

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

2 records,
2 birds

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998):

Breeds in arctic Fenno-Scandia and Russia eastwards across northernmost Siberia to the Chukotskiy Peninsula, with occasional pairs in Scotland. Winters from the Mediterranean Basin and northern Afrotropics across the Middle East, and thence eastwards across southern Asia to Japan.

Kent status (KOS 2022):

It is a scarce but regular passage migrant to the county, both in spring and autumn.



Temminck's Stint at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

Ticehurst (1909) thought it to be "one of the rarest of our occasional visitors" and was only able to cite seven or eight occurrences in the county, but Harrison (1953) suspected that it may have been overlooked in the past and noted almost annual records from the 1930s, a situation that Taylor *et al.* (1981) considered to be "much as at present", listing it as an occasional passage migrant.

It was not included in Knight & Tolputt's "List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood" (1871) nor were any noted during Roger Norman's coverage of Nickolls Quarry in the 1950s or 1960s (Norman 2007), so it is one of the most recent additions to the area's wader list (indeed only Red-necked Phalarope has been added more recently).

It was first recorded locally on the 5th May 2000 when Ian Roberts found one at Nickolls Quarry, and the same observer located another at the same site on the 11th May 2002, when a single Little Stint was also present, offering a unique opportunity to see both species together in the Folkestone and Hythe area. During this time an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, which attracted a range of migrant waders, but the habitat has since been filled in.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

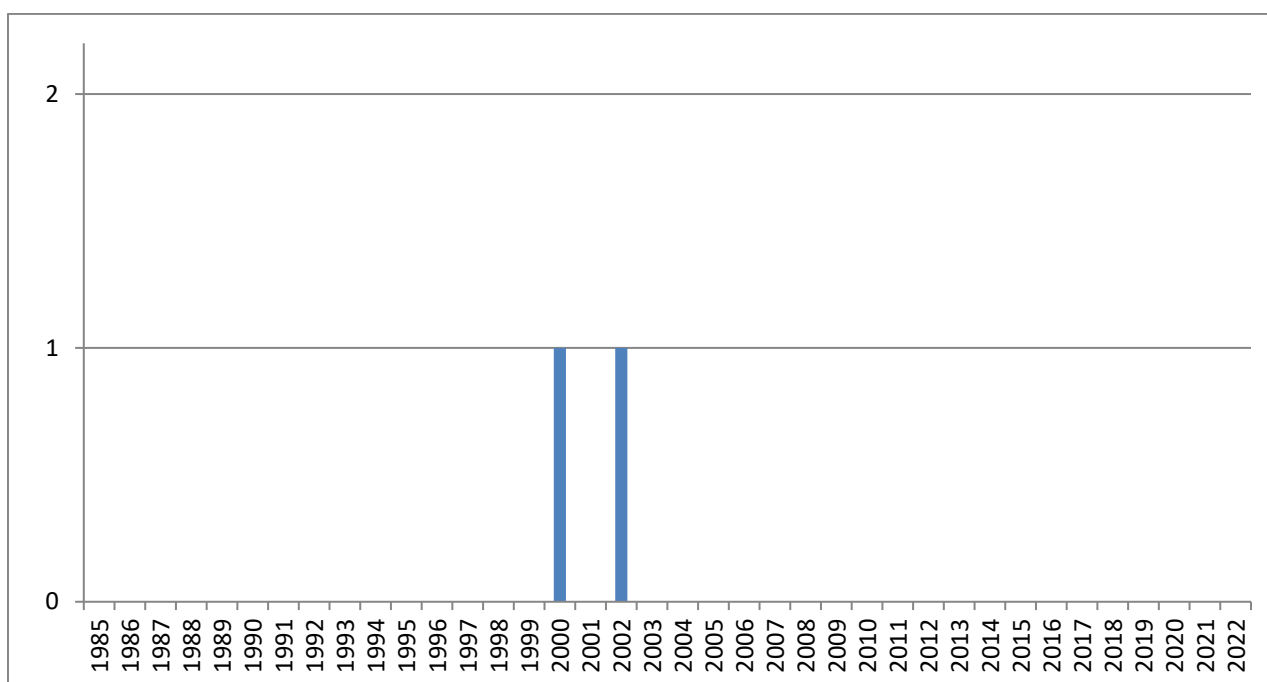


Figure 1: Temminck's Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe

Both records occurred in the first half of May, as demonstrated by figure 2.

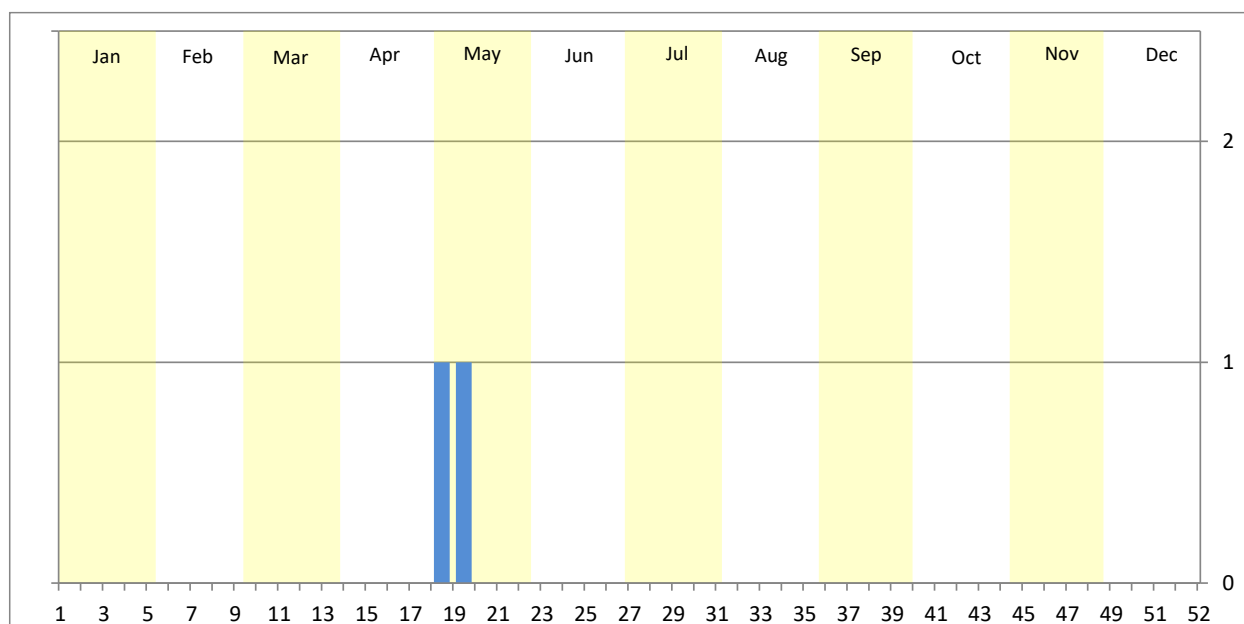


Figure 2: Temminck's Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad.

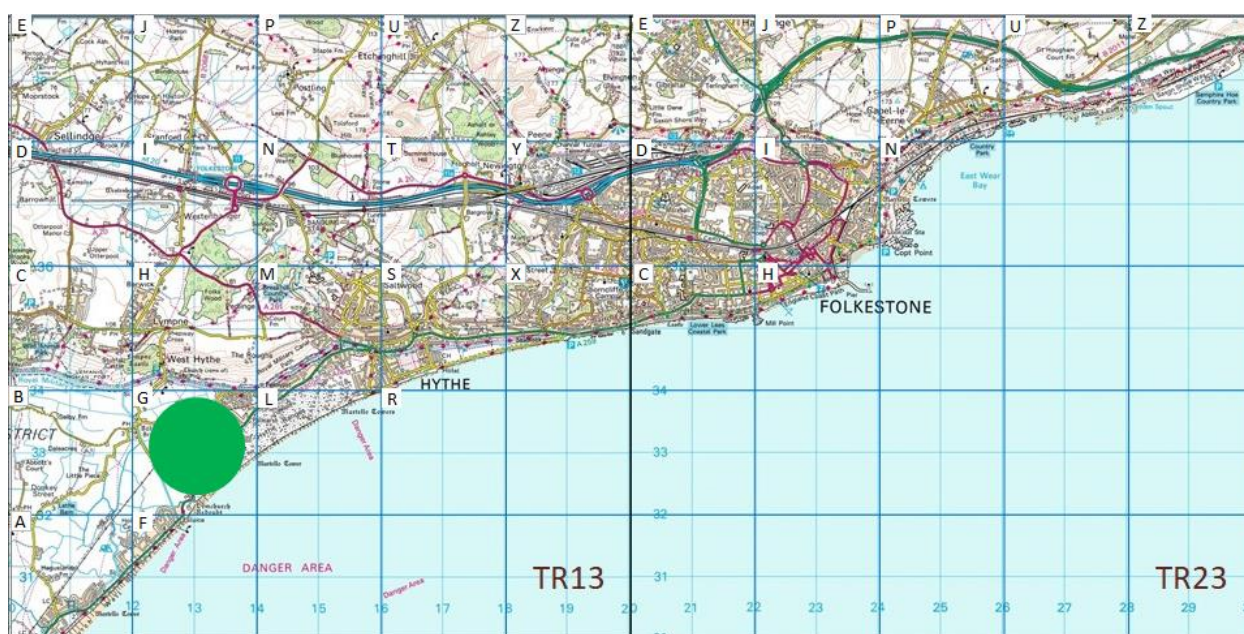


Figure 3: Distribution of all Temminck's Stint records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

2000 Nickolls Quarry, one, 5th May (I. A. Roberts, D. A. Gibson)

2002 Nickolls Quarry, one, 11th May, photographed (I. A. Roberts)

In addition, two unidentified stints, presumably either this species or Little Stint, flew east past Copt Point on the 8th May 2001.

An account of the first area record is given below.

Temminck's Stint at Nickolls Quarry
5th May 2000

By Ian Roberts

Weather conditions:

The day began cold with a strong (force 5-6) north-easterly wind and a few fog patches, but the evening felt milder and the wind had eased slightly.

Circumstances of the find:

I arrived at the western part of Nickolls Quarry to check for waders at about 18:15 and was pleased to find that good numbers of Common Sandpipers had appeared, with about 10 present. They had flushed quite early, as I approached the shallows, but I continued out towards the edge to see if anything else was lurking. As I did so, I noticed a very small wader quite close, which ran away a few feet before 'freezing'. As I raised my binoculars I think I was already expecting to see that it was a stint but was amazed to see it was a Temminck's!

I felt that I was a bit too close for comfort so backed off, but luckily it seemed reluctant to flush. I took a few mental notes before phoning Dale Gibson and fetching the telescope from the car. I relocated it quite easily and watched it from a safe distance as I waited for Dale to arrive and see it, which he duly did, although there was a brief scare when it towered up and flew around for a few minutes before returning. Once he had arrived we approached to within 20 feet of the bird and had superb views. I took the following description over the 45 minutes or so that I was there.

Description of the bird:

Age / sex: A summer-plumaged adult

Size, structure, jizz: Size as Little Stint (much smaller than Common Sandpiper) but shape more attenuated and long-winged. Moved with horizontal posture and furtive, creeping action, with some crouching. Flew once on high, erratic course, calling frequently, before returning.

Head and upperparts: Slight supercilium over eye, but head generally quite plain brownish. Darkish-centered feathers in scapulars gave a somewhat spotted effect to otherwise brownish upperparts.

Underparts: 'Clouded' buff-brown breast, with quite neat pectoral band, and white belly below.

Bare parts: Legs pale, yellowish-green. Lower mandible showed a pale, yellowish base.

Call: Distinctive dry trilling call given frequently in flight - 'tirrr-tirrr-tirrr'.

Comments on the record:

May 2000 saw a notable influx of Temminck's Stints to the county and Britain as a whole. After two in late April, there were about 80 in Britain in May at around 40 sites, with the main arrival between the 4th and 7th May.

The record was accepted by the Kent Ornithological Society Rarities Committee and appears in the Kent Bird Report for that year.



Temminck's Stint at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Temminck's Stint at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)



Temminck's Stint at Nickolls Quarry (Ian Roberts)

References

Harrison, J. M. 1953. *The Birds of Kent*. Witherby, London.

Kent Ornithological Society (KOS) 1953-2022. *Kent Bird Reports*. Kent Ornithological Society.

Knight, V. & Tolputt, F. 1871. List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood. *Fourth Annual Report of the Folkestone Natural History Society*. Available at: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/46103

Norman, R. K. 2007. The Birds of Palmarsh Gravel Pit. <https://folkestonebirds.com/where-to-watch> (see "Further Information" section).

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

Taylor, D., Davenport, D. & Flegg, J. 1981. *Birds of Kent*. Kent Ornithological Society.

Ticehurst, N. F. 1909. *A History of the Birds of Kent*. Witherby, London.

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.