

# Common Rosefinch

*Carpodacus erythrinus*

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

3 records

Breeds in eastern and northern Europe, and locally in central Europe and Turkey, eastwards across northern Asia to north-east Siberia and south to the Caucasus and the Himalayas. Winters from Iran and the Indian subcontinent to southern China and Indochina. It underwent a westward spread across Europe in the latter part of the twentieth century, breeding for the first time in Britain in 1982, France in 1985, the Netherlands in 1987 and Belgium in 1993 (Snow & Perrins, 1998).

In Britain single pairs bred in Highland in 1982 and Sutherland in 1990, with at least seven pairs in 1992 (at least four in Yorkshire, two in Suffolk and one in Devon). In 1992 it also entered the Pas-de-Calais region of France, where at least three males were heard in song, whilst up to 16 males were noted there the following year, when four nests were found. However hopes that it was set to colonise were disappointed as only four or five males reappeared in Pas-de-Calais in 1995 and has not bred there or in Britain since. It is now a scarce passage migrant, with an annual mean of 163 per annum in last decade, with most in the Northern Isles (Wallace, 1999, White & Kehoe, 2019).

It was not recorded in Kent until 1977 but there had been a total of 30 records to the end of 2019, with sightings primarily in late spring and early autumn (KOS, 2021).

The first local record involved an immature male in song at Mill Point on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1988, whilst a female or immature male was seen on the cliff-top top at Capel-le-Ferne (within sight of the breeding site at Cap Blanc Nez, Pas de Calais) on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1992 and a 'red' male was in song at Capel Battery on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

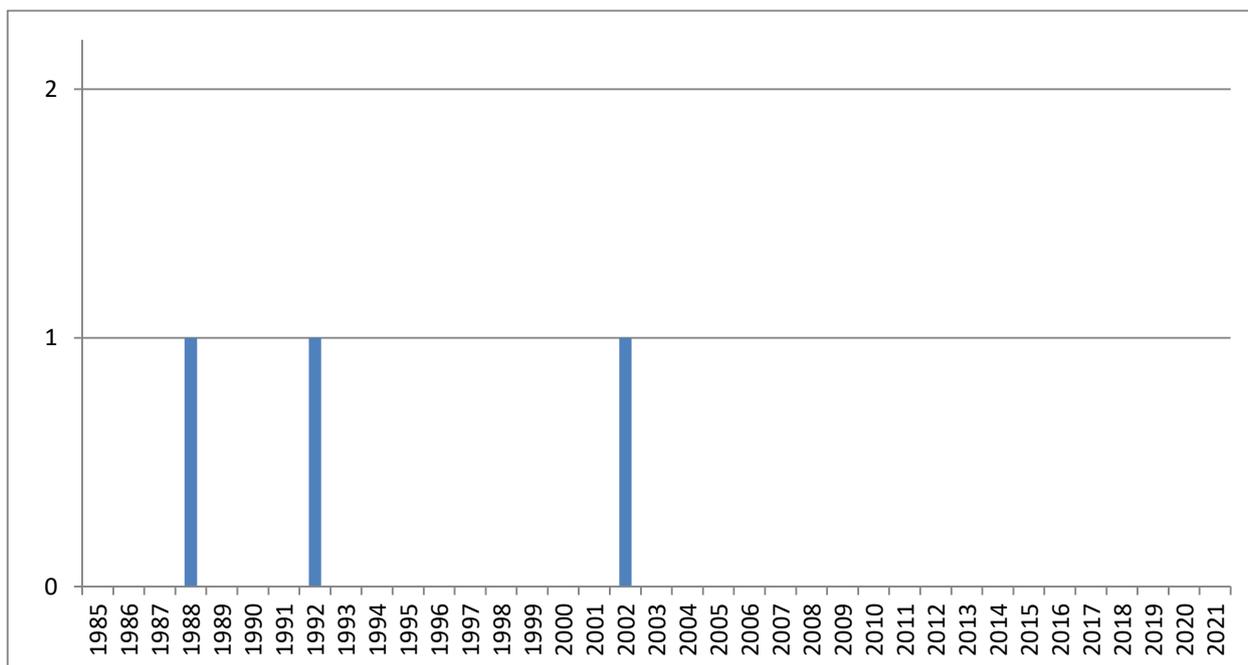


Figure 1: Common Rosefinch records at Folkestone and Hythe

All records to date have occurred in late spring, between 31<sup>st</sup> May (week 22) and 14<sup>th</sup> June (week 24), as demonstrated by figure 2.

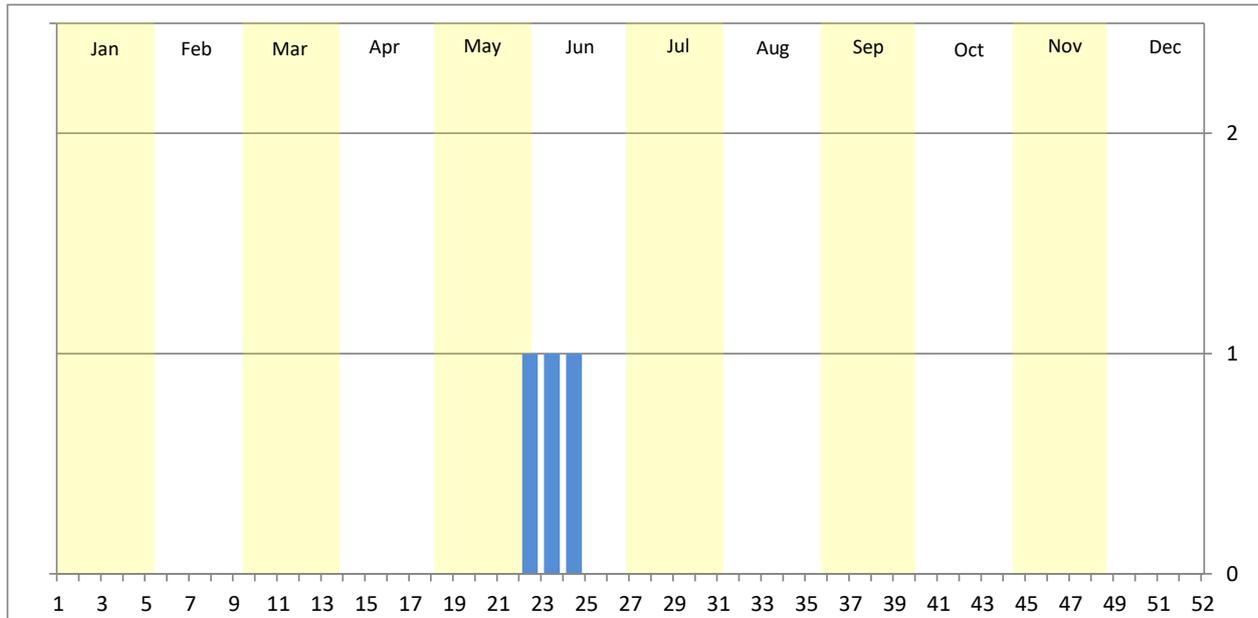


Figure 2: Common Rosefinch records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Common Rosefinch records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1988** Mill Point, immature male in song, 14<sup>th</sup> June (I. A. Roberts)
- 1992** Capel-le-Ferne Café, female or immature male, 7<sup>th</sup> June (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Capel-le-Ferne Battery, adult male in song, 31<sup>st</sup> May (I. A. Roberts)

An account of the first area record is given below.

**Common Rosefinch at Mill Point**  
**14<sup>th</sup> June 1998**

(Ian A Roberts)

**Circumstances of the find:**

I was on the seafront at Mill Point on 14th June when at around 07:40 a passerine appeared to fly in off the sea, and gave a clear, phyllosc-like "hueet" call, although it did not resemble a warbler in size or shape, being more finch-like. It landed in a small bush out of sight but sang twice "wee-ju-wee-ju-woo" with a phyllosc-like tone and quality. I approached nearer trying to get a view of the bird, but it appeared very flighty and I only caught a glimpse before it flew off. It appeared brown above and streaked below, with a plain-looking face.

When I returned home I made reference to recordings of the call and song of Common Rosefinch and these were identical to what I had heard earlier that morning.

**Description of the bird:**

Size, shape, jizz: a finch-like bird.

Head and upperparts: appeared brown above, with a plain-looking face.

Underparts: streaked below.

Voice: a clear, phyllosc-like "hueet" call and a song with a similar tone and quality: "wee-ju-wee-ju-woo".

**Comments on the record:**

The record was accepted by the KOS rarities committee and appears in the Kent Bird Report for that year as the seventh county record.

**References**

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

KOS Kent list: <https://kentos.org.uk/kent-list> (accessed 2021)

Snow, D. & Perrins, C.M., 1998. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press.

Wallace, D. I. M., 1999. History of the Common Rosefinch, 1869-1996. *British Birds*, 92: 445-471

White, S. & Kehoe, C., 2019. Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain in 2017. *British Birds*, 112: 444-468.

**Acknowledgements**

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