

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Category A

Rare passage migrant.

20 records,
33 birds

World/British distribution (Snow & Perrins 1998, Holling et al. 2019):

Breeds chiefly in Fenno-Scandia and Russia eastwards across northern Asia to Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island, with a few pairs in countries on the southern coast of the Baltic and in Britain (where around 30 pairs nest annually). Winters mainly in tropical and subtropical latitudes in Africa, across southern Asia and in Australia.

Kent status (KOS 2022):

It is a regular passage migrant in the county and is more plentiful in autumn.



Wood Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

Ticehurst (1909) described it as a regular visitor to Kent in autumn but only a straggler in spring, whilst Harrison (1953) noted that “a significant change in status has taken place since about the mid-1930s” such that the species has also become a regular passage migrant also in spring. It was not included in Knight & Tolputt’s “List of birds observed in Folkestone and its immediate neighbourhood” (1871).

Taylor *et al.* (1981) noted that there had been “little apparent change in status since the mid-thirties” and considered it to be annual in small numbers in spring, but more plentiful in autumn. It was during their review period (1952-76) that the first local records occurred. Roger Norman noted one at Nickolls Quarry on the 20th August 1952, followed by two there on the 5th August and one on the 9th September 1956, one there from the 29th August to 3rd September 1957, the first spring record there on the 3rd May 1958, another on the 9th September on that year, and a further spring record with three seen there on the 24th May 1961 (Norman 2007).



Wood Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)

After this series of seven sightings in 11 years a thirty-year gap ensued, probably due at least in part to a lack of coverage, before Roger recorded another at Nickolls Quarry on the 14th June 1992. Ian Roberts then noted one there on the 10th August 1997 and it then occurred with some regularity between 2000 and 2006, with a total of eight records, including sightings in five consecutive years.

All were seen at Nickolls Quarry, where in the first half of the 2000s an area of shallow water, islets and mud existed at the site, attracting a range of migrant waders, but this was unfortunately infilled.

There have been just three records since, one at Botolph's Bridge on the 18th May 2008, a flock of five at Nickolls Quarry on the 29th August 2015 and one heard calling as it flew over there during the night on the 22nd May 2020.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

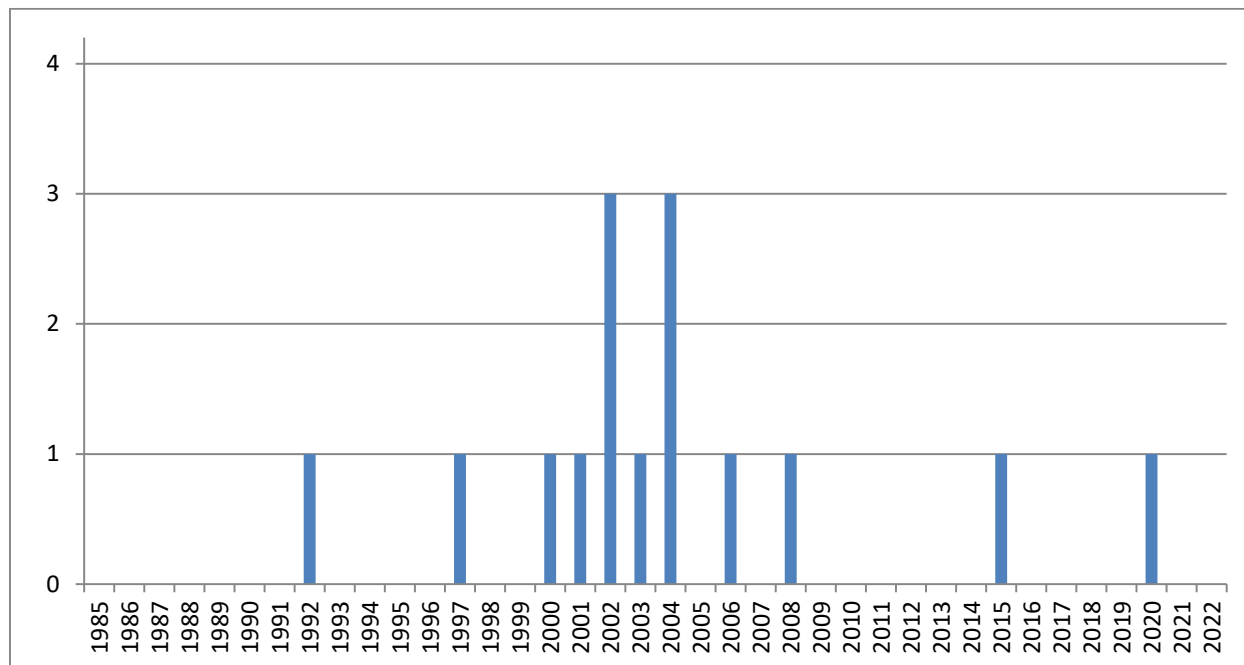


Figure 1: Wood Sandpiper records at Folkestone and Hythe since 1985

The records by week are shown in figure 2. Arrival have fallen into two distinct periods: late spring/early summer (between the 3rd and 31st May, with a notably late individual on the 14th June 1992) and late summer/early autumn (between the 17th July and 9th September).

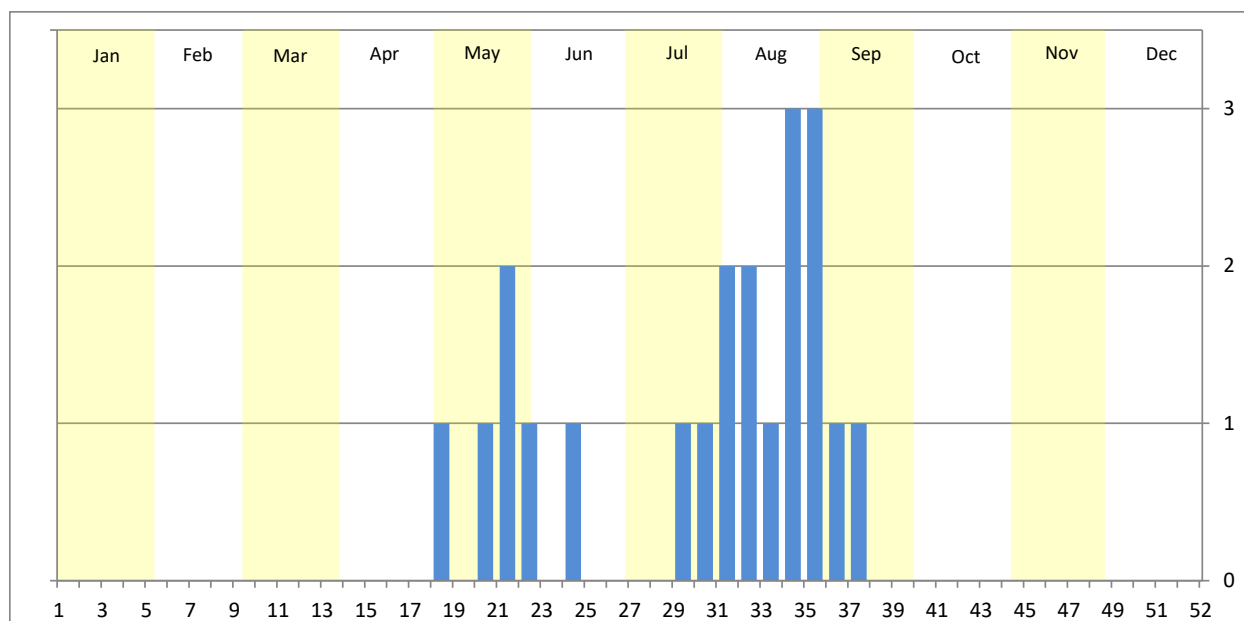


Figure 2: Wood Sandpiper records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the location of records by tetrad. All but one have occurred at Nickolls Quarry, with the other at Botolph's Bridge (also within TR13 G).

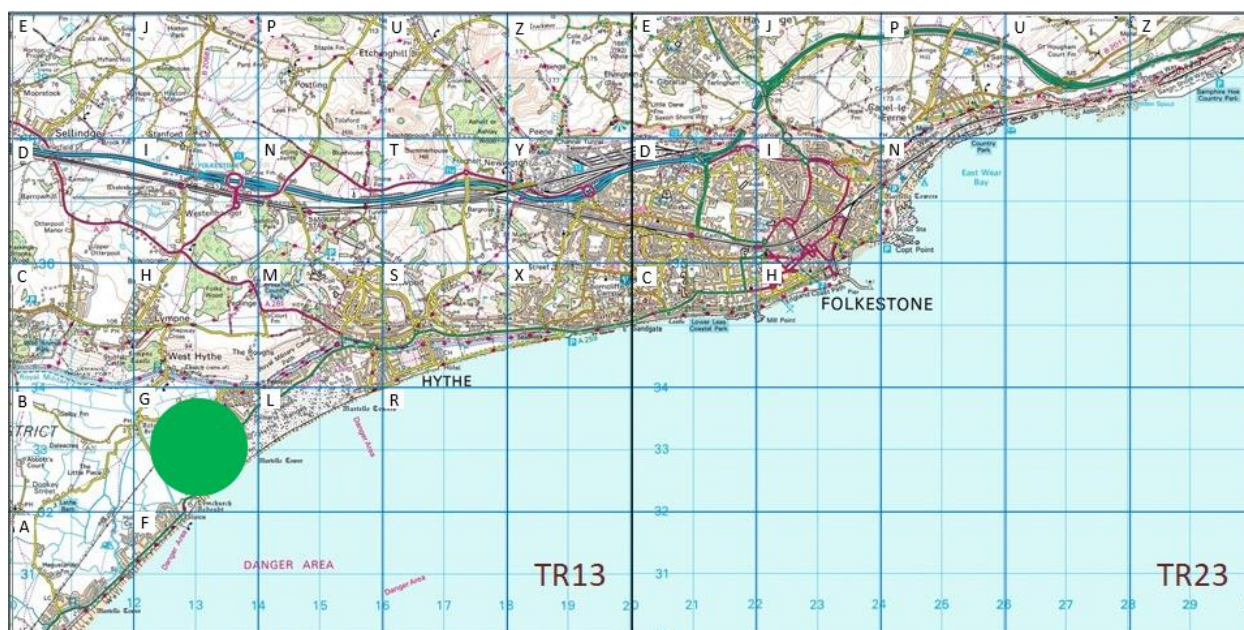


Figure 3: Distribution of all Wood Sandpiper records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

- 1952** Nickolls Quarry, one, 20th August (R. K. Norman)
- 1956** Nickolls Quarry, two, 5th August (R. K. Norman)
- 1956** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9th September (R. K. Norman)
- 1957** Nickolls Quarry, one, 29th August to 3rd September (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, one, 3rd May (R. K. Norman)
- 1958** Nickolls Quarry, one, 9th September (R. K. Norman)
- 1961** Nickolls Quarry, three, 24th May (R. K. Norman)
- 1992** Nickolls Quarry, one, 14th June (R. K. Norman)
- 1997** Nickolls Quarry, one, then flew high south-west, 10th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2000** Nickolls Quarry, two, 29th to 30th July, with one remaining to the 31st (R. K. Norman, D. A. Gibson, P. Haines)
- 2001** Nickolls Quarry, one, 31st May (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 14th August (R. K. Norman)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 26th August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2002** Nickolls Quarry, one, 2nd September (R. K. Norman)
- 2003** Nickolls Quarry, one flew east, 23rd August (R. K. Norman)
- 2004** Nickolls Quarry, at least four different birds on 11 dates from 17th July, including one staying from 29th July to 8th August (R. K. Norman, I. A. Roberts)
- 2006** Nickolls Quarry, one, 27th July to 1st August (I. A. Roberts)
- 2008** Botolph's Bridge, one, 18th May (R. K. Norman)
- 2015** Nickolls Quarry, five, 29th August, photographed (B. Harper)
- 2020** Nickolls Quarry, one, calling at night, 22nd May (I. A. Roberts)

References

- Harrison, J. M. 1953. *The Birds of Kent*. Witherby, London.
- Holling, M. & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel 2019. Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2017. *British Birds* 112: 706-758.
- 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.



Wood Sandpiper at Nickolls Quarry (Brian Harper)



Wood Sandpipers at Nickolls Quarry (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.