

Treecreeper

Certhia familiaris Category A
Breeding resident.

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):
Widespread across much of Europe but only patchily distributed in France and southern Europe. Its range extends eastwards through southern Siberia and north-central Asia to Sakhalin Island, Japan and north-east China, then south-west to the Himalayas. Northern populations are partially migratory and eruptive in some years, heading chiefly south-west in autumn, but British, central and southern European populations are sedentary.

Kent status (KOS 2021):
In Kent it is a widespread resident, but almost absent on the north Kent marshes, Thanet and Romney Marsh.



Treecreeper at Saltwood Castle (Brian Harper)

The Treecreeper 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 “generally distributed throughout the county” absent only from “districts devoid of trees”, 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.

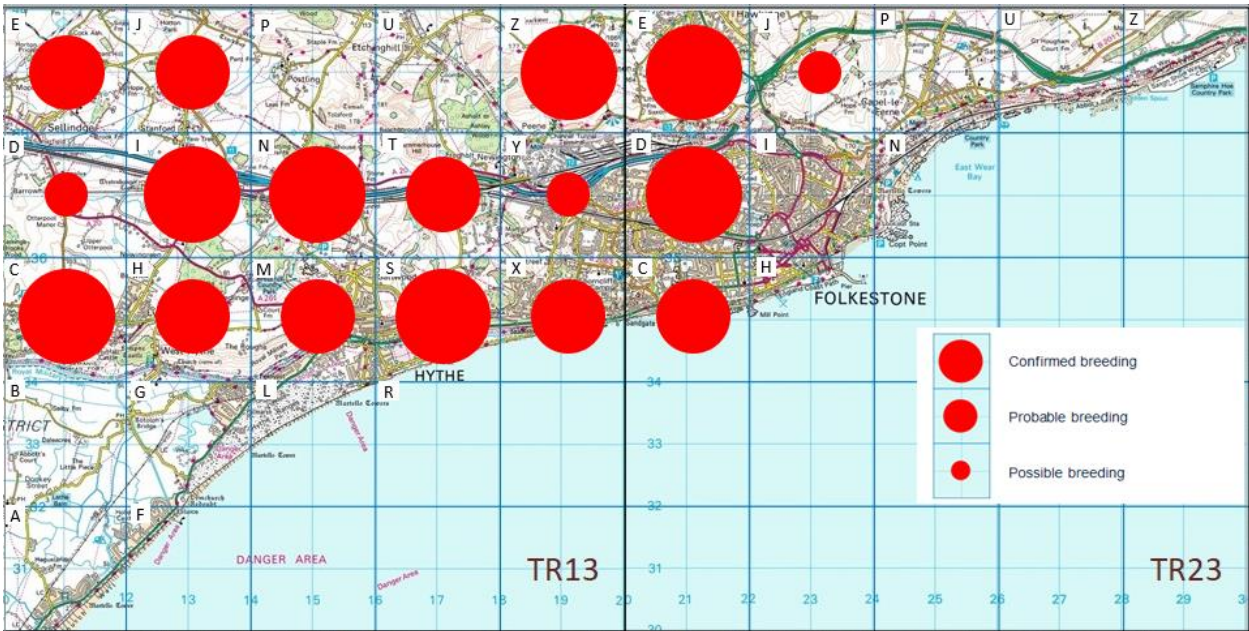


Figure 1: Breeding distribution of Treecreeper at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad (2007-13 BTO/KOS Atlas)

Breeding was confirmed in seven tetrads, with probable breeding in seven more and possible breeding in three others. 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.

Breeding atlases	1967 - 1973		1988 - 1994		2007 - 2013	
Possible	0	(0%)	3	(10%)	3	(10%)
Probable/Confirmed	6	(19%)	7	(23%)	14	(45%)
Total	6	(19%)	10	(32%)	17	(55%)
Change			+4	(+67%)	+7	(+70%)

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	+67%	+70%	+183%
Kent	+37%	+5%	+44%

Treecreepers are most often found in woodland, including mature conifer plantations, but will also nest in parks and large gardens. Clements *et al.* (2015) reported that although the population fluctuates, falling in severe winters, it had remained relatively stable in Kent over the past twenty years and there was little evidence of a change in status since the second county atlas. There was just a 3% increase in occupied tetrads between the second and third county atlases, which was very similar to the BBS trend for 1995 to 2012 of a 4% increase across south-east England. Clements *et al.* considered that the number of occupied tetrads appeared to vary with observer effort, so the apparent increase locally is presumably due to improved coverage, rather than a genuine spread.

As has long been observed (Ticehurst; Harrison 1953 and Taylor *et al.*) it is absent from treeless areas such as the Romney Marsh and is not found in the local tetrads to the south of the canal, although it does seem to be in the process of colonising TR13 G, where the trees around the sewage works adjacent to Nickolls Quarry are maturing. It was first recorded there in December 2018, with another in August in 2020 and up to two (including a singing bird) on several dates in 2021.

Overall distribution

Figure 2 shows the distribution of all records of Treecreeper by tetrad, with records in 24 tetrads (77%).

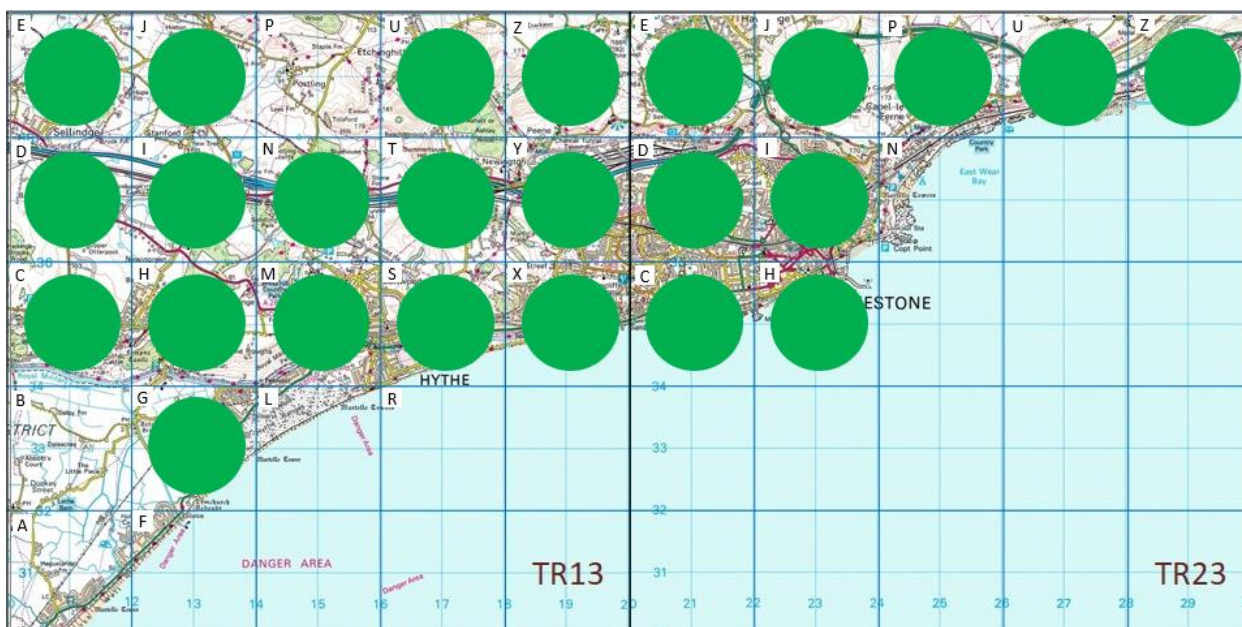


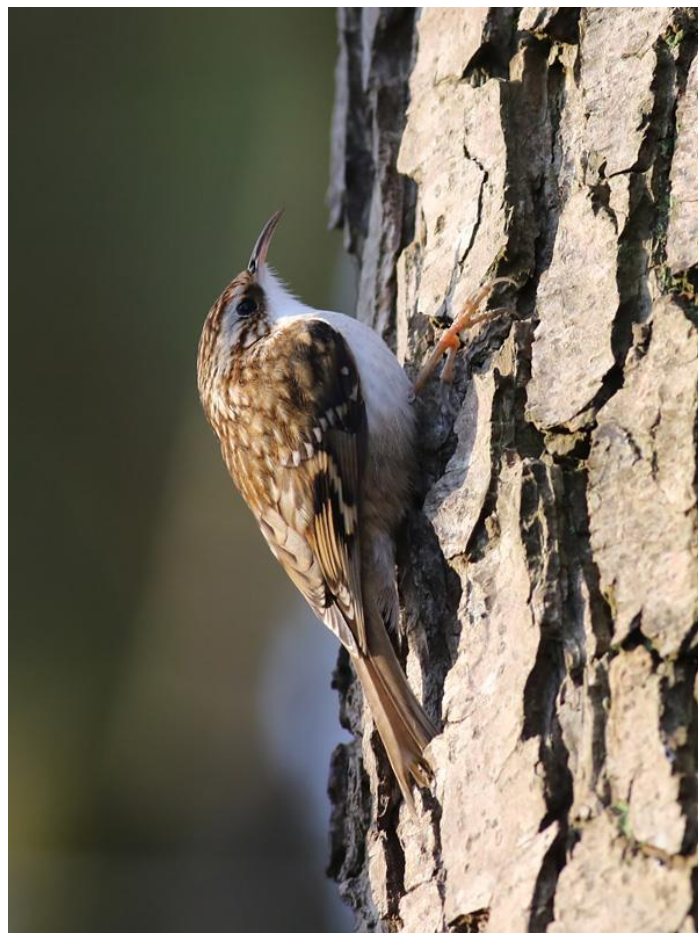
Figure 2: Distribution of all Treecreeper records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

There have been few counts that exceed a family group in number but eight were at Beachborough Park on the 27th September and nine were at Saltwood Castle on the 22nd January 2017.

Treecreepers are sedentary birds and there are very few records away from wooded areas but one was found inside a multi-storey car park at Middelburg Square on the 24th June 1997 and a treecreeper species (*Certhia sp.*), presumed to a Treecreeper, was seen briefly at the western end of Samphire Hoe on the 17th October 2008.



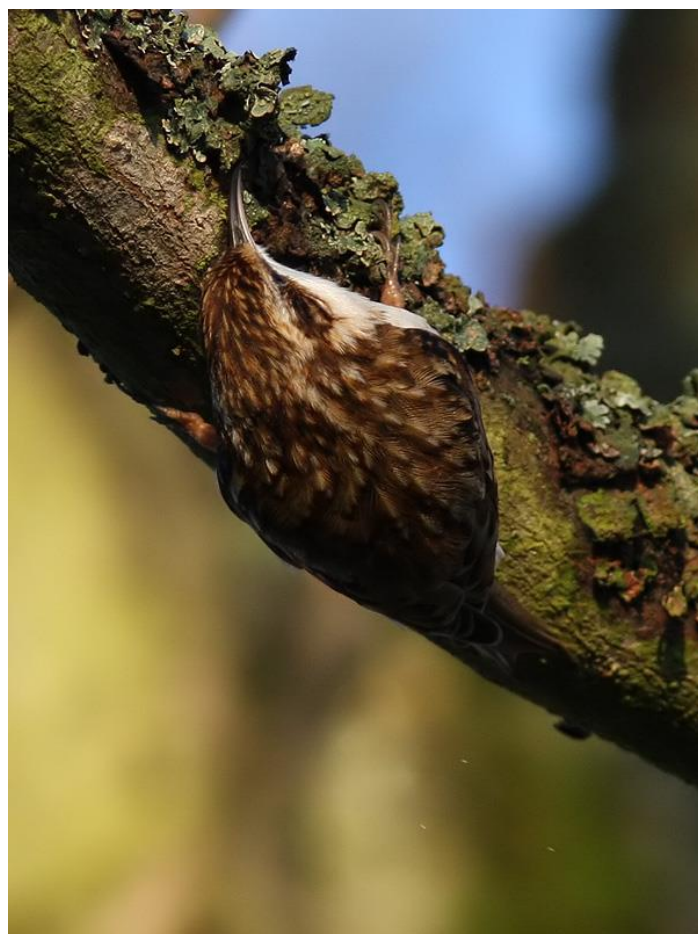
Treecreeper at Saltwood (Gary Blackburn)



Treecreeper at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)



Treecreeper at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)



Treecreeper at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)

References

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Treecreeper at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)



Treecreeper at Palmarsh (Brian Harper)



Treecreeper at Beachborough Park (Steve Tomlinson)



Treecreeper at Princes Parade (Nigel Webster)

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.