

## Review of bird sightings 2022

### January

The first ten days of the month were unsettled and, after a very mild start, it became rather cold with some overnight frosts. High pressure developed towards mid-month so the remainder of the month was mostly dry, whilst the last few days of the month were again rather mild. It was a notably sunny month, with rainfall totals well below average.

A Grey Partridge was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 21<sup>st</sup>, whilst Red-legged Partridges were noted at Donkey Street, Cock Ash Lake and near Pedlinge. There was an early movement of Brent Geese on the 1<sup>st</sup>, when 95 flew east past Princes Parade and 104 flew east past Samphire Hoe, but very few were noted in the rest of the month. A flock of Greylag Geese were present at Folkestone Racecourse for much of the month and peaked at 51 on the 26<sup>th</sup>, whilst they were joined by a **Pink-footed Goose** between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. A Greylag Goose flew west over West Hythe dam on the 13<sup>th</sup> and up to 25 Canada Geese were seen at Nickolls Quarry. A Mute Swan in Folkestone Harbour on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was of note, whilst a flock near Selby Farm peaked at 36 on the 5<sup>th</sup>.



Red-legged Partridge near Pedlinge (Brian Harper)



Mute Swan at the Willop Sewage Works (Brian Harper)



Pink-footed Goose with Greylag Geese at Folkestone Racecourse (Ian Roberts)

Two Shelduck were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 18<sup>th</sup>, whilst a drake Mandarin Duck lingered at the Willop Basin from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the month's end. Two Gadwall and up to nine Shoveler were present in the Donkey Street/Hoorne's Sewer area throughout, with two Gadwall at Nickolls Quarry on the 18<sup>th</sup> and single Shovelers there on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, whilst a Shoveler was at Folkestone Racecourse on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Single Wigeon flew past Princes Parade on the 1<sup>st</sup> and Samphire Hoe on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, whilst six were seen on the sea off Seabrook on the 18<sup>th</sup>. There was an excellent count of 120 Teal at the Willop Basin on the 1<sup>st</sup>, with small numbers at Donkey Street, West Hythe dam, Nickolls Quarry and Folkestone Racecourse, whilst three flew east past Princes Parade on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

A pair of Pochard were at Nickolls Quarry on the 1<sup>st</sup>, with singles at Cock Ash Lake and Woodside Farm Pond during the month and up to five Tufted Ducks were present in the Cock Ash Lake/Horton Priory area. A Scaup was reported off Hythe on the 26<sup>th</sup> and up to 50 Common Scoter lingered off the Dymchurch Redoubt. A 'red-head' Goldeneye was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and four Goosanders were at West Hythe dam on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, whilst a flock of 11 flew over there on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Water Rails were noted at Donkey Street, Nickolls Quarry, Folkestone Racecourse and Holy Well, whilst 18 Coot were counted at Nickolls Quarry on the 20<sup>th</sup>. A flock of up to 70 Great Crested Grebes were seen off Folkestone Pier, whilst an excellent total of 400 were on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Lapwing flocks were noted at Cock Ash Lake (16), Botolph's Bridge (30), the Willop Basin (40), Hillhurst Farm (85) and Selby Farm (420), whilst three Golden Plovers flew over Donkey Street on the 1<sup>st</sup> and a flock of 50 were at Selby Farm on the 9<sup>th</sup>. The Ringed Plover roosted at Folkestone Beach held 17 birds and an Oystercatcher, 11 Sanderling and 30 Turnstone were noted at the Willop Outfall. At least 2 Purple Sandpipers were at Hythe throughout, with one at Folkestone Harbour on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Woodcock were noted at Hythe Roughts and Kiln Wood (two), whilst there were up to two Jack Snipe and 30 Snipe at the Willop Basin, with a single Snipe at Abbotscliffe on the 21<sup>st</sup> and a peak of 21 at Folkestone Racecourse on the 8<sup>th</sup>. A Green Sandpiper was seen on the ditch to the north of Nickolls Quarry on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, whilst up to six Redshank were noted at the Willop Basin and Folkestone Harbour.



Purple Sandpiper at Hythe (David Gower)



Jack Snipe at the Willop Basin (Brian Harper)

A **Glaucous Gull** flew west past Folkestone Sunny Sands on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, whilst gull counts included 130 Mediterranean Gulls at West Hythe dam on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 370 Mediterranean Gulls on the Hotel Imperial Golf Course on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 353 Common Gulls between Cock Ash Lake and Summerhouse Hill on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 300 Black-headed Gulls at West Hythe dam on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Auk numbers were very low, with a peak count of 100 Guillemots/Razorbills passing Princes Parade on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

A **Great Northern Diver** flew east past Seabrook on the 10<sup>th</sup>, whilst 64 Red-throated Diver flew east there on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 130 flew east past Princes Parade on the 21<sup>st</sup>. At least four Fulmars were on the cliffs at Samphire Hoe, with singles noted from several other sites, whilst four flew past Hythe on the 31<sup>st</sup>. A Shag was seen in the Folkestone Harbour area on several dates, with one off Sandgate on the 26<sup>th</sup> and two off Samphire Hoe on the 31<sup>st</sup>, whilst a peak of 5,970 Cormorants were seen flying east past Princes Parade on the 21<sup>st</sup>.



A **Great White Egret** was seen in the Donkey Street area on six dates and up to seven Little Egrets were roosting at Port Lympne and feeding on the marsh, with one at Copt Point on the 4<sup>th</sup> and up to three at Samphire Hoe. An adult male Marsh Harrier was seen at Abbott's Court Farm on the 6<sup>th</sup> and at Nickolls Quarry on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, whilst an adult female flew high east over West Hythe dam on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Up to three Barn Owls were present in the West Hythe dam area throughout, whilst Little Owls were noted there and at Selby Farm. A Merlin flew over Botolph's Bridge on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.



Kittiwake at Folkestone Pier (Brian Harper)



Mediterranean Gull at Folkestone Harbour (Phil Smith)



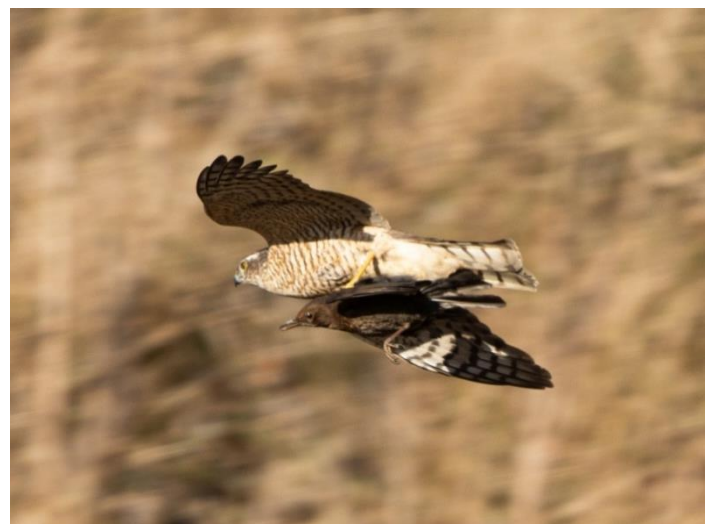
Cormorant at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Guillemot at Folkestone Harbour (Elliot Ranford)



Little Egret at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Sparrowhawk at Samphire Hoe (Martin Collins)



Single Marsh Tits were noted at Bartholomew's Wood and Bargrove Wood, whilst 28 Skylarks were counted at Abbotscliffe on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The Dartford Warbler remained at Samphire Hoe throughout, whilst Chiffchaffs were noted at the Aldergate Bridge, West Hythe dam (two) and Willop Sewage Works (four), Blackcaps were wintering in gardens in Lympe, Hythe and Folkestone and Firecrests were seen at Enbrook Park, Castle Hill and Mill Point.



Dartford Warbler at Samphire Hoe (Dave Clarke)



Chiffchaff at the Willop Sewage Works (Brian Harper)

Winter thrush numbers were low with Fieldfares noted in just scattered ones and twos and the only double-figure counts of Redwings were 13 at West Hythe dam on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 13 arriving in off the sea at Seabrook on the 4<sup>th</sup> and ten at Cock Ash Lake the following day, but 23 Song Thrushes were counted at West Hythe dam on the 6<sup>th</sup>. A Black Redstart remained at Samphire Hoe throughout, whilst up to nine Stonechats were noted there, with two at the Willop Basin and singles at West Hythe dam, Nickolls Quarry and Cheriton Hill.

Up to nine Tree Sparrows were seen in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street area, whilst 30 Linnets, 32 Yellowhammer and 40 Chaffinches were at Abbotscliffe on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Siskins were present in good numbers, with up to 39 in the Cock Ash Lake area and 79 in Chesterfield Wood. The Snow Bunting remained at Folkestone Harbour until the 9<sup>th</sup> and there was a very noteworthy peak of 60 Corn Buntings at Botolph's Bridge on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, where up to 30 Yellowhammers were also present.



Snow Bunting at Folkestone Harbour (Rich Bonser)



Rock Pipit at Folkestone Pier (Tony Poole)

## February

The first ten days or so of the month were relatively settled at times but then rain became more frequent. It was particularly stormy between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, with winds approaching hurricane-force along the south coast on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The unsettled weather persisted until the month's end.

Five Red-legged Partridges were seen along Crete Road West on the 1<sup>st</sup>. The only signs of Brent Goose passage involved 12 flying east past Mill Point on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Up to 38 Greylag Geese remained at Folkestone Racecourse until the 4<sup>th</sup>, whilst up to 8 Canada Geese were at Nickolls Quarry throughout and six flew east over West Hythe on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Up to 29 Mute Swans remained near Selby Farm and a Shelduck was at Nickolls Quarry on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

The drake Mandarin Duck lingered at the Willop Basin throughout, whilst good numbers of dabbling duck in the Hoorne's Sewer included up to 8 Gadwall, 15 Shoveler and 51 Teal. Up to three Pochard and seven Tufted Duck were at Cock Ash Lake. Single Water Rails were noted at the Willop Sewage Works, Seabrook, Newington and Enbrook Park. A peak of 93 Great Crested Grebes were counted off Folkestone Pier on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The breeding pair of Oystercatchers returned to Nickolls Quarry on the 25<sup>th</sup>, whilst a Golden Plover was at Hoorne's Sewer on the 12<sup>th</sup> but few Lapwings were noted. Up to two Curlew were seen intermittently at the Willop Basin, whilst up to 34 Sanderling were at the Willop Outfall and two Purple Sandpipers remained at Hythe, with one at Folkestone Harbour on the 21<sup>st</sup>. A Woodcock was flushed at Abbotscliffe on the 1<sup>st</sup>, whilst single Jack Snipe were noted at the Willop Basin and Donkey Street. A Green Sandpiper was seen occasionally at Botolph's Bridge, whilst two were near Selby Farm on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Up to six Redshank remained in Folkestone Harbour.

A first-winter Little Gull lingered in the Donkey Street/Botolph's Bridge area between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, whilst the first Lesser Black-backed Gull was noted at Nickolls Quarry on the 18<sup>th</sup> and gull counts included 155 Mediterranean Gull at Botolph's Bridge on the 4<sup>th</sup> and a total of 550 Common Gulls at inland sites on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Shags were seen at Sandgate on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Folkestone Harbour on the 14<sup>th</sup>.



Mandarin Duck at the Willop Basin (Brian Harper)



Little Gull at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

A **Great White Egret** was seen at Willop Sewage Works on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, whilst single Little Egrets were noted from various sites, with two at West Hythe on the 1<sup>st</sup>. A male Marsh Harrier was seen near Hoorne's Sewer on the 12<sup>th</sup>. A Barn Owl was seen at the Alkham Valley road/A20 junction on the 21<sup>st</sup>, whilst up to two Little Owls remained at Selby Farm and a **Long-eared Owl** was seen along Aldergate Lane on the 14<sup>th</sup>. A Merlin was hunting Skylarks near Selby Farm on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Two Marsh Tits were seen at Enbrook Park on the 1<sup>st</sup>. A Chiffchaff was singing at the Little Piece on Donkey Street on the 19<sup>th</sup>, whilst at least three Blackcaps were noted in gardens in Folkestone and the Dartford Warbler remained at Samphire Hoe until at least the 8<sup>th</sup>. Up to two were Firecrests were noted at Enbrook Park. Winter thrush numbers remained low, with the only double-figure counts involving 15 Fieldfares at Cock Ash Lake on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 20 Redwings at Port Lympne on the 4<sup>th</sup>, but 14 Song Thrushes were counted in the Willop Sewage Works area on the 12<sup>th</sup>.



Two Reed Buntings, 13 Yellowhammers, 20 Chaffinches and 40 Linnets were logged at Abbotscliffe on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 18 Linnets were noted at Hythe Ranges on the 26<sup>th</sup> and up to 2 Tree Sparrows and 30 Corn Buntings remained at Botolph's Bridge.



Shag at Folkestone Harbour (Elliot Ranford)



Marsh Harrier near Hoorne's Sewer (Adam Buckland)



Firecrest at Enbrook Park (Elliot Ranford)



Nuthatch at Brockhill Country Park (Tony Poole)



Skylark at Hythe Roughts (Brian Harper)



Tree Sparrow at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

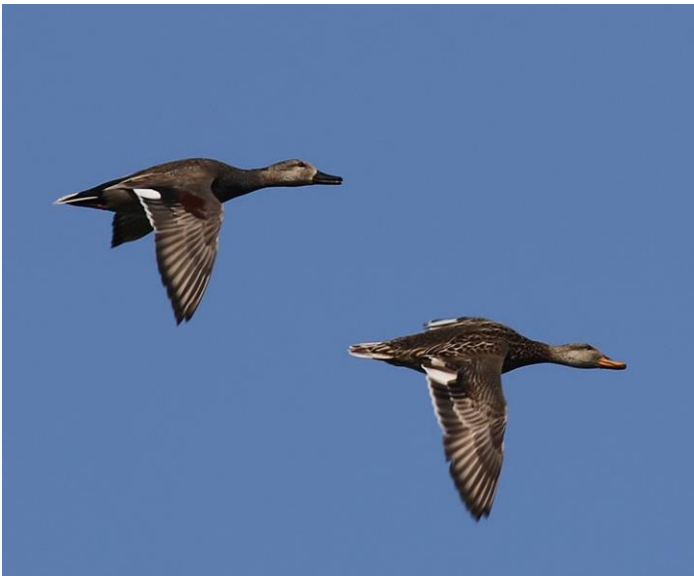
## March

The first few days of the month were rather cold, and the first half was generally unsettled, but it became milder as high pressure built from mid-month with plentiful sunshine. The end of the month was less settled and much colder, with even a covering of snow on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The drake Mandarin Duck remained in the Willop Basin area until the 1<sup>st</sup>, whilst up to 36 Mute Swans remained near Selby Farm, up to 8 Gadwall and 25 Teal lingered at Hoorne's Sewer, with up to seven Tufted Duck at Cock Ash Lake and three Water Rails along the canal at Seabrook, with one remaining at Enbrook Park. The breeding pair of Oystercatchers were at Nickolls Quarry throughout, as did the two wintering Purple Sandpipers at Hythe, whilst there were up to 7 Sanderling and 33 Turnstone at the Willop Outfall. At least two Green Sandpipers were seen regularly in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area. At least one Firecrest remained at Enbrook Park and 3 Tree Sparrows and up to 27 Corn Buntings were still present in the Botolph's Bridge area.

The first migrant Chiffchaff of the spring was seen in a garden in Hythe on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, when 7 Greylag Geese, 9 Brent Geese, 8 Fulmars, 9 Teal and 16 Red-throated Divers flew east at sea. Further Chiffchaffs were noted at Abbott's Court Farm and Donkey Street (2) the next day, with a Merlin at the latter site, whilst a Black Redstart was singing at Folkestone Beach (until the 13<sup>th</sup>), and 107 Brent Geese flew east past Seabrook on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

The 5<sup>th</sup> produced the first visual passage of the spring, when a Brambling, a Siskin, 300 Starlings and 1,125 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe, whilst at sea a Red-breasted Merganser, a Curlew, 6 Shoveler, 40 Red-throated Divers, 48 Brent Geese and 65 Gannets passed by, whilst a Teal and 2 Gadwall were present offshore. The following day saw 2 Shelduck, 3 Bar-tailed Godwits, 17 Brent Geese, 18 Great Crested Grebes, 21 Fulmars, up to 40 Kittiwakes, and 46 Gannets flying east at sea, whilst a Brambling was seen in a garden in Lympne, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> 2 Pintail, 8 Fulmars, 13 Great Crested Grebes, 25 Red-throated Divers and 30 Gannets flew east offshore, whilst 3,650 Starlings flew east at the Aldergate Bridge.



Gadwall at the Willop Sewage Works (Brian Harper)



Little Owl at Selby Farm (Brian Harper)

A **Long-eared Owl** was seen at the Aldergate Bridge on the 8<sup>th</sup> and a Red Kite flew over Cheriton. Two **Black-necked Grebes** were seen on the sea off Hythe the following day, when a Curlew, 3 Oystercatchers, 6 Shoveler and at least 710 Brent Geese flew east offshore, further Red Kites flew over Cheriton and Port Lympne, a Firecrest was at Mill Point, a Woodcock was at Aldergate Lane and Chiffchaffs continued to arrive in small numbers. 75 Brent Geese flew east past Seabrook on the 10<sup>th</sup>. A Shelduck, 2 Wigeon, 17 Teal, 18 Shoveler, 19 Pintail, 25 Red-throated Divers, c.200 Gannets and c.320 Brent Geese flew east past Mill Point the next day.

A **Glossy Ibis** (only the second area record) was reported between the Aldergate Bridge and West Hythe Dam on the 12<sup>th</sup>, when a Firecrest was seen at Lympne and four Lapwings were opposite Selby Farm. A Red Kite flew east over Port Lympne the following day, when a Firecrest was seen in Folkestone and five drake Eider and 88 Brent Geese flew east past Mill Point.



Single Black Redstarts were seen in a garden in Capel-le-Ferne and at Samphire Hoe on the 14<sup>th</sup>, with 3 Siskins and 3 Redwings also at the latter site, and 20 Redwings at Abbotscliffe, whilst the next day produced a Red Kite flying west and 37 Siskins and 337 Chaffinches flying east at Seabrook, a Woodcock at Lypne Park Wood and a Redshank at Nickolls Quarry.

An Arctic Skua, a Red-breasted Merganser, 13 Fulmars, 33 Siskins, 47 Red-throated Divers, 90 Common Scoters and 370 Brent Geese flew past Samphire Hoe on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The following day saw two Red Kites flying over Radnor Park and three flying over The Durlocks in Folkestone, whilst 6 Siskins and 85 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe, where a Black Redstart was singing. Eight Siskins were seen along the canal at Palmarsh on the 18<sup>th</sup>, whilst 12 flew east at Mill Point the next day, when a Woodcock, 2 Grey Partridges and 4 Mandarin Ducks were at Kiln Wood.



Siskin at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)



Water Rail at Enbrook Park (Brian Harper)



Little Ringed Plover at the Willop Sewage Works  
(Brian Harper)



Corn Bunting at the Willop Sewage Works  
(Brian Harper)



A **Little Ringed Plover** and 6 Gadwall were at Nickolls Quarry on the 20<sup>th</sup>, when 41 Brent Geese and 137 Siskins flew east at Seabrook and three Red Kites flew over Lympe, whilst two Red Kites flew over Seabrook the following day, when a Gadwall was seen on the canal there, a Blackcap was singing in Folkestone, 8 Chiffchaffs were at Nickolls Quarry and 145 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe. The first Sandwich Tern of the year was seen off Seabrook on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when a Blackcap was singing there, six Red Kites flew over Cheriton and 3 Oystercatchers and 42 Brent Geese flew past Samphire Hoe. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> two Red Kites flew along the cliffs at Samphire Hoe, a Black Redstart was seen at Abbotscliffe and an immature White-tailed Eagle (presumably from the Isle of Wight reintroduction scheme) flew over Port Lympe.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> a Red Kite and a Fieldfare were at Donkey Street and a Greylag Goose and 145 Brent Geese flew past Seabrook, whilst two Greylag Geese, 56 Siskins and 188 Chaffinches flew east at Seabrook the next day, when a Red Kite flew over Capel-le-Ferne. A **Little Ringed Plover** and a Black Redstart were at the Willop Sewage Works on the 26<sup>th</sup>, when a Jack Snipe was at Donkey Street, two Curlew were at the Willop Basin and 74 Chaffinches and 92 Siskins flew east at Seabrook. A Sandwich Tern flew east past Seabrook on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The first Wheatear of the year and a Fieldfare were at Samphire Hoe on the 29<sup>th</sup>, when 44 Siskins and 462 Chaffinches flew east at Mill Point and a Red-breasted Merganser, 10 Sandwich Terns and 48 Brent Geese flew east at sea. A Bar-tailed Godwit, a Sandwich Tern, 5 Dunlin, 12 Sanderling and 100 Brent Geese flew east past the Dymchurch Redoubt on the 30<sup>th</sup> and a Jack Snipe was at Donkey Street on the 31<sup>st</sup>, when single Blackcaps were at Nickolls Quarry and West Hythe.

## April

April saw predominately dry, settled weather. After a cool start it was reasonably warm, particularly around mid-month, but the last ten days or so were cooler with moderate easterly winds suppressing temperatures.

There was a quiet start to the month in cool northerly and then westerly winds. There was a little visual migration on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, when a Grey Wagtail, 5 Meadow Pipits, 11 Siskins and 206 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe and the first three Swallows of the year were seen at Nickolls Quarry, with a Wheatear at Samphire Hoe, a Black Redstart at Willop Sewage Works and Chiffchaffs continued to arrive, including eight at Nickolls Quarry.



Wheatear at Samphire Hoe (Dave Clarke)



Black Redstart at Willop Sewage Works (Brian Harper)

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> five Black Redstarts and eight Redwings were seen at Samphire Hoe, with the first three House Martins of the year and five Swallows at Nickolls Quarry the following day, and two Swallows at Folkestone Warren on the 5<sup>th</sup>, when nine Chiffchaffs were counted at Holy Well. The first Willow Warbler of the year was at Nickolls Quarry on the 8<sup>th</sup>, when a Red Kite flew over Lympe and a Black Redstart was seen in a garden there, whilst a Little Egret flew east at Seabrook, a Green Sandpiper was at the Willop Sewage Works, two Gadwalls were at Hoorne's Sewer and several Blackcaps and good numbers of Chiffchaffs were noted.

A singing Black Redstart and 2 Wheatears were at Hythe Ranges on the 9<sup>th</sup>, when a Jack Snipe was seen at Donkey Street, a Gadwall and 2 Green Sandpipers were at the Willop Sewage Works, a Shoveler was at Nickolls Quarry, two Little Egrets and 6 Greylag Geese flew west offshore, two Sandwich Terns were fishing off Hythe and five Greylag Geese were at Botolph's Bridge. The following day saw an arrival of Willow Warblers, with singles at the Willop Sewage Works, Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry, the canal at Palmarsh, Hythe, Cheriton and Samphire Hoe, whilst Wheatears were seen at Samphire Hoe and Botolph's Bridge (2).

South-easterly winds on the 11<sup>th</sup> induced some passage offshore, with a Little Tern, a Red-breasted Merganser, an Oystercatcher, 2 Arctic Skuas, 2 Greylag Geese, 2 Gadwalls, 4 Whimbrels, 5 Pintails, 8 Teal, 9 Common Terns and at least 18 Mediterranean Gulls, 91 Shovelers, 97 Common Scoters, 246 Sandwich Terns and 277 Gannets flying east. On the land, a female Ring Ouzel was seen at Creteway Down and single Willow Warblers were noted in central Folkestone and at Crete Road West. The next day saw a Red-breasted Merganser, 5 Common Terns, 8 Whimbrels, 13 Oystercatchers, 66 Common Scoters and 467 Sandwich Terns going east at sea, whilst four Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe and 14 Siskins flew east at Mill Point.

The first Yellow Wagtail of the year flew in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 13<sup>th</sup>, with two Swallows, the first three Whitethroats of the year and three Willow Warblers also of note there, whilst another Whitethroat was singing along Botolph's Bridge Road. The first Reed Warbler of the year was singing at Aldergate Lane the following day, when the first two Sedge Warblers and a Willow Warbler were at Nickolls Quarry, a male Ring Ouzel, a Whimbrel and a Black Redstart were at Abbotscliffe, a Yellow Wagtail and 68 Sanderling were at the Willop Outfall, two Green Sandpipers were at Botolph's Bridge and Swallows and Whitethroats continued to arrive.



Ring Ouzel at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)



Whimbrel at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)

The 15<sup>th</sup> saw a further Ring Ouzel, a Whimbrel, a Redwing, 2 Willow Warblers and six Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe, where a Great Spotted Woodpecker flew west. Two **Egyptian Geese** were found at Cock Ash Lake on the 16<sup>th</sup> (where they remained until the month's end), whilst two Gadwall and four Tufted Ducks were also noted there.

A **Hawfinch** visited a pond in a garden in central Folkestone on the 17<sup>th</sup>, when a Red Kite flew over Copt Point, a Ring Ouzel was at Summerhouse Hill, a Reed Warbler was at Beachborough Lakes, and 3 Green Sandpipers and 3 Sedge Warblers were at Nickolls Quarry. A Yellow Wagtail and a Redpoll were noted at Samphire Hoe the next day, where two Whimbrel and 25 Brent Geese flew east, and there was a Wheatear there on the 19<sup>th</sup>, when two Firecrests were at Brockhill Country Park. The first two Hobbies of the year were seen at Lympne on the 20<sup>th</sup> and two House Martins were at Sandling the following day.

A 'ring-tail' **Hen Harrier**, a Grey Plover, 2 Shoveler, 4 Teal, 23 Dunlin, 29 Whimbrel, 63 Gannets and 85 Bar-tailed Godwits flew east at sea on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when a Greenshank was at Nickolls Quarry, a Hobby flew over Cheriton and a House Martin was at Cock Ash Lake. The next day produced the first Common Sandpiper of the year at Battery Point and 2 Whimbrel, 2 Yellow Wagtails and 2 Reed Warblers at Donkey Street. The first Lesser Whitethroat of the year was at Hythe Ranges on the 24<sup>th</sup>, when a Ring Ouzel was at Beachborough Lakes, a Willow Warbler, a House Martin and 2 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe and 6 Whimbrel, 13 Bar-tailed Godwits and 15 Common Terns flew east at sea.



The first Sand Martin, 2 House Martins and 5 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry on the 25<sup>th</sup>, when a Hobby was seen at Kiln Wood, whilst the next day saw three Wheatears at Samphire Hoe and 6 Bar-tailed Godwits, 9 Oystercatchers and 14 Whimbrels flying east past Mill Point. On the 27<sup>th</sup> three Common Terns, 11 Whimbrels and 20 Sandwich Terns flew east past Mill Point and eight Swallows arrived in off the sea there, a Hobby, 3 House Martins, 5 Sand Martins and 8 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry and 2 Whimbrel, 2 Wheatears and 8 House Martins were at Samphire Hoe.



Egyptian Geese at Cock Ash Lake (Ian Roberts)



Hawfinch at Folkestone (John Tomlinson)

The first Swift of the year was at Nickolls Quarry on the 28<sup>th</sup>, when a Green Sandpiper was at Cherry Garden Reservoirs and six Swallows arrived in off the sea at Seabrook. A Nightingale was singing at West Hythe the following day, when a Great Skua and 13 Whimbrel flew east past Mill Point and 68 Swallows arrived in off the sea there, whilst the first Garden Warbler of the year was at Bluehouse Wood on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

## May

The weather in May was generally rather quiet and mostly reasonably warm and settled, although not as dry as April, with some showery rain at times and thunderstorms on occasion.

The first Cuckoo of the year was at Botolph's Bridge on the 1<sup>st</sup>, when two Red Kites were present at Pent Farm, and a Whimbrel and three Oystercatchers flew past Hythe. A Common Sandpiper, a Ring Ouzel, Wheatear and 20 House Martins were at Samphire Hoe the following day, when four Shelducks flew east, whilst a Yellow Wagtail, a Sand Martin and 21 Swallows were at Abbotscliffe and a Swift was seen at Nickolls Quarry. A Nightingale was singing at Thorn Wood on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, when a Black Redstart was seen at Palmarsh, a Wheatear was at Mill Point and 29 Swallows were at Abbotscliffe. A Wheatear and three Common Sandpipers were at Samphire Hoe the next day.

The 5<sup>th</sup> produced a Whinchat, a Sedge Warbler, a Red Kite and 2 Wheatears at Abbotscliffe, where a Yellow Wagtail, 2 Sand Martins and 23 Swallows arrived in off the sea, whilst two Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe. A Red Kite and 2 Hobbies were seen at Lympne the following day. On the 8<sup>th</sup> three Whimbrel, 5 Brent Geese and 38 Bar-tailed Godwit flew east past Samphire Hoe.

Seawatching on the 9<sup>th</sup> saw a **Great White Egret**, a Pomarine Skua, 2 Little Terns, 2 Turnstones, 4 Sanderlings, 5 Oystercatchers, 6 Dunlin, 12 Shelducks, 18 Whimbrels, 21 Common/Arctic Terns and 149 Black-headed Gulls heading up-channel, whilst there was an arrival of Swifts, with 30 seen over Folkestone. Three Hobbies were at Folks' Wood on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

A **Hoopoe** was reported in a garden in Hawkinge on the 14<sup>th</sup>, whilst on the 16<sup>th</sup> a Tree Pipit, a Wheatear, a Yellow Wagtail, a Red Kite, 2 Siskins and 14 Whitethroats were seen at Abbotscliffe and a Hobby was hunting over the canal at Seabrook. An Osprey was seen fishing offshore between the Willop Outfall and Dymchurch on the 17<sup>th</sup>, before it flew inland, whilst a Siskin flew over Abbotscliffe and a Whimbrel flew east at Hythe on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

A **Golden Oriole** was seen along Crete Road West on the 19<sup>th</sup>, before it flew north, and a Spotted Flycatcher and a Garden Warbler were also noted there, whilst a late migrant Reed Warbler was singing at Abbotscliffe the following day. A pair of Mandarin Ducks flew over Gibbin's Brook on the 21<sup>st</sup> and a Turtle Dove was reported along the canal at Hythe the next day.



Whinchat at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



Common Sandpiper at Samphire Hoe (Elliot Ranford)

A **Black-winged Stilt** was heard calling as it flew south-west over Hythe after dusk on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, whilst another late migrant Reed Warbler was singing at Abbotscliffe the same day, with a further individual at Paraker Wood on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Four Red Kites flew over Cheriton on the 24<sup>th</sup> and one flew west at Church Hougham on the 27<sup>th</sup>. A Garden Warbler was singing at Princes Parade on the 30<sup>th</sup>, when a Sand Martin arrived in off the sea at Abbotscliffe.

A **Little Ringed Plover** was seen at Nickolls Quarry on several dates between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, whilst a pair of **Egyptian Geese** lingered at Cock Ash Lake from the 8<sup>th</sup> until at least the 21<sup>st</sup>, but were no indications of either species breeding (and neither were present in early June). The highlight of the breeding season involved a pair of Great Black-backed Gulls nesting locally for the first time, on a roof at the Park Farm industrial estate, whilst a total of eight pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were nesting within the two main local gull colonies, with at least one further pair at Hythe.

Also of note were single pairs of Canada Goose and Oystercatcher breeding at Nickolls Quarry and Greylag Geese nesting successfully at Cock Ash Lake and Stanford. Up to 24 Tufted Ducks were also present at Cock Ash Lake, a Firecrest was singing at the American Garden on the 8<sup>th</sup> and at least two pairs of Corn Buntings were at Abbotscliffe throughout, with up to two territorial males at Donkey Street and another along the Aldington Road.



Great Black-backed Gull at Park Farm (Ian Roberts)



Corn Bunting at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



## June

June saw mostly fine and settled weather after some showers during the first week. There was a warm spell in mid-month which peaked on the 17<sup>th</sup>, giving the warmest day of the year so far. The final week of June again saw a few showers, but overall the month was warmer, drier and sunnier than average.

The month began well, with a singing **Marsh Warbler** at Abbotscliffe on the 1<sup>st</sup>, but unfortunately it did not linger. A Hobby was also seen there on the same day, whilst a Yellow Wagtail flew east and 3 Sand Martins arrived in off the sea.

Late migrant waders included a Whimbrel at Hythe Ranges on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Greenshank at Pent Farm on the 6<sup>th</sup> and a Common Sandpiper along the canal at Seabrook on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Single Red Kites flew over Cheriton on the 9<sup>th</sup> and over Seabrook on the 13<sup>th</sup>, whilst a Honey Buzzard was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 14<sup>th</sup>.



Honey Buzzard at Samphire Hoe (Michael Smith)

A Cuckoo was heard at Nickolls Quarry on the 21<sup>st</sup>, when four Little Egrets flew east at Seabrook and several wandering Grey Herons were noted during the month.

The pair of Great Black-backed Gulls at the Park Farm industrial estate successfully raised two young, whilst surprises during June included the discovery of a pair of Spotted Flycatchers nesting at Bartholomew's Wood (the first successful local breeding since 2009) and two recently fledged **Long-eared Owls** at West Hythe (only the second confirmed instance of local breeding). A Black Redstart holding territory at Dollands Moor (near Frogholt) was also of note.



Great Black-backed Gulls at Park Farm (Ian Roberts)



Long-eared Owls at West Hythe (per Martin Collins)

## July

There was a fairly cool start to the month but within a few days it became increasingly warm and daytime temperatures exceeded 25°C on several days from the 11<sup>th</sup>. However, it was a spell just after mid-month that broke records, with Britain's first ever readings above 40°C and temperatures locally exceeded 38°C. It remained settled for the remainder of the month, with daytime temperatures in excess of 20°C. It was provisionally the fourth warmest July for England (in a series from 1884) and there was very little rain (with less than a fifth of the average).

A singing Corn Bunting at Shrine Farm, near Posting Wents on the 2<sup>nd</sup> was an unusual record away from the marsh, whilst an out-of-habitat Reed Warbler was singing at Abbotscliffe on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

The warm weather encouraged a few raptors to wander, particularly on the 17<sup>th</sup> when an Osprey flew over Cheriton, a Honey Buzzard arrived in off the sea at Samphire Hoe and a Marsh Harrier flew west sea past Sandgate, whilst a further Honey Buzzard flew over Samphire Hoe on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Red Kites were seen hunting over Donkey Street on the 13<sup>th</sup> and in the Abbotscliffe area on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.

Hobbies were noted at Lypne Park Wood, Hythe, Church Hougham and Abbotscliffe during the month, whilst a Barn Owl was seen at West Hythe dam on the 8<sup>th</sup>, when a Little Egret was also present there, whilst two Little Egrets flew east at Seabrook on the 16<sup>th</sup>.



Honey Buzzard at Samphire Hoe (Dave Clarke)



Peregrines at Samphire Hoe (Dave Clarke)

At least one Turtle Dove (possibly two) were seen in Church Hougham churchyard on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and a juvenile Black Redstart in a garden in Seabrook on the 28<sup>th</sup> was presumably locally bred. A juvenile Coot on the sea off Battery Point on the 24<sup>th</sup> was an unusual record.

Returning waders included a Curlew flying east at Hythe on the 8<sup>th</sup>, two Whimbrel at Sandgate on the 21<sup>st</sup>, a Whimbrel at Dymchurch on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Green Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry on the 31<sup>st</sup> and several Oystercatchers (with a peak of nine flying east past Seabrook on the 30<sup>th</sup>), whilst a Common Tern was seen off Sandgate on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Other returning migrants included three Sand Martins at Church Hougham on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and five Sand Martins at Abbotscliffe on the 31<sup>st</sup>, where 227 Swifts flew west.

## August

It remained largely warm and dry during August. Nationally it was the third warmest August for England (in a series from 1884), with southern areas furthest above average, and rainfall was again well below average, although there was a thundery breakdown mid-month after a particularly hot spell (when daytime highs locally had exceeded 30°C for several days).



The first signs of returning passerine migration were evident from the 1<sup>st</sup>, when a Reed Warbler, a Sedge Warbler, 3 Lesser Whitethroats and 24 Whitethroats were seen at Abbotscliffe and at least 2 Willow Warblers were present in a garden in Folkestone, whilst on the 3<sup>rd</sup> a Sedge Warbler, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 9 Willow Warblers and 14 Whitethroats were logged at Abbotscliffe (where ten Sand Martins and 28 Swifts flew over) and two Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe, with five there the next day and one at Church Hougham on the 5<sup>th</sup>, when three Willow Warblers were seen at Sandgate.

A Willow Warbler, 2 Sedge Warblers, 3 Lesser Whitethroats and 22 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe on the 7<sup>th</sup>, with 4 Willow Warblers and 5 Lesser Whitethroats there the following day, when a Yellow Wagtail flew west, whilst on the 8<sup>th</sup> a juvenile Cuckoo, a Whinchat and 5 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe. A Willow Warbler, 2 Wheatears, 2 Sedge Warblers, 7 Lesser Whitethroats and 16 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Wader migration continued, with a Whimbrel flying over Folkestone on the 1<sup>st</sup>, two Oystercatchers flying west past Sandgate on the 5<sup>th</sup>, a Ringed Plover and three 3 Dunlins at Copt Point on the 6<sup>th</sup>, a Golden Plover flying west at Abbotscliffe and an Oystercatcher flying east at Seabrook on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and a Curlew flying west and four Golden Plovers arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 10<sup>th</sup>, when four Shelducks flew east over Folkestone Harbour.

Four Sand Martins flew east at Seabrook on the 11<sup>th</sup>, with nine heading east there the next day, whilst a Curlew, a Sedge Warbler, 3 Willow Warblers and 6 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The 15<sup>th</sup> produced a Redstart, 3 Wheatears and 5 Stonechats at Hythe Ranges and a Tree Pipit flying west at Seabrook.

A flock of up to 25 White Storks (from the introduction project in Sussex) provided some entertainment as they were tracked heading westwards from Samphire Hoe over Castle Hill, Cheriton and Sandgate on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The following day saw a Grasshopper Warbler, 8 Lesser Whitethroats and 14 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe, 2 Whinchats and 2 Wheatears at Church Hougham and four Willow Warblers in a garden in central Folkestone, where a Pied Flycatcher was seen on the 18<sup>th</sup>, when a Wheatear was at Folkestone Harbour and 32 Gannets flew west at Sandgate.



Wheatear at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)



White Stork at Cheriton (Mike Linklater)

A Little Egret flew east over Seabrook on the 20<sup>th</sup>, when 37 Gannets flew west past Sandgate and at least one juvenile Hobby was seen at Lympne Park Wood (with two there on the 23<sup>rd</sup>). The 21<sup>st</sup> produced a Redstart, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Yellow Wagtail, 2 Willow Warblers and 2 Reed Buntings at Abbotscliffe, a Green Sandpiper and 2 Willow Warblers along the canal at Seabrook and a Common Sandpiper at Folkestone Harbour. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> a Hobby, a Tree Pipit, a Whinchat, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Garden Warbler, a Reed Warbler, a Sedge Warbler, 2 Sand Martins, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 6 Blackcaps, 7 Willow Warblers and 15 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe, a Spotted Flycatcher, 4 Willow Warblers and 12 Crossbills were at Lympne Castle and a juvenile Hobby was seen at Seabrook.

A Whinchat, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Sedge Warbler, a Sand Martin, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Willow Warblers, 8 Blackcaps and 9 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe on the 24<sup>th</sup>, when four Willow Warblers were at Mill Point, whilst the next day saw a Whinchat at Samphire Hoe and a Tree Pipit and 13 Yellow Wagtails flying west at Abbotscliffe. A Redstart and 2 Spotted Flycatchers were at Church Hougham on the 26<sup>th</sup>, whilst five Oystercatchers flew east at Seabrook the following day.

A Pied Flycatcher, a Whinchat, a Wheatear and a Yellow Wagtail were at Abbotscliffe on the 28<sup>th</sup>, when an Arctic Skua, a Fulmar and 16 Gannets flew east past Sandgate, whilst a Redstart, 2 Willow Warblers and 11 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe on the 29<sup>th</sup> and a Common Sandpiper was seen at Sandgate on the 30<sup>th</sup>.



White Storks at Sandgate (Chris Powell)

## September

The first couple of days of September were fine and warm, but it soon became more unsettled and showery. By the middle of the month it was becoming cooler and, although it became drier for a few days, the latter part of the month was much more autumnal with lower temperatures and further rain. After several dry months rainfall was well above average in September.

The month began with a Common Sandpiper at Hythe and a Wheatear at Hythe Ranges on the 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by a Redstart at Samphire Hoe and a Firecrest at Enbrook Park the next day, whilst the 3<sup>rd</sup> produced a **Red-backed Shrike**, 2 Whinchats, 4 Stonechats and 22 Wheatears at Hythe Ranges and three Wheatears at Copt Point.

Two **Great White Egrets** flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 4<sup>th</sup>, when a Wheatear, a Shag, an Oystercatcher and 2 Little Egrets were also noted there, whilst a Wigeon, 2 Arctic Skuas and 2 Oystercatchers flew past Sandgate. A further Arctic Skua was seen there the following day, when a Garden Warbler, a Hobby, a Wheatear, a Blackcap, 2 Whinchats, 6 Lesser Whitethroats and 7 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe and a Sand Martin, 16 Yellow Wagtails and 30 Swallows flew west. Three Arctic Skuas were seen off Sandgate on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

The 7<sup>th</sup> produced a **Balearic Shearwater**, 7 Brent Geese, 7 Shelduck, 10 Common/Arctic Terns, up to 12 Arctic Skuas and 72 Sandwich Terns flying past Sandgate, a further **Balearic Shearwater** and 2 Arctic Skuas flying past Hythe and 68 Gannets passing Seabrook, whilst the next day saw four Arctic Skuas flying past Sandgate and on the 9<sup>th</sup> three Arctic Skuas, 5 Common Terns, 44 Sandwich Terns and 100+ Gannets were seen off Princes Parade/Sandgate, whilst three Yellow Wagtails flew west.

A juvenile **Purple Heron** was reported flying over Hythe on the 10<sup>th</sup>, when a Cuckoo, a Wheatear, a Willow Warbler, 3 Whinchats and 5 Swifts were at Abbotscliffe, a Tree Pipit flew west at Sandgate and a Common Sandpiper and five Little Egrets were at Copt Point.



On the 11<sup>th</sup>, a Redstart, a Spotted Flycatcher and 2 Wheatears were at Hythe Ranges, where 3 Grey Wagtails and 40 Meadow Pipits flew south, a Wheatear, a Siskin, a Reed Bunting, 3 Tree Pipits, 4 Whinchats, 5 Whitethroats and 16 Blackcaps were at Abbotscliffe, a Redshank, a Yellow Wagtail, 2 Wheatears, 2 Willow Warblers, 4 Whinchats, 8 Little Egrets, 15 Chiffchaffs, 19 Stonechats and 50 Blackcaps were at Samphire Hoe and single Spotted Flycatchers were seen at Grove Road in Folkestone and at Folkestone Warren.



Red-backed Shrike at Hythe Ranges (Sean McMinn)



Whinchat at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)

A Swift flew over Hythe on the 14<sup>th</sup>, whilst the next day saw a Swift, 3 Yellow Wagtails, 6 Grey Wagtails, 112 Sand Martins, 292 Meadow Pipits, c.1,000 Swallows and c.3,000 House Martins flying east at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Whinchat was also noted there. A further Swift, 3 Yellow Wagtails, 3 Grey Wagtails and 130 Meadow Pipits flew over Abbotscliffe on the 16<sup>th</sup>, when a Mute Swan was seen on the sea off Sandgate and 14 Chiffchaffs were at Mill Point. Seven Brent Geese flew east at Seabrook on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Two **Great White Egrets** flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 18<sup>th</sup>, when a Hobby was at Abbotscliffe and two Brent Geese flew past Princes Parade. A Ring Ouzel, a Brambling, a Swift and c.1,000 House Martins were at Round Down the following day, when a Firecrest was at Seabrook, two Spotted Flycatchers were at Pedlinge and 1,500 House Martins flew over Hythe in the evening. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, a Hobby, a Swift, a Willow Warbler, a Goldcrest, a Lesser Whitethroat, 6 Blackcaps and c.1,000 House Martins were at Abbotscliffe, where a Great Spotted Woodpecker flew over.



Brambling at Round Down (Jamie Partridge)



Swift at Round Down (Jamie Partridge)

A first-winter **Caspian Gull**, a Common Tern, 4 Shags, 8 Sandwich Terns and 85 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen at Sandgate on the 21<sup>st</sup>, when a Marsh Harrier, 2 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 4 Reed Buntings, 11 Stonechats, 13 Blackcaps, 61 Meadow Pipits and 158 Swallows were at Abbotscliffe, where 100 Starlings arrived in off the sea, two Shags and 13 Chiffchaffs were at Mill Point and a Razorbill was seen off Hythe.

An Arctic Skua, a Razorbill and a Red-throated Diver were seen off Sandgate the next day, when two Firecrests were at Paraker Wood and a Siskin was seen in a garden in Cheriton. Two Reed Buntings and 23 Stonechats were at Abbotscliffe on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, when 326 House Martins flew west at Seabrook. The next day saw a Firecrest at Enbrook Park, two Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, two Wheatears at Folkestone Harbour, 8 Eider flying east past Seabrook and 165 Gannets flying east past Sandgate.

The fifth **Great White Egret** of the month was seen arriving in off the sea at Copt Point on the 25<sup>th</sup>, when 2 Razorbills and 3 Shags were seen off Mill Point, whilst a **Ring-necked Parakeet** flew east at Seabrook the following day, when a new (German-ringed) first-winter **Caspian Gull** and 89 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were at Sandgate, where a Sand Martin, 56 Swallows and 151 House Martins flew west, and three Firecrests were at Enbrook Park.



Caspian Gull at Sandgate (Chris Powell)



Caspian Gull at Sandgate (Chris Powell)

A Firecrest, 2 Goldcrests and 17 Chiffchaffs were at Enbrook Park on the 27<sup>th</sup>, when a Hobby, 10 Meadow Pipits and 154 House Martins flew west at Sandgate. The 28<sup>th</sup> produced a Grasshopper Warbler, 6 Siskins and 16 Reed Buntings at Abbotscliffe and 28 Chaffinches arrived in off the sea there, whilst nine Grey Herons flew out to sea from Sandgate on the 29<sup>th</sup> and c.250 Swallows flew east there.

The month ended with six Firecrests at Enbrook Park, 12 Chiffchaffs at Mill Point and a Kingfisher, 16 Chiffchaffs and 18 Blackcaps at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Shag, two Razorbills, 11 Sandwich Terns, 42 Brent Geese, 48 Common Scoter and 146 Gannets were seen offshore.

## October

The first week of the month was warm, but rather unsettled at times. Temperatures were lower during the second week, especially by night, with a few drier days. The second half of the October became increasingly unsettled, but it remained very mild, with a mix of sunny periods and rain. It was provisionally England's equal fourth warmest October (in a series from 1884), with maximum temperatures for the month nearly 3 °C above average in parts of the south-east.

October began well, with the third area record of **Glossy Ibis** seen flying west at Sandgate on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, when a first-year **Yellow-legged Gull**, 2 Arctic Skuas and 126 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also seen there, whilst singles of Arctic Skua and Great Skua were noted off Folkestone Warren. Three Kingfishers were logged at Folkestone Harbour the following day.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> a Hobby, a Snipe, a Whinchat, 5 Reed Buntings, 7 Goldcrests, 8 Stonechats, 9 Chiffchaffs, 10 Song Thrushes, 12 Blackcaps and 103 Goldfinches were seen at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Shag was offshore from Seabrook, where 9 Meadow Pipits arrived in off the sea and 10 Brent Geese and 1,172 House Martins flew east. Two Black Redstarts and 150 Sandwich Terns were seen at Hythe and a Wheatear was at Folkestone Harbour. The next day saw two Firecrests at Enbrook Park and an Arctic Skua flying west past Seabrook, whilst 25 Brent Geese and 40 Gannets flew past Sandgate on the 5<sup>th</sup>.



A Spotted Flycatcher was seen in Lympe Churchyard on the 6<sup>th</sup>, when two Firecrests were at Mill Point and 3 Firecrests and 5 Chiffchaffs were at Enbrook Park. On the 7<sup>th</sup> a total of 96 Great Black-backed Gulls flew west at Seabrook whilst 1,000 Starlings arrived in off the sea at Sandgate.



Glossy Ibis at Sandgate (Chris Powell)



Yellow-legged Gull at Sandgate (Chris Powell)

A **Dartford Warbler** and a Snipe were at Abbotscliffe on the 8<sup>th</sup>, when a Great Spotted Woodpecker, 3 Reed Buntings, 4 Siskins, 48 Swallows and 362 House Martins flew west there and an Arctic Skua flew west at Sandgate, where 40 Starlings arrived in off the sea. The following day saw a Whinchat, 3 Blackcaps and 6 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe, where 69 Brent Geese flew west, whilst an Arctic Skua was seen off Sandgate and two Shags were at Battery Point. A Black Redstart, a Grey Wagtail, 2 Redwings, 2 Siskins, 4 Reed Buntings and 14 Stonechats were at Abbotscliffe on the 10<sup>th</sup>, when a Little Egret flew east at Seabrook and two Arctic Skuas flew past Sandgate.



Dartford Warbler at Abbotscliffe (Chris Powell)



Firecrest at West Hythe (Mike Fitch)

Two new **Dartford Warblers**, a Whinchat, a Redpoll, 2 Corn Buntings, 2 Little Egrets, 3 Goldcrests, 5 Chiffchaffs, 6 Siskins, 8 Song Thrushes and 10 Reed Buntings were at Abbotscliffe on the 11<sup>th</sup>, when 575 Starlings arrived in off the sea, whilst single Arctic Skuas were seen off Copt Point and Sandgate, and a **Ring-necked Parakeet** (presumably the individual first seen in September) was seen in the Golden Valley area of Cheriton (with intermittent sightings until at least the 28<sup>th</sup>). A further three **Dartford Warblers** were found at Abbotscliffe the following day, when 2 Chiffchaffs, 2 Blackcaps, 4 Goldcrests, 6 Siskins, 11 Reed Buntings and 21 Stonechats were also seen there, whilst 200 Starlings arrived in off the sea and 430 Goldfinches flew east. Five Firecrests were seen at Enbrook Park. On the 13<sup>th</sup> an Arctic Skua was noted off Sandgate.

A Brambling, 4 Goldcrests, 4 Blackcaps, 5 Chiffchaffs and 9 Reed Buntings were at Abbotscliffe on the 14<sup>th</sup>, when 30 Siskins arrived in off the sea. On the 15<sup>th</sup> a total of 123 Gannets flew east past Sandgate and 62 flew west there the following day, when a Black Redstart at Hythe Ranges, where 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers and 3 Redpolls flew over and a Firecrest was at West Hythe. Three Firecrests were at Copt Point on the 17<sup>th</sup> and the next day saw three Goosanders flying east past Sandgate, and a Redpoll and 2 Siskins flying over Abbotscliffe.

A **Dartford Warbler** and 4 Firecrests were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 19<sup>th</sup>, when a Common Tern and 4 Sandwich Terns were at Sandgate and 55 Brent Geese flew past. A Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe the next day, when four Fieldfares were at Sandgate, whilst at sea an Oystercatcher, a Sandwich Tern, 3 Gadwall, 3 Shoveler, 6 Little Gulls, 15 Teal, up to 90 Common Scoter and up to 122 Brent Geese flew past. Five Little Gulls flew west past Mill Point on the 21<sup>st</sup>, with up to five Firecrests and five Goldcrests there, whilst 920 Mediterranean Gulls were counted at Hythe.

A **Woodlark** was found at Hythe Ranges on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when three Bramblings were seen in a mixed finch flock at Shrine Barn and a Black Swan was an unusual sight in Folkestone Harbour. Two Velvet Scoter and 83 Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe the next day, when 3 Blackcaps, 4 Little Egrets, 4 Firecrests and 7 Goldcrests were at Holy Well and a Firecrest was in a garden in Folkestone, with two there on the 24<sup>th</sup>. A Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe on the 25<sup>th</sup>.



Common Tern at Sandgate (Chris Powell)



Shag at Folkestone Harbour (Chris Powell)

A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** was glimpsed at Port Lympne on the 27<sup>th</sup> (but later showed exceptional well in early November). Two House Martins and 1,645 Mediterranean Gulls were at Copt Point the next day, when five Firecrests were at Enbrook Park, whilst on the 29<sup>th</sup> a Reed Bunting, a Grey Wagtail, a Siskin and 5 Redpolls flew over Abbotscliffe. A **Dartford Warbler**, 2 Siskins and 4 Reed Buntings were seen there the following day, when two Grey Wagtails flew west, whilst the month ended with 10 Sandwich Terns and 1,159 Mediterranean Gulls off Mill Point /Sandgate.

## November

The first half of November was very mild and unsettled, although it did become drier for a time towards mid-month. It was unsettled again for most of the second half, with temperatures nearer normal, though it became drier and colder at the end of the month. Overall, it was provisionally England's equal fourth warmest November (in a series from 1884), with the south-east seeing the mildest temperatures, but also wet, with rainfall about twice the long-term average amount in Kent.

A Curlew, a Sandwich Tern, 19 Brent Geese and 22 Gannets flew west at sea on the 1<sup>st</sup>, whilst 2 Swallows and 2 Redpolls were at Nickolls Quarry the following day, and 2 Corn Buntings, 25 Yellowhammers and 50 Skylarks were at Botolph's Bridge.

An Arctic Tern, 3 Sandwich Terns, 5 Sooty Shearwaters, 16 Kittiwakes and 87 Gannets flew west past Mill Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, whilst 220 Starlings arrived in off the sea there and a Short-eared Owl was seen at Samphire Hoe. A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** had been glimpsed at Port Lympne in late October and was relocated in the car park there on the afternoon on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, where it delighted many observers with its incredibly confiding nature during its stay until the 13<sup>th</sup>.

The 4<sup>th</sup> produced a Ring Ouzel, a Fieldfare, 2 Blackcaps and 2 Redwings at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Snow Bunting, 2 Bramblings, 6 Stock Doves, 20 Redpolls, 57 Meadow Pipits, 60 Siskins and 358 Goldfinches flew east at Abbotscliffe and a Snipe, a Corn Bunting and 5 Reed Buntings were present.



A **Yellow-browed Warbler** and a Green Sandpiper were seen at Port Lympne on the 5<sup>th</sup>, when a 'redhead' Goosander was found at Cock Ash Lake (where it remained until the 8<sup>th</sup>), with 95 Fieldfares also seen there, whilst a Ring Ouzel, a Woodcock and 3 Black Redstarts were at Samphire Hoe, 6 Snipe and 15 Red-legged Partridges were at Shrine Barn, 50 Redwings and 100 Fieldfares were at Pent Farm, 6 Tree Sparrows and 10 Corn Buntings were at Botolph's Bridge, 18 Ringed Plovers were at Folkestone Beach and 9 Brent Geese flew past at sea.



Sabine's Gull at Port Lympne (Elliot Ranford)



Sabine's Gull at Port Lympne (Richard Tyler)



Sabine's Gull at Port Lympne (Trevor Ellery)



Sabine's Gull at Port Lympne (Simon King)

Quite remarkably another juvenile **Sabine's Gull** was seen on the 6<sup>th</sup>, as it flew past Sandgate, where a Black Redstart was also seen, whilst the next day saw an adult Little Gull flying west past Princes Parade and a Sand Martin, 2 House Martins and 9 Swallows at Nickolls Quarry. Two House Martins and 4 Swallows were still present there on the 9<sup>th</sup>, when a Sandwich Tern was seen off the Willop Outfall, four Tree Sparrows were at Botolph's Bridge, a Blackcap was at Church Hougham, where 2 Redpolls flew west, and two Firecrests were seen in a garden in Folkestone.

A flock of **11 Cattle Egrets** were found between Donkey Street and Lower Wall on the 10<sup>th</sup>, when a **Great White Egret** was seen in a marshy field near Capel-le-Ferne, a Goosander, 20 Yellowhammers and 23 Corn Buntings were at Botolph's Bridge, a Sandwich Tern was seen off Princes Parade and two Firecrests were at Enbrook Park. A **Cattle Egret** flew west over Hythe the following day, when a Barn Owl was at Botolph's Bridge, a Sand Martin and an exceptional count (for the time of year) of 25 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry, three Swallows were at Capel Street and a drake Mandarin Duck was at the Willop Basin (where it remained until at least the end of the month).



The 12<sup>th</sup> saw a small arrival of Black Redstarts, with singles at Hythe, Mill Point and Abbotscliffe, whilst a Jack Snipe was at Donkey Street, a Blackcap was seen in a garden in Folkestone and a Sand Martin and 4 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry, with further Swallows at Abbotscliffe (3) and the Willop Basin (3). Three **Dartford Warblers** were seen at Abbotscliffe on the 13<sup>th</sup>, where a Redpoll, 2 Siskins, 5 Goldcrests, 6 Corn Buntings and 7 Reed Buntings were also noted, whilst there was a marked increase in thrushes (with 8 Fieldfares, 15 Blackbirds, 18 Song Thrushes and 28 Redwings) and Robins (34) there. Elsewhere, a 'redhead' Goosander, a drake Gadwall and 3 Swallows was seen at Botolph's Bridge and two 'redhead' Goosanders were present at Cock Ash Lake, whilst a Shoveler and a Golden Plover were seen at Donkey Street, a Woodcock was at Capel-le-Ferne, a Firecrest was at Samphire Hoe and 15 Sandwich Terns were at Hythe Ranges.



Cattle Egret at Lower Wall (Brian Harper)



Goosanders at Cock Ash Lake (Tony Poole)



Cattle Egrets at Donkey Street/Lower Wall (Ian Roberts)

The **Ring-necked Parakeet** reappeared on the 14<sup>th</sup>, when it flew east over Seabrook and was later seen feeding in a garden there, whilst 4 Redpolls, 28 Fieldfares and 152 Redwings were counted at Abbotscliffe.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> two Fulmars, 3 Little Gulls, 21 Sandwich Terns and 31 Common Scoter flew west past Mill Point, whilst a Sand Martin and 5 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry the next day. A **Hoopoe** was found in Lympe on the 17<sup>th</sup>, where it remained until the 22<sup>nd</sup> and proved to be a popular attraction, although it could be elusive at times. Elsewhere, a Dunlin and three Sandwich Terns flew past Princes Parade, 13 Sanderlings were seen on Dymchurch Beach, 55 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin and a Sand Martin and 6 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry (this was the final sighting of Sand Martin and was by far the latest ever occurrence. There had only been three previous records in November, all on the 4<sup>th</sup>, at Hythe in 1963, West Hythe in 1981 and at Abbotscliffe in 2020, whilst this year produced sightings at Nickolls Quarry on five later dates). Swallows also remained into November in exceptional numbers, a reflection no doubt of the unusually mild conditions.



Hoopoe at Lympe (Mike Fitch)



Hoopoe at Lympe (Barry Wright)

Cooler conditions on the Continent led to some notable movements locally, beginning with a Golden Plover and 30 White-fronted Geese flying south over Samphire Hoe on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and the following day saw a Goosander, a Red-breasted Merganser, 3 Sandwich Terns, 3 Shelduck, 5 Razorbills, 7 Gadwall, 8 Wigeon, 59 Teal and 84 Brent Geese flying west at sea and 30 Lapwings arriving in off. Also of note were a Snow Bunting flying west at Abbotscliffe, a Golden Plover and 2 Jack Snipe in the Donkey Street area, a Tufted Duck off the Willop Outfall and Black Redstarts at the Hythe Redoubt and the Willop Outfall, whilst Swallows lingered at Nickolls Quarry (5) and West Hythe (7).

The 20<sup>th</sup> produced a **Little Auk**, a Sooty Shearwater, a Curlew, 3 **Barnacle Geese**, 3 Shoveler, 6 Sandwich Terns, 9 Gadwall, 12 Little Gulls, 13 Red-breasted Mergansers, 19 Pintail, 22 Brent Geese, 23 Razorbills, 38 Wigeon, 39 Dunlin and 45 Shelducks flying west past Princes Parade, whilst the next day saw a **Great Northern Diver**, a Black-throated Diver, a Great Skua, a Red-breasted Merganser, a Pintail, 2 **Little Auks**, 2 Eider, 2 Shelduck, 5 Brent Geese, 12 Teal, 16 Little Gulls, 17 Sandwich Terns, 37 Red-throated Divers, 48 Razorbills, 170 Kittiwakes and 285 Gannets flying past there and 120 Starlings arriving in off the sea. A Shoveler and 9 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry and a Brambling was with 40 Chaffinches at Kick Hill.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> a **Bearded Tit** was found at Nickolls Quarry (where it was also seen on the 25<sup>th</sup>), with 2 House Martins and 4 Swallows also present there, and a 'redhead' Goosander in the ditch to the north. A female Eider was seen off Princes Parade and, following the movements at sea over the previous two days, a remarkable influx of Little Gulls began with singles at Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry and Princes Parade. The following day saw five Little Gulls off Hythe, with further sightings at Princes Parade, Folkestone Harbour and Nickolls Quarry (2), whilst one was found dead on the seawall at Samphire Hoe. A Chiffchaff at Nickolls Quarry and two Sandwich Terns off Princes Parade was also of note.

A Black-throated Diver was seen at Folkestone Harbour on the 24<sup>th</sup>, with a 'redhead' Goosander, a Peregrine, 3 Fieldfares and 17 Redwings at the Aldergate Bridge, a Wigeon at Hoorne's Sewer, a House Martin at Nickolls Quarry and 2 Shags at Princes Parade, whilst Little Gulls were seen at Botolph's Bridge, Hythe (2), Princes Parade (4) and Nickolls Quarry (7).

A **Cattle Egret** was seen with the European Bison at Port Lympne on the 25<sup>th</sup>, with a drake Pochard on Woodside Farm pond, a Woodcock at Samphire Hoe, a House Martin, 2 Swallows and 5 Little Gulls at Nickolls Quarry, a Black Redstart and 41 Sanderling at the Willop Outfall, a Black Redstart at Folkestone Harbour, two Swallows at Abbotscliffe and 60 Fieldfares at the Aldergate Bridge.



Little Gull at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Bearded Tit at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Little Gull at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Little Gull at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

A Little Gull was seen off Hythe on the 26<sup>th</sup>, when six Little Gulls were at Nickolls Quarry and 24 Turnstones were counted at the Stade Street groyne. On the 27<sup>th</sup> a Black Redstart was at Mill Point, two Green Sandpipers were at Nickolls Quarry and three Little Gulls were seen off Princes Parade.

The 28<sup>th</sup> produced two **Caspian Gulls** (an adult and a 2CY) on the beach at Sandgate, a Little Gull, 3 Gadwall and 33 Teal at the Willop Outfall, a Woodcock and 8 Mandarin Ducks at Folks' Wood, 5 Little Gulls at Princes Parade and 7 Little Gulls at Nickolls Quarry. The following day saw a drake Pochard, 2 Swallows, 2 Chiffchaffs and 4 Little Gulls at Nickolls Quarry and a Little Gull off the Willop Outfall.

The month ended with a Little Gull, 3 Green Sandpipers and 3 Golden Plovers at Botolph's Bridge, 2 Chiffchaffs and 5 Little Gulls at Nickolls Quarry, a Brambling, a Corn Bunting and 80 Yellowhammers between Folks' Wood and Pedlinge and 3 Sandwich Terns and 5 Gadwall at the Willop Outfall. November sightings of Sandwich Tern are a recent phenomenon, with only two noted before 2018, but annual occurrences since. As the Kent Bird Report for 2019 noted "there is no doubt that Sandwich Terns are present [in the county] for longer than in the past". Prior to this year only small numbers had been involved, mostly ones and twos, with two counts of four and a maximum of seven, however this month produced three double-figure counts (with the peak of 21 passing Mill Point on the 15<sup>th</sup>).





Caspian Gulls at Sandgate (Ian Roberts)



Little Egret at Folkestone Harbour (Tony Poole)