

## Little Stint

*Calidris minuta*

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

12 records,  
17 birds

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

Breeds in high-arctic coastal tundra in northern Norway and northern Russia eastwards across Siberia to the Chukotskiy Peninsula. Winters mainly in Africa, around the Indian Ocean and in Europe in variable numbers, notably around the Mediterranean Basin. Occurs on passage in Britain in spring and autumn.

*Kent status (KOS 2022):*

It is a regular passage migrant in Kent, with a few overwintering in most years.



Little Stint with Dunlin at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

Ticehurst (1909) considered it to be a regular visitor on passage in autumn and observed that often the Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper occur together, whilst its appearance in spring was “quite exceptional” and he noted just one winter record in the county. Harrison (1953) noted slightly larger autumn numbers, with a few spring and winter records, whilst Taylor *et al.* (1981) wrote that its “status had changed considerably”, with almost annual winter records, an annual spring passage (mainly in May) and often good numbers in autumn, with occasional influxes.

It was not included in Knight & Tolputt’s “List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood” (1871) and was first recorded locally in 1956, when Geoffrey Manser found one at Nickolls Quarry on the 9<sup>th</sup> September. There were further sightings in the two subsequent years, with Roger Norman noting one on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1957, with two there the next day and three on the 19<sup>th</sup> September, and the first spring bird on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1958 (Norman 2007).

Over 30 years elapsed before a further sighting occurred, which was again at Nickolls Quarry, where one was seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1992. The next record involved three flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1996 which were part of a major influx of Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers to the eastern coast of Britain at this time, with a flock of three of the latter species seen flying east over Capel Battery on the following day.

Little Stints were then recorded at Nickolls Quarry in five consecutive years from 1998. During this time an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, which attracted a range of migrant waders, but the habitat has since been filled in. On the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2002 the site hosted singles of both Little and Temminck’s Stint, offering a unique opportunity to see both species together in the Folkestone and Hythe area.



Little Stint with Dunlin at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

A decade after the last at Nickolls Quarry, one was attracted to a flooded field at the Willop Basin in October 2012, with another there the following November.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

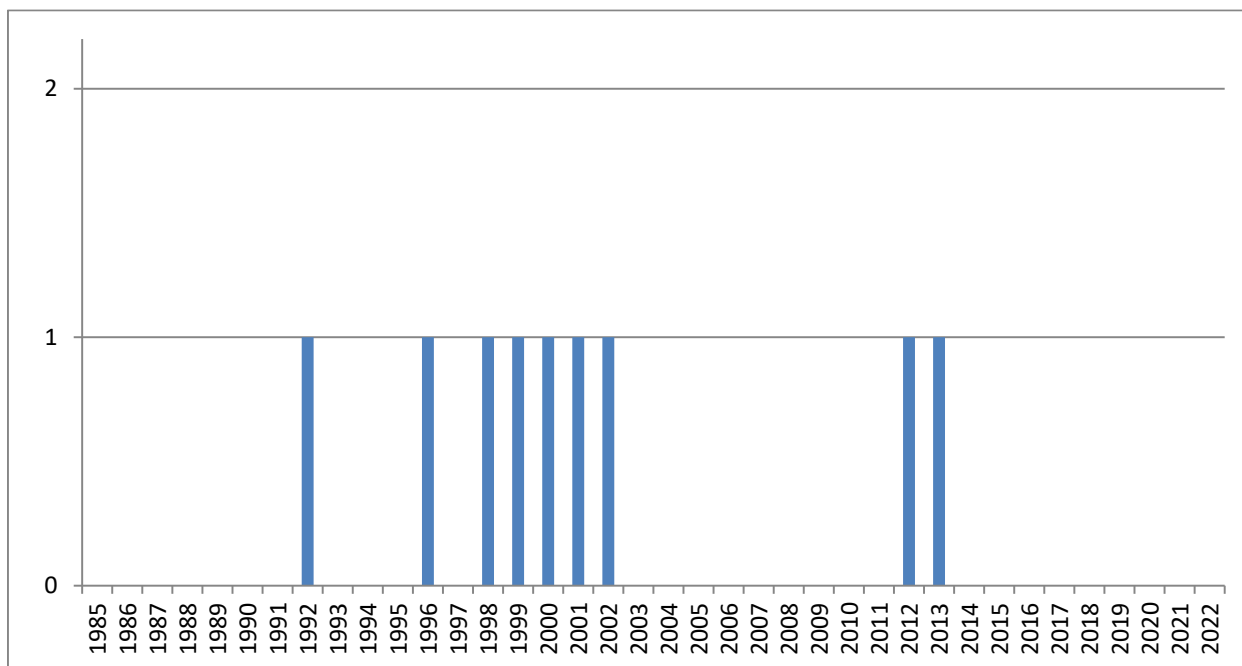


Figure 1: Little Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The records by week are given in figure 2. The majority have occurred between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> September (weeks 36 to 39) with two records in spring (in May 1958 and May 2002), one in early autumn (in July 2000) and the most recent two in October and early November.

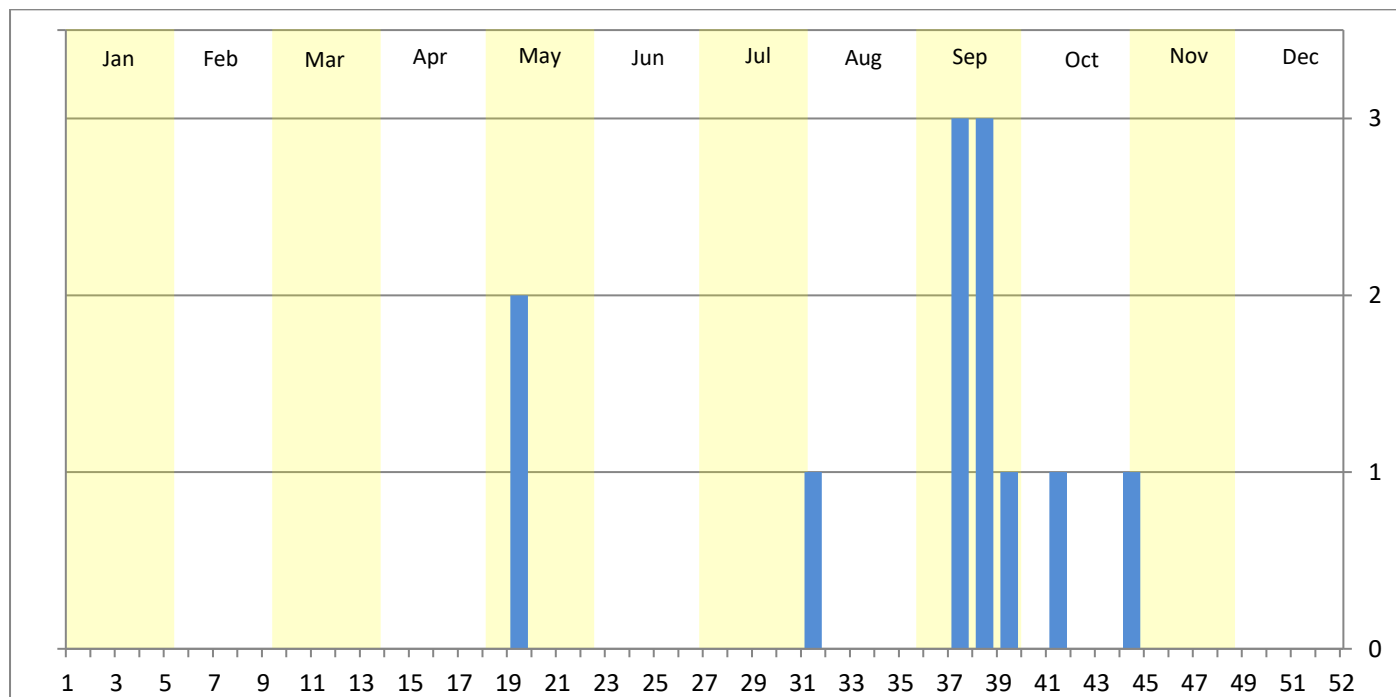


Figure 2: Little Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad. All records have been from Nickolls Quarry with the exception of the flock of three that were seen flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe (in September 1996) and the most recent two records at the Willop Basin (in October 2012 and November 2013).

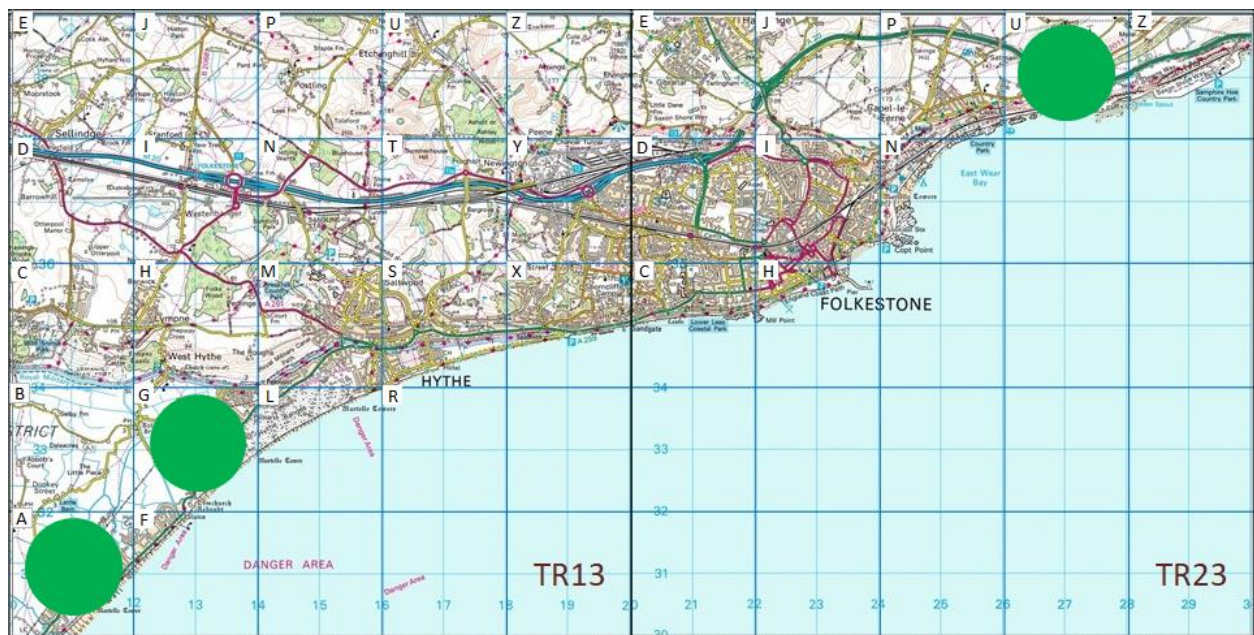


Figure 3: Distribution of all Little Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1956** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9<sup>th</sup> September (G. E. Manser)
- 1957** Nickolls Quarry, one, 17<sup>th</sup> September, increasing to two on the 18<sup>th</sup> and three on the 19<sup>th</sup> (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9<sup>th</sup> May (R. K. Norman)
- 1992** Nickolls Quarry, one, 13<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1996** Abbotscliffe, three flew in off the sea, 21<sup>st</sup> September (D. A. Gibson, J. A. Gibson)
- 1998** Nickolls Quarry, two, 16<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 1999** Nickolls Quarry, juvenile, 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September (I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Nickolls Quarry, one, 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July (D. A. Gibson, R. K. Norman, P. Haines)
- 2001** Nickolls Quarry, one, 18<sup>th</sup> September (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 11<sup>th</sup> May, photographed (I. A. Roberts)
- 2012** Willop Basin, one, 13<sup>th</sup> October (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper)
- 2013** Willop Basin, one, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> November (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts)

In addition, two unidentified stints, presumably either this species or Temminck's Stint, flew east past Copt Point on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2001.

## References

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### ***Acknowledgements***

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

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