

Red-breasted Flycatcher

Ficedula parva

Category A

Very rare vagrant.

3 records

Breeds across mid-latitude Europe from eastern Germany eastwards through Russia and Siberia to Kamchatka and Sakhalin island, and south-east into the Balkans to Iran. Winters in southern Asia, from Pakistan and India east to southern China (Snow & Perrins, 1998).



Red-breasted Flycatcher at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)

It is a scarce autumn migrant to Kent, which is very rare in spring. There had been 145 county records to the end of 2019 (KOS, 2020).

There is evidence of a recent decline in the numbers being recorded in Kent, with an average of 2.9 records per annum between 1970 and 1999 but an average of just 0.9 per annum between 2000 and 2019 (KOS, 2021). The national trend in occurrence however appears to be stable (White & Kehoe, 2019). Only ten Kent records have occurred in spring (almost all in May), with the rest in autumn, mainly in September and October, but with four in November.

It was first recorded locally in 1998, when Dale Gibson found one in Folkestone Warren on the 19th November 1998, the latest arrival date so far in the county. The second area record was found at the same site by the same observer the following year, on the more typical date of 14th October.

A third area record occurred 16 years later, when Mark Kennett found one at Samphire Hoe on the afternoon of the 20th October 2015. It remained until dusk, allowing several observers to catch up with this first record for the site.

The records by year are shown in figure 1.

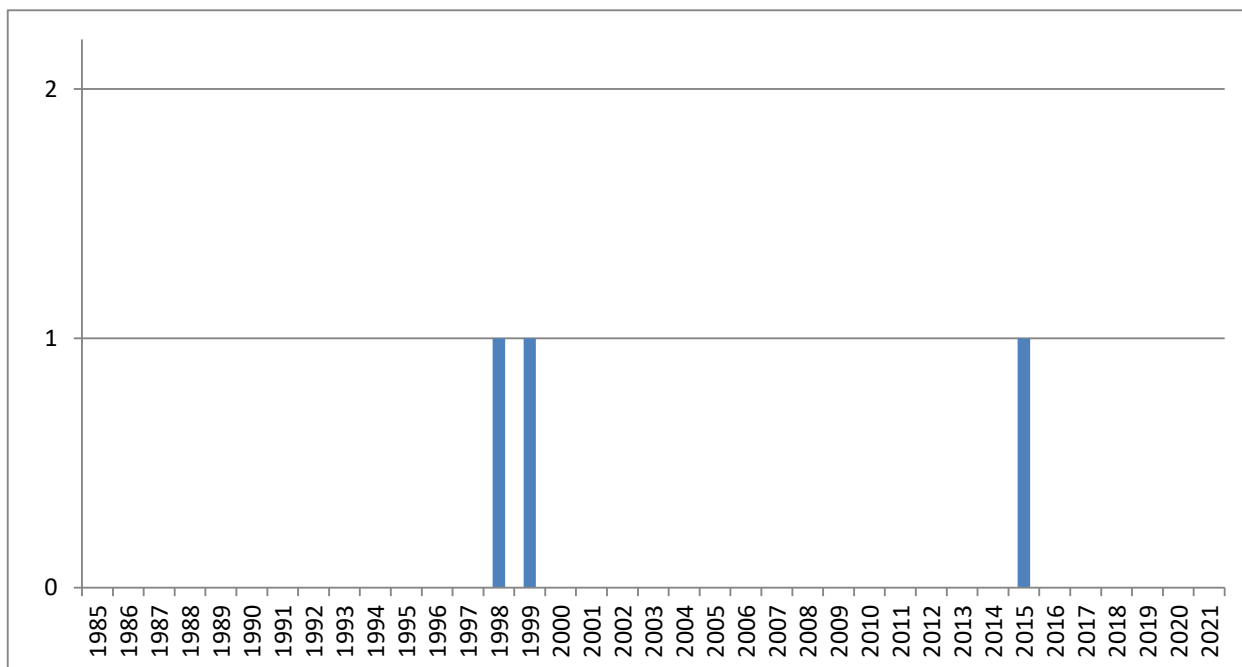


Figure 1: Red-breasted Flycatcher records at Folkestone and Hythe

The records by week are given in figure 2

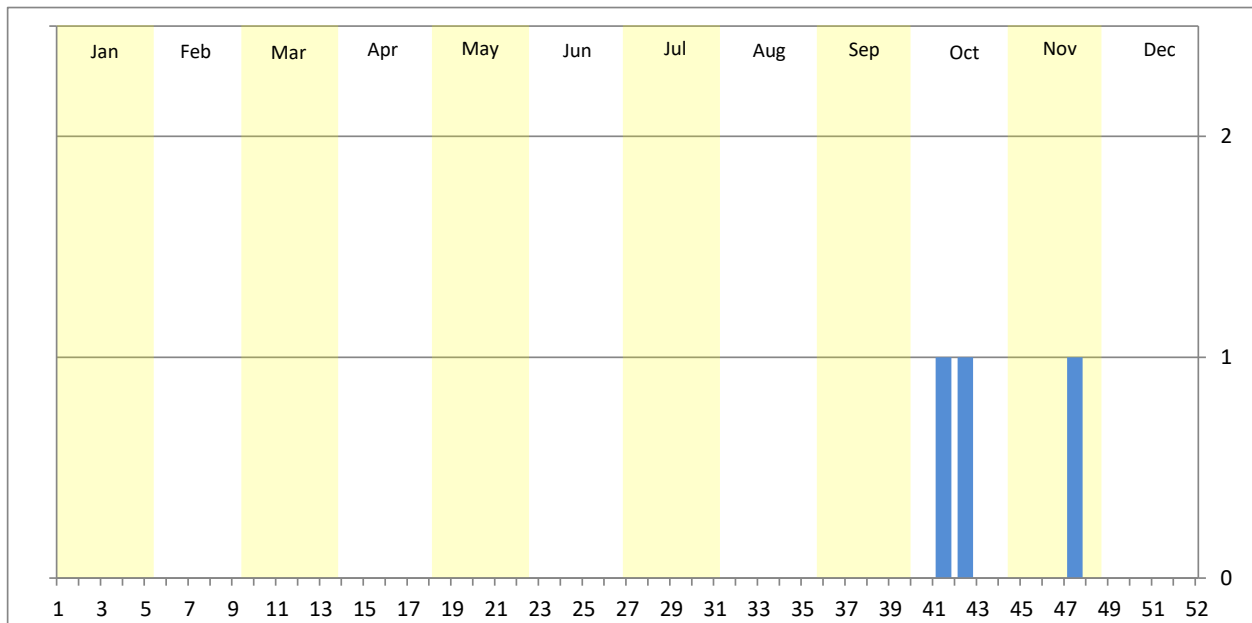


Figure 2: Red-breasted Flycatcher records at Folkestone and Hythe by week

Figure 3 shows the distribution of records by tetrad.



Figure 3: Distribution of all Red-breasted Flycatcher records at Folkestone and Hythe by tetrad

The full list of records is as follows:

1998 Folkestone Warren, immature/female, 19th November (D. A. Gibson *et al*)

1999 Folkestone Warren, immature/female, 14th October (D. A. Gibson)

2015 Samphire Hoe, immature/female, 20th October, photographed (M. D. Kennett, P. Holt, P. R. Smith *et al*)

In addition, there is an intriguing record of a probable male Red-breasted Flycatcher seen briefly by Roger Norman at Hythe Ranges on the 18th April 1958. The record was not submitted at the time due to the brevity of the views and incompleteness of description, but the red breast and tail pattern were noted and the observer is now happy with the identification, especially following subsequent experience of the species abroad. It would however constitute the earliest arrival date in the county by nearly three weeks.

References

Kent Bird Reports. Kent Ornithological Society

KOS Kent list: <https://kentos.org.uk/kent-list> (accessed 2021)

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

White, S. & Kehoe, C., 2019. Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain in 2017. *British Birds*, 112: 444-468.

Acknowledgements

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Red-breasted Flycatcher at Samphire Hoe (Phil Smith)