

2019



Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report



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Introduction

Welcome to the eighth annual Folkestone and Hythe Bird Report which covers the 192 species recorded in 2019, which was seven less than the previous year. Whilst there were no additions to the area list there were numerous highlights to report, including the sixth record of Puffin, the sixth modern record of Quail, the seventh Water Pipit, the ninth Siberian Chiffchaff and the tenth and eleventh White Storks. Sightings of Bewick's Swan, Egyptian Goose, Long-tailed Duck, Great White Egret, Black Kite, Common Crane, Caspian Gull, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Hawfinch added further excitement.

The early winter period produced a record movement of Red-throated Divers whilst the spring saw the earliest ever Swallow, the second earliest Sand Martin, a particularly good early Sandwich Tern count, and a strong passage of Shelduck, Shoveler, Pomarine and Great Skuas, Sand Martin, Chaffinch and Brambling. The latest ever departure of Purple Sandpiper was also note note.

The highlight of the breeding season was the first ever confirmed nesting by a pair of Long-eared Owls (with two young being raised), whilst Little Ringed Plovers bred successfully again for the only the second time since 2006 and at least two pairs of Ravens again nested successfully. Peregrine, Hobby, Black Redstart, Rock Pipit and Corn Bunting were also confirmed or thought likely to have bred. 2019 saw the first complete survey of roof-nesting gulls in the area since 1994, which revealed confirmed breeding by 8 pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 877 pairs of Herring Gulls (see page 92 for full details of the 2019 census and analysis of the results compared to previous surveys).

The latter half of the year saw new record counts for Mediterranean Gulls (in August, and again in December), the second largest (and highest non passage) count of Dunlin, the second highest count of Song Thrush and the largest migrant flock of Starlings. There was the latest ever departure date for Ring Ouzel, the second latest Common and Sandwich Terns, and Common and Lesser Whitethroats, and the third latest Arctic Skua.

There were welcome returns for Black Tern, Nightingale and Lapland Bunting, whilst there were no records of Grey Partridge for the first time ever, highlighting the plight of this species. There were no other significant omissions, though it was only the third blank year since 1992 for Avocet.

A Wildlife Migration Day event held on the 13th October, coordinated by Paul Holt and the volunteers at Samphire Hoe, again proved to be very popular and the highlights included the second latest ever sighting of Whitethroat (at Abbotscliffe) and an impressive group of at least 5,000 Starlings (the largest migrant flock ever recorded locally) arriving in off the sea over Folkestone Harbour

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 98 and my contact details are given below.

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29th January 2020

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Front cover: Water Pipit at the Willop Sewage Works in December 2019 (Brian Harper)

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List of contributors

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 will be accepted for the oversight.

B Adams	D Lawie
J Birkett	S Lea
B Boothroyd	O Leyshon
K Brignall	A Mackay
A Brown	D Mansfield
D Brown	S McMinn
G J A Burton	
M Casemore	R K Norman
S P Clancy	C Nuttman
P Coleman	R O'Reilly
L Collins	
M Collins	C Peverett
G Cooke	J Phillips
S Cutt	K Privett
K Daniells	B Rao
G Eddis	I A Roberts
P Edmondson	J Russell
D Featherbe	D Scott
B Findlay	P J Sharp
P Findlay	D E Smith
R Flamant	I Smith
N C Frampton	N Smith
A Gay	P Smith
D A Gibson	S Smith
C Gillard	A South
D Gower	S Spence
L Gower	N Spencer
C Green	
A J Greenland	R Thorogood
K Harding	C Tomlinson
B Harper	J Tomlinson
P Heading	S Tomlinson
S Hedley	J Tomsett
L Holman	P Trodd
P Holt	G Tutton
P Howe	
M D Kennett	M Vandoen
	M J Varley
	P Westgate
	M Whybrow
	B Woolhouse
	S Wright

Review of the year

January

January started dry and settled but mostly cloudy with high pressure dominant, and it remained generally dry and often mild during the first half of the month. The second half became markedly cooler with overnight frosts and the last week saw a little precipitation, some which was occasionally wintry.



Great Northern Diver at Sandgate (Ian Roberts)

A **Bewick's Swan** drifted east at sea past Battery Point on the 6th and up to 33 Mute Swans remained at the Lower Wall, increasing to 39 by the 26th. A few Brent Geese were noted moving up-channel during the month, with a peak of 53 passing Seabrook on the 23rd and nine Shelduck were seen off the Willop Outfall on the 11th. Mandarin Ducks were noted at Chesterfield Wood (4) and Folks' Wood (4).

Two Wigeon were at Botolph's Bridge on the 2nd and 3 Gadwall were noted at Folkestone Racecourse on the 13th. Counts of Teal included 12 at Nickolls Quarry and 35 at the Willop Basin on the 1st and 180 at Chesterfield Wood on the 5th, whilst 100 Mallards were at Botolph's Bridge on the 17th. Single Tufted Ducks were noted from Beachborough Lakes, Nickolls Quarry and West Hythe. A Velvet Scoter flew east past Seabrook on the 7th.

Red-throated Diver movements included 75 flying east past Mill Point on the 3rd and 50 flying east past the Willop Outfall on the 8th before a record total of 667 flew west past Seabrook on the 29th. Single Black-throated Divers were reported from Folkestone Harbour on the 6th and Hythe on the 29th and a **Great Northern Diver** was seen regularly between Mill Point and Sandgate from the 3rd to the 21st.

Exceptional numbers of Cormorants were again seen offshore with 1,186 flying east past Seabrook on the 4th, 2,320 off the Willop Outfall on the 8th, about 2,900 (including a flock of around 2,500) there on the 11th, up to 5,000 off Hythe between the 11th and 13th and 2,286 flying east past Seabrook on the 29th. Up to six Shags were fishing offshore between Mill Point and Sandgate between the 3rd and the 10th, with further sightings from Battery Point on the 15th, Mill Point (2) on the 18th and Samphire Hoe and Seabrook on the 29th.

A **Great White Egret** (first seen in December 2018) remained in the Donkey Street area throughout and single Little Egrets were noted from Donkey Street, Botolph's Bridge, Seabrook, Mill Point, Folkestone Harbour, Copt Point and Samphire Hoe, with two at Nickolls Quarry on several dates. Great Crested Grebes reached a peak of c.450 off Hythe Ranges/Willop Outfall on the 6th. A Red Kite flew over Folkestone Downs on the 15th and single Marsh Harriers were seen at the Willop Sewage Works on the 1st and Nickolls Quarry on the 6th.

Water Rails were wintering at Beachborough Lakes (2), Nickolls Quarry (2) and West Hythe (2), whilst counts of Coot included 10 at Beachborough Lakes and 13 at Nickolls Quarry. A total of 14 Oystercatchers were counted between Hythe Redoubt and the Willop Outfall on the 25th, whilst up to 20 Ringed Plovers were present in the Folkestone Beach/Harbour area.

A Golden Plover flew over the Willop Sewage Works on the 1st and one was seen at Capel-le-Ferne on the 29th, whilst Lapwing flocks included 100 near Postling Wents, 163 at Capel-le-Ferne and 280 in the Willop Basin area. Up to four Purple Sandpipers were frequenting the rock groyne between Hythe and Battery Point, whilst at least four Sanderling were at the Willop Outfall and 15 Dunlin flew past Princes Parade on the 5th.

A single Jack Snipe was wintering at the Willop Basin and one was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 24th, whilst there was a peak count of 71 Common Snipe at the former site and Woodcock were noted from Folks' Wood (2), Beachborough Park (3), Chesterfield Wood (3) and Kiln Wood (5). Two Curlew were wintering at the Willop Basin and up to two Green Sandpipers were frequenting the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area, with another at Kiln Wood on the 13th, whilst there was a peak of nine Redshank at Folkestone Harbour on the 24th, with singles at Botolph's Bridge and the Willop Basin.

Single Great Skuas were seen from the Willop Outfall, Princes Parade, Mill Point, Folkestone Pier and Samphire Hoe, whilst 120 Kittiwakes were offshore from Seabrook on the 22nd and 205 Mediterranean Gulls were counted at Beachborough Park on the 7th. Two adult **Caspian Gulls** remained in the Nickolls Quarry area until the 3rd and another was seen in Folkestone Harbour on the 7th.

Large auk movements included around 350 flying east past Mill Point on the 3rd, 330 flying east there the next day and at least 475 flying west past Hythe/Seabrook on the 29th and these appeared to be primarily Guillemots with only a small proportion of Razorbills, however on the 18th a total of 300 (130 west, 170 east) of the latter were seen off Mill Point.

A **Ring-necked Parakeet** flew west over Seabrook on the 25th and a Barn Owl was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 6th, whilst a **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker** was heard calling at Beachborough Park the following day.

Firecrests were wintering at Port Lympne, West Hythe (2), Enbrook Park and Mill Point, whilst Chiffchaffs were seen at Beachborough Park (up to three), Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Enbrook Park (2) and Mill Point and Blackcaps were at Hythe, Seabrook (2), Cheriton and Folkestone (3). Up to 26 Song Thrushes and 50 Fieldfares were frequenting the Botolph's Bridge area, with up to 23 Song Thrushes, 30 Fieldfares and 120 Redwings at Beachborough Park.

A Black Redstart was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 25th and Stonechats were wintering at the Willop Sewage Works (3), Botolph's Bridge, Hythe Roughts, Church Hougham and Samphire Hoe (where there was a peak count of 14). At least 50 Pied Wagtails and 100 Meadow Pipits were present in the Willop Sewage Works area and the **Water Pipit** (first seen in November) was again at nearby Donkey Street on the 1st, whilst 22 Rock Pipits were counted at Samphire Hoe on the 25th.

Bramblings were seen at Beachborough Park on the 8th and 31st (2), whilst Goldfinches reached a peak of 200 there on the 14th, and 2 Redpolls and 61 Siskins flew north there on the 2nd. A single Corn Bunting was seen at the Willop Sewage Works on the 26th.

February

After a cold start to the month it was generally mild from the 5th onwards. It was unsettled until the 10th but very mild and sunny weather developed between the 13th and 15th and again between the 21st and 27th, with record-breaking daytime temperatures in the latter spell (in Kent temperatures approached 20°C and this was exceeded elsewhere in the UK for the first time in February). With clear skies it quickly became much cooler in the evenings and frost and fog developed on some nights.



Great White Egret at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

A Greylag Goose was an unusual sight in Folkestone Harbour on the 6th and three Canada Geese had returned to Nickolls Quarry by the 14th. Two Shelduck flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th and two were at the Willop Basin on the 14th, whilst a male Mandarin Duck appeared on the canal in Hythe Town on the 12th to 13th. A Pochard was seen at Folkestone Racecourse on the 10th and four Gadwall were noted there on the 22nd, whilst counts of Teal included 35 at Donkey Street and 50 at the Willop Basin.

A total of 96 Red-throated Divers flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th and the **Great Northern Diver** was seen again at Sandgate on the 1st. Cormorants continued to be seen in good numbers and up to two Shags were present at Samphire Hoe throughout. The **Great White Egret** remained in the Donkey Street area as did Little Egrets at the usual sites.

A Marsh Harrier was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 10th and there was some evidence of Buzzard migration, with a peak of 13 passing through Beachborough Park on the 11th and three flying east over Hythe on the 17th, whilst a Merlin flew east over the latter site on the 26th. The breeding pair of Oystercatchers had returned to Nickolls Quarry by the 14th and there was a peak of 150 Lapwings at the Willop Basin on the 17th. Up to four Purple Sandpipers remained between Hythe and Battery Point and one was seen at the Willop Outfall on the 13th, whilst a Jack Snipe was seen again at Beachborough Lakes on the 4th to 5th, and Curlews increased to three at the Willop Basin on the 16th.

At least one Green Sandpiper remained in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area and at least seven Redshanks remained at Folkestone Harbour, whilst up to six were seen at the Willop Basin. Mediterranean Gulls peaked at 220 at Beachborough Park on the 20th and an increase in Lesser Black-backed Gulls was noted towards the end of the month as migrants began to arrive. Auk numbers were low with a peak of 3 Razorbills and 100 Guillemots off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd.

A Firecrest was found at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, whilst the wintering birds remained and at Enbrook Park there was an increase to two on the 26th. Additional Chiffchaffs were noted from Nickolls Quarry, Seabrook and Folkestone and further Blackcaps were discovered at Hythe (2), Folkestone and Samphire Hoe.

A flock of seven **Waxwings** were reported in the Enbrook Valley area between the 3rd and the 6th, whilst six were seen briefly on aerials at Foord Road (Folkestone) on the 11th. Fieldfare counts included 76 at Haguelands Farm, 80 at Donkey Street and 177 at Beachborough Park and a Black Redstart was seen on two dates at Samphire Hoe.

There were signs of Meadow Pipit passage through Beachborough Park, where numbers increased to 66 on the 11th and 81 on the 20th, whilst 2 Redpolls and up to nine Siskins were noted there on several dates, with three Siskins at Cheriton Sports Centre on the 24th and three flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th, when a migrant Reed Bunting was also noted there and 15 Linnets flew west. Single Common Crossbills flew over Beachborough Park on the 26th and 27th.

March

The first three weeks of the month were dominated by a westerly airflow and it was very windy at times, particularly during the second week, with some light rain or showers on most days. Daytime maxima were generally into low double figures and overnight temperatures remained above zero. The last ten days saw much drier and sunnier weather due to the influence of high pressure but daytime temperatures were similar until the very end of the month, when there were a couple of very mild days and 18°C was exceeded. The clear skies though made for chillier nights, with some frosts.



Barn Owl at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

A pair of Canada Geese and a pair of Oystercatchers remained at Nickolls Quarry throughout and were showing indications by the end of the month that they might breed, whilst lingering winter visitors included up to 33 Mute Swans at the Lower Wall, two Shags at Samphire Hoe, the Great White Egret in the Donkey Street area, up to four Purple Sandpipers at Hythe, at least two Curlew at the Willop Basin, up to two Green Sandpipers in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area, at least four Redshank at Folkestone Harbour, a few Redpolls and Siskins at Beachborough Park and Firecrests, Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps at numerous localities.

Spring migration was evident from the 1st, when 124 Brent Geese flew east past Seabrook, followed by the earliest ever record of Swallow at Hythe the following day, when a Dunlin, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, the first 8 Sandwich Terns, 10 Fulmars, 61 Red-throated Divers, 365 Brent Geese and 380 Gannets flew past Mill Point/Sandgate and a White Wagtail was seen at Samphire Hoe. A Black Redstart was at Folkestone Rugby Club on the 3rd. A Merlin was seen at Beachborough Park on the 4th, where Chiffchaffs increased to four (up to three had been seen during the winter), and a Kestrel flew in off the sea at Seabrook, whilst two Siskins flew over Nickolls Quarry, and a flock of 11 Buzzards flew west over Hythe the next day.

A Red-breasted Merganser, 2 Eider, 2 Sandwich Terns, 4 Fulmars and 421 Brent Geese flew east at sea on 6th. Two Common Crossbills flew west over Beachborough Park on the 7th, where Chiffchaffs increased to six, and four Common Crossbills flew east there the following day, when five Siskins flew in/east at Abbotscliffe. A Marsh Harrier was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 9th. A **Great Northern Diver**, a Sandwich Tern, 31 Kittiwakes and 55 Gannets flew past Samphire Hoe on the 10th, when the first 2 Sand Martins of the year flew through Hythe, whilst a further two Common Crossbills flew east over Beachborough Park the following day. On the 12th a total of 21 Meadow Pipits arrived in off the sea at Mill Point and 40 Common Scoter and 70 Brent Geese flew east.

A Firecrest at Samphire Hoe on the 14th appeared to be a new arrival, as did a Chiffchaff in a garden in Hythe the next day, whilst further Firecrests were at Bargrove Wood and Nickolls Quarry (2) on the 17th, when a migrant Woodcock found dead on Hillcrest Road (Saltwood) and two Barn Owls were hunting in the Botolph's Bridge area in the evening. Another Firecrest was at Abbotscliffe on the 18th, when a Reed Bunting, 2 Siskins, 26 Golden Plovers, 30 Chaffinches and 37 Meadow Pipits flew over, 2 Chiffchaffs and 2 Long-tailed Tits were at Samphire Hoe and 22 Buzzards flew west over Beachborough Park. A further Firecrest was at Samphire Hoe on the 19th.

The first Wheatear was at the Hythe Redoubt on the 20th, with a White Wagtail at the Hythe Imperial golf course, and a Marsh Harrier, a Black Redstart and 3 Chiffchaffs at Samphire Hoe, whilst 5 Sandwich Terns and 60 Brent Geese flew east at sea. The following day produced single Wheatears at Cheriton, Church Hougham and Samphire Hoe, with 8 Chiffchaffs at the latter site and 15 at Beachborough Park.

A Blackcap and 3 Firecrests were at Mill Point on the 22nd, when there was a Firecrest at Nickolls Quarry and 39 Brent Geese flew east past Folkestone Pier, whilst 2 Great Skuas, 2 Wigeon, 4 Little Gulls, 4 Grey Plovers, 4 Teal, 8 Shelduck, 29 Red-throated Divers, 44 Kittiwakes, 81 Sandwich Terns, 100 Common Scoter, 217 Gannets and 315 Brent Geese flew east past Mill Point the next day, with 6 Siskins and 100 Chaffinches flying east and 12 Meadow Pipits arriving in off.

A **White Stork** flew in off the sea at Folkestone Warren on the 24th, when a Great Skua and 4 Greylag Geese flew east past Samphire Hoe, a Brambling flew over Botolph's Bridge and a White Wagtail was at Hythe Imperial golf course. A **Black Kite** and 2 Red Kites flew west over Beachborough Park on the 25th, with a White Wagtail, a Woodcock and 8 Chiffchaffs also of note there, whilst Red Kites were also seen at Hythe and Abbotscliffe (2), where a Brambling, 54 Siskins and 3,075 Chaffinches flew east. A further A Red Kite and 20 Buzzards flew over Beachborough Park the following day, when a Merlin and 2 Black Redstarts were at Samphire Hoe and two Mute Swans were on the sea off Princes Parade.

A male Goosander, a Marsh Harrier, 4 Red Kites, 7 Crossbills and 41 Redwings were logged at Beachborough Park on the 27th, when a Crossbill, 9 Bramblings, 17 Siskins and 1,150 Chaffinches flew east at Abbotscliffe and a Brambling was seen in a garden in Folkestone. The 28th produced a Swallow, a Woodcock, a Brambling and 12 Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Beachborough Park and two Siskins and 500 Chaffinches flying east at Abbotscliffe, whilst a Cetti's Warbler (second site record) was at Beachborough Lakes the next day, when 3 Black Redstarts were at Abbotscliffe and 12 Grey Heron nests were counted at Lympe Park Wood.

A Pochard and 3 Shoveler were at Nickolls Quarry on the 30th and the month ended with a Great Skua, a Red-breasted Merganser, a Dunlin, a Shelduck, 4 Shoveler, 57 Sandwich Terns, 155 Gannets and 187 Brent Geese flying east past Mill Point where 3 Sand Martins arrived in off the sea and a Wheatear was seen on the beach, with another at Samphire Hoe.

April

The first nine days of the month were fairly cool and unsettled with winds mostly from the easterly quadrant. It was drier from the 10th and the easterly winds persisted, with daytime temperatures gradually increasing until it became very warm over the Easter weekend, with temperatures exceeding 20°C for the first time this year. The last week was cooler and more unsettled, with variable winds.



White Stork at Samphire Hoe (Shelagh Wright)

Lingering wintering visitors included the Great White Egret at Donkey Street (until the 2nd), a Shag at Samphire Hoe (until the 6th), and a Green Sandpiper in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area and up to four Purple Sandpipers at Hythe throughout. The pair of Canada Geese remained at Nickolls Quarry (and had fledged six young by month's end), whilst the pair of Oystercatchers appeared to be nesting on the island there and a pair of Black Redstarts were on territory at Samphire Hoe.

A north-easterly breeze on the 1st produced a good movement at sea, where a Red-breasted Merganser, a Grey Plover, 2 Curlews, 4 **Garganey**, 4 Teal, 14 Fulmars, 17 Red-throated Divers, the first 22 Common Terns of the year, 38 Kittiwakes, 75 Sandwich Terns and 80 Common Gulls flew east. A Marsh Harrier flew east past Samphire Hoe and 3 Swallows and 40 Sand Martins were feeding over the lake at Nickolls Quarry. The first Willow Warblers of the year were singing at Beachborough Lakes and Nickolls Quarry the next day, when a Wheatear was at Samphire Hoe and 3 Shelduck and 50 Brent flew east there. A Jack Snipe was found at Beachborough Lakes on the 3rd (where it remained until the 11th) and a White Wagtail was also noted there, whilst Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs continued to arrive. The wind increased from the south-east on the 4th and a Manx Shearwater, a Curlew, 2 Arctic Skuas, 3 Eider, 4 Great Skuas, 5 Red-breasted Mergansers, 6 Velvet Scoters, 56 Brent Geese and 355 Common Scoter flew past Mill Point, whilst single Wheatears were at Abbotscliffe and Samphire Hoe.

The following day saw a Black-throated Diver, a Great Skua, a Little Gull, 3 Eiders, 190 Gannets, 260 Common Scoter and 265 Sandwich Terns heading up-channel, when the first two House Martins and 33 Sand Martins were counted at Nickolls Quarry. A Little Gull, 2 Red-breasted Mergansers, 11 Common Terns and 160 Sandwich Terns flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th. A Marsh Harrier was seen at Donkey Street on the 7th, when three **Little Ringed Plovers** arrived at Nickolls Quarry.

The second **White Stork** of the spring flew east over Samphire Hoe on the 8th, when a Willow Warbler and 3 Wheatears were also seen there and 3 Swallows flew in off the sea. A **Bearded Tit** flew west over Beachborough Lakes, where a House Martin, 3 Redwings, 5 Swallows and 13 Chiffchaffs was also logged. The first Whitethroat and Yellow Wagtail were at Nickolls Quarry, a Marsh Harrier flew over Hythe Roughts and a Wheatear and 4 Redwings were at Abbotscliffe. The following day produced a male Common Redstart at the Beach Road estate (Hythe) and a male Ring Ouzel, 6 Redwings, 17 Blackcaps and 17 Chiffchaffs at Beachborough Park. Six Dunlin, 6 Common Terns, 12 Fulmars, 33 Sandwich Terns, 50 Brent Geese and 93 Common Scoter flew east past Mill Point on the 10th, when two Willow Warblers were at Beachborough Park.

A Ring Ouzel and Wheatear were at Abbotscliffe on the 11th, when two Ring Ouzels and two Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe. The first Whimbrel of the year was at Mill Point on the 12th, when a Little Grebe was seen offshore and a Little Egret was noted, whilst a Willow Warbler and 2 Little Egrets were at Abbotscliffe, and a White Wagtail and 16 Swallows were at Beachborough Park. A Red Kite flew over Folkestone Warren the next day, when 2 Pintail, 2 Shoveler, 8 Bar-tailed Godwits, 13 Teal and 15 Whimbrel flew east past Samphire Hoe and six Green Sandpipers were at Beachborough Lakes, whilst six Little Gulls flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th and a Dunlin was at Nickolls Quarry. The 15th saw a Great Skua, the first two Arctic Terns, 2 Dunlin, 3 Wigeon, 4 Shelduck, 5 Whimbrel, 6 Bar-tailed Godwits, 14 Teal, 18 Kittiwakes, 24 Shoveler, 52 Common Terns, 62 Sandwich Terns, 145 Gannets and 157 Common Scoter heading up-channel, whilst the following day produced the first Sedge Warblers at Princes Parade and Nickolls Quarry (2). A Common Redstart, the first Lesser Whitethroat of the year and two Willow Warblers were at Abbotscliffe on the 17th when ten Mediterranean Gulls flew east at Hythe.

The second **Black Kite** of the spring flew south-west over Cheriton on the 18th, when the first Reed Warblers were singing at Donkey Street and Princes Parade, there were late records of Fieldfare and Redwing at Beachborough Park and a drake Mandarin took up residence on the canal at Hythe (into May). Two Red Kites flew over Folkestone the following day, when a Grasshopper Warbler was reeling at Hythe Roughts, two Whimbrel were at Nickolls Quarry, four Whimbrel flew east past Samphire Hoe, nine Green Sandpipers were at Beachborough Lakes and 63 Mediterranean Gulls flew east at Hythe, whilst Reed and Sedge Warblers continued to arrive.

The 20th produced a Greenshank at Nickolls Quarry, a Red Kite at West Hythe, single Wheatears at Hythe Redoubt, Princes Parade and Samphire Hoe, a Snipe and 3 Yellow Wagtails at Donkey Street and a Whimbrel, 5 Shelduck, 15 Brent Geese and 22 Mediterranean Gulls flying east at sea, whilst another Red Kite flew east over Saltwood the next day. South-easterlies on the 22nd encouraged a good movement at sea, with a **Puffin**, a Great Skua, 2 Pomarine Skuas, 2 Shoveler, 4 Whimbrel, 7 Oystercatchers, 6 Shelduck, 12 Teal, 13 Brent Geese, 16 Bar-tailed Godwits, 29 Mediterranean Gulls, 171 Common Scoter and 290 Black-headed Gulls logged. The first Cuckoo of the year was at Nickolls Quarry, a Fieldfare flew over Cheriton and a Firecrest was seen at Enbrook Park.

The following day saw 3 Dunlin, 3 Whimbrel, 3 Bar-tailed Godwits, 6 Shovelers, 6 Teal, 12 Mediterranean Gulls and 45 Bar-tailed Godwits heading up-channel. The first Garden Warbler and a Red Kite were at Beachborough Park on the 24th, when 5 Whimbrel, 8 Mediterranean Gulls and 105 Sandwich Terns flew east at sea. A south-easterly breeze on the 25th produced another movement on the sea, where a Little Tern, a Little Egret, 2 Black Terns, 2 Shovelers, 3 Black-throated Divers, 3 Arctic Skuas, 10 Pomarine Skuas, 13 Great Skuas, 16 Whimbrel, 24 Mediterranean Gulls, 36 Common/Arctic Terns, 40 Brent Geese, 100 Gannets, 215 Sandwich Terns and 300 Common Scoter flew east, whilst the first Hobby of the year was at Lympne Park Wood and a Purple Sandpiper was seen at Samphire Hoe. A Red-breasted Merganser and four **Egyptian Geese** flew past Samphire Hoe on the 27th, when a ring-tail **Hen Harrier** flew over Botolph's Bridge and 3 Sand Martins, 20 House Martins and 35 Swallows were at Nickolls Quarry, whilst the first Common Sandpiper and a Jack Snipe were at the latter site the next day. A Common Redstart was at Samphire Hoe on the 29th, when 5 Whimbrel flew east over Hythe and 8 Whimbrel flew east past Mill Point. The month ended with a Grey Plover, 2 Wigeon, 4 Whimbrel, 8 Shoveler, 29 Common/Arctic and 82 Sandwich Terns flying east past Mill Point.

May

After a mild first day with a light southerly breeze, the wind switched to the north-west and it became cooler and mostly dry apart from some heavy showers on the 3rd. A spell of southerly winds followed from the 7th and it became slightly milder but also wetter. Northerly winds then dominated from the 11th and it became settled though still fairly cool, particularly overnight. Another spell of southerlies from the 21st enabled temperatures to struggle to 20°C but the last few days of the month were cooler again and more unsettled.



Grasshopper Warbler at Hythe Roughs (Brian Harper)

An Osprey flew east over Samphire Hoe on the 1st and the following day saw Red Kites flying over Capel-le-Ferne and Palmarsh (2), when the first Swifts were noted at Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone and Hythe, two Willow Warblers were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, a Wheatear was at Princes Parade and a Common Sandpiper was at Battery Point, whilst up to three Purple Sandpipers remained in the Battery Point/Hythe area. A singing Firecrest and a Willow Warbler were at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 3rd, when a Yellow Wagtail was at Creteway Down, a Turnstone and 7 Shelduck flew east past Mill Point and 30 Swallows flew in off the sea at Abbotscliffe, whilst the next day saw a Hobby at Nickolls Quarry, a Cuckoo at West Hythe and a Yellow Wagtail at Donkey Street. A Garden Warbler was singing in a garden in Folkestone on the 5th.

Three **Turtle Doves** flew over Bargrove Wood on the 6th, when a pair of Nightingales were at Oak Banks (with the male still singing there on the 12th), whilst a Sand Martin, 12 Whitethroats and 26 Swallows were at Abbotscliffe and a Dunlin and 2 Shelduck were at Nickolls Quarry. A Wheatear was at Princes Parade on the 7th, when three Common Sandpipers were at Battery Point and 13 Swallows flew in off the sea at Capel-le-Ferne.

A Whimbrel, 2 Pomarine Skuas, 2 Great Skuas, 5 Sanderling and 70 Sandwich Terns flew east past Mill Point on the 8th, when a Yellow Wagtail flew over Hythe, whilst a male Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe on the 10th (remaining until the next day), when a further Yellow Wagtail flew over Hythe. A Whimbrel was seen at Hythe Redoubt on the 12th. Two **Common Cranes** flew west over Folkestone and Horn Street on the 13th and a Hobby flew over there the next day, with a Hobby over Hythe on the 16th, when a Cuckoo was at Nickolls Quarry. Three Ringed Plovers, 4 Dunlins, 10 Pomarine Skuas, 20 Swallows and 45 Common/Arctic Terns flew east at sea on the 17th.

A Grasshopper Warbler was reeling at Hythe Roughts on the 18th, when a Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe, where a Great Skua and seven Manx Shearwaters flew east, and two Whimbrel flew east at Hythe whilst the Purple Sandpipers were seen for the last time at Battery Point. A Garden Warbler was singing at Oak Banks the next day. An Osprey flew in off the sea at Seabrook on the 21st and two Red Kites flew west over Folkestone Warren, whilst the first Spotted Flycatcher and a Reed Warbler were at Samphire Hoe, where 2 Yellow Wagtails flew west, and two Common Crossbills flew east at Abbotscliffe. A Hobby was at Samphire Hoe the following day, with one at Capel-le-Ferne on the 24th, when a Cuckoo was at Seabrook.

A Hobby was at Samphire Hoe on the 25th, when a **Turtle Dove** was reported at West Hythe and Cuckoos were noted at Hythe on the 27th, Palmarsh on the 30th and Seabrook on the 31st, when a Hobby was noted there and a Red Kite flew over Westenhangar.

Highlights of the breeding season included the first ever confirmed nesting by a pair of **Long-eared Owls** (with two young being raised), a pair of **Little Ringed Plovers** nesting again at Nickolls Quarry (with four young noted in June), single pairs of successful Ravens at Capel-le-Ferne (three young) and Samphire Hoe (four young) and the first complete survey of roof-nesting gulls in the area since 1994, which revealed confirmed breeding by 8 pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 877 pairs of Herring Gulls (see page 92 for full details of the 2019 census and analysis of the results compared to previous surveys).

June

The month began fine and warm but it soon turned cooler and more unsettled again, and it was particularly cool, cloudy and wet between the 10th and the 13th. Warm air moving up across France on the night of the 18th/19th brought with it some spectacular thunderstorms before a ridge of high pressure formed, leading to dry, sunny weather on the 21st and the 22nd. The rest of the month was mainly warm and humid and temperatures climbed above 30°C on the 29th.



Little Ringed Plover at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

A flock of five Little Egrets flew east at Hythe on the 3rd, with a single flying east there on the 26th and two at Copt Point on the 30th. A Honey Buzzard was seen flying low over Hythe on the evening of the 18th and a Red Kite was seen near Shrine Farm (Postling Wents) on the 23rd. Single Hobbies were seen at Samphire Hoe and Seabrook during the month.

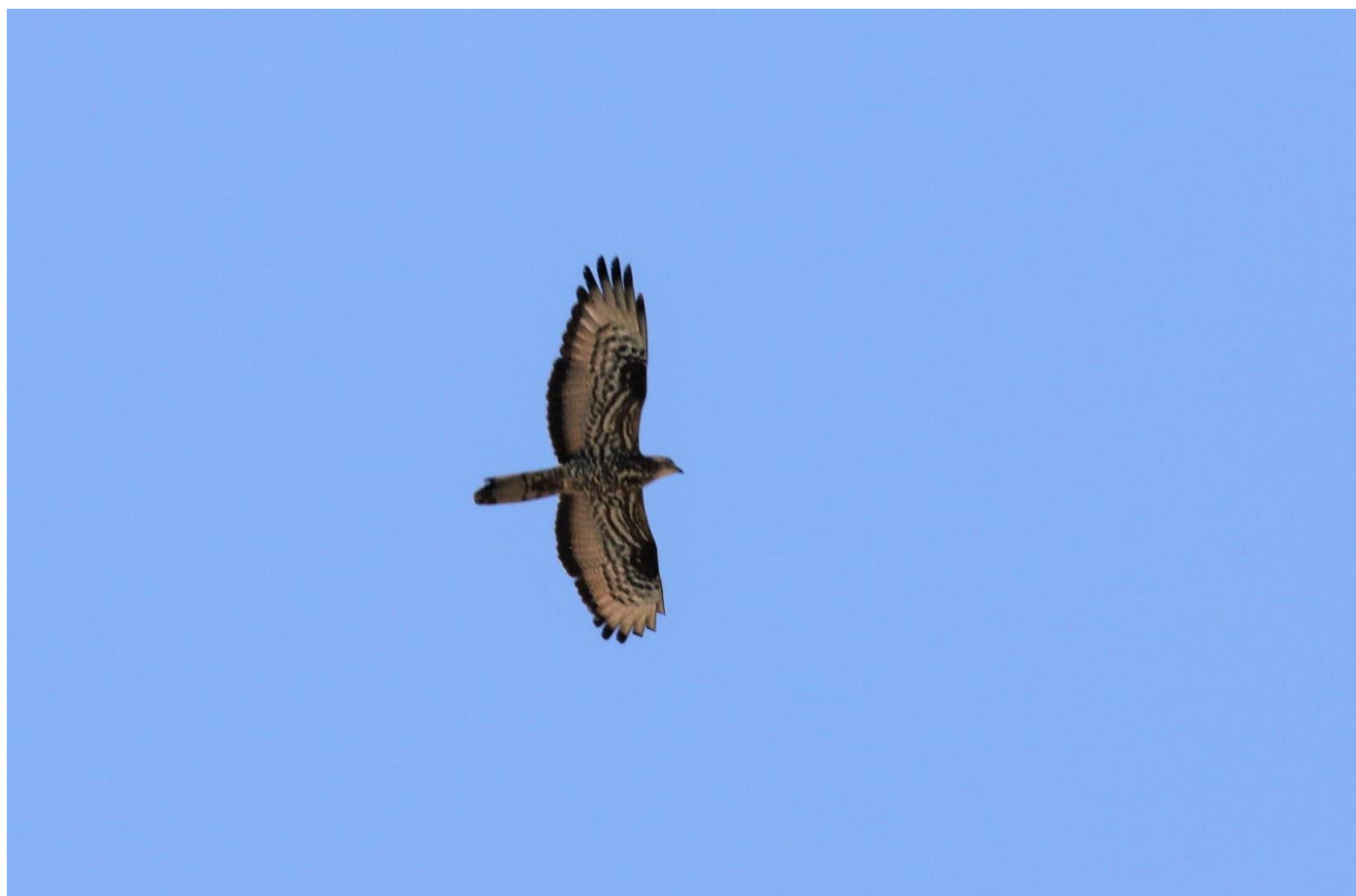
A Great Crested Grebe at Samphire Hoe on the 15th was an unusual mid-summer record there, whilst a pair of Little Grebes were found to have bred on a small pond at Peene. A Cuckoo was noted again at Seabrook on the 2nd and a Reed Warbler at Samphire Hoe on the 25th was a notably late arriving (or early departing) migrant. There were a few small movements of Swifts, with a peak of 57 flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 26th.

Returning waders included a Green Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry on the night of the 23rd/24th and a Whimbrel flying over Chesterfield Wood on the night of the 29th/30th.

Following the first confirmed breeding of **Long-eared Owl** in May a single bird was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the night of the 4th/5th. A pair of Black Redstarts bred at Samphire Hoe (fledging three young, with two from a further brood later in the summer) and another pair were noted at Shorncliffe Camp early in the month, whilst at least two pairs of Rock Pipits bred at the former site and a pair of Corn Buntings may have bred at Abbotscliffe. A pair of Peregrines bred at Capel-le-Ferne, raising three young.

July

The first half of the month was mostly dry and settled with unremarkable temperatures before the third week saw a few thundery showers, preceding an exceptionally hot spell between the 22nd and 25th which saw record-breaking temperatures in the UK, and in excess of 37°C locally. The last few days were cooler and cloudier, with some light rain.



Honey Buzzard at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

A Shag seen off Samphire Hoe on the 16th was an unseasonal record. A total of three Honey Buzzards were noted in July, with singles at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and 23rd, and at Palmarsh on the 8th, whilst a Hobby flew over Hythe on the 23rd.

Returning waders included five Turnstone at Samphire Hoe on the 11th, single Lapwings at Samphire Hoe and flying over Folkestone Warren on the 16th, a Whimbrel flying west past Hythe on the 27th, a Common Sandpiper at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd, with one at Nickolls Quarry and two at the Hythe Redoubt on the 28th, when a Green Sandpiper was also present at Nickolls Quarry.

A Cuckoo was at Seabrook on the 5th. Three Sand Martins flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 22nd and 16 flew west there on the 24th. The first returning Willow Warbler was seen in a garden in Hythe on the 12th and 24 Whitethroats were counted at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, whilst the 29th produced a Cuckoo at Samphire Hoe and a Wheatear at Mill Point.

August

After a settled start to the month deep depressions brought wet and windy weather on the 9th/10th and 14th to 16th. A hot spell developed from the 21st to the 27th, setting new record high temperatures (in excess of 31°C locally) for the Bank Holiday weekend. Conditions then turned cooler and more unsettled again from the 28th.



Black Redstart at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

A Shag was noted at Samphire Hoe on the 1st, when two Wheatears were at Abbotscliffe and 240 Swifts flew west at Seabrook, whilst a Hobby was seen at Palmarsh on the 2nd when a flock of 11 Oystercatchers flew east at Hythe. A Willow Warbler was at the latter site the next day, whilst on the 4th a Yellow Wagtail flew west there and a Hobby and 100 Mediterranean Gulls were seen at Palmarsh.

The 7th produced a Ringed Plover, a Wheatear, a Willow Warbler, 3 Lesser Whitethroats and 6 Whitethroats at Samphire Hoe, whilst the following day saw a Willow Warbler, 2 Wheatears, 2 Blackcaps and 16 Whitethroats there, a Cuckoo at Nickolls Quarry and a Wheatear at Cheriton Hill.

A Great Skua flew past Samphire Hoe on a blustery 10th, with 43 Sandwich Terns there the next day and three Wheatears there on the 12th. A Marsh Harrier, a Sedge Warbler, 2 Willow Warblers, 6 Lesser Whitethroats and 14 Whitethroats were noted at Abbotscliffe on the 13th, when two Wheatears and two Willow Warblers were at Samphire Hoe and a Wheatear was at Copt Point.

Three Wheatears were at Church Hougham on the 14th, with three at Samphire Hoe the following day and one at Abbotscliffe on the 16th. A Little Egret, 2 Whinchats and 4 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe on the 17th and a Spotted Flycatcher was noted there on the 20th. A Honey Buzzard and a Whinchat were at Samphire Hoe on the 21st and on the 23rd single Wheatears were seen at Dibgate Camp and Horn Street. A Pied Flycatcher, a Garden Warbler and a Yellow Wagtail were found in the Scene Wood / Dibgate area on the 25th, when a Common Sandpiper was seen at Seabrook.

Two **Great White Egrets** and 10 Grey Herons flew west at Copt Point on the 26th, when 1,000+ Mediterranean Gulls were present there and a Greenshank flew west at Sandgate. Two Grey Herons arrived in off the sea at Seabrook the next day, when 52 Sandwich Terns were feeding offshore. A Common Redstart, a Whinchat, a Wheatear, a Lapwing and 12 Whitethroats were at Abbotscliffe on the 28th.

A record count of **1,950** Mediterranean Gulls was logged at Copt Point on the 29th, when a Common Redstart, a Reed Warbler, 2 Whinchats and 2 Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe, 2 Wheatears, 2 Willow Warblers and 4 Whinchats were at Church Hougham, a Great Spotted Woodpecker and 2 Willow Warblers were at Abbotscliffe and a Hobby flew east at Seabrook. A Wheatear was on the beach at Hythe on the 31st.

September

The first week was dominated by westerly winds and it was mild with a few showers. A settled fortnight followed, with light winds and dry conditions, before the weather turned wetter, with stronger south-westerly winds.



Whinchat at Samphire Hoe (Dave Clarke)

A Common Redstart was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 1st, when two Whinchats and four Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe, and a Wheatear was at Princes Parade. A Hobby flew over Peene on the 3rd and it was confirmed that a pair had again bred in Lympe Park Wood, raising two young. Small numbers of Whitethroats, Lesser Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs continued to pass through.

A Tree Pipit, a Whinchat and a Sedge Warbler, were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 5th, when a Spotted Flycatcher was at Abbotscliffe and an Arctic Skua was seen off Seabrook. A **Great White Egret**, an Arctic Skua, 2 Common Sandpipers, 3 Little Egrets and c.300 Sandwich Terns were at Folkestone Warren the following day, whilst 6 Arctic Skuas and c.70 Common Terns were seen off Hythe and a Wheatear was at Copt Point.

Six Whinchats were at Samphire Hoe on the 6th, when c.200 Sandwich Terns were seen Terns off Seabrook and a Little Egret flew east past the latter site the next day, whilst up to five Little Egrets were noted regularly between Copt Point and Samphire Hoe throughout the month. A Garden Warbler and a Whinchat were at Samphire Hoe on the 9th and small numbers of Wheatears continued to pass through.

On the 10th a Hobby was seen at Seabrook, where a Grey Heron arrived in off the sea, and two Swifts flew west at Hythe, whilst four Shags were at Samphire Hoe. A further two Swifts flew over Folkestone on the 11th, when a Lapland Bunting was found at Abbotscliffe, and a Spotted Flycatcher and two Goldcrests were at the latter site the following day, when two Yellow Wagtails, 30 Sand Martins and 3,000 Swallows flew west, and a Spotted Flycatcher and two Yellow Wagtails were in the Dibgate Camp/Casebourne Wood area.

A Hobby was at Abbotscliffe on the 13th and a Whinchat, a Yellow Wagtail and 3 Wheatears were at Princes Parade on the 14th, when three Wheatears were at Hythe Ranges. A Yellow Wagtail, 2 Whinchats, 10 Chiffchaffs, 40 Blackcaps and 600 House Martins were at Abbotscliffe on the 15th, when a Swift and a Wheatear were at Newington and three Wheatears were at Copt Point. A migrant Great Spotted Woodpecker was at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th and a migrant Jay was at Abbotscliffe the following day.

The 19th produced a Common Redstart, 12 Chiffchaffs, 18 Blackcaps, 45 Robins and 100+ Meadow Pipits at Abbotscliffe and a Whinchat, two Firecrests and 23 Robins at Samphire Hoe. Two Greylag Geese and the first three Brent Geese of the autumn flew east past Hythe/Seabrook on the 20th. A Honey Buzzard flew east over Folkestone Warren on the 21st, when a Common Redstart was in a garden in Folkestone, a Whinchat and two Firecrests were at Samphire Hoe and a further Firecrest was seen in a garden in Hythe.

Three Red-throated Divers flew past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd, when 16 Brent Geese flew past Seabrook, and two Arctic Skuas and 25 Wigeon flew west past Mill Point on the 24th. A Little Gull was seen off Samphire Hoe on the 25th, when three Arctic Skuas flew past Copt Point, with a further single there the next day.

A **Balearic Shearwater** and six Arctic Skuas flew west past Copt Point on the 27th and a **Balearic Shearwater** flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th, with three Great Skuas and Brent Geese passing there the following day. Large numbers of Mediterranean Gulls remained throughout the month, with a peak count of 1,160 at Copt Point on the 28th.

October

The jet stream tracked over southern Britain for most of October, resulting in a largely cloudy and often wet month, and there were some heavy showers on the 1st when a Green Sandpiper and a Yellow Wagtail were seen at Nickolls Quarry, two Siskins were at Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, 16 Brent Geese flew past Sandgate and 229 Swallows flew west at Seabrook. The following day was drier and cooler, and produced the first Redwings of the autumn; at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, Samphire Hoe and Creteway Down (two), whilst a Great Spotted Woodpecker arrived in off the sea at Capel-le-Ferne and seven Shelduck and 12 Brent Geese flew east at sea.

There was a marked arrival of Chiffchaffs on the 3rd, with around 50 at Abbotscliffe and 52 at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Grey Wagtail and 3 Reed Buntings flew west at the former site and 13 Blackcaps were logged at the latter. A Black Redstart was present at Mill Point, small numbers of Redwings continued to arrive and a Shelduck, 2 Greylag Geese and 5 Brent Geese flew past at sea. A Jay arrived in off the sea at Seabrook the next day, whilst a Rock Pipit flew west at Hythe on the 5th and two Wheatears were at Abbotscliffe.



Black-necked Grebe at Hythe (Brian Harper)

There was a marked arrival of Chiffchaffs on the 3rd, with around 50 at Abbotscliffe and 52 at Samphire Hoe, whilst a Grey Wagtail and 3 Reed Buntings flew west at the former site and 13 Blackcaps were logged at the latter. A Black Redstart was present at Mill Point, small numbers of Redwings continued to arrive and a Shelduck, 2 Greylag Geese and 5 Brent Geese flew past at sea. A Jay arrived in off the sea at Seabrook the next day, whilst a Rock Pipit flew west at Hythe on the 5th and two Wheatears were at Abbotscliffe.

A north-westerly wind and heavy showers on the 6th grounded a significant number of Song Thrushes, with **150** at Sene Valley (the second highest area count), and 50 at Abbotscliffe, where a Common Redstart, a Ring Ouzel, a Firecrest and a Lesser Whitethroat were also noted. A Curlew, a Red-throated Diver, 2 Dunlin, 3 Gadwall, 9 Sandwich Terns, 10 Teal, 24 Wigeon, 26 Brent Geese and 38 Common Scoter flew past Princes Parade, and an Eider was present offshore. An Osprey, 5 Shelduck and 13 Sandwich Terns flew past Seabrook the following day, when a Common Sandpiper, an Arctic Skua and 9 Ringed Plovers were seen in the Folkestone Harbour area and a Water Rail, a Lapwing, 3 Wheatears and 4 Grey Wagtails were at Samphire Hoe.

A Pomarine Skua and 3 Little Gulls flew past Samphire Hoe on the 8th, where 3 Ring Ouzels and 4 Wheatears were also noted, and there were 12 Ring Ouzels at Creteway Down and a Whinchat and 10 Ring Ouzels at Abbotscliffe. A Merlin flew in off the sea at Hythe on the 9th, when a Whinchat and two Ring Ouzels were at Samphire Hoe, and a Common Sandpiper and 3 Ring Ouzels were at the latter site the next day, whilst an Arctic Skua, 26 Sandwich Terns and 76 Gannets flew west at Seabrook and 13 Blackcaps and 23 Chiffchaffs were counted at Nickolls Quarry. The first Fieldfare of the autumn was seen at Palmarsh on the 12th.

Highlights of the annual Wildlife Migration Day on the 13th included the second latest ever sighting of Whitethroat (at Abbotscliffe), an impressive flock of at least 5,000 Starlings arriving in off the sea over Folkestone Harbour, a Woodcock at Folks' Wood, two Ring Ouzels at Creteway Down and a Firecrest trapped and ringed at Samphire Hoe, where 3 Wheatears and 3 Grey Wagtails were also noted.

A Firecrest was at Copt Point the following day, when two Ring Ouzels were at Abbotscliffe, and the 15th produced a Firecrest, 2 Stonechats and 12 Chiffchaffs at Nickolls Quarry, two Ring Ouzels at Creteway Down and a Ring Ouzel, 12 Blackcaps and 16 Siskins at Samphire Hoe. A Little Gull and 2 Arctic Skuas were seen off Hythe the next day.

A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was seen briefly in a garden in Cheriton on the 17th, when a **Quail** was flushed from a stubble field at Abbotscliffe (noted again on the 19th), four Ring Ouzels and nine Wheatears were at Samphire Hoe and a Lapwing, 7 Goldcrests, 18 Redwings and 20 Chiffchaffs at Nickolls Quarry completed an interesting day. The 18th produced a Jack Snipe, a Snipe, a Corn Bunting and 3 Wigeon at the Willop Sewage Works, whilst a Crossbill flew over Botolph's Bridge and a Firecrest was seen at Mill Point, where 45 Swallows flew west. The following day saw a Velvet Scoter at the Willop Outfall, where 24 Swallows and 250 Goldfinches flew over and a Wheatear and 3 Ring Ouzels were at Abbotscliffe, where 200 Goldfinches flew over.

Two Snipe and 11 Ring Ouzels were at Abbotscliffe on the 20th, when a Golden Plover, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 230 Stock Doves and 250 Goldfinches flew over and an Arctic Skua was seen off Samphire Hoe. Two Ring Ouzels and six Redwings were at Folkestone Leas the next day.

A brief spell of more settled weather ensued from the 22nd and this proved to be rather productive, with a confiding **Black-necked Grebe** on the canal at Hythe (until the 23rd), a **Hawfinch**, a Firecrest, 5 Goldcrests and 7 Chiffchaffs at Nickolls Quarry and two Ring Ouzels at Creteway Down on the 22nd and a **Little Auk** flying east past Sandgate and a Ring Ouzel, 2 Black Redstarts and 5 Goldcrests at Nickolls Quarry the next day.

A Firecrest was at Mill Point on the 24th, when 5 Chiffchaffs and 9 Goldcrests were at Nickolls Quarry and two Ring Ouzels and a peak count of three Little Egrets were at Samphire Hoe (up to two had been noted there on many dates, with singles at Abbotscliffe, Cheriton, Copt Point, Mill Point and Seabrook during the month).

There was a more settled end to the month, with colder, calmer and drier weather. A light north-westerly breeze on the 27th produced some good visual passage, with a Jay, 2 Bramblings, 2 Redpolls, 3 Bullfinches, 7 Swallows, 11 House Martins, 20 Sky Larks, 120 Chaffinches, 205 Siskins and 850 Starlings flying over Abbotscliffe, where two Black Redstarts and three Ring Ouzels were present. There were notably late sightings of Common Tern and Lesser Whitethroat at Nickolls Quarry on the same day, when a Ring Ouzel was also present there, a Wheatear and 2 Black Redstarts were at Hythe Ranges and two Firecrests were in a garden in Folkestone.

A Snow Bunting was found at Samphire Hoe on the 28th (remaining until the 5th November), when a Firecrest was also seen there, two new Black Redstarts were at Abbotscliffe, three Firecrests were at Mill Point and three Water Rails were along the canal at Hythe. A switch to easterly winds from the 29th generated some movement at sea, with a Red-breasted Merganser, 12 Shelducks, 24 Wigeon and 450 Brent Geese passing Mill Point and 11 Swallows were seen at Seabrook. Three Firecrests were at Nickolls Quarry the following day, when five Firecrests and 20 Goldcrests were at Mill Point and three Lapwings were at Abbotscliffe. The month ended with a ring-tail **Hen Harrier** at Samphire Hoe and a Woodcock at Lympe on the 31st.

November

The jet stream continued to track further south than usual, bringing more spells of cloudy and wet weather for much of November and temperatures were mostly below average. The month began with a Sandwich Tern off Princes Parade and two Swallows flying over Palmarsh on the 1st, whilst the 3rd was an excellent day, producing a **Yellow-browed Warbler**, 2 Firecrests, 3 Swallows, 5 Corn Buntings and 56 Lapwings at the Willop Sewage Works, a **Great White Egret**, a Little Egret, a Barn Owl, a Water Rail and a Blackcap at Botolph's Bridge, single Velvet Scoters flying past Folkestone Harbour and the Hythe Redoubt, where a Black Redstart and a Little Egret were seen, and a Firecrest and 3 Stonechats at Hythe Ranges. Two Little Egrets were at Samphire Hoe on the 4th and on several subsequent dates in the month, with a peak of three on the 11th.

A Swallow flew west at Seabrook on the 5th, when 2 Black Redstarts, 3 Fieldfares, 14 Pied Wagtails, 47 Meadow Pipits and 80 Mediterranean Gulls were at Church Hougham and 400 Mediterranean Gulls were noted at Copt Point. A Brambling, 2 Short-eared Owls and 4 Swallows were at Samphire Hoe the next day, when two Bramblings and 4 House Martins were at Capel-le-Ferne, a Fieldfare, a Chiffchaff and 6 Goldcrests were at Nickolls Quarry, a Firecrest, a Chiffchaff and several Goldcrests were at Enbrook Park and two Sandwich Terns were seen off Seabrook.



Yellow-browed Warbler at the Willop Sewage Works (Brian Harper)

A **Siberian Chiffchaff**, a Green Sandpiper, 2 Tree Sparrows and 30 Lapwings were at the Willop Sewage Works on the 7th, where 35 Redwings flew north, and a Swallow flew west at Hythe, whilst three Long-tailed Tits were of note at Samphire Hoe and a Redpoll flew over Gibbin's Brook. The following day saw a Sandwich Tern and 2 Purple Sandpipers at Hythe, a Firecrest at Kingsnorth Gardens and 3 Goldcrests and 7 Chiffchaffs at Nickolls Quarry.

A Tufted Duck, 3 Stonechats, 3 Fieldfares, 9 Snipe, 10 Corn Buntings, 35 Lapwings and 70 Teal were present in the Willop Basin/Sewage Works area on the 9th, when a Sandwich Tern flew west past Seabrook, and a further Sandwich Tern and two Swallows flew west there the next day, when a Firecrest, a Chiffchaff and 6 Goldcrests were at Enbrook Park, a Firecrest was at Samphire Hoe, a Tree Sparrow, a Swallow and 3 Corn Buntings were at the Willop Sewage Works and a Tufted Duck was at Botolph's Bridge. A Sandwich Tern was seen off Folkestone Beach on the 11th, when three Swallows were at Mill Point and 60 Kittiwakes were present off Folkestone Harbour.

Two **Wood Larks**, a Firecrest and 2 Siskins were seen at Newington on the 12th, whilst a Snow Bunting and a Brambling flew over Samphire Hoe the next day, when a Snow Bunting at 920 Wood Pigeons flew over Abbotscliffe and 17 Ringed Plovers were counted at Folkestone Beach. Seven Sandwich Terns flew east past Folkestone Pier on the 14th.

On the 15th a **Long-tailed Duck**, an Arctic Skua, a Little Gull, a Shoveler, a Sandwich Tern, 2 Dunlin, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 3 Teal, 4 Razorbills and 100 Wigeon flew past Mill Point/Princes Parade, whilst a Swallow was feeding along the canal at Seabrook.

The following day saw two Velvet Scoter, 3 Eider, 4 Sandwich Terns, 7 Wigeon, 15 Teal and 26 Red-throated Divers flying past Mill Point, where a Shag (to 21st), 4 Firecrests and 12 Goldcrests were present, and a Short-eared Owl and a Firecrest were seen at Copt Point, with three Firecrests at Holy Well. Two Velvet Scoter, 2 Shelduck and 3 Brent Geese flew past Mill Point on the 17th, where a Chiffchaff, 4 Firecrests and 10 Goldcrests were seen and a Marsh Harrier and a Green Sandpiper were at Nickolls Quarry.

A Kingfisher was in Folkestone Harbour on the 19th, two Shags, 2 Razorbills, 2 Fulmars and 9 Brent Geese were at Samphire Hoe the next day and around 15 Redwings were present in a garden in Folkestone on the 23rd. On the 24th a Firecrest and 2 Redpolls were at Pedlinge and a Chiffchaff and 5 Goldcrests were at Nickolls Quarry, whilst 285 Cormorants flew east past Hythe on the 25th.

A very late Ring Ouzel was at Samphire Hoe on the 28th, where a Shag flew past, and seven Sanderling were at the Willop Outfall the next day, when 19 Teal and 78 Lapwings were at the Willop Basin.

December

After a settled and fairly cool start to the month it quickly turned milder as westerly winds brought in a series of bands of rain. This pattern persisted until Christmas, after which it became calmer and drier.



Water Pipit at the Willop Sewage Works (Brian Harper)

One of the features of recent Decembers has been an up-channel movement of Brent Geese, and this year saw counts of 170 past Hythe on the 18th, 156 past Seabrook on the 26th and 61 past Seabrook on the 27th. A flock of 15 Greylag Geese were noted at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) on the 7th.

Other wildfowl noted offshore included a Velvet Scoter flying east past Mill Point on the 1st, a Tufted Duck, 2 Shelduck, 3 Wigeon and 8 Teal flying past Princes Parade on the 27th and a drake Shoveler on the sea there on the 31st. Up to two Gadwall, four Pochard, five Mandarin and 11 Tufted Ducks were present in the Cock Ash Lake/Horton Priory area, a Tufted Duck was at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th and up to 60 Teal were wintering at the Willop Basin.

A peak of 55 Red-throated Divers flew east past Princes Parade on the 31st and small numbers of Fulmars were noted offshore, whilst the first birds returned to breeding sites on the cliffs. A total of 73 Gannets flew east past Seabrook on the 26th. Cormorant numbers increased during the month, with 600 seen off Samphire Hoe on the 5th, 1,600 off Princes Parade on the 27th and c.2,000 off Seabrook on the 31st. A Shag was noted at Folkestone Harbour on the 30th.

Single Little Egrets were seen at Church Hougham and in a garden in Cheriton, whilst two **Great White Egrets** were at Donkey Street on the 27th. Counts of Great Crested Grebes included 58 off Folkestone Harbour on the 19th and 30 off Seabrook on the 29th.

A ring-tail **Hen Harrier** flew south over Horton Priory on the 7th. At least three Water Rails were wintering at Nickolls Quarry and there was a peak count of 22 Coot there. Up to 20 Ringed Plovers were present in the roost at Folkestone Beach but Lapwing numbers were low, with maximum counts of 50 at the Willop Basin, 75 at Folkestone Racecourse and 96 at Hillhurst Farm. A total of 16 Knot, 46 Sanderling and 112 Dunlin were roosting at the Willop Outfall at high tide on the afternoon of the 27th, whilst a mixed flock of 70 Knot/Dunlin were present again on the 29th. Two Purple Sandpipers remained at Hythe throughout and two were seen at Folkestone Harbour on the 11th.

A Woodcock was seen at Nickolls Quarry at dusk on the 3rd and a Curlew was present at the Willop Basin from the 27th. A Green Sandpiper was frequenting the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area and Redshank were wintering at Folkestone Harbour (5) and the Willop Basin (8).

Single Great Skuas were seen flying east past Mill Point on the 1st and Seabrook on the 30th. A flock of gulls off Copt Point on the 2nd included estimates of 500 Kittiwakes and **3,000** Mediterranean Gulls (a new record count). Other gull counts included c.400 Common Gulls at Cock Ash Lake on the 7th and a peak of 74 Great Black-backed Gulls heading east past Seabrook on the 26th.

Two Barn Owls were hunting at Nickolls Quarry on the evening on the 3rd and a Little Owl was seen at Church Hougham on the 19th. Away from the usual haunts, a Kingfisher was seen in Folkestone Harbour on the 19th. Firecrests were noted from Hythe, Mill Point and Nickolls Quarry (2). Blackcaps were wintering at East Cliff Gardens and Ingles Manor (Folkestone), at Seabrook and at St Hilda's Road (Hythe), whilst a Chiffchaff was also seen at East Cliff Gardens on the 31st.

A Ring Ouzel (presumably the bird from late November) reappeared again at Samphire Hoe on the 11th and 17th, becoming the latest ever sighting. Two **Water Pipits** were seen in the Donkey Street/Willop Sewage Works area on the 7th. Up to two Siskins, 40 Chaffinches and 100 Goldfinches were present at Cock Ash Lake, up to 15 Yellowhammers were present at Church Hougham and 11 Corn Buntings were seen at the Willop Sewage Works on the 7th.

Systematic list

The systematic list is based on the sequence and taxonomy followed by the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) (Gill & Donsker, 2017) and uses the vernacular names that are common use in Britain. The status of each species is described with reference to its frequency of occurrence, as summarised in the table below, and the time of year when it usually occurs. Any significant changes in status over time are also highlighted.

Status	Frequency of occurrence
Very rare	Has occurred locally on between one and 15 occasions
Rare	Has occurred locally on between 16 and 50 occasions
Scarce	Has occurred locally on more than 50 occasions but on less than ten occasions per year on average

The category given in parentheses after the status is based on the British Ornithologist's Union (BOU) categorisation (BOU, no date), adapted to reflect the status of species locally, as follows:

Category	Description
A	Species recorded locally in an apparently natural state at least once since 1 January 1950
B	Species recorded locally in an apparently natural state at least once between 1800 and 1949, but have not been recorded subsequently
C	Species that, although introduced, now derive from the resulting self-sustaining populations
D	Species that would otherwise appear in Category A except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state. The only species in this category that are on the local list are Falcated Duck and Great White Pelican
E	Species recorded locally as introductions, human-assisted transportations or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining

A species is usually placed in only one category, but some are placed in multiple categories, for example those species occurring in Category A which now have naturalised Category C populations (e.g. Red Kite).

The Folkestone and Hythe list comprises only those species in Categories A, B and C. Species placed in Category D and E are not included in the species total.

Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A, C)

A flock of 32 had been present in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street area from 2018 and these remained into January 2018, increasing to 33 on the 13th January and 39 on the 26th January, with 38 still present at the end of February and 33 remaining well into March.

As in previous years, there were a few records of birds seen offshore in the spring, with two (an adult and an immature) on the sea off Battery Point on the 26th March and an adult on the sea there from the 12th to the 15th May.

At least three pairs bred again in the usual haunts along the canal and on the marsh. In autumn two flew west past Hythe on the 9th October, two flew east past Hythe and three flew west past Seabrook on the 17th October and two were seen on the sea off Samphire Hoe on the 28th October. There were no counts of significance in the late winter period.

Bewick's Swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>
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Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One drifted east at sea past Battery Point on the 6th January (P. Howe). The 18th area record but the first since 2013.

Greylag Goose

Anser anser

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. Having been recorded in several summers in suitable habitat, breeding was confirmed for the first time in 2014 (A, C)

One in Folkestone Harbour on the 6th February was the only record in the first two months but there were a number of sightings in March, with four at Hayton Lake (Stanford) on the 1st, two at Folkestone Racecourse on the 9th (and 29th), two flying east over Nickolls Quarry on the 17th, two at the Lower Wall on the 20th and four at Nickolls Quarry on the 24th, on which date four flew east past Samphire Hoe. There were no records between April and August and no indications of local breeding.

In the latter part of the year three flew east past Seabrook on the 20th September, two flew west there on the 3rd October and 15 were seen at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) on the 7th December.

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

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

Up to three were present at Nickolls Quarry from the 14th February to the 24th March, after which a pair remained and the female appeared to be on eggs by the end of that month. Six young fledged in late April and at least four juveniles were still present at the end of May. There were no records in the second half of the year.

Brent Goose

Branta bernicla

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The trend for birds to be moving east along the coast from as early as January continued, with a peak of 53 passing Seabrook on the 23rd, but there no further sightings until the main spring passage began in early March. Counts of birds moving up-channel included 124 past Seabrook on the 1st, 365 past Mill Point on the 2nd, a total of 421 past Mill Point/Samphire Hoe on the 6th, 315 past Mill Point on the 23rd and 187 past there on the 31st. Smaller numbers were noted into late April. The spring total (including the early movement in January) was just 1,878, which was the lowest since 2012 and well below the mean for the previous decade of 3,250.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Latest/Earliest ever
	2019	2018				
Brent Goose	25 th Apr	5 th May	-10	3 rd May	-8	26 th May 1997*
Arrival	20 th Sep	7 th Oct	-17	21 st Sep*	-1	11 th Sep 2014*

In autumn the first three were seen flying east past Hythe and Seabrook on the 20th September, with 16 flying west past the latter site on the 22nd September. One of the features of recent years has been an up-channel movement in December, and 2019 saw counts of 170 past Hythe on the 18th, 156 past Seabrook on the 26th and 61 past Seabrook on the 27th.

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiaca

Very rare vagrant (C)

Four flew south past Samphire Hoe on the 27th April March (M. Collins, B. Woolhouse). This was the 12th area record and the third for the site. There have now been sightings in eight of the last nine years as the species continues to become established in the county. All records have occurred between January and May.

Winter visitor and passage migrant, may have bred on at least one occasion prior to 2004 (A)

In January one was seen off Samphire Hoe on the 10th and nine were seen off the Willop Outfall the following day, whilst February produced two flying west past Samphire Hoe on the 11th and two at the Willop Basin on the 14th.

Spring passage was noted from the 23rd March, when eight flew east past Mill Point, until early May. Further counts included five flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 19th and 20th April, six east there on the 22nd April and seven east past Mill Point on the 3rd May. The last record was the only one away from the coast: a pair at Nickolls Quarry on the 6th May. The spring total of 57 was the third highest in the last ten years and an improvement of the mean for the previous decade of 41.

There was a mid-summer record of four at Abbotscliffe on the 6th June but no further sightings until the 2nd October, when seven flew east past Hythe. Ones and twos were noted infrequently until the end of the year, with larger counts of five flying east past Seabrook on the 7th October and 12 flying east past Mill Point on the 29th October.



Mute Swans at West Hythe (Brian Harper)



Greylag Geese at Cock Ash Lake (Ian Roberts)

Breeding resident (C)

Low numbers were again noted from the woods in the Saltwood area, with peak counts of four at both Chesterfield Wood and Folks' Wood, whilst five were seen flying over Horton Priory on the 7th December. A drake was seen on the canal at Hythe on the 12th to 13th February and it, or another, was present there between the 17th April and 28th May, where it rather unusually had appeared to have adopted a brood of Mallard chicks.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Two were seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 2nd January and in spring two flew east past Mill Point on the 23rd March, three flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April and two flew east past Mill Point on the 30th April.

In autumn 25 flew west past Mill Point on the 24th September, 24 flew past Princes Parade on the 6th October, three were seen at the Willop Sewage Works on the 18th October and 24 flew past Mill Point on the 29th October. There was a notable movement of 100 (22 west, 68 east) past Mill Point on the 15th November, with seven flying west there the next day and three flew west past Princes Parade on the 27th December.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

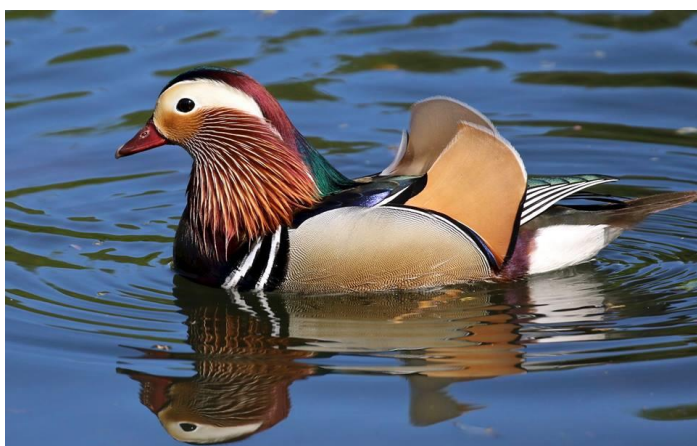
The only records from the early winter period were from Folkestone Racecourse where up to four were present in January to February, and none were seen in spring. In autumn three were seen off Princes Parade on the 6th October and two were present at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) on the 14th December.



Brent Goose at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Shelducks at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Mandarin Duck at Hythe (Phil Heading)



Mallards at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

As usual, the largest counts in the early winter period were from the Donkey Street/Willop Basin area (where there was a peak of 50 on the 16th February) and Chesterfield Wood (where there was a peak of 180 on the 5th January). Elsewhere a female was at Beachborough Lakes throughout January and February, two were at Folks' Wood on the 29th March, and up to nine were at Botolph's Bridge and up to 12 at Nickolls Quarry in January.

A light spring passage comprised a total of at least 53 moving up-channel between the 23rd March and 23rd April, with peak counts from Samphire Hoe, with 13 on the 13th April, 14 on the 15th April and 12 on the 22nd April.

The first of the autumn was at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd September and small numbers were noted offshore infrequently until November, with larger counts of ten off Princes Parade on the 6th October and 15 flying west past Mill Point on the 16th November. A wintering flock of up to 70 was present in the Willop Basin area in November and December, and eight (3 east, 5 west) were seen off Princes Parade on the 27th December.

Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
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Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

Counts from the early winter period included up to 29 at Beachborough Lakes, 35 at Port Lympne and 100 at Botolph's Bridge, all in January. In the late winter period counts were received of up to 23 at Samphire Hoe, 24 in the Horton Priory area and 54 at Radnor Park (Folkestone).

Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only sighting involved two flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th April. The worst year since 1990.

Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
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Rare migrant, mainly in spring, possibly bred in the past (A)

Four flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 1st April (S. Cutt). The 29th area record. Seven of the last ten sightings have been seen from this site.

Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no record from the early winter periods but the spring total of 51 was the third largest since 2005. Spring passage commenced with three at Nickolls Quarry on the 30th March but all other sightings were from the sea, with four east past Mill Point on the 31st March, and the rest in April, including counts of 24 past Samphire Hoe on the 15th and eight past Mill Point on the 30th.

The only records from the late winter period involved singles off Princes Parade on the 15th November and 31st December.

Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Singles were seen at Folkestone Racecourse on the 10th February and Nickolls Quarry on the 30th March, whilst up to four were present at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) in December.

Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were up to 12 at Cock Ash Lake, nine at Folkestone Racecourse, four at Beachborough Lakes, three at Hayton Lake (Stanford), two at Nickolls Quarry and singles at West Hythe and the Willop Sewer.

Single pairs remained at Beachborough Lakes and Nickolls Quarry until at least April and three pairs were still at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) in May but again there was no evidence of breeding noted.

In the late winter period a female, possibly the same individual, was seen at the Willop Basin on the 9th November and at Botolph's the following day, whilst a further female was at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th December. Up to 11 were present in the Cock Ash Lake/Horton Priory area throughout November/December and a drake flew west past Princes Parade on the 27th December.

Passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly summered but not since 2003 (A)

Two were seen off Mill Point on the 6th March, three flew east there on the 4th April and three flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 5th April. One was seen offshore from Seabrook on the 6th October and a flock of three flew east past Mill Point and Samphire Hoe on the 16th November.



Shoveler at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Tufted Ducks at Beachborough Lakes (Steve Tomlinson)

Very rare vagrant (A)

One flew east past Mill Point on the 15th November (I. A. Roberts). This was only the 13th area record but the third in the last three years.

Non-breeding summer visitor, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Very few were noted in the early winter period but there was a decent up-channel spring passage, with the total of around 1,720 being the third highest since 2005. Counts included 100 past Mill Point on the 23rd March, 355 past there on the 4th April, 260 past there on the 5th April, 157 past Mill Point/Samphire Hoe on the 15th April, 171 past Folkestone Pier/Samphire Hoe on the 22nd April and 300 past Mill Point on the 25th April.

Only small numbers were noted in the latter half of the year, with a peak of 38 off Princes Parade on the 6th October.

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

One flew east past Seabrook on the 7th January and six flew east past Mill Point on the 4th April.

In the late winter period singles were seen off the Willop Outfall on the 19th October, and Folkestone Harbour and the Hythe Redoubt on the 3rd November, whilst two flew west past Mill Point on the 16th November, two flew east there the following day and one flew east there on the 1st December.

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no sightings in the early winter period and a moderate spring passage involving a total of 14 birds, which was very similar to the mean for the previous decade of 13. The first three flew past Mill Point on the 2nd March, with one there on the 6th March and another on the 31st March. In April one flew east past Mill Point on the 1st, five flew east there on the 4th and two were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 6th, with a final single there on the 27th. In autumn one flew west past Mill Point on the 29th October and three flew west there on the 15th November.

Goosander

Mergus merganser

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only record related to a drake seen flying south over Beachborough Lakes on the 27th March.

Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa

Declining breeding resident (C)

The only record came from the Willop Basin where one was present on the 20th March. Yet another poor year for this species which appears to be declining locally.

Quail

Coturnix coturnix

Very rare vagrant (A)

One was flushed from a stubble field at Abbotscliffe on the 17th and again on 19th October (M. D. Kennett). There have only been six modern records (i.e. since 1980) but three of those have occurred in the last two years.

Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

Breeding resident (C)

As always very few counts of this species were received, with a peak of 20 at Beachborough Park in February. It tends to be scarce at Samphire Hoe but there were records in January, February, March and October. Other records from unusual areas included one on Sandgate Hill on the 2nd March, one at Mill Point on the 30th October and one in a garden in St Hilda's Road in Hythe on the 30th November.

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Movements in the early winter period included 75 flying east past Mill Point on the 3rd January and 50 flying east past the Willop Outfall on the 8th January before a record total of 667 flew west past Seabrook on the 29th January (surpassing the previous highest count of 535 flying west past the same site on the 24th December 2016). A further count of 96 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 11th February was also of note.

Spring passage was light with the only count of note being 61 flying east past Mill Point on the 2nd March.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference +/-	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Latest/Earliest ever
	2019	2018				
Departure	25 th Apr	13 th May	-18	30 th Apr	-5	6 th June 2006
Arrival	22 nd Sep	24 th Sep	-2	3 rd Oct	-12	7 th Sep 1997

Counts from the second half of the year again were low, with peaks of 26 west past Mill Point on the 16th November and 55 east past Princes Parade on the 31st December.

Black-throated Diver

<i>Gavia arctica</i>

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring, and occasional winter visitor (A)

In January singles were reported from Folkestone Harbour on the 6th and Hythe on the 29th, whilst spring passage comprised one flying east past Mill Point on the 5th April and three flying east there on the 25th April. The total of six was very much in line with the mean for previous ten years of 5.7.

Great Northern Diver

<i>Gavia immer</i>

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One was seen intermittently between Mill Point and Sandgate between the 3rd January and the 1st February (I. A. Roberts, B. Harper, D. Brown *et al*, see photograph on page 5) and one flew west past Samphire Hoe on the 10th March (S. Cutt). The 35th and 36th area records.

Fulmar

<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>

Breeding visitor and passage migrant (A)

Birds had begun to arrive back at the cliffs from late 2018 and three or four pairs bred at both Capel-le-Ferne and Samphire Hoe.

Spring passage was light and the only double-figure counts were as follows: 10 flying east past Mill Point on the 2nd March, 14 east there on the 1st April and 12 east there on the 10th April.

Very few were noted between May and July but small numbers were seen regularly again from August and birds began to return to the colonies in December.



Red-throated Diver at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Fulmar at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)

Manx Shearwater

<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>

Scarce passage migrant (A)

One flew west past Mill Point on the 4th April and seven flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 18th May.

Rare passage migrant (A)

Singles were seen flying west past Copt Point on the 27th September (M. J. Varley) and west past Samphire Hoe on the 29th September (S. Cutt). The 37th and 38th area records but the first since 2015.

Passage migrant and non-breeding visitor at all times of year (A)

The largest count from the early winter period was just 60 off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd February, but spring produced some decent movements including 380 flying east past Mill Point on the 2nd March, 217 flying east there on the 23rd March, 155 east there on the 31st March, 190 east there on the 5th April, 145 east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April and 100 east past Mill Point on the 25th April.

The largest counts in the second half of the year involved 76 flying west past Seabrook on the 10th October and 73 flying east there on the 26th December.

Non-breeding visitor at all times of year (A)

Exceptional numbers were again seen offshore in January, with 1,186 flying east past Seabrook on the 4th, 2,320 off the Willop Outfall on the 8th, about 2,900 (including a flock of around 2,500) there on the 11th, up to 5,000 off Hythe between the 11th and 13th and 2,286 flying east past Seabrook on the 29th. Smaller counts were noted during February as numbers appeared to slowly dwindle and the last significant sighting involved 526 flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 26th.

Numbers increased again towards the end of the year, with 285 flying east past Hythe on the 25th November, 600 off Samphire Hoe on the 5th December, 1,600 off Princes Parade on the 27th December and c.2,000 off Seabrook on the 31st December.

Passage migrant and winter visitor, with occasional summer records (A)

In January up to six were seen fishing offshore between Mill Point and Sandgate between the 3rd and the 10th, with further sightings from Battery Point on the 15th, Mill Point (two) on the 18th, Sandgate on the 23rd and Samphire Hoe and Seabrook on the 29th. Up to two were present at Samphire Hoe throughout February and March, with one remaining until the 6th April and one was seen from Mill Point on the 10th April.

The only summer sightings involved singles at Samphire Hoe on the 21st May, 16th July and 1st August. One was seen regularly there between late August and the end of the year, with four present on the 10th September and two on the 20th November. Elsewhere one was at Mill Point from the 16th to 21st November and one was at Folkestone Harbour on the 30th December.

Non-breeding visitor at any time of year, now regular in winter and on passage (A)

In January and February there singles at Donkey Street, Botolph's Bridge, Seabrook, Mill Point, Folkestone Harbour and Samphire Hoe, with two at Nickolls Quarry and Copt Point. There were fewer sightings in the spring period, with one at Abbotscliffe on the 4th March, one at Mill Point and two at Abbotscliffe on the 12th April and one at Hythe on the 25th April.

There were no reports in May but in June a flock of five flew east at Hythe on the 3rd, with a single flying east there on the 26th and two at Copt Point on the 30th.

The next sighting involved one at Samphire Hoe on the 17th August and up to three were seen frequently between there and Copt Point until the end of the year, with larger counts of five on the 22nd and 29th September. Elsewhere singles were seen flying west past Seabrook on the 8th September, flying over Cheriton Sports Centre on the 13th October, at Mill Point on the 14th October, flying east past Seabrook on the 22nd October, at Botolph's Bridge and the Hythe Redoubt on the 3rd November, in a garden at Sutton Close (Cheriton) on the 14th December and at Church Hougham on the 19th December.



Cormorant at Hythe Ranges (Ian Roberts)



Shag at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Rare migrant (A)

One remained in the Donkey Street area from December 2018 until the 2nd April (D. Brown, C. Gillard, B. Harper *et al*, see photograph on page 7).

Two flew west past Copt Point on the 26th August (M. Collins), one was seen there on the 6th September (M. Collins, P. Holt), one was seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 3rd November (B. Harper) and two were seen at Donkey Street on the 27th December (B. Harper).

These were the only the 15th to 18th area records but the species has now been recorded in nine of the last ten years and 2019 was the second consecutive year that has produced four. The September record was the first in that month and it is now only June that is yet to produce a sighting.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

At least 12 nests were occupied in Lympe Park Wood, where the population appears to be stable with 11 to 13 pairs noted in each of the last 11 years.

There was some evidence of passage, with one heard calling after dusk over Hythe on the 2nd April, one flying west past Mill Point on the 4th April, one arriving in off the sea at Seabrook on the 20th April, a flock of ten flying west at Copt Point on the 26th August, two arriving in off the sea at Seabrook on the 27th August and one arriving in off the sea there on the 10th September.

Very rare vagrant (A)

One was seen arriving in off the sea over Folkestone Warren on the 24th March (I. & S. Smith) and one flew east over Samphire Hoe on the 8th April (S. Wright), see photograph on page 10.

These were the 10th and 11th area records, and the first since 2013. This was the second year that has produced two sightings (as did 2003).



Little Egret at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Great White Egret at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

In the early winter period there were up to three at the Willop Basin, Botolph's Bridge, Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge), Folkestone Racecourse and Beachborough Lakes, but the only sighting from Samphire Hoe was a single on the 28th January. A single on the sea off Mill Point on the 12th April was an unusual occurrence and a new species for the site.

Birds remained at the Willop Basin and Beachborough Lakes into April but there were no reports of breeding from these sites, however in June an adult and a juvenile were seen on a small pond between Newington and Peene on the 14th.

At the latter end of the year there were up to four at Cock Ash Lake, three at the Willop Basin, two at Folkestone Racecourse and one at Chesterfield Wood.

Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

Good numbers were present offshore between the Willop Outfall and Hythe Ranges in January, with a peak of around 350 on the 11th, but the only other count of note in the early part of the year was of 60 off Folkestone Harbour on the 11th March. Inland there were two at Folkestone Racecourse in February and up to nine at Nickolls Quarry throughout, where breeding probably occurred but no evidence was noted. A pair were also present at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) in May.

In the late winter period smaller numbers were noted offshore with counts of 58 off Folkestone Harbour on the 19th December and 30 off Seabrook on the 29th December.

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One was present on the canal at Hythe on the 22nd and 23rd October (B. Harper), see photograph on page 18. The 22nd area record.



Little Grebe at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Black-necked Grebe at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Scarce passage migrant (A)

One was seen flying low over Hythe on the 18th June, with three in July; at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd, at Palmarsh on the 8th, and at Samphire Hoe again on the 23rd (see photograph on page 14), and further singles at Samphire Hoe on the 21st August and Folkestone Warren on the 21st September.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Arrival	18 th Jun	11 th Jun	7	23 rd May	26	3 rd May 2013
Departure	21 st Sep	6 th Sep	+15	3 rd Sep	+18	15 th Oct 1995

A total of 141 have now been recorded in the area in the 30 years since 1990 (mean of 4.7 per year), so the total of six was slightly above the average.

Very rare vagrant (A)

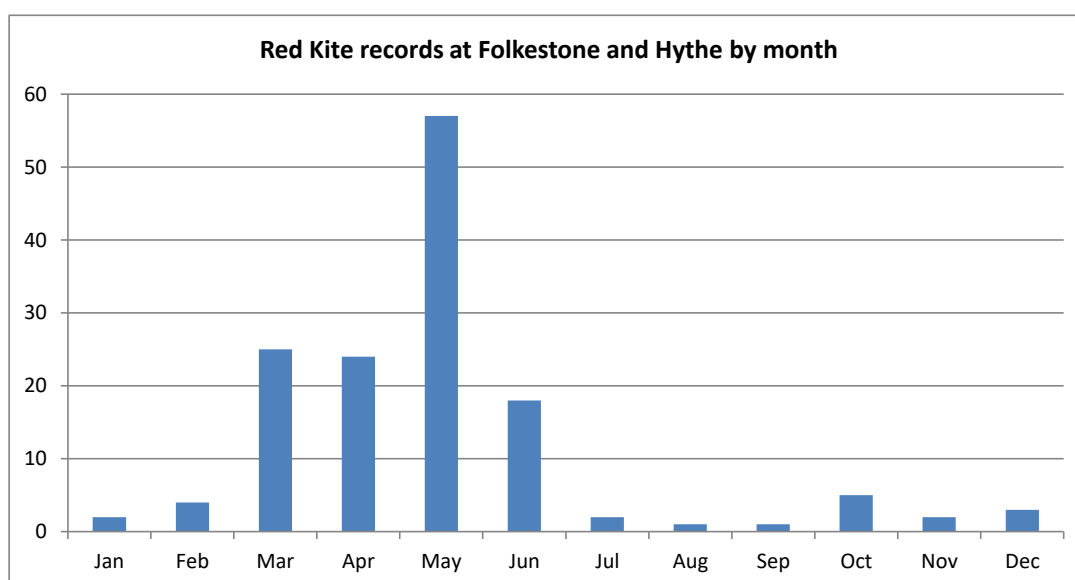
Singles were seen flying west over Beachborough Park on the 25th March (S. Tomlinson) and south-west over Cheriton on the 18th April (P. Howe). These were the 14th and 15th area records, all but two of which have occurred since 2005. This year was the third to produce multiple sightings (after three records in both 2011 and 2016).

Increasingly regular migrant, mainly in spring, but recorded in all months of the year (A, C)

The first of the year was seen flying over Folkestone Downs on the 15th January but there were no further sightings until late March when five were seen on the 25th (one at Hythe, two at Abbotscliffe and two at Beachborough Park), with another at Beachborough Park the next day and four there on the 27th. April produced one over Folkestone Warren on the 13th, two over Joyes Road (Folkestone) on the 19th, one at West Hythe on the 20th, one over Saltwood Cricket Club the following day and one at Beachborough Park on the 24th.

In May one was seen at Capel-le-Ferne and two flew over Palmarsh on the 2nd, two flew over Folkestone Warren on the 21st and one was at Westenhanger on the 31st, whilst the last sighting of the year related to one seen near Shrine Farm (Postling Wents) on the 23rd June.

The total of 16 records of 24 birds was the lowest since 2013 but the pattern of occurrence remains consistent: 86% of records have occurred between March and June and it remains a very scarce bird in the latter half of the year, as the chart below demonstrates.



Honey Buzzard at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Red Kite at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)

Marsh Harrier

<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were intermittent sightings of an immature/female in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry/Willop Sewer area between January and early March, which suggested that it might be roosting locally but no evidence of this was noted.

Spring migrants involved one flying over Samphire Hoe on the 20th March, one flying west over Beachborough Park on the 27th March, one flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 1st April, one at Donkey Street on the 7th April and one flying west over Hythe Roughs on the 8th April.

The only autumn migrant involved one seen at Abbotscliffe on the 13th August. One roosted at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th November but there were no further records there in the latter winter period.

Hen Harrier

<i>Circus cyaneus</i>

Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

Single 'ring-tails' were seen at Botolph's Bridge on the 27th April (B. Harper), at Samphire Hoe on the 31st October (M. Varley) and at Horton Priory on the 7th December (I. A. Roberts).

These were the 47th to 49th area records. Despite its national decline there have now been sightings in the last ten consecutive years.

Sparrowhawk

<i>Accipiter nisus</i>

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Ones and twos were seen at many sites throughout the year. There was no evidence of any passage.

Common Buzzard

<i>Buteo buteo</i>

Formerly scarce, but has bred since 2001 and continues to increase, also a passage migrant (A)

There were widespread records throughout the year. Some indication of passage migration was evident in early spring, with several considered to be moving through at Beachborough Park in February (with a peak of 13 on the 11th), whilst coastal records included three flying east over Hythe on the 17th. In March a flock of 11 flew west over Hythe on the 5th, 22 flew west over Beachborough Park on the 18th, four flew west over Hythe on the 24th and a count of 20 at Beachborough Park on the 26th seemed likely to include migrants in addition to the local birds.

There was little suggestion of passage in autumn, although two were seen flying high west over Seabrook on the 28th November and one flew west over Hythe seafront the following day.

An interesting sighting from Samphire Hoe on the 24th April involved one which was "carrying what appeared to be an Adder".

Osprey

<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>

Scarce passage migrant (A)

Singles were seen flying east over Samphire Hoe on the 1st May, in off the sea at Seabrook on the 21st May and west past Seabrook on the 7th October.

This was a very typical showing: there have now been 88 records in the area in the 30 years since 1990 (2.9 per year).



Hen Harrier at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Buzzard at Samphire Hoe (Martin Collins)

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Widespread in small numbers. The only suggestion of passage involved singles seen arriving in off the sea at Seabrook on the 4th March and 10th October.

Merlin

Falco columbarius

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A).

In the early part of the year singles were seen flying east over Hythe on the 26th February, flying west over Beachborough Park on the 4th March and at Samphire Hoe on the 26th March.

The only record from the latter winter period involved one seen arriving in off the sea at Hythe on the 9th October.

The previous decade saw a mean of 6.5 records per year so the total of four was a little below average.

Hobby

Falco Subbuteo

A summer visitor with breeding suspected in many years but not proven until 2014, also a passage migrant (A)

The first sighting was at the regular breeding site of Lympe Park Wood on the 25th April, where a pair bred again successfully raising two young. These presumably accounted for summer records in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry/Palmarsh area. There were also several sightings again in the Peene area and a pair may bred nearby (possibly in Asholt Wood where breeding has been suspected before), whilst a pair may also have bred in the Horn

Street area (where breeding possibly occurred in the last three years) as there were several records from Seabrook including birds hunting and carrying prey.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	25 th Apr	28 th Apr	-3	23 rd Apr	2	9 th Apr 1998
Departure	13 th Sep	24 th Sep	-11	2 nd Oct	-20	22 nd Oct 2001

Elsewhere singles were seen over Hythe on the 16th May and the 23rd July, and there records from Samphire Hoe on the 20th May, 22nd May, 25th May and 20th June, Capel-le-Ferne on the 24th May and Abbotscliffe on the 13th September.

Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
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Resident breeder until 1960 and again from the 1990s, also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were regular records from the cliffs between Folkestone and Dover throughout the year, and a pair bred at Capel-le-Ferne, raising three young, whilst a pair may have also bred at Samphire Hoe. Away from the cliffs there were singles at Donkey Street on the 2nd March, Beachborough Park on the 27th March (with it or another found dead there on the 1st April), Beachborough Park on the 5th April, Battery Point on the 22nd April, Beachborough Park again on the 26th April, Nickolls Quarry on the 4th May, Hythe on the 9th and 10th May, and 13th June, and Seabrook on the 12th July.

The bird found dead at Beachborough Park had been ringed as a nestling in Sweden in the previous summer, whilst one of the adults seen at Abbotscliffe had been ringed in East Sussex 12 years previously. Refer to page 89 for further details.

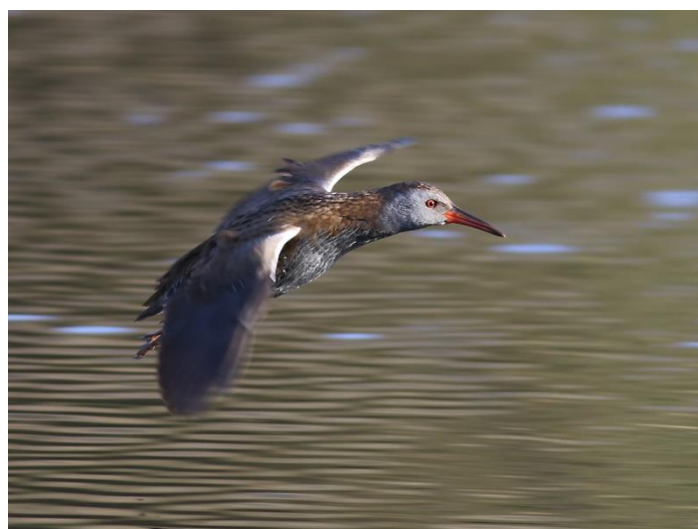
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period birds were present at West Hythe (2), Nickolls Quarry (2), Beachborough Lakes (2) and along the canal between Hythe and Seabrook. A migrant was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October and in the latter winter period there was one at Botolph's Bridge and at least three at Nickolls Quarry and along the canal between Hythe and Seabrook.



Hobby at Hythe (Glenn Tutton)



Water Rail at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident (A)

There were widespread records but the only double-figure counts came from Beachborough Lakes (where there was a peak of 15 in January) and Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) in December.

Coot

Fulica atra

Breeding resident and winter visitor (A)

In the early part of the year there were up to ten at Beachborough Lakes, 11 at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) and 14 at Nickolls Quarry, with smaller numbers at Folkestone Racecourse, Hayton Lake (Stanford), Seabrook and the Willop Sewer. A single pair bred at Beachborough Lakes and eight young fledged on the 28th March, whilst an adult was sitting on a nest on the Willop Sewer in early April and breeding may also have occurred at Nickolls Quarry.

In the latter winter period there were double-figure counts from the Cock Ash Lake/Horton Priory, where there were 20 in December, and Nickolls Quarry, where there were 22 in December.

Common Crane

Grus grus

Very rare vagrant (A)

Two flew west over Folkestone and Horn Street on the 13th May (P. Howe, J. Phillips). The 12th area record.



Coot at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)



Common Cranes at Folkestone (John Phillips)

Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

Breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor (A)

Small numbers were seen regularly on the shore between the Hythe Redoubt and the Willop Outfall in the early winter period with a peak of 14 on the 25th January. A pair were present again present at Nickolls Quarry from the 14th February and appeared to be nesting on the small island in the lake, though no young were noted.

A light spring passage was noted from March, including counts of seven east past Folkestone Pier on the 22nd April and 14 west past Capel-le-Ferne on the 7th May.

The only count of note from the latter part of the year involved a flock of 11 flying east past Hythe on the 2nd August.

Formerly a breeding summer visitor and scarce passage migrant. Now a very rare vagrant but bred again in 2018 and 2019 (A)

Three arrived at Nickolls Quarry on the 7th April, presumably returning birds from last year and a pair managed to nest successfully again, with four young fledging, and being last seen in June (see photograph on page 13). A single seen at Donkey Street on the 13th April was presumably one of the same, as this site was used for foraging in 2018 (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts).

Development of the site into housing continues and it would appear unlikely that suitable habitat will remain in 2020.

Occasional breeding species, also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period the regular roost at Folkestone Beach held a peak of 20 birds on the 9th January. Spring migrants were noted at Nickolls Quarry, where there was a single on the 28th April, and at Mill Point, where three flew east on the 17th May.

In autumn one was seen on the seawall at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October and the roost at Folkestone Beach held up to nine in October, increasing to 17 from November and 20 in December.

Declining winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only records from the early winter period related to singles flying over the Willop Sewage Works on the 1st January and at Capel-le-Ferne on the 29th January. In spring a flock of 26 flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 18th March.

In autumn one was seen flying east over Abbotscliffe on the 20th October.

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor (A)

There were no records from the early winter period and it was another poor spring, with the only sightings being four flying east past Mill Point on the 23rd March and singles flying east there on the 1st and 30th April. None were seen in the latter half of the year.

Occasional breeding species (most recently in 2018, formerly numerous), also a winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Peak counts from the early winter period involved 100 near Postling Wents, 163 at Capel-le-Ferne and 280 in the Willop Basin area.

The first returning bird was noted on the 16th July, when a single was seen at Samphire Hoe, whilst it or another was heard calling over Folkestone Warren on the night of the 16th/17th July. Further records from the cliffs involved one at Abbotscliffe on the 28th August, one at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October and three at Abbotscliffe on the 30th October, whilst on the marsh numbers increased to 56 at the Willop Basin in early November, with 78 counted there on the 29th November. Inland there was a count of 96 at Hillhurst Farm on the 11th December and 75, possibly part of the same flock, at nearby Folkestone Racecourse on the 14th December.

Passage migrant (A)

There were no records from the early winter period or on spring migration.

A total of 16 were roosting (with 112 Dunlin) at the Willop Outfall at high tide on the afternoon of the 27th December and a mixed flock of 70 Knot/Dunlin were present again there on the 29th December.

Sanderling

Calidris alba

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

At least four were seen regularly at the Willop Outfall in the early winter period but the only migrants noted were five flying east past Mill Point on the 8th May. Up to nine were present again at the Willop Outfall from November with an isolated count of 46 roosting there at high tide on the afternoon of the 27th December (there have only ever been six higher counts).

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period up to four were frequenting the rock groynes between Hythe and Battery Point and one was seen at the Willop Outfall on the 13th February. A migrant seen at Samphire Hoe on the 25th April was a good record for the site. The wintering birds were last seen at Battery Point on the very late date of 18th May (the latest ever departure date and some eight days later than the previous latest of 10th May 2009).

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Departure	18 th May	7 th May	+11	5 th May	13	18 th May 2019
Arrival	8 th Nov	4 th Nov	+4	31 st Oct	+8	30 th Sep 1984

Two returned to Hythe on the comparatively late date of 8th November (there has only been one later arrival in the previous 12 years) and remained until the year's end, and frequented the rock groynes at the end of Stade Street and Twiss Road. Elsewhere there were two at Folkestone Harbour on the 11th December.



Little Ringed Plover at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Purple Sandpiper at Hythe (David Scott)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

A flock of 15 flew past Princes Parade on the 5th January but there were no other sightings from the early winter period. A very light spring passage comprised a total of 17 flying east between the 2nd March and 17th May, including counts of six past Mill Point on the 10th April and four past there on the 17th May. Additional singles were at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th April, 24th April and 6th May.

In autumn two flew past Princes Parade on the 6th October and two flew past Mill Point on the 15th November, whilst an excellent total of 112 were roosting (with 16 Knot) at the Willop Outfall at high tide on the afternoon of the 27th December and a mixed flock of 70 Dunlin/Knot were present again there on the 29th December. There has only been one larger count (which involved a total of 366 heading east on spring migration on the 12th May 2002).

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

One was present at the Willop Basin in January and one was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 24th January, with perhaps the same bird there on the 4th and 5th February, and it or another there between the 3rd and 12th April. A late individual, possibly a migrant, was at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th April.

The only record in the latter winter period involved one at Donkey Street on the 18th October.



Dunlin at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Jack Snipe at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Common Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The largest numbers were, as usual, in the Willop Basin area, where was a peak of 71 in early January. Single figure counts came from the Aldington Road fields (up to five), Hythe Roughs (up to five), Donkey Street (up to four), Botolph's Bridge (up to three) Nickolls Quarry (one) and Folkestone Racecourse (one).

In autumn two were seen at Abbotscliffe on the 20th October and small numbers were wintering at various sites, with a peak count of just nine at the Willop Basin on the 9th November.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were up to two at Folks' Wood, three at Beachborough Park and Chesterfield Wood, and five at Kiln Wood. A migrant individual was found dead on Hillcrest Road (Saltwood) on the 17th March and late singles at Beachborough Park on the 25th and 28th March may also have been migrants.

An autumn migrant was seen at Lympe on the 31st October, whilst small numbers returned to their usual woodland haunts. Elsewhere one was seen at Nickolls Quarry at dusk on the 3rd December.

Passage migrant, mainly in spring (A)

Spring passage involved a modest total of 84 moving up-channel between the 13th and 26th April, with a peak of 45 past Samphire Hoe on the 23rd April, and was well below the mean for the previous ten years of 173.

Passage migrant, mainly in spring (A)

Spring passage involved a modest total of 80 recorded between the 12th April and the 18th May, mostly moving up-channel. Counts included 15 east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th April, 16 east past Mill Point on the 25th April and 8 east there on the 29th April. The mean for the previous decade was 154.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	12 th Apr	10 th Apr	2	13 th Apr	-1	25 th Mar 2011
Departure	27 th Jul	26 th Aug	-30	28 th Aug	-32	12 th Nov 2013

Autumn passage was typically light and involved singles heard calling over Chesterfield Wood on the night of the 29th/30th June and one flying west past Hythe on the 27th July 2019.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Up to three were seen regularly in the Willop Basin area between January and March, whilst spring passage comprised two flying east past Mill Point on the 1st April and one flying east there on the 4th April. In autumn one flew past Princes Parade on the 6th October and one was present again in the Willop Basin area in December.

Passage migrant, occasionally overwinters, most recently in 2008 (A)

A very poor spring passage involved a total of just five birds: one at Nickolls Quarry on the 28th April, one at Battery Point on the 2nd May and three there on the 7th May. The mean for the previous ten years was 13.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	28 th Apr	12 th Apr	16	18 th Apr	10	4 th Mar 2013*
Departure	10 th Oct	30 th Oct	-20	21 st Sep*	+18	Several wintered

The first of a light autumn passage was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 22nd July, with ones and twos at various coastal sites thereafter until the end of September, with singles at Folkestone Harbour on the 7th October and Samphire Hoe on the 10th October.

Green Sandpiper

<i>Tringa ochropus</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

At least two were wintering in the Botolph's Bridge/Donkey Street/Nickolls Quarry area from 2018 until late April. The only records away from the marsh involved one near Kiln Wood on the 13th January and a very good count of six migrants at Beachborough Lakes on the 13th April, increasing to nine there on the 19th April.

Singles were seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 23rd June and 28th July and at least one was wintering in the Willop Basin/Nickolls Quarry area from early October.

Greenshank

<i>Tringa nebularia</i>

Scarce passage migrant (A)

One was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 20th April and one flew west past Sandgate on the 26th August. A typical year; the mean for the last decade is 2.6 records.

Redshank

<i>Tringa tetanus</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were peaks of nine at Folkestone Harbour and six at the Willop Basin, with singles at Botolph's Bridge and Nickolls Quarry.

At the latter end of the year there were up to five at Folkestone Harbour and eight at the Willop Basin.

Turnstone

<i>Arenaria interpres</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Birds were present in the early winter period at the Willop Outfall, Hythe Redoubt, Hythe, Battery Point and Folkestone Harbour but the only counts of note were 12 at Battery Point on the 5th January as 18 at the Hythe Redoubt on the 2nd April. The only bird seen moving up-channel in spring flew past Mill Point on the 3rd May.

Six were seen at Copt Point on the 6th September, one flew east past Mill Point on the 29th October and birds were wintering again at the Willop Outfall, Hythe and Folkestone Harbour in the latter part of the year.

Pomarine Skua

<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring (A)

Two were lingering just offshore from Samphire Hoe on the 22nd April, a total of ten flew east past Mill Point on the 25th April, two flew east past Mill Point on the 8th May and a total of ten flew east there on the 10th May (with seven of these also noted from Copt Point). The mean for the previous decade was 14 so the tally of 24 was somewhat above average.

One that was seen off Samphire Hoe on the 8th October was the first autumn record since 2010.

Passage migrant (A)

The only records in spring involved two flying east past Mill Point on the 4th April and three flying east there on the 25th April. The total of just five was well below the mean for the previous ten springs of around 14 and the lowest since 2010.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	4 th Apr	30 th Mar	5	15 th Apr	-11	14 th Mar 2016*
Departure	15 th Nov	23 rd Sep	+53	13 th Oct	+32	21 st Nov 2002

In autumn six were seen off Hythe on the 6th September, when singles (perhaps part of the same total) were seen from Copt Point and Folkestone Pier, and two were seen off both Mill Point and Samphire Hoe on the 24th September, with three passing Copt Point on the 25th, one there the next day and six west there on the 27th September. Further singles were noted on three dates in October and two flew past Hythe on the 16th. In November a rather late bird flew east past Mill Point on the 15th (there have only been two later records). The autumn total of at least 24 was an improvement on the ten year mean of around 17.



Whimbrel at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Arctic Skua at Copt Point (Paul Holt)

Passage migrant (A)

Whilst not quite a repeat of 2018's record winter influx, seven sightings in January was the second highest total for that month of the year, and comprised singles off Samphire Hoe on the 1st, Folkestone Pier on the 2nd, Mill Point on the 4th and 19th, Princes Parade on the 5th and the Willop Outfall on the 8th and 12th. None were noted however in February.

There was another strong spring passage with a total of 27 seen heading up-channel between the 23rd March and 18th May, with peak counts of four east Mill Point on the 4th April and 13 east there on 25th April. The spring total was the third highest ever and far exceeded the mean for the previous decade of 15, whilst the peak day count equalled the second highest ever (only 25th April 2012 has produced more, with 14).

Autumn passage however was disappointing with just one off Samphire Hoe and three there on the 30th September. In the late winter period there singles off Mill Point on the 1st December and Seabrook on the 30th December.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there was a peak count of 120 off Seabrook on the 22nd January, with smaller counts at other sites (peaks of 12 off Samphire Hoe and 20 off Mill Point).

A light spring passage included counts of 31 east past Samphire Hoe on the 10th March, 44 east past Mill Point on the 23rd March and 38 east past Samphire Hoe on the 1st April.

In the late winter period there were 60 off Folkestone Harbour on the 11th November and an estimated 500 off Copt Point on the 2nd December.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Large numbers were present in the early winter period but the highest count received was of 350 at Beachborough Park on the 4th March. Spring passage was noted between mid-March and mid-May, with peak counts of 50 east past Mill Point on the 16th April, 81 east past Samphire Hoe on the 20th April and 290 east there on the 22nd April. There were no counts of note from the latter half of the year.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no sightings in the early winter period. Spring passage comprised four east past Mill Point on the 23rd March, singles east past Mill Point on the 5th April and Samphire Hoe the next day, and six east past Samphire Hoe on the 14th April.

In autumn one was seen off Samphire Hoe on the 25th September, with three there on the 8th October, one off Hythe on the 16th October and one off Mill Point on the 15th November.

The total of 18 was very close to the mean for the previous decade of 20.

Increasing winter visitor and passage migrant, scarce in summer (A)

Large numbers were present as normal in the early winter period but the only significant counts came from Beachborough Park, where there were up to 205 in January and 220 in February.

Small numbers were noted moving up-channel from mid-March and there was a pronounced passage between the 16th and 26th April, when at least 187 were logged heading east, including counts of 63 past Hythe on the 19th, 22 past Samphire Hoe the following day, 29 there on the 22nd April and 24 passing Mill Point on the 25th April.

As usual very few were noted between mid-May and the end of June before numbers began to build again. The first three figure count involved 100 over Palmarsh on the 4th August and later that month at least 1,000 were at Copt Point on the 26th, whilst on the 29th August there was a record count of 1,950 there. Large numbers remained through September, with 900 in fields at Capel-le-Ferne on the 5th and 1,160 at Copt Point on the 28th, whilst in October there were 400 on the Hythe Imperial golf course. There was another increase in early December when another new record count of around 3,000 were at Copt Point on the 2nd.

Colour-ringed birds from England, Ireland, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Italy were noted during the year, see page 89 for further information.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were widespread records in January but the only notable count received was of 122 at Beachborough Park on the 12th. Numbers increased during February, when there was a peak of 200 at Folkestone Racecourse on the 22nd, and into March, when 254 flew west over Beachborough Park on the 1st and 213 were counted there on the 8th.

Up-channel passage was noted between mid-March and late April, with counts including 37 past Mill Point on the 23rd March and 80 there on the 1st April.

There were also widespread records in the late winter period but the only notable count received was from Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge), where there were around 400 on the 7th December.



Black-headed Gull at Seabrook (Brian Harper)



Mediterranean Gulls at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

Breeding species, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Small numbers were noted in January and an increase was noted towards the end of February and into March, when 12 were noted at Beachborough Park on the 28th. A light spring passage included a peak count of seven passing east at Mill Point on the 5th April.

The first comprehensive survey of roof-nesting gulls in the area since 1994, revealed a total of eight apparently occupied nests and an additional apparently occupied territory: one nest at Hythe, four nests at the Channel Tunnel Terminal, two nests (and the additional territory) at Folkestone and one nest at Samphire Hoe. None had been noted in previous surveys, and only two to three pairs had been known to nest previously, however the increase is likely to be due (at least in part) to complete coverage of the area rather than recent growth. Refer to page 92 for full details of the census.

There were no notable counts from the latter half of the year.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Large numbers were present across the area throughout the year, but no notable counts were received.

The first comprehensive survey of roof-nesting gulls in the area since 1994, revealed a total of 877 apparently occupied nests and an additional 138 apparently occupied territories, giving an overall total of between 877 and 1,015 breeding pairs. This demonstrates a significant and continued growth since previous surveys, particularly in the Hythe area. The highest concentrations of nests involved 27 on the roof of the Topps Tiles building on the Park Farm Industrial Estate (in TR2137) and 51 on the roofs of the buildings used for security and customs checks upon check in at the Channel Tunnel Terminal (in TR1837). Refer to page 92 for full details of the 2019 census and analysis of the results compared to previous surveys.

A number of colour-ringed birds from the Pitsea Landfill Site in Essex were noted, see pages 89-91 for further information.

Caspian Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

Two adults remained in the Nickolls Quarry area (from December 2018) until the 3rd January (when an adult, presumably one of the same, was seen nearby at Hythe Ranges) and another was seen in Folkestone Harbour on the 7th January.

Excluding the birds first seen in 2018, this was only the 13th area record but the species is now proving to be almost annual in occurrence, with sightings in nine of the last ten years.

Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
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Winter visitor and passage migrant, with small numbers over-summering (A)

Counts included on/east at Mill Point on the 1st December, 48 flying west past Seabrook on the 5th December and 74 flying east there on the 26th December.

A returning Swedish-ringed bird was seen at Hythe, see page 91 for further information.

Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
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Passage migrant mainly in spring, formerly bred (but not since 1968) (A)

The only record involved one that flew east past Mill Point on the 25th April. A very poor year and the worst since 2012 when there was also just a single sighting. The mean for the previous decade is 26.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2018	2017	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	25 th Apr	22 nd Apr	3	27 th Apr	-2	11 th Apr 2016
Departure	-	-	-	-	-	16 th Sep 1999

Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
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Scarce passage migrant (A)

Two flew east past Mill Point on the 25th April. A welcome return after a blank year in 2018.

Non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, rare in winter (last record in 2000) (A)

Whilst there was no repeat of the January or February records from the last couple of years the first, eight flying east past Mill Point on the 2nd March, were still significantly earlier than the ten year mean and this was the highest count for such an early date.

The next two were seen off Hythe on the 6th March, with one past Samphire Hoe on the 10th and three off Hythe on the 15th March, after which sightings became regular and numbers increased. Counts in March included 81 flying east past Mill Point on the 23rd and 57 east there on the 31st.

A total of 75 heading east past Mill Point on the 1st included the unusual sight of a first-summer individual, and numbers increased rapidly with 265 east there on the 5th and 160 east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th. Passage then slowed until there was another surge of birds in late April, including 105 east past Mill Point on the 24th and 215 east there the next day, with smaller numbers into May and the last notable count involved 70 east past Mill Point on the 8th.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Arrival	2 nd Mar	13 th Jan	48	12 th Mar	-10	13 th Jan 2018
Departure	16 th Nov	19 th Nov	-3	11 th Oct	+35	19 th Nov 2018*

Numbers increased again in August, when 43 were present off Samphire Hoe on the 11th and 52 were seen off Seabrook on the 27th, whilst in September there were some good counts of birds fishing offshore, with 300 off Copt Point on the 6th, 200 off Seabrook the next day and 166 there on the 8th. Counts dwindled during the month and into October, with the last double-figure total involving 26 flying west past Seabrook on the 10th October. Similarly to last year there was a series of unusually late records, with ones or twos on six dates to the 11th November before an exceptional total of seven flew east past Folkestone Pier on the 14th November, with one east past Mill Point the following day and four east there on the 16th. There had only been five previous records in November, all relating to single birds, and only one later sighting (in 2018, excluding winter records in December 1955 and 1989).

Passage migrant, formerly bred (but not since 1998) (A)

There was no repeat of last year's March record, however the total of 22 seen flying east past Mill Point on the 1st April, were still significantly earlier than the ten year mean and was the highest count for such an early date. The next sighting involved 11 heading east past Samphire Hoe on the 6th April, with six east past Mill Point on the 10th April and regular records thereafter. The largest counts from a rather modest passage included 52 east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April, 35 Common/Arctic Terns east past Mill Point on the 25th April and 45 Common/Arctic Terns east there on the 17th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Arrival	1 st Apr	30 th Mar	2	11 th Apr	-10	30 th Mar 2018
Departure	27 th Oct	31 st Aug	+57	23 rd Sep	+34	30 th Oct 2007

The only counts of note in autumn involved 40 off Folkestone Pier and off 70 off Hythe on the 6th September, whilst small numbers were noted to the end of that month. There was an exceptionally late bird at Nickolls Quarry on the 27th October (there has only been only later sighting, at Samphire Hoe on the 30th October 2007, although a Common or Arctic Tern, not identified to species, was seen off Sandgate on the 28th December 1974).

Passage migrant (A)

The first two were seen flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 15th April, with one east past Hythe on the 25th April and one east past Mill Point on the 30th April. As noted under the previous species some birds were logged as Common/Arctic Tern in spring due to the difficulty of identification at distance, so others may have been overlooked.

There were no records in autumn.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In contrast to last year numbers of large auks in the early winter period were low, with counts of just 350 flying east past Mill Point on the 3rd January, 330 flying east there the next day, at least 475 flying west past Hythe/Seabrook on the 29th January and 100 off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd February. Those that were close enough to be identified were primarily Guillemots with only a small proportion of Razorbills.

There was little evidence of spring passage, however 15 flew east past Mill Point on the 31st March, 15 flew east past Samphire Hoe on the 13th April and 12 flew east past Mill Point on the 15th April.

Few were noted in in the late winter period.



Herring Gull at Seabrook (Brian Harper)



Common Tern at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

As noted above, most movements of large auks in January appeared to primarily comprise Guillemots and the small numbers of Razorbills that were picked out included three off Mill Point on the 3rd, five there on the 4th and 13th, and eight off Samphire Hoe on the 31st, however there was an isolated movement of 300 Razorbills (130 west, 170 east) past Mill Point on the 18th January. Three were seen off Samphire Hoe on the 2nd February and ones and twos were noted into May.

Few were noted in in the late winter period, with a peak count of four flying east past Mill Point on the 15th November.

Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>
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Rare migrant and winter visitor (A)

One flew east past Sandgate on the 22nd October (B. Harper). The 25th area record.

Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

One that was seen flying east past Samphire Hoe on the 22nd April (S. Cutt) was only the sixth area record and the first since 2002.

Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
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Breeding resident (C)

A common and widespread species but no counts were received.



Razorbill at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Feral Pigeon at Hythe Ranges (Ian Roberts)

Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

In the early part of the year there were up to 22 in stubble fields by the Aldington Road and 30 at Beachborough Park.

The only count of note in the autumn involved a total of 230 flying over Abbotscliffe on the 20th October.

Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

In the early part of the year there were up to 233 at Beachborough Park, 300 at the Aldergate Bridge and 1,000 at Kiln Wood.

The only count of note in the autumn involved a total of 920 flying west over Abbotscliffe on the 13th October.

Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

A common and widespread species but no counts were received.

Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
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Rare summer visitor and passage migrant, very rare in winter (A)

Three were seen flying over Bargrove Wood on the 6th May (B. Harper) and one was reported at West Hythe on the 25th May (per B. Harper).

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	6 th May	4 th Jun	-29	23 rd May	-17	10 th Apr 1993
Departure	-	22 nd Aug	-	23 rd Aug	-	24 th Oct 1981*

Ring-necked Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
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Very rare vagrant (A)

One flew west over Seabrook on the 25th January (P. Howe). This was only the 24th area record but the eighth in the last eight years.

Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
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Declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

At least one was present in the Nickolls Quarry/Palmarsh/West Hythe area from the 22nd April to at least the end of May and breeding may have occurred. Another was present at Seabrook between the 24th May and 2nd June, whilst one was seen at Ladies Walk, Hythe on the 27th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	22 nd Apr	16 th Apr	6	20 th Apr	2	27 th Mar 2001
Departure	8 th Aug	-	-	26 th Jul	+12	28 th Sep 1969

In autumn there were singles at Seabrook on 5th July, Samphire Hoe on the 29th July and Nickolls Quarry on the 8th August.

Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
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Scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor (A)

One was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 6th January, two were hunting in the Botolph's Bridge/Nickolls Quarry area on the evenings of the 17th and 18th March (see photograph on page 8) and a feather was found at Beachborough Park on the 12th April.

One was found by day roosting at Botolph's Bridge on the 3rd November and two were hunting at Nickolls Quarry on the 3rd December.

Resident breeding species, possibly declining (C)

There were records from West Hythe, Beachborough Park and Church Hougham during the year.



Wood Pigeon at Hythe Roughs (Brian Harper)



Cuckoo at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Breeding resident (A)

There were records from numerous sites, including the Aldergate Bridge, West Hythe, Chesterfield Wood, Heane Wood, Beachborough Park, Paraker Wood and Folkestone Warren.



Little Owl at Beachborough Park (Steve Tomlinson)



Tawny Owl at undisclosed site (Louise Gower)

Long-eared Owl

Asio otus

Very rare vagrant (A)

The first ever confirmed nesting by a pair locally (with two young fledging) was the highlight of the breeding season. The location has not been disclosed in order to avoid disturbance if the site is used again (observers names withheld). A further single bird was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the night of the 4th/5th June, raising suspicions that a second pair may have been present in this area, where breeding has been suspected before (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts).

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

Passage migrant (A)

Two were seen flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 6th November and one was seen at Copt Point on the 16th November. A fairly typical year.

Common Swift

Apus apus

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no April records for only the second time since 2000 but when birds finally did arrive on the 2nd May they did so in numbers, with at least 15 between three sites (Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone and Hythe). Numbers built up quickly thereafter but the only counts of note came in June, when 20 flew north-east over Palmarsh on the 7th and 57 flew west at Samphire Hoe on the 26th.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Arrival	2 nd May	18 th Apr	14	23rd Apr	9	18 th Apr 2015
Departure	15 th Sep	7 th Sep	+8	12 th Sep	+3	16 th Nov 1957

The peak count in autumn involved 240 flying west at Seabrook on the 1st August and stragglers lingered into September, when there were two at Seabrook on the 2nd, two at Hythe on the 10th, two at Folkestone on the 11th and the last at Newington on the 15th.

Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

Breeding resident, with dispersal to coasts and non-breeding areas in autumn and winter (A)

Resident birds were recorded from various points along the canal between the Aldergate Bridge and Seabrook, and also from the Willop Sewage Works and Botolph's Bridge.

Dispersing birds were noted at Folkestone Harbour on the 19th November and 19th December.

Green Woodpecker

Picus viridis

Breeding resident (A)

Widely recorded. No counts of note were received however one at Samphire Hoe on the 12th August was the first to be seen at this site since December 2017.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Widely recorded but there were no notable counts received of resident birds. Up to eight probable migrants were noted between the 29th August and 31st October, with four at Abbotscliffe, three at Nickolls Quarry and one at Capelle-Ferne.

Formerly bred (until the early 1980s), now a very rare vagrant (A)

One was heard calling at Beachborough Park on the 7th January (S. Tomlinson). This was only the 9th record since 1985 but is the third in the last six years. All three sightings were about 2km apart in area to the west of Cheriton, in the Seabrook Stream area, where perhaps it might still persist as a resident species?

Breeding resident (A)

The largest counts received were 22 at Beachborough Park on the 12th February, 18 at Abbotscliffe on the 21st March, 14 at the Willop Basin on the 5th January and 12 at Samphire Hoe on the 19th March.



Long-eared Owls at undisclosed site (Ian Roberts)



Magpies at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Resident birds were widely recorded. Presumed migrants involved two at Abbotscliffe on the 20th April, one there on the 18th September, two arriving in off the sea at Seabrook on the 4th October, two at Abbotscliffe on the 20th October and one arriving in off the sea there on the 27th October.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Counts in the early winter period included 450 flying over Nickolls Quarry on the 1st January and a peak of 314 at Beachborough Park on the 4th February. At the latter end of the year 470 were seen flying over Nickolls Quarry on the 3rd December.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

The only notable count received was of 105 flying over Nickolls Quarry on the 3rd December. Single migrants were noted at Samphire Hoe on the 19th April and 7th October.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

No counts of note were received.

Bred until about 1890 but then not recorded until 1997 (when there were two records), with no further sightings until 2006. Since then it has become established and continues to increase and spread, with breeding first suspected in 2015 and then proven in 2016. Now recorded in all months of the year (A)

Recorded throughout the year. Single pairs successful nested again at Capel-le-Ferne (raising three young) and Samphire Hoe (raising four young), whilst at least one pair were seen regularly in the Beachborough Park area where breeding may have occurred nearby (possibly at the Etchinghill radio mast), whilst a pair at Seabrook on the 18th March were considered to be “showing signs that they might be nesting”.

There were records from numerous other sites, including the Willop Basin/Donkey Street area, Aldergate Bridge, Botolph's Bridge, Folks' Wood, Hythe Ranges, Hythe Roughs, Chesterfield Wood, Princes Parade and Blackhouse Hill, whilst a count of seven at Creteway Down on the 15th August was notable.



Jay at Mill Point (Ian Roberts)



Raven at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Resident birds were widely recorded throughout the year, with a peak count from the early winter period of 19 at Beachborough Park on the 20th February. Ones and twos at a few coastal sites in March and April were again the only evidence of any spring passage.

Autumn passage was noted from the 12th September, when one was at Abbotscliffe, and low numbers were present on many dates, with counts of 7 at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th October, 9 there on the 24th October, 20 at Mill Point on the 30th October, 10 there the following day, 12 there on the 16th November and 10 there the next day.

Passage migrant and winter visitor, bred in 2012 (A)

In the early winter periods there were records from Port Lympne, West Hythe (2), Enbrook Park (2), Mill Point and Samphire Hoe. A light spring passage was noted in March, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 14th, one at Bargrove Wood and two at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th, one at Abbotscliffe on the 18th, one at Samphire Hoe on the 19th, and one at Nickolls Quarry and three at Mill Point on the 22nd. The only other records in the first half of the year involved one at Enbrook Park on the 22nd April and a singing male at Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site on the 3rd May.

The first autumn migrants were two at Samphire Hoe on the 19th September, with one in a garden in Hythe on the 21st and a further three bird/days at the former site in September. Few were noted in the first half of October but there were regular records from mid-month, mostly singles but with two in a garden at Ingles Manor (Folkestone) on the 27th October, three at Mill Point on the 28th October and three at Nickolls Quarry and five at Mill Point on the 30th October. On the 3rd November there was one at Hythe Ranges and two at the Willop Sewage Works, with singles at various sites until there was a marked arrival on the 16th November when one was at Copt Point, three were at Holy Well and four were at Mill Point (remaining until the next day). There were few others in November but in December birds were present at Hythe, Mill Point and Nickolls Quarry (2).



Goldcrest at Botolph's Bridge (Brian Harper)



Firecrest at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

No counts of note were received.

Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

There was a notable count of 48 at Beachborough Park on the 5th February but no evidence of any passage.

Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>
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Breeding resident and passage migrant. The continental form *P. a. ater* is a scarce passage migrant in spring and autumn (A)

There were no noteworthy counts of resident birds received. Singles at Nickolls Quarry and in a garden in Folkestone on the 1st October were unusual records at these sites and might perhaps have been migrants.

Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
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Breeding resident (A)

There were records from the usual haunts of Bargrove Wood, Kiln Wood and Paraker Wood during the year, whilst others were noted at Cowtye Wood and Asholt Wood.

Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>
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Rare migrant and winter visitor, recently more regular, with birds having made prolonged stays in five winters to 2018 (A)

One that flew west over Beachborough Lakes on the 8th April (S. Tomlinson) was the 22nd area record and the third for the site.

There were no records from Nickolls Quarry for the first time since 2012, presumably due to increased levels of disturbance at the site associated with the housing development. This species seems likely to return to its former rarity status.

Wood Lark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
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Rare passage migrant (A)

Two were seen in a small horse paddock near Newington on the 12th November (B. Harper). This was only the 35th area record but the 15th in the last eight years.

Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
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Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Numbers in the early winter period included 12 at Donkey Street, 16 at Abbotscliffe, 20 at Botolph's Bridge and 24 in the stubble fields by the Aldington Road. There was some indication of spring passage, with one flying west over Hythe on the 2nd March, two at Copt Point on the 3rd to 4th March and 44 flying south over Beachborough Park on the 11th April.

Autumn passage was very light, with a peak of 20 arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October.

Passage migrant, has bred but not since 2003 (A)

The first, two that flew through Hythe on the 10th March, were the second earliest ever but there were no further sightings until three arrived in off the sea at Mill Point on the 31st March. There was a good arrival of 40 at Nickolls Quarry on the 1st April, with up to 33 remaining until the 5th. Elsewhere two were seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 2nd April, one was at Donkey Street on the 7th, one was at Beachborough Lakes on 9th and up to ten were at Nickolls Quarry between the 11th and 13th April with smaller numbers there intermittently until the end of month. In May one flew over Abbotscliffe on the 6th. This constituted the best spring passage since 2000 and far exceeded the mean for the previous decade of 20 bird/days.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	10 th Mar	17 th Mar	-7	6 th Apr	-28	5 th Mar 1995
Departure	30 th Sep	3 rd Oct	-3	6 th Oct	-7	4 th Nov 1963

Autumn passage however was rather modest, with just small numbers noted from mid-July and peak counts of 16 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 24th July and 30 flying west there on the 12th September.



Great Tit at West Hythe (Brian Harper)



Sky Lark at Hythe Roughs (Brian Harper)

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first arrival, one at Hythe on the 2nd March, was exceptional but was part of a significant influx into Britain at this time which actually commenced in mid-February and saw ten arrive in Kent in that month, with several others in the county in early March. The next sighting locally was not until the 28th March when one was at Beachborough Lakes, with three there on the 1st April, increasing to four the following day, five on the 8th, six on the 11th and a peak of 16 on the 12th April. Three were also seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 1st April and further counts there included eight on the 6th, 30 on the 13th and 35 on the 27th April. Smaller numbers were noted at widespread sites from the 7th April and counts included eight at Abbotscliffe on the 18th April, 30 arriving in off the sea there on the 3rd May, 26 there on the 6th May and 20 flying east at Mill Point on the 17th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	2 nd Mar	6 th Apr	-35	25 th Mar	-23	2 nd Mar 2019
Departure	15 th Nov	10 th Nov	+5	15 th Nov	0	8 th Dec 1955

The first signs of autumn passage were noted in August and numbers began to increase in early September, with a peak count of 3,000 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 12th September. Numbers dwindled during October, with 229 flying west at Seabrook being the last three-figure count, although there were still 45 at Abbotscliffe on the 18th October, 24 at the Willop Basin on the 19th October and 19 at Seabrook on the 23rd October, whilst 11 at Seabrook on the 29th October was the last double-figure count. Up to three were noted on most dates in the first half of November, with four at Samphire Hoe on the 6th, and the last at Seabrook on the 15th November.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first, two at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th April, were not as notably early as the other hirundines but still ahead of the mean arrival date for the previous decade. The next was seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 8th April and small numbers were seen regularly at Nickolls Quarry from the 11th, whilst at least four were in the Abbotscliffe/Samphire Hoe area from the 18th. Six were seen at Beachborough Lakes on the 24th April and 20 were at Nickolls Quarry on the 27th April, whilst eight arrived in off the sea at Capel-le-Ferne on the 2nd May.

Numbers at Samphire Hoe steadily increased to 30 by mid-May and to 100 by early June and in July there was an excellent total of 79 active nests (29 at the western end and 50 at the eastern end), which appears to be a record count here. Breeding was also noted at Risborough Barracks, where 15 birds were present in the summer.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	5 th Apr	12 th Apr	-7	9 th Apr	-4	7 th Feb 2004
Departure	6 th Nov	2 nd Nov	+4	1 st Nov	+4	2 nd Dec 1974

An increase in autumn was noted from late August into September, when there were 120 at Seabrook and 150 at Samphire Hoe on the 12th, 200 at Abbotscliffe on the 13th, a peak of 600 there on the 15th, and 300 at Samphire Hoe on the 16th. Numbers decreased during October and the last double-figure count involved 130 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 8th, whilst the last double-figure count was 11 flying west there on the 27th October. Very few were noted thereafter, with the last four at Capel-le-Ferne on the 6th November.

Not recorded until 1981 but now well-established as a breeding resident though remains vulnerable to population decline in colder winters (A)

Present throughout the year, with territorial males noted from Burmarsh, Donkey Street, the Willop Basin, Botolph's Bridge, Nickolls Quarry (3), Hythe Roughs, Beachborough Lakes, Seabrook (2) and Folkestone Downs. The latter was unusual in that the habitat in which the bird was present was just a small spring at the foot of the chalk downland escarpment. Present from at least the 6th to the 18th May, this was the first record for the tetrad (TR13 Y).

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

The largest count of resident birds received related to 18 at Beachborough Park in January. Potential migrants included two at Samphire Hoe (where the species is unusual) on the 18th March, a flock of ten which appeared to arrive in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 6th October, ten there on the 19th October, three at Samphire Hoe on the 7th November and 11 in a garden on Hythe seafront on the 12th November.



House Martins at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Long-tailed Tits at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)

Rare migrant (A)

Singles were seen in a garden in Bathurst Road, Cheriton on the 17th October (N. C. Frampton) and at the Willop Sewage Works on the 3rd November (B. Harper), see photograph on page 20.

This species had only been recorded four times prior to 2003 but has occurred in 15 of the 17 years since, with the last four years having produced 39% of all records to date.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with small numbers wintering. The Siberian form *P. c. tristis* is a very rare vagrant in late autumn and winter (A).

Wintering birds were recorded from Nickolls Quarry, Beachborough Park (up to three), Seabrook, Enbrook Park (2), Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Folkestone and Mill Point.

In March numbers at Beachborough Park increased to four on the 5th and six on the 7th, presumably boosted by new arrivals. Elsewhere one was seen in a garden in Ormonde Road, Hythe on the 15th, two appeared at Samphire Hoe on the 18th and there were three there on the 20th.

There was a marked arrival on the 21st March, when there were two at Creteway Down, eight at Samphire Hoe and 15 at Beachborough Park. Mill Point and Nickolls Quarry recorded their first migrants the next day, as did Seabrook on the 23rd and Abbotscliffe on the 27th March. Arrivals continued into April and a peak count of 17 at Beachborough Park on the 9th was noteworthy.

Autumn migrants were noted from late August, with the first double-figure count being ten at Samphire Hoe on the 9th September and ten at Abbotscliffe on the 15th September, with 12 at the latter site on the 19th September. There was a significant arrival on the 3rd October when 50 were at Abbotscliffe and 52 at Samphire Hoe, with 23 at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th October and 20 there on the 17th October. This was the last double-figure count but smaller numbers persisted well into November, with seven still present at Nickolls Quarry on the 8th. Late migrants or wintering birds were seen at Enbrook Park on the 10th November (2), Mill Point on the 17th November and Nickolls Quarry on the 24th November, whilst one was seen in a garden at East Cliff Gardens (Folkestone) on the 31st December.

A bird of the Siberian form *tristis* was seen at the Willop Sewage Works on the 7th November (I. A. Roberts). This appears to be about the 9th area record.



Yellow-browed Warbler at the Willop S/W (Brian Harper)



Chiffchaff at West Hythe (Brian Harper)



Siberian Chiffchaff at the Willop Sewage Works (Ian Roberts)

Breeding summer visitor, but now scarce (having declined in recent years), and passage migrant (A)

The first were seen at Beachborough Park and Nickolls Quarry on the 2nd April, with one at Samphire Hoe on the 8th, two at Beachborough Park on the 10th and one at Abbotscliffe on the 12th April. There were widespread ones and twos thereafter as arrival continued until early May. The spring total of 26 was a distinct improvement of the 11 noted last year, and very much in line with the ten year mean of 27.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	2 nd Apr	14 th Apr	-12	6 th Apr	-4	26 th Mar 1960
Departure	17 th Sep	28 th Sep	-11	23 rd Sep	-6	19 th Oct 1986

The first returning bird was seen in a garden in Ormonde Road (Hythe) on the 12th July, with small numbers noted at various sites thereafter until the last was noted at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th September.

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with small but increasing numbers wintering (A)

Wintering birds were noted in gardens in Hythe (pair), Seabrook (pair), Cheriton and at three sites in Folkestone (at least four), whilst two were seen along the canal between Hythe and Seabrook and one was at Samphire Hoe on the 21st February.

It is often difficult to distinguish the first spring migrant from over-wintering birds as these may begin to sing in March, however a singing male at Mill Point on the 22nd March appeared to be a likely candidate, followed by one in the Golden Valley on the 24th, one at Beachborough Park on the 26th (increasing to two there on the 28th) and one at Nickolls Quarry on the 30th March. Arrival continued in April, with a peak of 17 at Beachborough Park on the 9th April.

Autumn migrants were noted from late August and numbers increased during September, with 13 at Abbotscliffe on the 12th and a peak of 40 there on the 15th. In October there were counts of 13 at Samphire Hoe on the 3rd, 13 at Nickolls Quarry on the 10th and 12 at Samphire Hoe on the 15th. Numbers dwindled thereafter and one at Botolph's Bridge on the 3rd November was probably the last migrant. In December birds were wintering in a garden at Hythe, along the canal at Seabrook and in two gardens in Folkestone.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

Breeding summer visitor, but now scarce (having declined in recent years), and passage migrant (A)

There were again three spring records: one at Beachborough Park on the 24th April, a singing male in a garden at Ingles Manor (Folkestone) on the 5th May and a singing male at Oak Banks on the 19th May. For the fourth consecutive year there were no signs of breeding.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	24 th Apr	14 th Apr	10	29 th Apr	-5	10 th Apr 2001
Departure	9 th Sep	4 th Oct	-25	9 th Sep	-1	6 th Nov 1981

Return passage was however disappointing, with just two singles noted: at Scene Wood on the 25th August and at Samphire Hoe on the 9th September.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 17th, with another at West Hythe on the 20th, one at Hythe Roughs and two at Hythe Ranges on the 21st, and the first arrivals followed at Botolph's Bridge on the 22nd, Samphire Hoe on the 23rd and Beachborough Park on the 24th. Sightings were widespread thereafter.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	17 th Apr	13 th Apr	4	15 th Apr	2	8 th Apr 2007
Departure	27 th Oct	4 th Oct	+23	27 th Sep	+29	3 rd Nov 1994

Autumn passage was noted from early August but counts were low with a peak of six at Abbotscliffe on the 13th August and 15th September. There were two notably late sightings, at Abbotscliffe on the 6th October and at Nickolls Quarry on the 27th October. There have only been October records in eight previous years, and just one later occurrence.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first involved a singing male at Nickolls Quarry on the 8th April and this was followed by one at Folkestone Racecourse on the 13th April, one at Princes Parade on the 17th April and one at the Aldington Road, two at Samphire Hoe and four at Abbotscliffe on the 18th April. Arrival continued thereafter with records from numerous other sites and numbers increased to ten at Abbotscliffe on the 24th April, with a further count of 12 singing males there on the 6th May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	8 th Apr	14 th Apr	-6	9 th Apr	-1	30 th Mar 2002
Departure	13 th Oct	28 th Sep	+15	4 th Oct	+9	19 th Oct 2016

Autumn passage was noted from late July, when there was a count of 24 at Abbotscliffe on the 24th, with 16 at Samphire Hoe on the 8th August, 14 at Abbotscliffe on the 13th August, 12 there on the 28th August and 11 at Samphire Hoe on the 12th September was the last double figure count. as numbers dwindled. A single at Abbotscliffe on the 13th October was the second latest ever sighting.

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, bred until about the mid-1980s but now rare in spring (A)

Reeling males, perhaps the same individual, were at Hythe Roughs on the 19th April and the 18th May (see photograph on page 12). This was the third time in the last four years that birds have been present at this site in spring, which hints at possible breeding here.

There were no records in autumn for the first time since 2001.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first arrivals were relatively late and involved one at Princes Parade and two at Nickolls Quarry on the 16th April, but numbers quickly increased, with five singing males at the latter site by the 19th April. Arrivals continued at Nickolls Quarry during late April and into early May, and several pairs bred there.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	16 th Apr	6 th Apr	10	10 th Apr	6	1 st Apr 2017
Departure	5 th Sep	12 th Sep	-7	22 nd Sep	-18	15 th Oct 1996

Breeding birds continued to be seen at Nickolls Quarry in August and September, whilst elsewhere returning migrants involved one at Abbotscliffe on the 13th August and one at Samphire Hoe on the 5th September.



Whitethroat at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)



Grasshopper Warbler at Hythe Roughs (Brian Harper)

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first arrivals, singles at Donkey Street and Princes Parade on the 18th April, were the latest since 2010, but numbers quickly increased, with one at Nickolls Quarry and two at Donkey Street the next day and four along the canal between Hythe and Seabrook on the 20th April. Arrivals continued during late April and into early May, and numerous pairs bred. Late migrants away from typical habitat involved singles at Samphire Hoe on the 21st May and 25th June.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	18 th Apr	11 th Apr	7	11 th Apr	7	3 rd Apr 2016
Departure	29 th Aug	24 th Nov	-87	28 th Sep	-30	24 th Nov 2018

Very few autumn migrants were noted.

Waxwing*Bombycilla garrulus*

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant, with occasional influx years (A)

A flock of seven were reported in the Enbrook Valley area between the 3rd and the 6th February whilst six were seen briefly on aials at Foord Road (Folkestone) on the 11th February.

Nuthatch*Sitta europaea*

Breeding resident (A)

There were records from Port Lympne, Horton Priory, Lympne Park Wood, Folks' Wood, Kiln Wood, Brockhill Country Park, Chesterfield Wood, Bargrove Wood, Beachborough Park, Asholt Wood and Paraker Wood.

Eurasian Treecreeper*Certhia familiaris*

Breeding resident (A)

There were widespread sightings but no counts of note.



Nuthatch at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)



Treecreeper at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Wren*Troglodytes troglodytes*

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Widely recorded but there no counts of note.

Starling*Sturnus vulgaris*

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only sign of spring passage involved 15 flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 18th March.

Post-breeding flocks included 150 in the Golden Valley (Cheriton) in June and up to 260 at Samphire Hoe throughout July and August. Autumn passage included a flock at least **5,000** (the largest ever seen locally on migration) arriving in off the sea over Folkestone Harbour on the 13th October and 850 in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October.

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Passage migrant, typically more numerous in autumn (A)

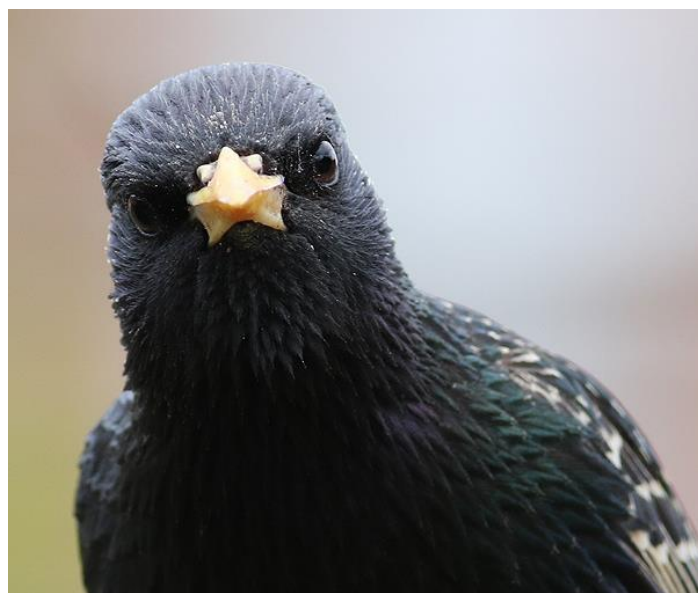
A male flying west over Beachborough Lakes on the 9th April was followed by a male at Abbotscliffe and a pair at Samphire Hoe on the 11th April. In May further singles were seen at Samphire Hoe on the 10th to 11th May and 18th May. The spring total of six bird/days was slightly under the mean for the previous decade of eight.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	9 th Apr	8 th Apr	1	11 th Apr	-2	9 th Mar 1997
Departure	17 th Dec	15 th Nov	+32	5 th Nov	+42	17 th Dec 2019

The first of the autumn was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 6th October, preceding a notable arrival on the 8th October, when three were at Samphire Hoe, ten at Abbotscliffe and 12 at Creteway Down. Small numbers were the noted at these sites until the month's end, with another marked arrival on the 20th October, when 11 were at Abbotscliffe. Two at Folkestone Leas on the 21st October were a good record for the site, as were singles at Nickolls Quarry on the 23rd and 27th October. There were no records in November until one was seen at Samphire Hoe on the 28th, with presumably the same individual there on the exceptionally late dates of 11th and 17th December. The previous latest departure was 26th November 2005. The autumn total of 70 bird/days was a considerable improvement on last year's 23 but still below the previous ten year mean of 92.



Wren at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Starling at Cheriton (Brian Harper)

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no notable counts from the early winter period and little evidence of spring passage, though there were counts of 18 at Samphire Hoe on the 18th April and 16 there on the 25th April.

Autumn passage included counts of 16 at Samphire Hoe on the 24th October, 20 at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October and 13 at Nickolls Quarry on the 5th November.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there were up to 15 at Folkestone Racecourse and up to 177 at Beachborough Park, whilst counts of 50 at Botolph's Bridge, 76 at Haguelands Farm and 80 at Donkey Street may have involved some of the same birds. Few were noted on spring passage but there were late singles in April at Beachborough Park on the 18th and flying over Cheriton on the 22nd.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Departure	22 nd Apr	12 th Apr	+10	12 th Apr	10	5 th Jun 2016
Arrival	12 th Oct	21 st Sep	+21	12 th Oct	0	21 st Sep 2018

The first returning bird at Palmarsh on the 12th October perfectly matched the mean arrival date but numbers in the late winter period were very poor, with peak counts of just three at Church Hougham on the 5th November and at the Willop Basin on the 9th November.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Peak counts in the early winter period included 23 at Beachborough Park and 26 at Botolph's Bridge. There was little indication of spring passage although six at Nickolls Quarry on the 16th April and nine at Abbotscliffe the following day may have involved migrants.

In autumn a north-westerly wind and heavy showers on the 6th October grounded a significant number, with 50 at Abbotscliffe and an exceptional **150** at Sene Valley (the second highest area count), but there were few other counts of note, with the largest being 20 at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Few were noted in the early winter period apart from at Beachborough Park where there was a peak of 120 in January. Spring passage was noted from mid-March and 20 flew west over Beachborough Park on the 20th, when a migrant was at Samphire Hoe, whilst two were at Abbotscliffe the following day and overnight movements were noted on several nights, with a particularly heavy passage on the night of the 22nd/23rd. There was a further count of 41 at Beachborough Park on the 27th March, whilst four were at Abbotscliffe on the 8th and small numbers remained at Beachborough Park until the 18th April.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Departure	18 th Apr	12 th Apr	+6	3 rd Apr	15	4 th May 1981
Arrival	2 nd Oct	28 th Sep	+4	3 rd Oct	-1	7 th Sep 2016

The first returning birds were at Creteway Down, Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site and Samphire Hoe on the 2nd October, but numbers in autumn and the late winter period were low. Counts included 18 at Nickolls Quarry on the 17th October, 35 there on the 7th November, 15 in a garden at Ingles Manor (Folkestone) on the 23rd November and 20 at Horton Priory on the 7th December. Nocturnal movements were noted on several nights in autumn, particularly in late October.

Breeding resident (A)

The highest counts again came from the Beachborough Park area where there were 15 on the 3rd January and from nearby Newington, where 11 were noted on the 15th September. One at Samphire Hoe on the 15th January was noteworthy as the species is unusual there.

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn, occasionally breeds (formerly more regular) (A)

The only record in spring was one at Samphire Hoe on the 21st May.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	21 st May	15 th May	6	13 th May	8	19 th Apr 1961
Departure	12 th Sep	4 th Oct	-22	24 th Sep	-13	11 th Oct 1999

Autumn produced two at Samphire Hoe on the 20th August and singles at Abbotscliffe on the 5th September, and Abbotscliffe and Casebourne Wood on the 12th September.

In contrast to last year's record total of 45, the bird/day total for the year of just six was well below the mean for the previous decade of 18.



Ring Ouzel at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Spotted Flycatcher at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no counts of note in the first half of the year but in autumn there was a notable arrival on the 19th September, when 23 were at Samphire Hoe and 45 at Abbotscliffe. Similar numbers remained at Samphire Hoe into October with an increase to 30 on the 22nd October, however numbers at Abbotscliffe dwindled before increasing again to 20 on the 27th October.

Declining breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

A pair were seen at Oak Banks on the 6th May and the male was still singing there on the 12th May. It is possible that breeding occurred. One was also reported from Creteway Down in August. Nightingales occurred annually until 2007 but have only been recorded in seven of the last 12 years. Its continued status as a breeding species appears to be tenuous. To hear a recording of the male singing copy this link into your browser:

www.folkestonebirds.com/SoundFiles/Nightingale_Oak_Banks_2019_song.mp3

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn (A)

One was present at Scene Wood on the 25th August. Another poor year.

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In January and February a wintering individual was noted intermittently at Samphire Hoe and one was seen at Folkestone Rugby Club on the 3rd March. Arrivals were noted from late March, with a singing male at Samphire Hoe on the 21st, two there on the 26th and three at Abbotscliffe on the 29th. In April numbers at Samphire Hoe increased to three from the 4th, with the appearance of an additional singing male, and four were present on the 18th.

A pair bred at Samphire Hoe, raising two broods (with three young fledging from the first and two from the second, see photograph on page 15) and there was a very interesting sighting of a pair in suitable habitat by the Burgoyne Barracks at Shorncliffe Camp. The family group remained through the summer and at least five birds were still present in October.

Autumn produced one at Mill Point on the 3rd October and there was a marked arrival later in the month, with two (possibly three) and Nickolls Quarry on the 23rd, two at both Hythe Ranges and Abbotscliffe on the 27th, with two new individuals at the latter site the next day. This continued into early November when there was one at the Hythe Redoubt on the 3rd and two at Church Hougham on the 5th. At least one remained at Samphire Hoe until the year's end.

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn (A)

A male was seen in a garden on Beach Road (near the Hythe Redoubt) on the 9th April and singles were at Abbotscliffe on the 17th April and Samphire Hoe on the 29th April.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	9 th Apr	-	-	14 th Apr	-5	12 th Mar 1960
Departure	6 th Oct	27 th Sep	+9	1 st Oct	+5	27 th Oct 1999

Autumn produced singles at Abbotscliffe on the 28th August, Samphire Hoe on the 29th August, Botolph's Bridge on the 1st September, Abbotscliffe on the 19th September, in a garden at Browning Place (Folkestone) on the 21st September and at Abbotscliffe on the 6th October.

The total for the year of nine bird/days was a little below the mean for the previous decade of 12.

Passage migrant, mainly in autumn. Has bred in the past but not since 1997 (A)

Following the blank last year, there were no spring records for only the second time since 2010.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	-	-	-	3 rd May	-	11 th Apr 2011
Departure	9 th Oct	24 th Sep	+15	10 th Oct	-1	10 th Nov 2009

Autumn passage was also disappointing with low numbers recorded between the 17th August and the 9th October, and peak counts of four at Church Hougham on the 29th August and six at Samphire Hoe on the 7th September (see photograph on page 16). All records were from the cliffs apart from a single at Princes Parade on the 14th September.



Nightingale at Oak Banks (Brian Harper)



Black Redstart at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant. The continental form *S. r. rubicola* is probably a scarce passage migrant (A).

In the early winter period there were sightings from Haguelands, the Willop Sewage Works (three), Botolph's Bridge, Hythe Roughts, Beachborough Park (two), Church Hougham and Samphire Hoe (where there was a peak count of 14 on the 20th January). Up to eight pairs nested at Samphire Hoe and two males were present at Abbotscliffe in April and May, with at least one appearing to be paired.

In autumn passage migrants were noted at Abbotscliffe between mid-September and early November, with a peak of eight on the 3rd October, whilst migrants or arriving winter visitors were noted from the Willop Sewage Works (where there were three on the 9th November), Hythe Ranges (up to three present in late October/early November), Nickolls Quarry (up to two from mid-October until the end of the year), Princes Parade (up to two in November and December) and Folkestone Racecourse (two in December), whilst at least 13 were still present at Samphire Hoe.

A rare breeding summer visitor but common passage migrant (A)

The first arrival was at the Hythe Redoubt on the 20th March and was quickly followed by singles at Cheriton, Church Hougham and Samphire Hoe the following day, however there were no further sightings until singles were at Mill Point and Samphire Hoe on the 31st March. There were regular and widespread records in April, chiefly from coastal sites as is typically the case, however numbers were low and most related to ones and twos, with a peak count of just three at Samphire Hoe on the 8th and 13th April. The overall spring total of 33 bird/days was less than half of the mean for the previous ten years of 69 and the lowest tally since 2009. There were no indications of breeding.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference +/-	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018				
Arrival	20 th Mar	24 th Mar	-4	19 th Mar	1	8 th Mar 2015
Departure	27 th Oct	19 th Oct	+8	30 th Oct	-4	4 th Dec 2016

Autumn passage was noted between the 29th July and the 27th October and produced a total of 101 bird/days. This was an improvement on last year's 84 but still well below the mean for the previous decade of 184. The only count in excess of four related to nine at Samphire Hoe on the 17th October.



Redstart at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



Stonechat at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

There was an increase at coastal sites in the autumn, suggestive of passage, with a peak of 13 at Abbotscliffe on the 12th September.

Declining breeding resident (A)

The peak counts received involved 50 at Nickolls Quarry on the 1st January and 34 at Abbotscliffe on the 19th September. At Samphire Hoe, where the species is unusual, there were two on the 20th April and eight on the 7th October.



Wheatear at Samphire Hoe (Paul Holt)



Dunnock at Seabrook (Brian Harper)

Declining passage migrant. No longer breeds and now scarce in winter (A)

The only records came from the Willop Sewage Works, where there were two on the 7th November and one on the 10th November.

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant (A)

The first was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 8th April but there were no further sightings until one arrived at Donkey Street on the 18th April. Numbers increased to three at the latter site on the 20th April and a pair were present through the summer and may have bred. Further migrants were recorded in April at Nickolls Quarry on the 19th, flying in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 23rd, at Beachborough Park on the 24th, flying over Hythe and Samphire Hoe on the 29th and flying over Hythe on the 30th. Passage continued into May with singles at Creteway Down on the 3rd, and flying north over Hythe on the 9th and 10th, with two in off the sea at Samphire Hoe on the 21st.

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	8 th Apr	21 st Mar	18	8 th Apr	0	21 st Mar 2018
Departure	1 st Oct	10 th Oct	-9	1 st Oct	0	20 th Oct 1984

One flying west over Hythe on the 4th August marked the start of a light return passage, with ones and twos at numerous sites but no counts of significance. The last was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 1st October.

Breeding resident and passage migrant (A)

Up to three were seen at numerous sites in the early winter period, including the Willop Sewage Works, Botolph's Bridge, Hythe, Beachborough Park, Enbrook Park and Folkestone. There was no evidence of spring passage.

Breeding probably occurred at Hythe and Enbrook Park and there was an interesting record of a juvenile seen feeding at the entrance to the Samphire Hoe tunnel on the 1st July.

A light autumn passage included a peak of four at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October. Small numbers were again wintering at numerous sites at the latter end of the year.

Pied Wagtail (*M. a. yarrellii*) is a breeding resident and passage migrant. White Wagtail (*M. a. alba*) is a scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring, that has bred once (in 2013) (A)

The only count of note from the early winter period related to at least 50 Pied Wagtails present in the Willop Sewage Works area in January. A light spring passage began with a White Wagtail at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd March, followed by four Pied/White Wagtails arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 18th March, a White Wagtail at Hythe Imperial golf course on the 20th March, two Pied/White Wagtails arriving in off the sea at Mill Point on the 23rd March, single White Wagtails at Hythe Imperial golf course on the 24th March and Beachborough Park on the 25th to the 27th March, and three Pied/White Wagtails arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th March. A further White Wagtail was seen at Beachborough Park on the 3rd April.

Autumn passage was noted in October but was rather light, with counts of five flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 20th October and 14 at Church Hougham on the 5th November, whilst single White Wagtails were reported at Samphire Hoe on the 10th, 15th and 17th October.



Yellow Wagtail at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)



Grey Wagtail at Beachborough Park (Steve Tomlinson)

Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn (A)

The only record related to one that flew over Samphire Hoe on the 5th September. The worst year since 2013 (which also produced a single record and had been the poorest year since regular recording at the cliffs began in 1991).

Arrival/Departure	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Arrival	-	7 th Apr	-	2 nd May	-	26 th Mar 1965
Departure	5 th Sep	21 st Sep	-16	25 th Sep	-20	20 th Oct 2001



Pied Wagtail at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)



White Wagtail at Beachborough (Steve Tomlinson)

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The highest count in the early winter period came from the Willop Sewage Works area, where at least 100 were present in January. There was a peak of 17 at Beachborough Park in January before numbers increased during February, presumably swelled by migrants, with counts of 66 there on the 11th and 81 on the 20th. There were 60 still present on the 7th March but these soon dispersed thereafter. Coastal migrants included 21 arriving in off the sea at Mill Point on the 12th March, 37 arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 18th March and 12 arriving in off at Mill Point on the 23rd March.

Autumn passage was noted from early September and numbers at Abbotscliffe increased to at least 100 by the 19th September, whilst 30 flew west over Hythe on the 27th September, 30 were at Samphire Hoe on the 1st October, 25 were at Creteway Down on the 13th October, 30 were at Hythe Ranges on the 3rd November, 47 were at Church Hougham on the 5th November and 40 were at the Willop Basin on the 9th November.

Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant. The Scandinavian form *A. p. littoralis* can only be identified when it begins to assume its summer plumage and is probably a regular winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The highest numbers in the early winter period were as usual at Samphire Hoe, where there was a peak count of 22 on the 25th January, whilst ones and twos were noted from Battery Point, Folkestone Harbour/Pier area and Copt Point. Three pairs were present at Samphire Hoe in spring and at least two bred successfully.

At least 12 were present at Samphire Hoe between July and the end of the year, increasing to a peak of 22 on the 8th October, whilst small numbers were seen in the Copt Point/Folkestone Harbour area and one flew west over Hythe on the 5th October.

Very rare vagrant (A)

The individual present at Donkey Street in November and December 2018 was seen again there on the 1st January, but not subsequently (B. Harper, I. A. Roberts). Two were seen in the Donkey Street/Willop Sewage Works area on the 7th December (B. Harper), one of which may have been the 2018/19 bird returning, and were the seventh area record, see photographs on page 21 and the front cover.



Meadow Pipit at Hythe Roughs (Brian Harper)



Rock Pipit at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

The only count of note from the early winter period came from Beachborough Park where there were 30 on the 21st January. Spring passage was noted from the 18th March when 30 flew east at Abbotscliffe and there were further counts of 120 flying east at Mill Point on the 22nd March and 100 flying east there the next day before an excellent total of 3,075 (the fifth largest spring count) flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 25th March, 1,150 flew east there on the 27th March and 500 flew east there on the 28th March.

Autumn passage however was poor, with a peak of just 120 arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October.

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

In the early winter period there was one at Beachborough Park on the 8th January and two flew over there on the 31st January. Spring produced one flying over Botolph's Bridge on the 24th March, one flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 25th March and a total of nine flying east there on the 27th March, when one was seen in a garden in Foreland Avenue (Folkestone), and the last was at Beachborough Park on the 28th March. The spring total of 13 was an improvement on the mean for the previous decade of 5 and the second best year since 2002.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Departure	28 th Mar	12 th Apr	-15	30 th Mar	-2	23 rd Apr 1958
Arrival	27 th Oct	3 rd Oct	+24	14 th Oct	+12	21 st Sep 1996

Autumn passage however was poor, with two in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October, one at Samphire Hoe and two at Capel-le-Ferne on the 6th November and one at Samphire Hoe on the 13th November.

Greenfinch

Carduelis chloris

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant, having declined in recent years (A)

Low numbers were noted in the early winter period, with a peak count of just six at Beachborough Park on the 2nd January, and the only indication of spring passage involved one flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 27th March.

In autumn one was at Samphire Hoe on the 7th October, four were at Abbotscliffe on the 13th October and five flew west there on the 20th October.

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, widespread but less common in winter (A)

The only counts of note from the early winter period came from Beachborough Park where there was a peak of 200 on the 14th January, and there were no indications of spring passage.

Numbers at Abbotscliffe increased in autumn to 70 on the 5th September and passage peaked in October, when 58 flew west at Seabrook and 80 were at Samphire Hoe on the 17th, 200 flew over Abbotscliffe and 250 were at the Willop Basin on the 19th, 250 flew east at Abbotscliffe on the 20th and 45 flew east at Samphire Hoe on the 31st. In the late winter period up to 100 were at Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge) in December.

Siskin

Carduelis spinus

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

A total of 61 flew north over Beachborough Park on the 2nd January and 22 were seen there the next day, after which up to nine were seen on numerous dates until the end of March, with a larger count of 11 on the 11th and 12th March. The only other winter record came from Chesterfield Wood, where there were two on the 5th January, though three at Cheriton Sports Centre on the 24th February may have either been wintering birds or migrants, as three flying in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th February were certainly the latter.

A light spring passage continued through March with single figure counts at various sites and larger movements of 54 flying east at Abbotscliffe on the 25th and 17 east there on the 27th March.

Departure/Arrival	Date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest/Latest ever
	2019	2018	+/-		+/-	
Departure	28 th Mar	14 th Apr	-17	12 th Apr*	-16	29 th May 2000*
Arrival	1 st Oct	17 th Sep	+14	18 th Sep*	+13	2 nd Sep 1997*

Numbers in autumn were very low with the exception of 16 flying over Samphire Hoe on the 15th October and 205 arriving in off the sea at Abbotscliffe on the 27th October, and few were wintering, with just ones and twos at Casebourne Wood, Newington and Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge).

Linnet

Linaria cannabina

Breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, less common in winter (A)

The only count from the early winter period was from the Aldington Road where there were 20 in January. Spring passage was noted from late February, when 15 flew west at Abbotscliffe on the 27th, and counts in March included 16 flying east there on the 27th and 61 present on the 29th. In April counts included 20 flying east at Samphire Hoe on the 2nd and 10 flying east at Mill Point on the 10th.

Autumn passage included counts of 22 flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 3rd October, 53 west at Seabrook on the 10th October, 40 west at Abbotscliffe on the 13th October and 24 east at Seabrook on the 23rd October.

Lesser Redpoll

<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>

Winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

Two flew north over Beachborough Park on the 2nd January and two were noted there on several dates in February. Seven were present there on the 1st March and up to four were seen regularly until the 3rd April. No spring migrants were noted at coastal sites and in autumn the only sighting in autumn involved two arriving in off the sea on the 27th October. In the late winter period up to two were noted at Pedlinge and Gibbin's Brook.

Common Crossbill

<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>

Passage migrant, with occasional summer irruptions, rare in winter (A)

Singles were seen flying south over Beachborough Park on the 26th February and flying west there the next day, whilst in March two flew west there on the 7th, four flew east there on the 8th, two flew east there on the 11th and seven flew over there on the 27th, when a single flew east at Abbotscliffe. A further two flew east at the latter site on the 21st May.

The only record in the latter half of the year involved one flying over Botolph's Bridge on the 18th October.

Bullfinch

<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>

Breeding resident (A)

There were records of resident birds from numerous sites whilst two at Abbotscliffe on the 18th May and 28th August and three there on the 27th October may have been at least local migrants.

Hawfinch

<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>

Very rare vagrant, perhaps formerly resident (A)

One was seen at Nickolls Quarry on the 22nd October (R. K. Norman). The 16th area record.

Snow Bunting

<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, has overwintered (A)

One was present at Samphire Hoe between the 28th October and the 5th November, whilst one flew west there on the 13th November one (perhaps the same bird) later flew over Abbotscliffe.

Lapland Bunting

<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn, occasionally overwinters (A)

One was seen at Abbotscliffe on the 11th September.

Breeding resident (A)

In the early winter period there were peak counts of 9 at the Willop Sewage Works, 11 at Abbotscliffe, 20 in stubble fields along the Aldington Road, 20 at Stutfall Castle and 24 at Botolph's Bridge.

In the latter half of the year peak counts came from Abbotscliffe (13 in September) and Church Hougham (15 in December).



Snow Bunting at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Yellowhammer at Donkey Street (Brian Harper)

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant (A)

There were no counts of note received from the early winter period. Spring migrants included singles at Abbotscliffe on the 27th February, 18th March and 29th March. Breeding records included three or four pairs at Nickolls Quarry and up to three pairs at Beachborough Lakes.

A light autumn passage was noted in October and early November, involving ones and twos at coastal sites, and a peak count of just three flying west at Abbotscliffe on the 3rd October. In the late winter period there was a count of 20 at the Willop Basin.

Declining resident, probably still breeding in most years (A)

In the early winter period singles were seen at the Willop Sewage Works on the 26th January and the 17th February. A male was singing at Botolph's Bridge on the 16th April, with one at nearby Donkey Street on the 26th April, whilst at Abbotscliffe a pair were present from the 18th April until June and may have bred.

The only records from the late winter period came from the Willop Sewage Works where one was present on the 18th October, increasing to five on the 3rd November, ten on the 9th November and 11 on the 7th December.

Category E species

Parakeet sp.	<i>Myiopsitta monachus?</i>
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Escapee. Native to South America (E)

A parakeet species that was seen and heard calling as it flew south over Donkey Street on the morning of the 9th November was thought likely to have been a Monk Parakeet (I. A. 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. A negative difference in the table indicates that a species arrived or departed earlier than the previous year or ten year mean, whilst a positive difference indicates a later arrival or departure. Winter records of Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps have become so frequent in recent years that these species have been excluded due to the difficulty of determining the first arriving or last departing migrant.

Spring arrival of summer migrants was earlier than last year for just 8 species and later for 16 species. The arrival date for Swallow was incredible (one at Hythe on the 2nd March), but was a part of a significant influx into Britain at this time which actually commenced in mid-February and saw ten arrive in Kent in that month, with several others in the county in early March. The previous record had stood for over fifty years and related to one, also seen at Hythe, on the 10th March 1952. The arrival dates for the other hirundines were also relatively early but it was only the second time since 2000 that there has not been a Swift in April.

Arrival dates of summer migrants

Species	Arrival date		Difference +/-	Prev. ten year mean	Difference +/-	Earliest ever arrival
	2019	2018				
Honey Buzzard	18 th Jun	11 th Jun	7	23 rd May	26	3 rd May 2013
Hobby	25 th Apr	28 th Apr	-3	23 rd Apr	2	9 th Apr 1998
Whimbrel	12 th Apr	10 th Apr	2	13 th Apr	-1	25 th Mar 2011
Common Sandpiper	28 th Apr	12 th Apr	16	18 th Apr	10	4 th Mar 2013*
Arctic Skua	4 th Apr	30 th Mar	5	15 th Apr	-11	14 th Mar 2016*
Little Tern	25 th Apr	22 nd Apr	3	27 th Apr	-2	11 th Apr 2016
Sandwich Tern	2 nd Mar	13 th Jan	48	12 th Mar	-10	13 th Jan 2018
Common Tern	1 st Apr	30 th Mar	2	11 th Apr	-10	30 th Mar 2018
Turtle Dove	6 th May	4 th Jun	-29	23 rd May	-17	10 th Apr 1993
Cuckoo	22 nd Apr	16 th Apr	6	20 th Apr	2	27 th Mar 2001
Swift	2 nd May	18 th Apr	14	23 rd Apr	9	18 th Apr 2015
Sand Martin	10 th Mar	17 th Mar	-7	6 th Apr	-28	5 th Mar 1995
Swallow	2 nd Mar	6 th Apr	-35	25 th Mar	-23	2 nd Mar 2019
House Martin	5 th Apr	12 th Apr	-7	9 th Apr	-4	7 th Feb 2004
Willow Warbler	2 nd Apr	14 th Apr	-12	6 th Apr	-4	26 th Mar 1960
Garden Warbler	24 th Apr	14 th Apr	10	29 th Apr	-5	10 th Apr 2001
Lesser Whitethroat	17 th Apr	13 th Apr	4	15 th Apr	2	8 th Apr 2007
Common Whitethroat	8 th Apr	14 th Apr	-6	9 th Apr	-1	30 th Mar 2002
Sedge Warbler	16 th Apr	6 th Apr	10	10 th Apr	6	1 st Apr 2017
Reed Warbler	18 th Apr	11 th Apr	7	11 th Apr	7	3 rd Apr 2016
Ring Ouzel	9 th Apr	8 th Apr	1	11 th Apr	-2	9 th Mar 1997
Spotted Flycatcher	21 st May	15 th May	6	13 th May	8	19 th Apr 1961
Nightingale	6 th May	-	-	23 rd Apr	13	10 th Apr 1981
Common Redstart	9 th Apr	-	-	14 th Apr	-5	12 th Mar 1960
Whinchat	-	-	-	3 rd May	-	11 th Apr 2011
Wheatear	20 th Mar	24 th Mar	-4	19 th Mar	1	8 th Mar 2015
Yellow Wagtail	8 th Apr	21 st Mar	18	8 th Apr	0	21 st Mar 2018
Tree Pipit	-	7 th Apr	-	2 nd May	-	26 th Mar 1965

Departures of summer migrants were evenly balanced with 12 leaving earlier and 12 later. There was the latest ever departure date for Ring Ouzel, whilst the final dates were also notable for Common Tern, and Common and Lesser Whitethroats (with only one previous later record), Arctic Skua (only two later records) and Sandwich Tern (only three later records).

Departure dates of summer migrants

Species	Departure date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Latest ever departure
	2019	2018				
			+/-		+/-	
Honey Buzzard	21 st Sep	6 th Sep	+15	3 rd Sep	+18	15 th Oct 1995
Hobby	13 th Sep	24 th Sep	-11	2 nd Oct	-20	22 nd Oct 2001
Whimbrel	27 th Jul	26 th Aug	-30	28 th Aug	-32	12 th Nov 2013
Common Sandpiper	10 th Oct	30 th Oct	-20	21 st Sep*	+18	Several wintered
Arctic Skua	15 th Nov	23 rd Sep	+53	13 th Oct	+32	21 st Nov 2002
Little Tern	-	-	-	-	-	16 th Sep 1999
Sandwich Tern	16 th Nov	19 th Nov	-3	11 th Oct	+35	19 th Nov 2018*
Common Tern	27 th Oct	31 st Aug	+57	23 rd Sep	+34	30 th Oct 2007
Turtle Dove	-	22 nd Aug	-	23 rd Aug	-	24 th Oct 1981*
Cuckoo	8 th Aug	-	-	26 th Jul	+12	28 th Sep 1969
Swift	15 th Sep	7 th Sep	+8	12 th Sep	+3	16 th Nov 1957
Sand Martin	30 th Sep	3 rd Oct	-3	6 th Oct	-7	4 th Nov 1963
Swallow	15 th Nov	10 th Nov	+5	15 th Nov	0	8 th Dec 1955
House Martin	6 th Nov	2 nd Nov	+4	1 st Nov	+4	2 nd Dec 1974
Willow Warbler	17 th Sep	28 th Sep	-11	23 rd Sep	-6	19 th Oct 1986
Garden Warbler	9 th Sep	4 th Oct	-25	9 th Sep	-1	6 th Nov 1981
Lesser Whitethroat	27 th Oct	4 th Oct	+23	27 th Sep	+29	3 rd Nov 1994
Common Whitethroat	13 th Oct	28 th Sep	+15	4 th Oct	+9	19 th Oct 2016
Sedge Warbler	5 th Sep	12 th Sep	-7	22 nd Sep	-18	15 th Oct 1996
Reed Warbler	29 th Aug	24 th Nov	-87	28 th Sep	-30	24 th Nov 2018
Ring Ouzel	17 th Dec	15 th Nov	+32	5 th Nov	+42	17 th Dec 2019
Spotted Flycatcher	12 th Sep	4 th Oct	-22	24 th Sep	-13	11 th Oct 1999
Common Redstart	6 th Oct	27 th Sep	+9	1 st Oct	+5	27 th Oct 1999
Whinchat	9 th Oct	24 th Sep	+15	10 th Oct	-1	10 th Nov 2009
Wheatear	27 th Oct	19 th Oct	+8	30 th Oct	-4	4 th Dec 2016
Yellow Wagtail	1 st Oct	10 th Oct	-9	1 st Oct	0	20 th Oct 1984
Tree Pipit	5 th Sep	21 st Sep	-16	25 th Sep	-20	20 th Oct 2001

Four winter visitors departed earlier than last year and three were later. The departure date for Purple Sandpiper was the latest ever and was some eight days later than the previous latest (10th May 2009). The winter thrushes were also rather tardy in their departure. In autumn three arrivals were earlier and three later. Only once in the previous 12 years has Purple Sandpiper arrived later.

Departure dates of winter migrants

Species	Departure date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Latest ever departure
	2019	2018				
Brent Goose	25 th Apr	5 th May	-10	3 rd May	-8	26 th May 1997*
Red-throated Diver	25 th Apr	13 th May	-18	30 th Apr	-5	6 th June 2006
Purple Sandpiper	18 th May	7 th May	+11	5 th May	13	18 th May 2019
Fieldfare	22 nd Apr	12 th Apr	+10	12 th Apr	10	5 th Jun 2016
Redwing	18 th Apr	12 th Apr	+6	3 rd Apr	15	4 th May 1981
Brambling	28 th Mar	12 th Apr	-15	30 th Mar	-2	23 rd Apr 1958
Siskin	28 th Mar	14 th Apr	-17	12 th Apr*	-16	29 th May 2000*

Arrival dates of winter migrants

Species	Arrival date		Difference	Prev. ten year mean	Difference	Earliest ever arrival
	2019	2018				
Brent Goose	20 th Sep	7 th Oct	-17	21 st Sep*	-1	11 th Sep 2014*
Red-throated Diver	22 nd Sep	24 th Sep	-2	3 rd Oct	-12	7 th Sep 1997
Purple Sandpiper	8 th Nov	4 th Nov	+4	31 st Oct	+8	30 th Sep 1984
Fieldfare	12 th Oct	21 st Sep	+21	12 th Oct	0	21 st Sep 2018
Redwing	2 nd Oct	28 th Sep	+4	3 rd Oct	-1	7 th Sep 2016
Brambling	27 th Oct	3 rd Oct	+24	14 th Oct	+12	21 st Sep 1996
Siskin	1 st Oct	17 th Sep	+14	18 th Sep*	+13	2 nd Sep 1997*



Purple Sandpiper at Battery Point (Brian Harper)

Year list

January

1	Mute Swan	1 st Jan
2	Teal	1 st Jan
3	Mallard	1 st Jan
4	Gannet	1 st Jan
5	Cormorant	1 st Jan
6	Little Egret	1 st Jan
7	Great White Egret	1 st Jan
8	Grey Heron	1 st Jan
9	Little Grebe	1 st Jan
10	Great Crested Grebe	1 st Jan
11	Marsh Harrier	1 st Jan
12	Sparrowhawk	1 st Jan
13	Common Buzzard	1 st Jan
14	Common Kestrel	1 st Jan
15	Peregrine	1 st Jan
16	Moorhen	1 st Jan
17	Coot	1 st Jan
18	Golden Plover	1 st Jan
19	Lapwing	1 st Jan
20	Purple Sandpiper	1 st Jan
21	Jack Snipe	1 st Jan
22	Common Snipe	1 st Jan
23	Curlew	1 st Jan
24	Green Sandpiper	1 st Jan
25	Great Skua	1 st Jan
26	Black-headed Gull	1 st Jan
27	Mediterranean Gull	1 st Jan
28	Common Gull	1 st Jan
29	Herring Gull	1 st Jan
30	Caspian Gull	1 st Jan
31	Great Black-backed Gull	1 st Jan
32	Feral Pigeon	1 st Jan
33	Stock Dove	1 st Jan
34	Wood Pigeon	1 st Jan
35	Collared Dove	1 st Jan
36	Little Owl	1 st Jan
37	Common Kingfisher	1 st Jan
38	Green Woodpecker	1 st Jan
39	Great Spotted Woodpecker	1 st Jan
40	Magpie	1 st Jan
41	Jackdaw	1 st Jan
42	Rook	1 st Jan
43	Carrion Crow	1 st Jan
44	Raven	1 st Jan
45	Goldcrest	1 st Jan
46	Firecrest	1 st Jan
47	Blue Tit	1 st Jan
48	Great Tit	1 st Jan
49	Coal Tit	1 st Jan
50	Sky Lark	1 st Jan
51	Cetti's Warbler	1 st Jan

52	Long-tailed Tit	1 st Jan
53	Treecreeper	1 st Jan
54	Wren	1 st Jan
55	Starling	1 st Jan
56	Blackbird	1 st Jan
57	Fieldfare	1 st Jan
58	Song Thrush	1 st Jan
59	Redwing	1 st Jan
60	Robin	1 st Jan
61	Stonechat	1 st Jan
62	Duncock	1 st Jan
63	House Sparrow	1 st Jan
64	Grey Wagtail	1 st Jan
65	Pied Wagtail	1 st Jan
66	Meadow Pipit	1 st Jan
67	Water Pipit	1 st Jan
68	Chaffinch	1 st Jan
69	Greenfinch	1 st Jan
70	Goldfinch	1 st Jan
71	Bullfinch	1 st Jan
72	Yellowhammer	1 st Jan
73	Reed Bunting	1 st Jan
74	Wigeon	2 nd Jan
75	Tufted Duck	2 nd Jan
76	Pheasant	2 nd Jan
77	Red-throated Diver	2 nd Jan
78	Water Rail	2 nd Jan
79	Woodcock	2 nd Jan
80	Redshank	2 nd Jan
81	Turnstone	2 nd Jan
82	Guillemot	2 nd Jan
83	Razorbill	2 nd Jan
84	Jay	2 nd Jan
85	Marsh Tit	2 nd Jan
86	Chiffchaff	2 nd Jan
87	Blackcap	2 nd Jan
88	Nuthatch	2 nd Jan
89	Mistle Thrush	2 nd Jan
90	Rock Pipit	2 nd Jan
91	Siskin	2 nd Jan
92	Redpoll	2 nd Jan
93	Brent Goose	3 rd Jan
94	Great Northern Diver	3 rd Jan
95	Fulmar	3 rd Jan
96	Shag	3 rd Jan
97	Ringed Plover	3 rd Jan
98	Kittiwake	3 rd Jan
99	Lesser Black-backed Gull	3 rd Jan
100	Linnet	3 rd Jan
101	Mandarin Duck	5 th Jan
102	Dunlin	5 th Jan
103	Bewick's Swan	6 th Jan
104	Black-throated Diver	6 th Jan
105	Oystercatcher	6 th Jan
106	Barn Owl	6 th Jan

107	Velvet Scoter	7 th Jan
108	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	7 th Jan
109	Sanderling	8 th Jan
110	Brambling	8 th Jan
111	Common Scoter	9 th Jan
112	Shelduck	11 th Jan
113	Gadwall	13 th Jan
114	Red Kite	15 th Jan
115	Ring-necked Parakeet	25 th Jan
116	Black Redstart	25 th Jan
117	Corn Bunting	26 th Jan

February

118	Waxwing	3 rd Feb
119	Greylag Goose	6 th Feb
120	Pochard	10 th Feb
121	Canada Goose	14 th Feb
122	Common Crossbill	26 th Feb
123	Merlin	26 th Feb

March

124	Red-breasted Merganser	2 nd Mar
125	Sandwich Tern	2 nd Mar
126	Swallow	2 nd Mar
127	Eider	6 th Mar
128	Sand Martin	10 th Mar
129	Tawny Owl	11 th Mar
130	Red-legged Partridge	20 th Mar
131	Wheatear	20 th Mar
132	Little Gull	23 rd Mar
133	White Stork	24 th Mar
134	Grey Plover	24 th Mar
135	Black Kite	25 th Mar
136	Goosander	27 th Mar
137	Shoveler	30 th Mar

April

138	Common Tern	1 st Apr
139	Garganey	1 st Apr
140	Willow Warbler	2 nd Apr
141	Arctic Skua	4 th Apr
142	Manx Shearwater	4 th Apr
143	House Martin	5 th Apr
144	Little Ringed Plover	7 th Apr
145	Common Whitethroat	8 th Apr
146	Yellow Wagtail	8 th Apr
147	Bearded Tit	8 th Apr
148	Ring Ouzel	9 th Apr
149	Common Redstart	9 th Apr
150	Whimbrel	12 th Apr
151	Bar-tailed Godwit	13 th Apr
152	Pintail	13 th Apr

153	Arctic Tern	15 th Apr
154	Sedge Warbler	16 th Apr
155	Lesser Whitethroat	17 th Apr
156	Reed Warbler	18 th Apr
157	Grasshopper Warbler	19 th Apr
158	Greenshank	20 th Apr
159	Cuckoo	22 nd Apr
160	Puffin	22 nd Apr
161	Pomarine Skua	22 nd Apr
162	Garden Warbler	24 th Apr
163	Little Tern	25 th Apr
164	Black Tern	25 th Apr
165	Hobby	25 th Apr
166	Hen Harrier	27 th Apr
167	Egyptian Goose	27 th Apr
168	Common Sandpiper	28 th Apr

May

169	Osprey	1 st May
170	Common Swift	2 nd May
171	Nightingale	6 th May
172	Turtle Dove	6 th May
173	Crane	13 th May
174	Spotted Flycatcher	21 st May
175	Long-eared Owl	25 th May

June

176	Honey Buzzard	18 th Jun
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August

177	Whinchat	17 th Aug
178	Pied Flycatcher	25 th Aug

September

179	Tree Pipit	5 th Sep
180	Lapland Bunting	11 th Sep
181	Balearic Shearwater	27 th Sep

October

182	Yellow-browed Warbler	17 th Oct
183	Quail	17 th Oct
184	Black-necked Grebe	22 nd Oct
185	Hawfinch	22 nd Oct
186	Little Auk	23 rd Oct
187	Snow Bunting	28 th Oct

November

188	Short-eared Owl	6 th Nov
189	Tree Sparrow	7 th Nov
190	Wood Lark	12 th Nov

191 Long-tailed Duck

15th Nov

December

192 Knot

27th Dec



Black-necked Grebe at Princes Parade (Brian Harper)

Ringling recoveries

Details of birds ringed elsewhere and recovered in the Folkestone and Hythe area are given here. 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.

The most notable recoveries in 2019 involved two rather contrasting Peregrine stories. The first involved an adult female seen alive on the cliffs at Abbotscliffe in March, which was the first reported sighting of this bird ringed as a nestling on the cliffs at Birling Gap in East Sussex almost 12 years previously. This bird's sister (from a clutch of two females and a male) had recently died (in August 2019), having nested for many years in the West London area (www.fabperegrines.org.uk).

The second involved a first-year male found dead at Beachborough on the 1st April, and was even more extraordinary as it had been ringed as a nestling in northern Sweden in June 2018. This was the first ever Swedish recovery in Britain and only the 8th national record of a foreign-ringed bird (with three from each of Belgium and Holland, and one from Finland).

A large number of Mediterranean Gull rings were read in 2019, largely due to the efforts of Renaud Flamant, with birds having been ringed in the following countries: England, Ireland, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Italy. There is too much data for inclusion in this report and a separate article on the usage of the Folkestone and Hythe area by Mediterranean Gulls will be produced for a future publication.

Four Herring Gulls from the Pitsea Landfill Site in Essex were noted, including a bird at Hawkinge that was recorded during the roof-nesting gull survey, and which had returned to the same site as last year (see page 92 for further information). A returning Swedish-ringed Great Black-backed Gull was also worthy of mention.

I am grateful to Jon Franklin and Steve Tomlinson for proving information and photographs regarding the Peregrine recoveries, Martin Collins and Renaud Flamant for passing on details of Mediterranean Gulls and to Brian Harper and Glenn Tutton for passing on details of Herring Gulls. I am also grateful to the coordinators of the various ringing schemes for providing the relevant information, with particular thanks to Paul Roper of the North Thames Gull Group.

Several new Stonechats were ringed again at Samphire Hoe this year. Please continue to report sightings of these, making a note of the position and order of the rings, the date and location, by either picking up a form from the Rangers' Office at Samphire Hoe or by emailing pwjfindley@hotmail.com.

Peregrine					<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
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-	Ringed	16 May 2007	Juvenile	Birling Gap, East Sussex	
Green 21	Read in field	26 Mar 2019	Adult	Abbotscliffe	84km NE
-	Ringed	28 Jun 2018	Juvenile	Ångermanland, Sweden	
Blue YC	Found dead	01 Apr 2019	1 st -year	Beachborough	2,352km SW

Herring Gull					<i>Larus argentatus</i>
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GV47744	Ringed	17 Dec 2016	1 st year	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex	
Orange T7YT	Read in field	17 Jan 2017	1 st year	Bexley Tip, Crayford, Kent	26km WSW
	Read in field	06 Mar 2017	1 st year	Dungeness, Kent	99km SSE
	Read in field	29 Apr 2017	1 st year	North Greenwich, Gtr. London	36km W
	Read in field	12 Jan 2018	2 nd year	Bexley Tip, Crayford, Kent	26km WSW
	Read in field	02 Feb 2018	2 nd year	Bexley Tip, Crayford, Kent	26km WSW
	Read in field	24 Dec 2018	3 rd year	Dungeness, Kent	99km SSE
	Read in field	03 Jan 2019	3 rd year	Hythe Ranges, Kent	68km SE

GV55193	Ringed	25 Mar 2017	1 st year
Red SA6Z	Read in field	28 Aug 2017	2 nd year
	Read in field	07 Jan 2019	3 rd year

Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex	
Warkworth, Northumberland	444km NNW
Folkestone Harbour	71km SE



Peregrine 'Green 21' at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)



'Green 21' as nestling at Birling Gap (Jon Franklin)



Peregrine at Folkestone (Steve Tomlinson)



Peregrine at Folkestone (Steve Tomlinson)

Herring Gull				<i>Larus argentatus</i>	
GR75201	Ringed	12 Jan 2013	Adult	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex	
Orange AZ3T	Read in field	06 Nov 2013	Adult	Dannes, Pas-de-Calais, France	131km SE
	Read in field	21 Nov 2013	Adult	Blaringhem, Nord, France	163km SE
	Read in field	12 Dec 2013	Adult	Blaringhem, Nord, France	163km SE
	Read in field	17 Jun 2018	Adult	Hawkinge	67km SE
	Read in field	25 May 2019	Adult	Hawkinge	67km SE
GV55417	Ringed	17 Jan 2018	Adult	Pitsea Landfill Site, Essex	
Orange Y2KT	Read in field	23 Jul 2019	Adult	Hythe	68km SE
Great Black-backed Gull				<i>Larus marinus</i>	
9111897	Ringed	16 May 2016	Adult	Hållnäs, Uppland, Sweden	
Red 706	Read in field	28 Oct 2018	Adult	Hythe	1481km SW
	Read in field	01 Nov 2019	Adult	Hythe	1481km SW



Herring Gull Orange T7YT at Hythe Ranges (Brian Harper)



Great Black-backed Gull Red R:706 at Hythe (Ian Roberts)

Roof-nesting Gulls at Folkestone & Hythe in 2019

Introduction

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) coordinated a census of gulls nesting in non-natural sites in Britain during the 2019 breeding season. This survey was the first to be undertaken nationally since 1994 and that survey had revealed a continuing increase in the numbers of gulls nesting on buildings compared to previous counts. Data is also available for the Folkestone area from censuses undertaken in 1986 and 1976, and from details published in Kent Bird Reports since 1952.

Aims and census efficiency

The principle aim of the census was to establish the current population and distribution of the two roof-nesting gull species that are present locally: the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) and the Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). Survey work was completed between 26 April and 1 June which was timed to coincide with the peak incubation period. Counts were undertaken for all of the 1km monads within the TR13 and TR13 10km hectads. Confirmed breeding was considered to involve an apparently occupied nest (AON), which is a well-constructed nest or scrape nest, either containing eggs or young, or capable of holding eggs (ideally attended by an adult) or an apparently incubating adult.

In some cases where access was difficult an apparently occupied territory (AOT), i.e. probable breeding, was recorded. These typically involved an adult that appeared to be “standing guard” close to a suitable nesting site but where the actual nest could not be discerned, but also included pairs in suitable breeding locations displaying apparent territorial behaviour. AONs were also considered to be territories, so the numbers of AOTs presented in the tables in the results also include the numbers of AONs.

Individual adults (IND) that did not appear to be directly associated with nests or territories were also counted and a note was made of any use of gull deterrents or control measures that were in place.

Advantage was taken of a number of prominent vantage points that overlook the area, primarily sites along the North Downs (Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site, Creteway Down, Sugarloaf Hill, Castle Hill, Cheriton Hill and Peene Quarry) which proved to be extremely helpful for counting nests on the industrial units to the north of the town and around the Eurotunnel terminal, but also some elevated points within the town, of which the Civic Centre and the roof of the Sainsbury's multi-storey car park were the most useful. In many cases however a detailed road by road census was necessary.

A high degree of coverage was achieved and there were only two monads where it was considered that nests were present but no assessment of numbers could be made. It is of course quite likely however that some nests or territories in other areas were missed.

History of Herring Gulls nesting at Folkestone & Hythe

Taylor *et al* (1981) stated that the first reference to Herring Gulls breeding on the Dover cliffs was a few pairs in 1842, increasing to 400 pairs by 1887 and 700 pairs in 1947. Harrison (1953) specified that the colony originated in the St. Margaret's Bay area and that in 1947 the “chief breeding area is between St. Margaret's Bay and Dover, most of the nests being on the cliff face” and continues that “there are fewer suitable nesting ledges between Dover and Folkestone”, presumably as the cliff is less steep, but provides no details regarding numbers.

The only references in Kent Bird Reports to cliff-nesting birds in the Folkestone & Hythe area were that c.40 breeding pairs were found in the vicinity of Abbotscliffe in 1957 by J. V. Perrott and that 31 pairs were noted between Folkestone and Dover in 1986. Cliff-nesting between Folkestone and Dover appears to have ceased during the 1990s though two pairs bred on the ground Samphire Hoe in May 1997, before it opened to the public in July of that year.

The spread to buildings for nest sites was first noted at Dover in 1936 and this colony grew rapidly, increasing to 200 pairs by 1946.

The first report of roof-nesting by Herring Gulls in the Folkestone area was included in Harrison (1953), when “on the 25th March 1952, a pair of Herring Gulls was seen by myself and Dr Jeffrey G. Harrison displaying and calling on the roof-top of a shop in the Sandgate Road, Folkestone. This behaviour may possibly portend, at some future date, the establishment of a breeding colony there, such as exists in Dover”.

Further reports soon followed in 1954, when Geoffrey Manser saw 11 (three sitting) at Folkestone, and 1956, when A. Clough noted that one pair reared four young in a roof-top nest at Folkestone and another nest was found on a roof-top at nearby Cheriton, however Taylor *et al* suggest (it would appear incorrectly) that roof-nesting occurred for the first time in 1956.

The next mention in Kent Bird Reports comes in 1967 when it is noted that Herring Gulls are “now breeding on roofs of houses at Cheriton two miles from the coast”. Worsfold (1996) appears to cite this (again incorrectly) as the first record for the Folkestone area: “Dover has the longest history of roof-nesting Herring Gulls in Kent as the first reports for Cheriton in nearby Folkestone do not appear until 1967”. There is little mention of Herring Gulls nesting at Folkestone in subsequent Kent Bird Reports apart from reference to the dedicated censuses. The first census of gulls nesting on buildings in Britain and Ireland was organised in 1969 by the Seabird Group (Cramp *et al*, 1974), and found a single nest at Folkestone. A second survey, coordinated by Monaghan & Coulson (1977), followed just seven years later in 1976, but by this time the population had expanded to 20 pairs.

It was a decade later that Shepway District Council commissioned the University of Durham to assess the scale of the problems presented by Herring Gulls nesting in Folkestone and to make recommendations on methods of control. Worsfold reported that “two counts in May and June [1986] revealed a total of 386 nesting pairs”, which is slightly lower figure than that belatedly included in the 1991 Kent Bird Report: “1986 Counts of breeding pairs included ... 410 on buildings in Folkestone and Cheriton”. The 1991 report also mentions seven pairs on buildings in Hythe.

The University of Durham, with the endorsement of the British Trust for Ornithology, also coordinated a national survey in 1994 (Raven & Coulson, 1997) which reported 550 Herring Gull nests at Folkestone and 46 at Hythe (which Worsfold gives as 76), with a mixed Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull pairing also at Folkestone.

History of Lesser Black-backed Gulls nesting at Folkestone & Hythe

Taylor *et al* stated that breeding Lesser Black-backed Gulls had been noted intermittently on the Dover cliffs from 1952 until 1977, with a peak of up to four pairs present (again primarily in the St. Margaret’s Bay area). The Kent Bird Report for 1991 recorded the first roof-nesting in the county (with one or two pairs in Thanet) but it seems likely that breeding in the county was under-recorded as the national survey in 1994 revealed 40-60 pairs in Kent, though with none found at Folkestone or Hythe. However probable or confirmed breeding was noted in two tetrads locally (in TR23) and possible breeding in two more (in TR13) in the second county atlas (1988-1994).

Up to two pairs have nested in most years since, generally in Folkestone or Hythe, though a pair bred on one of the buildings at Samphire Hoe in 2017 and 2018.

Results of the 2019 survey

A total of 877 apparently occupied Herring Gulls nests were recorded across the area, with an additional 138 apparently occupied territories, giving an overall total of between 877 and 1,015 breeding pairs. A total of eight apparently occupied Lesser Black-backed Gulls nests were also recorded, with one additional apparently occupied territory, giving an overall total of between 8 and 9 breeding pairs.

The numbers by 10km hectad are shown in the table below:

10km square	Herring Gull			Lesser Black-backed Gull		
	AON	AOT	Nesting population	AON	AOT	Nesting population
TR13	372	434	372 – 434 pairs	5	0	5 pairs
TR23	505	581	505 – 581 pairs	3	4	3 – 4 pairs
Total	877	1,015	877 – 1,015 pairs	8	9	8 – 9 pairs

The numbers of nests, territories and individual adults (apparently not directly associated with nests or territories) by 2km tetrad are summarised in the tables below. The detailed results by 1km monads with maps of the nest locations are provided as an appendix.

TR13 tetrad totals

Tetrad	Herring Gull			Lesser Black-backed Gull			Notes
	AON	AOT	IND	AON	AOT	IND	
TR13 A	3	12	19	0	0	1	
TR13 B	0	1	0	0	0	0	
TR13 C	4	9	5	0	0	0	Possibly more nests present
TR13 D	0	0	1	0	0	0	
TR13 E	0	1	1	0	0	0	
TR13 F	8	10	10	0	0	1	
TR13 G	6	19	21	0	0	0	
TR13 H	1	2	5	0	0	0	
TR13 I	11	13	2	0	0	0	Probably more nests present
TR13 J	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TR13 L	2	8	5	0	0	1	
TR13 M	106	115	16	0	0	1	
TR13 N	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TR13 P	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TR13 S	51	57	9	1	1	0	
TR13 T	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TR13 U	0	0	1	0	0	0	
TR13 X	19	25	11	0	0	0	
TR13 Y	161	162	0	4	4	1	
TR13 Z	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	372	434	106	5	5	5	

TR23 tetrad totals

Tetrad	Herring Gull			Lesser Black-backed Gull			Notes
	AON	AOT	IND	AON	AOT	IND	
TR23 C	52	60	4	0	0	0	
TR23 D	183	187	10	0	0	0	
TR23 E	0	1	5	0	0	0	
TR23 H	51	84	24	0	0	0	
TR23 I	208	230	49	2	3	0	
TR23 J	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TR23 N	3	3	0	0	0	0	
TR23 P	3	11	9	0	0	0	
TR23 U	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TR23 Z	5	5	0	1	1	0	
Total	505	581	101	3	4	0	

Discussion

Previous surveys have not provided precise definitions of the areas that have been considered to comprise 'Folkestone and Cheriton' or 'Hythe' so it has been necessary to make some assumptions in order to analyse trends. It has been assumed that the tetrad TR13 X contains the boundary between Folkestone and Hythe, where the western half of the tetrad (the Seabrook area) is generally considered to be part of Hythe and the eastern half (the Sandgate area) is generally considered to be part of Folkestone.

Therefore Folkestone has been considered to comprise the western half of TR13 X (monads TR1934/1935) and all of TR13 Y, TR23 C, TR23 D, TR23 H, TR23 I and TR23 N, whilst Hythe comprises the eastern half of TR13 X (monads TR1834/1835) and all of TR13 G, TR13 L, TR13 M and TR13 S.

It has also been assumed that previous surveys have given their totals based on the number of apparently occupied nests (Raven & Coulson confirm that this was the methodology for the 1994 census). The 1986 total is the higher figure that appears in 1991 Kent Bird Report, rather than the lower number quoted by Worsfold.

The table below shows the numbers of Herring Gull nests recorded in the five surveys listed above:

	1969	1976	1986	1994	2019
Folkestone	1	20	410	550	670
Hythe	0	0	7	46	172
Total	1	20	417	596	842

The overall numbers of Herring Gulls have increased by 246 pairs (41%) since the 1994 survey, a growth rate of 1.7% per annum on average, with a larger increase in the Hythe area (126 pairs, 274%) than Folkestone (120 pairs, 22%). There is insufficient data to enable a more detailed analysis of the population trends and the factors which enable and restrict growth in numbers are numerous and complex in nature.



Herring Gull nest at Hythe

A typical nest site on a flat roof in the lee of the pitched roof, affording some shelter from the prevailing winds

A small number of Herring Gull nests (35) from outlying areas have been excluded from the comparison above. It is not clear in all cases whether these were in areas not covered under previous surveys or new colonisations. The 1994 survey reported that “one pair ... was reported as being distinctly territorial in Dymchurch, but no nest was a found”, whilst the 2019 survey found three nests and a further nine territories within the Sands Estate (TR13 A) and another eight nests and two territories in TR13 F, centred upon the New Beach holiday park, so this would appear to be an area that has been colonised since the earlier survey. One nest and a territory were found at Lypne (TR13 H), which was not mentioned in the 1994 survey, but where two pairs had bred in 2011.

At least four nests and five territories were found at the Lypne Industrial Park (TR13 C) and at least 11 nests and two territories were noted on industrial buildings in the Westenhangar area (TR13 I), with probably more present as neither of these sites could not be fully accessed. Some of these industrial units appear to have been constructed since the last survey so this would appear most likely to be another colonisation, though a small number of nests could have been overlooked previously. There were also three nests and eight territories at Capel-le-Ferne which is a site that has not previously been mentioned.

Finally, at Samphire Hoe five Herring Gull nests (breeding first reported here in 2013) and one Lesser Black-backed Gull nest (the latter also noted in 2017 and 2018) were present on the buildings there, which have been constructed since the previous survey.

No Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded in the four previous surveys, although at least two pairs were noted in the second county atlas (1988-1994). The population of 8 or 9 pairs is higher than had previously been recorded but this is likely to be due, at least in part, to complete coverage of the area rather than recent growth.



Lesser Black-backed Gull nest at Samphire Hoe
A typical nest site on an industrial unit

Types of buildings used

As Worsfold observed, in the towns gulls showed a preference for old, high, well-built structures with stout chimney stacks, particularly properties built before 1920. Flat roof sections where the owners had added extensions were also popular. Additionally, the birds built on pitched roofs, the nests often wedged between chimney pots, dormer windows or roof tiles and stacks. In some areas more modern and single storey buildings were also used to a lesser extent.

Large commercial or industrial buildings with shallow, pitched roofs, or flat roofs with large vents were used extensively and as Raven & Coulson stated, here the colonies could be much denser. The greatest concentrations of Herring Gulls locally involved 27 nests on the roof of the Topps Tiles building on the Park Farm Industrial Estate (in TR2137) and 51 nests on the roofs of the buildings used for security and customs checks upon check in at the Channel Tunnel terminal (in TR1837).

However agricultural properties appear to be avoided completely, even large barns of a similar appearance to industrial units.

Controls

Many householders and commercial property owners have taken measures to discourage gulls from nesting and during the survey at least 582 buildings were noted to have some form of control in place. The most common form of discouragement involved a net guard (commercially-produced or home-made) affixed to cover the chimney stack. Mesh netting was also popular, particularly over flat roofs, and some supermarkets in the area have extensive net covering.

Spikes were widely deployed and barbed wire has also been used on several properties. Replica owls and hawks had sometimes been installed, seemingly to very little effect.

The net guards and spikes appeared to provide some success but in many cases it appeared to have been quite easy to find another suitable nest site close by, sometimes adjacent to the guard. Indeed the presence of control measures was often a good sign that a nest was located somewhere in the immediate vicinity. This would suggest a fair degree of site fidelity.

Further evidence of site fidelity was provided by a single colour-ringed individual that was recorded during the survey; an adult with the orange ring 'AZ3T', that was apparently occupying a territory on Coombe Wood Lane, Hawkinge (TR23 J) on the 25th May. It had been trapped and ringed as an adult by the North Thames Gulls Group at Pitsea in Essex in January 2013, before being noted in northern France in November and December 2013, then being seen at Hawkinge in June 2018, and so had returned to the same area during the survey year, see page 91 for further details.

A preference for reusing previous nest sites and for colonial nesting might provide an explanation as to why the numerous new builds within the area have not (yet) been colonised. However if the population continues to grow and to spread then these would appear to offer new habitat that could be utilised in future.

Acknowledgments

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

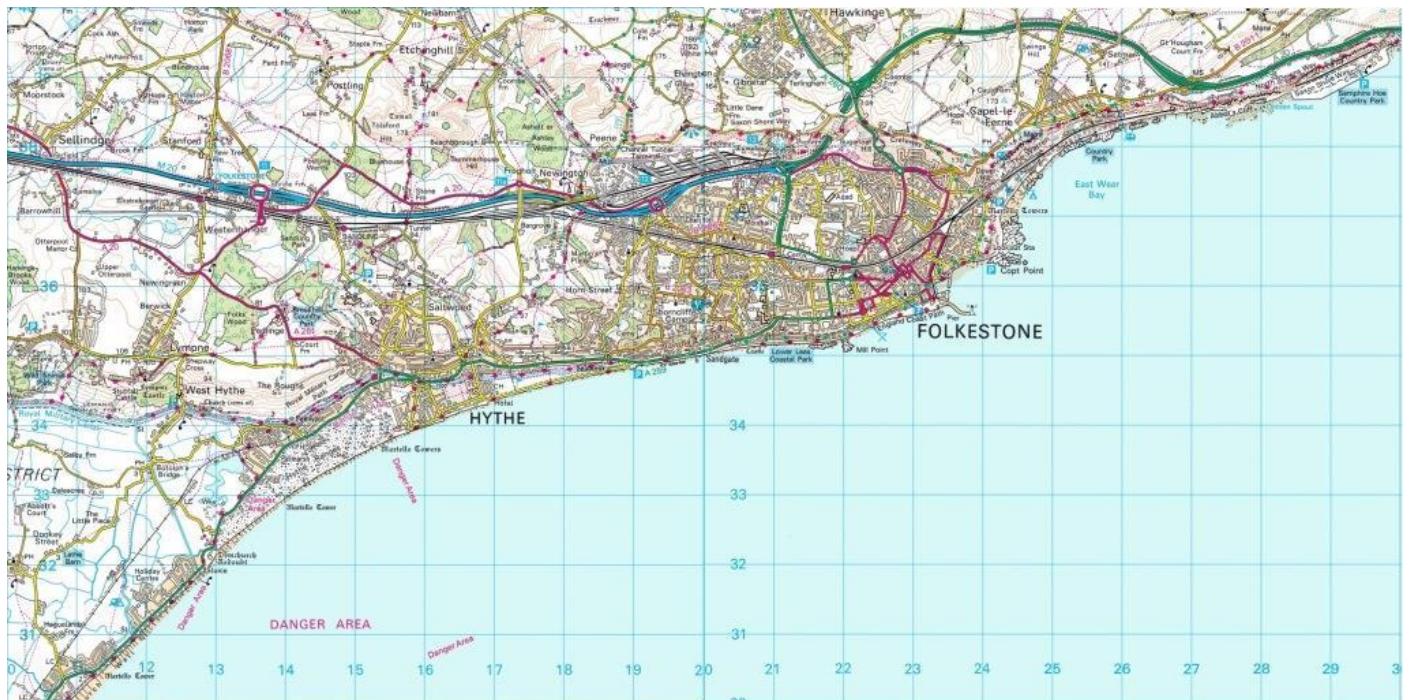
I am grateful to Brian Harper for providing counts from the Civic Centre and for parts of Cheriton.

Appendix (survey maps)

To access the detailed results by 1km monads with maps of the nest locations use this [link](#).

The Folkestone and Hythe area

The Folkestone & Hythe area comprises the 10km squares TR13 and TR23 as shown by the map below. The tetrad layouts are also provided for ease of reference.



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.

A map of some of the major sites listed together with the tetrads and 1km squares is available via Google maps on the 'where to watch' section of the website: www.folkestonebirds.com/wheretowatch.htm.

Site	Tetrad
Abbotscliffe	TR23 U/TR23 Z
Aldergate Bridge	TR13 C
Aldington Road fields	TR13 H/TR13 M
Asholt Wood	TR13 T/TR13 U
Bargrove Wood	TR13 T
Bathurst Road (Cheriton)	TR23 D
Battery Point (Seabrook)	TR13 X
Beachborough Lakes	TR13 T
Beachborough Park	TR13 U
Beach Road Estate (Hythe)	TR13 F/TR13 G
Blackhouse Hill	TR13 S/TR13 T
Botolph's Bridge	TR13 G
Brockhill Country Park	TR13 M
Browning Place (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Burgoyne Barracks (Shorncliffe Camp)	TR13 X
Burmarsh	TR13 A/TR13 B
Capel-le-Ferne	TR23 P
Capel-le-Ferne Gun Site	TR23 N/TR23 P
Casebourne Wood	TR13 Y
Castle Hill	TR23 D
Channel Tunnel Terminal	TR13 Y
Cheriton	TR13 Y/TR23 D
Cheriton Hill	TR13 Z
Cheriton Sports Centre	TR23 D
Chesterfield Wood (Saltwood)	TR13 N
Church Hougham	TR23 U
Civic Centre (Folkestone)	TR23 H
Cock Ash Lake (near Sellindge)	TR13 E
Coombe Wood Lane	TR23 J
Copt Point	TR23 N
Cowtye Wood	TR13 N
Creteway Down	TR23 J
Dibgate Camp	TR13 T
Donkey Street	TR13 B
East Cliff Gardens (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Enbrook Park (Sandgate)	TR23 C
Enbrook Valley (Cheriton)	TR23 D
Etchinghill radio mast	TR13 U
Folkestone	TR23 C/TR23 D/TR23 H/TR23 I
Folkestone Beach	TR13 H

Site	Tetrad
Folkestone Downs	TR23 I/TR23 J
Folkestone Harbour	TR13 H/TR13 I
Folkestone Leas	TR23 C/TR23 H
Folkestone Pier	TR23 H
Folkestone Racecourse (Westenhanger)	TR13 I
Folkestone Rugby Club	TR13 T
Folkestone Warren	TR23 N/TR23 P
Folks' Wood (Pedlinge)	TR23 H
Foord Road	TR23 I
Foreland Avenue (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Gibbin's Brook	TR13 E
Golden Valley (Cheriton)	TR13 Y
Haguelands Farm	TR13 A
Hayton Lake (Stanford)	TR13 J
Heane Wood (Saltwood)	TR13 N
Hillcrest Road (Saltwood)	TR13 M
Hillhurst Farm (Westenhanger)	TR13 I
Holy Well	TR23 J
Horn Street	TR13 X/TR13 Y
Horton Priory	TR13 E
Hythe	TR13 M/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
Hythe seafront	TR13 S
Ingles Manor (Folkestone)	TR23 C
Joyes Road (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Kiln Wood	TR13 I
Ladies Walk (Hythe)	TR13 S
Lower Wall	TR13 B
Lympne	TR13 H
Lymone Industrial Park	TR13 C
Lympne Park Wood	TR13 C/TR13 H
Mill Point	TR23 C/TR23 H
New Beach Holiday Park	TR13 C
Newington	TR13 Y
Nickolls Quarry	TR13 G
Oak Banks	TR13 T
Ormonde Road (Hythe)	TR13 S
Palmarsh	TR13 G
Paraker Wood (Seabrook)	TR13 X
Park Farm Industrial Estate	TR23 D
Peene	TR13 Z
Peene Quarry	TR13 Z
Port Lympne	TR13 C

Site	Tetrad
Postling Wents	TR13 N
Princes Parade	TR13 S/TR13 X
Radnor Park (Folkestone)	TR23 I
Sainsbury's supermarket (Folkestone)	TR23 H
Saltwood	TR13 M
Saltwood Cricket Club	TR13 S
Samphire Hoe	TR23 Z
Sandgate	TR23 C
Sandgate Hill	TR23 C
Sands Estate	TR13 A
Scene Wood	TR13 S
Seabrook	TR13 X
Sene Valley	TR13 S
Shorncliffe Camp	TR13 X
Shorncliffe Military Cemetery	TR13 X
Shrine Farm (Postling Wents)	TR13 N
St. Hilda's Road (Hythe)	TR13 M
Stade Street (Hythe)	TR13 S
Stutfall Castle	TR13 C
Sugarloaf Hill	TR23 I
Sutton Close (Cheriton)	TR23 D
Twiss Road (Hythe)	TR13 S
West Hythe	TR13 H
Westenhanger	TR13 I
Willop Basin	TR13 A
Willop Outfall	TR13 A
Willop Sewer	TR13 A/TR13B
Willop Sewage Works	TR13 A/TR13 B

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Wood Pigeons at Abbotscliffe (Ian Roberts)