



Review of bird sightings 2021

January

After a cold and generally settled start to the year it gradually turned milder and more unsettled during the second week and it was often very wet in the third week, with storms on the night of the 20th. It then turned colder for a few days before there was a milder and wet end to the month.

Small numbers of Brent Geese were noted during the month with a larger count of 45 flying west past Folkestone Harbour on the 3rd, whilst 16 flying east past Seabrook and Samphire Hoe on the 9th, 11 flying east past Seabrook on the 14th, 45 flying east there on the 30th and 11 flying east past the Willop Outfall were perhaps signs of early up-channel passage. Single Canada Geese were seen near the Dymchurch Redoubt and at Folkestone Harbour on the 17th, whilst a flock of six **Barnacle Geese** flew west past Seabrook on the 21st.

Five Greylag Geese flew west over Radnor Park and six flew west over the Willop Basin on the 23rd and four **Egyptian Geese** flew east past the Willop Outfall on the 8th before later being seen at Nickolls Quarry. Six Shelduck were seen on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 2nd with smaller numbers noted at coastal sites later in the month. A pair of Mandarin Ducks were present at Folks' Wood.

Two Shoveler were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th and four were present at Donkey Street on the 15th and 31st. Two Gadwall flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 9th, when a drake was seen at Nickolls Quarry, with a pair there the following day, whilst four were seen at Hoorne's Sewer on the 17th and a pair flew east past the Willop Outfall on the 24th. A total of 26 Wigeon were on the sea off the Willop Outfall on the 1st, with 43 there the next day, whilst two flew east there on the 3rd, five were at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th and ten flew west past the Willop Outfall on the 24th. A Pintail was seen at the Willop Outfall on the 2nd and a total of 34 flew east past Princes Parade on the 30th. Up to 58 Teal were present in the Willop Basin area, with ones and twos at other sites.

A Pochard was seen at Cock Ash Lake on the 8th, with eight at Nickolls Quarry on the 9th, increasing to 21 on the 10th, with one there the following day. Up to five Tufted Ducks were also at Nickolls Quarry during the same period, with seven at Cock Ash Lake on the 31st. A male Velvet Scoter flew west past the Willop Outfall on the 24th and up to 100 Common Scoters were seen offshore there during the month. A partially summer-plumaged Red-necked Grebe was seen off Seabrook on the 27th and 40 Great Crested Grebes were counted off the Willop Outfall on the 1st.

Lapwing flocks included 29 at Capel-le-Ferne, 46 at Hillhurst Farm and up to 500 at the Willop Basin, where there was a peak of 70 Golden Plovers on the 9th and a single Curlew was seen on several dates, whilst up to 19 Ringed Plovers were at Folkestone Beach. Up to 10 Sanderling and 25 Turnstone were at the Willop Outfall, whilst up to three Purple Sandpipers frequented the rock groyne between Hythe and Battery Point.



Shoveler at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Purple Sandpiper at Hythe (Phil Smith)

Single Woodcocks were noted at Chesterfield Wood and Kiln Wood in January, whilst a Jack Snipe was seen at Radnor Park on the 23rd and two Jack Snipe and 25 Snipe were at the Willop Basin on the 1st, with 11 Snipe near the Dymchurch Redoubt on the 31st. At least two Green Sandpipers were wintering in the Donkey Street/Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area, whilst up to six Redshank were at Folkestone Harbour and up to ten were at the Willop Basin.

Cold south-easterly winds in the fourth week induced some massive movements of auks, with 2,545 (most of which appeared to be Razorbills) flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd and a record **10,000** auks (with an even split between Guillemots and Razorbills) flying west past the Willop Outfall on the 24th, when 100 Kittiwakes and 200 Gannets also flew west there.



Razorbill at Princes Parade (Elliot Ranford)



Guillemot at Folkestone Harbour (Phil Smith)

The **Great Northern Diver** remained off Sandgate on the 1st and another was seen off Hythe Ranges on the morning of the 2nd, with presumably both birds seen together off Sandgate in the afternoon, where they lingered until the end of the month. Single Black-throated Divers were seen off Hythe Ranges on the 2nd and Folkestone Pier on the 31st, whilst Red-throated Diver counts included 137 flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd and 300 off Hythe Ranges on the 2nd.



Great Northern Diver at Sandgate (Elliot Ranford)



Black-throated Diver at Folkestone Pier (Elliot Ranford)

A Shag was seen off Sandgate on the 3rd and a peak of eight flew west from roost past Samphire Hoe on the 9th January, whilst Cormorant counts included 1,540 flying east past Seabrook on the 5th, 3,150 flying east there on the 9th, 3,300 flying east there on the 10th and c.1,500 off Abbotscliffe on the 23rd.

A single **Great White Egret** was seen at Donkey Street on two dates whilst up to eight Little Egrets were roosting near the Aldergate Bridge and feeding at various localities on the marsh, with singles at Princes Parade, Seabrook, Broadmead Village, Radnor Park, in a garden in central Folkestone and at Samphire Hoe during the month. An adult male Marsh Harrier was seen near Abbot's Court Farm on the 11th and a Red Kite flew over Horton Priory on the 31st.

A Barn Owl was seen frequently in the Lower Wall Road/Abbot's Court Farm area, whilst a Short-eared Owl was noted at the junction of Lower Wall Road and the Aldergate Lane on the 2nd and a Merlin was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 5th.

Single Marsh Tits were noted at Kiln Wood and Turnpike Hill and Skylark counts included 29 at the Willop Basin and 35 at Botolph's Bridge. The only Chiffchaff noted was seen along the canal at Seabrook but Blackcaps were present in good numbers with one at Cheriton, four at Lymgne, five at Folkestone and up to six at Seabrook. A Firecrest was at Botolph's Bridge on the 5th and up to three were present at Enbrook Park throughout.

50 Fieldfares and 100 Redwings were in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street area on the 1st and there was a peak of 58 Redwings at Church Hougham on the 21st. A male Black Redstart was seen intermittently at Samphire Hoe, where up to 12 Stonechats were present, with single Stonechats at Lathe Barn, Princes Parade and Abbotscliffe, and two at the Willop Sewage Works. Pied Wagtail counts included 28 at the Willop Basin on the 1st and 56 at Botolph's Bridge on the 17th.



Blackcap at Lymgne (Nick Hollands)



Black Redstart at Samphire Hoe (Steve Reynaert)

A **Water Pipit** was seen at Donkey Street on the 31st, whilst Rock Pipits were noted at the Willop Outfall and Folkestone Harbour, with several at Samphire Hoe. A Brambling was seen in a garden in Lymgne on the 24th to 26th, whilst up to 300 Linnets remained in fields at Oathill Cottages near Lymgne and Siskins were noted from Cock Ash Lake, Horton Priory, Kiln Wood and Chesterfield Wood. Two Corn Buntings and 20 Reed Buntings were at the Willop Sewage Works on the 1st.



Brambling at Lymgne (Phil Sharp)



Reed Bunting at Lymgne Old Airfield (Nick Hollands)

February

There was a mild start to the month and lingering rarities included the **Great Northern Diver** at Sandgate and the **Water Pipit** at Donkey Street, whilst two **Great White Egrets** were roosting at Port Lympe and feeding on the marsh from the 1st (following the one seen nearby in January). Other remaining wintering birds included the Curlew at the Willop Basin, at least 2 Purple Sandpipers at Hythe, two Green Sandpipers in the Botolph's Bridge area, up to six Redshanks at Folkestone Harbour, at least three Little Egrets in the Donkey Street area, several Blackcaps, and up to 170 Linnets at Oathill Cottages near Lympe. There was another Black-throated Diver sighting (perhaps the same individual noted in January), when one flew west past Mill Point on the 4th, whilst 100 Great Crested Grebes and 120 Red-throated Divers were offshore of the Willop Outfall on the 6th.

A flock of 15 Brent Geese flew east past Folkestone Pier on the 1st, when a Purple Sandpiper was on the apron at Folkestone Warren, a Snipe was seen at Abbotscliffe and two Firecrests were at Westenhanger. A Black Swan was an unusual sight at Haguelands on the 5th, when a Woodcock, a Chiffchaff, 5 Greylag Goose, 6 Snipe and 8 Siskins were at Folkestone Racecourse, 7 Canada Geese were at Nickolls Quarry and 7 Ringed Plovers were at the Willop Outfall.

From the 6th it became steadily colder, with bitter easterly winds, freezing daytime temperatures and some significant snowfall, and there was a substantial influx of birds, particularly wildfowl and waders, fleeing the even more severe weather on the continent. Highlights amongst the wildfowl included five **Tundra Bean Geese** near the Willop Sewage Works and a 'red-head' **Smew** flying past the Willop Outfall and then at Nickolls Quarry on the 8th, and an **Egyptian Goose** in the Nickolls Quarry/Willop Basin area from the 9th to the 15th, with two at Nickolls Quarry and Cock Ash Lake on the 20th.



Smew at the Willop Outfall (Brian Harper)



Smew at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

There were some good counts of the more regular species including 45 Brent Geese at Donkey Street and at least 154 offshore on the 8th, with 63 flying east past Seabrook the next day, at least 38 Shelduck offshore on the 8th, a peak of 12 Shovelers (one off the Willop Outfall, four at Donkey Street and 7 at Nickolls Quarry) on the 8th, a peak of nine Gadwall at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th, at least 360 Wigeon on the 8th (including 56 at Nickolls Quarry and c.250 off the Willop Outfall), with 78 at Nickolls Quarry and 131 flying east past Seabrook the following day, and 101 at Nickolls Quarry on the 13th, a drake Pintail at Samphire Hoe on the 8th to 9th, with a pair at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th, 70 Teal off the Willop Outfall and 74 at Nickolls Quarry on the 8th and a Red-breasted Merganser flying west past Seabrook on the 8th.

Highlights amongst the waders included single **Ruff** near the Willop Sewage Works on the 10th and at the Willop Basin on the 16th to 18th and an Avocet flying east and then landing on the sea off the Princes Parade on the 8th. There were particularly impressive arrivals of Lapwings (with a peak of between 2,500 and 3,000 on the 8th) and Golden Plovers (with a peak of over 400 on the 8th), with excellent counts also of Dunlin (with 261 noted on the 8th, including 188 heading east offshore and 65 at the Willop Basin) and Snipe (with a peak of 162 in the Donkey Street/Willop Basin area on the 12th).

Jack Snipe were also displaced by the conditions, with two at Nickolls Quarry on the 7th, one at Samphire Hoe on the 8th and singles at Holy Well on the 9th and 16th, as were Woodcock, with a total of 11 noted from widespread locations, but many of the latter must sadly have perished as nine corpses were found along the tideline at Hythe on the 15th.



Egyptian Goose at the Willop Basin (Ian Roberts)



Pintail at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Lapwing at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Plovers at Donkey Street (Ian Roberts)



Snipe at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Jack Snipe at Holy Well (Elliot Ranford)

Other waders of note included 2 Grey Plover and 5 Knot flying east past the Willop Outfall on the 8th, a Bar-tailed Godwit in a field near Haguelands on the 10th, a Green Sandpiper at Holy Well on the 10th to the 12th, and several Oystercatchers, Ringed Plovers, Curlew and Redshank.



Oystercatchers at the Willop Outfall (Brian Harper)



Ringed Plover at the Willop Outfall (Brian Harper)

There were counts of 59 Skylarks at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th and 35 at the Willop Basin the next day, whilst good numbers of winter thrushes were seen at many localities, including “hundreds” of Fieldfares and Redwings at Holy Well on the 9th, at least 50 Fieldfares at Donkey Street on the 11th and 100 Redwings at Pedlinge on the 13th. The conditions also led to an accumulation of around 10,000 Starlings roosting at the Willop Sewage Works on the 10th.



Redwing at Folkestone (David Featherbe)



Fieldfare at Sellindge (Derek Smith)

Further highlights during the cold spell included adult **Yellow-legged Gulls** at the Willop Basin on the 9th and Princes Parade on the 11th and a first-winter **Caspian Gull** at Haguelands on the 19th. A Water Rail at Holy Well from the 10th, a male Marsh Harrier at Haguelands on the 17th, single Merlins on the marsh on the 10th and 17th, up to two Peregrines on the marsh, single Chiffchaffs at Seabrook and the Willop Sewage Works, and a Black Redstart in a garden in Lympe on the 19th. A count of 3,802 Cormorants flying east past Seabrook on the 10th was also of note.

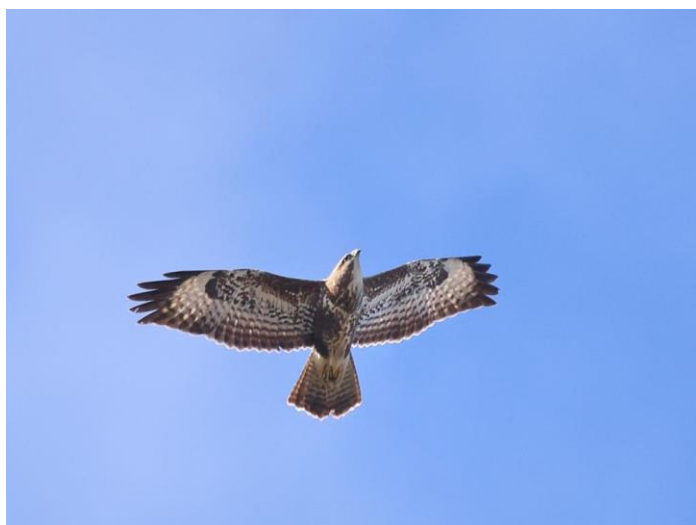
The latter part of the month was considerably milder, and it also became more settled as time went on. A Great White Egret flew south over Lympe on the 20th, 20 Brent Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 21st and 37 Brent Geese, 62 Gannets, 175 Red-throated Divers and 200 auks flew east past Hythe on the 23rd, when a Shoveler, 2 Gadwall, 3 Great White Egrets and 12 Wigeon were in the Donkey Street/Hoorne's Sewer area.

A plume of warm air from northern Africa raised local temperatures to over 13°C on the on the 24th and produced the earliest ever Wheatear at Samphire Hoe, whilst the first Red Kite of the spring flew west over Seabrook. Another Red Kite flew west over Hythe Roughs the following day, when a Chiffchaff was at Holy Well.

Two Red Kites and ten Buzzards flew over Hythe on the 26th, when a Red Kite flew over Newingreen, ten Buzzards flew over Seabrook, a Red Kite, a Siskin, 19 Stock Doves, 20 Buzzards and 160 Chaffinches flew over Abbotscliffe, and a Short-eared Owl was seen at Selby Farm in the evening.



Caspian Gull at Haguelands (Ian Roberts)



Buzzard over Hythe (Glenn Tutton)

A Crossbill, a Redpoll, 2 Reed Buntings, 3 Greenfinches, 5 Stock Doves, 9 Siskins and 1,276 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 27th, when a singing Chiffchaff and a Goldcrest were noted there, whilst a Black Redstart and a Chiffchaff were new arrivals at the Willop Basin, a Chiffchaff was singing at Chesterfield Wood and a Knot and 143 Sanderling were roosting at the Willop Outfall. Six Siskins flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 28th, when three Green Sandpipers were at Donkey Street and 12 Pochard and 15 Tufted Ducks were in the Cock Ash Lake/Horton Priory area.

March

Long-staying rarities included two **Great White Egrets** roosting at Port Lympne and feeding on the marsh until at least the 4th, the **Great Northern Diver** at Sandgate until at least the 5th and the **Water Pipit** at Donkey Street until at least the month's end. Other remaining wintering birds included two Purple Sandpipers at Hythe, two Green Sandpipers in the Donkey Street/Nickolls Quarry area, a Jack Snipe and up to 9 Curlew and 62 Snipe at the Willop Basin and a Little Egret along the coast in the Abbotscliffe/Samphire Hoe area.

There was a cool start to March, with an easterly airflow which produced some up-channel passage at sea, including 2 Shelduck, 4 Shovelers, 6 Avocets, 15 Fulmars, 25 Brent Geese, 110 Razorbills and a record count of **305** Pintails on the 1st, two Avocets, 9 Shelduck and 200 Brent Geese on the 2nd, another 200 Brent Geese the next day, a **Black-tailed Godwit**, the first Sandwich Tern, 3 Eiders, 5 Oystercatchers, 7 Curlews, 10 Shelduck, 40 Dunlin and at least 1,132 Brent Geese on the 4th and 3 Oystercatchers, 9 Fulmars, 70 Kittiwakes and 81 Gannets on the 5th. A **Red-necked Grebe** was also noted offshore from Folkestone Beach on the 1st.

There was an influx of geese in the first few days of the month, presumably involving birds moving back north having been displaced by the cold weather in February. On the afternoon of the 1st a flock of 30 **White-fronted Geese** flew over Cheriton and a total of 104 **White-fronted Geese** (in two flocks) flew east at Seabrook, with a further 18 flying east there the next morning. Four **White-fronted Geese** were seen in fields at the Willop Basin on the 4th, when four **Barnacle Geese** were found at Donkey Street (remaining until the 6th, with three present on the 7th), whilst 6 **Barnacle Geese** and 27 **White-fronted Geese** were seen near Lympne on the 5th.

Other sightings of note at the beginning of the month included a Red Kite flying over Cheriton, a Merlin at Selby Farm and 2 Gadwall and 2 Wigeon at Hoorne's Sewer on the 1st, a Short-eared Owl and a Shoveler at Donkey Street, and a White Wagtail and 2 Gadwall at Nickolls Quarry on the 3rd, a Marsh Harrier at Donkey Street and a Chiffchaff at Botolph's Bridge on the 4th and a Velvet Scoter at the Willop Outfall, a Merlin and a Firecrest at Botolph's Bridge and a Jack Snipe at Donkey Street on the 5th, when four Siskins and 240 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe. The next day saw 80 Chaffinches flying east at the Willop Basin, whilst a Reed Bunting, 13 Siskins and 3,200 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 7th.

The 7th also produced a **Great White Egret** and a Woodcock at Samphire Hoe, a White Wagtail at the Hythe Imperial golf course and two Black-throated Divers flying west past Folkestone Pier. The 8th saw a change to a westerly airflow and it was generally quieter, although a male **Hen Harrier** flew east over Botolph's Bridge Road on the 8th, when a Firecrest and a White Wagtail were at Nickolls Quarry, a **Barnacle Goose** was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 9th, when a **Yellow-legged Gull** was at Samphire Hoe, 11 Siskins and 610 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe, at least 11 Fulmars, 150 Brent Geese and 520 Gannets flew east at sea on the 10th and a Red-breasted Merganser flew west past Sandgate on the 11th, when a Black Redstart was seen at Cheriton.



White-fronted Geese at Cock Ash Lake (Derek Smith)



Barnacle Geese at Donkey Street (Ian Roberts)



Barnacle Geese and White-fronted Geese at Lypne (Phil Sharp)

A female Marsh Harrier was at Nickolls Quarry on the 13th, when a Sandwich Tern was noted off Princes Parade, whilst six **White-fronted Geese** were found at Cock Ash Lake the following day, when a Red Kite flew north over Hythe and a Shag was seen on the canal at Seabrook.

North-westerly winds from mid-month led to some significant visual passage, with 9 Siskins and 1,715 Chaffinches flying east at Abbotscliffe the 15th, two Grey Wagtails, 30 Siskins and 2,480 Chaffinches flying east there on the 17th, a Grey Wagtail, 2 Bramblings, 4 Pied/White Wagtails, 16 Siskins and 4,875 Chaffinches flying east there the next day, a Brambling, a Reed Bunting, 3 Grey Wagtails, 10 Greenfinches, 73 Siskins and 4,335 Chaffinches flying east there on the 20th and a Grey Wagtail, 16 Goldfinches, 61 Siskins, 92 Brent Geese and 8,190 Chaffinches flying east there on the 21st.

Elsewhere a drake Goosander flew east past Folkestone Beach on the 16th, a **Barnacle Goose** was at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th, when a Firecrest was at West Hythe and two **Egyptian Geese** and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers flew east past Seabrook, and two Dunlin were at Nickolls Quarry on the 18th, with a Woodcock there the following day, when at least six Chiffchaffs were noted across the area and two Curlew and 57 Brent Geese flew east at sea. A Black Redstart was at Samphire Hoe on the 20th and a **Great White Egret** flew over the A20/A260 junction on the 21st.

South-westerly winds dominated the rest of the month and temperatures gradually began to climb. A **Little Ringed Plover** and a pair of Goosanders were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 22nd, when a Short-eared Owl was at Samphire Hoe and a Sandwich Tern and 105 Brent Geese flew east at sea. A Sandwich Tern and 330 Brent Geese flew east past Mill Point the next day, when Black Redstarts were seen at Abbotscliffe, in a garden in Folkestone and at Samphire Hoe. Two Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe on the 24th, when 2 Mute Swans, 3 Shelduck and 31 Brent Geese flew east at sea and Chiffchaffs continued to arrive.



Red Kite at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



Wheatear at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

A Black Redstart and a Brambling were at Church Hougham on the 25th and a Sandwich Tern, 3 Oystercatchers, 5 Fulmars, 40 Red-throated Divers and 46 Gannets flew east at sea, with 6 Sandwich Terns, 6 Fulmars, 14 Common Scoters, 25 Brent Geese and 270 Gannets going east the next day. A Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe on the 27th, when a pair of Black Redstarts were at Hythe Ranges and two Fieldfares flew north at Lympne, whilst a satellite-tracked White-tailed Eagle from the Isle of Wight reintroduction scheme passed over the area unseen. The first three Sand Martins and three Swallows of the year were at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th.



Shag on canal at Seabrook (Ian Roberts)



Little Ringed Plover at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

There was a particularly mild end to the month, with temperatures approaching 22°C on the 30th, and there were several notable sightings. On the 29th an Osprey flew north-west over Castle Hill, the first House Martin was at Lympe, a Tree Sparrow was at Daleacres on Lower Wall, three Whimbrel were at the Willop Basin, a Red Kite flew west over Seabrook and the Lower Wall, and a Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe. The 30th produced a **Hawfinch** at Saltwood, an **Egyptian Goose** at Radnor Park Pond, Red Kites flying over Abbotscliffe, Seabrook and Folkestone (2), 3 House Martins and 6 Swallows at Abbotscliffe, a Wheatear and a Merlin at the Willop Sewage Works, 2 Wheatears and 2 White Wagtails at Samphire Hoe and a Swallow at Seabrook.

The final day of March saw a **Goshawk** flying west over Barrack Hill (Hythe), a **Great Northern Diver** off the Willop Outfall, the first Whitethroat at Nickolls Quarry, a Wheatear and 3 White Wagtails at Abbotscliffe and 13 Sandwich Terns flying east past Mill Point.

April

April was particularly cold, dry and sunny and unusually the mean temperature was lower than March.

Lingering winter visitors included the **Water Pipit** at Donkey Street until the 5th, up to three Green Sandpipers in the Donkey Street/Nickolls Quarry area and up to 5 Curlew at the Willop Basin until the 11th and up to two Purple Sandpipers at Hythe until the 27th.

A cold north-easterly breeze from the 1st produced some movement at sea, with a drake **Garganey**, 10 Common Scoters, 35 Brent Geese, 55 Sandwich Terns and 135 Gannets flying east past Folkestone Beach, and some visual passage, with a Redpoll, a Siskin, a Sand Martin and 4 Swallows flying east and 5 Meadow Pipits, 35 Linnets and 40 Goldfinches arriving in off there, whilst at least 6 Sand Martins and 15 Swallows moved through Nickolls Quarry and a Swallow, 3 Whimbrel and 120 Sanderling were seen at the Willop Basin/Outfall.

On the 2nd a Bar-tailed Godwit, a Shelduck, 2 Gadwalls, 2 Grey Plovers and 30 Sandwich Terns flew east at sea, the first two Yellow Wagtails of the year and three Gadwalls were at Hoorne's Sewer, and hirundines continued to arrive, with two House Martins, 22 Sand Martins and 25 Swallows at Nickolls Quarry, a House Martin and 10 Swallows at Cock Ash Lake and two House Martins and two Sand Martins over the canal at Seabrook, whilst the 3rd produced three Red-breasted Mergansers, 14 Common Scoters, 94 Sandwich Terns and 160 Gannets flying east past Samphire Hoe.

It remained cold on the 4th with the wind becoming more northerly and single Black Redstart and Wheatear at Samphire Hoe were the only sightings of note, whilst a Whitethroat and 130 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry the following day, when a White-tailed Eagle from the Isle of Wight reintroduction scheme flew in off the sea and then north-east over Samphire Hoe. The eagle made another pass through local airspace on the 6th, but was this time unseen, as it headed south-west over Saltwood and West Hythe, whilst 2 **Yellow-legged Gulls** were at Samphire Hoe, the first Sedge Warbler and 15 House Martins were at Nickolls Quarry, a Red Kite flew west over Palmarsh and a Marsh Harrier flew west over Hythe Roughs. A Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe on the 7th.



White-tailed Eagle at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)



Yellow-legged Gulls at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

A change to a south-westerly wind on the 8th encouraged a little passage at sea, with four **Egyptian Geese**, 48 Red-throated Divers, 70 Brent Geese, 70 Sandwich Terns, 112 Common Scoters and 533 Gannets flying east past Samphire Hoe, whilst a Great Skua, an Eider, 43 Sandwich Terns, 78 Common Scoters and 180 Gannets went east there the next day, when a **Yellow-legged Gull** was on the seawall, single Wheatears were at Princes Parade and Seabrook and a White Wagtail was at Donkey Street, and the first Common Tern, a Red-breasted Merganser, 40 Common Scoters and 105 Sandwich Terns flew east past Mill Point on the 10th.

Although it remained rather cool, light winds from the 11th produced a few migrants on the land. A Ring Ouzel was at Abbotscliffe on the 11th, when a Red Kite flew over Cheriton and 14 Sandwich Terns and 182 Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe, and 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Blackcaps, 4 Wheatears and 11 Chiffchaffs were at Samphire Hoe the next day, when a Bar-tailed Godwit was at the Willop Sewage Works. A Redstart and 2 Ring Ouzels were at Samphire Hoe on the 13th, a Common Tern was at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th and 2 Ring Ouzels and 7 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe on the 15th.

The second half of the month was milder, with winds mostly from the east or north-east and migrants continued to arrive, with the first Willow Warblers at Nickolls Quarry and Lympe on the 16th, although winter visitors still lingered, with 32 Fieldfares at Saltwood. Another Fieldfare was seen at the Willop Sewage Works the following day, when the first two Reed Warblers were at Nickolls Quarry and five Whimbrel flew east at Seabrook. Three Ring Ouzels were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 18th, when a Yellow Wagtail flew in off the sea at Capel Battery.



Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Sandwich Tern at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)

A **Serin** flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 19th, when two Grey Partridges were also of note there, whilst there was a small arrival of Willow Warblers with singles at Haguelands, Botolph's Bridge, Hythe and Mill Point, and three at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Wheatear was also seen at Haguelands and 2 Arctic Skuas, 3 Shovelers, 14 Shelducks, 18 Whimbrels, 18 Mediterranean Gulls and 190 Sandwich Terns flew east at sea.

A Nightingale was singing at West Hythe from the 20th, with a further Willow Warbler there, one at Capel Battery and three at Nickolls Quarry, whilst the first Lesser Whitethroat was at Copt Point and Reed Warblers, Sedge Warblers and Whitethroats continued to arrive and a Fieldfare flew over Lympe Park Wood. An Osprey flew north over Aldergate Lane on the 21st, when an Arctic Skua, 2 Shovelers, 5 Bar-tailed Godwits, 24 Whimbrels and 80 Gannets flew east past Samphire Hoe and 11 Sand Martins arrived in off the sea there.

An Arctic Skua, 2 Black-throated Divers, 3 Pomarine Skuas, 3 Whimbrels, 12 Bar-tailed Godwits, 32 Fulmars and 66 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd, when the first Swift was at Nickolls Quarry, and a Pomarine Skua, a Common Tern, 7 Whimbrels, 16 Bar-tailed Godwits, 30 Kittiwakes and 42 Sandwich Terns flew east past Mill Point the next day.

A **Black Kite** flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 24th, where a Red-breasted Merganser, 2 Arctic Skuas, 6 Velvet Scoters, 9 Bar-tailed Godwits, 13 Common Terns, 20 Whimbrels and 830 Common Scoter flew east, whilst a Greenshank was seen at Donkey Street, a Swift was at the Willop Basin, a Fieldfare was at Lympe and a White-tailed Eagle (presumably a reintroduced bird) was reported flying west over Hythe.

A **Spotted Redshank**, 4 Greenshank, 4 Snipe and 7 Whimbrel were at Donkey Street on the 25th, when the first Cuckoo and 75 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry and a Red-breasted Merganser, 2 Black-throated Divers, 2 Grey Plovers, 3 Great Skuas, 4 Shovelers, 10 Brent Geese and 18 Whimbrel flew east past Samphire Hoe.



Spotted Redshank and Greenshanks at Donkey Street (Ian Roberts)

The last four days of the month were cooler and more showery, with northerly winds. On the 27th, Willow Warblers were seen at Nickolls Quarry, Crete Road West and Samphire Hoe (2), whilst Swifts were noted at Hythe and Folkestone and nine Whimbrels were at Botolph's Bridge, with at least seven noted heading east past coastal sites. Seawatching the following day produced a Knot, a Bar-tailed Godwit, 3 Velvet Scoters, 11 Little Terns, 25 Whimbrels, 150 Black-headed Gulls, 300 Brent Geese and 390 Common Scoters heading east, whilst the first Common Sandpiper, 8 Swifts, 10 Sand Martins, 10 House Martins and 80 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry.



Whimbrel at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Whitethroat at Folkestone Downs (Tony Poole)

A **Richard's Pipit** and the first Hobby were reported at Samphire Hoe on the 29th, when an **Egyptian Goose** was at Cock Ash Lake, a Short-eared Owl flew over Lympne and two Eiders were offshore of the Dymchurch Redoubt. The first Whinchat was reported at Samphire Hoe on the 30th, when 2 Black-throated Divers, 6 Oystercatchers, 9 Whimbrels, 11 Bar-tailed Godwits and c.60 Common/Arctic Terns flew east at sea.

May

The first week of May was unsettled and unseasonably cold, after which it became a little milder but due to a series of deep low pressure systems the frequent, often heavy, rain continued and there were a number of particularly windy days. Conditions settled in the final few days of the month, when it also became warmer. Overall it was the coldest May for 25 years and the fifth wettest in 150 years.

The Nightingale was still singing at West Hythe on the 1st (where it remained throughout the month) when new arrivals included a Yellow Wagtail, 2 Ring Ouzels and 16 Swallows at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Whimbrel and 15 Brent Geese flew east at Hythe. A male Wheatear remained at Donkey Street until the 10th, where a Corn Bunting was holding territory, with two territorial males at Abbotscliffe. A Cuckoo also frequented the Donkey Street/Nickolls Quarry area, with two present from the 20th, whilst up to six Yellow Wagtails were in the Romney Marsh area. A pair of Gadwall bred at Hoorne's Sewer (the first occurrence of breeding locally) and a pair of Black Redstarts were on territory at Samphire Hoe.

A Common Sandpiper was seen along the canal at Seabrook on the 2nd, when two Common Sandpipers were at Hythe Ranges, three Snipe were at Donkey Street and seven Whimbrels were at Botolph's Bridge (with three remaining until the 4th). A Ring Ouzel, a Willow Warbler, a Wheatear, 4 Sand Martins, 8 Swallows and 30 House Martins were at Abbotscliffe, 2 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, 3 Whimbrels flew there and small numbers of Swifts continued to arrive. A Hobby arrived in off the sea at Seabrook on the 3rd, when an Arctic Skua, 20 Oystercatchers, 21 Sandwich Terns and 35 Common Scoters flew past Samphire Hoe and a Willow Warbler was seen at Nickolls Quarry.

An Arctic Skua, a Great Skua and seven Manx Shearwaters flew west past Mill Point on the 4th, when a Hobby was hunting over the canal at Seabrook. A Turtle Dove, a Ring Ouzel and a Willow Warbler were at Abbotscliffe the next day, when a Hobby, 10 Swallows and 19 Swifts arrived in off the sea there, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Hobby, a Willow Warbler and 150 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry, a Black-throated Diver was on the sea off the Willop Outfall, two drake Eider flew past Samphire Hoe and a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was reported at the A20 Westenhangar junction.

A **Wood Warbler**, a Ring Ouzel, a Willow Warbler and a Yellow Wagtail were at Abbotscliffe on the 7th, when a Hobby was at Hythe, and a Garden Warbler took up territory at Princes Parade the following day, when a Manx Shearwater, a Grey Plover, 2 Bar-tailed Godwits, 19 Whimbrel and 30 Dunlin flew past and a Greenshank was at Donkey Street. A **Great Northern Diver**, an Arctic Skua, 13 Brent Geese and 63 Common Scoter flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 9th, when a Yellow Wagtail, a Redpoll and 2 Wheatears were seen, a Hobby arrived in off the sea at Seabrook, two Wheatears were at Abbotscliffe, two Wheatears were at Princes Parade and a very good count of nine Common Sandpipers were at Nickolls Quarry. A Nightingale was singing along the canal near Palmarsh on the 10th.



Garden Warbler at Princes Parade (Ian Roberts)

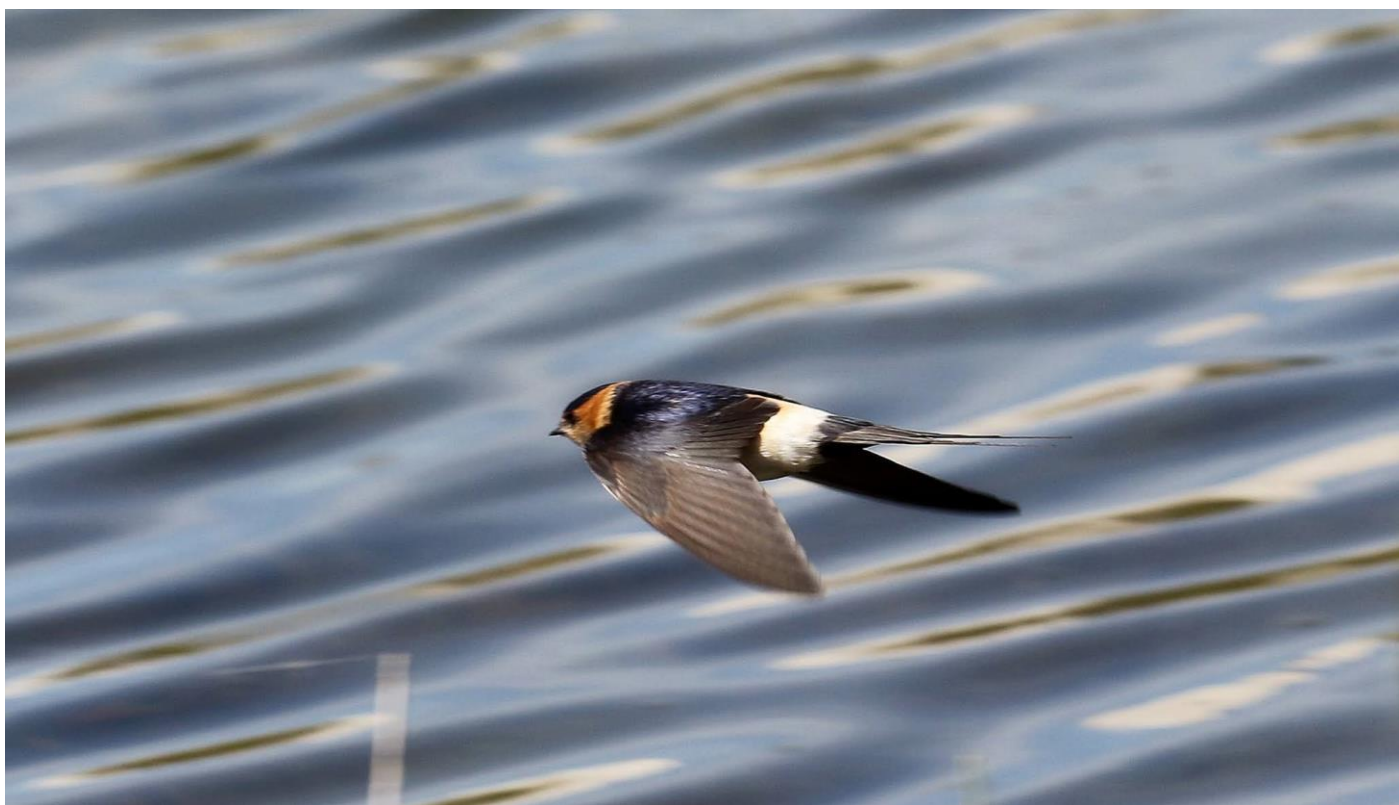


Manx Shearwater at Mill Point (Ian Roberts)



Four of the nine Common Sandpipers at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

A **Red-rumped Swallow** lingered for a short while with c.50 House Martins at Samphire Hoe on the 11th, when 28 Swallows flew west at Abbotscliffe. A Sand Martin and three Hobbies were at Nickolls Quarry on the 12th, when a Snipe was at Donkey Street, whilst a **Great White Egret** flew east over Hythe the next day, when five Red-breasted Mergansers flew past Samphire Hoe and a Hobby was at Seabrook. A Crossbill flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 14th.



Red-rumped Swallow at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

An Arctic Skua flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th, when a Cuckoo was seen at Hythe and three Hobbies were at Lympne on the 16th, with a Grey Partridge at Abbotscliffe on the 17th, where 28 Swifts arrived in off the sea. A Little Egret flew east over Seabrook and four Red Kites flew east over Hythe and on the 18th.

Another Red Kite was at Crete Road West the following day, when a Willow Warbler was at Brockhill Country Park and two Willow Warblers were at Nickolls Quarry, whilst two Red Kites were seen near Castle Hill on the 20th, when a Dunlin was at Donkey Street. On the 21st 14 Swifts and 25 House Martins arrived in off the sea at Mill Point, whilst a Firecrest was singing at Port Lympe on the 23rd.

Following a day of stormy conditions, a record count of **66** Manx Shearwaters flew west past Hythe on the 24th. A Red Kite flew over Abbot's Court Farm on the 26th, when two Redpolls flew over Abbotscliffe, whilst late arrivals on the 27th comprised a Wheatear at Hythe and a Willow Warbler at Abbotscliffe. A largely disappointing month ended with a flourish when a **Bee-eater** was heard calling over Samphire Hoe and a Marsh Harrier was seen arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 31st.

June

The first half of the month was predominantly warm and dry, especially at the start, but it became less settled during the second half, with fluctuating temperatures and numerous episodes of rain or heavy showers, some of these thundery. Overall the rainfall total was more than double the mean for June.

Highlights in June included the fourth area record of **Black Stork** seen flying over Sellindge on the 5th and again on the 6th, having presumably roosted nearby, and a flock of nine **Bee-eaters** that arrived in off the sea at Folkestone Warren on the 9th, whilst another was heard over Church Hougham later that day (the 14th and 15th area records).

A **Black Kite** was reported flying north over Postling on the 5th (the 17th area record), whilst a Red Kite flew over Saltwood on the 4th, a record count of **19** flew north over Sellindge on the 5th and three flew east over Hythe on the 9th. Two Little Egrets also flew over Hythe on the 5th and four were seen below Abbotscliffe on the 6th.

A male White Wagtail was seen gathering food near Cock Ash Lake on the 6th and was thought to presumably be feeding chicks but the female was not seen, so it is unknown whether it was a pure or mixed pair (there has only been one previous breeding record, which involved a pure pair, at Samphire Hoe in 2013).



Black Stork at Sellindge (Derek Smith)

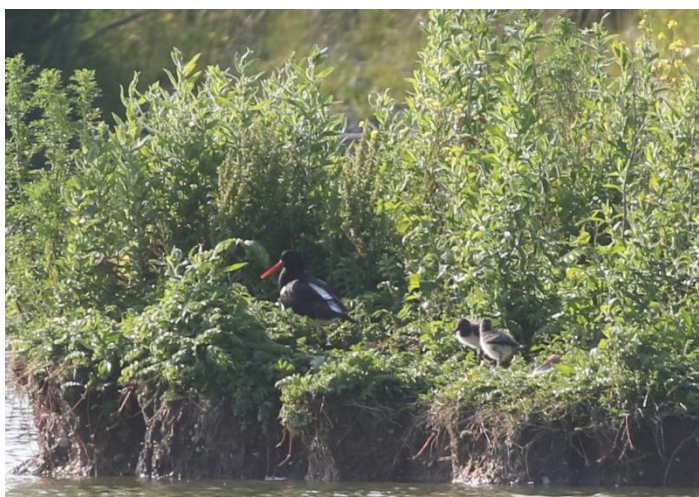


White Wagtail at Cock Ash Lake (Paul Holt)

Other breeding records of note included the Garden Warbler continuing to hold territory at Princes Parade until at least the 2nd, a Nightingale singing in Thorn Wood on the 19th, a pair of Oystercatchers with two fledged young at Nickolls Quarry, up to two Cuckoos in the Nickolls Quarry area throughout, with another at Seabrook on the 3rd, a territorial Corn Bunting at Donkey Street, with two territorial males at Abbotscliffe, and Tufted Ducks were present at Cock Ash Lake (2 drakes, 1 duck), Nickolls Quarry (2 drakes, 1 duck) and Brockhill Country Park (two pairs).

Hobbies were seen arrived in off the sea at Capel Battery on the 9th, at Samphire Hoe on the 17th and 20th and hunting over Seabrook on several dates.

Other sightings of note included a Grey Partridge near Bluehouse Wood on the 10th, up to 17 Canada Geese at Nickolls Quarry, where 15 Greylag Geese flew over on the 3rd, a female Shoveler at Nickolls Quarry on the 23rd, single Lapwings flying over Seabrook on the 4th and 27th and a Redshank at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th.



Oystercatchers at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Little Owl at Lower Wall Road (Brian Harper)

July

The unsettled weather continued into July with unseasonably cool temperatures and frequent spells of rain, many of which were heavy and thundery. However it became much warmer by mid-month, with drier and sunnier conditions, before it became unsettled again during the final week.

The clear highlight of the month was another **Black Stork** that, having earlier flown west over Dover, spent some time over the Crete Road East area before drifting north over Hawkinge on the 15th, with presumably the same bird seen again flying east over Folkestone on the 17th.

A Honey Buzzard flying west over Samphire Hoe on the 19th was also notable in an otherwise quiet month.



Black Stork at Crete Road East (Ian Roberts)

Returning waders are often a feature of July and comprised single Common Sandpipers at Folkestone Warren on the 3rd and Hythe Ranges on the 20th, a Lapwing at Samphire Hoe on the 13th and a Whimbrel at Hythe Ranges on the 20th.

Passerines also began to move through and included 2 Yellow Wagtails at Abbotscliffe on the 22nd, a Whinchat and a Grey Wagtail there on the 25th and a Willow Warbler there on the 26th. Departing Swifts included 70 flying west over Hythe on the 26th.

Hobbies continued to be seen hunting over Seabrook and a pair were again present at Lympe Park Wood, with others at Samphire Hoe on the 13th and Abbotscliffe on the 27th.



Lapwing at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Swifts at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)

A Little Egret flew west at Seabrook on the 13th and Mediterranean Gull numbers began to increase from mid-month.

August

The first half of August was largely unsettled with wet and often windy conditions but the second half was drier and more settled. An anticyclone settled over the continent during the last week of the month, introducing a north to north-easterly airflow and mostly cloudy conditions.

The first ten days of the month saw passerine migrants continuing to trickle through and these included 3 Willow Warblers, 3 Lesser Whitethroats and 10 Whitethroats at Abbotscliffe on the 1st, a Chiffchaff in a garden in Folkestone on the 7th and a Garden Warbler at Abbotscliffe, a Willow Warbler at Park Farm and a Wheatear and 6 Willow Warblers at Samphire Hoe on the 10th. A Marsh Harrier was also noted at Abbotscliffe on the 7th and departing Swifts included 50 flying over Creteway Down on the 5th.

Three **Balearic Shearwaters** flew past Samphire Hoe on the 11th, when a Wheatear, a Sedge Warbler, a Chiffchaff, 2 Sand Martins, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 7 Willow Warblers and 12 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe and seven Sand Martins flew west at Seabrook, whilst the next day saw a Yellow Wagtail flying east and an Arctic Skua flying west at Seabrook. A Green Sandpiper and a Common Sandpiper were at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th and a Whimbrel flew west at Hythe the following day, when a Wheatear, a Sand Martin, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 6 Swifts, 8 Willow Warblers and 36 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe and three Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe.



Yellow Wagtails at Abbotscliffe (Mike Linklater)



Hobbies at Lympe (Phil Sharp)

A Whinchat, a Tree Pipit, a Reed Warbler, 2 Swifts and 6 Yellow Wagtails were seen at Abbotscliffe on the 16th, whilst the next day saw an Osprey flying west at Samphire Hoe and later over Hythe, where a Ringed Plover and 40 Swifts also flew west. A Whinchat at Samphire Hoe and a Whinchat, a Wheatear and 4 Willow Warblers at Abbotscliffe were also of note. The 18th produced a Redshank, 2 Whinchats and 3 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe and 7 Willow Warblers at Abbotscliffe.

Another Osprey flew west over Hythe on the 19th, when two Green Sandpipers and four Common Sandpipers at Nickolls Quarry and confirmation was received that a pair of Hobbies had successfully bred again at Lympe Park Wood, raising two juveniles.

A Whimbrel, 26 Sand Martins and 39 Swallows flew west at the Willop Outfall on the 20th, when 45 Common Scoters were seen offshore and 97 Sandwich Terns were roosting at Hythe Ranges. A Little Gull, a Shoveler, 3 Little Egrets, 4 Teal, 11 Whimbrels and 75 Sandwich Terns flew past Samphire Hoe the following day, where 3 Whinchats and 5 Wheatears were noted and 70 Swifts flew west. Two **Black-tailed Godwits** flew east and an Arctic Skua, 6 Sand Martins and 18 Swallows flew west at Seabrook on the 22nd, when a Spotted Flycatcher, a Whinchat, a Wheatear, 4 Willow Warbler, 5 Lesser Whitethroats and 15 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe and ten Yellow Wagtails flew west.

The influence of easterly winds was evident in the last week or so of the month, with a Pied Flycatcher, 2 Redstarts and 2 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe and a Redstart, a Sedge Warbler and 3 Whinchats at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd and a new Pied Flycatcher at Abbotscliffe the next day, when a Honey Buzzard arrived in off the sea at the Willop Outfall.

An Arctic Skua, 2 Whimbrel, 4 Shelduck and c.60 Sandwich Terns flew past Samphire Hoe on the 25th, where Whinchats increased to five, whilst two Wheatears, two Whinchats and 11 Yellow Wagtails were at Abbotscliffe the following day. A juvenile Cuckoo in a garden in Folkestone on the 27th was an unusual record, whilst two Common Sandpipers were seen at Sandgate.

Two **Wrynecks** arrived at Abbotscliffe on the 28th and remained until the 1st September (with at least one lingering until the 6th September), whilst a Pied Flycatcher, 2 Wheatears and 3 Whinchats were also noted there, with two Wheatears at Copt Point.



Pied Flycatcher at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)



Wrynecks at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



Wryneck at Abbotscliffe (Russ Blackman)



Wryneck at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)

A Marsh Harrier, a Redstart, a Tree Pipit, 2 Wheatears, 4 Whinchats, 7 Lesser Whitethroats and 27 Yellow Wagtails were also seen at Abbotscliffe on the 29th, with a Garden Warbler, a Tree Pipit, 2 Black Redstarts, 3 Whinchats, 6 Lesser Whitethroats and 14 Yellow Wagtails there on the 30th, when a Pied Flycatcher, 3 Whinchats, 4 Yellow Wagtails and 8 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe and an Arctic Skua, 2 Wigeon, 11 Teal and 100 Gannets flew east there, a Reed Warbler was seen in a garden in central Folkestone and a Dunlin was along the undercliff below Abbotscliffe.

A Pied Flycatcher, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Tree Pipit, 9 Whinchats and 10 Yellow Wagtails were also seen at Abbotscliffe on the last day of the month, when four Whinchats and ten Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe.

September

Much of September was fine and settled, with dry, relatively warm conditions although it became markedly cooler and wetter from the 27th.

The month began with a Redstart, a Tree Pipit, a Sedge Warbler, a Willow Warbler, 2 Whinchats, 6 Chiffchaffs and 38 Yellow Wagtails at Abbotscliffe on the 1st, with a Pied Flycatcher there the next day, when 2 Redstarts, 3 Whinchats, 7 Wheatears and 8 Whitethroats were at Samphire Hoe. A Redstart and 7 Whinchats were at Abbotscliffe on the 3rd, with a further Redstart at Church Hougham, whilst a Pied Flycatcher, a Willow Warbler, 3 Sand Martins, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 6 Whinchats, 8 Blackcaps and 9 Yellow Wagtails were seen at Abbotscliffe on the 5th.

The 6th produced a Common Sandpiper, 2 Yellow Wagtails, 2 Whinchats and 4 Wheatears at Samphire Hoe, a Wheatear, 2 Swifts and 5 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe and 2 Yellow Wagtails and 11 Whinchats at Botolph's Bridge, whilst two Golden Plovers were at Church Hougham on the 7th. A Grasshopper Warbler was noted between the Aldergate Bridge and the West Hythe dam on the 9th.



Wheatear at Samphire Hoe (Steve Reynaert)



Chiffchaff at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)

A **Corncrake** was seen flying over the A20 just south of the Round Hill tunnels on the 11th whilst the 12th produced an exceptional flock of 45 White Storks flying over West Hythe and later roosting at Etchinghill, although these were considered to have originated from an introduction program. A Spotted Flycatcher, a Swift and 3 Whinchats at Abbotscliffe were also of note, with 2 Wheatears and 4 Whinchats there the following day. A Wigeon was seen at Samphire Hoe from the 14th and 2 Yellow Wagtails, 5 Whinchats and 10 Chiffchaffs were at Abbotscliffe the next day.

The 16th saw the first migrant Great Spotted Woodpecker, 5 Chiffchaffs and 6 Blackcaps at Abbotscliffe, whilst an Arctic Skua was seen off Samphire Hoe and 19 Wigeon were seen off Princes Parade. A **Balearic Shearwater**, an Arctic Skua, a Red-throated Diver, 2 Wigeon and 50 Sandwich Terns were noted off the Dymchurch Redoubt on the 17th.

The first area record of **Black Guillemot** flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 18th, where 9 Teal and 100 Gannets also flew east, whilst an Osprey and a Hobby were noted at Abbotscliffe and a Hobby and a Whinchat were at Beachborough Park. The first Brent Geese of the autumn were noted off Samphire Hoe (four) and Seabrook (12) on the 19th.

Two seemingly wild **White Storks** were reported on the beach between Hythe and Dymchurch on the 20th, when a Tree Pipit and 6 Yellow Wagtails flew west at Abbotscliffe, a Red-throated Diver, a Tufted Duck, 2 Brent Geese, 3 Golden Plovers, 7 Wigeon and 8 Teal were seen off the Willop Outfall, 4 Common Terns, 8 Sand Martins, 23 Brent Geese, 30 Kittiwakes and 58 Sandwich Terns were seen from Seabrook and single Little Egrets were noted at Abbotscliffe, Folkestone Harbour and Donkey Street.



White Storks at Etchinghill (Ruth McCabe)

A Wheatear, 2 Whitethroats, 6 Blackcaps and 15 Chiffchaffs were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 21st, whilst at Abbotscliffe a Whinchat and 13 Chiffchaffs were present whilst about 100 Meadow Pipits flew east and 143 Meadow Pipits were logged there the following day, when ten Blackcaps were noted. A flock of 31 Greylag Geese flew east at Seabrook on the 23rd, a Black Tern was reported at Copt Point on the 24th and the two juvenile Hobbies were still at Lympe Park Wood on the 27th.

An adult **Rose-coloured Starling** was found in a garden at Palmarsh on the 28th, where it remained until at least the 25th October, whilst an Arctic Skua and 2 Red-throated Divers were seen off the Dymchurch Redoubt on the 30th.



Rose-coloured Starling at Palmarsh (John Organ)



Rose-coloured Starling at Palmarsh (Barry Wright)

October

After an unsettled start to the month it became drier and milder between the 6th and 17th, before turning unsettled again and the last week saw some heavy and prolonged spells of rain.

A stormy start to the month with strong southerly winds produced some excellent seawatching, with a juvenile **Long-tailed Skua**, **5 Leach's Petrels**, 12 Arctic Skuas, 110 Gannets and 250 Sandwich Terns flying west past Mill Point on the 1st and a **Sooty Shearwater**, a **Balearic Shearwater**, a Manx Shearwater, a Grey Plover, 3 Arctic Skuas, 3 Great Skuas, 3 Red-throated Divers and 905 Gannets flying west past Samphire Hoe the next day.

A quieter spell followed, with just 3 Wheatears at Copt Point and 5 Chiffchaffs and 6 Blackcaps at Samphire Hoe of note on the 3rd, whilst offshore single Arctic Skuas were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 3rd and Princes Parade on the 5th. A late Swift flew west at the Aldergate Bridge on the 6th, where five Sand Martins and 247 House Martins also flew west, whilst c.200 House Martins were at Nickolls Quarry. A Merlin, 5 Jays and 60 Swallows were noted at Abbotscliffe and a Corn Bunting, 12 Tree Sparrows, 12 Teal and 120 Linnets were present at Donkey Street.

A **Woodlark** and a Hobby flew west over Seabrook on the 7th, when two Ring Ouzels were at Samphire Hoe and a Ring Ouzel and 14 Chiffchaffs were at Abbotscliffe, where 2 Siskins, 12 Reed Buntings and 500 Starlings flew over. Another **Woodlark** and a Whitethroat were at Abbotscliffe the following day, when a **Yellow-legged Gull**, a Ring Ouzel and a Wheatear were at Samphire Hoe where a flock of c.1,000 Starlings arrived in off the sea, and a Hobby was seen over Hythe.

A Lesser Whitethroat, a Snipe and 3 Lapwings were at Abbotscliffe on the 9th, when 5 Jays flew west there, whilst the next day produced a Redwing, 11 Chiffchaffs and 19 Blackcaps at Samphire Hoe, a Firecrest at Sandgate and a flock of 16 Ravens flying east over Hythe and later over Horn Street. A Brambling and 2 Reed Buntings were at Abbotscliffe on the 11th, when 2 Redpolls flew east there and a further seven Ravens flew east over Seabrook. The 12th saw a Snipe, a Great Spotted Woodpecker and 10 Chiffchaffs at Abbotscliffe, 4 Corn Buntings and 10 Tree Sparrows at Donkey Street and .100 Redwings flying east over Cheriton.



Ravens at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)

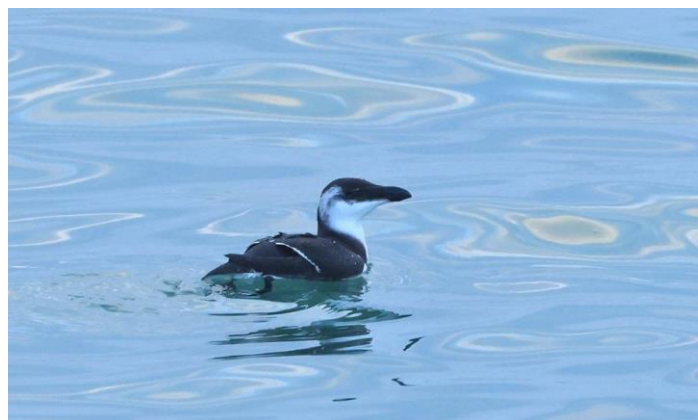


Gannet at Princes Parade (Ian Roberts)

A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** spent some time feeding off Battery Point on the 13th, whilst a **Grey Phalarope** was reported off Princes Parade and 5 Razorbills and 10 Brent Geese were also seen offshore, whilst a Lapwing, 2 Bramblings and 2 Reed Buntings were at Abbotscliffe, where a Fieldfare, 2 Jays, 8 Siskins, 15 Swallows and 375 Goldfinches flew east and 14 Skylarks arrived in off the sea at Seabrook. A Wheatear was at Folkestone Beach. A Shag, 31 Guillemots and 45 Razorbills were seen off Princes Parade the next day. A Black Redstart was at Abbotscliffe on the 15th, whilst 5 Jays flew west and c.1,000 Starlings arrived in off the sea there the following day.



Guillemot at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)



Razorbill at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)

On the 17th a drake Velvet Scoter, 3 Arctic Skuas, 5 Red-throated Divers, 7 Razorbills, 31 Kittiwakes and 450 Gannets flew past Mill Point, with two Arctic Skuas, 4 Little Gulls and 4 Sandwich Terns flying east there the next day. A Hobby was seen at West Hythe on the 19th. The 21st produced a Green Sandpiper at Botolph's Bridge, 5 Corn Buntings and 7 Tree Sparrows at Donkey Street and ten Sandwich Terns at the Dymchurch Redoubt, whilst the following day saw a Brambling, 3 Ring Ouzels, 4 Golden Plovers, 4 Jays and 4 Siskins fly west at Abbotscliffe.

A juvenile **Pallid Harrier** at Abbotscliffe on the 23rd was a new species for the area, whilst three Ring Ouzels were also seen there and a Redpoll, 5 Reed Buntings, 10 Jays, 14 Siskins, 22 Bramblings and 880 Starlings flew over. Another Ring Ouzel was noted at Samphire Hoe. Two Wigeon and 4 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe and 75 Starling arrived in off the sea there the next day. Single Ring Ouzels were seen at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe on the 25th and a Barn Owl was at West Hythe on the 26th, with a Hobby at Lympe on the 27th.



Pallid Harrier at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)

A Great Skua, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Sandwich Terns, 9 Brent Geese, c.75 Guillemots and c.225 Razorbills flew past Mill Point on the 29th, whilst a **Great White Egret** flew south-east out to sea from Copt Point the following day. The month ended with a **Sooty Shearwater** flying west past Hythe, the first returning Purple Sandpiper at Hythe and a male Marsh Harrier at Abbot's Court Farm on the 31st.

November

Most of November was mild and settled, with winds predominately from the westerly quarter, and a few summer visitors were lingering early in month, including a Swallow and a Chiffchaff at Seabrook on the 1st, when a Water Rail and 31 Blackbirds were also of note, and 63 Goldfinches flew west. A Blackcap, a Chiffchaff and 2 Bramblings were at Copt Point the next day, when a Blackcap was at Samphire Hoe, three Tree Sparrows were at Abbotscliffe, and 2 Redpolls, 8 Bramblings, 15 Siskins, 25 Stock Doves, 120 Starlings and 210 Woodpigeons flew over. A Ring Ouzel was seen at Copt Point on the 3rd, when a Swallow, a Redpoll, 2 Bramblings and 120 Starlings flew over Abbotscliffe and a Chiffchaff was at Samphire Hoe.

A fresh north-westerly breeze on the 4th produced a Snow Bunting, a Reed Bunting, a Snipe, a Swallow and 25 Blackbirds at Abbotscliffe, where 3 Golden Plover flew west, whilst six Blackbirds and 30 Redwings flew in off the sea at Samphire Hoe and 7 Song Thrushes, 29 Redwings and 45 Fieldfares flew west at West Hythe. At Mill Point 2 Shelduck, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 3 Sandwich Terns, 6 Teal, 8 Dunlin, 12 Razorbills and 53 Brent Geese flew past, whilst 415 Starlings arrived in off and 2 Dunlin and 12 Lapwing were at the Willop Basin. A late Wheatear, a Chiffchaff, 2 Snow Buntings, 2 Ring Ouzels and 2 Fieldfares were seen at Abbotscliffe on the 5th, where 3 Siskin, 4 Redpoll and 7 Golden Plover flew west and 26 Blackbirds arrived in off the sea. Two Sandwich Terns were seen off Hythe and 27 Brent Geese flew east at Seabrook, where 247 Starlings flew west.

A **Dartford Warbler** was found at Samphire Hoe on the 6th (where it remained until at least the month's end), whilst a Green Sandpiper, a Corn Bunting, a Redpoll, 3 Tree Sparrows, 5 Brent Geese and 23 Lapwings were in the Donkey Street/Willop Basin area. Four Sandwich Terns were seen off Hythe Ranges the following day.

The 8th saw 15 Brambling, 19 Stock Doves and 355 Starlings fly over at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Sandwich Tern was seen off the Willop Outfall. On the 10th a Woodcock was killed by a Peregrine as it arrived in off the sea at Folkestone Pier, a Shag was seen off of Seabrook and 170 Redwings flew west at West Hythe, whilst a redhead Goosander, a Woodcock and 2 Green Sandpipers were at Botolph's Bridge the next day, when a Velvet Scoter flew west past the Dymchurch Redoubt. On the 12th 470 Starlings arrived in off the sea at Mill Point and a Snow Bunting, 5 Siskins and 11 Stock Doves flew over Abbotscliffe the following day, when a Swallow was at Palmarsch.



Dartford Warbler at Samphire Hoe (Lee Walker)



Ring Ouzel at Abbotscliffe (Elliot Ranford)

A Teal, 4 Brent Geese and 14 Shelduck flew past Mill Point on the 14th, when a Brambling, a Redpoll and 170 Starlings arrived in off the sea there, and a Red-breasted Merganser, a Pintail, a Gadwall, 2 Sandwich Terns, 11 Wigeon, 30 Shelduck and 33 Brent Geese flew past Samphire Hoe the next day, when 120 Starlings arrived in off the sea, and a Barn Owl (the first of several sightings), 3 Little Egrets and c.12 Golden Plovers were at West Hythe. A Snow Bunting flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 16th and two Black Redstarts were at the Willop Outfall on the 17th, with another seen below Abbotscliffe on the 20th. Four Golden Plovers flew in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 21st.



Peregrine with Woodcock at Folkestone Pier
(Don Mooney)



Gannet at Folkestone Pier
(Elliot Ranford)

The 22nd saw a colder northerly airflow and a **Rough-legged Buzzard** was reported at Samphire Hoe, where a Snow Bunting flew over and an Eider, a Pintail, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Lapwings, 7 Gadwall, 9 Dunlin, 21 Razorbills, 23 Red-throated Divers, 43 Kittiwakes, 60 Teal, 157 Brent Geese, a record count of 194 Shelduck and 205 Wigeon flew east, but it soon became with quieter, with a male Marsh Harrier at the Willop Basin on the 23rd, a Reed Bunting and 2 Snipe at Abbotscliffe on the 24th and a Chiffchaff at the Aldergate Bridge on the 25th being the highlights.

A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers, 3 Brent Geese, 60 Red-throated Divers and 240 Guillemots/Razorbills flew past Mill Point on the 28th, when a female Blackcap was seen in a garden in Folkestone, whilst the next day produced a female/immature Goldeneye, a Sandwich Tern, 6 Shelduck and 19 Brent Geese passing Mill Point and a Red-breasted Merganser was seen off Hythe on the 30th.

December

During the early part of the December it was unsettled and chilly, though towards the middle of the month it became more settled and milder. Unsettled conditions returned around Christmas but the last few days of the year were again milder.

A flock of 12 **White-fronted Geese** flew west along the seawall at Samphire Hoe on the 19th, whilst 15 were seen in fields along Donkey Street on the 22nd and small numbers of Brent Geese were noted during December, with a peak of nine at Samphire Hoe on the 20th. A peak of 25 Mute Swans were counted near Selby Farm on the 22nd.

Nine Shelduck flew past Samphire Hoe on the 20th, with seven heading east past Hythe the following day and two flying west there on the 26th, whilst four Wigeon flew west past Hythe on the 15th, a Gadwall and seven Wigeon flew east past Princes Parade on the 18th and a drake Wigeon was seen on the main pond at Samphire Hoe on the 24th. At least 25 Teal were in the Willop Sewer area during the month. A flock of five 'red-head' Goosanders were seen flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 14th, with possibly the same flock seen at West Hythe dam on the 17th, whilst three Red-breasted Mergansers flew west past Hythe on the 26th.



Goosanders passing Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Water Rails were noted at Nickolls Quarry, Enbrook Park and Holy Well (three), whilst a peak of 28 Great Crested Grebes were logged off Folkestone Pier on the 28th. Lapwing numbers were low, with peak counts of just 40 at the Willop Sewer on the 21st and 50 at Hillhurst Farm on the 27th, but a flock of 15 on Cheriton Polo Ground on the 26th was indicative of some movement. A Golden Plover flew over Samphire Hoe on the 19th, where a Turnstone the following day was an unusual record for the site. At least two Purple Sandpipers remained at Hythe, a Green Sandpiper was at the Willop Sewage Works on the 11th and up to five Redshanks were seen in Folkestone Harbour.

Single Sandwich Terns were noted from Seabrook on the 5th and Hythe the next day. Auk counts were low, with the exception of around 500 Guillemot/Razorbills flying east past Princes Parade on the 18th, whilst the peak Red-throated Diver count was just 12 off Folkestone Pier on the 28th. Single Black-throated Divers were seen off Hythe Ranges on the 11th and Samphire Hoe on the 27th, whilst a **Great Northern Diver** was seen on the sea from the latter site on the 14th.



Great Northern Diver at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Great white Egret at Selby Farm (Ian Roberts)

Small numbers of Fulmars were noted from mid-month as birds began to return to the breeding colonies. Up to five Shags were noted at Samphire Hoe, with one in the Folkestone Harbour area between the 21st and 23rd. Large numbers of Cormorants were present throughout and counts included 1,600 flying west past Hythe on the 7th and 2,000 off Samphire Hoe on the 27th.

A **Great White Egret** was seen flying east over Haguelands Farm on the 2nd, before landing near the Willop Sewage Works, with possibly the same individual at the latter site on the 21st, with two seen near Selby Farm on the following day. Little Egrets were noted at various sites, with a peak of four at West Hythe dam. The Little Owl remained at Selby Farm and a Peregrine was noted there on the 22nd.

A Chiffchaff and three Firecrests were wintering at Enbrook Park, as was a male Blackcap in a garden in north-east Folkestone, whilst the **Dartford Warbler** remained at Samphire Hoe, although continued to be elusive. The mild conditions meant that winter thrush numbers were low, with a peak of just three Fieldfares and 29 Redwings at the Aldergate Bridge. At least one Black Redstart remained at Samphire Hoe until the year's end.

A Tree Sparrow, a Corn Bunting, 17 Yellowhammers, 19 Skylarks and 25 Chaffinches were counted in a stubble field at Abbotscliffe on the 13th, whilst up to eight Tree Sparrows and 32 Corn Buntings were present in the Botolph's Bridge area. Single Snow Buntings were present along the seafront at Hythe on the 2nd and at Folkestone Harbour from the 21st to the year's end.



Snow Bunting at Hythe (Ian Roberts)



Snow Bunting at Folkestone Harbour (Elliot Ranford)