

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Category A

Breeding resident, winter visitor and passage migrant.

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

A widespread breeding species across Europe and eastwards across Russia and Siberia to the upper Ob'. Migratory in the north-east of its range but thought to largely sedentary in the extreme south. Winters south to Saharan oases and the Middle East. The British population is largely resident but some migrate south-west at least as far as southern Iberia.

Kent status (KOS 2021):

In Kent it is a common and widespread resident, a passage migrant and a winter visitor.

The Robin was included in Knight and Tolputt's "List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood" (1871). This list covered an area of six miles radius from Folkestone town hall, therefore extending further inland than the current Folkestone and Hythe area, so this does not provide conclusive evidence of its occurrence here. However, Ticehurst (1909) considered it to be "a common and generally distributed bird throughout the county, being almost as numerous in the town gardens as it is in the lanes and hedges of the country", so there can be little doubt that it was to be found locally.

Breeding atlas distribution

Figure 1 shows the breeding distribution by tetrad based on the results of the 2007-13 BTO/KOS atlas fieldwork.

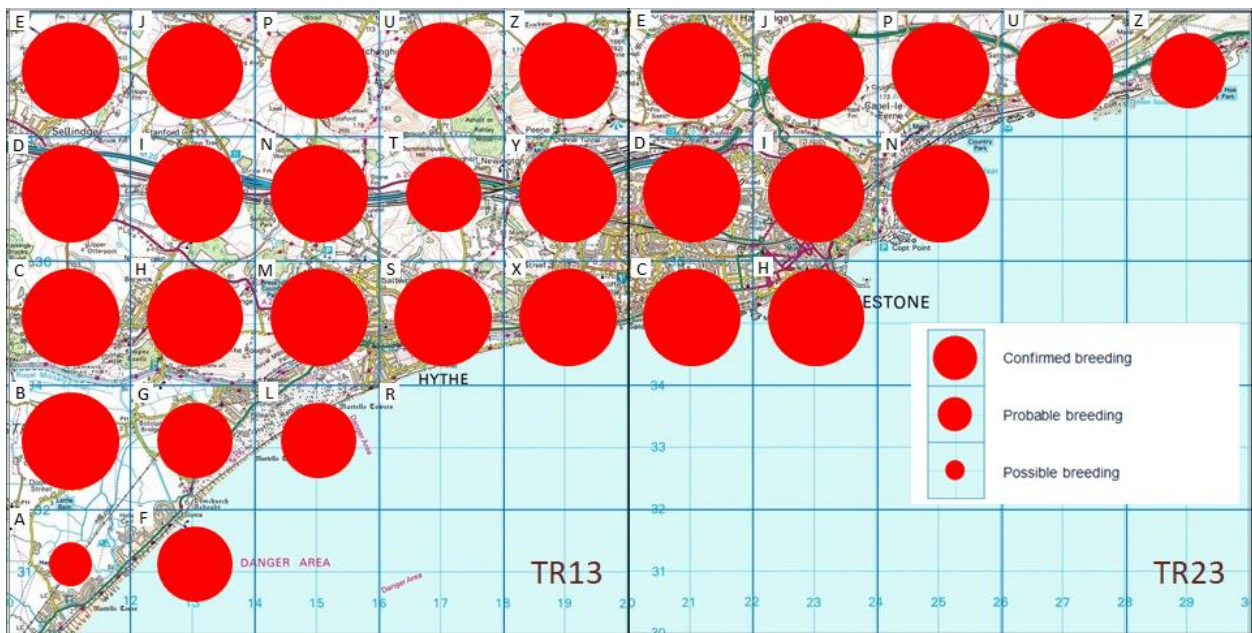


Figure 1: Breeding distribution of Robin at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad (2007-13 BTO/KOS Atlas)

Breeding was confirmed in 24 tetrads, with probable breeding in five more and possible breeding in one other. The table below shows how this compares to previous atlases (Taylor *et al.* 1981; Henderson & Hodge 1998). The confirmed and probable breeding categories have been combined to account for differing definitions of these in the first atlas.



Robin at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Breeding atlases	1967 - 1973		1988 - 1994		2007 - 2013	
Possible	3	(10%)	0	(0%)	1	(3%)
Probable/Confirmed	25	(81%)	29	(94%)	29	(94%)
Total	28	(90%)	29	(94%)	30	(97%)
Change			+1	(+4%)	+1	(+3%)

The table below shows the changes in tetrad occupancy across the three atlas periods.

Trends	First to second atlas (1967-73 to 1988-94)	Second to third atlas (1988-94 to 2007-13)	First to third atlas (1967-73 to 2007-13)
Local	+4%	+3%	+7%
Kent	+13%	+2%	+16%

The Robin is a woodland species that has adapted well to a man-made environment and is common in urban and suburban gardens, farmland and woodland across Kent. As Clements *et al.* (2015) reported, Robins were recorded from even more tetrads in the third county atlas (a 2% increase from the second atlas), with gains in coastal areas of marginal habitat that may be due to better coverage, as the BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) population trend across south-east England shows just a 1% increase between 1995 and 2012. Locally the same would appear to hold true, with a 3% increase since the previous survey.

Overall distribution

Figure 2 shows the distribution of all records of Robin by tetrad, with records in 30 tetrads (97%).

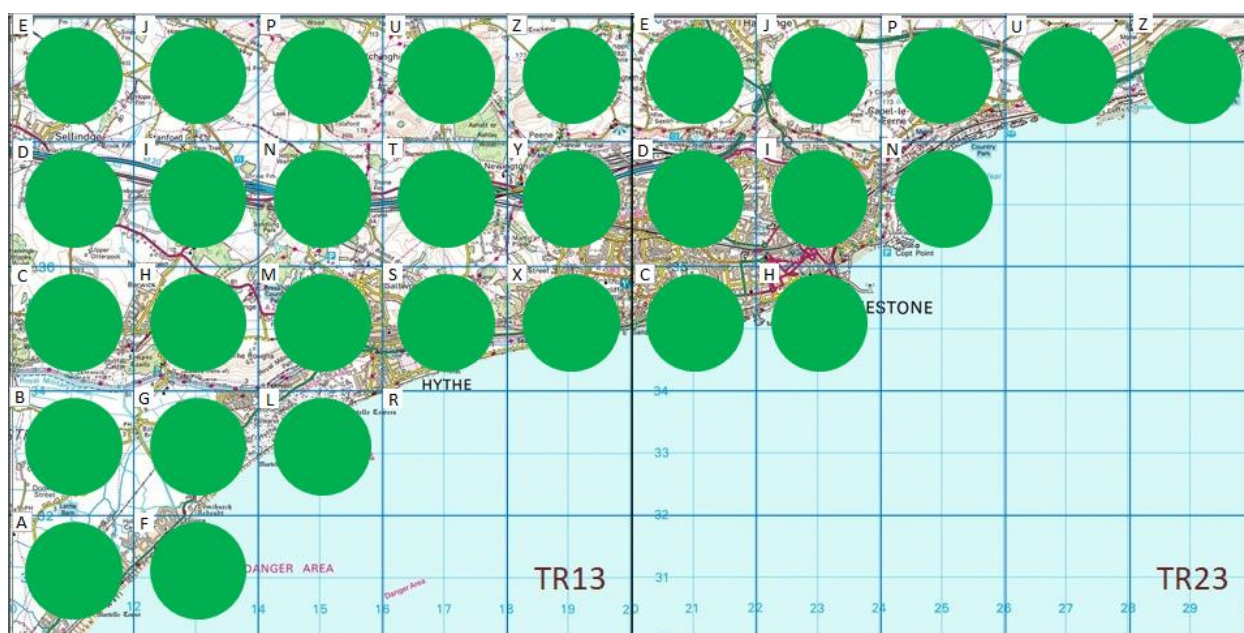


Figure 2: Distribution of all Robin records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

As Taylor *et al.* (1981) noted, the breeding population is augmented by passage migrants and winter visitors. In autumn, passage is usually noted from September to November, typically with a peak in October. Counts of 40 or more have been logged on several occasions:

- 90 at Folkestone Warren on the 31st October 1971
- 40 at Folkestone on the 23rd October 1981
- 40 at Mill Point on the 8th September 1988
- 55 at Capel Battery on the 25th September 1993
- 60 at Capel Battery on the 20th September 1996
- 40 at Castle Hill on the 18th October 2015
- 48 at Beachborough Park on the 3rd September 2018
- 45 at Abbotscliffe on the 19th September 2019
- 200 in the Copt Point/Creteway Down area on the 3rd October 2020



Robin at Saltwood Castle (Brian Harper)



Robin at Princes Parade (Nigel Webster)

Spring migration is light and rarely detected.

One ringed at Hythe on the 7th May 1952 was recovered at Capbreton in south-western France (850km SSW) on the 11th February 1953, whilst another of the same brood was trapped at the site of ringing on the 25th December 1953. Another ringed in Lithuania in October 1959 was trapped at Hythe just over 10 weeks later (having travelled over 1,500km).



Robin at West Hythe (Brian Harper)



Robin at Cheriton (Brian Harper)

References

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Robin at Samphire Hoe (Martin Collins)



Robin at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)



Robin at West Hythe (Brian Harper)

Acknowledgements

The tetrad map images were produced from the Ordnance Survey [Get-a-map service](#) and are reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#). I am indebted to Andrew Henderson and Tim Hodge for providing access to the Kent Ornithological Society archives.