

2013



Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report



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Introduction

Welcome to the second Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report which covers the 198 species recorded in 2013. This was five less than the total for the previous year and there were no new sightings for the area, however the three additions to the list in 2012 were all accepted by the respective committees: the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) published the records of Asian Desert Warbler (*British Birds 106: 612*) and Short-toed Treecreeper (*British Birds 106: 618*) in their annual report for 2012, whilst the Kent Ornithological Society (KOS) accepted the Rose-coloured Starling (as published on their website: <http://www.kentos.org.uk/Records/RoseColouredStarling.htm>).

There were a wealth of highlights in 2013, including the fourth records of Egyptian Goose and Bluethroat, the fifth Purple Heron, the sixth Great White Egret, the eighth Storm Petrel and Black Kite, the eighth and ninth records (and largest flock) of Bee-eaters, the ninth White Stork, the ninth and tenth Leach's Petrels and Long-eared Owls, and the tenth Great Grey Shrike. Sightings of Long-tailed Duck, Little Ringed Plover, Rough-legged Buzzard, Little Stint, Black-necked Grebe, Bewick's Swan, Montagu's Harrier, Bearded Tit, Yellow-browed Warbler and Wryneck added further excitement.

The early winter period saw a quite exceptional influx of Guillemot and Razorbills, with record day counts for both species, a remarkably early passage of Brent Geese (with a record count for January) and a spell of cold weather which produced record counts of Mandarin and Curlew, the second ever largest influx of Wigeon, and the third highest day count of Wigeon and Sky Lark. Meanwhile the third largest ever influx of Waxwings continued from 2012.

Spring saw record passages of Brent Geese, Shelduck, Pintail, Shoveler, Red-throated Diver, Gannet, Avocet, Curlew and Kittiwake, and these included the largest ever spring count of Gannets and the second ever highest day count of Red-throated Divers. There was also the second best spring passage and second highest spring day count of Dunlin to report, whilst a record spring movement of Great Crested Grebes, a record March count of Sandwich Terns, the fourth highest day count of Common/Arctic Terns and the earliest ever record of Avocet were also of note.

The highlight of the breeding season was the first ever successful nesting of White Wagtails locally, which was apparently the first occurrence in the county for over thirty years. A Marsh Warbler was located in potential breeding habitat for second year running but, as last year, this bird also appeared to fail to attract a mate. A continuing upward trend in the number of Grey Heron nests can also be reported whilst there was a tantalising sighting of a Little Egret in the heronry, though it was not seen subsequently.

Summer also produced the first July sighting of Brent Geese and a record autumn passage completed a very good year for this species. The autumn also produced a remarkable arrival of thrushes, which included an astonishing movement of Redwings, a record count of Song Thrushes and the second largest ever influx of Ring Ouzels (which included the second latest sighting). A record count of Mediterranean Gulls, the latest ever Whimbrel and the second largest arrival of Chiffchaffs also provided interest.

In the late winter period there were two record winter/non-passage counts of Common Scoter and the second largest ever count of Redshanks, whilst overall 2013 proved to be the second best ever year for Shag, Red Kite and Marsh Harrier, the third best year for Black-throated Diver and Avocet, the best year since 2005 for Velvet Scoter, the best year since 2006 for Goldeneye and the best spring since 2005 for Red-breasted Merganser.

It is however disappointing to have to report that there were no records this year for Tree Sparrow and Corn Bunting since regular watching began, and just a single sighting of Turtle Dove. This follows alarming population declines of at least 90% nationally for all these three species between 1970 and 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds (Eaton et al, 2012)*). Black Tern (only the second blank year since 2000) and Lapland Bunting (only the second blank year since 1991) were other notable absentees, whilst there were just singles records of Pied Flycatcher and Tree Pipit.

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 113 and my contact details are given on the following page.

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Front cover: Bluethroat at Samphire Hoe in March 2013 (Paul Rowe)

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List of contributors 2013

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 be accepted for the oversight.

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| B Adams | A Lapworth |
| | D Lawrie |
| S Beard | J Lees |
| G Blackburn | J E Leigh |
| A Bleach | P Lightman |
| G J A Burton | S Lloyd |
| | V Lloyd |
| R Card | A Luckhurst |
| P J Chantler | |
| D Chesterman | D Mansfield |
| D Clarke | I M Marshall |
| S Coates | J I Marshall |
| P Coleman | M E Marshall |
| L Collins | S McMinn |
| M Collins | |
| G Cooke | R K Norman |
| D Curtis | |
| | T Prentice |
| P Edmondson | K Privett |
| R Edwards | |
| A Ellery | R Rackliffe |
| | I A Roberts |
| D Featherbe | C Roome |
| B Findlay | J Russell |
| N C Frampton | B A Ryan |
| | |
| D A Gibson | P J Sharp |
| J A Gibson | D E Smith |
| C Gillard | P R Smith |
| J Gomm | R Smith |
| R Goslett | M Stevens |
| B Green | |
| P Green | R Thorogood |
| T Gutsell | P Trodd |
| | |
| B Harper | M Vandoen |
| L Harper | M Varley |
| M Harper | |
| N Hollands | J Walder |
| P Holt | D Weller |
| P Howe | P J Wells |
| | M Whybrow |
| A Jupp | J Wood |
| | |
| M D Kennett | |

Review of the year 2013

January

There was a mild start to the month with daytime temperatures approaching 10°C and overnight lows well above zero. Whilst it was generally rather dull and overcast it was also mostly dry, with winds from the westerly quarter. A number of fields remained flooded following the very wet conditions in 2012.

With the mild conditions there were few wildfowl in the area, though small numbers of Brent Geese (a total of 23 over four dates) were noted off Samphire Hoe and there was a record count of 27 Mandarin in a flooded field near Pedlinge on the 3rd.

A pair of Gadwall lingered at Botolph's Bridge from December and two Tufted Duck and three Teal were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 6th.



Brent Geese off Folkestone Pier (Brian Harper)

A flock of Common Scoter remained off Princes Parade, Seabrook from 2012, increasing to a peak of 32 on the 6th, whilst smaller numbers were noted off Samphire Hoe, including a count of 23 west there on the 5th. A single Velvet Scoter also flew west past the latter site on the 8th.

Counts of Red-throated Divers included 34 west past Samphire Hoe on the 1st, 66 west there on the 5th and a total of 35 (20 east, 15 west) on the 8th, whilst up to five Fulmars were noted at the same site, and Gannets included 60 there on the 2nd, 40 off Copt Point on the 3rd, 62 off Samphire Hoe on the 5th and 35 west there on the 7th. Single Shags were on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and the 8th. A Little Egret was at Botolph's Bridge on the 1st and there were three sightings at Samphire Hoe early in the month.

A Little Grebe was at Samphire Hoe from the 1st to the 6th and there was a peak count of 24 Great Crested Grebes off Copt Point on the 3rd. A Water Rail was seen along the canal at Seabrook on the 5th.

Single Oystercatchers were noted from three sites, 35 Ringed Plovers were counted in the roost at Folkestone Beach on the 5th and good numbers of Lapwings remained at the Willop Basin, with a peak of 500 there on the 9th. A Sanderling was at the Willop Outfall on the 2nd, at least four Purple Sandpipers were still at Hythe, with two at Battery Point on the 3rd and Curlews were noted at the Willop Basin (two on the 2nd) and Copt Point (one on the 3rd).

Good numbers of Kittiwakes were feeding off Samphire Hoe, including counts of 70 on the 2nd and 80 the next day. The 2nd also produced around 20 Guillemots and 30 Razorbills off Samphire Hoe, before 530 auks flew east there, with another 30 on the sea on the 5th, and the majority appeared to be Razorbills. On the 7th there were estimates of 220 Guillemots and 550 Razorbills west past the same site, but still larger numbers were to follow.

Two Kingfishers were along the canal near Hythe to at least mid-month and at least one Cetti's Warbler was in the Nickoll's Quarry area, whilst Blackcaps were wintering in gardens in Cheriton, Palmarsh, Folkestone (2) and Saltwood (2). Small groups of **Waxwings** continued to appear but none lingered for long: in the early part of the month six were seen on Canterbury Road, Folkestone on the 2nd, eight were near Hill Road, Folkestone on the 3rd and around 20 were near Coombe Farm the same day. Numbers of winter thrushes were low but a Black Redstart was wintering at Samphire Hoe, as were 5 Stonechats and 8 Rock Pipits. Two Siskins flew over Saltwood on the 5th, with another over Samphire Hoe the next day, and 22 Yellowhammers were counted at Church Hougham on the 3rd.

The weather turned markedly colder from the 10th, with the wind switching round to the north and then to the east and daytime temperatures plummeted to just 3-4°C, falling below freezing at night. Exceptional numbers of large auks were seen off Samphire Hoe, with just over 5,000 heading east on the 10th and 5,665 east the following day, when c.500 were noted offshore or heading west. A significant proportion of those that could be identified were Razorbills, with estimates of 60% on the first day and 70-75% on the second, giving approximate totals of 3,000 Razorbills and 2,000 Guillemots on the 10th and 4,500 Razorbills and 1,665 Guillemots on the 11th (record counts of both species).



Egyptian Geese at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

A Ringed Plover, 4 Common Scoter, 4 Fulmar, 6 Great Crested Grebes, 7 Brent Geese, 20 Red-throated Divers, 27 Shelduck, 53 Gannets and 125 Kittiwakes also flew east there on the 10th and a drake Goldeneye, 2 Shelduck, 3 Common Scoter, 5 Wigeon, 20 Red-throated Divers, 40 Kittiwakes, 70 Gannets and 170 Brent Geese went east the next day, when a pair of Gadwall flew west and a male House Sparrow was seen.

On the 12th there was a remarkable up-channel movement of Brent Geese, with at least 1,765 logged from various points between Hythe and Samphire Hoe (a record count for January), and around 100 Kittiwakes, 150 Gannets and another 1,700 auks (about 1,275 Razorbills) also flew east past the latter site. The following day saw adult Little Gull, 2 Shelduck, 4 Fulmars, 65 Kittiwakes, 165 Guillemots, 185 Gannets, 250 Brent Geese and 500 Razorbills going east past Samphire Hoe, with 77 Brent Geese east at Hythe. Elsewhere a Peregrine and a Kingfisher were at West Hythe.

The 14th saw a light covering of snow with further flurries, particularly over higher ground, over the next couple of days, before more substantial snowfall occurred on the 19th and 20th, amounting to several inches. Overnight temperatures fell to as low as -6°C and daytime highs were below freezing on some days, with the cold conditions persisting until the 25th.

There was a significant arrival of Wigeon in response to the conditions (the second largest ever influx), including counts of 1,230 west past Samphire Hoe on the morning of the 17th, about 600 on the sea off the Hythe Redoubt and 45 east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th, 160 in the Nickoll's Quarry area on the 26th and 98 west past the Willop Outfall on the 27th. Other wildfowl of note comprised two **Egyptian Geese** flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd (the first record for the site), 100 Brent Geese passing here on the 21st, a Shoveler and peak counts of 3 Teal, 9 Pochard, 9 Tufted Ducks and 14 Gadwall in the Nickoll's Quarry area, a drake Teal at Samphire Hoe from the 20th to the 25th, with 3 west there on the 15th, 4 Shoveler west past Samphire Hoe on the 17th, 4 Shoveler and 75 Mallard at the Willop Basin on the 27th, 36 Common Scoter off the Willop Outfall on the 26th and small numbers of Shelduck at several sites.

On the 24th 36 Red-throated Divers flew east past Samphire Hoe and 52 flew west past the Willop Outfall on 26th, whilst 200 Gannets were feeding offshore of Samphire Hoe on the 16th and 75 flew east there on the 24th, with a Little Egret noted on the 22nd. Three Marsh Harriers (including an adult male) were at Botolph's Bridge on the 26th, with presumably the same male at the Willop Basin the next day. A Peregrine was seen in the Botolph's Bridge area of several dates and up to four were at Samphire Hoe, whilst single Water Rails were note at Nickoll's Quarry and Samphire Hoe.

Waders were also displaced by the weather and included records of Jack Snipe at Samphire Hoe on the 19th, 26th (2) and 27th (another new species for the site).

Common Snipe were more widely recorded, with counts of up to 4 at Samphire Hoe, 5 at Nickoll's Quarry and 8 at Botolph's Bridge, and even a few in gardens in Cheriton and Folkestone (including three in the Enbrook Valley on the 20th) however, in contrast to other recent cold spells, there were no Woodcock records.

Four Golden Plover were at Botolph's Bridge on the 19th, with singles over Samphire Hoe on the 20th, at Hythe Ranges on the 23rd and at the Willop Basin on the 27th, and the latter site also hosted a Grey Plover on the 24th, with two there on the 27th.



Snipe in a garden in Cheriton (Phil Lightman)

Lapwing sightings included 16 in off the sea at Abbotscliffe and 22 (possibly involving some of the same birds) in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 16th, 12 at Saltwood on the 25th and 169 at the Willop Basin on the 27th. A Knot and six Sanderlings were in Folkestone Harbour on the 27th, Purple Sandpipers increased to 6 at Hythe, and Dunlin counts included 6 east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, 15 at the Willop Basin on the 24th, 7 in Folkestone Harbour on the 26th and 21 at the Willop Basin the following day.

A flock of 60 Curlew (a record count) flew past Copt Point on the evening of the 20th and 18 were at the Willop Basin on the 27th, with 3 singles at Samphire Hoe, one at Saltwood on the 25th and one flying over Hythe on the 26th. The first Green Sandpiper records since last April involved two at Botolph's Bridge on the 19th and three at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th, whilst up to 13 Redshank were counted at the Willop Outfall.

A Great Skua was lingering off Samphire Hoe on the 26th and there was a peak of 82 Kittiwakes flying east there on the 24th. Auk numbers reduced but still included several counts of 2-300 (involving a high proportion of Razorbills), before there was another large movement involving an estimated 1,040 Guillemots and 3,200 Razorbills flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th. Assuming the movements all related to different birds an estimated total of over 14,000 Razorbills were logged at this site in January.

A **Long-eared Owl** was roosting in a garden in Cheriton on the 17th and a Little Owl was seen at Round Down on the 16th, whilst a pair of Ravens flew along the cliffs at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd and 25th, and a Goldcrest there on the 21st was an unusual cold weather migrant. There was a huge movement of Sky Larks on the 16th, with 545 logged arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe in just over one hour (the third highest ever count).

There were further **Waxwing** records during this period but again all were single-day sightings, with 11 along Churchill Avenue, Folkestone on the 15th, 20 along the canal east of Twiss Road, Hythe on the 25th and two flocks of 8 (possibly the same birds) at Hythe Ranges and Seabrook on the 26th. The weather led to a significant influx of thrushes, particularly Fieldfares and Redwings. The first two Fieldfares were at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, with 19 at Church Hougham the next day, 27 at Samphire Hoe (including 24 arriving in off the sea) on the 16th, 20 there on the 21st, 64 at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, 30+ at Cheriton Polo Ground and large numbers at Saltwood on the 25th, and 258 at Botolph's Bridge on the 27th.

There were also numerous reports of smaller numbers from other localities, including several venturing into gardens. The first Redwing was also at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, with 62 at Church Hougham the next day, 35 at Samphire Hoe on the 16th, 50 there on the 19th, 45 there still on the 23rd, large numbers at Saltwood on the 25th, 25 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th and 34 at Botolph's Bridge the next day. There also appeared to be local increases in Blackbirds (including counts of 20 at Samphire Hoe on the 14th and 20 at Church Hougham on the 15th) and Song Thrushes (including counts of 8 at Church Hougham on the 15th and 15 at Samphire Hoe on the 19th).

Up to two Black Redstarts were reported at Samphire Hoe, with at least one in the Folkestone Harbour area, and there were five Stonechats at the former site, where a House Sparrow was again noted on the 25th.

There was a milder, wet and windy end to the month, with less to report, though 2 Shelduck, 6 Wigeon, 6 Dunlin, 9 Curlew, 9 Golden Plover and 155 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin on the 30th, a Sanderling was accompanying the Purple Sandpipers at Hythe and two Siskins were seen along Hythe Canal.

Although it was a rather eventful month the total number of species recorded (110) was only one less than the previous two Januaries.



Waxwing at Seabrook (Ade Jupp)

February

There was a cold, dry start to February which set the pattern for most of the rest of the month. For the first ten days the wind was generally from the westerly quadrant and some clear skies led to a few overnight frosts. On the 11th the wind switched round to the north-east and daytime temperatures dipped to less than 2°C, with some snow falling over higher ground. There was a brief interlude of milder weather on the 14th but this was accompanied by wet and windy conditions so it did not feel any more pleasant. The following few days were dry and less windy, and temperatures almost reached double-figures though fell below freezing at night. The 20th saw a cold easterly wind becoming established and this persisted until the month's end, bringing further wintry showers over the 22nd to 24th, and the last few days were cold, dry and dull.

Two Greylag Geese were at the Willop Outfall on the 2nd and 3rd, whilst the first Canada Goose of the year flew over Botolph's Bridge on the latter date. Two **White-fronted Geese** which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 12th were a new species for the site. The same day saw 24 Greylag Geese heading up-channel there (in flocks of 3 and 21), which might well have been genuine wild birds, as might an unusually large group of 18 at the Willop Outfall on the 16th, and finally two more flew over Botolph's Bridge on the 20th.

There was a small movement of Brent Geese past Hythe on the 17th and 43 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 20th. Eight Shelduck were on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 9th, with one or two there on a couple of other dates, whilst a total of 11 flew east past Samphire Hoe during the month, with another on the main pond there on the 13th. There was a small cold weather movement of duck on the 11th, comprising 2 Mallard, 6 Teal and 30 Wigeon heading west past Samphire Hoe, and good numbers of Mandarin remained in the Pedlinge area, with a count of 14 on the 16th. A pair of Gadwall remained in the Botolph's Bridge area until at least the 17th, with perhaps the same birds at Nickoll's Quarry on the 23rd, whilst a pair flew east past Samphire Hoe the following day. The 20th offered signs of the start of spring passage, when 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 8 Common Scoter, 12 Wigeon and 20 Pintail flew east past Samphire Hoe. A flock of 58 Common Scoter and 168 Great Crested Grebes were off Princes Parade, Seabrook on the 23rd.

The peak count of Red-throated Divers was 49 on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 9th, with 14 east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st and 19 east there on the 28th also being of note. Counts of Gannets at the latter site included 80 east on the 3rd, 240 east on the 20th, 90 east the next day and 83 east on the 28th, whilst a Shag was seen there on the 19th.

Single Little Egrets were at Botolph's Bridge on the 3rd and Samphire Hoe on the 12th, whilst a **Great White Egret** was reported flying south over the former site on the 25th. Single **Red Kites** were seen flying over Folkestone Downs on the 2nd and over Kiln Wood on the 20th, and a Marsh Harrier was along Donkey Street on the 16th. A male Merlin was at Botolph's Bridge on the 26th and a Peregrine was noted there on two dates, on one occasion dive-bombing a Buzzard. Water Rails were seen again at Samphire Hoe and Seabrook but remained elusive.

A very early **Avocet** flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th. Lapwing numbers at the Willop Outfall increased to 335 on the 2nd before peaking at 1,200 on the 16th, before appearing to rapidly disperse. Elsewhere two flew in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd, probably in response to cold weather. Up to 6 Purple Sandpipers remained at Hythe throughout, and 7 Dunlin were at the Willop Outfall on the 16th, with a Sanderling there on the 26th. Five Snipe were in a flooded field near Hythe Redoubt on the 3rd, with two at Samphire Hoe on the 24th and one flushed from beside football pitches at Church Road, Cheriton on the 28th. There was a very good count (the fifth highest for the area) of 8 Woodcock at Cowtye Wood on the 24th.



Barn Owl at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Following the new record count last month, a total of 54 Curlew at the Willop Outfall on the 2nd was the second highest for the area, whilst a total of 7 passed Samphire Hoe during the month. Up to two Green Sandpipers remained in the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry area and a peak of 19 Redshanks at the Willop Outfall on the 17th was the fourth highest count for the area.

A Great Skua flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th and there were peak counts of 62 Kittiwakes heading east there on the 20th and 57 the next day. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were increasingly noted during February and there was an apparent easterly passage of Common Gulls towards the end of the month, including 43 past Samphire Hoe on the 28th. Good numbers of auks continued to be seen into the first few days of the month, including about 800 Guillemots and 2,300 Razorbills off Samphire Hoe on the 3rd and around 530 of each there the following day, but decreased thereafter, though another 530 or so of each species flew east at the same site on the 20th.

On the 2nd a **Barn Owl** was found at Hythe Roughs and it remained in the area until the month's end, ranging between there, Donkey Street and the Hythe Redoubt, whilst a male Tawny Owl was hooting in Paraker Wood on the 4th. Two Ravens flew over Crete Road East on the 13th, with one also seen there the next day, and large numbers of Jackdaws and Rooks were roosting in the Pedlinge area, with a pre-roost gathering of around 2,500 there on the 25th.

A Firecrest was at Brockhill Country Park on the 24th and single male Blackcaps were in gardens in Saltwood and at East Cliff Gardens and Joyes Road in Folkestone.

Winter thrush numbers were generally lower than in January, with the exception of a count of 200 Fieldfares in the Round Down area on the 11th, though counts of 15 Redwings over Crete Road East on the 13th, and 4 Fieldfares, 5 Song Thrushes and 14 Redwings at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd were of note. A Black Redstart remained at Samphire Hoe whilst a pair was seen at Folkestone Harbour, and there were up to 3 Stonechats at the former site. A count of 28 Meadow Pipits at Samphire Hoe might have included cold weather migrants and up to 9 Rock Pipits remained there. 15-20 Siskins were along canal by the Hythe Roughs on the 4th, with 8 in alders at Church Road sports ground in Cheriton on the 8th, whilst migrants flew over Samphire Hoe on the 8th, 15th (2) and 19th, and Saltwood on the 17th. 35 Yellowhammers were counted at Church Hougham on the 23rd.



Rock Pipit at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

There were 13 additions to the year list in February, which increased it to 123.

March

The month began with the cold easterly wind still in place and the wintering Black Redstart, 3 Stonechats and 9 Redwings remained at Samphire Hoe 1st. Two Purple Sandpipers were still at Hythe on the 2nd, where they remained throughout, 3 Buzzards were at Bluehouse Wood on the 2nd and singles of Marsh Tit, Nuthatch and Buzzard were noted at Brockhill Country Park on the 3rd. A flock of about 15 **Waxwings** in Folkestone on the 2nd was the eighth sighting this year but the first since late January.

There were some signs of springs however, with a Common Scoter, 2 Brent Geese and 24 Red-throated Divers flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and 2 Oystercatchers, 20 Brent Geese, 37 Gannets, 53 Red-throated Divers, 70 auks and 79 Kittiwakes east there the next day. The 3rd also produced a Siskin flying over Samphire Hoe and a Chiffchaff, possibly an early migrant, in a garden in Cheriton.

A Common Sandpiper on the beach at Folkestone Sands on the 4th was an exceptionally early migrant (and only the fourth March record) and at least three Buzzards flew east over Saltwood the same day, whilst four Lapwings were at Abbotscliffe.

The 5th was sunny and milder, with temperatures reaching double-figures for the first time in over a month. Four Common Scoters, 19 Red-throated Divers and 395 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe, 2 Peregrines were hunting along Princes Parade, Seabrook, and the **Barn Owl** was seen again at Botolph's Bridge (with a further sighting at Palmarsh on the 9th).

A light south-easterly wind on the 6th produced a flock of 21 **Bewick's Swans**, 3 Curlew, 7 Shelduck, 9 Brent Geese, 50 Gannets, 63 Red-throated Divers and 185 auks heading east past Samphire Hoe, whilst two *alba* wagtails also flew east, ten Great Tits moved through and 40 Cormorants were fishing offshore. The following day saw a Great Skua, a Shag, a Curlew, an Oystercatcher, 6 Little Gulls, 8 Common Scoters, 21 Kittiwakes, 35 Common Gulls, 53 Brent Geese, 83 Red-throated Divers, 170 auks and a good count of 450 Gannets flying east there, and 3 Siskins also flew east, with a further two Siskins going east over Saltwood.

The 8th began foggy and then turned wet but a White Wagtail, a Crossbill and 2 Curlews were noted at Samphire Hoe before the weather deteriorated. Dry conditions with a light wind the following day produced a good movement at sea where the first 3 Sandwich Terns, a Greylag Goose, a Redshank, 5 Curlew, 6 Teal, 7 Gadwall, 8 **Avocets**, 12 Oystercatcher, a flock of 21 Little Gulls, 33 Dunlin, 50 Black-headed Gulls, 75 Red-throated Divers and 1,280 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe.

A male Black Redstart, a Chiffchaff and a Reed Bunting were new arrivals there, whilst a Rock Pipit, 2 Goldfinches and 8 *alba* wagtails flew in off the sea. Another 6 **Avocets**, 3 Brent Geese, 4 Wigeon, 4 Redshank, 5 Ringed Plover, 6 Curlew, 14 Teal and 27 Dunlin were on the flood at the Willop Basin, with 106 Brent Geese and 124 Red-throated Divers past offshore, and 3 Dunlin were on the flooded golf course at the Hythe Imperial, with 2 Teal and 48 Common Scoters on the sea. A Black Redstart and a Shag were at Folkestone Harbour.



Avocets at the Willop Basin (Brian Harper)

It turned colder again on the 10th as the easterly wind returned but seawatching remained productive with a Black-throated Diver, 2 Velvet Scoters, 17 Gannets, 176 Common Scoter and 223 Red-throated Divers flying east past Hythe (with 140 Great Crested Grebes on the sea there), a female **Goldeneye** east past the Willop Outfall and 25 Cormorants, 29 Brent Geese, 48 Gannets and 207 Red-throated Divers east at Samphire Hoe.

A Water Rail was along the canal at Seabrook and single Chiffchaffs were at Princes Parade, Seabrook and Samphire Hoe. The wind increased from the east the next day, accompanied by snow flurries. Two Greylag Geese flew west at Samphire Hoe and 98 Great Crested Grebes flew east there, whilst a *littoralis* Rock Pipit was noted on the seawall.

On the 12th the wind reached gale force with several inches of snowfall, leading to snowdrifts and significant disruption and observations became impossible.

There was some improvement in the weather on the 14th, but clear skies overnight led to a heavy frost with temperatures falling to -5°C. A Rook, an *alba* wagtail and 8 Jackdaws flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Siskin and 20 Chaffinches flew east. There were 7 Redshank and 118 Lapwings at the Willop Basin, and a Chiffchaff, a Black Swan and four Tufted Ducks at Nickoll's Quarry.

A change in the wind direction to south-west on the 15th encouraged some passage at sea, with 50 auks, 61 Red-throated Divers, 62 Kittiwakes, 345 Brent Geese and a spring record movement of 563 Gannets east past Samphire Hoe. On land there was a Snipe, 7 Rock Pipits and 18 Redwings, whilst a flock of 230 Starlings flew in off the sea. A flock of 10-15 **Waxwings** were seen briefly in Cheriton.

On the 17th 14 Greylag and 50 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe, where a Goldcrest was also noted, whilst a Firecrest was along the canal at West Hythe, with a Little Egret at the dam. A Sandwich Tern was seen off Hythe, six Shags were in Folkestone Harbour and a male Blackcap was singing in a garden in Folkestone (to the 26th). The following day produced a Marsh Harrier flying out to sea at Samphire Hoe, two Greylag Geese west there and four drake Eider east. At Abbotscliffe a Raven flew west, 160 Chaffinches flew east and a Goldcrest was seen.

In light and variable winds on the 19th a pair of Pintail, 2 Teal, 3 Shags, 5 Shelduck, 19 Sandwich Terns and 482 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe, a Tufted Duck flew west and a Reed Bunting and a Raven flew over. Two White Wagtails, 4 Pied Wagtails, 15 Yellowhammers and 75 Redwings were at Church Hougham.

Moderate easterly winds returned to dominate the last ten days or so of the month and with daytime temperatures rarely above 5°C it felt bitterly cold. Overnight temperatures during this time were frequently below zero and there were even some further snow showers. These conditions led to some decent passage at sea however, with 2 Little Gulls, 3 Pintail, 25 Red-throated Divers, 42 Sandwich Terns, 91 Gannets and 104 Dunlin east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th, when a Grey Wagtail, a Siskin, 155 Starlings and 1,435 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe.



Shags at Folkestone Harbour (Brian Harper)

A Reed Bunting was also at the former site and a Mistle Thrush and 2 Goldcrests at the latter. On the 21st two Shelduck, 15 Common Scoter, 35 Gannets, 65 auks, 70 Sandwich Terns and 515 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe, 3 Shags and 9 Sandwich Terns were seen off Folkestone Pier, where 33 Brent Geese flew east and 41 Red-throated Divers flew west and at least 25 Gannets flew east at Seabrook.

The 22nd produced a **Little Ringed Plover**, a Shag, 2 Grey Plover, 2 Ringed Plover, 3 Bar-tailed Godwit, 5 Shelduck, 7 Teal, 8 Pintail, 9 **Avocets**, 10 Curlew, 11 Gadwall, 18 Red-throated Divers, 18 Fulmars, 20 auks, 21 Wigeon, 36 Dunlin, 41 Shoveler, 80 Common Scoter, 165 Sandwich Terns (a record for March) and 361 Gannets east past Samphire Hoe.

Next day a Redshank, 3 Shelduck, 7 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 10 Wigeon, 12 Gadwall, 14 Bar-tailed Godwits, 15 Kittiwakes, 16 Knot, 16 Teal, 16 Red-throated Divers, 20 Pintail, 21 Shoveler, 24 Common Scoter, 35 Curlew, 81 Sandwich Terns, 82 Gannets and 85 Dunlin flew east there and the first Wheatear arrived.

A Black-throated Diver, 2 **Slavonian Grebes**, 2 Shoveler, 3 Shelduck, 6 **Avocets**, 6 Little Gulls, 6 Bar-tailed Godwits, 8 Eider, 75 Common Scoter, 75 Sandwich Terns, 80 Gannets and 415 Brent Geese flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 24th, and 2 Wheatears, 2 Black Redstarts and the first 5 Swallows were seen. A Chiffchaff was in a garden in Hythe. The 25th saw a Little Gull, an Oystercatcher, 2 Curlew, 15 Red-throated Divers, 21 Great Crested Grebes, 27 Brent Geese, 37 Common Scoter, 37 Kittiwakes, 50 Gannets and 72 Sandwich Terns flying east at Samphire Hoe, where a Common Buzzard was also noted. A male Black Redstart was at Abbotscliffe and a Red-breasted Merganser flew past, whilst 38 Lapwings flew high west over Saltwood.

On the 26th a Black-throated Diver flew east at Samphire Hoe and single male Black Redstart and Wheatear were noted, with another Black Redstart at Hythe Ranges, two Chiffchaffs in a garden in Folkestone and two Siskins in a garden in Saltwood.

Highlight of the month was a female **Bluethroat** (presumably of the White-spotted form) found at Samphire Hoe on the 27th, when a Black-throated Diver was seen offshore. A Black Redstart was seen near the Hythe Redoubt, a Chiffchaff was in a garden in Folkestone and 2 Siskins and 3 Buzzards flew over Saltwood. A Short-eared Owl flew west at Samphire Hoe the following day, whilst 2 Curlews, 2 Sandwich Terns, 10 Siskins and 135 Brent Geese flew east and a Chiffchaff was seen, whilst a Buzzard flew north over Folkestone.

On the 29th a female **Bluethroat** (presumably the same bird having reappeared) was at Samphire Hoe, where it performed well until the 3rd April. Three Curlew, 7 Shelduck, 26 Common Gulls, 41 Sandwich Terns, 62 Brent Geese, 99 Black-headed Gulls and 190 Gannets flew east there, a **Red Kite** flew south-west over Capel-le-Ferne and two Eider were seen off West Parade, Hythe.



Bluethroat at Samphire Hoe (Tim Gutsell)

Another **Red Kite** flew north-west over Hythe the following day, when single Marsh Harriers were at Botolph's Bridge and Nickoll's Quarry, a Water Rail and a Chiffchaff were along the canal at Seabrook and 47 Common Scoters were off Princes Parade, Seabrook, with pair of Mandarin at Brockhill Country Park.

The last day of the month saw a female Black Redstart, a male Wheatear, a Shag, a Snipe, a Grey Wagtail and c.50 Siskins at Samphire Hoe, a Firecrest at Paraker Wood, a Brambling in a garden in Lympe, a Green Sandpiper at Botolph's Bridge, an Eider, 23 Common Scoter and 28 Great Crested Grebes off the Hythe Redoubt, 17 Great Crested Grebes at the Willop Outfall, 31 Lapwings at the Willop Basin and 57 Common Scoters off Princes Parade, Seabrook. There were 17 additions to the year list in March, which increased it to 140.

April

The month began with the cold easterly winds and wintery showers persisting and the female Bluethroat still in residence at Samphire Hoe, whilst up to two Black Redstarts were regularly noted there throughout. The site also produced 3 Sandwich Terns, 7 Red-throated Divers, 11 Pintail and 20 Brent Geese passing offshore on the 1st, with a Shag on the sea, when a male Brambling was again in a garden in Lympe. The next day a Buzzard and 220 Starlings flew north over Saltwood and a Marsh Harrier was at Botolph's Bridge on the 5th. The 6th was a little milder and a **White Stork** flew over Folkestone in the afternoon. A Black Redstart at Hythe, single Cetti's Warbler and Chiffchaff at West Hythe, a female Brambling (to the 7th) and two Reed Buntings in a garden in Lympe, and a Redpoll and 281 Chaffinches flying north over Saltwood were also of note.

Improvement continued the following day with temperatures almost reaching double figures in some hazy sunshine, and a **Red Kite**, 2 Redpoll, 4 Buzzards and 7 Lesser Black-backed Gulls flew north over Saltwood, whilst two continental Coal Tits were seen with a migrant flock of 22 Great Tits at Samphire Hoe. Elsewhere a male Blackcap was along Green Lane, Hythe, a Marsh Harrier, a Green Sandpiper, a Kingfisher and a Chiffchaff were at Botolph's Bridge, a Chiffchaff was at Nickoll's Quarry, 3 Buzzards and 7 Woodcock were at Cowtye Wood, a Woodcock was in a garden in Cheriton briefly, a male Blackcap and 2 Siskins were in a garden in Lympe and 124 Red-throated Divers were on the sea off Hythe Ranges.

In south-easterly winds on the 8th a male **Hen Harrier** flew north and 5 Buzzards east over Folkestone, and an **Avocet**, a Red-breasted Merganser, 2 Pintail, 2 Shoveler, 2 Teal, 3 Shelduck, 4 Fulmar, 13 Dunlin, 73 Brent Geese, 78 Common Scoter and 403 Red-throated Divers headed east past Princes Parade, Seabrook. Similar conditions the following day produced totals of at least 2 Gadwall, 6 Common Terns, 12 Teal, 14 Red-breasted Mergansers, 20 Shoveler, 190 Common Scoter and 1,370 Brent Geese east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe. A Black Redstart was at the former site and a Firecrest, a Wheatear, a Raven, a Long-tailed Tit, a Redwing and 2 Goldcrests at the latter. On the 10th a Swallow and the first 2 Sand Martins were at Nickoll's Quarry and a Swallow flew north over Saltwood. Two male Blackcaps and 3 Chiffchaffs were seen in a garden in Folkestone and a Firecrest, 2 Goldcrests and 3 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe, where 2 Sandwich Terns, 32 Gannets and 42 Red-throated Divers flew east and 170 Brent Geese flew west.

The next week was dominated by south-westerly winds and temperatures rose gradually, peaking at close to 20°C on the 14th. A pair of **Garganey**, a Green Sandpiper and a singing Willow Warbler were at Botolph's Bridge on the 11th, with the first House Martin, 2 Red-throated Divers, 2 Sand Martins, and 11 Swallows at Nickoll's Quarry, a Swallow, a Blackcap, a Lapwing, 2 Willow Warblers, 2 Goldcrests, 4 Robins, 4 Song Thrushes, 6 Chiffchaffs, 6 Fieldfares and 15 Redwings at Samphire Hoe, a Swallow west over Cheriton and 3 male Blackcaps in a garden there.

A splendid summer-plumaged **Black-necked Grebe** was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 12th, and a male Black Redstart and 2 Firecrests were at Samphire Hoe, where 2 Great Skuas, 4 Red-breasted Mergansers, 17 Red-throated Divers, 27 Common Scoters and 30 Brent Geese flew east, whilst 11 Siskins were noted in Hythe.



Black-necked Grebe at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

On the 13th a Wheatear, a Golden Plover, a Raven, a Grey Wagtail, a Willow Warbler, a Redwing, 2 female Black Redstarts, 2 Shags, 2 Goldcrests, 3 Firecrests and 6 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe and a Marsh Harrier, the first 2 Yellow Wagtails, 7 Swallows, 23 Linnets, 40 Goldfinches and 140 Wood Pigeons flew over. Ten **Waxwings** were seen in Folkestone, with 3 Firecrests in the Holland's Avenue area, a Buzzard over Folkestone, a Little Egret over Saltwood and 2 Little Egrets at West Hythe, where there were also a Willow Warbler, a Blackcap, a Swallow, 2 Peregrines and 5 Chiffchaffs.

The 14th produced a Nightingale, a Wheatear, a Willow Warbler, a Raven, 2 Goldcrests and 5 Firecrests at Samphire Hoe and 2 Black-throated Divers, 16 Brent Geese, 30 Gannets and 80 Common Scoters flew east there. The first Cuckoo, a Buzzard, a Firecrest, a Kingfisher, a Little Owl, 6 Willow Warblers, 7 Blackcaps and 20 Chiffchaffs were noted along the canal west of Hythe whilst a Whitethroat along Princes Parade was also new for the year. A Woodcock and 2 Ravens at Capel-le-Ferne were also of note, as were 2 female Blackcaps in a garden in Cheriton and Swallows at several sites, including counts of 4 over Saltwood and 20 over Horn Street. Next day saw a Whitethroat, a Blackcap, 2 Firecrests, 2 Willow Warblers, 3 Chiffchaffs and 3 Goldcrests at Samphire Hoe, and a Lesser Redpoll, a Collared Dove, a Stock Dove, 2 Swallows, 2 Ravens, 10 Goldfinches, 35 Linnets and 145 Wood Pigeons flew west, whilst a Merlin was reported.

A Little Egret, a Whitethroat, 2 Firecrests, 2 Chiffchaffs and 3 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and a Little Egret flew west over Hythe. On the 17th a Firecrest, a Willow Warbler, a Long-tailed Tit, 2 Black Redstarts, 2 Whitethroats and 3 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe, and a Great Skua, a Gadwall, a Shelduck, 2 Curlew, 14 Red-throated Divers, 20 Sandwich Terns and 20 Gannets flew east. The first Reed Warbler was along the canal at Seabrook in the evening. The wind picked up on the 18th and produced little of note with just 140 Gannets passing Samphire Hoe. The following day remained quiet with just 2 Firecrests and singles of Wheatear, Whitethroat and Blackcap at Samphire Hoe, with 2 Yellow Wagtails and 125 Wood Pigeons over.

In a north-easterly breeze on the 20th a continental Coal Tit, a Wheatear, a Goldcrest, 2 Blackcaps and 3 Whitethroats were seen at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Buzzard, 2 Sparrowhawks, 2 House Martins and 6 Swallows flew over and an Arctic Skua, a Whimbrel, 2 Shelduck, 7 Red-throated Divers, 14 Kittiwakes and 26 Gannets flew east at sea. A Yellow Wagtail and a Brambling flew north over Saltwood.

The wind returned to the south-west from the 21st and again temperatures slowly increased towards 20°C, though coastal fog on the 24th and 25th made it feel cooler and hampered observations.

A Whimbrel, a Reed Warbler, 2 Cetti's Warblers and the first 2 Sedge Warblers of the year were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 21st, when 4 Buzzards flew over Saltwood and a Goldcrest, 2 Blackcaps and 4 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe, where a Red Kite, 2 Rooks, 4 Yellow Wagtails, 6 House Martins and 10 Swallows flew over, and a Shelduck, 4 Mediterranean Gulls, 6 Whimbrel, 10 Red-throated Divers, 11 Sandwich Terns, 12 Common Scoter, 12 Gannets and 20 Kittiwakes flew east at sea.

The latter site hosted the first Lesser Whitethroat of the year the following day, when a single Willow Warbler was also present, a Shag flew east and a Raven flew west. A Buzzard flew over Hythe and 2 Swallows flew in off the sea. The 23rd produced just a Willow Warbler, 2 Swallows, 2 Chiffchaffs and 6 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe, with a single Wheatear at Princes Parade, Seabrook.



Firecrest at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

The next day was little better, with just a Lapwing and 2 Willow Warblers there, and 50 Brent Geese flying east. The first 6 Swifts of the year were seen over Folkestone on the 25th, when a Lesser Whitethroat, a Blackcap, a Willow Warbler, a Whimbrel and 7 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe and a Dunlin, a Yellow Wagtail, 5 House Martins and 6 Swallows flew over. Further Lesser Whitethroats were at Seabrook and Castle Hill (2), and a Wheatear, a Buzzard, a Grey Partridge, 5 Swallows and 27 Yellowhammers were at Church Hougham.

A northerly wind and showers on the morning of the 26th led to a small arrival of migrants including a Blackcap, 2 Whinchats, 2 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Willow Warblers, 5 House Martins, 8 Whitethroats, 8 Chiffchaffs and 10 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, with Wheatears also noted arriving at Folkestone Pier (4) and Mill Point (4), with a Common Sandpiper at the latter site. At sea a Little Egret, a Shag, 6 Shelduck, 24 Gannets and 27 Brent Geese passed by. Just 3 Wheatears and 6 Whitethroats remained at Samphire Hoe the following day, but 2 Yellow Wagtails and 3 Swallows arrived in off the sea and 80 Wood Pigeons flew west. At the heronry in Lympe Park Wood 12 nests were noted again this year.

A couple of days of more south-westerly winds followed and a Great Skua, a Bar-tailed Godwit, 2 Black-throated Divers, 4 Eider, 4 Shelduck, 8 Mediterranean Gulls, 11 Whimbrel, 12 Brent Geese and 40 Sandwich Terns flew East past Samphire Hoe on the 28th, with 7 House Martins and 10 Swallows arriving in off the sea, 2 Ravens, 5 Buzzards and 6 Mute Swans flying west and two Wheatears on the sea wall. A Buzzard, a House Martin, 4 Wheatears, 6 Whitethroats and 10 Swallows were at Abbotscliffe, a Common Sandpiper and 3 Yellow Wagtails were at Botolph's Bridge and 3 Buzzards flew over Saltwood. On the 29th a Yellow Wagtail and 2 Common Sandpipers were at Nickoll's Quarry, a Swift flew over Princes Parade, Seabrook, a Little Egret, a Shag, a Curlew and a Wheatear were at Samphire Hoe, where a Yellow Wagtail and four Swallows flew in off the sea, a Greylag Goose flew east over Saltwood and six Purple Sandpipers were at Battery Point.

The month ended with a cool northerly breeze picking up and a ring-tail **Montagu's Harrier**, a Marsh Harrier, 6 House Martins, 23 Goldfinches and 24 Swallows arrived into the headwind at Samphire Hoe. After taking a short rest at Abbotscliffe, the Montagu's Harrier was later seen heading north-west over Folkestone West station. Samphire Hoe also produced a Little Egret, 2 Mediterranean Gulls and 18 Sandwich Terns flying east, whilst a Black Redstart, a Lesser Whitethroat, 2 House Martins and 12 Whitethroats were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site.

There were 21 additions to the year list in April, which increased it to 161.

May

May began with a cool north-easterly wind on the 1st and produced another Marsh Harrier (at Folkestone Racecourse, Westenhanger) and the first Hobby of the year (at Samphire Hoe). A Whimbrel, 4 Common Scoter, 23 Kittiwakes, 29 Gannets and 68 Sandwich Terns flew east past the latter site, where a Yellow Wagtail and 3 Swallows flew in off the sea, and a Wheatear was grounded. At Botolph's Bridge a Peregrine, a Common Sandpiper and a Yellow Wagtail were noted.

Similar conditions the following day saw a male **Montagu's Harrier** arriving in off the sea at Princes Parade, Seabrook, whilst another Hobby and a Yellow Wagtail were at Nickoll's Quarry, and a Black-throated Diver, a Grey Plover, 2 Knot, 3 Arctic Skuas, 3 Shelduck, 3 Oystercatchers, 5 Sanderling, 10 Red-throated Divers, 17 Bar-tailed Godwits, 17 auks, 23 Whimbrel, 46 Common/Arctic Terns, 71 Kittiwakes, 165 Gannets and 192 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe, where 3 Shags were seen on the sea.



Hobby at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

The 3rd saw the wind move round to the south south-west but raptors continue to arrive with a **Honey Buzzard** over Saltwood, where a Swift was also noted. Sea passage improved, with a Black-throated Diver, a Sanderling, 2 Mediterranean Gulls, 3 **Pomarine Skuas**, 3 Shelduck, 10 Velvet Scoter, 14 Brent Geese, 20 Whimbrel, 20 Kittiwakes, 26 Common Gulls, 34 Sandwich Terns, 37 Common Scoter, 98 Black-headed Gulls and 113 Common/Arctic Terns (including the first of the latter species for the year) going east past Samphire Hoe.

Samphire Hoe also produced 2 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Sand Martins, 11 House Martins, 17 Carrion Crows and 85 Swallows flying in off the sea, 2 Ravens, 2 Sparrowhawks, 4 Buzzards and 16 Oystercatchers flying west and a Willow Warbler in the bushes. At Crete Hill the first two Ring Ouzels of the year and 20 Swallows were seen, and 2 Whimbrel flew east over Hythe. The wind increased from the south-west on the 4th and just a single Great Skua, 3 Red-throated Divers, 30 Common Scoter, 40 Gannets and 45 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe, whilst a Wheatear and 2 Willow Warblers were grounded and 20 Swallows flew in off the sea. The first two Garden Warblers of the year were noted at Heane Wood, Saltwood.

The wind eased on the 5th and the sea was again productive with the highlight being an exceptional movement of Common/Arctic Terns in the afternoon, with up to **800 per hour** passing east past Samphire Hoe before thick fog rolled in and halted counting. Other birds of note moving up-channel here included a Great Skua, a Mediterranean Gull, 2 Whimbrel, 4 Red-throated Divers, 5 Arctic Skuas, 5 Oystercatchers, 6 Little Terns, 20 Kittiwakes, 23 Dunlin, 25 Sandwich Terns and 62 Common Scoter, whilst an Arctic Skua, a Bar-tailed Godwit, 5 Whimbrel, 5 Red-throated Divers, 15 Little Terns, 38 Sandwich Terns and 45 Common Scoter passed Folkestone Pier. A Yellow Wagtail and 7 Swallows flew in off the sea at the former site with 15 Swallows in off the sea at the latter. A flock of six Velvet Scoter were also seen in the bay off Mill Point and a Hobby flew north over Saltwood.

Fog persisted into the morning of the 6th which hampered observations but a flock of 29 **Black-tailed Godwits** flew west close inshore at Battery Point, Seabrook, where a Little Tern was lingering and 4 Purple Sandpipers remained. At Samphire Hoe Greenshank, Dunlin and Whimbrel could be heard calling and a lost drake Pochard was on the main pond.

Once conditions had cleared a Great Skua, 2 **Pomarine Skuas**, 3 Mediterranean Gulls and 30 Common/Arctic Terns flew east past the latter site, whilst a Willow Warbler was present, 2 Redpolls, 2 Swallows and 3 House Martins flew over. A Yellow Wagtail was on the Hythe Imperial golf course in the evening.

On a calm 7th another 2 **Pomarine Skuas**, 2 Red-throated Divers, 10 Sandwich Terns and 80 Common/Arctic Terns flew east past Copt Point and a Common Sandpiper, 2 Whimbrel, 8 Little Terns, 16 Bar-tailed Godwits and 51 Common Scoter flew east past Folkestone Pier, where a Black-throated Diver was seen on the sea. At Samphire Hoe a Great Skua, a Black-throated Diver, 3 Shelduck, 3 Oystercatchers, 14 Whimbrel, 15 Little Terns, 30 Sandwich Terns, 39 Bar-tailed Godwits, 110 Common Scoter and 200 Common/Arctic Terns flew east, a Greylag Goose flew west, 3 Swallows flew in off the sea and a Wheatear was present. Another migrant Pochard appeared on the canal at Twiss Road, Hythe, 9 Swifts were at Saltwood Castle and 6 House Martins and 24 Swifts were at Saltwood.



Little Tern at Battery Point (Brian Harper)

A band of heavy rain passed through on the 8th and there was little to be seen. The next few days were dominated by strong south-westerly winds and were generally unproductive. On the 9th an Arctic Skua, a Red-throated Diver, 9 Sandwich Terns, 10 Kittiwakes, 40 Gannets and 90 Common Scoter flew east past Samphire Hoe, where 2 Swallows and 4 Swifts arrived in off the sea. The following day saw just 30 Common Scoters heading east there and 6 Swallows in off the sea.

On the 11th an Arctic Skua, a Shag and 92 Common Scoters flew past Folkestone Pier and 2 Swifts and 21 Swallows flew in off the sea. A Hobby, 2 Swifts, 15 Swallows and 19 House Martins flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe the next day, and a Cuckoo and 2 Yellow Wagtails were at Botolph's Bridge. A Cuckoo was at Hythe Ranges on the 13th, when a Greylag Goose flew south over Saltwood, and 5 Swifts were noted there.

Another day of moderate westerly winds on the 14th promised little so the discovery of a flock of **ten Bee-eaters** at Saltwood came as quite a shock but unfortunately they quickly moved on. Elsewhere just a single Swallow in off the sea at Samphire Hoe and a Shag offshore were of note. An Arctic Skua, 2 Great Skuas and 40 Common Scoter flew east past Samphire Hoe the next day as the wind again increased from the south-west, and 40 Swifts arrived in off the sea there. The 16th yielded just a single Whimbrel east past Samphire Hoe and 4 Shelduck on the pond.

The wind switched round to the north from the 17th and a Goldcrest, 9 Swallows, 11 Swifts and 20 House Martins were seen at Samphire Hoe, where a Red-throated Diver, 15 Sandwich Terns and 50 Wood Pigeons flew east, and a migrant Willow Warbler was at Broadmead Village pond. The next day saw a Little Tern, a Bar-tailed Godwit, 2 Whimbrel, 2 Shags, 2 Little Egrets and 6 Shelduck pass Folkestone Pier and ten Swallows flew in off the sea there, whilst a Hobby, 3 Swifts, 5 Swallows and 17 House Martins were at Samphire Hoe. There was little of note on the 19th, though 3 Black Redstarts at Samphire Hoe included 2 birds which appeared to be new arrivals.

The 21st offered some signs of encouragement with an Arctic Skua, 5 Bar-tailed Godwits, 10 Gannets, 10 Kittiwakes, 15 Swifts and 17 Whimbrel flying east past Samphire Hoe, and an increase there to 40 House Martins, whilst 25 Swallows flew north over Hythe. The 22nd saw considerable improvement with the first Spotted Flycatcher and a new Lesser Whitethroat at Samphire Hoe, where an Arctic Skua, an Oystercatcher, 2 Whimbrel, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 25 Sandwich Terns and 50 Common Scoters east early morning. Then in the late morning a **Red Kite** flew over Saltwood and a **Honey Buzzard** and a probable Marsh Harrier flew over Folkestone, with a Marsh Harrier over Samphire Hoe in the evening, when a **Long-eared Owl** was found at Nickoll's Quarry, where a Cetti's Warbler, 2 Cuckoos and 25 Swifts were also seen. On the 23rd three **Red Kites** flew west over West Parade, Hythe early morning and a Nightingale was singing at Hythe Ranges late evening (reported as present for about a fortnight).



Long-eared Owl at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

This productive spell continued into the 24th when a **Bee-eater** flew over Hythe with presumably the same bird later seen flying north-west over Nickoll's Quarry, where 25 Swifts and a mixed flock of around 600 Swallows and House Martins were feeding over the lake. The first Turtle Dove was seen on Donkey Street, near Botolph's Bridge pub, on the 25th, and four Grey Wagtails were at Enbrook Park, Sandgate the next day. A Whimbrel was on the rock groyne opposite the Hotel Imperial, Hythe on the 27th and two Yellow Wagtails were at Botolph's Bridge. A flock of 9 Oystercatchers flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 28th. A Spotted Flycatcher was at Samphire Hoe on the 29th and the afternoon saw a marked arrival of hirundines and Swifts, with 20 Swallows, 100 House Martins and 100 Swifts at the Willop Outfall, and 100 Swifts and 400 House Martins at Capel-le-Ferne. The next day a Hobby flew over Hythe in the evening, whilst 16 Swifts and 105 House Martins flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 31st, and the month ended on a high with a **Purple Heron** flying north over Saltwood in the afternoon. There were 13 additions to the year list in May, which increased it to 174.

June

There was a dry but relatively cool start to the month with a north-easterly breeze persisting for the first ten days and small numbers of migrants continued to arrive. These included a particularly impressive array of raptors, beginning with an **Osprey** flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, then a **Honey Buzzard** in off the sea at Capel-le-Ferne, a **Hen Harrier** flying west at Samphire Hoe, and singles of **Red Kite**, Hobby and Peregrine over Saltwood the next day. Sightings of local Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk, and a nestling Tawny Owl at Newington brought the bird of prey total for the day to 9 species! A second **Honey Buzzard** flew north over Saltwood on the 6th, which was followed by a further Hobby over Cheriton on the 8th, an **Osprey** north over Abbotscliffe on the 10th and a **Red Kite** over Cheriton on the 11th.

Other migrants comprised a Collared Dove and 2 Jays flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, a late Willow Warbler there on the 5th, newly-arrived Chiffchaff and Lesser Whitethroat there on the 7th, and small numbers of incoming Swifts and Swallows. It was rather quiet offshore, with a single Shelduck east past Samphire Hoe on the 1st, 3 Oystercatchers east there the next day, a late Red-throated Diver offshore on the 4th, and 70 Common Scoter east there on the 6th, whilst a Shag was seen on several dates, with 2 on the 11th. Two Lapwings at Abbotscliffe on the 10th were also of note.

A few days of strong south-westerly winds followed, accompanied by some drizzle and showers, and two Manx Shearwaters, 25 Common Scoter and 26 Gannets flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 12th, with another Manx Shearwater, 10 Gannets and 50 Common Scoter passing there the next day. A further 30 Common Scoter flew east there on the 15th when 75 Swifts flew west.

When the weather settled down a singing **Marsh Warbler** was found in suitable breeding habitat on the 17th but the news could not be released in case the bird attracted a mate and attempted to nest. After a couple of days however it appeared to move on and so was presumably just a late migrant.



Male White Wagtail at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

The third **Osprey** of the month flew east over Folkestone on the 18th (there had been only two previous records in June before this year, singles in 2003 and 2012), when a Curlew and a Grey Heron flew west at Samphire Hoe.

A rather quiet spell followed before a returning Green Sandpiper was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 27th and a **Honey Buzzard** flew in off the sea there the next day. A late Spotted Flycatcher was at the same site on the 28th, when 250 Swifts flew east, and two Hobbies were hunting along the cliffs there on the 29th, whilst two Mute Swans and 47 Swifts flew over, and 119 Swifts flew north-west over Cheriton.

During the last few days of the month it became apparent that a pair of White Wagtails was nesting at Samphire Hoe, and the female was seen carrying food into the compound on the 29th, confirming the first ever successful breeding of this form locally (and apparently the first occurrence in the county for other thirty years).

There were three additions to the year list in June, which increased it to 177.

July

July was mostly dry, settled and relatively warm, with daytime highs typically exceeding 20° C. The temperature peaked at close to 30°C on the 22nd, preceding spectacular thunderstorms over the eastern side of Kent the following night, and further thunderstorms followed on the 27th.

Three Manx Shearwaters flew past Samphire Hoe on the 1st, when 2 Sand Martins and 30 Swifts flew west at Abbotscliffe. A Common Sandpiper was heard calling at the former site the next day, whilst 2 Shags were on the sea and 30 Common Scoter flew west. On the 3rd a Curlew, 3 Teal, 8 Common Scoters, 30 Gannets and 54 Swifts flew west there and a Guillemot was seen on the sea, whilst up to 5 Mediterranean Gulls were noted there during the month.

On the 6th 20 Common Scoter flew west at Samphire Hoe and a Shag was noted there the next day. A post-breeding flock of Starlings began to accumulate at the same site, with 26 on the 9th, increasing to 40 on the 12th, and 50 on the 14th.

A flock of five Shags were on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 12th and 40 Common Scoter flew west, whilst the following day produced the most remarkable record of the month when three Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe (the first ever July sighting), though arguably more significant was the appearance there of a juvenile White Wagtail with its parents on the 14th.

Return passage became more evident from around mid-month, with 2 Lapwings at Abbotscliffe and a Crossbill flying west there on the 14th, when a Whimbrel, an Oystercatcher, 3 Sand Martins and 30 Common Scoter flew past Samphire Hoe and a House Sparrow began a two-day stay. A Reed Warbler was at Abbotscliffe the next day and a Kingfisher was flushed from bushes at Samphire Hoe on the 18th.

Three Crossbills flew west over Hythe on the 20th, with a flock of about 15 flying west there the next day and a further three west over Samphire Hoe on the 22nd, when a Common Sandpiper was also of note.



Mediterranean Gull at Samphire Hoe (Dave Featherbe)

Another five Crossbills flew south over Saltwood on the 26th and a Hobby and 4 Common Sandpipers were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 27th. There were no additions to the year list in July.

August

August remained mostly dry, settled and warm, with daytime peaks regularly above 20° C, though there were a few showers, some thundery, in the first week, and a rain-bearing front passed through on the 24th/25th.

A Hobby was chasing House Martins at Risborough Barracks, Cheriton on the 1st and singles of Wheatear, a Willow Warbler and Shag were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 4th. A Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Willow Warblers and 9 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe on the 5th, whilst 4 Common Terns and 8 Sandwich Terns were seen off Samphire Hoe. A Wheatear and 6 Willow Warblers were at the latter site on the 6th, with a Hobby at Church Hougham on the 8th.

The 11th saw a small arrival of migrants, with a Grasshopper Warbler, 5 Willow Warblers and 24 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Marsh Harrier flew high over Botolph's Bridge road, and a Common Sandpiper and 3 Ringed Plovers were at Hythe Redoubt. A Wheatear, a Lesser Whitethroat, 4 Willow Warblers and 17 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe the following day and 2 Sedge Warblers, 2 Willow Warblers and 7 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe, where the post-breeding Starling flock peaked at 150.

A Cuckoo, a Sedge Warbler, a Chiffchaff, 3 Wheatears, 5 Willow Warblers and 7 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe on the 13th and a Marsh Harrier was seen at Abbotscliffe, with presumably the same bird seen again there the next day, when a Sedge Warbler, 2 Whinchats, 5 Wheatears, 6 Whitethroats, 6 Lesser Whitethroats and 30 Willow Warblers were also noted, and a Sedge Warbler, a Common Sandpiper, 4 Willow Warblers, 6 Whitethroats and 24 Mediterranean Gulls were at Samphire Hoe, with a Greenshank and 2 Yellow Wagtails flying west there.

A Common Redstart, a Sedge Warbler and 2 Willow Warblers were at Samphire Hoe on the 15th and 2 Common Sandpipers, 2 Sedge Warblers, 3 Willow Warblers, 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Blackcaps and 11 Whitethroats were noted there the following day. On the 17th Samphire Hoe produced a Sedge Warbler, a Blackcap and 7 Willow Warblers, with a Wheatear at Abbotscliffe, a Green Sandpiper and a Common Sandpiper at Hythe Redoubt, 2 Wheatears on the Hythe Imperial Golf Course, and 5 Yellow Wagtails flying west along Princes Parade, Seabrook.

A flock of four **Balearic Shearwaters** flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 18th, when 4 Willow Warblers and 30 Gannets were also logged, and a Yellow Wagtail flew over Cheriton. A further three shearwaters, presumably also Balearics, flew west past Folkestone Pier the next day, as did a Marsh Harrier, 2 Arctic Skuas and 10 Common Scoters, whilst a Buzzard, an Arctic Skua, a Sand Martin, 4 Common Scoters, 7 Sandwich Terns and 35 Gannets flew west past Samphire Hoe, where a Cuckoo, a Common Sandpiper, a Blackcap and 3 Willow Warblers were seen. In the evening single Wheatears were at Hythe Redoubt and the Hythe Imperial Golf Course.

A Common Sandpiper, 2 Wheatears, 3 Willow Warblers and 6 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe on the 20th, when 2 Yellow Wagtails flew east there and about 100 Mediterranean Gulls were seen hawking ants above the site. A Whinchat, a Lesser Whitethroat and 5 Willow Warblers were present there the next day and another 2 Yellow Wagtails flew over, whilst a Raven flew west at Lympne and a Buzzard flew south-west over Saltwood.



Common Sandpiper at Hythe Redoubt (Brian Harper)

Two Hobbies, 2 Whitethroats, 3 Wheatears and 15 Swallows were at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd, when a Wheatear was at Hythe Redoubt, 2 Wheatears were at Hythe Ranges and 2 Willow Warblers were seen in a garden in Cheriton. A Common Sandpiper, a Wheatear and 2 Sedge Warblers were at Samphire Hoe the next day and 2 Yellow Wagtails flew east, whilst a Reed Warbler, 5 Willow Warbler and 13 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe.

A Whinchat, a Wheatear, a Common Sandpiper, a Dunlin, a Lesser Whitethroat, 3 Willow Warblers, 3 Robins and 6 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe on the 24th and a single Yellow Wagtail flew over. A Green Sandpiper flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 25th, where 2 Whinchats, 4 Willow Warbler and 10 Whitethroats were also seen, and a Common Sandpiper and 3 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe. A Redstart, a Sedge Warbler, a Chiffchaff, 2 Reed Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 8 Whitethroats and 10 Willow Warblers were counted in the Botolph's Bridge road / Nickoll's Quarry area and 3 Common Sandpipers were at Hythe Redoubt.

On the 26th two Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Whitethroats, 2 Yellow Wagtails and 4 Willow Warblers were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and a Whinchat, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Sedge Warbler, a Raven, a Lapwing, a Common Sandpiper, a Curlew, an Oystercatcher, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Willow Warblers, 3 Robins, 4 Wheatears, 5 Common Scoter and 12 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe whilst about 8 Yellow Wagtails flew over. Elsewhere a Whinchat, 2 Shoveler and 4 Teal were at Botolph's Bridge, a Common Sandpiper, 2 Wheatears and 3 Yellow Wagtails were at Hythe Redoubt, a Grey Wagtail was at Horn Street and 2 Yellow Wagtails were at Nickoll's Quarry.

A **Honey Buzzard** and 3 Buzzards flew over Peene on the 27th, when a Reed Warbler, 2 Green Sandpipers, 2 Robins, 3 Whinchats, 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Yellow Wagtails, 8 Wheatears and 8 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe and a Swift and a Little Owl were at Church Hougham.

On the 28th a Whinchat, 2 Robins, 3 Black Redstarts, 4 Willow Warblers, 6 Whitethroats, 7 Mediterranean Gulls, 9 Wheatears and 250 House Martins were at Samphire Hoe and four Yellow Wagtails flew over. A Hobby, a Buzzard and a Whinchat were at Abbotscliffe, a Garden Warbler was along Botolph's Bridge road, a Common Sandpiper and a Wheatear were at Hythe Redoubt, a Peregrine and ten Buzzards flew over Saltwood and a Yellow Wagtail flew over Cheriton.

A Pied Flycatcher, 3 Willow Warblers and 3 Whitethroats were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 29th, when a Raven and a Lesser Whitethroat were at Abbotscliffe, 2 Wheatears, 3 Willow Warblers and 4 Whinchats were at Samphire Hoe and an Arctic Skua flew east there. The 30th produced a Redstart along Crete Road East and a Hobby, a Blackcap, a Willow Warbler, 2 Robins, 5 Whinchats, 5 Whitethroats and 12 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe and 2 Yellow Wagtails flew east.



Honey Buzzard at Peene (Brian Harper)

The final day of the month saw a Yellow Wagtail and 2 Peregrines along at Botolph's Bridge road and 2 Wheatears at Hythe Redoubt. There were four additions to the year list in August, which increased it to 181.

September

The dry, settled weather lasted into the first few days of September, with peak temperatures even approaching 30° C on the 5th. Migrants continued to trickle through, including singles of Grey Wagtail over Abbotscliffe and Yellow Wagtail over Crete Road East on the 1st, when a Willow Warbler and 3 Robins were at Samphire Hoe and 3 Buzzards flew north-east over Saltwood. A count of around 450 Mediterranean Gulls at Copt Point that evening was also of note. On the 2nd a Whinchat, a Wheatear, a Lesser Whitethroat, a Willow Warbler and 300 House Martins were at Samphire Hoe and a Sedge Warbler spent the evening catching moths in a Saltwood garden.

A Firecrest, a Shag, 2 Willow Warblers, 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Blackcaps, 4 Wheatears, 5 Whinchats and 5 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, and a Redstart, a Dunlin, a Sedge Warbler, 2 Reed Warblers, 4 Robins and 7 Whitethroats were present the next day, with another Redstart at Abbotscliffe and a Yellow Wagtail over. The 5th produced a Grasshopper Warbler, a Whinchat, a Chiffchaff, a Redshank, 9 Robins and 10 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe, and 2 Grey Wagtails flew east, with a Reed Warbler, a Blackcap, 2 Wheatears, 2 Chiffchaffs, 3 Black Redstarts, 4 Robins, 5 Whinchats and 9 Whitethroats there the following day, when 2 Grey Wagtails flew west.

There was marked change in the weather from the 7th when strong south-westerly winds were accompanied by showers, and there were further showers or more prolonged periods of rain on all of the following ten days. Just a Wheatear and 2 Whinchats were of note at Samphire Hoe on the 7th when 2 Curlews flew west, and the next day produced a Yellowhammer, 2 Whinchats, 4 Robins, 4 Whitethroats and 7 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe, and 4 Yellow Wagtails at Abbotscliffe. On the 9th a Garden Warbler, a Sedge Warbler, a Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Song Thrush, 4 Chiffchaffs and 7 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe and 2 Grey Wagtails flew west, whilst the same site yielded a Whinchat, a Wheatear, a Sedge Warbler, 3 Whitethroats and 4 Chiffchaffs the following day, when a single Arctic Skua flew west.

An **Osprey** flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th and sea passage was surprisingly productive given the moderate north-westerly wind, with a Curlew, 2 Arctic Skuas, 2 Grey Plovers, 2 Pintail, 3 Wigeon, 6 Great Skuas, 7 Common Terns, 18 Sandwich Terns, 21 Teal and 40 Gannets mostly moving west. Elsewhere a Wheatear in a garden in Cheriton was an unusual record. On the 12th a Spotted Flycatcher, a Sedge Warbler, a Grey Wagtail, a Blackcap, a Raven, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 2 Whitethroats, 3 Whinchats, 3 Wheatears and 3 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Grasshopper Warbler and the first Reed Bunting of the autumn were newly-arrived there the next day, and an increase in Meadow Pipits was noted.

On the 14th in a moderate north-westerly wind, following overnight rain, there was a sizeable movement of House Martins at Samphire Hoe, with 1,540 passing through, and a late Swift in their midst. A Common Sandpiper, a Grey Wagtail, 2 Whinchats, 3 Wheatears, 3 Blackcaps and 5 Whitethroats were also of note there, with 115 Gannets offshore. The following day saw 2 Wheatears, 2 Willow Warblers, 3 Whinchats, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 16 Chiffchaffs and 20 Blackcaps at the same site, and singles of Tree Pipit, Grey Wagtail and Yellow Wagtail flew over, whilst the 16th produced a Redstart, 3 Wheatears, 8 Blackcaps and 10 Chiffchaffs there.



Wheatear at Hythe (Brian Harper)

The 17th saw 2 Yellow Wagtails and 7 Sand Martins moving into a cool westerly breeze at Samphire Hoe, where 6 Wheatears and 20 Meadow Pipits were logged, and a flock of 76 House Martins flew over Saltwood. In similar conditions the next day a Merlin, a Whinchat, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Blackcaps, 4 Chiffchaffs and 6 Wheatears were seen at Samphire Hoe and a Merlin, a Hobby, a Snipe, a Wheatear, 2 Ravens, 2 Peregrines and 3 Buzzards were at Abbotscliffe.

A Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Blackcaps and 6 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe on the 19th and a Yellow Wagtail, 3 Siskins, 4 Grey Wagtails and 350 House Martins flew over. The 20th produced a Hobby, a Whitethroat, 2 Bullfinches, 2 Blackcaps and at least 25 Chiffchaffs at Crete Hill, 15 Chiffchaffs and at least 120 House Martins at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, a Wheatear at Hythe Ranges, a Whinchat at Nickoll's Quarry and a Peregrine at Botolph's Bridge. On the 21st a Cetti's Warbler, a Whinchat, 2 Teal, 3 Water Rail, 95 House Martins and at least 500 Swallows were at Nickoll's Quarry, with a Hobby and a Raven at Botolph's Bridge, a Black Redstart at Hythe Redoubt, a Whinchat at Princes Parade, Seabrook, and a Little Egret in Folkestone Harbour.

The next couple of days saw a large passage of Swallows, with c. 2,000 flying north-east over Saltwood on the 22nd and a similar count made there the following day, when c.4,000 were logged heading west at Samphire Hoe, and smaller movements were noted elsewhere. A Marsh Harrier also flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, and a Whitethroat and 2 Wheatears were noted there, whilst a Whitethroat, 8 Blackcaps and 30 Chiffchaffs were at Crete Hill and 3 Chiffchaffs were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site.

The 25th produced little apart from several Siskins flying over Saltwood and 3 Buzzards flew south-west the following day, when a Whinchat, 2 Blackcaps, 6 Robins and 22 Chiffchaffs were counted at Samphire Hoe and 46 Brent Geese flew east.

The last few days of the month saw the influence of easterly winds with the arrival of a Firecrest at Capel-le-Ferne on the 27th and another two at Samphire Hoe, where there were also 4 Chiffchaffs, and 2 Grey Wagtails, 4 *alba* wagtails, 15 Wigeon and 27 Meadow Pipits flew east.

A Grasshopper Warbler, 2 Ravens, 2 Grey Wagtails, 4 Ring Ouzels, 9 Chiffchaffs and 300 Swallows were at Abbotscliffe on the 28th, when an Arctic Skua was seen off Copt Point.



Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

At Samphire Hoe a Firecrest, a Redstart, a Wheatear, a Whitethroat, a Raven, a Little Egret, a Wigeon, 2 Ring Ouzels, 2 Whinchats, 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Goldcrests and 7 Chiffchaffs were logged, whilst a Pintail, a Red-throated Diver, a Grey Wagtail, 8 *alba* wagtails, 12 Wigeon, 28 Meadow Pipits and 28 Siskins flew east.

On the 29th a **Scaup** was on the sea off Folkestone Warren and a Lesser Whitethroat, 5 Ring Ouzels, 5 Blackcaps, 30 Song Thrushes and 100+ Chiffchaffs were at Crete Road East, where a Reed Bunting, 4 Siskins and hundreds of Swallows and House Martins flew east. There were a further three Ring Ouzels at Samphire Hoe and 4 Brent Geese, 5 *alba* wagtails and 225 Swallows flew east there. At Nickoll's Quarry two Jays were noted and c.500 Swallows flew east. The 30th produced a Ring Ouzel, a Redstart, a Raven, a Wheatear, a Black Redstart, a Reed Bunting, a Whitethroat, 2 Whinchats, 2 Grey Wagtails and 8 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe, and 4 Siskins, 5 *alba* wagtail, 6 Goldfinches and 14 Meadow Pipit flew east.

Good numbers of Mediterranean Gulls were present at the end of the month, with a record count of 500+ in fields off Crete Road East and 430, presumably part of the same flock, along Crete Road West. There were just two additions to the year list in September, which increased it to 183.

October

The easterly winds from late September became south-easterly on the 1st and continued round to the south on the next two days but still continued to produce some interesting arrivals. The first day of the month was fairly quiet, with just a Redstart, a Whinchat, a Wigeon, 2 Song Thrushes and 5 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe, where a Grey Wagtail, 6 *alba* Wagtails and 23 Meadow Pipit flew east, but the 2nd produced a **Wryneck** at Capel-le-Ferne and a flock of 22 Ring Ouzels at Crete Hill. A further two Ring Ouzels were seen at the former site and a Yellow Wagtail, 6 Blackcaps, 9 Chiffchaffs and 9 Song Thrushes at the latter. Elsewhere a Brambling, a Redstart, a Whinchat, a Wheatear, a Little Gull, a Wigeon, 2 Ravens and 6 Ring Ouzels were at Samphire Hoe, where 2 Grey Wagtails flew over and 10 Brent Geese flew west.

On the 3rd a Whinchat, 3 Reed Buntings, 4 Ring Ouzels and 7 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe, and a Yellow Wagtail, a Grey Wagtail, 15 *alba* wagtails, 30 Linnets and 160 Swallows flew over. A Ring Ouzel was at Crete Hill, where a mixed flock of 30 Pied Wagtails and 50 Meadow Pipits were feeding on the fields inland and House Martins and Swallows were noted as "moving through in steady numbers". The wind picked up from the south-west on the 4th and just a Ring Ouzel, a Whinchat, a Shag and 3 Chiffchaffs were noted at Samphire Hoe.

The next few days were calm or with a light westerly breeze, and it remained mild and generally cloudy.

A Whinchat, 2 Ravens, 6 Ring Ouzels, 6 Dunnocks, 8 Stonechats, 9 Robins, 9 Blackcaps and 27 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, where a Yellow Wagtail, a Grey Wagtail, a Reed Bunting, 15 Starlings, 16 Siskins, 20 Chaffinches, 30 *alba* wagtails, 50 Meadow Pipits, 75 Linnets, 100 Swallows and 200 House Martins flew over. A Reed Bunting and 25 Chaffinches flew over Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, 20 Meadow Pipits and 26 *alba* wagtails flew over Hythe and 58 Siskins flew over Botolph's Bridge, where a Firecrest was noted.



Redwing at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

On the 6th a Whinchat, a Wheatear, a Brambling, 4 Reed Buntings, 6 Black Redstarts, 8 Blackcaps, 15 Robins and 37 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Grey Wagtail, 2 *alba* wagtails, 29 Goldfinches and 50 Meadow Pipits flew over, and a Ring Ouzel, a Spotted Flycatcher, 3 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaffs and 7 Song Thrushes were at Nickoll's Quarry, with singles of Kingfisher and Grey Wagtail along canal at Hythe.

The first two Redwings of the autumn were at Crete Hill on the 7th, with c.10 Chiffchaffs and c.30 Robins also of note there, and a Goldcrest, a House Sparrow, 5 Blackcaps, 9 Chiffchaffs, 12 Dunnocks and 12 Robins were at Samphire Hoe, where 4 Sky Larks, 8 Chaffinches, 9 *alba* wagtails and 35 Linnets flew over, and several groups of Chaffinches flew south-west over Saltwood during the morning. The following day produced just a single Ring Ouzel, 2 Blackcaps and 9 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe and a Grey Wagtail, 3 Reed Buntings, 6 *alba* wagtails, 14 Goldfinches and 43 Linnets flew over and the 9th was little better, with only a Wheatear, 3 Blackcaps and 10 Chiffchaffs at Crete Hill and 6 Blackcaps and 11 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe.

The 10th was markedly colder with a strong north-westerly wind and this produced the first reasonable arrival of Redwings with at least 260 flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Marsh Harrier, a Grey Wagtail and 180 House Martins also flew over, and a Wheatear, 2 Blackcaps, 4 Chiffchaffs and 5 Song Thrushes were present. Several Redwings were also noted moving west over Seabrook in the afternoon.

The wind had moved round to the north-east by the 11th and rain moved in during the morning. An early seawatch off Samphire Hoe saw an Arctic Skua, a Knot, a Teal, an Oystercatcher, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Curlew, 4 Kittiwakes, 9 Common Scoter, 60 Dunlin and 145 Brent Geese passing by, with 4 Brent Geese, 9 Shelduck and 15 Common Scoter off Copt Point. The major event of the day however was a quite astonishing movement of Redwings over Seabrook, with a conservative estimate of **30-40,000** moving west, far exceeding the previous record count. From the early morning they were moving at an estimated 1,000 per hour and this increased to a rate of around 12,000 per hour about midday (based on sample counts), though "died off quite suddenly" mid-afternoon. Just four Fieldfares were noted, whilst smaller numbers of thrushes elsewhere included 5 Ring Ouzels, 6 Fieldfares, 10 Song Thrushes and 150 Redwings at Crete Hill, a Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe and 250 Redwings at Saltwood.

A rain-bearing trough moved north overnight, coupled with north-easterly winds, and it was obvious on the morning of the 12th that there had been a considerable arrivals of birds. These included a **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Crete Hill, where a Redstart, a Crossbill, a Grey Wagtail, 2 Bramblings, 2 Lapwings, 3 Firecrests, 3 Blackcaps, 11 Mistle Thrushes, 15 Swallows, 17 House Martins, 35 Ring Ouzels, 43 Fieldfares, 110 Song Thrushes and 2,500 Redwings were also logged, a Fieldfare, a Wigeon, a Lesser Redpoll, 2 Brambling, 2 Mistle Thrushes, 3 Blackcaps, 6 Chiffchaffs, 16 Siskins, 20 Ring Ouzels, 30 Robins and 35 Redwings at Samphire Hoe (with 315 Brent Geese offshore), 3 Fieldfares, 15-20 Ring Ouzels and 30+ Redwings at Abbotscliffe, 2 Ring Ouzels at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and a Brambling, 4 Siskins and "impressive numbers" of Redwings over Saltwood. A Shag was also noted at Battery Point.

The day total of at least 72 Ring Ouzels has only been exceeded during the remarkable arrival, in rather similar conditions, in 1998.

Heavy rain followed on the 13th and there was less to be seen though quite a few Redwings and Song Thrushes were still at Samphire Hoe. The wind then switched round to the south-west and, although there were still a few migrants to be seen on the 14th, it became progressively quieter. A Snipe, a Ring Ouzel, a Fieldfare, 3 Reed Buntings and 9 Mistle Thrushes were at Abbotscliffe on the 14th and 15 Siskins and 380 Goldfinches flew over, with a Brambling, a Wheatear, 2 Chiffchaffs, 5 Ring Ouzels and 12 Redwings at Samphire Hoe, where a Great Skua flew east offshore and 20 Goldfinches and 44 Meadow Pipits passed overhead. There were also a Black Redstart and a Grey Wagtail in Folkestone Harbour.



Yellow-browed Warbler at Crete Hill (Dale Gibson)

The following day produced just a Wheatear, 2 Ring Ouzels, 3 Bramblings and 8 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe, and a Curlew, a Grey Wagtail, a Reed Bunting, 3 *alba* wagtails and 5 Greenfinches flew west. On the 16th a Lapwing, a Goldcrest, 3 Reed Buntings, 4 Chiffchaffs and 6 Redwings were at Samphire Hoe and 2 Grey Wagtails, 20 Goldfinches and 35 Siskins flew over, whilst a Reed Bunting and 4 Brambling were at Abbotscliffe and 10 Siskin flew east, and 4 Chiffchaffs were seen at Seabrook. There was little of note on the 17th until a Short-eared Owl flew over Nickoll's Quarry in the evening, and the following day saw a Ring Ouzel, a Black Redstart, a Shag, a Collared Dove, 5 Chiffchaffs and 6 Redwings at Samphire Hoe and a Redpoll, 2 Siskins and 50 Goldfinches flew over. It was a similar story on the 19th, with a Ring Ouzel, 3 Goldcrests and 5 Redwings at Samphire Hoe and 3 Ravens flew over.

The wind increased from the south-west on the 20th, when 50+ Swallows at Horn Street was the only report of note, and the 21st produced little more than a Firecrest, a Chiffchaff, a Little Grebe and 3 Redwings at Samphire Hoe, whilst the following two days drew a blank. A brief lull in the wind allowed some visual passage, with at least 30 Sky Larks passing north over Saltwood, a Buzzard over Crete Hill, three Buzzards over Samphire Hoe and a Raven over Eaton Lands, Hythe. The strong winds returned from the 25th but at least they were from the south-east initially which pushed a few seabirds inshore and enabled a **Balearic Shearwater**, a Sandwich Tern, a Shag, a Red-throated Diver, a Shelduck, 3 Sky Larks, 5 Red-breasted Mergansers, 5 Curlew, 13 Wigeon, 20 Common Scoter, 25 Gannets and 205 Brent Geese to be logged off Samphire Hoe. However they soon veered south-west and a single Firecrest and 2 Ravens were all that was of note at Samphire Hoe the next day.

The night of the 27th saw a significant storm approaching and early on the 28th there were gusts of over 90 mph in the English Channel. When the weather abated a **Rough-legged Buzzard** was reported near the Plough Inn, Church Hougham on the 29th, whilst at Samphire Hoe a Merlin, a Grey Wagtail, a Brambling, 2 Snow Buntings, 3 Siskins and 30 Stock Doves flew over. The next day produced a **Great Grey Shrike** at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Marsh Harrier, a Buzzard, a Snow Bunting, a Redpoll, a Brambling, 2 Reed Buntings, 6 Swallows, 36 Stock Doves and 310 Starlings flew over, and a late Wheatear was noted. At Samphire Hoe a Jack Snipe, a Snipe, a Ring Ouzel, a Raven, a Black Redstart and 4 Chiffchaffs were noted, and a Redpoll, 3 Reed Buntings, 3 *alba* wagtails, 20 Meadow Pipits and 100 Starlings flew over. Two Grey Herons flew north-west over Saltwood and 5 Sparrowhawks were logged at Crete Hill.

The last day of the month saw the return of strong winds and rain but single **Storm Petrel** and **Leach's Petrel** reported from the Cefas research vessel "Endeavour" when it was 4 miles south of Folkestone meant that October ended on a high note. The petrels were amongst the seven additions to the year list in October, which increased it to 190.

November

The first day of the month was relatively quiet in a moderate southerly wind and 19 Redpolls flying north over Saltwood was the only sighting of note. A **Little Stint** was found at the Willop Basin on the 2nd (remaining to the 3rd) and a Brent Goose, a Shelduck, a Golden Plover, a Ringed Plover, 2 Redshank, 3 Wigeon, 7 Curlew and 221 Lapwings were also seen there, with 15 Common Scoters off Princes Parade, Seabrook. At Samphire Hoe a Little Grebe, a Ring Ouzel and a House Sparrow were of note.

Strong southerly winds on the 5th produced the second **Leach's Petrel** of autumn, off Samphire Hoe, where a Curlew, two Red-breasted Mergansers, 9 Little Gulls, 20 Gannets and 145 Brent Geese also flew past, whilst a Great Spotted Woodpecker and a Chiffchaff were also seen there.



Great Northern Diver at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

On the 7th a Raven, 22 Meadow Pipits and 25 Sky Larks were seen at Abbotscliffe whilst 18 Brent Geese flew past and 5 Song Thrushes and 20 Robins were at Samphire Hoe, where 3 Mute Swans flew west. The following day saw just a single Blackcap and two Siskins flying east at Samphire Hoe.

Calmer conditions on the 9th produced a Brambling at Samphire Hoe, with 30 Starlings in off sea there, six Redpolls north over Saltwood, three Cetti's Warblers at Nickoll's Quarry, 5 Purple Sandpipers at Hythe (where they remained all month), and a Shoveler, 2 Brent Geese, 6 Curlews and 199 Lapwings at the Willop Basin, with 44 Common Scoters offshore. A count of 870 Jackdaws going to roost over Saltwood that evening was also of note. A Ring Ouzel, 2 Sparrowhawks and 8 Rock Pipits were noted at Samphire Hoe the next day, when 2 Shelduck, 3 Curlew and 8 Redshank were at the Willop Basin and at least 250+ Mediterranean Gulls were seen on the football pitches at Church Road, Cheriton.

Further strong south to south south-easterly winds on the 11th induced another reasonable movement at sea with an **Avocet**, a Shag, 2 Sanderling, 3 Red-throated Divers, 4 Great Crested Grebes, 4 Curlew, 9 Pintail, 13 Red-breasted Mergansers, 77 Wigeon, 85 Dunlin, 111 Common Scoter and 710 Brent Geese passing west off Samphire Hoe, whilst a male Hen Harrier and 200 Starlings flew in off the sea there. The following day saw a very late Whimbrel, 3 Little Gulls, 34 Common Scoter and 63 Brent Geese past Samphire Hoe, and a Blackcap and 3 Little Egrets were also noted, with a further 60 Starlings flying in off the sea. At the Willop Basin 2 Redshank, 3 Shelduck, 4 Wigeon, 115 Brent Geese and 180 Lapwings were counted.

A Woodcock, a Little Egret and a Black Redstart were at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, and a male Marsh Harrier, a Grey Wagtail and a Redpoll flew over, whilst 80 Common Scoters were on the sea off the Hythe Redoubt. On the 14th two Ringed Plover, 3 Brent Geese (remaining to the 18th), 4 Shelduck, 4 Redshank, 9 Dunlin, 148 Lapwings and c.400 Starlings were at the Willop Basin, with 3 Teal offshore. The following day produced a Ring Ouzel, a Redpoll, 2 Song Thrushes, 8 Redwings and 10 Blackbirds at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Snow Bunting flew west, a Little Egret, a Shoveler, a Red-breasted Merganser, 3 Brent Geese, 6 Kittiwakes, 10 Gadwall, 12 Gannets and 15 Teal flew past offshore and 280 Starlings arrived in off the sea.

On the 16th a Little Egret, a Ring Ouzel, a Chiffchaff, 2 Ravens and 12 Rock Pipits were seen at Samphire Hoe and 4 Siskins, 7 Redpolls and 25 Goldfinches flew east. At the Willop Basin 2 Peregrines, 5 Shelduck, 16 Redshank and 270 Lapwings were noted, with a Little Egret and a Stonechat at Nickoll's Quarry and a Kingfisher at Botolph's Bridge.

Nickoll's Quarry produced a female/immature **Goldeneye**, a Tufted Duck, a Teal and a Kingfisher on the following day, whilst a Little Egret was seen along Botolph's Bridge road, a Peregrine, a Gadwall, 2 Golden Plovers, 6 Shelduck, 7 Curlew, 18 Redshank and 226 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin, with c.100 Common Scoter offshore. At Samphire Hoe a Ring Ouzel, a Redwing, a Grey Wagtail and 4 Song Thrushes were present and a Brambling, a Raven and 2 Siskins flew over, whilst a Chiffchaff was seen at Copt Point.

A Little Egret, 11 Shelduck, a very good count of 29 Redshank and 240 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin on the 18th, when 25 Teal and 130 Common Scoter were present offshore, and another Little Egret, a Lapwing and a Grey Wagtail were at Samphire Hoe, where a Wigeon and 2 Red-throated Divers flew west and 16 Common Scoters flew east.



Long-tailed Duck at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

The following day saw a **Great Northern Diver** feeding close inshore off the seawall (to the 20th) at Samphire Hoe where a Ring Ouzel, a Blackcap and 6 Stonechats were also seen. On the 20th a female **Long-tailed Duck** was seen close inshore there before it flew west, whilst a drake **Goldeneye**, a Shag, 7 Common Scoter, 9 Brent Geese and 11 Shelduck flew past.

Two **Black-tailed Godwits** flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 21st, a Shelduck, a Brent Goose, 2 Teal and 3 Mallard also flew past, with a Shag and 3 Common Scoter on the sea and 12 Starlings in off the sea. The next day saw a Curlew, 2 Brent Geese and 3 Red-breasted Mergansers flying east, whilst c.500 Starlings arrived in off the sea and a Redwing, 6 Blackbirds and 8 Song Thrushes were noted. On the 23rd a **Black-tailed Godwit**, a Golden Plover, 13 Dunlin, 16 Brent Geese and 582 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin, single Little Egret were at Botolph's Bridge and Nickoll's Quarry, a Ring Ouzel was again at Samphire Hoe, and a Black Redstart, a Fieldfare, 3 Redwings and 8 Song Thrushes were also seen there, whilst 180 Starlings flew in off the sea and a Red-breasted Merganser, a Shelduck, 11 Brent Geese and 15 Gannets flew past.

On the 24th a Greylag Goose, 4 Sanderling, 7 Curlew, 8 Shelduck, 17 Brent Geese, 18 Redshank, 24 Dunlin and 545 Lapwings were of note at the Willop Basin and 4 Teal, 7 Wigeon and 250 Common Scoter were seen off the Hythe Redoubt, with a Firecrest at West Hythe. The Ring Ouzel was last seen at Samphire Hoe on the 25th (the second latest ever sighting), when a Blackcap, a Fieldfare, a Redwing, a Grey Wagtail, 2 Brent Geese, 2 Little Egrets and 6 Song Thrushes were also recorded there. Elsewhere five Tufted Ducks were at Nickoll's Quarry and Lapwings increased to c.560 at the Willop Basin. A Chiffchaff, a Black Redstart and 9 Red-throated Divers were at Samphire Hoe on the 26th, when a Snipe, a Peregrine, 8 Shelduck, 11 Dunlin and 12 Brent Geese were noted at the Willop Basin.

Just a Redshank, a Fieldfare, 2 Redwings and 2 Black Redstarts were at Samphire Hoe on the 27th whilst a female/immature **Goldeneye**, 2 Teal, 6 Wigeon and 7 Mallard flew east there the following day, when 3 Fulmars had returned and 25 Cormorants were logged. At the Willop Basin 6 Dunlin and 10 Shelduck were of note but Lapwings decreased to 390, and 5 Siskins were seen along the Hythe Canal east of the Burmarsh Bridge. The Willop Basin produced a **Ruff**, a Little Egret, 2 Peregrines, 7 Brent Geese, 11 Shelduck and 154 Lapwings on the 29th, when 16 Teal and c.75 Common Scoter were seen offshore and 22 Ringed Plovers were at Princes Parade, Seabrook. The final day of the month saw a **Goosander** arrive at Botolph's Bridge, where a Little Egret, 2 Gadwall, 3 Wigeon and 4 Teal were also seen, with an Eider, a Red-breasted Merganser and 150 Common Scoter off the Hythe Redoubt, where 2 Little Egrets flew east, and 36 Teal off the Willop Outfall. At Samphire Hoe the Blackcap was still present. The Goosander was the fifth addition of the month to the year list and increased it to 195.

December

December was generally rather mild with daytime temperatures reaching double-figures on several occasions and with very few frosts. The first half of the month was mostly dry but it became increasing wetter and windier in the second fortnight and 2013 ended with a couple of rather severe storms in its final week or so.

The **Goosander** remained at Botolph's Bridge on the 1st and two Little Egrets were also seen there, whilst the Eider was seen again off the Willop Outfall, where three Velvet Scoters were identified amongst around 400 Common Scoter. A male Marsh Harrier flew over the Willop Basin, where another Little Egret and 2 Peregrines were also of note. Singles of Peregrine and Grey Wagtail were at West Hythe, a Raven, 2 Gadwall, 3 Mandarin and 80 Teal were at Sandling Park and 3 Purple Sandpipers were at Hythe where they remained all month. The Blackcap was seen for the last time at Samphire Hoe whilst a Chiffchaff there (presumably the bird from late November, and seen on a couple of occasions to the 9th December) showed some characteristics of the form *tristis*.



Marsh Harrier at Willop Outfall (Brian Harper)

On the 2nd a Velvet Scoter and a Shag flew east past Samphire Hoe, whilst a Little Egret flew west and a Black Redstart and 3 Fulmars were also present. At the Willop Outfall there were two Curlew, 4 Shelduck and 13 Lapwings.

The Eider and 3 Velvet Scoters were still in the bay off the Hythe Redoubt / Willop Outfall on the 3rd where the Common Scoter flock increased to about 750 (a record count for wintering birds). Elsewhere a Little Egret, 2 Teal, 4 Little Grebes and 96 Mallard were at Botolph's Bridge, a Little Egret, a Kingfisher and 3 Tufted Ducks were at Nickoll's Quarry, and 2 Redshank, 4 Curlew, 4 Shelduck, 7 Dunlin and 101 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin.

A **Black Kite** which flew over Samphire Hoe on the 4th was quite a surprise, being the first to be recorded outside of the April to May period, though one had frequented the Romney Marsh area in November, and was later seen at Sandwich Bay, before presumably the same bird reappeared at Samphire Hoe on the 12th and 13th. On the 4th a Great Skua, 3 Fulmars and 10 Gannets were seen offshore there.

A Jack Snipe was flushed from rough ground by Princes Parade, Seabrook on the 7th, with a Little Egret at Nickoll's Quarry, 3 Teal at Botolph's Bridge and the Eider again off the Willop Outfall (also seen off the Hythe Redoubt the next day). On the 8th a Buzzard, a Little Egret, 2 Redwing and 3 Redwings were at Samphire Hoe, a Cetti's Warbler was at Nickoll's Quarry and a Snipe and two Teal were noted at Botolph's Bridge.

On the 10th a Shag, a Fulmar, a Little Egret, a Grey Wagtail, 2 Redwings, 2 Ravens, 3 Stonechats and c.15 Rock Pipits were logged at Samphire Hoe and there was a small nocturnal movement of Redwings over Hythe that evening. A Grey Wagtail and two Stonechats were at the Willop Basin the following day, with c.400 Common Scoter offshore. A Raven was again noted at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, when 27 Red-throated Divers flew west.

Eight Fulmars, 12 Guillemots and 27 Kittiwakes were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 16th and a Great Skua, 10 Guillemots, 15 Kittiwakes and 25 Red-throated Divers flew past there the next day.

Five Velvet Scoter were off the Willop Outfall on the 19th, with 22 Red-throated Divers flying past. On the 20th a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** and 19 Guillemots flew east past Samphire Hoe, and the following day 2 Great Crested Grebes, 3 Common Scoters, 6 Fulmars, 44 Guillemots and 51 Kittiwakes were seen there.

The 23rd produced a Razorbill, 3 Common Scoters, 62 Kittiwakes, 75 Gannets and 165 Guillemots flying west past Samphire Hoe and the next morning, following a severe overnight storm, saw a Great Skua flying east there, and 2 Eiders, 8 Velvet Scoters, 15 Red-throated Divers, 42 Gannets, 56 Great Crested Grebes, 176 Kittiwakes, 443 Guillemots and 1,135 Common Scoters (another record winter count) heading west.



Bearded Tit at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

Christmas Day saw two Peregrines, 6 Curlew and 46 Teal at the Willop Basin, with 70 Common Scoter offshore and 140 Common Scoter off Princes Parade, Hythe, with Boxing Day producing a male **Bearded Tit** at Nickoll's Quarry (which remained into 2014), with a Peregrine, a Snipe and 2 Cetti's Warblers also being seen there, 2 Peregrines, 4 Sanderling, 16 Redshank, 28 Teal and 31 Curlews at the Willop Basin, with 400 Common Scoters offshore, 9 Linnets at Fisherman's Beach, Hythe, where a Redpoll flew over, and three probable Velvet Scoters were reported flying east past Samphire Hoe at dusk.

On the 27th an adult Little Gull, a Brent Goose, 11 Great Crested Grebes and 90 Common Scoter flew west past Samphire Hoe, and 3 Redshank and 28 Ringed Plovers were in the Folkestone Harbour area, with 12 Common Scoters offshore. A Black Redstart, a Redwing and 6 Song Thrushes were at Samphire Hoe the next day, and two Ravens flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 29th. The final day of the year produced two Great Skuas, 12 Kittiwakes, 21 Fulmars and 100 Gannets flying west past Samphire Hoe, with 60 Brent Geese flying east there, and a Fulmar, 2 Red-throated Divers, 3 Mediterranean Gulls, 4 Kittiwakes, 11 Brent Geese, 18 Common Scoter and 130 Gannets off Princes Parade, Seabrook.

There were 3 additions to the year list in December, which finished on 198, five fewer than the 203 recorded in 2012.

Systematic list

Mute Swan

Cygnus olor

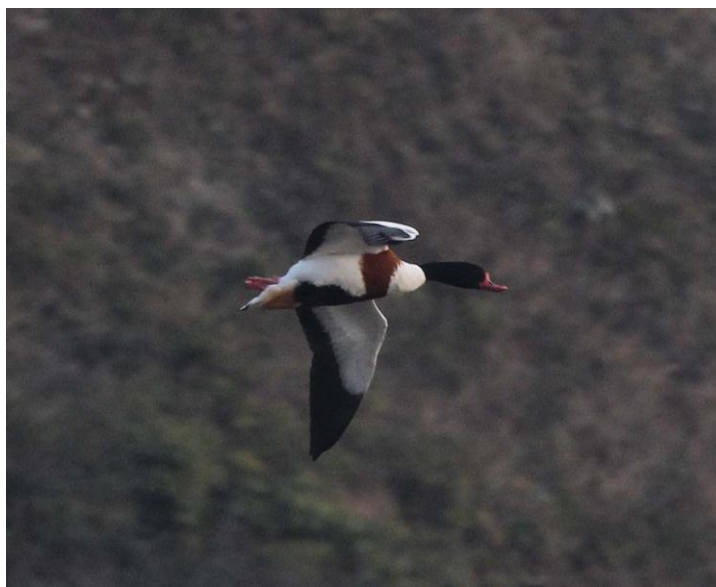
Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Numbers in the early winter period were low, with a peak of just eight noted in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 18th January, and the largest count in the second half of the year was seven there on the 29th September.

There was little evidence of any passage though six flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 28th April, two flew east there on the 29th June and three flew west there on the 7th November.



Mute Swans at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)



Shelduck at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

Bewick's Swan

Cygnus columbianus

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

A flock of 21 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th March (I. A. Roberts).

This is the second record in the last three years which involved a relatively large flock seen moving east at sea in early March. This suggests that there might be a small, previously undetected, up-channel passage at this time of year of departing birds, possibly from Romney Marsh

The 17th area record but the first for Samphire Hoe.

White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

Two flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 12th February (I. A. Roberts, P. R. Smith). The 25th area record but the first for the site.

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. Has been recorded in summer in suitable habitat but breeding has not been confirmed.

On the 12th February a total of 24 (in flocks of 3 and 21) which flew east at sea past Samphire Hoe might well have been genuine migrants, occurring on the same day that two White-fronted Geese flew east there, as might a flock of 18 that were at the Willop Outfall on the 16th February.

Other records from the first half of the year however were perhaps more likely to involve feral birds: two at the Willop Outfall on the 2nd and 3rd February, two south over Botolph's Bridge on the 20th February, one east past Samphire Hoe on the 9th March, two west there on the 13th, 14 east there on the 17th, two west there on the 18th March, one south over Saltwood on the 29th April, one west at Samphire Hoe on the 7th May and another south over Saltwood on the 13th May.

A pair was present in the Botolph's Bridge area from late April until at least late May and may have bred, though again this was not proven. The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed an increase in the breeding range across Britain of 138% since the previous Atlas in 1988-91, and of 748% since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976). This species was not recorded locally in either of the earlier atlases but 'probable' breeding was noted in the most recent one. It could become a regular breeder here though would be limited by a sparseness of suitable habitat.

In the late winter period one was at the Willop Basin on the 23rd to 24th November.

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

One flew over Botolph's Bridge on the 3rd February and a pair were present at Nickoll's Quarry from mid-March where they bred, raising two young.

There were no records from the late winter period.

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

The first week of January saw small numbers (a total of 23 over 4 dates) noted off Samphire Hoe before seven flying east there on the 10th were a precursor to a remarkable up-channel movement for such an early time of the year. This involved a total of 170 east there on 11th and at least 1,765 logged from various points between Hythe and Samphire Hoe on the 12th (a record count for January). A further 250 passed Samphire Hoe the next day, with 77 past Hythe, and 100 were seen off the former site on the 21st January.

There were few records thereafter until a couple of small easterly movements were noted in the second half of February, and larger numbers were observed passing east off Samphire Hoe in March, including 395 on the 5th, 1,380 on the 9th, 345 on the 15th, 482 on the 19th, 515 on the 21st and 415 on the 24th. Passage continued into April, including a movement of at least 1,370 east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe on the 9th, but numbers tailed off fairly quickly thereafter, with the last record involving 14 east on the 3rd May.

The total for the spring (including the early movement in January) was at least 8,065, which constitutes a record passage, exceeding the previous best of 5,174 in 1996, and was a considerable improvement on the previous two springs (1,200 in 2012 and 2,112 in 2011).

There was also an exceptional mid-summer record of three flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th July – the first ever July sighting.

First recorded in autumn on the 26th September when 46 flew east past Samphire Hoe, and small numbers were recorded regularly through October and November with larger counts of 145 (30 east, 115 west) off Samphire Hoe on the 11th October, 315 (110 east, 205 west) there the next day, 205 west there on the 25th October, 145 west there on the 5th November, 710 west there on the 11th November and 63 west there the following day, when 115 were at the Willop Basin. Up to 17 were at the latter site between the 23rd and the 29th November and the final day of the year saw 11 flying east past Seabrook and 60 east past Samphire Hoe. The bird/day total for second half of the year was a record 1,975 and the movement on the 11th November was the second largest autumn count (with 916 west past Samphire Hoe on the 9th October 2011 being the largest).

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| Egyptian Goose |
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| <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

Two which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd January (I. A. Roberts) were the fourth area record and the first for the site.

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| Shelduck |
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| <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant, probably having bred on at least one occasion.

There was a cold weather movement of 27 east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th January, with ones and twos also passing east there on four further dates, before five were seen on the 21st. One was at the Willop Basin on the 26th January, with two there on 30th January, one on the 2nd February and 8 on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 9th February. Three flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 10th February, with one on the pond there on the 13th, and two at the Willop Outfall on the 16th-17th February.

A protracted spring passage was noted from 19th February until 1st June, with a record total of 85 recorded, mostly moving up-channel off Samphire Hoe, though with day counts no higher than seven east there on the 6th and 29th March, six east there on the 26th April and six east past Folkestone Pier on the 18th May.

In autumn one flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th September, with nine off Copt Point on the 11th October, one east past Samphire Hoe the following day and another west there on the 25th October. A single was at the Willop Basin on the 2nd November, with two there on the 10th, before numbers steadily increased to six there on the 17th and to 11 there the next day. Up to 11 remained at this site until the end of the month, with four there on the 2nd to 3rd December. Elsewhere 11 (10 east, 1 west) flew past Samphire Hoe on the 20th November, with singles past there on the 21st and 23rd November.

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| Mandarin Duck |
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| <i>Aix galericulata</i> |
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Introduced breeding resident.

As usual all records were from the woods in the Saltwood area with a notable accumulation on flooded roadside fields at Pedlinge in January and February, with a record count of 27 there on the 3rd January (exceeding the previous highest flock of 23 at Sandling Park on the 2nd January 2005), and at least 14 remaining until 16th February.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (BTO 2013) reported a considerable range expansion since the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976), particularly through southern and central England, with an overall 1144% increase. The range has continued to increase since the previous Atlas in 1988-91, having more than doubled (123% growth), which also included the colonisation of the Folkestone and Hythe area.

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January led to the second largest ever influx into the area. This began slowly with five east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th and four west there on the 14th but these were followed by a massive movement of 1,230 west past the same site on the morning of the 17th – the third highest ever day count. Smaller numbers were noted at Samphire Hoe and at Nickoll's Quarry over the next few days before there was another large count of about 600 on the sea off the Hythe Redoubt on the 24th, when 45 flew east past Samphire Hoe. On the 26th around 160 were in the Nickoll's Quarry area and 98 flew west past the Willop Outfall the following day, when nine were on the Willop Basin, decreasing to six by the 30th.

In February 30 flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th, with 12 east there on the 20th, and four were at the Willop Basin on the 9th March. Spring passage comprised 21 east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March and ten east there the next day.

Three flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th September, with 15 east there on the 27th September and 12 east there the next day, when a female/immature bird took up residence on the main pond, where it remained until the 2nd October. On the 12th October a female/immature bird was seen sitting on the seawall at Samphire Hoe before it moved to the pond and 13 flew west there on the 25th October. On the 11th November a total of 89 (12 east, 77 west) passed Samphire Hoe, with a single west on the 18th and 6 east on the 18th November.

At the Willop Basin there were two on the 2nd November, three the following day and four on the 12th November, with 7 offshore on the 24th November. Finally three were at Botolph's Bridge on the 30th November.



Wigeon at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)



Mandarin Ducks at Brockhill Country Park (Nick Hollands)

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A pair remained in the Botolph's Bridge area from December 2012 until at least 17th February. Nearby during the cold spell there were 14 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 18th January, 16 in the same area the following day and nine there on the 26th January. Elsewhere a pair flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th January.

There were signs of spring passage from late February, with two at Nickoll's Quarry on the 23rd and two east past Samphire Hoe the next day, and in March seven flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 9th, with 11 east there on the 22nd, 12 east on the 23rd March, two east there on the 9th April and a single east there on the 17th April.

In the latter winter period ten (8 east, 2 west) flew past Samphire Hoe on the 15th November, one was at the Willop Basin on the 17th November, two were at Botolph's Bridge on the 30th November and two were at Sandling Park on the 1st December.

Teal

Anas crecca

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

There was little response to the cold weather and only small numbers were noted in January, with up to three at Nickoll's Quarry on several dates, 3 west past Samphire Hoe on the 15th, and a drake at Samphire Hoe from the 20th to the 25th. In February six flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th, with one on the ponds there on the 23rd to 24th, with another flying east on the latter date.

Spring passage was noted from the 9th March, when six flew east past Samphire Hoe, 14 were at the Willop Basin and two were on the sea off Hythe. Two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th March, with 7 east there on the 22nd, 21 east there the next day, two east at Hythe on the 8th April and 12 east past Folkestone Pier on the 9th April.

In summer three flew west past Samphire Hoe on the unusual date of 3rd July (there had only been records in this month in eight previous years) and the first autumn birds, four at Botolph's Bridge on the 26th August, were relatively early. In September 21 flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th and two were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 21st, whilst in October a single flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th.

Records were more regular in November and December, including counts of 25 at the Willop Outfall on the 18th November, 36 there on the 30th November and 46 there on the 25th December, 15 east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th November, c.80 at Sandling Park on the 1st December and up to four in the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry area in November/December.



Teal at Willop Outfall (Brian Harper)



Garganey at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Breeding resident and winter visitor.

Counts from the early winter period included peaks of 75 at the Willop Basin on the 27th January, 70 on the canal in Hythe on the 10th February, 25 at Botolph's Bridge on the 30th January and 16 at Samphire Hoe on the 26th January.

In the late winter period there were counts of 96 on the canal cutting between the Hythe Redoubt and Botolph's Bridge on the 3rd December, 70 at the Willop Basin on the 28th October, 34 at Sandling Park on the 1st December and 17 at Samphire Hoe on the 10th November.

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| Pintail |
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| <i>Anas acuta</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A total of 20 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th February were the first of a record spring passage, which also involved a pair flying east there on the 19th March, three east there the next day, eight east there on the 22nd March and 20 east on the 23rd. In April 11 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 1st with the last two flying east past Hythe on the 8th April. The total of 66 exceeded the previous best of 63 in 2006.

The only records in autumn were two east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th September, one east there on the 28th September and nine west there on the 11th November.

2012

Additional record received of a flock of eight flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 8th January.

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| Garganey |
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| <i>Anas querquedula</i> |
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Rare migrant, mainly in spring, possibly bred in the past.

A pair were seen near Botolph's Bridge, on the ditch that runs east from Stonereach Bridge, on the 11th April (B. Harper). The 24th area record but the first since 2010.

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| Shoveler |
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| <i>Anas clypeata</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January produced a few records, with four west past Samphire Hoe on the 17th, singles at Nickoll's Quarry on the 18th and 26th, and four at the Willop Basin on the 27th.

There was a record spring passage involving at least 86 moving up-channel in late March and early April, including counts of 41 east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March, 21 east there the next day and at least 20 east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe on the 9th April.

The only records from the second half of the year were two at Botolph's Bridge on the 26th August, one at the Willop Basin on the 9th November and one east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th November.

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| Pochard |
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| <i>Aythya ferina</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Despite the cold weather in January the only record was of nine at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th. There were two sightings of migrants in spring: a male on the pond at Samphire Hoe on the 6th May and another on the canal near Twiss Road, Hythe the next day.

There were no records from the late winter period.

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| Tufted Duck |
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| <i>Aythya fuligula</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to six were present at Nickoll's Quarry throughout and the cold weather in January appeared to have little effect, with the peak count there only increasing to 9 at on the 26th.

Elsewhere one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 19th March and one was at Botolph's Bridge on the 29th September.

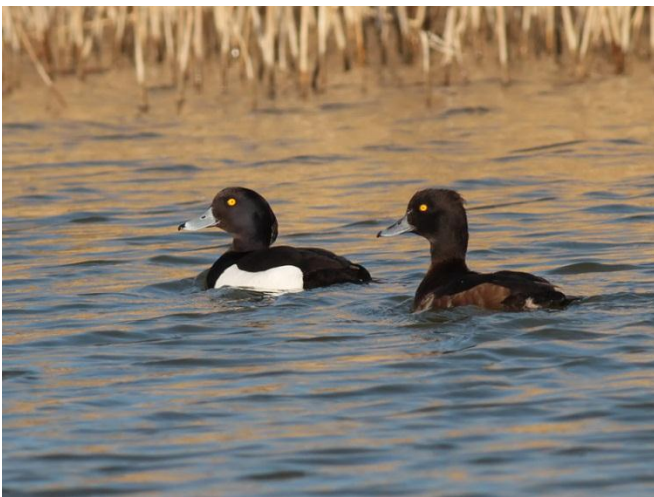
As last year there were at least two pairs at Nickoll's Quarry in the breeding season, but again there was no confirmation of success.

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| Scaup |
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| <i>Aythya marila</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

A female/immature was on the sea off Folkestone Warren on the 29th October (D. A. Gibson). The 27th area record.



Tufted Duck at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)



Scaup at Folkestone Warren (Dale Gibson)

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| Eider |
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| <i>Somateria mollissima</i> |
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Passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly summered.

Four males flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 18th March, with eight birds also passing east there on the 24th March. Two were seen off Hythe on the 29th March and one was on the sea off the Hythe Redoubt on the 31st March. In April another flock of four males flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th.

A female or immature was in the Hythe Redoubt / Willop Outfall area between the 30th November and the 8th December and two flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 24th December.

A welcome return after a blank year in 2012.

Very rare vagrant.

A female was seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe for around 15 minutes on the morning of the 20th November before it flew west (M. D. Kennett, I. A. Roberts). The 11th area record but the first since 2000.

Non-breeding summer visitor, winter visitor and passage migrant.

A flock of Common Scoter remained off Princes Parade, Seabrook from 2012, increasing to 32 on the 6th January and to 58 on the 23rd February, with 57 still present on the 31st March. Elsewhere 36 were on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 26th January and smaller numbers were noted off Samphire Hoe on several dates in the first two months of the year, with a peak of 23 west there on the 5th January.

From late February an up-channel passage became apparent and this gathered pace in March with 176 passing Hythe on the 10th, 80 past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd and 75 past there on the 24th being the most notable counts. In April 78 flew east past Hythe on the 8th, at least 190 went east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe on the 9th and 80 flew east off the latter site on the 14th, whilst May saw further movements of 107 east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe on the 5th, at least 110 east past the same two sites on the 7th, 90 east past the latter site on the 9th and 92 east past the former on the 11th. Passage continued into at least late May, possibly later as birds were still noted moving east into June, including 70 past Samphire Hoe on the 6th. The total spring passage was difficult to calculate accurately but was approximately 1,500, which is the best tally since 2005.

There were regular counts of up to 40 off Samphire Hoe during July but only smaller numbers in August and September. In October 20 flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 25th and 50 were on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 28th. This latter flock remained in the bay between the Willop Outfall and Princes Parade, Seabrook until the end of the year and numbers steadily increased to 80 on the 13th November, 100 on the 17th, 130 on the 18th, 250 on the 24th November, 400 on the 1st December and peaked at a record winter count of 750 on the 3rd December, with up to 400 remaining until the end of December. Smaller numbers were noted elsewhere in November, mainly at Samphire Hoe, including a movement of 111 west there on the 11th, and there was a massive movement of 1,135 west past Samphire Hoe on the morning of the 24th December (following a severe overnight storm) – another record winter count.

There have been just three larger counts, all of which related to passage birds moving up-channel in spring: 1,680 past Mill Point on the 1st April 2004, 2,550 past there the following day and 2,235 past there on the 19th April 2005.



Eider at Hythe Redoubt (Brian Harper)



Velvet Scoters at Mill Point (Brian Harper)

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| Velvet Scoter |
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| <i>Melanitta fusca</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

One flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 8th January, two flew east past West Parade, Hythe on the 10th March, ten flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd May and six were seen off Mill Point on the 5th May.

In December three were seen amongst the Common Scoter flock off the Willop Outfall on the 1st and the 3rd, and five were counted there on the 19th, whilst at Samphire Hoe one flew east on the 1st, eight flew west on the 24th and three 'probables' flew east at dusk on the 26th.

The total for the year, excluding the latter three probables, was 33 which was the best total since 2005.

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| Goldeneye |
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| <i>Bucephala clangula</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A male which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th January (G. J. A. Burton), a female which flew east past the Willop Outfall on the 10th March (B. Harper), an immature/female at Nickoll's Quarry on the 17th November (B. Harper), a male which flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 20th November (I. A. Roberts) and an immature/female which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th November (I. A. Roberts) were the 43rd to 47th area records.

After a gap of three years there have now been 9 records in the last four and the total of five in 2013 constitutes the best year since 2006.

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| Red-breasted Merganser |
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| <i>Mergus serrator</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A pair flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th February and one was seen off Abbotscliffe on the 25th March. In April one flew east past Hythe on the 8th, 14 flew east past Folkestone Pier and Samphire Hoe on the 9th, and four flew east the latter site on the 12th April. Three which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd May completed the best spring passage since 2005.

Autumn passage was also decent, with two east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th October, five west there on the 25th October, two west there on the 5th November, 13 west there on the 11th November, one east there on the 15th November, three east there on the 22nd November, and singles there on the 23rd November and at the Hythe Redoubt on the 30th November.

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| Goosander |
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| <i>Mergus merganser</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

One was on the canal cutting south of Botolph's Bridge on the 30th November to the 1st December.

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| Red-legged Partridge |
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| <i>Alectoris rufa</i> |
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Breeding resident.

Small numbers were noted at the usual sites, including the Bluehouse Wood area and Abbotscliffe.

Breeding resident.

All records were from the usual sites in the Abbotscliffe / Church Hougham area with the exception of an unusual report of six within the grounds of Saltwood Castle on the 17th July.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) presents a bleak position for this species. A 46% decline in the number of occupied 10km squares since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) has been coupled with a 91% population decline in the UK during 1967-2010. Locally it has decreased from occupying 15 tetrads in the 1968-72 Atlas to just five in the latest atlas (the reason for its presence in just one tetrad in the 1988-91 Atlas is unclear and might be due to under-recording). The Grey Partridge is one of the most strongly decreasing bird species in Europe, due to the effects of agricultural intensification.

Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Breeding resident.

Very few counts were received. Singles at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd to 9th September and 4th October were of some local interest as it relatively unusual at this site.

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Counts from the early winter period included 34 west past Samphire Hoe on the 1st January, 66 west there on the 5th and 36 east there on the 24th, 52 west past the Willop Outfall on the 26th January and 49 on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 9th February.

An up-channel spring passage was evident from late February to mid-May and produced a record total of just over 1,300 birds. Day counts included 53 east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd March, 63 east there on the 6th, 83 east there on the 7th, 75 east there on the 9th, 223 east past Hythe and Samphire Hoe on the 10th and 61 east past the latter site on the 15th March.

In April a total of 124 were counted on the sea off Hythe Ranges on the 7th (not included in the up-channel total) before the second highest day count of 403 flew east past Hythe the next day, and 42 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th. The highest ever count was of 486 east past Copt Point on the 22nd February 1996.

Much smaller numbers were recorded in the second half of April into May, with the last one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 17th May, however a single bird was seen on the sea there on the 4th June and was the second latest record ever (the only other June record being one off Hythe on the 6th June 2006).

One flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th September and small numbers were seen regularly from late October but the only counts of note were 27 west past Samphire Hoe on the 14th December, 25 east there on the 17th December and 22 west past the Willop Outfall on the 19th December.



Red-throated Diver at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

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| Black-throated Diver |
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| <i>Gavia arctica</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

One flew east past Hythe on the 10th March and there were three sightings at Samphire Hoe, possibly relating to just one individual, between the 24th and 27th March. In April two flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th, with a further two east there on the 28th, and May produced another four singles: east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, 3rd and 7th, and on the sea off Folkestone Pier on the 7th.

With a total of at least ten for the year this was only the third year to produce a double-figure total, following 15 in 2008 and 11 in 2001.

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| Great Northern Diver |
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| <i>Gavia immer</i> |
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Rare migrant and winter visitor.

One off Samphire Hoe on the 19th to 20th November (P. R. Smith, M. D. Kennett) was the 29th area record.

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| Fulmar |
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| <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> |
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Breeding visitor and passage migrant.

Birds had arrived back at the cliffs in December 2012 and up to eight birds were seen on the cliffs at Samphire Hoe in January and February, with at least three sets of birds appearing to be paired.

An up-channel passage was noted in spring, with a peak of 47 east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th February, whilst counts of 16 east there on the 28th February and 18 east there on the 22nd March were also of note.

Small numbers were noted into early September but there were no records thereafter until three returned to Samphire Hoe on the 28th November where they remained until the end of the year, increasing to 8 by the 16th December. On the final day of the year 21 flew west past Samphire Hoe.

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| Sooty Shearwater |
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| <i>Puffinus griseus</i> |
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Rare passage migrant.

2012

Additional record received of one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 25th September (per D. E. Smith).

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| Manx Shearwater |
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| <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

Two flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 12th June, with a single west there the next day and three flew east there on the 1st July.

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| Balearic Shearwater |
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| <i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i> |
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Rare passage migrant.

A flock of four flew west fairly close inshore off Samphire Hoe, even landing briefly on the sea, on the 18th August (I. A. Roberts), whilst a flock of three shearwaters which flew past Folkestone Pier the following day were too distant to be identified to species but seem very likely to have been Balearics (B. Harper).

One flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 25th October. The 32nd and 33rd area records.

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| Storm Petrel |
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| <i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One was reported from the research vessel “Endeavour” from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) when she was four miles south of Folkestone on the 31st October (per Rare Bird Alert). The crew also recorded a Leach’s Petrel there. The 8th area record and the first since the remarkable influx in 2006.

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| Leach’s Petrel |
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| <i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One was reported from the CEFAS research vessel “Endeavour” when she was four miles south of Folkestone on the 31st October (per Rare Bird Alert). The crew also recorded a Storm Petrel there. A second flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 5th November (I. A. Roberts). The 9th and 10th area records and the first since 2005.

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| Gannet |
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| <i>Morus bassanus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

Good numbers were present in the early winter period, including counts of 150 off Samphire Hoe on the 12th January, 185 east there the following day and 200 feeding offshore there on the 16th January.

Up-channel passage in spring, between mid-February and late May, was the strongest ever with around 3,300 birds logged. This included counts of 240 east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th February, 450 east there on the 7th March, a spring record count of 563 east there on the 15th March, 361 east there on the 22nd March and 190 east there on the 29th March. The only three-figure counts though in April or May were 140 east at Samphire Hoe on the 18th April and 165 east there on the 2nd May.

Counts of up to 35 were regular offshore throughout the summer and into the autumn, with a larger total of 115 off Samphire Hoe on the 14th September. Numbers increased during stormy weather in late December with 75 west past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, and 100 west there and 130 off Princes Parade, Seabrook on New Year’s Eve.

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| Cormorant |
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| <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> |
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A non-breeding visitor at all times of year.

Small numbers were seen throughout the year and larger counts or movements included 17 west past Samphire Hoe on the 18th January, 17 east there on the 12th February, 15 east there on the 21st February, 25 east there on the 23rd and 17 east there on the 28th February, and 27 there (including 15 flying east) on the 3rd March. On the 6th March a total of 40 were fishing offshore from Samphire Hoe, with 25 moving east there on the 10th March, 38 on/east there on the 19th and 37 there on the 28th March. In the latter part of the year the peak count was 25 off Samphire Hoe on the 28th November.

Passage migrant and winter visitor, with occasional summer records.

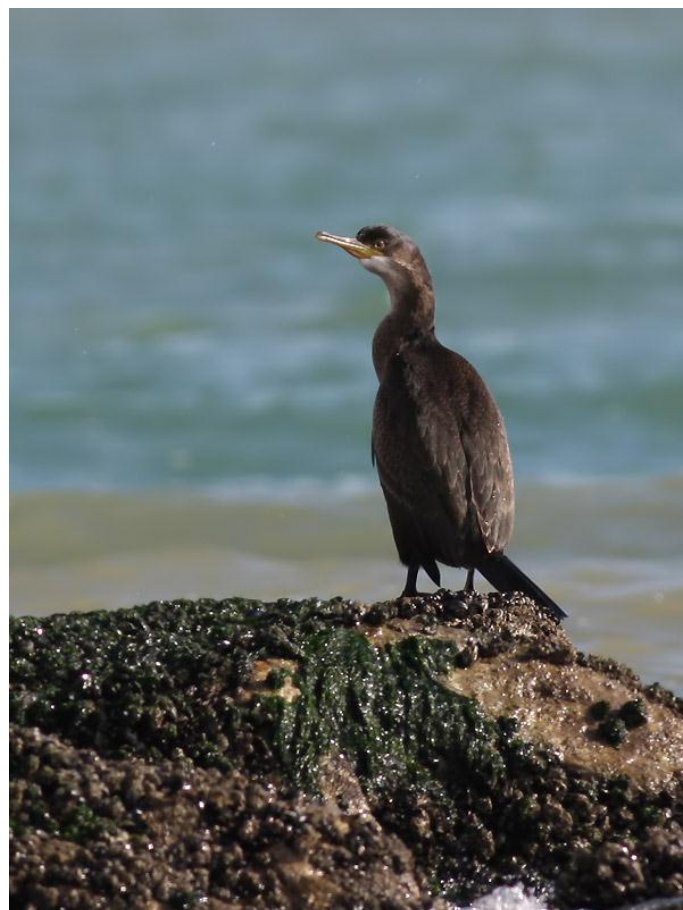
The peak monthly counts in 2013 are shown in the table below:

| J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

In January singles were seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and 8th, with another there on the 19th February. A series of records in March involved one east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th, one in Folkestone Harbour on the 9th, one west past Samphire Hoe on the 10th, six in Folkestone Harbour on the 17th, three east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th, one there the next day, three off Folkestone Pier and one at Samphire Hoe on the 21st and singles at the latter site on the 22nd and 31st.

Singles were seen off Samphire Hoe on four dates in April, with two there on the 13th, and in May three were on the sea there on the 2nd, with singles on three subsequent dates, and two off Folkestone Pier on the 18th. Singles were noted at Samphire Hoe on three dates in June with two there on the 11th, whilst in July there were two there on the 2nd, one on the 7th and a flock of five on the sea there on the 12th.

In autumn there were just single sightings in August (at Samphire Hoe on the 4th) and September (at the same site on the 3rd) but four in October: at Samphire Hoe on the 4th, 18th and 25th, and at Battery Point, Seabrook on the 12th, and three in November: at Samphire Hoe on the 11th, 20th and 21st November. In December singles were noted flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and the 10th.



Shag at Battery Point, Seabrook (Brian Harper)

The total of 60 bird/days is best since the highest ever total of 66 in 2004.

A scarce non-breeding visitor at any time of year, now regular in winter and on passage.

One was at Botolph's Bridge on the 1st January and singles were seen at Samphire Hoe on four later dates in the month, whilst singles were again at the former site on the 3rd February and the latter on the 12th February.

On the 17th March one was seen at West Hythe and on the 13th April there were two in the same area, including one in the heronry at Lympne Park Wood, raising hopes of breeding but there were no further sightings there nor did the annual heronry survey record any. The 13th April also produced one flying over Saltwood, whilst on the 16th one flew west at Hythe and one was present at Samphire Hoe, with singles at the latter site on three dates during the last week of April. Two flying east past Folkestone Pier on the 18th May completed the records from the first half of the year.

In September one was seen in Folkestone Harbour on the 21st and one flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 28th but none were reported in October. In November there were three at Samphire Hoe on the 12th, with one or two seen there on several dates to mid-December, and up to two were in the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry area in November and December, with two seen flying east at the Hythe Redoubt on the 30th November and singles at the Willop Basin on the 18th and 29th November, and 1st December.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported the colonisation and range expansion of the Little Egret as one of the most phenomenal shifts in abundance and distribution of any bird in Britain over the past 20 years. The species was recorded in only a single 10km square nationally during the 1981-84 Winter Atlas, and as a vagrant in just three 10-km squares during the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993). Now, a winter distribution encompassing over 1,500 10-km squares and confirmed breeding in more than 160 10-km squares, emphasises the extent to which the Little Egret population has flourished over the relatively short period since its initial establishment. It would seem to only be a matter of time before breeding occurs locally.

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| Great White Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One was reported flying south over Botolph's Bridge in the late afternoon of 25th February (B. Findlay). This was only the 6th area record but the fourth consecutive winter that the species has been recorded at this site.

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| Grey Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Small numbers were seen at many sites across the area during the year and the cold weather in the early part of the year seemingly had little effects. There were a very few records of birds moving over or past coastal sites between mid-February and late April which were suggestive of a light spring passage but in autumn the only sign of migration were two which flew north-west over Saltwood on the 30th October which "looked like they might have come in".

There were 12 nests in Lympe Park Wood which continued the upward trend from 11 last year, ten in 2011 and eight in 2010.

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| Purple Heron | <i>Ardea purpurea</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One which flew north over Saltwood on the afternoon of the 31st May (P. Howe) was the 5th area record.

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| White Stork | <i>Ciconia ciconia</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One which flew over Folkestone on the afternoon of the 6th April (D. Gibson) was the 9th area record.

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| Little Grebe | <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> |
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Breeding resident and winter visitor.

Despite the cold weather numbers in the early winter period remained low, with a peak of just four in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 31st March. Elsewhere one was at Samphire Hoe from the 1st to the 6th January.

Numbers were no higher in the latter half of the year with a peak of four at Botolph's Bridge on the 29th September and 3rd December, and another was at Samphire Hoe from the 21st October to the 3rd November.

Breeding resident and winter visitor.

Numbers in January and early February were generally low, with a peak of 24 off Copt Point on the 3rd January, however there was a noticeable increase in late February, with a peak of 168 off Hythe on the 23rd. There also was some evidence of up-channel passage at this time, including counts of 11 east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th February and 15 east there on the 28th February.

There was a further count of 140 on the sea off Hythe on the 10th March and a record movement of 98 east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th March, with another 21 east there on the 25th March. The last sizeable flock recorded was 45 on the sea off the Hythe Redoubt / Willop Outfall on the 31st March, with only single-figure counts offshore during April and May, though a late bird flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 4th June was notable.

Birds were again present at Nickoll's Quarry throughout the spring / summer and presumably bred, though proof was not recorded.

One was seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 17th August and small numbers were seen regularly at coastal sites through November and December. The only counts of note were 56 flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 24th December and 11 west there on the 27th December.



White Stork over Folkestone (Dale Gibson)



Great Crested Grebe at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

Two which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th March constituted the 44th area record (I. A. Roberts).

Very rare vagrant.

One at Nickoll's Quarry on the 12th April (B. Harper) was only the 16th area record. This remains very much the scarcest of the three scarce grebes here as there have been twice as many Red-necked and almost thrice as many Slavonian.



Black-necked Grebe at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)



Honey Buzzard

Pernis apivorus

Scarce passage migrant.

Singles flew north-east over Saltwood on the 3rd May (P. Howe), north-east over Folkestone on the 22nd May (B. Harper), in off the sea at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 2nd June, north over Saltwood on the 6th June (P. Howe) and in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 27th June (P. Holt). In autumn one flew over Peene on the 27th August (B. Harper).

A total of 106 have been recorded in the area in the 24 years since 1990 (4.4 per year) so the six in 2013 was a little above average.

Black Kite

Milvus migrans

Very rare vagrant.

One flew over Samphire Hoe on the 4th December (R. Smith) with presumably the same bird flying east then west there at about 15:00 on the 12th December (P. Holt) and east again the following morning (D. Mansfield).

This was the eighth area record but the first for the site. Previous records were all in April and May and the late date is unusual, but one (presumably the same bird) had been seen earlier in the Romney Marsh area between the 13th and 26th November, and was also noted at Sandwich Bay on the 6th December and a couple of hours prior to the second local sighting (at around 13:00 on the 12th December).

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| Red Kite |
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| <i>Milvus milvus</i> |
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Rare migrant, but increasing.

There were two records in winter – singles over Folkestone Downs on the 2nd February (B. Findlay) and north over Kiln Wood on the 20th February (I. A. Roberts), and these were followed by another spring influx: one south-west over Capel-le-Ferne on the 29th March (D. A. Gibson), one north-west over South Road, Hythe on the 30th March (I. A. Roberts), singles north over Saltwood on the 7th April and 22nd May (P. Howe), one reported over Samphire Hoe on the 21st April (per P. Holt), three west over West Parade, Hythe on the 23rd May (S. McMinn), another north over Saltwood on the 2nd June (P. Howe) and one over Cheriton on the 11th June (J. Russell). The total of ten records off 12 birds constitutes the second best year ever after 2012.

2012

An additional record was received of one flying over junction 11 of the M20 on the evening of the 27th June (B. Findlay) which increased the total for that record year to 13.

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| Marsh Harrier |
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| <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

An adult male and two females or immature birds were in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 26th January and presumably the same male flew east at the Willop Basin the next day. Another was seen along Donkey Street on the 16th February. Winter occurrences are certainly becoming more regular: the first record in January or February was not until 2007 but it has been recorded in that period in all of the last five years.

In spring one flew out to sea at Samphire Hoe on the 18th March, singles were at Botolph's Bridge and Nickoll's Quarry on the 30th March, one was at the former site on 5th and 7th April, one flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 13th April and another arrived in off there on the 30th April. One flew west over Westenhanger on the 1st May, one flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd May and a probable was seen over Folkestone the same day.

In autumn one flew high over the Botolph's Bridge road on the 11th August, a juvenile was hunting at Abbotscliffe on the 13th to 14th August, one flew out to sea at Folkestone Pier on the 19th August, singles flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd September and Abbotscliffe on the 30th October, and a male flew out to sea at Samphire Hoe on the 13th November. In December a male was seen at the Willop Basin on the 1st December.

The total of at least 18 has only been bettered in 2000 (when 19 were recorded) and was well above the above the average for the previous ten years of 9.3.

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| Hen Harrier |
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| <i>Circus cyaneus</i> |
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Rare migrant and winter visitor.

A male flew north over Folkestone on the 8th April (D. A. Gibson), one flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd June (I. A. Roberts) and a male flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 11th November (L. Collins).

These were the 34th to 37th area records. The previous decade saw an average of 1.5 records per year so this is an above average showing.

Rare migrant.

A 'ring-tail' flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 30th April and landed on the cliff-top at Abbotscliffe where it remained for about 20 minutes before heading off west (I. A. Roberts) and what was presumably the same bird was noted a short while later heading north-west over Folkestone West station (P. Howe). A male flew in off the sea at Seabrook on the 2nd May (P. Howe). The 17th and 18th area records.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Ones and twos were seen at many sites throughout the year. There was little evidence of spring passage although a female at Samphire Hoe on the 14th March appeared to have arrived in off the sea and there were singles there on several dates between in late March and early May, with two on the 20th April and two flying east on the 3rd May. A single flying high to the east over Saltwood on the 29th April might also have been on passage.

There were few signs either of autumn passage though singles were noted at Samphire Hoe on 12 dates between September and November, with two there on the 10th November, and five at Crete Hill on the 30th October may have included passage birds.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed an increase in the breeding range across Britain of 29% since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) but only a 7% expansion since the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993), though most of this was in eastern England, and there was also a marked increase in relative abundance, particularly in East Anglia and Kent, over the latter period. Locally it was absent from the first Atlas, recorded as at least possibly breeding in seven tetrads in the 1988-91 Atlas, with this further increasing to 20 (69%) tetrads in the latest Atlas.

Formerly scarce, now an increasing breeding species, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Small numbers were seen at widespread sites throughout the year with the largest count being ten at Saltwood on the 28th August.

There some evidence of migration, particularly in spring, when about 42 birds seen between early March and early May were considered to have probably been on passage. Counts included three, maybe four, east over Saltwood on the 4th March, three north-east there on the 27th March, four north there on the 7th April, five east over Folkestone on the 8th April, four north over Saltwood on the 21st April, three over Saltwood and five west at Samphire Hoe on the 28th April, and four the latter site on the 3rd May. In autumn three at Abbotscliffe on the 18th September, three south-west over Saltwood on the 26th September, one at Crete Hill and three at Samphire Hoe on the 24th October, and one at Abbotscliffe on the 30th October may have been migrants.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) describes the spread of the Common Buzzard as one of the most extraordinary changes in our avifauna over recent decades. It has more than doubled its range and is now widespread across the whole country. In most areas this represents a recolonisation of former range. Harrison in his *The Birds of Kent* (1953) recorded that it became extinct as a breeding bird in the county near the end of the 18th or the beginning of the 19th century. This contraction in range was mainly caused by persecution. In the earlier atlases it was absent from almost the entire eastern half of England but by the 2007-11 Atlas it was present in ten (34%) local tetrads.

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| Rough-legged Buzzard |
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| <i>Buteo lagopus</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One reported flying west over the B2011 just beyond the Plough Inn, Church Hougham on the late morning of the 29th October (per Rare Bird Alert) was just the 11th area record but the fourth to be recorded in the last three years.

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| Osprey |
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| <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> |
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Scarce passage migrant.

Singles flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 1st June (I. A. Roberts), north over Abbotscliffe on the 10th June (M. Kennett) and east over Folkestone on the 18th June (B. Ryan), whilst in autumn one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th September (I. A. Roberts).

There had only been two June records prior to this year, one of which was in 2012, so it will be interesting to see if this is an emerging trend. A total of 59 have been recorded in the area in the 24 years since 1990 (2.5 per year) so 2013 was another above average year.

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| Kestrel |
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| <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Ones and twos were seen at many sites throughout the year with a peak count of six at Samphire Hoe on the 26th October.



Kestrel at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)



Peregrine at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)

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| Merlin |
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| <i>Falco columbarius</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A male was at Botolph's Bridge on the 26th February and one was reported at Samphire Hoe on the 15th April. In the second half of the year one, presumably the same bird, was seen at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe on the 18th September, with another at the latter site on the 29th October.

The previous decade saw an average of 4.1 records per year so this was an average showing.

A summer visitor with breeding suspected but not proven.

There were no April records for only the fourth time since 1993, with the first being seen at Samphire Hoe on the 1st May. This was quickly followed however by one at Nickoll's Quarry the next day, with another north over Saltwood on the 5th, singles at Samphire Hoe on the 12th and 18th May and over Hythe on the 30th May.

In June one was seen over Saltwood on the 2nd, one flew over Cheriton on the 8th and two were along the cliff-top above Samphire Hoe on the 29th. There was another record from Samphire Hoe on the 27th July, whilst one was chasing House Martins over Risborough Barracks, Cheriton on the 1st August and one was at Church Hougham on the 8th August. Two were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd August, with one at Abbotscliffe on the 28th and another again at Samphire Hoe on the 30th August. In September there were singles at Abbotscliffe on the 18th, Crete Road East on the 20th and Botolph's Bridge on the 21st.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) described how this species has undergone both a large-scale expansion in range and an increased within its existing range. Locally this species was absent in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976), present in just two tetrads in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) and had increased into 12 tetrads in the latest Atlas.

Resident breeder, winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were regular records from the cliffs between Folkestone and Dover throughout the year, with up to 3 pairs present in summer though there was no evidence of breeding success.

Elsewhere one was seen regularly in the Botolph's Bridge area in January and February, whilst in the Hythe area, following the summer records last year, there were further indications of local breeding. In March a pair was seen along Princes Parade, Seabrook in unsuccessful pursuit of a Collared Dove and two were seen at West Hythe on the 13th April, with a single again at Botolph's Bridge in early May. In late May and June Peregrines were noted regularly taking Feral Pigeons from the Martello Tower at Hythe Ranges (an activity also observed last July). Singles were also seen over Saltwood on the 2nd June and 28th August, with further sightings at Botolph's Bridge on the 31st August and 20th September.

A pair took up residence at the Willop Basin from 16th November until the end of the year, apparently attracted by the large accumulation of waders there, whilst singles, possibly part of this pair, were seen at West Hythe on the 1st December and Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th December.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) demonstrated that there had been a remarkable recovery in the Peregrine population following the ban on organochlorine pesticide usage in agriculture, with it now being widespread in Britain. Overall, the breeding distribution has increased by 184% since 1968-72 and, after being absent locally in the first two Atlases, there was probable or confirmed breeding in four tetrads in the most recent Atlas.

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the early winter period birds were present at the usual sites of Nickoll's Quarry, Samphire Hoe and the canal at Seabrook, with the last at the latter site on the 30th March.

The only record from the latter part of the year was of three at Nickoll's Quarry on the 21st September.

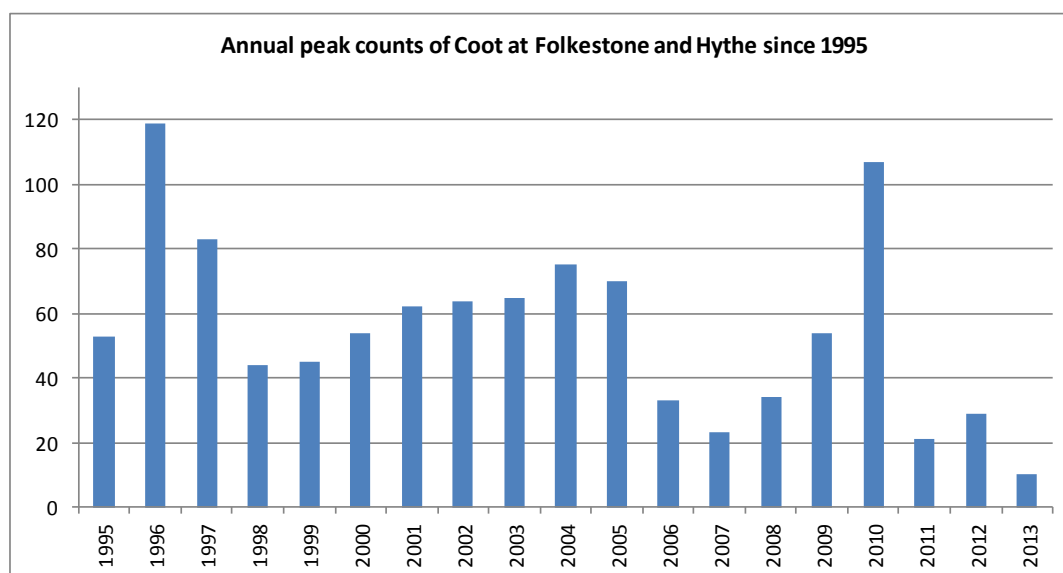
Breeding resident.

The few counts that were received included peaks of 12 at Botolph's Bridge on the 8th February, ten at Brockhill Country Park on the 9th February and ten at Samphire Hoe (two adults and a first and second brood, both of four young) on the 5th July.

Breeding resident and winter visitor.

Only small numbers were recorded with peaks of just ten at Nickoll's Quarry on the 18th January and six at Botolph's Bridge on the 29th September.

The annual peak was the lowest since 1995, as the chart below demonstrates. Peak counts were typically higher in the second half of the 1990s and first half of the 2000s, with the notable exception of 2010 when there was a significant influx during the coldest December in over a century. The reduction is probably due to habitat changes at Nickoll's Quarry, as the national population trend over the period 1995 to 2010 was a 32% increase (*The state of the UK's birds (Eaton et al, 2012)*).



Breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were early winter records from the Willop Outfall on the 2nd January, Copt Point on the 3rd January and Samphire Hoe on the 6th and 17th January. Further singles at the latter site on the 17th February and flying east there on the 20th February may have marked the start of a light spring passage, with a total of 71 logged passing offshore there by early June. Counts included 12 on the 9th March, 16 on 3rd May and 9 on the 28th May.

A pair was again present at Nickoll's Quarry through the summer and breeding may have occurred. In the latter part of the year ones and twos were recorded at several sites including Hythe, Samphire Hoe and the Willop Outfall.

Rare migrant.

A particularly early spring migrant which flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 20th February (I. A. Roberts) was the first to be recorded in that month. On the 9th March a flock of six were seen in a flooded field at the Willop Basin (B. Harper) whilst eight flew east past Samphire Hoe the same day (I. A. Roberts), with a further nine east there on the 22nd March (I. A. Roberts) and six east on the 24th March (I. A. Roberts). Finally one flew east past Princes Parade, Seabrook on the 8th April (B. Harper).

In autumn one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th November (I. A. Roberts). The total of 31 birds in spring constitutes the best passage in that season to date, whilst 32 for the year is the third best overall total. There have now been 56 area records.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Formerly a breeding summer visitor and scarce passage migrant. Now a very rare vagrant.

One flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March (I. A. Roberts). The third record for the site but only the 6th away from the Nickoll's Quarry area (where it was regular until 2006).

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

Occasional breeding species, also a winter visitor and passage migrant.

The winter roost at Folkestone Beach held a peak of 39 birds on the 26th January. Elsewhere one flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th January and one was at the Willop Basin on the 27th January. The only signs of spring passage were five at the Willop Basin on the 9th March and two flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March.

There were no reports from Hythe Ranges in summer but three were at the nearby Hythe Redoubt on the 11th August. In the late winter period there were peak counts of 28 at Folkestone Beach on the 27th December, 22 on the beach at Hythe on the 29th November and two at the Willop Basin on the 14th November.

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

The cold spell in January led to a small influx, with four at Botolph's Bridge on the 19th, singles over Samphire Hoe on the 20th, at Hythe Ranges on the 23rd and at the Willop Basin on the 27th, and nine at the latter site on the 30th.

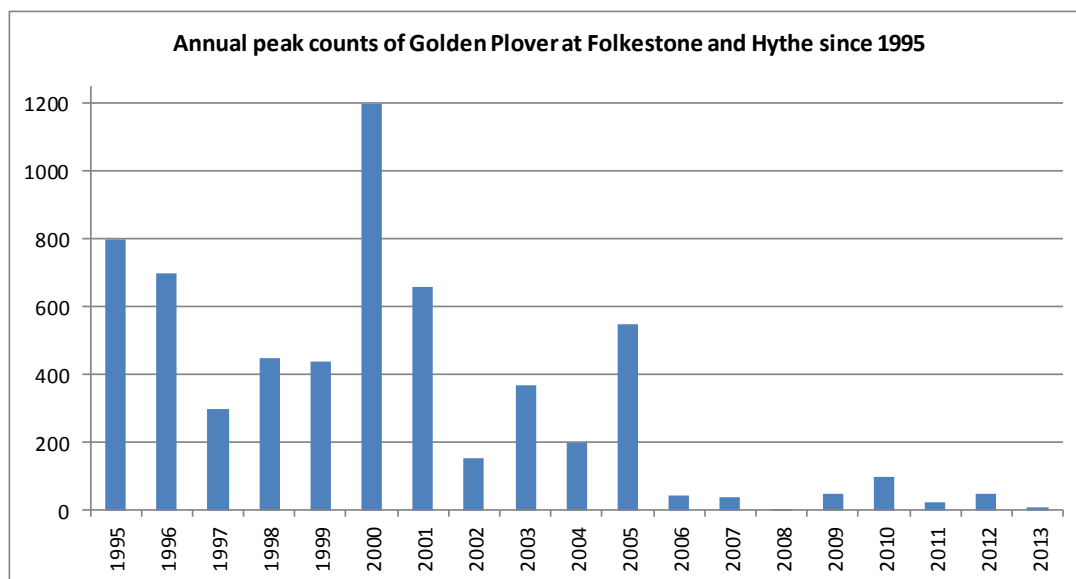
In April one was seen on the seawall at Samphire Hoe on the 13th.

The only records in the second half of the year were of singles at the Willop Basin on the 2nd, 3rd and 23rd November, and two there on the 17th November.



Golden Plover at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

The annual peak was the second-lowest since 1995, as the chart below demonstrates. Peak counts were typically much higher in the second half of the 1990s and first half of the 2000s. The reduction appears far more dramatic than the national population trend which was a 13% decrease over the period 1995 to 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton et al, 2012)). The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer et al, 2013) reported a 20% reduction in breeding range over the last forty years, with the greatest losses in the southern uplands of Scotland and around the margins of the smaller more southerly populations, including the disappearance of the species as a breeding bird in south-west England. Possible causes of decline are considered to include afforestation, increases in generalist predators, changes in hill farming and drying of peatland soils as a result of artificial drainage and summer warming.



Grey Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January produced one at the Willop Basin on the 24th, with two there on the 27th.

A very light spring passage comprised just two east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd March and one east there on the 2nd May, whilst in autumn there was just one record of two flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th September.

Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

Occasional breeding species, also a winter visitor and passage migrant.

Good numbers remained at the Willop Basin from 2012, with a peak of 500 there on the 9th January but these dispersed with the advent of the cold weather. These conditions however led to a small influx elsewhere, beginning with one at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, followed by five at Church Hougham the next day, 16 in off the sea at Abbotscliffe and 22 (possibly involving some of the same birds) in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and 12 at Saltwood on the 25th. When conditions improved birds returned to the Willop Basin, with 169 there on the 27th January, increasing to 335 on the 2nd February and peaking at 1,200 there on the 16th, before appearing to rapidly disperse again.

Elsewhere two flew in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd February, probably in response to further cold weather, and four were seen there on the 4th March. On the 14th March 118 were counted at the Willop Basin, whilst 38 flew high west over Saltwood on the 25th March and 31 were at the Willop Basin on the 31st March. In April singles were at Samphire Hoe on the 11th and 24th. None were noted at the breeding site at the Willop Basin in early May and later in the month the field was ploughed.

The first returning bird was at Abbotscliffe on the 10th June, with two there at Abbotscliffe on the 14th July and more regular records from August, including one at Samphire Hoe the 26th August. Numbers remained low however until late October, when 175 were counted at the Willop Basin on the 28th, and this flock increased through November to 221 on the 2nd, 270 on the 16th and peaked at 582 on the 23rd, with around 550 remaining until the 26th before decreasing to 390 on the 28th, 154 the next day and 101 on the 3rd December. Much smaller numbers were noted in the remainder of the year.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported that despite decades of population decline, the Lapwing is still the most widespread breeding wader species in Britain. There has been a 17% contraction in range since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) with most losses in the south-west England, Wales and western Scotland, though the species has also disappeared from a number of 10-km squares in Kent, and breeding abundance has decreased across the entire country. Locally it was present in 17 tetrads in 1968-72, seven in 1988-91 and just one in 2007-11.

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| Knot | <i>Calidris canutus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

The cold spell produced one in Folkestone Harbour on the 27th January.

In spring 16 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd March and two flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd May. The only autumn record was of one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th October.

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| Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Singles were at the Willop Outfall on the 2nd January and the 26th February, whilst following the cold spell there were six in Folkestone Harbour on the 27th January and one by the Hotel Imperial at Hythe on the 29th and 31st January.

There was a typically light spring passage comprising five east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd May and one east there the next day.

In autumn two flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th November and up to four were at the Willop Outfall from late November until the end of the year.

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| Little Stint | <i>Calidris minuta</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One was at the Willop Basin on the 2nd to 3rd November (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts). The 12th area record but the second at this site in the last two years. This was the first to be recorded in November.

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| Purple Sandpiper | <i>Calidris maritima</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

A flock of up to six were wintering at Hythe, frequenting the rock groynes opposite the Imperial and Stade Court Hotels and at Battery Point, with the last on the 6th May.

The first returning birds were four at Hythe on the 9th November, increasing to 5 on the 15th November, with at least three remaining until the end of the year.



Purple Sandpiper at Hythe (Gavin Coultrip)

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather led to a small influx in late January, with one flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st, six east there on the 23rd, and one there on the 24th and 25th, whilst 15 were at the Willop Basin on the 24th, increasing to 21 on the 27th (but decreasing to 6 by the 30th) and seven in Folkestone Harbour on the 26th, with three there the next day. In February there were seven at the Willop Basin on the 16th, with two there the following day.

There was a very good spring passage beginning on the 9th March when 33 flew east past Samphire Hoe (with another on the seawall there) and a count of 27 at the Willop Basin, with three on the golf course by the Hythe Imperial.

On the 20th March a total of 104 (the second highest spring day count) flew east past Samphire Hoe, with 36 east there on the 22nd and another good tally of 85 east there the next day. In April 13 flew east past Princes Parade, Seabrook on the 8th April, with one east past Samphire Hoe on the 25th, 23 east there on the 5th May and another east there the following day. The total of 327 was the second best ever spring passage, exceeded only in 2002, when the highest ever day count of 366 east on the 12th May was also recorded.

In autumn singles were at Samphire Hoe on the 24th August and 4th September, before 60 flew east there on the 11th October and 85 flew west there on the 11th November. Nine were seen at the Willop Basin on the 14th November and this flock remained there until early December, increasing to 13 on the 23rd November and peaking at 24 the following day, before decreasing to 11 on the 26th and seven on the 3rd December, but there were no further sightings.

Rare migrant and winter visitor.

One was at the Willop Basin on the 29th November (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper) was the 27th area record but the first since one at the same site in 2010.



Ruff at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)



Black-tailed Godwit at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

During the cold weather in January one was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 19th, with two there on the 26th and one again on the 27th. These were the first records for the site.

Remarkably another was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 30th and 31st October, and one was flushed from rough ground along Princes Parade, Seabrook on the 7th December.

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January led to a small influx with four at Samphire Hoe and eight at Botolph's Bridge on the 19th, and up to four remained at the former site until the 26th January whilst elsewhere there was one at Terlingham Gardens, near the Grand Hotel in Folkestone on the 19th January, three in a garden in the Enbrook Valley, Cheriton on the 20th and five in the ditch to the north of Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th. In February five were in a field behind Hythe Redoubt on the 3rd, with two at Samphire Hoe on the 24th and one flushed beside football pitches at Church Road, Cheriton on the 28th. In March presumed migrants were at Samphire Hoe on the 15th and 31st.

In autumn migrants were at Abbotscliffe on the 18th September and 14th October, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 30th October, and small numbers were wintering on the Marsh, with records from Botolph's Bridge, Nickoll's Quarry and the Willop Basin in November and December.

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| Woodcock |
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| <i>Scolopax rusticola</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Perhaps surprisingly none were involved in the cold weather influx in January, however a very good count of eight (the fifth highest ever) were counted in the Cowtye Wood area on the 24th February. Seven were seen again in the same area on the 7th April, on which date one appeared briefly in a garden in Laurel Close, Cheriton, whilst one was at Capel-le-Ferne on the 14th April.

The only record in autumn was of one which flew past the office at Samphire Hoe on the 13th November.

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| Black-tailed Godwit |
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| <i>Limosa limosa</i> |
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Rare passage migrant.

A flock of 29 flew west past Battery Point, Seabrook on the 6th May (B. Harper), two flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 21st November (I. A. Roberts) and one was at the Willop Basin on the 23rd November (B. Harper, M. Harper, R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts). The 22nd to 24th area records. All previous records had occurred between March and August so these were the first to be seen in November.

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| Bar-tailed Godwit |
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| <i>Limosa lapponica</i> |
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Passage migrant.

Spring passage involved a total of about 87 moving up-channel between the 22nd March and 21st May which was similar to the 91 recorded last year and well below the average for the last ten years of 299. The largest counts included 14 east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd March, 17 east there on the 2nd May, and 16 east past Folkestone Pier and 39 east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th May. There were no records in autumn.

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| Whimbrel |
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| <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

Spring passage involved a total of about 119, mostly noted moving up-channel, between the 20th April and 27th May. This marked an improvement on the 102 recorded last year and was very close to the average for the last ten years of 120. The largest counts included 11 east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th April, 23 east there on the 2nd May, 20 east there the next day, 14 east there on the 7th May and 17 east there on the 21st May. The only record away from the sea was of one at Nickoll's Quarry on the 21st April.

There were only two autumn records – one heard calling at Samphire Hoe on the 14th July and one flying west there on the 12th November, but the latter was the latest ever by some margin (the previous latest was one flying west past Copt Point on the 6th October 2001).

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| Curlew |
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| <i>Numenius arquata</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In January there were two at the Willop Basin on the 2nd and one at Copt Point on the 3rd before cold weather led to a record count of 60 (in one flock) flying flew past Copt Point on the evening of the 20th, with 18 at the Willop Basin on the 27th, one at Saltwood on the 25th, one flying over Hythe on the 26th and three singles at Samphire Hoe in the latter part of the month. Numbers at the Willop Basin decreased to 9 on the 30th January but increased to another very good count of 54 there on the 2nd February, with 32 still present on the 9th and up to six there into early March. Elsewhere in February one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 10th, with three east there the next day, whilst two east there on the 22nd and one east on the 23rd February might have been early spring migrants.

In contrast to last year there was a marked spring passage, presumably as a result of the considerable displacement of birds in the earlier cold weather, with a record total of around 70 heading up-channel past Samphire Hoe between late February and the end of March, including counts of seven east on the 9th, ten east on the 22nd and 35 east on the 23rd. The only sightings in April were of two flying south over Samphire Hoe on the 17th and the last of the spring was one on the beach there on the 29th.

Returning birds were noted from mid-June, when one flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 18th June, with another west there on the 3rd July, one there on the 26th August, two west on the 7th September and one west on the 11th September. A total of nine were seen at Samphire Hoe in October, including five flying west on the 25th, and in November six were logged, including four west on the 11th. One was noted at the Willop Basin on the 28th October, with seven there from the 2nd November to the 25th December, before numbers suddenly increased to 31 on the 26th December.



Whimbrel at Hythe (Brian Harper)



Curlew at Nickoll's Quarry (Brian Harper)

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| Common Sandpiper |
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| <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> |
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Passage migrant.

One seen on the beach at Folkestone Sands on the 4th March was an exceptionally early migrant (and only the fourth to be recorded in that month). The next, at Mill Point, on the 26th April was still four days earlier than the late arrival date for last year, and was quickly followed by another at Botolph's Bridge on the 28th and two at Nickoll's Quarry the next day. Very few were seen in May however, with just single birds at Botolph's Bridge on the 1st May and flying east past Folkestone Pier on the 7th May.

The first returning bird was at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd July, with another there on the 22nd and four on the 27th July. Autumn passage was light with peaks in August of just two at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and three at Hythe Redoubt on the 25th. The last was at Samphire Hoe on the 14th September.

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| Green Sandpiper |
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| <i>Tringa ochropus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In the early winter period there were up to three in the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry area in January, with singles there on several dates in February and one at the Willop Basin on the 3rd February. Singles were again in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 31st March and 7th and 11th April.

The first returning bird was at Samphire Hoe on the 26th June, with one near the Hythe Redoubt on the 17th August, one flying west over Abbotscliffe on the 25th August and two at Samphire Hoe on the 27th August. As in 2012 however there were no records from the late winter period.

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| Greenshank |
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| <i>Tringa nebularia</i> |
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Passage migrant.

Singles flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th May and west there on the 14th August.

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| Redshank |
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| <i>Tringa totanus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 13 were at the Willop Basin in January, increasing to 19 (the fourth highest count) on the 17th February but decreasing to seven there by mid-March. Elsewhere at least two were wintering in Folkestone Harbour whilst singles flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 9th and 23rd March were presumably migrants.

In autumn singles were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 5th September and 27th November, and the Willop Basin held good numbers in November and December, with eight there on the 10th November increasing to 16 on the 16th, 17 on the 17th and peaking at 29 on the 18th (the second largest count ever, following 30 seen at Nickoll's Quarry on the 23rd January 1979). Numbers steadily dropped off to just two by the 3rd December, but increased again to 16 on the December. Elsewhere small numbers were seen in the Folkestone Beach / Folkestone Harbour area.

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| Turnstone |
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| <i>Arenaria interpres</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 20 were wintering in the early part of the year at Hythe with a further 16 at the Willop Outfall. In the late winter period up to 20 were at the Willop Outfall with smaller numbers noted in the Hythe and Seabrook areas.



Turnstone at Hythe Redoubt (Brian Harper)



Redshank at Willop Basin (Brian Harper)

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| Pomarine Skua | <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

Three flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd May, with a further two east there on the evening of the 6th May and two east past Copt Point early the following morning.

A slight improvement on 2012 but still well below the annual mean for the previous ten years of around 20 birds.

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| Arctic Skua | <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

The first, which flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th April, was nine days earlier than the first sighting last year but there were no more until May, when three flew east there on the 2nd. On the 5th May five flew east past Samphire Hoe and another passed Copt Point, with further singles east past Samphire Hoe on the 9th, Folkestone Pier on the 11th, and Samphire Hoe on the 15th, 21st and 22nd May.

Autumn passage began with one west past Samphire Hoe and two off Folkestone Pier on the 19th August, followed by one east past Samphire Hoe on the 29th August, one west there on the 10th September, two west there the following day, one off Copt Point on the 28th September and one west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th October.

The totals for both the spring (15) and particularly the autumn (9) were relatively low compared to the annual mean for the previous ten years of around 19 in spring and 25 in autumn.

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| Great Skua | <i>Stercorarius skua</i> |
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Passage migrant.

One was lingering offshore at Samphire Hoe on the 26th January and another flew east there on the 10th February. After the exceptional spring last year there was a more modest passage, though the total of 11 was still above the average for the ten years prior to 2012 of 5.8. One flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 7th March, with two east there on the 12th April and further singles east there on the 17th and 28th April. In May singles flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, with two on the 15th.

In autumn a total of six flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th September and one flew east there on the 14th October. In December one was seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 4th, with singles flying east there on the 17th and 24th, and two flying west on the 31st.

2012

An additional record received of three east past Samphire Hoe on the 24th April increases the total for that record spring passage to 48.

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| Kittiwake | <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Good numbers were seen off Samphire Hoe in January, including 70 feeding offshore on the 2nd, increasing to 80 the next day, with 125 flying east on the 10th, 100 east on the 12th, 65 east on the 13th and 82 east on the 24th. Up to 50 were still present there in early February but numbers dropped off thereafter before an excellent up-channel passage was noted between 20th February and late May. A total of at least 630 birds passed through which appears to be a record spring tally for the area. Counts included 62 east on the 20th February, 57 east the next day, 79 east on the 3rd March, 62 east on the 15th March and 71 east on the 2nd May.

Only small numbers were recorded between June and November, with a peak of just six west past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd July and east there on the 15th November, but larger movements were noted in December, including 27 west there on the 16th, 51 west there on the 21st, 62 west there on the 23rd and 176 west there on the 24th.

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| Black-headed Gull |
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| <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Large numbers were present in both the early and late winter periods but the only counts were received were of 110 at Samphire Hoe on the 9th and 12th February, 100 there on the 7th March and 140 there on the 8th March, though the latter two counts may have included migrant birds.

Spring passage was noted between early March and early May, including counts of 50 east past Samphire Hoe on the 9th March, 99 east there on the 29th March and 98 east there on the 3rd May.

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| Little Gull |
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| <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

An adult flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th January and an up-channel passage was noted in March with a total of 36 passing Samphire Hoe: six on the 7th, a flock of 21 on the 9th, two on the 20th, six on the 24th and one on the 25th.

In autumn a juvenile was seen close to the seawall off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd October, with nine there (2 east and 7 west) on the 5th November, three east there on the 12th November and an adult west there on the 27th December.

The total of 51 was above the annual average for the previous ten years of 34 and represents the best year since 2007.

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| Mediterranean Gull |
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| <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were no counts received from Copt Point in the early winter period. Small numbers were noted at a number of other sites with the largest report being 15 at Church Road, Cheriton on the 28th February.

There was some evidence of a small easterly passage in spring, between late February and early May, mostly involving ones and twos, but with four passing Samphire Hoe on the 21st April and eight east there on the 28th April.

As usual there were few records between mid-May and late June and numbers only really began to increase notably during August, with 24 (including seven juveniles) on the beach at Samphire Hoe on the 14th and around 100 hawking ants over the site on the 20th. In September 450 were present at Copt Point on the evening of the 1st and towards the end of the month there was a record count of 500+ in fields off Crete Road East and 430, presumably part of the same flock, along Crete Road West. The previous record involved 450 in fields at Capel-le-Ferne on the 27th August 2006.

The latter part of the year produced counts of 100+ at Hillhurst Farm, Westenhanger on the 4th November and 250+ feeding on football pitches at Church Road, Cheriton on the 10th November.

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| Common Gull |
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| <i>Larus canus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Large numbers were seen in both the early and late winter periods but the only counts received were during cold weather of 40 at Samphire Hoe on the 25th January and 30 there on the 12th and 13th February. There was an apparent easterly passage towards the end of the February, including 43 past Samphire Hoe on the 28th, followed by several smaller movements there in March, with ten east on the 3rd and 6th, 35 east on the 7th and 26 east on the 29th, and another 26 east there on the 3rd May.

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| Lesser Black-backed Gull |
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| <i>Larus fuscus</i> |
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Breeding species, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Only small numbers were noted in January and early February with a peak count of four at the Willop Basin on the 2nd February. There were some signs of spring passage during February, including one east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th, two east there on the 12th, two east there on the 21st, and further singles east there on the 22nd and 28th. Late March produced slightly larger numbers, including seven east past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, three east there the next day and four east there on the 25th, whilst seven flew north over Saltwood on the 7th April and eight were counted at Samphire Hoe on the 11th April.

Birds were again noted in suitable breeding habitat on roof-tops in Folkestone but there no evidence of success was obtained this year.

The second half of the year produced a peak count of just eight at the Willop Basin on the 24th November.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) stated that there has been a remarkable change in the status of this species, with increases in range in both the winter and the breeding season. The breeding range has increased by 65% nationally since the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976). The greatest change in distribution has been the increase in inland nesting, mainly on man-made structures such as rooftops. Locally it was not recorded as a breeding species in 1968-72, was present in four tetrads in 1988-91 and seven in 2007-11, with all on rooftop locations.

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| Herring Gull |
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| <i>Larus argentatus</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Large numbers were present across the area throughout the year, but the only significant count received was of around 650 in fields in the Botolph's Bridge area on the 22nd October.

Breeding pairs were widespread across the built up areas and there was also a successful pair on the roof of the Adit (security compound) at Samphire Hoe.

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| Glaucous Gull |
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| <i>Larus hyperboreus</i> |
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Rare migrant and winter visitor.

A first-winter flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th December (I. A. Roberts). The 25th area record but the first since one at the same site in 2008.

Winter visitor and passage migrant, small numbers oversummer.

The only counts of note were of 42 at Samphire Hoe on the 28th February, 15 there on the 5th July, 45 there on the 28th November and 32 flying west there on the 17th December.

Passage migrant, formerly bred.

On the 5th May 15 flew east past Folkestone Pier with six, presumably some of the same birds, also noted off Samphire Hoe. The following day one was lingering off Battery Point, Seabrook, whilst on the 7th May 15 flew east past Folkestone Pier with eight, again presumably some of the same birds, also noted off Folkestone Pier. Finally one flew east past the latter site on the 18th May.

Assuming that the counts on the 5th and 7th May were duplications then the total for the spring was 32 birds. The annual mean for the previous ten years was 19 birds so this was an above average showing.

Non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, rare in winter.

The first, three east and one west past Samphire Hoe on the 9th March, were eight days earlier than the arrival date last year and there some very good early counts followed, including 19 east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th March, 42 east there the next day, 70 east there on the 21st, 165 east there (a record movement for March) on the 22nd, 81 east there on the 23rd, 75 east there on the 24th, 72 east there on the 25th and 41 east there on the 29th March. Numbers in April however were disappointing, with a peak of just 40 east past Samphire Hoe on the 28th, but in May 68 flew east there on the 1st, with 192 east there the next day, 45 east there on the 4th and 63 east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe on the 7th, with smaller counts thereafter.

Small numbers were seen throughout the summer as usual, but autumn passage was again very poor, with just two double-figure counts: 11 west past Samphire Hoe on the 19th August and 18 west there on the 11th September. The last, one west past Samphire Hoe on the 25th October, was almost three weeks later than the final sighting last year.



Kittiwake at Folkestone Harbour (Brian Harper)



Sandwich Tern at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Passage migrant.

The first, six east past Folkestone Pier on the 9th April, were notably early, being 16 days before than the first arrival last year, and the fifth earliest ever. The only earlier arrival dates were six east past Copt Point on the 3rd April 2005, one east there on the 4th April 2001, 13 east there on the 6th April 2009 and one east there on the 7th April 1998.

There were no further sightings in April and up-channel passage was concentrated into the first week of May, with 46 east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, 113 east there on the 3rd, an excellent total of 897 east past Folkestone Pier / Samphire Hoe on the 5th (see below) and 200 east past the latter site on the 7th, but very few thereafter. Many of these could only identified as Common / Arctic Terns but both species were definitely involved in the movements on 2nd and 3rd May.

On the 5th May relatively few had been noted in the morning but at Samphire Hoe in the afternoon around 800 were noted in a just a single hour before thick fog rolled in and halted counting. There have only been three higher day counts: 1,980 east past Samphire Hoe on the 3rd May 2005, 1,124 east past Copt Point on the 7th May 1999 and 1,042 east there on the 26th April 2003.

Very low numbers were recorded in autumn, with the last on the 11th September.

Passage migrant.

As stated above the movements past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and 3rd May involved a number of Arctic Terns.

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In January there were around 20 off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd with an estimated 220 west there on the 7th before cold weather led to an exceptional influx, with approximate totals of 2,000 east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th (a record count), 1,665 east there on the 11th and 425 east there on the 12th. 165 were logged there on the 12th as numbers decreased though counts of up to 60 continued to be made before a further large movement of about 1,040 flying east was noted off Samphire Hoe on the 24th January, with around 800 there on the 3rd February, 530 the following day, and another count of around 530 flew east on the 20th. Assuming the movements all related to different birds an estimated total of over 8,000 were logged at Samphire Hoe in the first two months of the year, however they were outnumbered by Razorbills. The count of 2,000 exceeded the previous record of 1,600 east past Copt Point on the 30th January 2003.

Numbers dropped off considerably in March though counts of 185 large auks (Guillemots/Razorbills) east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th and 170 east there the next day were still notable, and very few were noted in April, whilst up-channel passage in spring peaked with 17 large auks east past Samphire Hoe on the 2nd May.

Two were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 12th June, with one there on the 3rd July, and small numbers were recorded between September and mid-December, with some larger counts in the last fortnight of the month, including 44 west past Samphire Hoe on the 21st, 165 west there on the 23rd and 443 west there on the 24th.

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| Razorbill |
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| <i>Alca torda</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In January there were around 30 off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd with 530 large auks (the majority of which appeared to be Razorbills) flying east there on the 5th, with another 27 on the sea. On the 7th an estimated total of 550 flew west past Samphire Hoe, with 130 west the next day.

Cold weather led to an exceptional influx from the 10th January, when just over 5,000 large auks flew east past Samphire Hoe with 5,665 east the following day (when c.500 were noted offshore or heading west) and a significant proportion of those that could be identified were Razorbills, with estimates of 60% on the first day and 70-75% on the second, giving approximate totals of 3,000 on the 10th and 4,500 on the 11th (a record count, exceeding the previous record of c.1,200 west past Copt Point on the 29th January 2000). A further 1,275 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 12th, with 500 east there on the 13th, 150 east on the 15th, 170 east on the 15th, 200+ east on the 17th, 270 east on the 21st and 300 east on the 23rd January.

Another large movement occurred on the 24th January when an estimated 3,200 flew east past Samphire Hoe and around 2,300 (2,000 east, 300 west) were logged there on the 3rd February, with about 535 there the next day (mostly moving west). Numbers dropped off thereafter before 530 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 20th February, with 130 east there the next day, and smaller counts continued into March with the last on the 24th (although small numbers of large auks were seen into May – see above). Assuming the movements all related to different birds an estimated total of over 18,500 were logged at Samphire Hoe in the first two months of the year.

The only definite record from the latter part of the year was of one flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd December though some of the birds could only be identified as Guillemot/Razorbill.

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| Feral Pigeon |
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| <i>Columba livia</i> |
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Breeding resident.

A common and widespread species but the only counts received were from Samphire Hoe where there was a peak of 23 in March.

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| Stock Dove |
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| <i>Columba oenas</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

The peaks counts were seven flying east at the Willop Basin on the 2nd February and up to 3 at Samphire Hoe throughout where at least one pair bred.

Autumn passage was light, with peak counts of 30 west at Samphire Hoe on the 29th October and 36 north-west at Abbotscliffe the following day.

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| Wood Pigeon |
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| <i>Columba palumbus</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

An abundant species but the only notable counts received were of 66 at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd February, 92 there on the 2nd March and 83 there on the 10th March. A light spring passage included 140 west at Samphire Hoe on the 13th April, 145 west there on the 15th, 125 west there on the 19th and 80 west there on the 27th April. There were no counts of note in the autumn.

Collared Dove*Streptopelia decaocto*

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

A common resident but no large counts were received.

Two were at Samphire Hoe, where the species is unusual, on the 9th February, whilst further records there on 10th April, 15th April, 2nd June and 18th October were suggestive of arrival or passage.

Turtle Dove*Streptopelia turtur*

Declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, very rare in winter.

There was just a single record this year: one along Donkey Street on the 25th May. This follows from the previous lowest ever annual total of three in 2012. It seems likely that the first blank year for this species will sadly not be too far away.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) presented 'one of the most striking changes of any species in the Atlas, with a progressive loss of range in the north, west and south-west of Britain over the last 40 years'. Whilst still present in the south-east of England there has been a 93% population decline between 1970 and 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)) and across Europe a 73% decrease has been noted over the last 30 years. There are several possible explanations for the decline, including conditions on the wintering grounds, hunting pressure during migration and agricultural intensification in the breeding range. As recently as the *1988-91 Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) the Turtle Dove was present in 23 of the 29 tetrads locally.

Ring-necked Parakeet*Psittacula krameri*

Very rare vagrant.

2012

A late record received of one heard calling at Samphire Hoe on the 18th May (per D. E. Smith). The first record for the site.

Cuckoo*Cuculus canorus*

Declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant,

The first arrival, at Hythe Roughs on 14th April, was significantly earlier than last year. There were also records in spring / summer from other likely breeding sites including the Botolph's Bridge area, Hythe Ranges and Nickoll's Quarry.

Autumn passage as always was very light, with single birds at Samphire Hoe on 13th and 19th August.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed little change in breeding range in southern England since the *1988-91 Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) but a significant decline in abundance. This trend is matched by the population size which is estimated to have decreased by 63% in the Britain during 1995-2010. Locally it was found in 30% less tetrads in 2007-11 compared to 1988-91. Cuckoos are among several declining migrants that winter in the humid zone of Africa. It has been suggested that the host species of this brood parasite appear to be breeding earlier, probably due to climate change or a succession of mild winters, but Cuckoos have not advanced their arrival times to the same extent. Alternative possible contributors to decline include reduced breeding-season prey availability, owing to falling British moth populations, and unknown factors acting on the wintering grounds or during migration.

Rare breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were a series of eight sightings of at least one bird at various sites to the west of Hythe, including Botolph's Bridge, Donkey Street, Hythe Roughts, Palmarsh and Nickoll's Quarry, between 2nd February and 9th March.



Barn Owl at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Introduced resident breeding species.

Rather under-recorded this year though there were sightings at Round Down, Church Hougham and Hythe Roughts.

2012

A later date of 19th March has been received as the last sighting of the wintering bird at Samphire Hoe.

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| Tawny Owl | <i>Strix aluco</i> |
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Breeding resident.

This species was also under-recorded. The only records received were of a male hooting in Paraker Wood on the 4th February and a pair which bred successfully in a nest box at Newington.

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| Long-eared Owl | <i>Asio otus</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One was roosting in a garden in Folkestone during a spell of cold weather on the 17th January (D. Clarke) and one was seen at Nickoll's Quarry on the 22nd May (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts).

The 9th and 10th area records. This was the first winter record and the first year to produce more than one sighting. The May record again raises the question of whether this secretive species does perhaps occasionally breed locally.

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| Short-eared Owl | <i>Asio flammeus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

The only records related to one which flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 28th March and another which flew over Nickoll's Quarry on the 17th October.

After the record year of 2012 the total of two was below the annual average for the last ten years of 4.3.

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| Common Swift | <i>Apus apus</i> |
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first, six at Folkestone on the 25th April, were three days earlier than last year. The next was at Seabrook on the 29th April and there were regular records from early May, with a noticeable arrival on the 7th, when nine were at Saltwood Castle and 24 were at Saltwood. Further counts included 40 (including a flock of 25) in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 15th May and 100 at both Capel-le-Ferne and the Willop Outfall on the 29th May.

In June 250 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 28th and 47 flew west there the following day, when 119 flew high north-west over Cheriton. A further 54 flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd July but there were no large counts of departing birds. As usual numbers quickly dwindled in August with last sightings at Church Hougham on the 27th August and Samphire Hoe on the 14th September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed little or no change in breeding range in England since the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) but a widespread decline in abundance. An estimated 38% population decline in the UK during 1995-2010 appears to tally with this. Locally it was found in 45% less tetrads in 2007-11 compared to 1988-91. A possible reason for a decline is changes to construction techniques that restrict the availability of nesting cavities in new buildings. Breeding success may be related to summer weather and, as long-distance migrants wintering south of the equator, Swifts are susceptible to changes they encounter in conditions on migration and in their wintering areas.

Kingfisher*Alcedo atthis*

Breeding resident, with dispersal to coasts and non-breeding areas in autumn and winter.

Seen regularly along the canal between Seabrook and the West Hythe dam, and along the canal cutting near Botolph's Bridge where a pair attempted to use the same nest site as last year, though no evidence of success was noted. There were also a couple of records from Nickoll's Quarry in November and December.

There was an interesting record, presumably involving post-breeding dispersal, at Samphire Hoe on the 18th July.

European Bee-eater*Merops apiaster*

Very rare vagrant.

A remarkable flock of **ten** (the largest recorded to date and equalling the second largest group to be recorded in the county) were seen at Saltwood on the 14th May (G. Cooke) but unfortunately quickly moved on. Another was seen over Hythe on the 24th (S. McMinn), with presumably the same bird flying north-west over Nickoll's Quarry later that morning (I. A. Roberts).

These were the 8th and 9th area records. 2013 is the third year that has produced more than one record (with two records also in 2004 and 2008).

Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

Formerly bred, now a rare passage migrant.

One was seen at Capel-le-Ferne on the 2nd October (D. Chesterman). The 19th area record since 1980.

Green Woodpecker*Picus viridis*

Breeding resident.

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts received of resident birds. At Samphire Hoe, where the species is a winter visitor, there were regular records until early March, then a single on the 18th July, followed by intermittent sightings from early October to December.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed very little change in breeding range in England since the 1968-72 but this conceals a marked increase in abundance in eastern and south-eastern England. A separate study (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)) had shown a 115% population increase between 1970 and 2010. The Atlas reported that considerable gains were noted at a finer scale than the 10-km square distribution and this holds true locally where it has increased from 9 tetrads in 1968-72 to occupy 17 in 1988-91 and to 29 in 2007-11, which means that it now has a breeding status of at least 'possible' in all local tetrads. This demonstrates how this essentially woodland species has become familiar also as a bird of gardens and farmland.

Great Spotted Woodpecker*Dendrocopos major*

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts received of resident birds. Autumn passage was very light with one at Samphire Hoe on the 5th November being the only record received which appeared to relate to a migrant.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed a range expansion, particularly in the north and west of Britain and a colonisation of Ireland. Similarly to the Green Woodpecker there was little change in breeding range in south-eastern England as the species already occupied almost all 10-km squares, but there was a significant increase in

abundance and a population rise of 368% was recorded in the UK between 1970 and 2010 by separate study (*The state of the UK's birds (Eaton et al, 2012)*). Again there were considerable gains at a finer scale which was demonstrated locally by an increase from 3 tetrads in 1968-72 to 11 in 1988-91 and to 23 in 2007-11.

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| Great Grey Shrike |
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| <i>Lanius excubitor</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

One was at the eastern end of Abbotscliffe on the 30th October (M. D. Kennett). The 10th area record.

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| Magpie |
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| <i>Pica pica</i> |
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Breeding resident.

The only counts of note were a flock of 21 at Saltwood on the 24th January and 22 at Samphire Hoe on the 16th November.

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| Jay |
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| <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Resident birds were widely recorded. Spring passage might have been expected to have been more obvious following the record autumn movements, but the only sighting from the first half of the year which appeared to relate to migrants was of two flying east over Samphire Hoe on the 2nd June.

The only autumn record away from the usual sites was of two at Nickoll's Quarry on the 29th September.

2012

An additional record of another migrant at Samphire Hoe on 5th November has been received which increases the total for the record autumn passage to 295 birds.

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| Jackdaw |
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| <i>Corvus monedula</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

A large pre-roost flock of Jackdaws and Rooks was present in the Pedlinge area on the 25th February. It was estimated to have included some 2,500 birds around half of which were Jackdaws. In the latter part of the year 870 flew over Saltwood to roost on the 9th November.

The only suggestion of immigration was of eight arriving in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 14th March.

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| Rook |
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| <i>Corvus frugilegus</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

A large pre-roost flock of Jackdaws and Rooks was present in the Pedlinge area on the 25th February. It was estimated to have included some 2,500 birds around half of which were Rooks.

There was little evidence of passage though one flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 14th March and two were noted there on the 21st April.

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

The largest count received was of 31 on the beach at Samphire Hoe on the 15th February. There was little evidence of passage though this did include singles flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 27th April, 28th April and 5th May, and a flock of 17 in off the sea there on the 3rd May.

Formerly a vagrant, now a regular non-breeding visitor at any time of year.

There were a total of 37 records, with the monthly bird/day totals as follows:

| J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |
|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 8 | 11 | 4 | 6 |

All records related to single birds or a pair, apart from three at Samphire Hoe on the 19th October, though it is very difficult to determine how many individuals were involved. Most sightings were at the cliffs, between Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and Samphire Hoe, with two along nearby Crete Road East on the 13th February and one calling from a pylon there the next day. Elsewhere one flew west over the churchyard at Lympe on the 21st August, one was at Botolph's Bridge on the 21st August, one flew over Eaton Lands, Hythe on the 24th October and one was in Chesterfield Wood, Saltwood on the 1st December.



Tawny Owlet at Newington (Garry Blackburn)



Raven at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

Ticehurst in his *A History of the Birds of Kent* (1909) described how two former breeding sites of the Raven existed at the chalk cliffs, one at the South Foreland, the other between Dover and Folkestone. He states that "they were probably both tenanted from time immemorial, but the first reference to either is to the former in 1841. Mr Gordon of Folkestone informs me that the pair still bred on the cliffs between that town and Dover up till about twenty years ago" (i.e. about 1890 but breeding was not noted in the county thereafter). Ticehurst was also able to record that "in 1905 Mr J. Allchin, the Curator of the Maidstone Museum, reported that his cousin, who lived near Hythe, remembered a pair of Ravens nesting in the Saltwood Park, about 1855".

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed that by the time of the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) the species was confined to the north and west of Britain, but has since expanded its breeding range by 59% and "is now as much a bird of pastoral or mixed lowland farmland and forestry as it is of the uplands". It continued to note that only the Raven and Buzzard share this pattern of eastward range expansion in Britain.

The first modern local records concerned two sightings in 1997 but there were no more until 2006, since when it has been recorded annually. The first breeding in the county for over a century occurred near Dover during the most recent Atlas period, whilst locally a status of 'possible' breeding was recorded as birds were noted in suitable habitat, but there has been no sign of a breeding attempt yet.

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| Goldcrest |
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| <i>Regulus regulus</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

The cold weather in January appeared to bring small numbers into gardens and one was at Samphire Hoe on the 21st.

There was a light spring passage, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 17th March, one at Abbotscliffe the following day, two there on the 20th March, 16 bird/days at Samphire Hoe between the 9th and 21st April (with a peak of 3 on the 15th) and a singing bird there on the 17th May.

Autumn passage was almost non-existent, with a total of just eight birds recorded at Samphire Hoe between late September and late October, compared to the annual mean for the previous ten years of around 150.

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| Firecrest |
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| <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i> |
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Recently confirmed as a breeding species. Also a passage migrant and winter visitor.

There were records from the early winter period at Brockhill Country Park on the 24th February, West Hythe on the 17th March and Paraker Wood on the 31st March.

Spring passage was mainly noted in April, with singles at Samphire Hoe on the 9th and 10th, two there on the 12th, three at both Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and Samphire Hoe on the 13th, one at Hythe Roughs and five at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, and up to two at Samphire Hoe until the 19th.

Sandling Park, site of last year's breeding pair, was not visited this summer (it was only open to the public on a single day), and there were no other records from potential breeding sites. The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed an "astounding" change in breeding distribution, "with a 935% increase in occupation of 10km squares since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976)".

The Firecrest was not confirmed as breeding in Britain until 1962 (when a pair bred in Hampshire) but then has steadily increased since to a peak estimate of 1,000 pairs in 2010 (Holling *et al*, 2012) and hopefully further breeding records locally will follow. The habitats used by breeding Firecrests are described in by Mason (*British Birds 105: 258-262*) and vary from predominately deciduous woods to plantation predominately of conifers. Nevertheless all territories contained at least some evergreen cover, either in the canopy or as under-storey (the latter typically Holly) and all had at least some deciduous trees present. Non-native conifers appeared to be particularly favoured.

A total of 11 were recorded on autumn passage, thereby outnumbering Goldcrests. After a relatively earlier individual at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd September, there was one at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and two at Samphire Hoe on the 27th September, and one at the latter the following day. In October one was at Botolph's Bridge on the 5th, with three at Crete Hill on the 12th October, and singles at Samphire Hoe on the 21st and 26th October. A late migrant or wintering individual was at West Hythe dam on the 24th November.

2012

An additional record has been received of one at Samphire Hoe on the 10th September which was the first autumn record for the year.

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| Blue Tit | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were no counts of note or evidence of migration.

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| Great Tit | <i>Parus major</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were no notable counts received of resident birds. There was some evidence of spring passage with ten moving through Samphire Hoe on the 6th March and a flock of 22 seen at the eastern end of the site on the 7th April (only a single pair is resident there).

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| Coal Tit | <i>Periparus ater</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were no notable counts received of resident birds. Two at the eastern end of Samphire Hoe on the 7th April and a single there on the 20th April appeared to be of the nominate continental form.



Great Tit at Cheriton (Brian Harper)



Coal Tit at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

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|-----------|--------------------------|
| Marsh Tit | <i>Poecile palustris</i> |
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Breeding resident.

Coverage of the favoured areas was limited in 2013 and the only record received was of one at Brockhill Country Park on the 3rd March.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported a continuing population decline in Britain, with a 22% range contraction since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976). Locally there was a decrease from seven occupied tetrads in both the 1968-72 and 1988-91 atlases to two in 2007-12. Woodland habitat degradation is thought to be the most likely explanation for the decline. The species requires moderately large woodland patches in which to

breed and woodland fragmentation might be an important factor. They also prefer a complex understorey below tall, closed canopies and declining active woodland management is a possible mechanism for population decline and range contraction.

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| Bearded Tit |
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| <i>Panurus biarmicus</i> |
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Rare migrant and winter visitor.

A male bearing a metal ring was seen at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th December, was still present on the 28th (B. Harper, R. K. Norman) and remained into 2014. The 13th area record but the sixth in the last five years.

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| Sky Lark |
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| <i>Alauda arvensis</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

During the cold weather in January there was a huge movement on the 16th, with 545 logged arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe in just over one hour (the third highest ever count), but no other large numbers were noted.

Autumn passage included counts of 30 flying north over Saltwood on the 7th October and 25 at Abbotscliffe on the 7th November.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) stated that despite many decades of population decline (a 58% population decrease between 1970 and 2010 was reported in *The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)) there had been very little change in the distribution in Britain. Locally there was also very little change in tetrad occupancy between the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) and 2007-11 Atlas. Declines in Britain have been linked to changes in farming, particularly intensification of grassland management and the switch from spring to autumn sowing of cereals.

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| Sand Martin |
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| <i>Riparia riparia</i> |
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Passage migrant, has bred.

The first arrival, two at Nickoll's Quarry on the 10th (to 11th), were five days earlier than last year, but spring passage was very light with two in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd May being the only other record.

The first returning migrants were two flying west at Abbotscliffe on the relatively early date of 1st July but autumn passage was also disappointing with a peak count of 7 west at Samphire Hoe on the 17th September and the last going east there on the 29th September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) shows an apparent shift north-westward in the distribution of the Sand Martin, with most gains in the far north and west of Scotland and most losses across the south and east of England. The changes in breeding abundance presented there further emphasise this trend. Locally it was present in six tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) (with confirmed breeding in five), eight tetrads in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) (but with only a 'possible' status in seven of these) and not recorded at all in the 2007-11 Atlas.

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| Swallow |
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| <i>Hirundo rustica</i> |
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first report, of six at Samphire Hoe on the 24th March, was three days earlier than the arrival date last year but there were no further sightings until the 10th April when singles were seen at Nickoll's Quarry and flying north over Saltwood. There were however almost daily sightings thereafter, including 11 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 11th April, seven in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, four at Saltwood and 20 at Horn Street on the 14th, six east at

Samphire Hoe on the 20th April, ten west there on the 21st, ten in off the sea there and ten at Abbotscliffe on the 28th and 24 in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 30th April.

In May 85 flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, when another 20 were at Crete Road East, 20 flew in off the sea at the former site the following day, 15 arrived in off at Folkestone Pier and seven did likewise at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, another 21 flew in off the sea at Folkestone Pier on the 11th and 15 arrived at Samphire Hoe on the 12th. On the 18th ten flew in off the sea at Folkestone Pier, with 25 flying north over Hythe on the 21st and a mixed flock of 600 Swallows and House Martins were at Nickoll's Quarry on the 24th, but passage tailed off thereafter.

Return passage was noted from about mid-September, with the largest counts in the last week of the month. On the 21st there were 500+ at Nickoll's Quarry, with 2,000 flying north-east over Saltwood the following day and a major, widespread movement on the 23rd involved around 4,000 west at Samphire Hoe and 2,000 over Saltwood, with good numbers also noted at a number of other localities. On the 28th September there were at least 300 at Abbotscliffe, and the following day produced around 500 east at Nickoll's Quarry, 225 east at Samphire Hoe and "hundreds" moving east at Crete Hill.

Numbers decreased in October though 160 flew out to sea at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, when they were "moving through in steady numbers" at Capel-le-Ferne, 100 flew east at the former site on the 5th and 50+ were at Horn Street on the 20th, with the last six noted moving west at Abbotscliffe on the 30th October.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed increases in breeding abundance in the north and west of Britain and decreases in the south-east. These were not yet sufficient to influence the distribution at a high level, with the Swallow being recorded breeding in 95% of 10-km squares across Britain and Ireland which gives it the most extensive distribution of any summer migrant to these isles. Locally it was recorded with a status of at least 'possible' breeding in 24 tetrads in the latest Atlas but in 27 in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) which is an 11% decrease.

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| House Martin |
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| <i>Delichon urbicum</i> |
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first, at Nickoll's Quarry on the 11th April, was four days earlier than last year but there were no further sightings until two were at Samphire Hoe on the 20th, with six west there the next day and five in off the sea there on the 25th. Almost daily sightings followed however with arrivals including seven in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 28th, six in off the sea there on the 30th, 11 in off the sea there on the 3rd May and 17 in off the sea there on the 12th May. Numbers continued to increase in the second half of May with 20 at Samphire Hoe on the 17th, 40 there on the 21st, a mixed flock of 600 Swallows and House Martins at Nickoll's Quarry on the 24th, 100 at the Willop Outfall and 400 at Capel-le-Ferne on the 29th and 105 flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 31st.



House Martin at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith) and at ancestral nesting site below Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)

As usual birds were present at their ancestral haunts along the cliffs at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe, with 44 nests counted at the latter site. Post-breeding numbers began to build up at Samphire Hoe from late August, with 100 there on the 27th and 250 the next day, and 300 on the 2nd September and return passage was noted from just before mid-September. This included 1,040 flying west at Samphire Hoe with another 500 feeding there on the 14th, 350 there on the 19th and “hundreds” moving east at Crete Hill on the 29th September. Numbers decreased fairly quickly in October, with further counts of 200 at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, 180 west there on the 10th and the last 17 noted at Crete Hill on the relatively early date of 12th October.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed that House Martin has experienced a similar shift in its distribution to the Sand Martin and Swallow. There have been marked increases in breeding abundance in the north and west of Britain and decreases in the south-east. These are not yet sufficient to influence the distribution at a high level, apart from a very few gains in the extreme north and west of Scotland and western Ireland, but at the local level there was a 41% reduction in tetrad occupancy in the Folkestone and Hythe area between the 1988-91 and 2007-11 atlases.

Cetti's Warbler

Cettia cetti

Breeding resident.

Recorded from the local strongholds of Nickoll's Quarry and West Hythe, with a peak count at the former site of three on the 9th November, but there were no records from the Seabrook area. It is possible that the recent series of cold winters may have reversed some of population expansion referred to below: the rare breeding bird report for 2010 (Holling *et al*, 2012) reported the first drop in numbers for ten years following the hard winter of 2009/10.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) described how the “remarkable colonisation by the Cetti's Warbler has progressed strongly across England and Wales” since the first breeding record in Kent in 1973. It states that “numbers have risen exponentially, recently doubling in periods of four to seven years, and now total at least 1,900 territories (Holling *et al*, 2012). Across western Europe, the population has increased almost fourfold since 1990”. The colonisation of Britain was part of a major expansion northwards from Mediterranean France during the 20th century. It was not recorded locally in either of the earlier atlases but was present five tetrads in the most recent survey.

Long-tailed Tit

Aegithalos caudatus

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

There were no notable counts received of resident birds. Singles at the eastern end of Samphire Hoe on the 9th April and on the bird-feeders by the back car park there on the 17th April were at least local migrants.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported that monitoring has shown a progressive increase in Long-tailed Tit numbers, with a 97% increase in numbers in the UK during the period 1985-2010 (*BirdTrends*, 2012) and 115% over the longer-term, between 1970 and 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)). This increase however was only reflected to a limited degree in the change maps as the species was already widespread across Britain and Ireland. Locally it has increased from occupying six tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) to 25 tetrads in the most recent Atlas, a 317% increase in distribution.



Long-tailed Tit at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Rare migrant.

One was at Crete Hill on the 12th October (D. A. Gibson). This was only the 18th area record but the species has now been recorded in ten of the last 11 years.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with small numbers wintering.

Unusually there were no records in January or February, possibly as a result of the particularly prolonged cold weather, so the first of the year in a garden in Royal Military Avenue, Cheriton on the 3rd March was probably an early migrant. One at Samphire Hoe on the 9th March was certainly a new arrival, with another along the canal at Seabrook the following day, and one at Nickoll's Quarry on the 14th March. Sightings were frequent from the last week of March, including one in a garden in Lynton Road, Hythe on the 24th, two in a garden in East Cliff Gardens, Folkestone on the 26th, one in a garden in Browning Place, Folkestone the next day, one at Samphire Hoe on the 28th and one along the canal at Seabrook on the 30th.

Counts in April included six at Samphire Hoe on the 11th, five at Samphire Hoe and six at West Hythe on the 13th, 20+ along the canal by Hythe Roughs on the 14th and eight at Samphire Hoe on the 26th, but passage tailed off in May, though a newly arrived bird was singing at Samphire Hoe as late as the 7th June.

Early autumn migrants were at Samphire Hoe on the 13th August and Nickoll's Quarry on the 25th August, with regular sightings from early September including counts of seven at Samphire Hoe on the 8th September, 16 there on the 15th, 25 at Crete Hill and 15 at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 20th, 30 at Crete Hill on the 23rd, 22 at Samphire Hoe on the 26th and an exceptional arrival of 100+ at Crete Hill on the 29th September. This was the second largest count ever, following an extraordinary count of "over 700" at Cheriton on the 25th September 1967 (a few days earlier that month there has also been "unprecedented numbers (600)" at Dungeness on the 21st).

There were smaller numbers in October with the largest counts being 27 at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, 37 there the next day and the last double-figure totals being ten at Crete Hill and 11 at Samphire Hoe on the 9th, with regular records into the first half of November, and later birds at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and Copt Point on the 17th, whilst an individual showing some characteristics of *tristis* was at Samphire Hoe on several dates between the 26th November and 9th December.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed a 20% expansion in the breeding distribution since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976), though most of the gains were in northern Britain, reflecting a northward expansion of the breeding range. In England the population increased by 69% between 1995 and 2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely *et al*, 2012)) and, correspondingly, tetrad occupancy rates have increased in many 10-km squares. Locally it has increased from being present in 16 tetrads in the 1968-72 Atlas to occupying all 29 tetrads by the most recent Atlas, an 81% increase in distribution.

The change in the winter distribution has been even more substantial with an increase of 85% in the number of occupied 10-km squares Britain since the 1981-84 Winter Atlas. It had previously been largely coastal in its winter distribution and these gains have resulted in a substantial colonisation of range inland and a considerable northward expansion, whilst abundance in coastal areas increased markedly. Locally it was relatively rare in the winter period before 1990 but its presence now is expected.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrivals were even later than last year due to particularly cold weather in late March and early April, not appearing until the 11th April when there was one at Botolph's Bridge and two at Samphire Hoe. On the 13th there were singles at Samphire Hoe and West Hythe, whilst six were counted along the canal by Hythe Roughs on the 14th. Ones and twos were seen at Samphire Hoe regularly through the second half of April into early May whilst notably late migrants were at Broadmead Village on the 17th May and at Samphire Hoe on the 5th June.

Returning birds were noted from early August and autumn passage was improved on previous years. Counts of five or more in August comprised six at Samphire Hoe on the 6th, five at Abbotscliffe on the 11th, five at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, 30 (the highest total since 2006) at Abbotscliffe on the 14th, seven at Samphire Hoe on the 17th, five at Samphire Hoe on the 21st, five at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd and ten at Nickoll's Quarry on the 25th. Lower numbers were noted in September with the last two at Samphire Hoe on the 15th.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed a striking change in distribution, with widespread declines in the proportion of tetrads occupied by Willow Warblers across much of England, contrasting with increases in most of Scotland and Ireland. This pattern is shared with several other long-distance migrants, including Cuckoo and House Martin. Despite this pattern of loss at tetrad resolution, it still has a very wide breeding distribution and occupies 92% of 10-km squares in Britain making it the most widespread of migrant warblers.

Monitoring data shows a 28% decline in numbers in England between 1995 and 2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely *et al*, 2012)) and this is probably most marked in the south. Locally it was confirmed breeding in 21 tetrads in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) but a breeding status of at least probable was only recorded in five tetrads in the latest survey, with confirmed breeding in just one (a recorded status of 'possible' in a further ten is likely to have related to migrants). Changing climatic conditions in Britain, the quality of the breeding habitat, and environmental changes on the wintering grounds in Africa are considered to be driving the changes in abundance at the regional scale.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with small numbers wintering.

During the early winter period there were birds in gardens at Palmbeach Avenue, Palmmarsh (a male), Saltwood (a male and a female in different gardens), Carter's Road, Cheriton (a male present from late December 2012), Joyes Road, Folkestone (a male) and East Cliff Gardens, Folkestone (a male which lingered until late March and began singing from mid-month).

With an increasing number of wintering birds in recent years it is becoming more difficult to identify the first new arrivals of the spring. A male along the canal at Green Lane, Hythe on the 7th April appeared to be a good candidate but a number were also seen in gardens at this time, with a male at Lympe on the 7th to 8th April, two males at East Cliff Gardens, Folkestone (where at least one male had been wintering) on the 10th April and three males in a garden at Laurel Close, Cheriton on the 11th April. A male at Samphire Hoe though on the 11th April was certainly a migrant and arrivals continued through April, with a peak count of seven along the canal by Hythe Roughs on the 14th.

It is similarly tricky to distinguish the first returning migrants and these may have occurred from mid-August but counts did not exceed three until there was a marked arrival of 20 at Samphire Hoe on the 15th September. There were further counts of note of eight at Samphire Hoe on the 16th September, eight at Crete Hill on the 23rd September, six there on the 2nd October, nine at Samphire Hoe on the 5th October, eight there the following day and six there on the 9th October. Small numbers were regularly seen until the end of the month and later sightings involved a female/immature at Samphire Hoe on the 8th November and a male which remained in the sea buckthorn bushes there from the 12th November to the 1st December.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer et al, 2013) clearly demonstrates the increasing number of wintering birds referred to above, with a 77% increase in 10-km square occupancy since the 1981-84 Winter Atlas. Furthermore *The Garden Bird Feeding Survey* (BTO, 2013) reports “a striking increase since the 1990s”, with numbers peaking in gardens in late January or February.

Densities appear to be highest in the milder south and west of Britain and this increase has been attributed, at least in part, to milder winters leading to a change in migration patterns. A proportion of Blackcaps from breeding populations in central Europe have adapted their migratory strategy and now winter in Britain. This is thought to increase these birds winter survival and allow them to return earlier to their breeding grounds.

There have also been extensive gains in the breeding range. Since the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) the range has expanded in Britain by 25% (with most gains in Scotland) and by 249% in Ireland. The highest densities occur mostly in lowland areas across southern Britain and here there have been widespread increases in breeding abundance. Nationally numbers in the UK have increased by 102% between 1995 and 2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely et al, 2012)), and over the longer-term by 222% between 1970 and 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton et al, 2012)), whilst locally it has increased from occupying nine tetrads in the 1968-72 Atlas to 26 tetrads in the most recent survey (a 189% increase).

The Blackcap is a relatively adaptable species that has colonised urban and suburban areas to a far greater degree than most other migrants.

2012

Additional records have been received of one at Samphire Hoe on the 18th November (presumably the latest migrant bird of the year) and one, another wintering bird, in a garden off Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone towards the end of December.

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| Garden Warbler |
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| <i>Sylvia borin</i> |
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first was not noted until 4th May when two were at one of the local breeding sites in Heane Wood, Saltwood.

Autumn passage was typically light, with just two singles recorded: at Nickoll's Quarry on the 28th August and Samphire Hoe on the 9th September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer et al, 2013) reported a 12% range expansion in Britain and Ireland since the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976). Gains however were most evident in the west and north of the range, mainly in Scotland and Ireland, and breeding abundance appears to have declined in the south and east. This corresponds with a 16% decline in numbers in England between 1995 and 2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely et al, 2012)), which it would appear is most marked in the south and south-east of England. Locally the decline is striking; the Garden Warbler occupied 19 tetrads in the *1988-91 Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons et al, 1993) but just two in the latest survey.

The contrast in its fortunes in Britain and Ireland suggest a possible influence of climatic change and numbers have shown a widespread moderate decline across Europe since 1980. It is also possible that changes in climate or land use in these wintering areas may be driving the declines. Might competition from the increasing Blackcap also be a factor?

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrival, one at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd April, was even later (by two days) than last year but was quickly followed by others at Seabrook and Crete Road West on the 25th and Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 30th. Arrivals continued into May but there were no counts of note.

Autumn passage was light, with peak counts of six at Abbotscliffe on the 14th August and four at Samphire Hoe on the 15th September, whilst the last, at Crete Hill on 29th September, was relatively late.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first arrival, one at Seabrook on the 14th April, was even later (by three days) than last year, but there were daily sightings thereafter and numbers gradually increased: for example at Samphire Hoe the first was seen on the 15th April, with two on the 17th, three on the 20th, four on the 21st, six on the 23rd, seven on the 25th and eight on the 26th April. Elsewhere counts of six at Abbotscliffe on the 28th April and 12 at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 30th April were notable.

Autumn migrants were noted from early August, with the largest counts being nine at Abbotscliffe on the 5th, 24 there on the 11th, 17 there on the 12th, 11 at Samphire Hoe on the 16th, 13 at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd and 12 Samphire Hoe on the 26th August. Ten were at Samphire Hoe on the 5th September but numbers then steadily decreased, with the last there on the 30th September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported that the Whitethroat has never fully recovered from the major population crash which occurred during the 1968/69 winter as a result of severe droughts on their wintering grounds south of the Sahara. There has been a steady increase of 15% over the last 40 years however (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)) and there was a 43% rise between 1995 and 2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely *et al*, 2012)), which is reflected in the change in breeding relative abundance. Locally it has increased from occupying 20 tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) to 27 in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) and to 28 in the latest survey.

2012

An additional record received of two at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October becomes the last of the year.

Passage migrant, formerly bred.

Singles were at Abbotscliffe on the 11th August, Samphire Hoe on the 5th and 13th September, and Abbotscliffe again on the 28th September.

The annual mean for the previous ten years was 4.1 so this was very much an average showing.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed losses in 10-km square occupancy across a large swathe of English south-coast counties (though these were offset by gains in Scotland and Ireland). Locally it was present in five tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) but had disappeared by the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) and was not recorded in the most recent survey. Reasons for the decline are unclear but may include succession, loss or degradation of habitat (including the removal of critical low vegetation through grazing) and factors affecting conditions on passage and in the wintering grounds.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first, two at Nickoll's Quarry on the 21st April, were considerably than the rather early arrival last year but appeared on the same date as the first in 2011. At least two territorial males were at Nickoll's Quarry and breeding probably occurred.

The first returning birds were two at Samphire Hoe on the 12th August, with further singles there on ten dates to the 13th September, and two there on the 16th and 23rd August. Elsewhere one was at Abbotscliffe on the 14th August, with the last at Nickoll's Quarry on the 25th August and there was an unusual record of one catching moths in a garden in Leaside Cottages, Saltwood in the evening of the 2nd September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported that the long-term pattern in Britain is of range loss in England, especially the south and east, and gains in Wales and northwest Scotland. In addition to broad changes in distribution, the abundance change map showed declines in the proportions of occupied tetrads in eastern England, contrasting with strong increases in tetrad occupancy in Ireland and in northern and western Britain. This is borne out locally, where it was present in eight tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976), seven in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) and five in the most recent survey.

Factors underlying this geographical variation are current unknown. Sedge Warblers show a trend of earlier spring arrival in Britain, and thus factors relating to migration and climate change may be implicated.

Rare summer visitor and passage migrant.

A singing male held territory in the area from the 17th to the 20th June (M. Kennett, I. A. Roberts). The bird was in suitable breeding habitat so the exact location cannot be disclosed. Unfortunately though it appears that it moved on without attracting a female.

This was the only the second record since 2006 but follows the singing male which held territory in the Botolph's Bridge area last year.

Marsh Warblers were locally established as a breeding species between 1987 (perhaps earlier) and 2006, but are now considered to only be rare opportunistic breeders in coastal areas in eastern Britain. The latest rare breeding bird report (Holling *et al*, 2013) states that no confirmed breeding was reported in Britain in 2011.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first, one along the canal at Seabrook was on the 17th April, was five days later than the arrival date last year. Arrival continued through late April and most of the usual sites appeared to be occupied by early May.

Unusually there were no late spring migrants noted from the cliffs but returning birds were at Abbotscliffe on the 15th July and 23rd August, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 27th August, two there on the 4th September and the last on the 6th September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported that annual monitoring shows that numbers in Britain have more than doubled over the past 40 years and that this growth continues, with a 36% increase during 1995 to 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)). Part of this increase is related to a northward and westward expansion of range, including the colonisation of Ireland and Scotland, but there have also been increases in tetrad occupancies in a number of areas, including the Romney Marsh.

Locally it increased from occupying five tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) to 12 in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) but with no further range expansion in the recent survey. It may be the case however that all tetrads with sufficient *Phragmites* cover are now occupied and that the populations within these tetrads continue to increase. There is some evidence of this from Nickoll's Quarry, where Roger Norman considered that during the 1990s the number of singing birds "increased through the decade" (Norman, 2007).

Waxwing

Bombycilla garrulus

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor, with occasional large influxes.

Following the arrival in late 2012 up to 116 were recorded in the early winter period. On the 2nd January six were seen at the junction of Archer Road and Canterbury Road, Folkestone (B. Harper), whilst the following day eight were at Hill Road, Folkestone (M. Varley) and a flock of about 20 were seen by the A20 near Coombe Farm (I. A. Roberts). A flock of 11 were at Churchill Avenue, Folkestone on the 15th January (A. Bleach) and 20 were seen along the canal east of Twiss Road, Hythe on the 25th January (J. Walder), whilst eight were at Seabrook the following day (A. Jupp), with eight, possibly the same, at Hythe Ranges (B. Findlay) later that afternoon.



Waxwings at Seabrook (Ade Jupp)

In March 15 were at the junction of Grimstone Avenue and Westbourne Gardens, Folkestone on the 2nd (P. Sharp) and between ten and 15 were seen at the junction of Surrenden Road and Wells Road, Cheriton on the 15th (L. Harper).

Finally ten were reported on Brockman Road, Folkestone on the 13th April (observer not known).

2012

An additional record was received of 14 feeding on rosehips by the Holiday Inn, Cheriton, on the 18th December, increasing to 24 the next day (B. Findlay). This increases the total for the arrival in November and December to 128 and the total for the 2012/13 winter to 244. This does not allow for any duplication apart from obvious cases like this flock seen on consecutive days at the same site however, in contrast to other influx years, few flocks stayed for any length of time, with most moving quickly on. The 2012/13 arrival is the third largest to date, following the really 'big years' of 1995/96 and 2010/11.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) stated that it appears that Waxwings are becoming more regular winter visitors to Britain and Ireland.

Nuthatch

Sitta europaea

Breeding resident.

As usual most records were from the woods around Saltwood.

Breeding resident.

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts or unusual sightings received.

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts or unusual sightings received.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

The only counts of note in the early part of the year were of 230 flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 15th March, 155 east at Abbotscliffe on the 20th March and 220 north over Saltwood on the 2nd April. The first post-breeding birds noted at Samphire Hoe were five on the 26th June and six flew in off the sea there the next day, with one being taken by a Peregrine. Five were again present on the 30th June then numbers increased to 26 on the 9th July, 40 on the 12th July, 50 on the 14th July and peaked at 150 on the 12th August, with 120 still present on the 15th, but dispersing fairly quickly thereafter and only small numbers were noted there in the second half of the month and in September.

Wintering birds were noted arriving from late October, with 100 in off the sea at Samphire Hoe and 310 in off at Abbotscliffe on the 30th October, 200 in off at Samphire Hoe on the 11 November, 60 in off there the next day, 400 at the Willop Basin on the 14th November, 280 in off at Samphire Hoe on the 15th November, 500 in off there on the 22nd November and 180 in off there the following day.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed very little change in breeding range but major declines in tetrad occupancy throughout much of Britain since the *1988-91 Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993), consistent with a 50% decline in numbers in the UK during 1995-2010, and 80% over a longer-term forty year period (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)). Locally the species still occupied 28 of the 29 tetrads in the latest survey but population data is not available. A decrease in the survival of first-year birds is thought likely to be a driver of this decline.

Passage migrant.

Two at Crete Hill on the 3rd May were the only spring sighting. Two at Samphire Hoe and four at Abbotscliffe on the 28th September were the first of a very good autumn passage. The following day saw an increase to three at Samphire Hoe and five were at Crete Hill, but on the 30th there was just a single at the former site. A flock of 22 were at Crete Hill on the 2nd October before they flew east towards Capel-le-Ferne, where two were later reported, with six at Samphire Hoe, whilst the next day saw one at Crete Hill and four at Samphire Hoe, with just a single at the latter site on the 4th. Six were at Samphire Hoe on the 5th October and one was at Nickoll's Quarry the following day, with singles at Samphire Hoe on the 8th and 11th, and five at Crete Hill on the latter date.



Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

On the 12th October conditions were remarkably similar to when the record arrival occurred in 1998, with a rain-bearing trough moving north coupled with north-easterly winds, and produced a notable arrival, with 35 at Crete Hill, 20 at Samphire Hoe, 15-20 at Abbotscliffe and two at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site (a day count of at least of 72 and a total only exceeded in 1998). Numbers quickly decreased however with none recorded the following day, just five at Samphire Hoe and one at Abbotscliffe on the 14th, two at the former site on the 15th and one there on the 18th and 19th. In November one was at Samphire Hoe on the 10th with another lingering there from the 15th to the 25th, and possibly a different individual on the 16th to the 17th. The departure date was 29 days later than in 2012 and there has only ever been one later record – one which remained at the same site until the 26th November 2005.

The annual total of around 150 birds was the second best ever after 1998 when up to 910 were recorded, including an incredible arrival of around 500 on the 7th October, including a single flock of 140.

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January appeared to lead to some local increases in numbers including counts of 20 at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, 20 at Church Hougham the following day, 15 at the former site on the 16th January and ten there on the 21st January.

Autumn passage was very light, with a peak of just ten at Samphire Hoe on the 15th November.

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

The cold weather in January led to a significant arrival. The first two were at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, with 19 at Church Hougham the next day, 27 at Samphire Hoe (including 24 arriving in off the sea) on the 16th, 20 there on the 21st, 64 at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, 30+ at Cheriton Polo Ground and large numbers at Saltwood on the 25th, and 258 at Botolph's Bridge on the 27th. There were also numerous reports of smaller numbers from other localities, including several venturing into gardens. Numbers were generally lower in February, with the exception of a count of 200 in the Round Down area on the 11th, whilst four at Samphire Hoe on the 24th were the last of the winter influx there. The last of the early winter period were six at Samphire Hoe on the 11th April.

The first autumn birds – four flying west over Paraker Wood and six at Crete Hill on the 11th October – were 11 days earlier than the arrival date last year. The following day saw one flying north at Samphire Hoe, three at Abbotscliffe and the autumn peak of 43 at Crete Hill. Another was at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October but no further migrants were noted until one was at Samphire Hoe between the 23rd and 28th November.

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January appeared to lead to some local increases including counts of eight at Church Hougham on the 15th and eight at Samphire Hoe the next day, where numbers build up to 12 on the 17th and 15 on the 19th, with ten still present on the 26th January, but only six on the 2nd February.

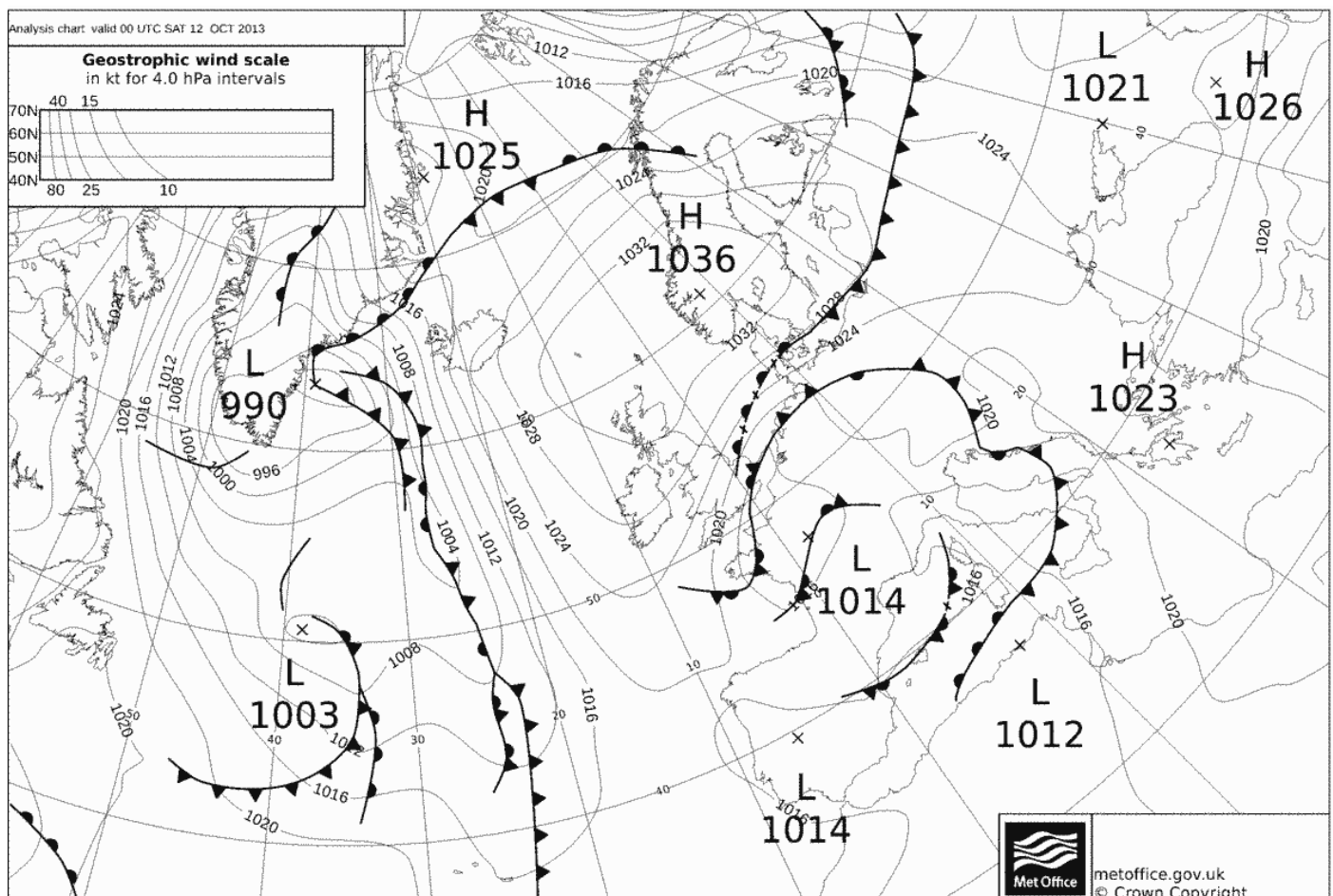
The first autumn migrant was at Samphire Hoe on the 9th September but the bulk of the arrival took place from late September, including 30 at Crete Hill on the 29th. In October there were nine at Crete Hill on the 2nd, Seven at Nickoll's Quarry on the 6th, five at Samphire Hoe on the 10th and ten at Crete Hill on the 11th, before an exceptional 110 were noted at Crete Hill on the 12th, with eight at Samphire Hoe the same day. This influx was linked to the much larger arrival of Redwings and exceeded the previous highest day count of 100 in Folkestone Warren at dawn on the 30th September 1956. Much smaller numbers were noted through the remainder of October and up to six were at Samphire Hoe in November and December, with eight there on the 22nd/23rd November.

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Cold weather in January led to a significant influx, with the first notable count being 62 at Church Hougham on the 15th, 35 at Samphire Hoe the next day, 50 there on the 19th, 45 there still on the 23rd, large numbers at Saltwood on the 25th, 25 at Nickoll's Quarry on the 26th and 34 at Botolph's Bridge the following day. Numbers decreased in February with the only double-figure counts being 15 flying over Crete Road East on the 13th and 14 at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd. In March there was a peak of 18 at Samphire Hoe on the 15th and 75 were in horse paddocks at the end of Parsonage Lane, Church Hougham on the 19th. In April 15 were at Samphire Hoe on the 11th but one there on the 13th was the last.

The first of the autumn were two at Crete Road East on the 7th October and these were followed by a decent arrival of at least 260 in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 10th and a westward movement over Seabrook in the afternoon. The events of the following day however were astonishing with a conservative estimate of **30-40,000** moving west over Seabrook, far exceeding the previous record count. The observer Ade Jupp noted that: the birds "were coming from over the hills to the east from the direction of Shorncliffe Cemetery and then heading towards the southern end of High Ridge and Naildown [Seabrook]" and that he "was missing the birds flying lower along the seafront", as this could not be seen from his vantage point. From the early morning Redwings were moving at an estimated 1,000 per hour and this increased to a rate of around 12,000 per hour about midday (based on sample counts), but "died off quite suddenly" mid-afternoon. He thought that "30-40,000 was a perfectly reasonable estimate" though "conservative" and that "possibly two or three times" this amount was involved. It was "the most amazing movement of migrant birds" that he had ever seen.

The weather chart below shows the situation as at midnight on the 12th October and clearly demonstrates the conditions which produced the exceptional arrivals of Redwings, Ring Ouzels and Song Thrushes over the 11th-12th.



Elsewhere that day there were just 150 at Crete Hill and 250 at Saltwood but the next morning (12th) saw a count of 2,500 at Crete Hill, “impressive numbers” at Saltwood and smaller counts at other sites but birds appeared to quickly disperse as the weather cleared. Numbers during the remainder of the autumn were relatively modest, with no counts over 20.

There was a late nocturnal movement of c.10 over Hythe on the night of the 10th/11th December but very few wintering birds were noted in December, with up to two at Samphire Hoe being the only count received.

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| Mistle Thrush |
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| <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> |
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Breeding resident.

A single at Abbotscliffe on the 20th March might have been a migrant but in October there was a definite movement associated with a large arrival of other thrushes, with two flying east at Samphire Hoe and 11 at Crete Hill on the 12th, and nine at Abbotscliffe on the 14th (with others noted along the coast at Dungeness).

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed very little change in breeding range but declines in tetrad occupancy throughout much of England. These mirror a breeding population decline which has been underway since the 1970s and encompasses a 35% decline in England during 1995-2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely *et al*, 2012)). Locally it occupied 28 tetrads in the 1998-91 Atlas but only 21 tetrads in the most recent survey (a 25% decrease). This decline is likely to have been driven by reductions in annual survival.



Fieldfare at Cheriton (Brian Harper)



Mistle Thrush at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

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| Spotted Flycatcher |
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| <i>Muscicapa striata</i> |
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Declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

In spring singles were at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd and 29th May, with a late bird flying north there on the 28th June.

Autumn passage was also light, with one at Samphire Hoe and two at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 26th August, one at Samphire Hoe on the 12th September and one at Nickoll’s Quarry on the 6th October.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) states that, though there has only been a relatively minor range loss in Britain (10% at 10-km resolution since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976)), the abundance change map is amongst the most consistently negative of any species.

The declines in tetrad occupancy correlate with a 50% decrease in population during 1995-2010, which was part on 88% decline record since 1970 (*The state of the UK's birds (Eaton et al, 2012)*). Moderate declines are also evident across Europe. Locally it has declined from occupying 14 tetrads in the 1988-94 Atlas to four in the 2007-11 Atlas (a 71% decrease) and there have been no suggestions of breeding in either of the two most recent summers.

Reduced survival of first-year birds is thought to be the main demographic factor behind the decline. The Spotted Flycatcher is one of several long-distance migrants wintering in the humid zone of West Africa that are currently in steep population decline, suggesting their declines have a common cause, acting on migration or on the wintering grounds. However reduction in invertebrate food during the summer may also be relevant.

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

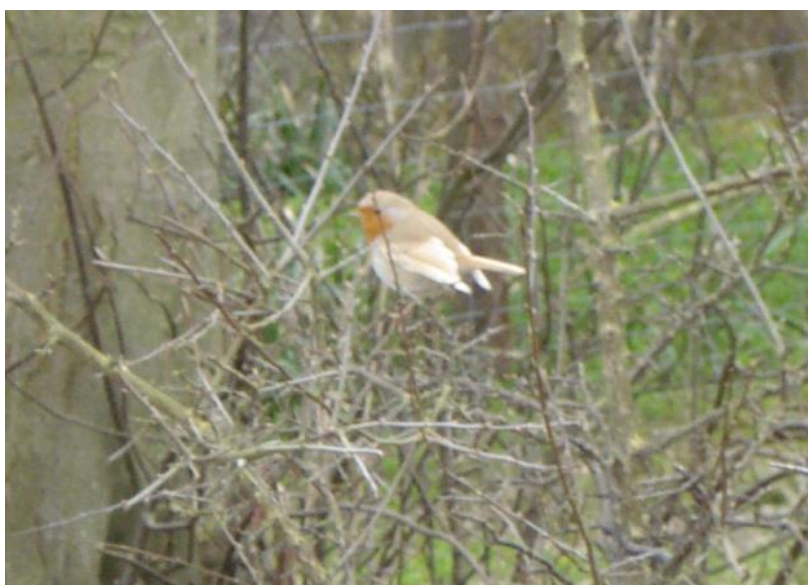
The peak count received from the early part of the year was eight at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd February. The species does not breed there however so a juvenile on the 22nd July was notable and autumn migrants were noted regularly there from mid-August, with several singles before three were noted on the 24th. Twos and threes were then noted on most dates, with a larger count of nine on the 5th September. Elsewhere “large numbers” were at Crete Hill and Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 20th September whilst eight were at Samphire Hoe on the 28th September.

In October nine were at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, with 12 there and c.30 at Crete Hill on the 7th, and 30 at Samphire Hoe on the 12th, with 20 there on the 7th November.

An aberrant individual, probably a “brown” mutation was seen at Cheriton Hill on the 16th April. For further information on colour aberrations in birds refer to van Grouw, 2013 (*British Birds: 106, 17-29*).



Robin at Cheriton (Brian Harper)



Aberrant Robin at Cheriton Hill (Phil Green)

Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

One was reported at Samphire Hoe on the 14th April and one singing at Hythe Ranges on the 23rd May was reported as having been present “for a couple of weeks”.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11 (Balmer et al, 2013)* showed a 43% contraction in range in England since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas (Sharrock, 1976)* towards the south-eastern strongholds of Kent, Sussex and Essex. Even in these

counties there has been a marked decline in breeding abundance and numbers of Nightingales in England have declined by 90% in the last 40 years, and in the shorter term by 52% during 1995-2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely et al, 2012)).

Locally it has declined from occupying nine tetrads in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) to three in the 2007-11 *Atlas* (a 67% decrease) and numbers were formerly much greater: c.12 pairs were present in Folkestone Warren in 1957, at least 15 pairs bred at Saltwood in 1974 and up to six singing males were regularly recorded at Hythe Ranges until the mid-1990s (with a peak of eight there in 1983).

Whereas other northwest European countries have also experienced declines, the trend for Europe as a whole is stable, with central and southern countries having recorded increases. The decline in Britain is thought to probably be attributable to a combination of factors which include habitat loss and reductions in breeding habitat quality, pressures on migration and degradation of the habitat in the West Africa winter quarters. The position of England at the limit of the species' global range may also be highly relevant.

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| Bluethroat |
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| <i>Luscinia svecica</i> |
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Very rare vagrant.

A female was at Samphire Hoe on the 27th March and, though it could not been found on the afternoon of the 27th or on the 28th, what was presumably the same bird reappeared on the 29th March and then performed well to the 3rd April and was the subject of the largest twitch of 2013 (P. Holt *et al*).

This was the fourth area record, following an immature/female at Folkestone on the 22nd September 1959, a female at Abbotscliffe on the 13th to 14th April 1996 and a male at Nickoll's Quarry on the 17th March 2002. In view of the date the first record could have been of the red-spotted form (*L. s. svecica*) but the other three are very likely to have been the white-spotted form, (*L. s. cyanecula*). This year's bird was almost certainly so, arriving as part of an exceptional influx of Bluethroats into southern England in late March and early April, which involved 14 birds (12 which were white-spotted males, with just two females). The only possible doubt really is that it, and others in the influx, were of the potentially overlooked form *L. s. namnetum* which is a summer visitor to central and western France and a candidate for vagrancy to Britain. The southern bias to the influx did suggest this possibility but the biometrics of trapped birds and even genetic analysis were inclusive. For more information see Cade, 2013 (*Birding World* 26: 288-297).

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| Pied Flycatcher |
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| <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i> |
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Passage migrant.

One was at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 29th August.

The annual mean for the previous ten years was 3.5 birds so this was a poor showing.

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| Black Redstart |
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| <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

One was wintering at Samphire Hoe from January into March, with two reported there on the 14th January, and singles were noted in the Folkestone Pier and Harbour area on several dates between January and 9th March, with a pair present on the Pier on the 9th February.

A fine male at Samphire Hoe on the 9th March was newly-arrived and a pair was seen in the car park there on the 24th March. A male was at Abbotscliffe on the 25th March, with singles at Hythe Ranges and Samphire Hoe (a male) the next day, and another near the Hythe Redoubt on the 27th. A male was again at Samphire Hoe on the 30th March with a female there the next day.

In April a pair remained at Samphire and arrival continued with singles on Hythe seafront on the 6th and Folkestone Pier on the 9th, whilst an additional female was at Samphire Hoe on the 13th and four were reported there on the 23rd, with one at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 30th April. In May a count of three at Samphire Hoe on the 19th included an additional singing male and another bird which appeared to be a new arrival.

At Samphire Hoe a male held territory at the eastern end and whilst there was no firm evidence of breeding three birds were seen there from mid-August. Elsewhere a pair were seen feeding newly-fledged young below Abbotscliffe on the 26th July.

Up to three were seen regularly at Samphire Hoe throughout September, with a peak of four there on the 10th, and six were counted there on the 6th October, but numbers dropped off thereafter with most reports relating to single birds. At least one remained into late November, with two reported on the 27th November, and one on two dates in December. Elsewhere there were singles at Hythe Redoubt on the 21st September and Folkestone Harbour on the 14th October.

2012

Additional winter sightings were received from Samphire Hoe where singles were seen on three dates in January and one in February.



Black Redstart at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)



Whinchat at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

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| Common Redstart | <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> |
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Passage migrant.

There were no spring records for the first time since 2007 but autumn passage was reasonable and began with one at Samphire Hoe on the 15th August, followed by two at Nickoll's Quarry on the 25th and one along Crete Road East on the 30th August. In September singles were at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe on the 4th, with another at the latter site on the 16th and one there from the 28th September to the 2nd October, with the last at Crete Hill on the 12th October. The total of 11 bird/days (at least 8 individuals) was slightly better than the mean for the previous ten years of 8.4.

2012

An additional record was received of one at Samphire Hoe on the 14th September and the lingering late-stayer there was last reported on the 23rd October and so equalled the second-latest date ever.

Whinchat*Saxicola rubetra*

Passage migrant. Has bred in the past.

As usual spring passage was light, with just two (a male and a female) at Samphire Hoe on the 26th April.

Autumn passage was noted between the 14th August and 6th October, with the majority at the cliffs where there were peaks counts of five at Samphire Hoe on the 30th August, and 3rd and 6th September. Away from the chalk singles were at Botolph's Bridge on the 26th August, Nickoll's Quarry on the 20th and 21st September and Princes Parade, Seabrook on the latter date. The total of 62 bird/days was the highest for three years but still only just about average, with the mean for the previous ten years being 60.

Stonechat*Saxicola torquatus*

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to five were seen at Samphire Hoe in January, February and March, and three pairs were noted there on the 20th April, at least two of which bred successfully. Counts in autumn there included six on the 27th September, eight on the 5th October, seven on the 30th October and six on the 19th November, with at least three remaining through December.

Elsewhere there were several records at Abbotscliffe, one was at Nickoll's Quarry on the 16th November and a pair was at the Willop Basin on the 11th December.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) stated that there had been a decline in range between the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) and the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) but the most recent survey had shown that virtually all of these losses had been reversed along with substantial eastward expansion. The local position fits the same pattern with two tetrads occupied in the first survey, just one in the second but five in the most recent atlas.

The recent increases are attributed to a series of mild winters which came to an abrupt end with the severe winters of 2009/10 and 2010/11. These caused a sharp reversal of the previously positive population trends – in 2007, the UK breeding population was 209% higher than in 1995 but by 2010 it was only 19% higher (BBS Report 2011 (Risely *et al*, 2012)). Yet another hard winter in 2012/13 is likely to have reduced numbers still further.

Wheatear*Oenanthe oenanthe*

A rare breeding summer visitor but common passage migrant.

The first arrival, one at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd March, was rather late due to particularly cold weather. The median arrival date over the previous ten years was 17th March. The following day however produced two at the same site with singles there on the 26th and 31st March but no more until one there on the 9th April. Further singles followed on the 13th and 14th April, with three on the 16th and 17th, but then just scattered singles again before the 26th April finally produced a decent arrival when ten were at Samphire Hoe with four at both Folkestone Pier and Mill Point. Four were also at Abbotscliffe on the 28th April with ones and twos at Samphire Hoe until 7th May. The spring total of 49 bird/days was very much in line with the mean for the previous ten years of 49.6.

Recorded in autumn between the 4th August and 30th October, with peaks counts of five at Abbotscliffe on the 14th August, eight at Samphire Hoe on the 27th August, and nine there the next day with 12 on the 30th August, and six there on the 17th September. The autumn total of 109 bird/days was also rather close to the previous ten year mean (of 117).

Breeding resident and passage migrant.

A widespread resident. There appeared to be an increase at coastal sites in the autumn, suggestive of passage, including a count of 12 at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October.



Dunnock and Wheatear at Princes Parade, Seabrook (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident.

A common though declining resident but there were no counts of note received.

At Samphire Hoe where the species is unusual there were singles on the 11th January, 25th January, 14th to 15th July, 7th to 9th October, and 2nd November.

There has been a rapid decline of 64% in the UK breeding population between 1970 and 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)) though numbers have perhaps stabilised in the last decade. The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed that whilst this was not evident in the breeding range at 10-km resolution, as the House Sparrow still occupies virtually every square in England, there are marked reductions in tetrad occupancy however across much of the country.

Locally it was still found in the latest survey in all but one of the 29 tetrads, a decrease of a single tetrad or 3% since the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993), but there certainly has been a decrease in numbers. Three-figure counts were almost annual until the 1990s but there has not been one since 2000. Extensive research into these changes indicates that different factors are likely to drive trends in urban and rural populations. Low first-year survival rates, connected with reduction in winter food supply caused by agricultural intensification, are probably key factors affecting rural populations, whereas in towns and cities reduced breeding performance has probably been more important, potentially owing to reductions in invertebrate prey availability, air pollution and lack of nest sites.

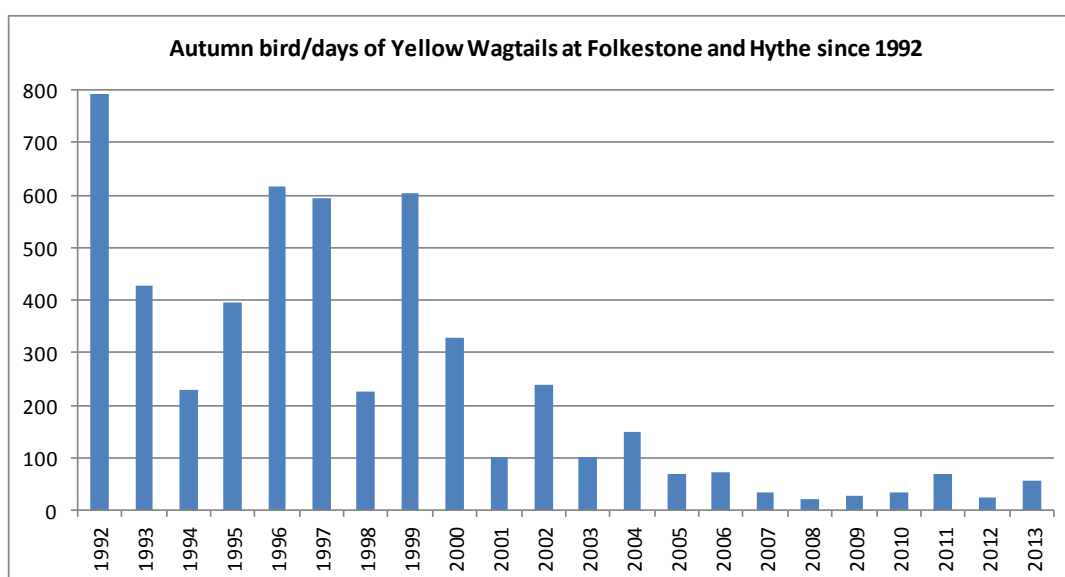
Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first, two in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 13th April, were two days later than the arrival date last year but the main arrival appeared to occur earlier this year, with more records in April, including two in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 19th, one north over Saltwood on the 20th, four in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 21st, one in off there on the 25th, two in off there on the 26th and 27th, and one in off on the 29th. There were also three at Botolph's Bridge on the 28th April and one at Nickoll's Quarry the next day.

Arrival continued into May, with one in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, two in off there on the 3rd and one in off on the 5th, one on the golf course by the Hotel Imperial, Hythe on the 6th, and others in the Botolph's Bridge / Nickoll's Quarry area where the species breeds.

Return passage was noted from mid-August and, though still relatively modest, was the second best showing since 2006, as illustrated in the chart above. There were peak counts of just five west over Princes Parade, Seabrook on the 17th August, eight over Samphire Hoe on the 26th August, four west there on the 28th August and four at Abbotscliffe on the 8th September. Numbers dwindled in September but there were three in October: singles at Crete Hill on the 2nd October, and Samphire Hoe on the 3rd and 5th October.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed a considerable range contraction in Britain and reduced tetrad occupancy in many areas, consistent with a 72% population decline in the UK during 1970-2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)). This is not reflected locally in the breeding distribution as it was present in six tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) and eight in the two later surveys. However the annual autumn bird/day totals since regular monitoring began in 1992 clearly reflect the national population decline, as the chart below demonstrates:



Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Ones and twos were seen at well scattered sites in the early winter period and singles east over Abbotscliffe on the 20th March and west over Samphire Hoe on the 31st March May hinted at a light spring passage.

Breeding season records included a singing male at Turnpike Hill, Hythe on the 14th April, four at Enbrook Park, Sandgate on the 26th May and one at Brockhill Country Park on the 15th June.

Autumn migrants were recorded from the cliffs, with 21 bird/days there in September and 14 in October, but all counts related to ones and twos. Small numbers were again wintering at the end of the year.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed a 19% increase in breeding range since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976), with the majority of the gains in eastern England. The UK population had shown a 38% increase during 1995 to 2007 but, following two severe winters, the trend had become a 15% decline by 2010 (BBS Report 2011 (Risely *et al*, 2012)). Locally it increased from occupying just a single tetrad in the first Atlas to four tetrads in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) to eight in the most recent survey.

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|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Pied / White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> |
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Breeding resident and passage migrant.

Pied Wagtails were noted throughout the year but there were no counts of significance.

There was a small spring passage of Pied / White ('alba') wagtails noted in March, including two flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 6th, four flying over on the 8th, eight in/east there the next day and singles in off the sea on the 14th and 21st. Further sightings in April included singles west at Samphire Hoe on the 15th April and in off the sea there 21st and 24th April.

In spring White Wagtails were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 8th March and in horse paddocks at the end of Parsonage Lane, Church Hougham on the 19th March. 'alba' Wagtails had been noted at Samphire Hoe in May and June but had not been seen well enough to be sub-specifically identified until a male White Wagtail was closely observed on the 26th June. This sighting was quickly followed by the finding of a female the subsequent day and she was seen carrying food to a presumed nest site in the Adit (security compound) on the 29th June.



Female White Wagtail at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

There were a number of further sightings before the pair was seen together with a fledged juvenile on the 14th July and the juvenile was noted again (with the male) on the 20th July.

August saw just two records of flyover 'alba' Wagtails but the pair of White Wagtails was noted again on the 6th September, with three on the 10th, the pair on the 14th and singles on the 15th, 17th and 23rd September.

This constituted the first ever successful breeding of this form locally and apparently the first occurrence in the county for other thirty years. The latest rare breeding birds report (Holling *et al*, 2013) recorded on only pure pair breeding in Britain in 2011 (on Shetland), with three mixed pairs (in Sussex, Norfolk and Glamorgan).

Autumn passage of 'alba' wagtails between late September and mid-November was more pronounced, and included counts of four east at Samphire Hoe on the 27th September, eight east there on the 28th, five east there on the 29th and five east there on the 30th September, six east there on the 1st October and 15 east there on the 3rd October, when 30 were seen in a mixed flock of wagtails and pipits in fields inland of Crete Road East. A further 30 (13 west, 17 east) flew over Samphire Hoe on the 5th October, with 26 flying east over Hythe that evening. Nine flew over Samphire Hoe on the 7th October, with six going west there the following day but only smaller numbers were noted thereafter.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed very little change in the breeding range of the Pied Wagtail but there were increases in tetrad occupancy through a large part of eastern England. Locally it increased from

occupying eight tetrads in the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) to 14 in the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993) to 24 in the most recent survey (a 200% increase across the 40 year period).

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| Tree Pipit |
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| <i>Anthus trivialis</i> |
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Passage migrant.

The only record was of one at Samphire Hoe on the 15th September. The worst year since regular recording at the cliffs began in 1991 and well below the mean for the previous ten years of 10.5.

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| Meadow Pipit |
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| <i>Anthus pratensis</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 15 were at Samphire Hoe in January whilst a count of 28 there on the 11th February might have included cold weather migrants as numbers decreased to nine on the 13th and eight on the 24th February. Again spring passage was barely perceptible with a peak of three east at Samphire Hoe on the 21st March.

Numbers increased in September, with 16 at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, 20 there on the 17th, 27 east there on the 27th, 48 there (28 east + 20) on the 28th and 20 east on the 29th. In October 23 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, 50 were seen in a mixed flock of wagtails and pipits in fields inland of Crete Road East on the 3rd, 20 flew west over Hythe on the 5th, 50 were at Samphire Hoe on the 5th-6th, 44 flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 14th and 20 flew west there on the 30th. The only count of note in November was 22 at Abbotscliffe on the 7th.

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| Rock Pipit |
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| <i>Anthus petrosus</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to nine were present at Samphire Hoe from January to March and included a metal-ringed bird of the form *littoralis* from 11th to 18th March. At least two pairs bred successfully between Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe. In the latter half of the year there were counts of eight at Samphire Hoe on the 30th August, 12 there on the 14th October, 16th November and 19th November, and c.15 there on the 10th December.

There were no reports this year from other sites.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) showed very little change in the either the breeding range or population of the Rock Pipit but locally it was recorded in two tetrads in the most recent survey despite not having been found in either of the two earlier Atlases.



Littoralis Rock Pipit at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)

Improved coverage on the undercliff, where has Samphire Hoe has been constructed since the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993), may be a factor.

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| Chaffinch |
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| <i>Fringilla coelebs</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

Spring passage was noted in March and April including counts of 160 east at Abbotscliffe on the 18th March, 1,435 east there in 90 minutes on the 20th March and 281 north over Saltwood on the 6th April.

Autumn passage was very modest, with a peak count of just 25 in off of the sea at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and 20 in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 5th October, though “several groups” flew south-west over Saltwood on the 7th October.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer et al, 2013) showed only a very minor increase in breeding range but this concealed a 12% increase in the UK during 1995 to 2010 which was part of a longer-term 37% rise during 1970 to 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton et al, 2012)). Locally it increased from occupying 22 tetrads in 1968-72 to 28 in 1988-91 to all 29 tetrads in the most recent survey.

2012

An additional record of 100 flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 27th March increases the total for the spring migration to 5,101 (the second highest ever).

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| Brambling |
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| <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

In spring a male was in a garden in Lypne from the 31st March to 1st April, with a female in the same garden on the 6th and 7th April. Elsewhere one flew north over Saltwood on the 20th April.

In autumn a total of 19 were logged between the 2nd October and 17th November, including a total of five (one over Saltwood, two over Crete Hill and two over Samphire Hoe) on the 12th October, three at Samphire Hoe on the 15th October and four at Abbotscliffe on the 16th October.



Brambling at Lypne (Nick Hollands)

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| Greenfinch |
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| <i>Carduelis chloris</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

The only signs of passage from the early part of the year were one flying over Samphire Hoe on the 19th February and another heading west there on the 5th March.

Autumn passage was also very light with a peak count of just five flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 15th October.

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| Goldfinch |
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| <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> |
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, widespread but less common in winter.

Spring passage was noted between early March and the mid-May but numbers were low, with 41 west at Samphire Hoe on the 13th April, ten west there on the 15th April and 23 in off the sea there on the 30th April being the only double-figure counts.

Autumn passage was also light, particularly in comparison to last year's record numbers, with a total of only around 600 passing through from late September to mid-November. The largest movements were 380 flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October and 50 east at Samphire Hoe on the 18th October.

2012

Additional records were received of an extra 360 passing through Samphire Hoe in October. This increases the total for the autumn migration to 5,139 which is the highest ever.

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| Siskin |
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| <i>Carduelis spinus</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Wintering birds were present along the canal by Hythe Roughs (up to 20 in late January / early February) and in alders at Church Road sports ground, Cheriton (eight on the 8th February), whilst ones and twos were noted flying over various sites presumably mostly in response to cold weather: two over Saltwood on the 5th January, one west over Samphire Hoe on the 6th January, one west at the latter site on the 8th February, two east there on the 15th February, one south-east over Saltwood on the 17th February and one over Samphire Hoe on the 19th February.

In spring small numbers were noted from early March, generally moving east, though a pair were seen in a garden in Saltwood on the 26th, with larger counts at the end of the month when ten flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 28th and 52 were seen there (including 32 flying east) on the 31st. In April two were in a garden in Lympe on the 7th April with 11 seen in Hythe on the 12th April.

Autumn passage was noted between the 19th September and 17th November but, as with most other finches, numbers were relatively low. A total of around 210 were logged moving through, including counts of 28 east at Samphire Hoe on the 28th September, 58 east at Botolph's Bridge on the 5th October and 35 east at Samphire Hoe on the 16th October.

In the late winter period five were seen along the Hythe Canal by Hythe Roughs on the 28th November.

2012

Additional records have been received from Samphire Hoe which increases the total for the third-best autumn to date by 102 to 1,393.

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| Linnet |
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| <i>Carduelis cannabina</i> |
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Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, less common in winter.

Few were noted in the early winter period with up to four at Samphire Hoe in January being the only records received. Spring passage in April was light, with peak counts of 23 west at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, 35 west there on the 15th and 12 east there on the 20th.

Autumn passage was noted from late September to late October, with counts of 35 at Samphire Hoe on the 28th September, 120 there (c.90 + 30 east) on the 3rd October, 75 there (35 west, 40 east) on the 5th October, 35 east there on the 7th October, 43 west there on the 8th October and 35 there on the 14th October. Smaller numbers remained at Samphire Hoe into December and nine were at Fisherman's Beach, Hythe on the 26th December.

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| Lesser Redpoll |
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| <i>Carduelis cabaret</i> |
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Winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were no records from the early winter period and a very light spring passage involved just one over Saltwood on the 6th April, two flying north there the next day, one flying west over Samphire Hoe on the 15th April and two over the latter site on the 6th May.

In contrast to last year autumn passage was also very light with a total of just 38 recorded between 12th October and 16th November. The only counts of notes were 19 flying north over Saltwood on the 1st November, six north there on the 9th November and seven east at Samphire Hoe on the 16th November. In December one flew over Fisherman's Beach, Hythe on the 26th.



Lesser Redpoll at Samphire Hoe (Ian Roberts)



Goldfinch at Cheriton (Brian Harper)

Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

The only record from the first half of the year was of one flying west over Samphire Hoe on the 8th March.

There was a small influx in July, comprising one west at Abbotscliffe on the 14th, three west over Hythe on the 20th, 15 west there on the 21st, three west at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd and five south over Saltwood on the 26th.

In October one flew over Crete Hill on the 12th October.

Following the record year in 2012 the annual total of 29 was almost exactly in line with the median for the previous ten years of 29.5. The mean is somewhat higher (72.4) due to large influxes in 2003, 2011 and 2012.

2012

Additional records received of singles over Samphire Hoe on the 19th June and 4th October increase the total for the year to 343.

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Breeding resident.

There were records from a number of sites but the only notable count was of six at West Hythe on the 13th January and there were no signs of any passage.

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| Snow Bunting | <i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i> |
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Passage migrant, occasionally overwinters.

Two flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 29th October, with one flying west at Abbotscliffe the following day and another flying west at Samphire Hoe on the 15th November.

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| Yellowhammer | <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> |
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Breeding resident.

Widely recorded but the only double-figure counts received were from Church Hougham, where there were 22 on the 3rd January, 35 on the 23rd February, 19 on the 19th March and 27 on the 25th April.

At Samphire Hoe, where the species is now unusual, there was a single record on 8th September.

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* (Balmer *et al*, 2013) reported a 21% range contraction in Britain since the 1968-72 *Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) and a 55% decline in breeding numbers during 1970 to 2010 (*The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012)). There was also a decrease in breeding densities throughout the range since the 1988-91 *Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993). Locally there has been a slight decline in range from 24 occupied tetrads in the 1998-91 Atlas to 20 in the most recent survey. Declining overwinter survival, owing to reductions in winter seed availability, is implicated in the decline.

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| Reed Bunting | <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> |
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were no large counts in the early part of the year and little suggestion of spring passage, though one was at Samphire Hoe on the 9th March, one flew east there on the 19th March, with it or another there the following day, and two were in a garden in Lympne on the 6th April.

A light autumn passage was noted between the 13th September and 30th October, with counts of just three at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd October, four there on the 6th October, three west there on the 8th October, three at Abbotscliffe on the 14th October and three west at Samphire Hoe on the 30th October.

Escaped species

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| Black Swan | <i>Cygnus atratus</i> |
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Escapee.

One was seen at Nickoll's Quarry on the 14th March (I. A. Roberts).

This is only the fifth record of this Australian species but the second in the last two years, following a pair seen off Hythe and Mill Point on the 3rd February 2012.

Black Swan breeds commonly in parts of the Netherlands, where it is established and self-sustaining. Small numbers also nest widely in France and around ten pairs have recently bred annually in Britain, though it is not currently considered to be self-sustaining here.



Black Swan at Nickoll's Quarry (Ian Roberts)

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. Winter records of Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps have become so frequent in recent years that determining the first arriving or last departing migrant is now very difficult. The winter, or very early spring, record of Common Sandpiper and summer record of Brent Goose in 2013 (which have been excluded from the tables) are far more unusual.

In total there was a fairly even split of 13 summer visitors which arrived earlier and 15 which arrived later compared to last year. It should be noted that arrivals were rather late in 2012, largely due to a particularly cold April, and 2013 was a similarly late spring. There was also a fairly similar mix of 12 later departures and 14 earlier ones. Most winter visitors arrived slightly later in autumn 2013 than in the previous year.

Summer migrants

| Species | Arrival date | | Difference | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|
| | 2013 | 2012 | Earlier | Later |
| Honey Buzzard | 3 rd May | 12 th May | 9 | |
| Hobby | 1 st May | 13 th Apr | | 18 |
| Common Sandpiper | 26 th Apr* | 30 th Apr | 4 | |
| Pomarine Skua | 3 rd May | 25 th Apr | | 8 |
| Arctic Skua | 20 th Apr | 17 th Apr | | 3 |
| Sandwich Tern | 9 th Mar | 17 th Mar | 8 | |
| Common Tern | 9 th Apr | 25 th Apr | 16 | |
| Little Tern | 5 th May | 1 st May | | 4 |
| Turtle Dove | 25 th May | 14 th Jun | 20 | |
| Cuckoo | 14 th Apr | 30 th Apr | 16 | |
| Swift | 25 th Apr | 28 th Apr | 3 | |
| Sand Martin | 10 th Apr | 15 th Apr | 5 | |
| Swallow | 24 th Mar | 27 th Mar | 3 | |
| House Martin | 11 th Apr | 15 th Apr | 4 | |
| Chiffchaff | 3 rd Mar* | 9 th Mar* | 6 | |
| Willow Warbler | 11 th Apr | 7 th Apr | | 4 |
| Blackcap | 7 th Apr* | 25 th Mar* | | 13 |
| Garden Warbler | 4 th May | 30 th Apr | | 4 |
| Lesser Whitethroat | 22 nd Apr | 20 th Apr | | 2 |
| Common Whitethroat | 14 th Apr | 11 th Apr | | 3 |
| Sedge Warbler | 21 st Apr | 7 th Apr | | 14 |
| Reed Warbler | 17 th Apr | 12 th Apr | | 5 |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 22 nd May | 2 nd May | | 20 |
| Ring Ouzel | 3 rd May | 12 th Apr | | 21 |
| Nightingale | 14 th Apr | 27 th Apr | 13 | |
| Redstart | - | 30 th Apr | | |
| Whinchat | 26 th Apr | 4 th May | 8 | |
| Wheatear | 23 rd Mar | 16 th Mar | | 7 |
| Yellow Wagtail | 13 th Apr | 11 th Apr | | 2 |
| Tree Pipit | - | 1 st May | | |

| Departure date | | Difference | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|
| 2013 | 2012 | Earlier | Later |
| 27 th Aug | 20 th Jul | | 38 |
| 21 st Sep | 20 th Oct | 29 | |
| 14 th Sep | 26 th Oct | 42 | |
| - | - | | |
| 11 th Oct | 27 th Oct | 16 | |
| 25 th Oct | 5 th Oct | | 20 |
| 11 th Sep | 25 th Aug | | 17 |
| - | - | | |
| - | 22 nd Jul | | |
| 19 th Aug | 8 th Aug | | 11 |
| 14 th Sep | 12 th Sep | | 2 |
| 29 th Sep | 24 th Oct | 25 | |
| 30 th Oct | 5 th Dec | 36 | |
| 12 th Oct | 29 th Nov | 48 | |
| 1 st Dec | 14 th Nov* | | 17 |
| 15 th Sep | 19 th Sep | 4 | |
| 1 st Dec | 18 th Nov* | | 13 |
| 9 th Sep | 3 rd Sep | | 6 |
| 29 th Sep | 27 th Sep | | 2 |
| 30 th Sep | 7 th Oct | 7 | |
| 13 th Sep | 21 st Sep | 8 | |
| 6 th Sep | 29 th Sep | 23 | |
| 6 th Oct | 18 th Sep | | 18 |
| 25 th Nov | 27 th Oct | | 29 |
| - | - | | |
| 12 th Oct | 23 rd Oct | 11 | |
| 6 th Oct | 9 th Oct | 3 | |
| 30 th Oct | 23 rd Oct | | 7 |
| 5 th Oct | 13 th Oct | 8 | |
| 15 th Sep | 4 th Oct | 19 | |

Winter migrants

| Species | Departure date | | Difference | |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|-------|
| | 2013 | 2012 | Earlier | Later |
| Brent Goose | 3 rd May* | 19 th May | 16 | |
| Red-throated Diver | 4 th Jun | 1 st May | | 34 |
| Purple Sandpiper | 6 th May | 2 nd May | | 4 |
| Fieldfare | 11 th Apr | 3 rd May | 22 | |
| Redwing | 13 th Apr | 29 th Mar | | 15 |
| Brambling | 20 th Apr | 27 th Mar | | 24 |
| Siskin | 12 th Apr | 13 th May | 31 | |
| Snow Bunting | - | - | | |

| Arrival date | | Difference | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------|-------|
| 2013 | 2012 | Earlier | Later |
| 26 th Sep | 23 rd Sep | | 3 |
| 28 th Sep | 23 rd Sep | | 5 |
| 9 th Nov | 27 th Oct | | 13 |
| 11 th Oct | 22 nd Oct | 11 | |
| 7 th Oct | 6 th Oct | | 1 |
| 2 nd Oct | 27 th Sep | | 5 |
| 19 th Sep | 20 th Sep | 1 | |
| 29 th Oct | 27 th Oct | | 2 |

The 2013 year list

January

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Brent Goose | 1 st Jan |
| 2 | Mallard | 1 st Jan |
| 3 | Red-throated Diver | 1 st Jan |
| 4 | Fulmar | 1 st Jan |
| 5 | Gannet | 1 st Jan |
| 6 | Cormorant | 1 st Jan |
| 7 | Little Egret | 1 st Jan |
| 8 | Little Grebe | 1 st Jan |
| 9 | Sparrowhawk | 1 st Jan |
| 10 | Buzzard | 1 st Jan |
| 11 | Moorhen | 1 st Jan |
| 12 | Lapwing | 1 st Jan |
| 13 | Purple Sandpiper | 1 st Jan |
| 14 | Turnstone | 1 st Jan |
| 15 | Kittiwake | 1 st Jan |
| 16 | Black-headed Gull | 1 st Jan |
| 17 | Mediterranean Gull | 1 st Jan |
| 18 | Common Gull | 1 st Jan |
| 19 | Herring Gull | 1 st Jan |
| 20 | Great Black-backed Gull | 1 st Jan |
| 21 | Guillemot | 1 st Jan |
| 22 | Feral Pigeon | 1 st Jan |
| 23 | Stock Dove | 1 st Jan |
| 24 | Wood Pigeon | 1 st Jan |
| 25 | Collared Dove | 1 st Jan |
| 26 | Green Woodpecker | 1 st Jan |
| 27 | Great Spotted Woodpecker | 1 st Jan |
| 28 | Kingfisher | 1 st Jan |
| 29 | Magpie | 1 st Jan |
| 30 | Jay | 1 st Jan |
| 31 | Jackdaw | 1 st Jan |
| 32 | Rook | 1 st Jan |
| 33 | Carrion Crow | 1 st Jan |
| 34 | Blue Tit | 1 st Jan |
| 35 | Great Tit | 1 st Jan |
| 36 | Long-tailed Tit | 1 st Jan |
| 37 | Wren | 1 st Jan |
| 38 | Starling | 1 st Jan |
| 39 | Blackbird | 1 st Jan |
| 40 | Song Thrush | 1 st Jan |
| 41 | Mistle Thrush | 1 st Jan |
| 42 | Robin | 1 st Jan |
| 43 | Stonechat | 1 st Jan |
| 44 | Dunnock | 1 st Jan |
| 45 | House Sparrow | 1 st Jan |
| 46 | Meadow Pipit | 1 st Jan |
| 47 | Rock Pipit | 1 st Jan |
| 48 | Chaffinch | 1 st Jan |
| 49 | Bullfinch | 1 st Jan |
| 50 | Mute Swan | 2 nd Jan |

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 51 | Mandarin | 2 nd Jan |
| 52 | Gadwall | 2 nd Jan |
| 53 | Grey Heron | 2 nd Jan |
| 54 | Great Crested Grebe | 2 nd Jan |
| 55 | Shag | 2 nd Jan |
| 56 | Peregrine | 2 nd Jan |
| 57 | Oystercatcher | 2 nd Jan |
| 58 | Sanderling | 2 nd Jan |
| 59 | Curlew | 2 nd Jan |
| 60 | Redshank | 2 nd Jan |
| 61 | Razorbill | 2 nd Jan |
| 62 | Goldcrest | 2 nd Jan |
| 63 | Blackcap | 2 nd Jan |
| 64 | Waxwing | 2 nd Jan |
| 65 | Pied Wagtail | 2 nd Jan |
| 66 | Linnet | 2 nd Jan |
| 67 | Common Scoter | 3 rd Jan |
| 68 | Nuthatch | 3 rd Jan |
| 69 | Yellowhammer | 3 rd Jan |
| 70 | Coot | 4 th Jan |
| 71 | Water Rail | 5 th Jan |
| 72 | Ringed Plover | 5 th Jan |
| 73 | Siskin | 5 th Jan |
| 74 | Greenfinch | 5 th Jan |
| 75 | Teal | 6 th Jan |
| 76 | Tufted Duck | 6 th Jan |
| 77 | Kestrel | 6 th Jan |
| 78 | Red-legged Partridge | 6 th Jan |
| 79 | Cetti's Warbler | 6 th Jan |
| 80 | Black Redstart | 6 th Jan |
| 81 | Redwing | 6 th Jan |
| 82 | Grey Wagtail | 6 th Jan |
| 83 | Coal Tit | 7 th Jan |
| 84 | Velvet Scoter | 8 th Jan |
| 85 | Pheasant | 9 th Jan |
| 86 | Shelduck | 10 th Jan |
| 87 | Wigeon | 11 th Jan |
| 88 | Goldeneye | 11 th Jan |
| 89 | Little Gull | 13 th Jan |
| 90 | Treecreeper | 13 th Jan |
| 91 | Fieldfare | 14 th Jan |
| 92 | Little Owl | 16 th Jan |
| 93 | Sky Lark | 16 th Jan |
| 94 | Shoveler | 17 th Jan |
| 95 | Long-eared Owl | 17 th Jan |
| 96 | Goldfinch | 17 th Jan |
| 97 | Golden Plover | 19 th Jan |
| 98 | Snipe | 19 th Jan |
| 99 | Jack Snipe | 19 th Jan |
| 100 | Green Sandpiper | 19 th Jan |
| 101 | Lesser Black-backed Gull | 19 th Jan |
| 102 | Dunlin | 21 st Jan |
| 103 | Raven | 22 nd Jan |
| 104 | Egyptian Goose | 23 rd Jan |

| | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------------|
| 105 | Grey Plover | 24 th Jan |
| 106 | Pochard | 26 th Jan |
| 107 | Marsh Harrier | 26 th Jan |
| 108 | Great Skua | 26 th Jan |
| 109 | Reed Bunting | 26 th Jan |
| 110 | Knot | 27 th Jan |

February

| | | |
|-----|------------------------|----------------------|
| 111 | Greylag Goose | 2 nd Feb |
| 112 | Red Kite | 2 nd Feb |
| 113 | Canada Goose | 3 rd Feb |
| 114 | Tawny Owl | 4 th Feb |
| 115 | Barn Owl | 8 th Feb |
| 116 | White-fronted Goose | 12 th Feb |
| 117 | Pintail | 20 th Feb |
| 118 | Red-breasted Merganser | 20 th Feb |
| 119 | Avocet | 20 th Feb |
| 120 | Woodcock | 24 th Feb |
| 121 | Firecrest | 24 th Feb |
| 122 | Great White Egret | 25 th Feb |
| 123 | Merlin | 26 th Feb |

March

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------|
| 124 | Marsh Tit | 3 rd Mar |
| 125 | Chiffchaff | 3 rd Mar |
| 126 | Common Sandpiper | 4 th Mar |
| 127 | Bewick's Swan | 6 th Mar |
| 128 | Grey Partridge | 6 th Mar |
| 129 | Crossbill | 8 th Mar |
| 130 | Sandwich Tern | 9 th Mar |
| 131 | Black-throated Diver | 10 th Mar |
| 132 | Eider | 18 th Mar |
| 133 | Little Ringed Plover | 22 nd Mar |
| 134 | Bar-tailed Godwit | 22 nd Mar |
| 135 | Wheatear | 23 rd Mar |
| 136 | Slavonian Grebe | 24 th Mar |
| 137 | Swallow | 24 th Mar |
| 138 | Bluethroat | 27 th Mar |
| 139 | Short-eared Owl | 28 th Mar |
| 140 | Brambling | 31 st Mar |

April

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------|
| 141 | White Stork | 6 th Apr |
| 142 | Hen Harrier | 8 th Apr |
| 143 | Common Tern | 9 th Apr |
| 144 | Sand Martin | 10 th Apr |
| 145 | Garganey | 11 th Apr |
| 146 | House Martin | 11 th Apr |
| 147 | Willow Warbler | 11 th Apr |
| 148 | Black-necked Grebe | 12 th Apr |
| 149 | Yellow Wagtail | 13 th Apr |

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------|
| 150 | Cuckoo | 14 th Apr |
| 151 | Nightingale | 14 th Apr |
| 152 | Common Whitethroat | 14 th Apr |
| 153 | Lesser Redpoll | 15 th Apr |
| 154 | Reed Warbler | 17 th Apr |
| 155 | Whimbrel | 20 th Apr |
| 156 | Arctic Skua | 20 th Apr |
| 157 | Sedge Warbler | 21 st Apr |
| 158 | Lesser Whitethroat | 22 nd Apr |
| 159 | Common Swift | 25 th Apr |
| 160 | Whinchat | 26 th Apr |
| 161 | Montagu's Harrier | 30 th Apr |

May

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 162 | Hobby | 1 st May |
| 163 | Honey Buzzard | 3 rd May |
| 164 | Pomarine Skua | 3 rd May |
| 165 | Arctic Tern | 3 rd May |
| 166 | Ring Ouzel | 3 rd May |
| 167 | Garden Warbler | 4 th May |
| 168 | Little Tern | 5 th May |
| 169 | Black-tailed Godwit | 6 th May |
| 170 | Greenshank | 6 th May |
| 171 | Bee-eater | 14 th May |
| 172 | Spotted Flycatcher | 22 nd May |
| 173 | Turtle Dove | 25 th May |
| 174 | Purple Heron | 31 st May |

June

| | | |
|-----|-----------------|----------------------|
| 175 | Osprey | 1 st Jun |
| 176 | Manx Shearwater | 12 th Jun |
| 177 | Marsh Warbler | 17 th Jun |

August

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 178 | Grasshopper Warbler | 11 th Aug |
| 179 | Common Redstart | 15 th Aug |
| 180 | Balearic Shearwater | 18 th Aug |
| 181 | Pied Flycatcher | 29 th Aug |

September

| | | |
|-----|------------|----------------------|
| 182 | Tree Pipit | 15 th Sep |
| 183 | Scaup | 29 th Sep |

October

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 184 | Wryneck | 2 nd Oct |
| 185 | Yellow-browed Warbler | 12 th Oct |
| 186 | Snow Bunting | 29 th Oct |
| 187 | Rough-legged Buzzard | 29 th Oct |
| 188 | Great Grey Shrike | 30 th Oct |

| | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------------|
| 189 | Leach's Petrel | 31 st Oct |
| 190 | Storm Petrel | 31 st Oct |

November

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------|
| 191 | Little Stint | 2 nd Nov |
| 192 | Great Northern Diver | 19 th Nov |
| 193 | Long-tailed Duck | 20 th Nov |
| 194 | Ruff | 29 th Nov |
| 195 | Goosander | 30 th Nov |

December

| | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------------|
| 196 | Black Kite | 4 th Dec |
| 197 | Glaucous Gull | 20 th Dec |
| 198 | Bearded Tit | 26 th Dec |

The Atlas

The *Bird Atlas 2007-11* was published by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) in November 2013. This now enables the local survey results published in the *2012 Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report* (Roberts, 2013) to be put in context against the national results.

Results can also be compared against three previous atlases. The first national atlas to be produced was the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas* (Sharrock, 1976) and the survey work was extended in Kent to 1967-73 to allow more detailed mapping, the results of which were published in *The Birds of Kent* (Taylor *et al*, 1981). The second was an atlas of birds in winter, covering the three winters between 1981/82 and 1983/84, published as the *1981-84 Winter Atlas* (Lack, 1986). The third national atlas was a repeat breeding atlas – the *1988-91 Breeding Atlas* (Gibbons *et al*, 1993), which was again extended in Kent to cover the period 1988-94, with the more detailed county results published in the 1996 Kent Bird Report. The most recent atlas was the first to encompass both breeding and wintering distributions.

Details are included in the systematic list for the 43 species which have shown the most significant changes and these are summarised in the table overleaf.

The first column (a) contains the species name and the second (b) shows the number of 2-km squares (tetrads) in which a breeding status of at least possible was recorded for the species locally in the *1968-72 Breeding Atlas*. Possible breeding is defined as at least one bird of that species being seen or heard in suitable nesting habitat during the survey period. The third (c) and fourth (d) columns show the number of tetrads in which a status of at least possible was recorded during the fieldwork for the *1998-91 Breeding Atlas* and the *Bird Atlas 2007-11* respectively. For all three surveys the results include the local extensions (and this also includes an extension of the most recent Atlas to 2012).

The fifth column (e) shows the percentage change between the 1968-72 and 1988-91 atlases, with the construction of the calculation shown in the table. The sixth column (f) shows the percentage change between the 1988-91 and 2007-11 atlases and the seventh column (g) shows the change between the 1968-72 and 2007-11 atlases. Again the constructions of the calculations are shown.

If a species was gained or lost from the area between the atlases then a percentage change cannot apply and arrows are used to demonstrate the differences:

| | |
|--|---|
| Gained between 1988-91 and 2007-11 atlas | ▲ |
| Gained between 1968-72 and 1988-91 atlas | △ |
| Gained between 1988-91 and 2007-11 atlas | ▼ |
| Gained between 1968-72 and 1988-91 atlas | ▽ |

The eighth column (h) shows the national change in range over the forty year period between the 1968-72 and 2007-11 atlases, as given in the *Bird Atlas 2007-11*. The final column (i) presents the national change in population, as given in *The state of the UK's birds* (Eaton *et al*, 2012). The long-term population trend is given where this is available and this is also over a forty year period (between 1970 and 2010) but for some species (indicated by *) only a short-term trend between 1995 and 2010 is known. For a few species, for example new colonisations or those with a low population level, no trend is available.

The long-term population trends are based on the results of four annual bird surveys; the Common Birds Census from 1970 to 2000, and its replacement, the Breeding Bird Survey, from 1994 onwards; the Waterways Bird Survey from 1974 to 2007; and its replacement, the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey, from 1998 onwards. Details of the methodologies used in the calculations are given in the report.

The breeding and wintering distribution species maps for the local area are available on the website, by following the link to the Folkestone and Hythe list, then the hyperlinks for the species.

| a | b | c | d | e =(c-b)/b | f =(d-c)/c | g =(d-b)/b | h | i |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | Atlas period | | | Percentage change | | | | |
| | 1968-72 | 1988-91 | 2007-11 | 1968-72 to 88-91 | 1988-91 to 07-11 | 1968-72 to 07-11 | Range (national) | Population (national) |
| Mandarin | 0 | 0 | 4 | | ▲ | ▲ | +1144% | N/A |
| Grey Partridge | 15 | 1 | 5 | -93% | 400% | -67% | -39% | -91% |
| Little Egret | 0 | 0 | 1 | | ▲ | ▲ | N/A | N/A |
| Sparrowhawk | 0 | 7 | 20 | △ | 186% | △ | +29% | 100% |
| Buzzard | 0 | 0 | 10 | | ▲ | ▲ | +81% | 439% |
| Hobby | 0 | 2 | 12 | △ | 500% | △ | +295% | 16%* |
| Peregrine | 0 | 0 | 4 | | ▲ | ▲ | +184% | -26%* |
| Lapwing | 17 | 7 | 1 | -59% | -86% | -94% | -17% | -56% |
| LBBG | 0 | 4 | 7 | △ | 75% | △ | +65% | N/A |
| Turtle Dove | 15 | 23 | 9 | 53% | -61% | -40% | -51% | -93% |
| Cuckoo | 10 | 20 | 14 | 100% | -30% | 40% | -7% | -62% |
| Swift | 12 | 22 | 12 | 83% | -45% | 0% | -3% | -38%* |
| G Woodpecker | 9 | 17 | 29 | 89% | 71% | 222% | +1% | 115% |
| GS Woodpecker | 3 | 11 | 23 | 267% | 109% | 667% | +14% | 368% |
| Raven | 0 | 0 | 2 | | ▲ | ▲ | +59% | 0%* |
| Firecrest | 0 | 1 | 2 | ▲ | 100% | ▲ | +935% | N/A |
| Marsh Tit | 7 | 7 | 2 | 0% | -71% | -71% | -22% | -68% |
| Sky Lark | 23 | 25 | 25 | 9% | 0% | 9% | -1% | -58% |
| Sand Martin | 6 | 8 | 0 | 33% | -100% | -100% | -14% | 40% |
| Swallow | 19 | 27 | 24 | 42% | -11% | 26% | +3% | 23% |
| House Martin | 22 | 29 | 17 | 32% | -41% | -23% | +3% | -44% |
| Cetti's Warbler | 0 | 0 | 5 | | ▲ | ▲ | +6783% | N/A |
| Long-tailed Tit | 6 | 19 | 25 | 217% | 32% | 317% | +2% | 115% |
| Chiffchaff | 16 | 25 | 29 | 56% | 16% | 81% | +20% | 67% |
| Willow Warbler | 20 | 22 | 15 | 10% | -32% | -25% | +3% | -34% |
| Blackcap | 9 | 24 | 26 | 167% | 8% | 189% | +25% | 222% |
| Garden Warbler | 10 | 19 | 2 | 90% | -89% | -80% | +12% | 8% |
| Whitethroat | 20 | 27 | 28 | 35% | 4% | 40% | 0% | 15% |
| Grasshopper W. | 5 | 0 | 0 | ▽ | ▽ | ▽ | -11% | 59%* |
| Sedge Warbler | 8 | 7 | 5 | -13% | -29% | -38% | +3% | -8% |
| Reed Warbler | 5 | 12 | 11 | 140% | -8% | 120% | +40% | 145% |
| Starling | 26 | 29 | 28 | 12% | -3% | 8% | -5% | -80% |
| Mistle Thrush | 23 | 28 | 21 | 22% | -25% | -9% | 0% | -57% |
| Spotted Flycatcher | 10 | 14 | 4 | 40% | -71% | -60% | -10% | -88% |
| Nightingale | 7 | 9 | 3 | 29% | -67% | -57% | -43% | N/A |
| Stonechat | 2 | 1 | 5 | -50% | 400% | 150% | +52% | N/A |
| House Sparrow | 28 | 29 | 28 | 4% | -3% | 0% | -3% | -64% |
| Yellow Wagtail | 6 | 8 | 8 | 33% | 0% | 33% | -32% | -72% |
| Grey Wagtail | 1 | 4 | 8 | 300% | 100% | 700% | +19% | -49% |
| Pied Wagtail | 8 | 14 | 24 | 75% | 71% | 200% | +3% | 23% |
| Rock Pipit | 0 | 0 | 2 | | ▲ | ▲ | -3% | N/A |
| Chaffinch | 22 | 28 | 29 | 27% | 4% | 32% | +3% | 37% |
| Yellowhammer | 21 | 24 | 20 | 14% | -17% | -5% | -21% | -55% |

Overall there have been significantly more gains (ten) than losses (one) whilst there is an almost even split between those that have shown major increases or decreases. There are several common factors that emerge from an analysis of the changes:

- The well-documented recovery of raptor populations following the reduction in persecution and ban on organochlorine pesticides. The westward spread of the Raven probably has a similar cause.
- The colonisation and spread of three species from southern Europe – Little Egret, Cetti's Warbler and Firecrest. Possibly linked to climatic change. The Reed Warbler has also shown a northward and westward expansion in range, and an increase within its existing range.
- Increases in the populations of the Blackcap and Chiffchaff linked to changes in their winter distribution attributed, at least in part, to milder winters. The increases of Stonechat, Pied Wagtail and Grey Wagtail have also been linked to milder winters.
- Declines in a number of farmland birds due to agricultural intensification – probably affecting Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Turtle Dove, Sky Lark, House Sparrow, Yellow Wagtail and Yellowhammer.
- Changes in distribution or widespread declines of a number of long-distance migrants that winter in Africa for reasons which are not fully understood. In a number of cases increases in the north and west of Britain off-set decreases in the south and east (Cuckoo, Swallow, House and Sand Martins, and Willow, Garden, Sedge and Grasshopper Warblers) whilst in other cases the decline affects the country as a whole, and even wider north-west Europe (Turtle Dove, Swift, Spotted Flycatcher, Nightingale and Yellow Wagtail).
- Decreases in first-year survival rates, the reasons for which are not clear, that appear to be driving declines in the Starling, Mistle Thrush and, to an extent, House Sparrow populations.
- Increases in the populations of several woodland species and their spread into gardens (Green and Great Spotted Woodpecker, Long-tailed Tit and Chaffinch).

Clearly some of these factors might be acting simultaneously on a number species and there are several very specific factors which are instead described in the systematic list.

Ringing recoveries in 2013

Details of birds ringed elsewhere and recovered in the Folkestone and Hythe area are given here. The only details received in 2013 related to colour rings which had been read in 2012 but the information was not available in time for inclusion in the report for that year. 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.

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mediterranean Gull | <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|

2012

Details were finally received back from the Polish ringing scheme for one seen at Seabrook in March 2012.

| | | | | |
|----------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Red PLY0 | Ringed | 17-Jun-2011 | 3 rd -year | Wójcice, Otmuchów, Opolskie, Poland |
| | Read in field | 04-Mar-2012 | Adult | Seabrook 1,132km W |



Mediterranean Gull at Seabrook (Brian Harper)

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Great Black-backed Gull | <i>Larus marinus</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------------|

2012

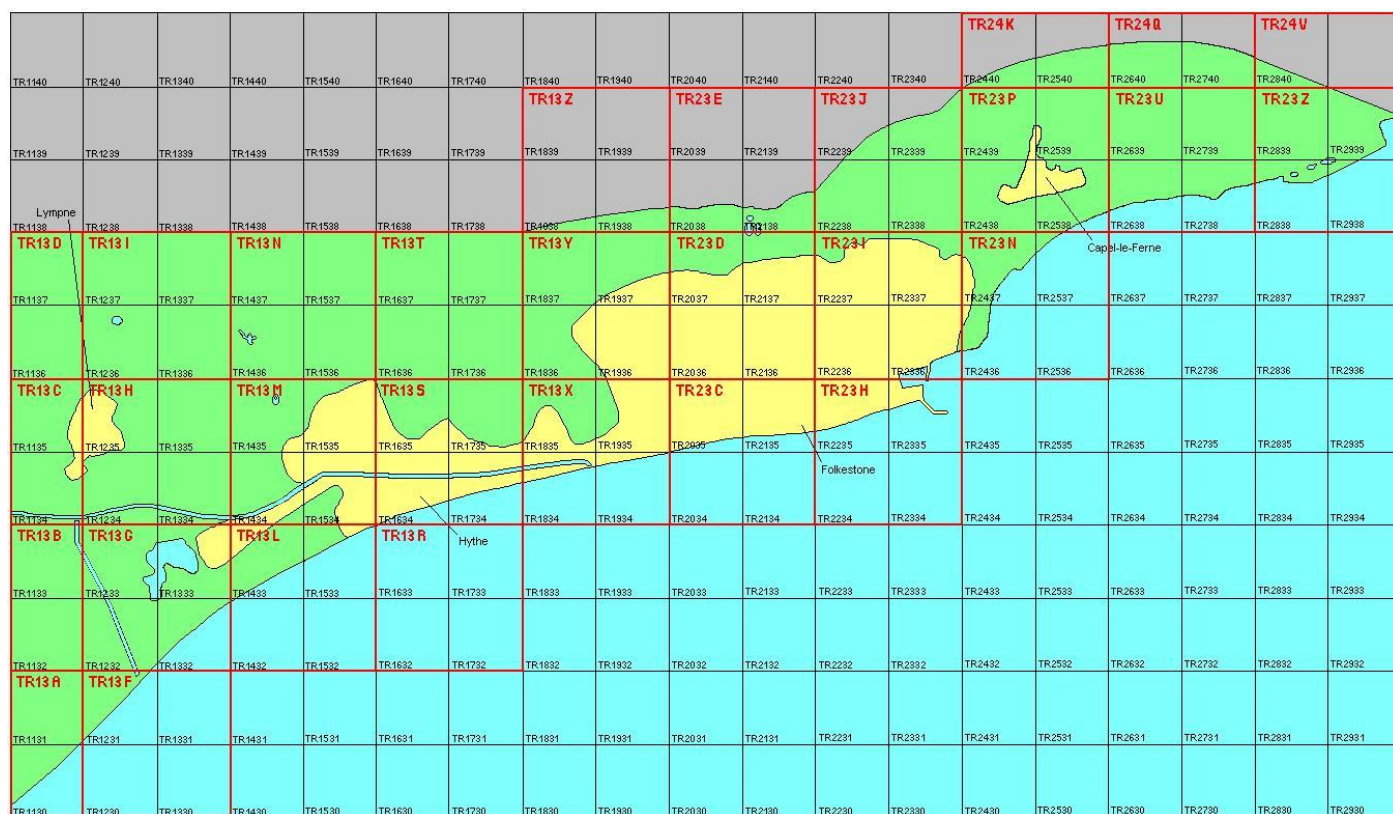
Details were received for one seen at Seabrook in 2012 which had been ringed in Dover after being caught in fishing line.

| | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| White A7SW | Ringed | 30-Jun-2011 | 2 nd -year | Dover |
| | Read in field | 25-Aug-2012 | 3 rd -year | Seabrook 14km |

The Folkestone and Hythe area

The Folkestone and Hythe area includes most of the 10km squares TR13 and TR23, though excludes the western half of the first 'column' of 2km tetrads in TR13 and the most northern 'row' of 2km tetrads, and it also includes a small component of the most southerly part of TR24, as shown in the map below.

It therefore extends from the Willop Outfall and Basin in the south-west to Folkestone Racecourse at Westenhanger in the north-west to Samphire Hoe in the east, and excludes Dymchurch, Sellindge, Hawkinge and Dover.



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.

| Site | Tetrad |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Abbotscliffe | TR23 U / TR23 Z |
| Archer Road, Folkestone | TR23 I |
| Battery Point, Seabrook | TR13 X |
| Bluehouse Wood | TR13 N |
| Botolph's Bridge | TR13 G |
| Broadmead Village | TR23 D |
| Brockhill Country Park | TR13 M |
| Brockman Road, Folkestone | TR23 I |
| Browning Place, Folkestone | TR23 I |
| Burmarsh Bridge | TR13 M |
| Canterbury Road, Folkestone | TR23 I |
| Capel-le-Ferne | TR23 P |
| Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site | TR23 N / TR23 P |
| Carter's Road, Cheriton | TR23 D |
| Castle Hill | TR23 D / TR23 E |
| Cheriton | TR13 Y / TR23 D |
| Cheriton Hill | TR13 Z |
| Cheriton Polo Ground | TR23 D |
| Chesterfield Wood, Saltwood | TR13 N |
| Church Hougham | TR23 U / TR24 Q |
| Church Road, Cheriton | TR13 Y |
| Churchill Avenue, Folkestone | TR23 D |
| Coombe Farm | TR23 J |
| Copt Point | TR23 N |
| Cowtye Wood | TR13 N |
| Crete Hill | TR23 I |
| Crete Road East | TR23 I / TR23 J |
| Crete Road West | TR23 E |
| Donkey Street | TR13 B |
| East Cliff Gardens, Folkestone | TR23 I |
| Eaton Lands, Hythe | TR13 S |
| Enbrook Park, Sandgate | TR23 C |
| Enbrook Valley | TR23 D |
| Fisherman's Beach, Hythe | TR13 L |
| Folkestone | TR23 C / TR23 D / TR23 H / TR23 I |
| Folkestone Beach | TR13 H |
| Folkestone Downs | TR23 I / TR23 J |
| Folkestone Harbour | TR13 H / TR13 I |
| Folkestone Pier | TR13 H |
| Folkestone Racecourse, Westenhanger | TR13 I |
| Folkestone Sands | TR13 I |

| Site | Tetrad |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Folkestone Warren | TR23 N / TR23 P |
| Folkestone West | TR23 D |
| Green Lane, Hythe | TR13 M |
| Grimstone Avenue, Folkestone | TR23 C |
| Heane Wood, Saltwood | TR13 N |
| High Ridge, Seabrook | TR13 X |
| Hill Road, Folkestone | TR13 I |
| Hillhurst Farm, Westenhanger | TR13 I |
| Holiday Inn, Cheriton | TR13 Y |
| Holland's Avenue | TR13 I / TR23 N |
| Horn Street | TR13 X / TR13 Y |
| Hougham valley | TR23 U / TR23 Z |
| Hythe | TR13 M / TR13 S |
| Hythe Imperial | TR13 S |
| 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 |
| Joyes Road, Folkestone | TR13 I |
| Kiln Wood | TR13 I |
| Laurel Close, Cheriton | TR23 D |
| Leaside Cottages, Saltwood | TR13 M |
| Lympne | TR13 H |
| Lympne Park Wood | TR13 H |
| Lynton Road, Hythe | TR13 S |
| M20 Junction 11 | TR13 I |
| Mill Point | TR23 C / TR23 H |
| Naildown, Seabrook | TR13 X |
| Newington | TR13 Y |
| Nickoll's Quarry | TR13 G |
| Palmarsh | TR13 G |
| Palmbeach Avenue, Palmarsh | TR13 G |
| Paraker Wood | TR13 X |
| Parsonage Lane, Church Hougham | TR24 V |
| Pedlinge | TR13 H |
| Peene | TR13 Y |
| Plough Inn, Church Hougham | TR23 Z |
| Princes Parade, Seabrook | TR13 X |
| Risborough Barracks, Cheriton | TR13 Y |
| Round Down | TR23 Z |
| Royal Military Avenue, Cheriton | TR13 Y |
| Saltwood | TR13 M |
| Saltwood Castle | TR13 S |
| Samphire Hoe | TR23 Z |
| Sandling Park | TR13 N |
| Seabrook | TR13 X |

| Site | Tetrad |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone | TR23 D |
| South Road, Hythe | TR13 S |
| Stade Court Hotel, Hythe | TR13 S |
| Stonereach Bridge | TR13 G |
| Surrenden Road, Cheriton | TR23 D |
| Turnpike Hill, Hythe | TR13 M |
| Twiss Road, Hythe | TR13 S |
| Wells Road, Cheriton | TR23 D |
| West Hythe | TR13 H |
| West Hythe dam | TR13 C |
| West Parade, Hythe | TR13 S |
| Westbourne Gardens, Folkestone | TR23 C |
| Westenhanger | TR13 I |
| Willop Basin | TR13 A |
| Willop Outfall | TR13 A |



Little Tern at Battery Point, Seabrook in TR13 X (Brian Harper)

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