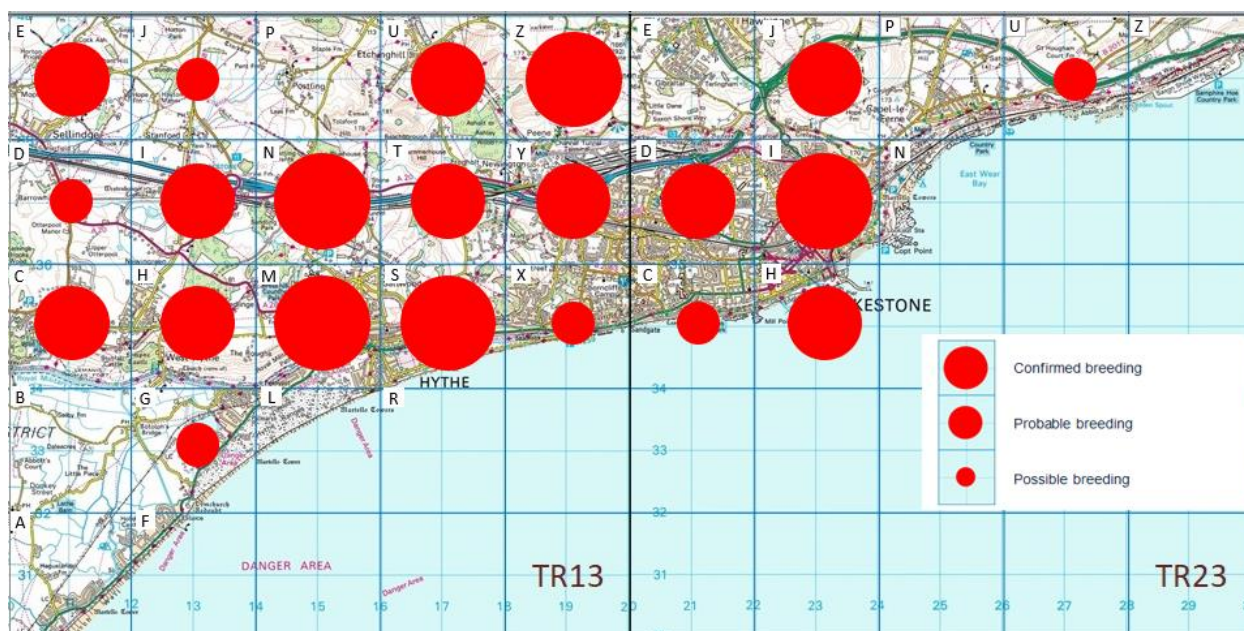


Figure 1: Breeding distribution of Goldcrest at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad (2007-13 BTO/KOS Atlas)

Breeding was confirmed in five tetrads, with probable breeding in ten more and possible breeding in six others. The table below shows how this compares to previous atlases (Taylor *et al.* 1981; Henderson & Hodge 1998). The confirmed and probable breeding categories have been combined to account for differing definitions of these in the first atlas.

Breeding atlases	1967 - 1973		1988 - 1994		2007 - 2013	
Possible	2	(6%)	5	(16%)	6	(19%)
Probable/Confirmed	8	(26%)	5	(16%)	15	(48%)
Total	10	(32%)	10	(32%)	21	(68%)
Change			0	(0%)	+11	(+110%)

The table below shows the changes in tetrad occupancy across the three atlas periods.

Trends	First to second atlas (1967-73 to 1988-94)	Second to third atlas (1988-94 to 2007-13)	First to third atlas (1967-73 to 2007-13)
Local	0%	+110%	+110%
Kent	-1%	+42%	+40%



Goldcrest at Saltwood Castle (Nigel Webster)



Goldcrest at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Goldcrest at Saltwood Castle (Brian Harper)



Goldcrest at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

As Clements *et al.* (2015) noted, Goldcrests are present wherever there are conifers, with substantial numbers using gardens, churchyards and cemeteries in urban locations as well as the main population in coniferous and mixed woodlands. The species is absent only from sparsely wooded areas such as the Romney Marsh.

The second county atlas noted the effect of three consecutive cold winters in the mid-1980s on numbers, however it has since recovered and evidence from the recent survey work is that the population has reached historically high numbers, perhaps aided by the sequence of very mild winters up to 2009. Clements *et al.* noted a 42% increase in occupied tetrads between the second and third county atlases, whilst the increase locally was even more marked (at 110%).

Overall distribution

Figure 2 shows the distribution of all records of Goldcrest by tetrad, with records in 29 tetrads (94%).

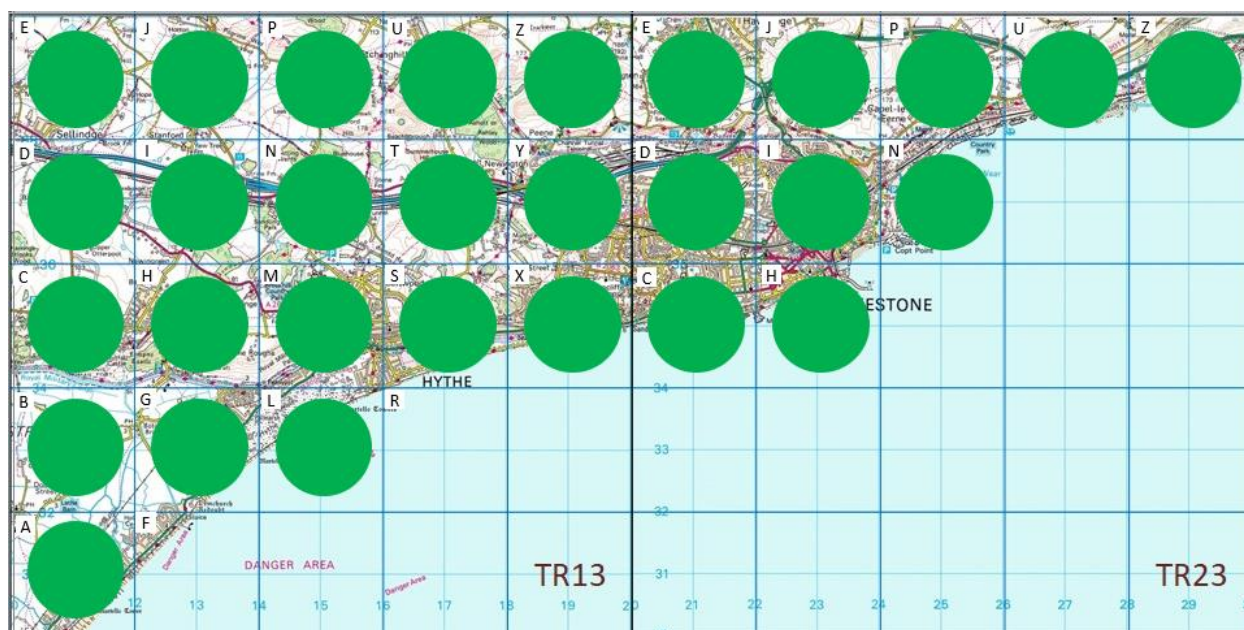


Figure 2: Distribution of all Goldcrest records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

Autumn passage may be noted from mid-August but typically peaks in October or November, when counts of 50 or more have been noted as follows:

- 50+ along the canal between Hythe and Palmarsh on the 18th October 1959
- 100 along the canal between Hythe and the Aldergate Bridge on the 25th October 1983
- 80 at Capel Battery on the 24th October 1990
- 108 in the Folkestone area on the 18th October 1997
- 100 at Folkestone Warren on the 19th November 1998, with 60 there on the 20th and 22nd
- 79 in the Folkestone area (including 59 in Folkestone Warren) on the 17th October 1999
- 121 in Folkestone Warren on the 19th October 1999
- 50 at Folkestone Warren on the 24th October 2003
- 50 at Samphire Hoe on the 15th October 2005
- 180 in the Folkestone area (including 130 at Creteway Down) on the 18th October 2015

Spring passage usually peaks in March and is much lighter, with double-figure counts being noteworthy:

- 10 along the canal between Hythe and Palmarsh on the 25th March 1960, with 15 there on the 26th and 20 on the 27th
- 40 at Folkestone Warren on the 29th March 1973
- 18 at Abbotscliffe on the 28th March 1998, with 15 there the next day
- 12 at West Hythe on the 4th March 2007

Click [here](#) to listen to a local audio recording of one singing at Lympne on the 28th April 2022 or [here](#) to listen to one singing at Botolph's Bridge on the 6th May 2022 (Ian Roberts).

References

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Acknowledgements

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

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Goldcrest at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Goldcrest at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)